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**EVALUATION OF THE
TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR FOOD
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

PROJECT-596-0116

INCAP/ROCAP

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DRAFT**Executive Summary****A. Introduction**

Community Systems Foundation was asked to provide a three person team to evaluate the first two years of activities under the AID/ROCAP funded Technical Support for the Food Assistance Program Project. The purpose of the \$5.6 million program, being implemented by the Nutrition Institute for Central America and Panama (INCAP), is to improve the effectiveness of food assistance activities in the Central America and Panama region by establishing effective national coordination mechanisms and strengthening the technical, managerial and evaluation capabilities of INCAP and other agencies involved in food delivery programs. The main project activities include: 1) planning and coordination of food programs; 2) technical assistance to participating countries; 3) training and information dissemination; and, 4) operations and applied research. The consultant team consisted of a food and nutrition planner, an operations research expert, and a public health nutritionist with education and training experience. All three team members have had extensive experience in designing and evaluating food assistance programs. The in-country portion of the evaluation was conducted from May 18 to 30. During this period, evaluation team members met with ROCAP and INCAP staff and visited government and PVO officials in five of the participating countries.

B. Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess project planning, implementation and management, INCAP and country team organization, and project coordination with donors, PVOS and national planners and program managers. In addition, the team evaluated progress toward achieving the project purpose and made recommendations to INCAP and ROCAP which would help assure that the project meets its objectives. Each evaluation team member took a major activity or activities of the project. These corresponded generally to each member's specialty although the team was able to read, discuss and contribute to findings and conclusions of activities being evaluated by other members as well. Because the project depended so much on the strength of the linkages to donors, individual ministries, and political leaders, the evaluation methodology gave high priority to interviewing and understanding their perceptions of project progress. Review of documents and interviews with INCAP personnel was a large part of the evaluation since much of the project achievements were well documented in seminar, commit-

tee, and country trip reports. A good deal of cross-checking of results was done among the project evaluators. This proved to be an effective means of verifying conclusions because the INCAP project team members were knowledgeable about all program activities since these various components were so interdependent.

C. Findings

General

In undertaking this project INCAP had some significant constraints to overcome. First, it is an organization historically characterized by its research in clinical nutrition. While INCAP has been well-known and respected for the high quality of this work, its emergence into planning, coordination and technical assistance activities for food programs was new. Moreover, INCAP has had no staff member with direct field experience in managing food aid programs. Thus, there was concern expressed that some of the discussions were too "academic" for practical application in countries.

Second, the project called for hiring entirely new specialists previously unknown to INCAP. These engineers, management consultants, and information systems personnel had to be integrated into an institution dominated by physicians and other health professionals. The fact that INCAP has received generally very high marks from its client countries and PVO organizations is a special credit, given the new institutional role it has had to perform under the project.

Project Administration

Project administration is now functioning well. Documentation of plans, activities and outcomes is prolific, and project personnel work in a coordinated manner, understanding each other's components. The main issue under administration is that of the relationship of the research component to other project activities. Results of and planning for research have not been well-coordinated with other training, information dissemination, and technical assistance activities. The lack of assignment of a planned long-term advisor to the project after two years of operations is another issue important to project administration. INCAP staff believe there is little need for such an advisor now. This must be balanced with the problems in the research component of the project and how such an advisor could assist in improving this element and better integrating it into the overall project.

Planning and Coordination

INCAP has successfully undertaken activities in this area which have contributed to the development of national interest, understanding and commitment to improving food programs. For example, INCAP established a Regional Technical Support Committee (CTAS) which meets annually and coordinates program activities among countries. There have been various regional meetings and 20 national meetings on food assistance programs with donor and voluntary agencies. Eight of eleven ad-hoc group meetings have been held. These meetings have established guidelines on general program areas so that all countries are operating from the same set of basic principles. National seminars in Honduras and El Salvador have resulted in the formation of coordinating entities and statements of policies by them. Costa Rica's Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Policy works closely with the project and has taken steps to restructure the national school feeding program with INCAP assistance.

Comparing this successful experience with the unsatisfactory results of multi-sectoral nutrition planning in the 1970s illustrates an important lesson of promoting nutrition programs and planning in developing countries. During the 1970s INCAP tried to promote a multisectorial approach which was not necessarily responsive to countries' real needs. In the case of this project, however, INCAP has worked carefully in eliciting those needs from the countries in order to make this endeavor a truly cooperative one.

Technical Assistance

The technical assistance component has included 182 weeks of consulting from the beginning of the project through March 1987. Much of the success of this technical assistance can be attributed to the previous contacts between INCAP staff and personnel in the country programs. INCAP staff now has more requests for help than they can fill. The consultants represent engineering, information and management fields much more than traditional research specialities at INCAP. This practical orientation explains much of the project's success in this area. Also, technical assistance follows country priorities and needs. For example, specific help to Costa Rica and El Salvador emanated from broader discussions with country officials about their problems. In Guatemala, the new Minister of Education asked for help in a major reprogramming of school feeding. In conjunction with this, the engineer who provided the assistance, also helped develop the logistics of a new school supplies project which complements the feeding program.

INCAP's decision to shift from providing "experts" to define countries' problems to one of providing consultants to undertake tasks basically determined by the countries themselves has been another important lesson learned from the project. Also, the INCAP personnel are involved in implementation as well as

design and planning. Thus, consultants under the project continue to prove valuable to the various national governments.

Training and Education

This activity consists of workshops, scholarships, observation visits and other training endeavors. Three of the twelve planned workshops have been completed and included high-level food program directors representing different ministries from participating countries. Considerable time and effort was put into planning for these workshops. This appears to have paid off since the course evaluations by participants were quite favorable as well as interviews with participants during this evaluation trip. Scholarships have included short term visits to INCAP where participants received a tailor-made program, such as practical application of food technology for food aid programs.

Another area of successful activity has been in the development of national training plans and the identification of resources to fund these plans. In Honduras the INCAP training coordinator assisted in developing a plan and obtaining approximately \$40,000 to fund the subsequent training courses. Similarly in Honduras and Costa Rica, the coordinator has identified training plans and resources. Despite the favorable response to observation visits outside of Central America, the training coordinator believed that they were not the most cost-efficient way of transferring knowledge and experience regarding food programs. The trips require too much logistical and other organizational support for the perceived benefits.

Information Dissemination

Specific accomplishments under this project activity include the identification and collection of over 400 documents relating to food programs and their classification into a system useful to project managers. In addition, a user classification system has been developed and over 600 persons in Central America with responsibilities related to food programs have been categorized by their position and type of food program. Twenty-six information centers in different countries have been inventoried with the ultimate objective of serving as in-country sources of bibliographic material which is now housed in the INCAP library.

Over 2,500 documents have been distributed to country food program personnel over the last year, consisting of 12 documents going to an average of 225 persons. These have included reports on different country projects and the project newsletter. One problem which needs to be addressed is the fact that some 50 percent of useful documents on food programs are in English and over 95 percent of the users speak only Spanish. Thus, expanded translation is important. While a for-

mal evaluation is planned for the end of 1987, the information coordinator receives acknowledgement letters on the material he has distributed. Some country personnel expressed the wish to have more input into the type of information they receive. Thus, some type of informal assessment covering basic user needs should be conducted immediately to assist in tailoring information distribution to the project clients' requirements.

Operations and Applied Research

The research program was the only component that presented serious problems in the evaluation. At this point, its accomplishments have been minimal. Whereas two major research projects were supposed to have been underway by the time of this evaluation, only one, in Costa Rica, is just beginning and requires a much stronger operations research orientation to fulfill project aims. The other research project has been rejected by Guatemala's Ministry of Health. Two smaller research programs were also to have been developed. One has not even been drafted, and the other has been analytically completed but not yet put into an operational context.

The basic reason for the slower progress in this area appears to be a lack of expertise in applied research among the principal investigators. This also has made it difficult to transfer an applied research approach to national counterparts and other component teams. It is also clear that one of the issues severely affecting the performance of the research component is the weak organization of the team. Nominally, the group includes six professional people; however, the only person working full time on these tasks is its coordinator. Under these circumstances, it is very difficult to accomplish project objectives.

Although this problematic situation seems to have been apparent for some time among INCAP personnel, there is little evidence indicating an effort to identify specific problems and find solutions. Thus, the research component has been somewhat paralyzed over the last six months. INCAP should explore further the causes of this situation. The general objectives of PROPAG and the specific goals of the research component within PROPAG require this research component to become fully operational. Otherwise, this component will collapse and this will seriously affect the other PROPAG components.

One useful lesson learned from the research experience is that it is inappropriate to promote large scale expensive research programs in countries and ministries which are strapped for operating expenses, particularly when there has been insufficient involvement of the host country counterparts in identifying the type of research needed. Moreover, the translation of scientific results into useful recommendations for program policy makers is extremely difficult. This was the case for

the specific research conducted by INCAP on the nutritional basis for screening and discharging of children in an MCH program.

ROCAP and INCAP should redefine and redesign the research component. This redefinition should primarily consider that the research team should be able to respond quickly to problems and supply solutions to be used in the operation of the PAGs. In order to achieve this, the team should significantly increase its operations and applied research skills. By developing these capabilities, the research activities will become a fundamental support to improvement of PAG operations and training. Thus, in addition to become more skilled in OR, the research team must work closely with training and information specialists in order to better learn how research results can be applied to achieving project results.

D. General Conclusions

Overall the activities now underway seem likely to produce more efficient and effective food programs in Central America. The project has successfully implemented a good part of its activities in the areas of planning and coordination, technical assistance, training and education and information dissemination. While some technical assistance and training related to specific operating problems of individual programs has been provided to countries, the prevailing assistance is still somewhat abstract and general. This has been necessary to establish a solid footing in the diverse countries. It is now time to move to designing programs and training for more concrete problems tailored to individual country needs. Otherwise, the project risks losing its practical utility much as did multisectoral nutrition planning by focussing too much on general coordination at the expense of specific projects and results.

More attention must be given to incorporating persons with direct field experience in managing food programs into the project activities. Significant assistance will be needed to improve the research component so that it can contribute to project aims. More of an emphasis on national country training, especially at the regional and local levels, will help focus training and assistance activities. Nevertheless, the regional aspects of the project cannot be abandoned since much has been learned and gained by bringing together different food program personnel to share their problems and solutions.

E . Summary of Recommendations

The complete set of recommendations can be found in the full evaluation paper. The following points highlight some of the recommendations.

- **ROCAP should allow the project to test the effectiveness of assigning full time "facilitators" to one or more countries.**
- **The project should use CARE, CRS and other PVO staff as consultants in field assistance and workshops, to take advantage of their practical experience and to mobilize their support for the project.**
- **The project should link the research component more closely with the immediate information needs for improving country food programs, and take immediate steps to present and disseminate research results in ways most useful to consultants working with country programs.**
- **The project should increase the quantity and quality of training materials, especially the use of audio-visual training materials in program activities.**
- **Within the existing budget, more documents should be translated from English to Spanish.**
- **An informal basic user information evaluation should be conducted before the formal evaluation.**
- **ROCAP and INCAP should redefine the research component of the project, and should not initiate any new research until this is completed.**
- **The project research team should increase its operations research skills so that these can be better integrated into other project activities.**
- **In Costa Rica, the project should be further developed within an operations research framework.**
- **The operations research project in Guatemala should be eliminated from the list of project activities since it is not appropriate for achieving project objectives and since there is no governmental support for it.**

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. INTRODUCTION

The Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama (INCAP) has completed two years of the planned five-year Technical Support for Food Assistance Program Project, No. 596-0116 (PROPAG). The Regional Office for Central America and Panama of AID (ROCAP) requested Community Systems Foundation (CSF) to evaluate the project to date. The original project design had scheduled three outside evaluations over the life of the project. The first was planned approximately one year into project implementation, and the second was planned as a midterm evaluation. Due to delays in the start up of the project and in the organization of the initial activities, ROCAP and INCAP decided to postpone the first evaluation and to merge it with the second one. Thus, this evaluation combines aspects of the two evaluations initially planned.

CSF was asked to provide a team to evaluate project planning, implementation and management of the project. Additionally, the team was asked to assess progress toward the project purpose and to make recommendations to INCAP and ROCAP on measures which could help assure that the project will meet its objectives.

The evaluation team consisted of a food and nutrition planner with extensive experience in food programs and food aid issues, an operations research expert with substantial experience with food assistance programs, and an education, training, communications expert, also with extensive food assistance program experience.

The members of the consultant team were James Pines, Jaime Benavente and Carol Adelman. James Pines had primary responsibility for evaluating the Planning and Coordination and Technical Assistance components of the project as well as for examining overall project management, administrative issues, and progress in achieving objectives. Jaime Benavente served as the team leader and was primarily responsible for assessing the progress in the Operations and Applied Research component. Carol Adelman had principal responsibility for evaluating the Training and Education and Information Dissemination components.

All three members of the evaluation team contributed to the conclusions and recommendations presented in this draft report.

B. HISTORY

Over the years, the INCAP has collaborated with its member countries in activities related to various food programs. The demand for technical assistance from INCAP had risen in recent years especially as requests for analysis of institutional capacity, management, training, and evaluation increased. In 1984 INCAP conducted a regional study of 65 food programs including those involving both supplementary and emergency feeding. The study identified the technical assistance, training and research requirements of these programs with a view to improving their design, management and evaluation.

As a result of this regional analysis and discussions with AID and WHO, a five year \$6.3 million project (PROPAG) was developed of which AID funded approximately 80 percent, INCAP some 15 percent and PAHO, five percent. Initial project preparatory activities began in July 1985 and consisted of familiarizing INCAP member countries with the goals of the project, planning the details of the various components and revising project plans according to suggestions by the numerous professionals involved in this phase of project activities. While there were various activities in all the project components in 1986, full project implementation did not begin until the end of 1986 and beginning of 1987.

C. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The implementation of the project is the responsibility of the Director of INCAP who in turn has delegated the project management to a coordinator in the Division of Food and Nutrition Planning. The coordinator has the overall responsibility for the different project components, including planning and coordination, technical cooperation, operations and applied research, training and education, and information dissemination. An internal technical committee within INCAP oversees the management and progress of the project. Another subregional technical committee, Comite Técnico Asesor Subregional (CTAS), is made up of different donor agencies and representatives from INCAP member countries. CTAS meets once a year to review progress and make suggestions for ongoing and new activities.

In addition to these formal organizational arrangements, the project has the support and assistance of other professionals on the INCAP staff. This support includes a wide range of expertise such as food technologists, epidemiologists, clinical nutritionists, chemists, and health and nutrition educators. Short term technical assistance is also available for developing specific aspects of the program.

D. THE PROJECT CONTEXT: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Evaluation of the PROPAG benefits from consideration of the Project context, which has influenced heavily both form and outcomes. Although the organization, orientation, and limitations of INCAP explain a great deal, the situations of the participating countries appear far more important for understanding what has happened. To fault the Project for failure to meet any specific activity target or intermediate goal would ignore the tremendous difficulties of planning or improving anything in the fragile and tumultuous Central American environment.

In addition to the non-existent or tenuous political stability in almost all the countries, deteriorating economic conditions have made the PROPAG task harder. Although financial constraints made ministries and agencies more responsive to reducing food program costs, they also stimulated resistance to useful but expensive research activities included in Project plans. The instability of government leadership and of agency staffs has also been a major problem for research and other components.

Countries' perceptions of INCAP also affect PROPAG performance. Though this early work explains much of the current national receptivity to PROPAG, the nutrition planning efforts of the 1970's, widely viewed as unrealistic and of little permanent value, did not initially help INCAP to be viewed as an effective provider of "practical" technical help in anything other than food technology. The Institute recognized correctly that offering management help would require a major effort to build credibility before countries would accept and respond. The Project title and funding source created some false impressions that INCAP was now "pushing" food aid, which also slowed country responsiveness.

The Project context also includes the dramatic differences among the countries. Costa Rica and Panama clearly enjoy socioeconomic and nutrition status far superior to the others. They also depend much less on food aid. Although the broadest purposes and goals of PROPAG can be regional in very general terms, country needs, interests, and capacities require distinctive agendas and approaches in each.

The differing aspects of USAID, Private Voluntary Organizations (e.g. CARE, Catholic Relief Services) and other donor (e.g., WFP, EEC) presence in the countries also affect the Project. The INCAP role contemplated in the Project Paper required the capacity to accommodate, coordinate and influence diverse in-

dependent interests, while providing little leverage, other than technical skill and concern for rationality, for doing so.

While national interests in improved food security, and concern for escalating food program costs, made the Project a response to "felt needs", country contexts and the nature of the program task presented a formidable challenge. Food programs are politically sensitive and often involve bitter "turf" problems. Their frequent welfare orientation produces resistance to evaluation, integration with development planning, and other key contributions anticipated for the PROPAG.

Within INCAP, the Project also faced major constraints. Like the countries, the Institute's absorptive capacity has been taxed by the AID health push in Central America. Another new project presented intra-organization administration and coordination problems that required special attention.

The PROPAG called for hiring of specialists previously unknown in INCAP. New engineers, management consultants, and information systems professionals had to be integrated into an institution dominated by physicians and other health professionals. Recruitment difficulties have also been a problem.

Furthermore, an organization still characterized by primary interest in clinical/nutrition, and especially research in it, now proposed to devote a substantial budget to improving coordination and operation of food programs. Even in AID, those interested in the role of food programs encounter many obstacles to receiving attention within the agency. INCAP continues to seek a balance between research and application. The related problem of how far to broaden beyond health is also being addressed.

INCAP had nobody on staff familiar with the day-to-day details of feeding programs or the separate "culture" of the agencies and individuals who distribute food. This remains a gap, though new staff bring considerable knowledge of the problems food programs share with businesses. As a result, some PROPAG discussions seem very "academic" to those familiar with the world of food program workers and monitors. Efforts to know that world better are still needed.

The evaluation report should be viewed in relation to the difficulties of the Project context and concept. Suggestions for improvement are not intended to disparage what has been done but to help PROPAG be even more effective in especially challenging circumstances.

E. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology was influenced heavily by the institution-building goals of the project and by the relatively short period during which it has been operating at anything like full strength. Because survival of both the PROPAG and the national coordinating agencies encouraged by it depends on the strength of linkages to donors, individual ministries and political leaders, the evaluation approach gave high priority to examining perceptions among these and other groups. Since technical cooperation had not been given long enough to make possible much measurable improvement in operations, the evaluation had to look more intensively at the nature of consulting relationships, seeking to assess the likelihood of eventual results.

The approach also emphasized the distinctive nature of each country situation. PROPAG activities can be reviewed in general terms, but exploration of outcomes requires careful delineation of each country's context and baseline. The wisdom of the project's selection of activities could not be determined a priori or in the abstract.

Document review played an unusually large part in the evaluation. The presence of an information component made this inevitable, but the project's heavy reliance on seminar reports and other materials to promote national responses, also influenced the approach. Evaluation of promotional success, a set of outcomes quite different from ultimate project results, required development of indicators, such as initiation of national activities and the number of requests for consulting help, to make judgements about likely future developments. Documents produced by the project had to be evaluated not only for substantive quality but also for their effectiveness in motivating national responses.

The evaluation method sought to identify whether the "stage had been set" for achievement of project goals. This intermediate, though indispensable, outcome required initial explicit attention. Only after determining this aspect of PROPAG status did the methodology pass to consideration of more conventional performance outcomes.

The approach also involved far more attention to adjustments that could improve performance and results than to placing blame for past delays and mishaps. Accepting the experimental nature of PROPAG and the lack of precedent for what it seeks to achieve among food programs, the evaluation looks primarily at the reasonableness of initial approaches and at the project response when some of these proved ineffective.

The methodology for evaluating the research component involves review of both the quality of research design and execution, and the relationship of research to other project components and to ultimate achievement of PROPAG goals.

II. EVALUATION

A. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Whatever earlier difficulties may have been, PROPAG administration now functions well. Intra-project coordination is linked to country strategies and operational improvement needs. Documentation of plans, activities, and outcomes is, if anything, excessive. ROCAP relations and coordination between the Project and the rest of INCAP have, after some initial difficulties, been worked out. Staff from other divisions are called on and respond as needed, with costing handled adequately. Formal presentation of the Project to the Evaluation Team, and administrative services during the visit, were very professional. Staff exhibited considerable enthusiasm, discussed their work intelligently, and appeared to function as a team.

The main issue which still had not been resolved concerns the relation of Research to the rest of the Project. The independent agenda for Research prevents those involved with this component from integrating closely with the activities of others. Coupled with the problems encountered in initiating the very substantial research activities proposed, it is clear that continuing to deal with the Research component should remain the primary administrative concern.

Another administrative issue relates to the role of the long-term advisor scheduled for assignment to the Project. After nearly two years of independent operation, staff appear to feel little need for the programmed assistance. It will be very important that the advisor treads slowly and lightly, taking care not to disturb the current staffing and organizational arrangements that took so long to achieve. His major contribution should be to provide a "reality check" on any PROPAG and INCAP tendencies to become too sophisticated for the world of food programs. This world, for example, often resists research and evaluation, making necessary a very practical orientation among those seeking to encourage them. The advisor must also accommodate to a PROPAG culture that appears to place a high value on participatory decision-making. This calls for considerable patience and capacity to accept compromise.

The PROPAG appears to recognize that multi-country efforts must now give way to implementation of action plans with individual countries. Guidelines developed so far (e.g., for MCH and School Feeding) are so general that they are

of limited use as guidance in particular situations. Their development served a useful purpose by identifying the elements that must be addressed in such programs, and the manuals disseminate some widely accepted principles, but they are in no sense "cookbooks". This is clarification, not criticism, since "guidelines" are intended to guide not to direct.

Why it took so long to recruit Project staff is not clear. The Project required people with skills new to INCAP and this delayed recruitment. The early departure of Victor Valverde, who played an important role in design and initial execution, added to delay since his departure also left a procedural vacuum. His excellent communication with ROCAP was not easy to replace. The demoralizing effect of Valverde's unexpected death must also be considered. He had maintained an interest in, and involvement with, PROPAG.

There was little to indicate that the current team is new or had been hard to find. They are well qualified, articulate, and show little hesitation about their roles and duties. Though the combined weight of ROCAP, INCAP, and PAHO administrative burdens may have caused delays, the result comes close to justifying them.

The project staff travel extensively and made no complaints about administrative services related to this. The well-funded Project also enjoys excellent secretarial and data processing services.

The record, showing 182 consulting weeks provided instead of the 144 programmed for July, 1985 through March, 1987, suggests that recruitment of consultants has not been a serious problem. Assistance in training and operations research, for example, has been readily available. Only the delays in bringing the proposed long-term advisor on board seem inordinate.

Although Project documents distinguish "components" from "líneas de trabajo", the terms are not always used consistently. The "líneas de trabajo" initially included a) Planning and Coordination, b) Improvement of Operations, and c) Technology Transfer. Recent documents subsume technology transfer under improvement of operations and add community participation as the third "línea" or program direction. Project goals, such as formation of planning entities or better inventory management, stem from the program directions and are achieved through coordinated activities of the four components; a) Training, b) Technical Assistance, c) Research, and d) Dissemination of Scientific-Technical Information. Strictly speaking, there are no Planning or Operations Components, though the terms are sometimes used when describing a collection of outcomes to be reviewed. The Evaluation includes review of the individual components, where necessary, and assessment of their combined impact on goal of the major program directions, beginning with Program Planning and Coordination.

B. COORDINATING AGENCIES AND FOOD PROGRAM STRATEGY

The Planning and Coordination "component", which includes technical cooperation activities addressed to this "línea de trabajo," seeks to develop mechanisms or institutions in the countries, that will coordinate food programs and improve strategic planning of them to improve impact and integrate food-related activities more effectively with other development work. The Project has carried out the activities described in various planning documents with high fidelity to the plans, including the following:

In November, 1985, the Regional Technical Support Committee (CTAS) was established, comprised of high-level representatives from each country and from donor and voluntary agencies. Meeting annually, in December of 1985 and 1986, the Committee has played a useful role by keeping the Project informed of country priorities and reactions to the Project. It has also been an important motivational tool for PROPAG, by encouraging national commitment to continued Project involvement. The CTAS also forms part of Project evaluation, since the meetings also involve assessment of activities and results in each country.

An initial Regional Seminar, held in Guatemala in July, 1986, became a key factor in building national coordination and planning institutions. It also served to assemble substantial information about food programs in the countries, since each was asked to make a presentation about national activities and problems. Follow-up workshops in Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras reinforced the Regional Seminar and the PROPAG has continued to assist these countries and Guatemala in planning and coordination. There has also been follow-up with five regional and 20 national meetings with donor and voluntary agencies.

Eight of eleven "ad-hoc groups" meetings and reports programmed have been held. These were intended to bring together experts in various aspects of food programs, who would prepare a document to be used as a guide to the general principles and problems of each area. Three other regional workshops, on MCH, school feeding, and nutrition education were also held. The Project also took ten Central Americans on an observation trip to Colombia.

All of these activities contributed to development of national interest, understanding, and commitment to further work on food programs. They also assisted development of action plans for achievement of specific goals in each country.

The PROPAG has already led to significant improvements in the planning of food programs in four countries. Though their representatives have participated in Project regional seminars, Panama and Nicaragua have not received technical assistance directed toward establishment of coordinating agencies and development

by them of PAG strategies. In Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, results vary, though all show increased sensitivity to the need for better food programming and improved operations. In Guatemala, where "indefinición institucional" (lack of institutional definition) and political instability have made identification of the primary client agency difficult, progress lags. In the other three countries, where the client was easier to identify, PROPAG has built continuing relationships that have produced visible steps toward coordination of food programs, planning of food aid, and integration of programs with related health and agricultural activities.

Without idealizing the current situation, attitudes within INCAP and in the countries contrast dramatically with those found when the Institute tried to promote multisectoral nutrition planning during the 1970's. During that period, the Division of Applied Nutrition followed the conventional wisdom and tried unilaterally to involve many different sectors in politically unrealistic planning, which the countries resisted strongly. This time, by starting with national felt needs for improvement in a limited set of specific activities, and spending almost a year to establish INCAP credibility and involve the countries in planning, there is much less resistance and far greater acceptance of the Institute role.

Although the initial entry point of the PAG (Group Feeding Programs) soon led to broader focus, such as planning of all food aid, linking PAG's to food security planning, and relation of food programs to health planning, PROPAG nowhere seeks the excessive involvement that discredited nutrition planning years ago. Furthermore, activities in each country start from the prevailing situation and concerns, instead of insisting on adherence to a preordained blueprint or model.

One may question or lament the two years that passed before commencement of "real" technical assistance, but all the "ad-hoc group" meetings, regional seminars, CTAS conferences, and PROPAG planning served important purposes. The countries are collaborating with the Project, taking it seriously, and often responding. For example, national seminars in Honduras and El Salvador have resulted in formation of coordinating entities and statements of policies by them. A similar seminar is scheduled for Guatemala in August. Costa Rica's Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Policy (SEPAN) works closely with the Project and has taken steps to restructure the national school feeding program with PROPAG help.

It is a long way from policy statements to concrete actions for improving program operations to (e.g.) reduce food losses, but the links between the planning activities and those addressed to improved operations seem promising. Although the need to respond to country priorities, such as food technology in Panama, forced compromise with the early plans and the theories of systematic management improvement, it has already helped to get PROPAG "into the system". If consultants and trainers can demonstrate their value, broader management improvement should follow.

The Project has limited technical cooperation well by passing to other INCAP divisions and projects those requests that go much beyond PAG matters. Although the lines are not defined rigidly, there seems little likelihood that PROPAG will spread itself too thinly. The detailed planning of technical cooperation, now in force, supports this conclusion.

C. IMPROVING OPERATIONS (THE TECHNICAL/COOPERATION COMPONENT)

The Technical Cooperation component has included 182 weeks of consulting help from Project inception to March 31, 1987. Table 1 shows the distribution by country. Consulting help has been directed primarily to individual programs and, within them, on specific management problems, identified through discussion between PROPAG staff and coordinating groups. Much of the effectiveness of this component can be attributed to the previous contacts between INCAP staff and the country programs. Many programs include graduates or former INCAP professionals, often at senior decision-making levels. Because the clients and subjects of technical assistance have been chosen in collaboration, client responsiveness has been excellent. PROPAG continues to provide services only while response continues at an acceptable level.

TABLE 1
SEMANAS/PROFESIONAL DE PROPAG PARA ASISTENCIA TECNICA
A NIVEL DE LOS PAISES
PERIODO JULIO 1985 - MARZO 1987

PAISES	Semanas Profesional Efectivo en los Paises			
	July-Dec 1985	Jan-Dec 1986	Jan-Mar 1987	TOTAL PERIOD
COSTA RICA	5.0	38.4	12.1 /1	55.6 /1
EL SALVADOR	4.0	8.4	8.4	20.8
GUATEMALA	8.0	40.6	21.0 /1	69.6 /1
HONDURAS	4.0	9.2	5.6	18.8
PANAMA	3.0	7.8	6.4	17.2
TOTAL	24.0	104.4 /1	53.6	182.0 /1

Although the Project originally contemplated emphasis on short-term technical help, the model evolving includes longer-term relationships. This stems partly from the need to understand more fully the problems identified as requiring attention. It also comes from the need to continue assistance through implementation, instead of simply presenting recommendations. The PROPAG consultants have already become key figures in, for example, school feeding programs in Costa Rica and Guatemala, and in the Office of the Primera Dama (First Lady) in Panama.

Much of the technical assistance to date has been concerned with identifying and understanding specific problems. The PROPAG consultants include engineers, information system specialists, and management trainers. They contrast sharply with other more research-oriented professionals working in the Project and elsewhere within INCAP. Their very practical orientation matches well the Project Paper's description of how technical cooperation should function, though it has created a need, within PROPAG and INCAP, to strike an appropriate balance between research and application. This has not yet been achieved.

The "management consulting" part of PROPAG exhibits a keen sense of the rational in relation to food programs, while acknowledging the practical need to accommodate to political realities. Staff now have more requests for help than they can fill. Programming of activities follows priorities of country, program, and subject of help that link closely to broader needs identified by the countries. The consultant spending six months helping the Costa Rican Ministry of Education assume responsibility for school feeding, for example, was assigned only after broader strategy discussions had identified the need. Technical assistance to El Salvador on integration of Title I and Title II activities also illustrates response to a country priority. A new Minister of Education in Guatemala, long familiar with INCAP, asked for help in a major reprogramming of school feeding. PROPAG immediately assigned an engineer who, recognizing an important opportunity, also helped the Ministry with logistics of a new school supplies project that complements the Feeding Program.

The rationalizing and professionalizing of food programs that now seems to be underway cannot proceed on all fronts simultaneously. Nevertheless, the momentum and enthusiasm encountered in the Project will inevitably produce some significant measurable results. Relating specific improvements, engendered with Project assistance, to subsequent positive outcomes (e.g., reduced food losses, lower costs) will benefit the Project in relation to the countries and to ROCAP. Some modest applied research to document results of this kind should be encouraged.

All of the components, except research, are coordinated well in the effort to improve specific programs. In Honduras, for example, national training workshops, planned with Project help, will extend initial higher level efforts to the field staffs who must bring about any improvements. The PROPAG information

component supports and reinforces training, which continues to be influenced by earlier and current technical cooperation. Action plans, in Honduras and elsewhere, reflect a diligent attempt to link PROPAG and other INCAP activities in relation to well-defined goals.

Improvement of operations can and should proceed independently of the coordination and strategy work. This protects the project against the clear possibility that these broader activities will yield little result, for reasons beyond PROPAG control. By taking advantage of targets of opportunity, for example by helping Panama primarily with food technology, the project builds the credibility and acceptance that will increase the likelihood of more effective work on strategy and coordination.

Because the project works with various programs in a range of matters, evaluation of outcomes cannot usually look only at "improved management and operations". It will be necessary, in each country, to delineate activities and look for specific results that can reasonably be attributed to them. At the same time, when a PROPAG advisor has a continuing intensive relationship, as with school feeding in Costa Rica and Guatemala, it may be possible to attribute broad and general program improvement to the project.

The best intermediate evidence of success, for both the technical cooperation component and the operational improvement program direction, is the excellent demand for consulting services. The project has stimulated interest, and responded to it, far beyond most expectations. Although the response may appear to be less systematic than the Project Paper anticipated, this is due primarily to the vagaries that influence country requests. If a friend of INCAP had not become Minister of Education, for example, the project's role in school feeding would be quite different. If the Ministry of Natural Resources in Honduras had not had a food program staff member who understood well the Project's value, the current proposal for making a videocassette would not have emerged.

The technical cooperation component has changed dramatically much of the INCAP approach to helping the countries. The PROPAG staff, perhaps because their experience differ from earlier INCAP professionals, appear to see themselves more as "consultants" than as "experts". As a result, they become more involved with their "clients" and do less prescribing of the "right" way to do things. This is a very positive change for a project that purports to be useful and practical at operating levels. It also suggests that long-term consulting relationships offer more promise than visits of experts, since they enable the consultant to assist implementation and practical revision of plans. PROPAG interest in "facilitators" (resident consultants) stems partly from this conclusion.

D. TRAINING, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

In the original project paper, training, education and information dissemination was a separate project category. The decision was made by the project managers to eliminate training and information dissemination as a distinct area and integrate these activities into all aspects of the program. While information dissemination is a formal part of all project components, the training and education activity is dealt with under the general project direction of improving the operations of food programs. The PROPAG has identified the training and education objective under this area as improving the technical quality of personnel at the national level who are responsible for the formulation, general management and evaluation of food programs.

Before discussing specific training and education activities, it is useful to review the recommendations which came out of the two meetings of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (CTAS). The first meeting was held in December 1985 before the project began. The second meeting was held one year later and provided an initial review with recommendations for program revisions. In addition to general recommendations concerning the importance of coordinating training activities within the project and among national governmental entities in the different countries, the Committee made several specific recommendations. These recommendations called for training activities which were not originally included in the project paper. The first was for INCAP to assist countries in developing national training plans. The second was for INCAP to identify the financial resources to undertake training at the national and local levels.

In the second CTAS meeting, some additional recommendations were made. First, the project should use other training methodologies besides just courses and seminars. Approaches such as in-service and on-site training were suggested. In addition, it was recommended to include training programs for Food for Work programs as well as Maternal Child Health and School Feeding programs. Another suggestion was to work closely with the central training offices in the different participating countries in order to better coordinate training efforts. A final recommendation requested PROPAG to conduct the workshop on displaced persons and emergencies in collaboration with the PAHO emergency medical office.

Thus, there were additional training activities added on both before and during the first year of full project implementation.

Workshops

Twelve workshops were originally planned under the project. The workshops cover six topics including:

- Food assistance for displaced persons or emergencies;
- Identification and design of food assistance programs;
- Organization and management of food assistance programs;
- Food management and preservation for food assistance programs;
- Techniques and methodologies for educational activities in food assistance programs;
- Information and evaluation systems for food assistance programs.

Three workshops have been completed. The first was held in May of 1986 and covered the identification and design of maternal child health and school feeding programs. Some 30 people from all the countries attended this two week session. Most of the attendees were actual directors of feeding programs from various public Ministries and private organizations. Some of these groups included Ministries of Education, Health, Labor and Social Welfare, Planning, Interior and Natural Resources and CARITAS.

Instructors were recruited from the Central American Institute of Public Administration (IPAC) in order to provide planning and design expertise to the project attendees. These management experts were familiar with the public agencies represented at the workshop and they were given background material on the nature of food programs and the specific problems associated with them in Central America. The Education and Training Coordinator explained that INCAP made the decision to use ICAP personnel as trainers even though they did not have experience in managing food programs since INCAP did not have the requisite management expertise. The Training and Education Coordinator acknowledged that it would have been useful to have some experienced food managers from existing food programs such as those managed by CARE and CRS/CARITAS, but the relationships with these PVOs have not been well enough established for this to occur. The coordinator said, however, that she had discussed this matter with a representative from CARE/New York and hoped that the situation would improve.

The second workshop was held in September/October of 1986 and covered the management of food programs. The two week session again involved high level participants, many of whom were working as program directors. Most of the major Ministries were represented at this workshop. The Training and Education Coordinator has developed a concept of training packages. This means that various levels of program managers will receive a package of training skills over the life of the project. For those at the program director level, the first two workshops in planning and management plus another planned workshop constitute the package of training skills necessary for their functions. Other packages will be formulated for individuals in mid-level and more technical functions in food programs. The ad-

vantages of this approach are that concentrated training can be provided to program directors. The disadvantages are that high level personnel have to be pulled away from their responsibilities for approximately 6 weeks over the period of one year and, further, that not all directors can attend all three workshops.

The third workshop covered educational technology and was attended by personnel from food programs at the regional and local levels of the Central American countries. The main topics covered were different teaching methodologies such as how to define problems with community participation, simulation models and other education methods such as dramatic presentations.

All three workshops appear to have been very carefully planned, with course objectives and components well documented. There was considerable time and effort put into the training plans which was evidenced by extensive teaching/training manuals for each workshop. Prior to the workshops fairly detailed survey questionnaires had been sent to the workshop participants. These returned questionnaires provided useful information on who the attendees were, what previous training they had, and the type of food program they operated. Thus, the trainers could better gear their teaching to the experience and education level of the workshop attendees.

The participants worked in groups and developed actual plans and budgets for food projects (see Attachment A). This involved working in the evenings as well. In addition, students developed teaching methodologies relevant to their own experiences. In several cases they revised methodologies developed by the Task Force meetings under the project (see Attachment B).

The trainers designed two evaluations for the workshops. One was an ongoing assessment of participants during the workshop so that the course leaders could help them throughout the two week session. Another was a course evaluation completed by the participants at the end of the workshop. This format was revised several times but some useful information was obtained on all three workshops. In general the participants rated the workshops as very useful. The main criticisms were related to course management, i.e. that they were worked too hard, that the project should have planned more social activities, and that the courses should start more punctually. Substantive criticisms were limited, i.e. there should be more of a focus on community participation and on the process of group dynamics.

There had been reservations about the teaching approach used -- a non-didactic style involving group participation and problem solving. However, most of the participants gained from the approach and thought it should be continued. According to the Training and Education Coordinator, the participants benefitted greatly from being able to meet others working in the same field, and to learn from each others' experiences. This was especially so with participants from Honduras

and El Salvador whose food programs are less developed than those in Costa Rica and Panama.

Several recommendations for future workshops were made in the PROPAG "Avances y Perspectivas Abril 1987". These include: 1) shifting workshops from the subregional to national levels; 2) doing more training at the regional and local levels within countries; and, 3) incorporating more community development training in the workshops. These recommendations follow a general trend in project activities to do more at the national level. Project Coordinators believe, and justifiably so, that the training can now be more effective when geared to specific country situations. For this reason, the Training and Education Coordinator recommends that the remaining food management and educational technology workshops be conducted at the national level. The savings in travel and per diem costs would make it possible to conduct national workshops in all the countries if requested, according to the coordinator.

The only subregional conference planned will be on Food for Work programs, and this will combine the planning, management and evaluation training into one 4-week workshop instead of doing these separately. The workshop for displaced persons and emergencies was postponed so that it could be coordinated with PAHO activities. Plans are underway to coordinate the remaining evaluation seminar with the INCAP ORT and Growth Monitoring project and to conduct a joint evaluation workshop.

Another workshop was conducted in Costa Rica in response to a request for technical assistance in the area of food management and supervision. Costa Rica has requested a second workshop in menu planning. These were not planned workshops under the original project paper, but come under the function of providing technical assistance in training to countries requesting it. It should be pointed out that "training" is occurring outside of the workshops such as in this example of training under the Technical Assistance portion of the project. Similar training in the form of valuable exchanges of ideas and improved skills is occurring in the numerous planning conferences as well.

In sum, the pattern in the development of the workshop activity under the training component has been sound -- to integrate it with other INCAP projects and functions and to change the emphasis from subregional to country level projects. These are appropriate and useful directions at this stage of project implementation, given the progress and interest among countries in improving their food programs.

A shift in emphasis from subregional to national level workshops should not ignore the utility of the regional workshops in the sharing of problems and solutions. It is appropriate, as the PROPAG intends to continue with some subregional workshops.

Scholarships

This activity under training (called "Tutoriales") has been developed under other project components. For example, a Panamanian food technologist visited INCAP for an observation tour and another food technologist came from Costa Rica to observe INCAP work in developing the school biscuit for the national school feeding program in Guatemala. While these scholarships have been managed under the planning component, the Training and Education Coordinator will be more involved in setting up schedules, learning objectives and evaluations for all visitors to INCAP.

National Training Plans and Resources Identification

Additional recommendations emanating from the CTAS meetings called for INCAP to develop national training plans with countries and to identify financial resources to help fund these and other training programs. Excellent progress has been made in this training activity. In Honduras the Training and Education Coordinator visited the country in March 1986. She gathered information on training needs from nine different food assistance programs. As a result of meeting with the Directors of these programs, a training committee was established to coordinate nutrition training activities. During subsequent visits, she reviewed the national training plan developed by the committee. This plan resulted in seven training courses of which the first has already taken place in Honduras. The first training session dealt with common management problems of food programs. The process and seminar have been aided by the INCAP representative in Honduras who has a Masters in Public Administration. A field visit to Honduras confirmed the utility of this successful activity. All those interviewed who were involved with the training program believed it had been a useful and positive activity.

The INCAP Education and Training Coordinator has also been successful in identifying funding for these seminars. She obtained roughly \$35,000 from AID/Honduras and \$6,000 from the WFP to sponsor the entire training program.

In April 1987 the Training and Education Coordinator visited the Ministry of Interior in El Salvador. The Government had requested assistance in designing a program for local promotoras and regional supervisors. She talked with program personnel from five regions as well as the Vice Minister of Social Welfare and developed recommendations for a training plan. The plan involves using the expertise of the five regional supervisors to develop guidelines and a manual for management of Food for Peace commodities. In addition she requested assistance from the WFP, and they agreed to provide an expert in community organization to assist program activities. The Ministry of Interior has agreed to make available existing AID funds of approximately \$60,000 from their budget to develop and implement the training program.

In Costa Rica, the Training and Education Coordinator worked with the Ministry of Education which is in charge of the school feeding program. The program has a strong infrastructure with 20 supervisors at the regional level and cooks in each school as well as the active involvement of teachers, school directors and parents. She has designed a program of training for the supervisors which will enable them to better identify and solve problems in the school feeding programs in each school. The program will involve teaching the supervisors to evaluate behavior change among those responsible for the local programs. She is in the process of identifying funds for financing this training program.

Observation Visits

Under the project, three observation visits with 10 people each had been planned. Two have been completed, although one of these involved only one person visiting INCAP. The other visit was to Colombia to observe two income generating projects involving rural cooperatives. The Training and Education Coordinator organized this trip and took nine people for a one week visit to Colombia. While the trip was extremely interesting, the project coordinator did not believe it was the most effective expenditure of funds. Several people came who were not directly responsible for projects, the trip was expensive, and the logistics of managing the group were very time consuming. The trip itself was rated very highly by the participants, however.

The second observation visit involved one person coming to INCAP to visit a project managed by the Ministry of Development. The Project Coordinator believes that, interesting though they may be, group observation visits are overly expensive for the benefits received. She believes that observation visits should be limited to individual visits with a more structured schedule, and continue to include the possibility of visits to model programs outside of Central America. The coordinator also believes that with the development of training materials, including audio visual, some of these projects are better shown to people in their countries in a more cost-effective manner.

Other Training Accomplishments

In addition to the above activities, there have been various achievements in the area of training and education which were not anticipated in the project paper. First, the entire relationship with the Central American Institute for Public Administration (ICAP) was not envisioned. This proved to be a valuable one in terms of drawing upon ICAP's years of management expertise. Indeed, one of the trainers from ICAP has become permanently associated with the project. The workshops proved to be a learning resource for the PROPAG project management, many of whom were not experienced in the details of managing food programs. They

learned from the various directors of food programs who attended the workshops and discussed the problems of managing food programs.

Another unanticipated consequence of the training, according to INCAP, was that different Ministries from the same country became more aware of each other's programs and problems and, in many cases, a useful dialogue was initiated for the first time at the project workshops. Workshop participants also became much more aware of other assistance possibilities from INCAP and they gained a much wider perspective of food aid in general.

E. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The information dissemination coordinator has been with the project for approximately one year. His office is located in the INCAP Information Dissemination Center which handles library activities, writing and editorial functions and information dissemination for INCAP and other specific projects. For example, there is an information dissemination unit as part of another ROCAP funded project, the ORT, Growth Monitoring and Education Program. Thus, INCAP is already involved in a number of information dissemination activities including its own newsletter and another one under the ORT project. There is ample opportunity for the integration of the PROPAG information activities with these other activities.

The existence of these other projects led to an initial decision by the project managers that the new food programs project should not establish a new center as called for in the project paper. Rather, they decided to establish a new function for food programs which would be integrated into the existing information center. In this way, resources could be shared and duplication avoided. Examples of this coordination are discussed later under the section on Project Coordination.

Identification/ Classification of Bibliographic Material

This activity has been satisfactorily completed. Using INCAP library materials, outside sources, and personal acquisitions of INCAP personnel, over 400 documents have been identified and collected. These documents are either directly or indirectly related to food program planning, management, evaluation and training. Some 320 of these documents have been classified into a system which will be useful for project managers. The classification system, for example, is divided into types of programs (MCH, FFW or School Feeding), planning, evaluation, or administrative documents. The titles are computerized, and the system allows the

project managers to retrieve specific types of documents for different activities and persons.

Identification/Classification of Users

This activity has also been successfully completed although there will be continual updates of new users as the project proceeds. Over 600 persons in the Central American region with responsibilities related to food programs have been identified under this activity. They have been classified into a useful system which identifies them by their position, nature of agency (whether public or PVO), and type of agency (education, agriculture, or health, etc.). These names have also been computerized as part of a system which enables all project personnel to retrieve names for inviting to courses, sending material or selection for potential research projects. (See Appendix C for a sample of this computerized system). The two data bases -- documents and users -- enable the coordinators to link food program personnel with different specialties to the appropriate types of available documents.

Identification of Information Centers

Twenty-six information centers in the different Central American countries have been identified under the project. The ultimate objective according to the Information Dissemination Coordinator, is a good one. It is to equip these centers with the same lists of people and bibliographic material now collected in INCAP, so that these centers can be the central point for information distribution to country individuals and institutions. The Centers identified represent a diverse group including national libraries, different libraries of health and nutrition organizations, and information centers in agriculture institutes. Because of delays due to the earthquake, only one center has been identified in El Salvador. The project coordinator will be completing this task this year.

Distribution of Documents

Some 2,500 documents have been sent to country food program personnel over the last year. This distribution has consisted of 12 documents sent out to an average of 225 persons. The documents include reports on the PROPAG program, the PROPAG newsletter, and reports on different country projects. A considerable amount of work has gone into revising, editing and translating some of these documents. This has been necessary because some of them are not in a useable form for project managers and approximately 50 percent of the documents are in English whereas over 95 percent of the users speak Spanish. Five documents have been translated to date and there are plans for another 10 to 15 to be translated in 1987. Given the number of available documents on the subject of food programs

and the Spanish-speaking constituency, there is room for additional documents translation under the project.

PROPAG Newsletter

The first newsletter came out in January 1987. There will be three newsletters per year sent to the identified food program managers and technical personnel. The newsletter will explain everything PROPAG is doing including technical assistance, training, and research. It also lists bibliographic materials obtained by PROPAG. Various quotes and stimulating passages from some of these documents will be reprinted in the newsletter to encourage readers to read these articles or documents. The newsletter is well executed and appears to be a useful information tool for the entire project. Every effort should be made to assure that the latest AID materials, including information on feeding programs, conferences and training opportunities are included in the newsletter.

Interchange of Project Experiences

Under this activity, interchanges of project experiences are being promoted. To date the approach has been to develop audio visual materials. An excellent film on the School Feeding Program in Costa Rica has been produced by the Information Dissemination Coordinator. The design and editing of the videocassette was done under PROPAG with the camera equipment and cameraman contributed by Costa Rica. The purpose of the film was to document the problems and accomplishments of a feeding program so that it could serve as a technical documentary film for other program managers both in Costa Rica and other countries. Thus, the video is not designed for public television consumption, but rather to be used as a sensitization and training tool for technical and policy level personnel.

The film was very well received in Costa Rica. Reports of numerous requests for viewings from the Ministry of Planning in addition to the responsible Ministries suggest that it is a useful mechanism for intergovernmental sensitization to the problems and achievements of food programs. Moreover, the Minister of Education has sent a letter to the Minister of Health citing the film and requesting that another one be made on another program. Thus, the film is receiving high level government attention as well. According to the coordinator, the film led to the establishment of an integrated food aid committee in Costa Rica.

Another video production for Honduras has been planned. This will document a Food for Work Program in which agriculture production is emphasized. The design work has been completed for this and production will begin in June 1987. While audio visual materials were not discussed in the project paper, this method appears to be a cost effective way of achieving project objectives. The Information Dissemination Coordinator estimates that one video costs approximately

\$2500 of project funds. This can be compared to considerable higher costs in the United States for producing a 35 minute film. Moreover, videos appear to be an effective mode of communications for busy policy makers and other high level governmental officials. Most of the Ministries and individuals have access to video cassette machines so that the medium is a viable one. The Costa Rica film has been distributed to all the countries in both VHS and Beta formats.

The coordinator would like to produce films or slide productions for each of the countries. In addition, he sees the need for additional audio visual materials dealing with project management and training. For example, slide presentations with and without sound could be developed as training materials for project managers. The approach would be to document a successful program and then disseminate the results through either film or slides. This same type of documentation and dissemination could be done for planning programs as well. While the information dissemination unit has developed graphic materials for the training courses, much more could be done in the area of audio-visual materials. To achieve project objectives, this medium can be very useful, especially for sensitizing political and managerial leadership and in training activities. There is also the possibility of documenting successful experiences in countries outside of Central America. Given the expense of observation visits versus technical documentaries, this approach should be explored.

Evaluation

A formal evaluation of the information dissemination component is planned for the end of 1987. This will consist of detailed questionnaires with an attempt to measure the utility of the documents to the users. There has already been informal feedback, however, from the users of the information. The case of the letter exchanged between the Ministers in Costa Rica is an example of the high level attention and utility of the film produced by the PROPAG.

According to the coordinator, he receives acknowledgement letters that the material has been received from roughly 30 to 40 percent of recipients. Additionally, PROPAG has established a system whereby project personnel inquire as to whether materials have been received when they travel to different countries on their various missions. This appears to be working as evidenced by one note from a PROPAG manager who had found out that some materials had not been received by the appropriate people in two of the countries. She had written a note to the coordinator indicating which people had not received the materials. In both cases, the coordinator knew the reason why and made changes in his mailing list. As further informal evaluation, the coordinator visits the various national level documentation centers himself to see who is using the materials he sent.

These informal evaluation methods are all helpful. It would be useful, however, to conduct a simple evaluation of basic user information -- if and how the materials have been received and a rough indication of their utility. Such a simple

one page questionnaire sent to the information users could provide more structured information on any problems so they could be corrected before having to wait for a full evaluation at the end of the year.

Coordination of Training and Education and Information Dissemination Activities

There are three principal ways that the project training and information dissemination activities are coordinated. The first is within the project itself, the second is with other INCAP training programs and functions, and the third is with organizations outside of INCAP. In all three areas good coordination has been developed and is contributing to the achievement of Project objectives.

Some elements of intra-project coordination have already been discussed. Other areas of coordination within the PROPAG itself appear to have been real and useful to PROPAG outcomes. For example, the mailing lists prepared by the information dissemination unit have been used by other project coordinators to select attendees for seminars and workshops. In addition, the information dissemination unit has prepared graphics and other materials for the training workshops. There has also been coordination between the training component and the planning component of the project. The Training and Education Coordinator has used reports of different Task Force Groups convened by the planning coordinator in her workshops. The workshop participants have used these group reports on maternal child health, food management and preservation, community participation, and school feeding to assist them in devising teaching methodologies for different responsibilities in food programs. One of the most important collaborative aspects of the project is the sharing of problems encountered in the workshops as participants talk about their various programs. The Training and Education Coordinator has shared these with those working in the planning activity of the project.

The second major area of coordination within INCAP -- warrants some discussion as this collaboration appears to be an important contribution to the success of training and information dissemination activities under the project.

Under INCAP organization, the Division of Human Resource Training and Development assists the PROPAG training component. This Division maintains communication with all training programs in INCAP. In this regard they set the norms and standards for training activities involving considerations of trainee selection, certification, and program evaluation. This Division also provides in-service training to INCAP employees and assistance to the various academic programs. This Division will continue to provide support to the PROPAG in standardizing training methods. INCAP has recently designed a human resource development project which is to be funded by Swiss foreign aid. The project will assist human resource development operations in different Central American countries and has

a budget of approximately \$2.5 million over a five year period. This new effort in human resource development provides an opportunity for coordination at the national level between this Division and the Food Programs Project.

The Food and Nutrition Education project, funded by French foreign aid at \$363,000 for one year, is directly complementary to the PROPAG. The INCAP project manager has assisted the PROPAG Training and Education Coordinator in developing the workshop on educational methodologies. In addition, this project is conducting a study of inter and intra-household food distribution whose results will be shared with PROPAG through workshops and seminars. The areas for cooperation in the future include: 1) working together to develop training modules on how to make school feeding programs include more nutrition education; 2) how to incorporate more community participation in maternal child health feeding programs; 3) sharing education methods; and, 4) identifying training opportunities for each other.

The two projects do not duplicate efforts since the PROPAG is covering logistics and management of food programs while the Food and Nutrition Education Program is developing the content of nutrition messages and the most effective teaching methodologies for these. Thus, PROPAG can benefit from what the other project develops. It can contribute to the other project by identifying food assistance programs which are in need of better nutrition education messages and teaching methodologies. Whereas there has been coordination among the planning, training and education and information dissemination components of the project, there does not appear to have been much interaction between these components and the research component of the project.

Both the training/education and information dissemination activities coordinate with the INCAP project on ORT, Growth Monitoring and Education. Information dissemination is the most logical area for collaboration, and the two projects are sharing mailing lists and distribution networks already. In the future they plan to do joint mailings when materials are going to the same people and to build on each others' lists. The person responsible for disseminating information under the ORT, Growth Monitoring and Education project has a large mailing list of some 6000 individuals and 200 institutions. She sends out a newsletter and individual materials as well. She was not aware of what types of materials under the PROPAG might be appropriate to include in some of her distributions. Since a good deal of material on food programs includes analysis or evaluation on growth monitoring and nutrition education, it would be helpful to both projects if some of this literature could be selected for inclusion in these other newsletters. The advantage of reaching so many people and the utility of this material for them would seem to outweigh any possibility of duplication.

The third area of coordination is with organizations outside of INCAP. There are numerous national level Ministries and offices which have been contacted under the PROPAG training and education and information dissemination

activities. Many of these have already been discussed in the context of workshops, national training plans and distribution lists. In addition, the training component has coordinated with PAHO on a workshop which will be held jointly in the next year. Moreover, the Training and Education Coordinator has worked with the various AID Missions and World Food Program representatives at the national level in discussing the country plans and enlisting their assistance in identifying funding sources.

F. OPERATIONS AND APPLIED RESEARCH

Introduction

This component was designed to supply the information needs of technical specialists, planners and program managers in improving the performance of national food assistance programs, to orient other project components and to answer priority research questions of interest to the international food aid and nutrition communities.

In the Project Paper (ROCAP, 1984), this component was divided into two types of research: 1) improving food assistance program processes; and 2) determining food assistance program impacts. Investigations were designed to be carried out in five topics, four applicable to improving food assistance program processes and one designed to help determine food assistance program impacts. These topics can be described as follows:

- Evaluation of Food Assistance Programs: operations, institutional capacity and food utilization at the household level.
- Cost-effectiveness analysis of food assistance programs in the sub-region.
- Defining the technical basis for screening and discharge decisions and for interpreting growth monitoring data in Maternal Child Food Programs.
- Design and testing of simple information and evaluation systems for National Food Assistance Programs.
- Food, nutrition and socio-economic impacts of Maternal and Child Assistance Programs on participant families.

Initially, these topics were addressed by preparing research proposals in a somewhat independent manner, indicative of a very weak integration. In reviewing the research component, the Review Panel of September 1985 pointed out the need for the PROPAG research team to clarify the conceptual relationships among the project proposals, and this was acknowledged by INCAP personnel. The review group also strongly suggested the need for exploring an operations research approach when dealing with issues such as program operations, institutional capacity and information systems. This need was further reinforced with the visit of a team from PRICOR, in February 1986, to review some specific research proposals of PROPAG.

As a result, the research component of PROPAG was reduced to four conceptually interrelated research projects. Those related to the issues of program operations and institutional capacity were methodologically framed within an operations research approach.

Operations Research to Improve PAGs

These research activities were planned to be carried out in two countries of the region: 1) In Costa Rica, the research aims to improve both the Mother/Child Feeding Program (PAMI) and the School Feeding Program (PAE) and integrates three of the six research projects described in the original PROPAG proposal (institutional and operational evaluation of food programs, cost-effectiveness analyses of PAGs, and information system designs); and 2) In Guatemala, the operations research of PAMI and PAE integrates these three aspects of the PAGs and also considers a study of the nutritional and socio-economic impact of the Mother/Child feeding program.

Applied Research

This research component also considers two proposals in the area of applied research but necessarily framed in an operations research approach. One defines the technical bases for admission and discharge decisions of children in a MCH food assistance program. The other addresses the study of food assistance program operations among displaced populations.

The progress of these research activities is the main focus of the evaluation of the research component.

General Assessment of the Research Progress

The PROPAG research component has some serious problems. During the period under evaluation, PROPAG was expected to be implementing two large operations research (OR) projects for improving food assistance programs -- one in Costa Rica and the other in Guatemala. It also was expected to have developed two smaller and more specific applied investigations -- one to define the technical basis for admission and discharge decisions and for interpreting growth monitoring data in maternal and child food assistance programs and the other to study the operation of food assistance programs for displaced populations.

At this point, the accomplishments have been minimal. The OR project in Costa Rica is just starting and needs strong operations research orientation in order to succeed. The OR proposal for Guatemala has been rejected by the Ministry of Health which resulted in the Ministry of Education withdrawing its support for the project. A proposal for the study of food programs for displaced persons has not been even drafted nor has a setting to carry out the research project been determined. The study to define the basis for beneficiaries selection and discharge

is analytically finished but applied conclusions and recommendations must be developed.

From the beginning of this evaluation there was a clear indication that the research component was having serious implementation problems. This became evident in the first interviews of the evaluation team with Elena Brineman (General Development Officer of ROCAP) and Maarten Immink, Head of the Planning Division of INCAP, and Edmundo Alvarez, Coordinator of PROPAG in INCAP. Although this situation seems to have been apparent for some time among INCAP personnel, there is little evidence indicating an effort to identify specific problems and find solutions. Thus, the research component has been somewhat paralyzed over the last six months.

Some may consider the long process of getting started and the slow pace of the research projects as a learning experience for the PROPAG research team members. They became familiar with the difficulties in transferring ideas to their national counterparts in order to become co-investigators, they experienced the difficulties in learning a new research approach such as OR, they found out that in order to do OR they had to divorce themselves from the academic mode of doing research, and perhaps they re-discovered the relationships between research and planning, and between research and policy. Experiencing these difficulties can indeed be a profitable learning experience, especially if one can overcome them and move ahead with the project. This evaluation team has found out that many times, these obstacles have not been successfully overcome. The general objectives of PROPAG and the specific goals of the research component within PROPAG require this research component to become fully operational. Otherwise, this component will collapse, and this will seriously affect the other PROPAG components.

Although the research team is capable of producing high quality research, these skills are significantly different from producing applied research. Consequently, it has been difficult for the team to apply an operations research approach. This situation could be ameliorated if the research team would develop a strong coordination with the Technical Cooperation team and the national teams, and if research activities could become closely integrated with the development of the Technical Cooperation component to improve PROPAG's operations. Unfortunately, this is not occurring, and the research component will not be able to produce results that can help and orient other project components.

INCAP should explore further the causes of this situation. However, it is clear that one of the issues severely affecting the performance of the research component is the weak organization of the team. Nominally, the group includes six professional people; however, the only person working full time on these tasks is its coordinator, Dr. Alfonso Mata. The others are working only part time on the activities of this component. Under these circumstances it is very difficult to accomplish project objectives. Nevertheless, the team has tried to do its best, and

one of the reasons for the relative success in Costa Rica is because of continuous involvement of Dr. Mata in this project.

Current Status of the Research Activities

The status of the different research activities is described in more detail in this section.

Operations Research (OR) to improve food assistance programs

This activity was planned to be developed in Costa Rica and Guatemala. In both countries the research proposals focus on Mother/Child and School Feeding Programs. These projects, however, have been developed quite differently.

Costa Rica: This operations research project has experienced significant progress. The proposal was finished and approved by the Government of Costa Rica in December 1986. It was then approved by ROCAP in January 1987. Consequently, the research activities should be starting soon. The major achievement in this activity has been the involvement of Costa Rica's program teams in the design of the approved proposal. This process should be encouraged, and the Costa Rican personnel should be further involved in the actual research activities.

The operations research proposal for Costa Rica's food assistance programs is organized in three main phases:

1. Institutional development and project promotion will be developed in three months. This phase has not formally started. However, considering the strong participation of Costa Rican personnel in the conceptualization and design of the proposal, the positive reaction towards the project from different people associated with food assistance programs in the country, and the integration of the two food assistance program teams in order to carry out the project, the evaluation team believes that this phase should be considered completed.

2. Diagnosis and problem identification has been planned to be carried out in six months. A close examination of the description of this phase gives the idea that most of the time is to be spent in information gathering. From an operations research perspective, however, this phase should focus strongly on problem analysis identification. In this phase, the overall problem should be carefully defined, analyzed, and divided into a series of smaller problems. The researchers will need to obtain the necessary information to accomplish this analytical process. Considering the situation of the food assistance programs in Costa Rica, the evaluation team foresees that minimal data will need to be gathered from primary sources. In most cases, the data will be available from program statistics or past surveys.

3. In the solution design phase, the proposal simultaneously considers solution development and testing. Furthermore, it puts too much attention on testing solutions rather than in specifying the methodology for solution development. The evaluation team encourages the PROPAG research team to focus first on this process of solution design. It should reinforce the idea that the central aim of this phase is to find an optimal solution to the operational problem specified in the previous phase.

The validation of solutions should be the final, and thus independent, phase of this systemic approach. The proposal attempts to define a "paquete" of solutions to the total food assistance program, and then experiment to validate those sets of solutions. The idea of a "paquete" of solutions to be tested, and the selection of the best "paquete", is an inappropriate approach from an operational point of view. It contradicts the concept of finding solutions which are appropriate for specific problems at different points in the system. It must be made clear that solution validation does not necessarily require an experiment. One can foresee that, considering the type of problems PROPAG will be dealing with, demonstration can be considered a useful strategy for validation of the solution.

Though the project proposal has been approved and everyone (ROCAP, INCAP, PROPAG team, the Costa Rican PAMI team, and the PAE team) seems to agree on its utility, the project has not formally begun. Moreover, the team is planning to spend more time in institutional development. The evaluation team does not believe that this is necessary. The work should proceed to the first operational phase. In fact, this project has actually moved very slowly considering that the institutional and financial conditions were there for a faster development.

A reason for this delay may be the institutional problem of hiring a country coordinator for the project. There have been difficulties in finding someone acceptable to the MOH, MEP and OCAF. It seems, however, that these groups have found a way to solve the impasse, and the project coordinator will be hired in several weeks.

The delay in the starting of the full project, however, reflects a more important general weakness in the PROPAG research component. It is acknowledged that the countries have never been much involved in research and that the operations research activities were going to include country teams. This implies that, even in the case of Costa Rica, the leadership of INCAP personnel is paramount in starting and developing projects. The INCAP team appears to be somewhat hesitant in moving forward in this role.

The PROPAG team urgently needs technical assistance in order to be able to apply an operations research approach. At this moment, there is none with sufficient skills to lead the country teams in pursuing the proposed research. Without external technical assistance, there is the risk that the project will evolve into end-

less protocol designs and data gathering without reaching the objectives of the proposal and without contributing to the general goal of PROPAG.

Despite the shortcomings in the development of the research activities in Costa Rica, this constitutes the most significant achievement in the research component. INCAP's team has been able to produce cooperation among local institutions and to increase the local team's awareness about the need for research. This achievement should not be overlooked, since it can provide a useful model to approach similar situations in other countries and program settings.

Guatemala: The operations research project here has experienced serious problems. The project is not underway. The INCAP research team prepared a proposal and presented it to both the MOH and MEP for approval, and the government (MOH) denied approval. Rejection came from the Direccion General de Salud technical staff, led by Dr. Pablo Werner Ramirez who is now Vice-Minister of Health.

It is important to consider Dr. Ramirez' reasons in order to assess the feasibility of a research project such as that proposed. INCAP believes the motivation for this rejection was the political circumstances surrounding the presentation of the proposal. Accordingly, it could be presented again following a different strategy. This does not seem to be a realistic approach, however, since, whatever the reasons for the rejection, there is a clear indication that the MOH decision cannot be reversed.

Aside from the political scenario, the research proposal has significant technical shortcomings which may have led to the MOH decision to reject it. In reading the proposal, it is clear that the conceptualization did not consider the specific circumstances of Guatemala's health system and the fact that the MOH views food programs as a temporary measure to alleviate the socio-economic conditions of a vast segment of the population. The PROPAG research proposal involved a large sum of money for studying an aspect of the health system which is viewed as temporary and less crucial than other health activities. Moreover, there is clear evidence of a lack of integration of the research component in the management and planning activities and a lack of clarity about how research activities could specifically help to improve the PAGs. In sum, the orientation of the proposal was somewhat academic and operationally vague.

The main failure in developing the proposal, however, was the isolation within which INCAP elaborated it. The research team recognizes that the proposal did not have the intense participation of the local technical team. The participation was very weak involving personnel without the support of higher level management. This isolation could have produced the alienation of PAMI personnel and may have been a major factor in the MOH's opposition to the proposal.

INCAP and ROCAP should seriously consider eliminating this activity from the research component. The alternative of redesigning the project for the MCH feeding program in Guatemala is not possible. The alternative of moving this operations research project to another country (Honduras or El Salvador) is absolutely unrealistic, considering the situation of the food assistance programs in these countries.

If INCAP wants to do something in operations research in Guatemala, they should start from the beginning. Whatever the project, operations research activities within the food assistance programs in Guatemala should be designed to directly help and orient PROPAG technical assistance to the programs. The research team should start working in coordination with the team providing technical cooperation to the PAGs and with the technical personnel from MOH and MEP in order to first identify the problems to be researched and then to jointly develop the research design(s). The evaluation team believes that large operations research projects, such as the one initially suggested for Guatemala, are not appropriate given the current situation. Efforts should be reoriented to specific and highly necessary problems where optimum solutions will help improve the overall operation of a particular program.

This experience reflects the research team's (and finally INCAP's) inability to transfer the excellent process of developing the research proposal in Costa Rica, where the integration of local teams in the design tasks created the basis for the legitimation of the research idea and the widespread technical acceptance of the project.

Food, nutrition and socio-economic impacts of Maternal and Child Assistance Programs on participant families

This investigation was designed to provide national planners with information as to whether, for nutritional purposes, it is worthwhile to allocate important resources to the management of food assistance programs. It was also thought to provide information on the extent to which donations, in the form of food aid, are worthwhile in terms of nutritional and economic consequences for deprived segments of the population.

This research project was designed to examine socio-economic, dietary and nutritional impacts of the maternal child care feeding program in Guatemala, where a process operations research of the same food assistance program was also planned to be conducted. In 1985 the Peer Review Group of the research component indicated that it was considerably more valuable to determine not only whether a program was having an impact, but why, and under what circumstances. Accordingly, the group recommended the implementation of this research project after the completion of the process evaluation, or at least, once the project was producing some initial results.

The technical basis for this suggestion was accepted by both ROCAP and INCAP, and subsequently the design of the study of impacts was strongly dependent on the development of the operations research project for MCH food assistance program in Guatemala. The situation of the operations research project for the MCH food program was discussed above and its prospects do not suggest that it can be implemented in the way it was planned. The impact study cannot continue being associated with the operations research (process), project in Guatemala. The only other setting where the idea of connecting process with impact studies is possible is in Costa Rica. The research team suggests, however, not to concentrate more research activities in that country, due to the exceptional nutritional situation of its population compared to the other countries in the region and because it is not politically appropriate to concentrate the research resources in one single country.

The situation of the impact investigation must be re-evaluated under current circumstances. The report on "Avances y Perspectivas, Abril 1987" of INCAP indicates that the contents of the evaluation of social, economic, dietary and nutritional impacts of the maternal child care feeding program in Guatemala have already been analyzed by the INCAP researchers and preliminary discussions with the national counterparts have been carried out. The plan is to produce a preliminary proposal for this investigation by the last quarter of 1987. This evaluation team did not review materials associated with these developments, however, the situation of the OR Guatemala project calls for an entire revision of this impact project. In the meantime, no more action associated with the implementation of the impacts study should be undertaken.

One possible line of action could be to include the impact study in the evaluation of the "centinelas" post program of the MOH. The MOH has asked INCAP to cooperate in such an evaluation. INCAP's role would be to design a research proposal to assess the nutritional status of mothers and children in the "centinela" posts in coordination with the team in INCAP's ORT project led by Dr. Hernand Delgado. Though development of this idea seems to be more within the realm of the ORT project and any cooperation of INCAP with MOH in this respect should follow this path, it could be possible to define a somewhat limited approach of both process and impact evaluation of the food assistance component of the "centinela" post program. If this solution is going to be explored, clear lines of responsibility between PROPAG and ORT teams should be specified and enforced.

Other Applied Research Projects

As indicated above, the research component also includes the development of research proposals that focus on more specific topics:

1. Defining the technical basis for screening and discharge decisions and for interpreting growth monitoring data in Maternal Child Food Programs. This is

the only PROPAG research activity that has reached completion. The main objective of this investigation was to provide a scientific basis for use of nutritional criteria in determining technical norms for beneficiary selection, duration of beneficiaries' participation, discharge procedures, and establishing parameters for monitoring the growth of participating children in the maternal child feeding program. The research was carried out by a team from INCAP using information from INCAP's eastern Guatemala and Patulul projects.

The paper reporting the findings of this research project clearly showed the high quality of INCAP's scientific work. The investigation was carefully planned and the analysis neatly implemented. There is little to discuss about the appropriateness of the paper's conclusions, however, the evaluation team considers that the researchers made no attempt in linking the scientific findings to applied recommendations to deal with the aforementioned issues in an actual MCH food assistance program. The results are presented at too high a level of abstraction. It is impossible to think program planners and managers can use them in order to solve their problems of accepting or discharging beneficiaries.

Completion of this investigation is an important achievement in this phase of the research component of PROPAG. However, the evaluation team strongly suggests that in order to complete the research activities, INCAP should spend some time trying, if it is possible, to translate these scientific findings into practical recommendations that can help food program personnel to address real problems.

2. Study of food assistance programs for displaced populations. There has been no progress on this research activity yet. PROPAG's research team has not developed a preliminary protocol for this investigation nor has it initiated any contacts with the people operating these types of programs in the sub-region. During this period, food assistance programs for displaced persons in El Salvador (three programs) have required assistance in order to organize their activities. Moreover, the government office coordinating these efforts (CONADES) has requested help from USAID in this regard. As a result of this need, USAID funded a national census for displaced persons and contracted with a private company (Krauss, Int'l.) to consolidate this information in a unique data base system. There is additional need for analysis of this information, and PROPAG may play a role in helping CONADES to analyze the census of displaced persons in El Salvador.

Information Systems

The design and implementation of simple information systems for food assistance programs that was integrated into the operations research activity has acquired a somewhat independent character. The major effort in this respect is being carried out in San Salvador where personnel from the research team have been providing technical assistance to DIDECOS in order to establish an information system that can coordinate some twelve food assistance programs. Though it is too early to evaluate this activity, there is evidence of an appropriate interaction

between INCAP and DIDECOS personnel. Efforts should be made to integrate personnel working directly in food assistance programs in the design of the information system.

Other Research Proposals

The evaluation team was presented with some very specific research proposals:

- An ethnographic study of intra-family food distribution in small communities.
- Operational testing of an alternative to the hot lunch in the School Feeding Program in Costa Rica.
- Analysis of the socio-economic and cultural determinants for implementing family and school gardens in marginal areas in Guatemala.

These three proposals seem to be adequately outlined and could provide interesting inputs in improving food assistance programs. Nevertheless, the evaluation team recommends that no new research activity begin until PROPAG redefines the entire research component. An exception could be made with the ethnographic study of intra-family food distribution in small communities since it is already underway as part of another INCAP activity, and its implementation does not compromise significant resources of the research team.

Research and other PROPAG's Components

ROCAP and INCAP should redefine and redesign the research component of the PROPAG. The redefinition should primarily consider that the research team should be able to respond quickly to specific problems and supply solutions to be used in the operation of the PAGs. In order to do this, the PROPAG team should significantly increase its operations and applied research skills. By developing these capabilities, the research activities will become, as it should be, a fundamental support to improvement of PAG operations and training.

Those concerned with development of coordinating groups and with improvement of PAG operations expressed reservations about integration of the research program with their work. They recognize that research can be a fundamental support of their work, but emphasize that they and the countries need many modest quick-response studies designed to aid specific decisions, rather than a few

major long-term efforts. The new Project Director gives high priority to integration of research with the rest of the PROPAG, but there is still much to be done.

While the major research studies will be useful eventually, there is much to be said for demonstrating to the countries a capacity for rapid delivery of applied work offering immediate benefits. They view INCAP, and the PROPAG as well, in relation to the more traditional research role of the Institute. If the new INCAP posture, as a practical aid for addressing current food program problems, is to be credible, the research role must be broadened. If the PROPAG staff are to respond effectively to country and PROPAG needs, they need access to responsive applied research. There is clearly a need for compromise, perhaps by reprogramming the Research budget to provide at least a part explicitly for integration with the Technical Cooperation component.

The project contemplates that priority national programs and their needs should determine response, with no component or activity being an end in itself. A predetermined Research agenda may have made sense at project inception, but the current need for a more flexible approach seems clear. Development of a more responsive research program merits priority attention.

Research into food programs involves sensitivities less common in other INCAP work. It too easily resembles audit and threatens people at all levels. When the countries or ministries actively solicit and accept more modest studies, INCAP becomes less vulnerable. This should be considered in reviewing the role of Research in the Project.

G. PROGRAM IMPACT

The activities now underway seem likely to produce more efficient and effective food programs. This should eventually be manifested in (e.g.) reduced food losses, lower costs per unit of calories and nutrients delivered, and positive changes in conventional measures of management improvement. The relationship of the PROPAG to changes in nutrition status is far more tenuous, so any expectation of dramatic gains should be tempered.

The programs are almost exclusively "compensatory" or "defensive", especially in periods of economic stress. Furthermore, budgetary pressures may cause countries to take benefits of increased efficiency in the form of reduced expenditures to achieve constant outcomes. Changes induced by the project will contribute to improved nutrition, but effects may be masked by exogenous influences. The PROPAG is such a modest part of the factors affecting food programs, just one of many influences on nutrition status, and the causal chain from the project to improved nutrition is so long and fragile that emphasis on measurement of intermediate outcomes should be the major focus of evaluation efforts.

PROPAG reporting systems are more than adequate to pick up positive results. Attributing certain results to the PROPAG involves a high degree of arbitrariness since outcomes with some relation to the project almost inevitably benefit from other INCAP activities. This reflects the excellent integration of the PROPAG with the rest of the Institute. PROPAG is best considered as a convenient mechanism for financing some activities distinctive to group feeding programs, though these programs share much in common with others supported by INCAP. Health and Nutrition Education, Food Technology, Information Systems, and other INCAP activities benefit the food programs along with other national efforts. The major outcomes clearly attributable to PROPAG include increased sensitivity to the food programs as an instrumentality that contributes to development and better coordination of them. By serving as a catalyst for channelling assistance to the programs, the PROPAG plays an indispensable role in their improvement, strict attribution of all such changes to it, though, ignores the impact of INCAP's other work.

Examples of impact already documented include Panama, where although the PROPAG help has been directed primarily to development of a new food made from local crops, for use in school and MCH programs, there is evidence of improved coordination and operation of PAG's. A representative from the Ministry of Education described recent efforts to target school feeding to deprived areas, using data already available but previously neglected. INCAPARINA of Panama, the new product, brings the Ministries of Health and Education together in a joint effort to promote wide use.

A representative from the Ministry of Planning, who had attended the July 1986 Guatemala Workshop on strategy development and a later meeting on project preparation, agreed that PROPAG had stimulated interest and action, by causing the various food program agencies to recognize their management weaknesses and the advantages of cooperating to remedy them by training and other activities.

The Incaparina effort, soon to reach fruition when the product is introduced into programs this August, illustrates a) an excellent balance between technical research and practical assistance, b) the cooperation between the PROPAG and other INCAP divisions, and c) the indirect impact on coordination that can be achieved by the PROPAG help on specific tasks.

Because the Incaparina project and the PROPAG involvement stem from the major role of a former INCAP staff member in activities of the political powerful Office of the First Lady in Panama, the success also shows both the great value of the INCAP "network" to the PROPAG success and the significance of access to high political levels for bringing about concrete results. The Government of Panama recently increased the school feeding budget by \$290,000, responding to political influence of the First Lady's Office and improved justification provided with PROPAG help.

In Honduras and Costa Rica, where technical assistance has been directed in part to development of formal planning and coordinating mechanisms, progress has occurred at operational, rather than strategic or planning, levels. SECPLAN, the Honduran planning group, is about to become a legal entity whose work will be linked to the national development plan. Nevertheless, its principal accomplishment to date has been to coordinate and present training activities that serve all the food program agencies. In Costa Rica, SEPAN has the power to plan national food program strategy, but the major impact has been transfer of responsibility for executing the School Feeding Program from the national social welfare agency (OCAF) to the Ministry of Education.

The special circumstances of El Salvador, with its large number of displaced persons and food programs, have led to formation of an agency for coordination of these activities. The PROPAG is helping with design and implementation of an information system. In Guatemala, efforts to seek formation of a planning group continue, but political changes have delayed response. Nevertheless, the Project continues to work with individual agencies and programs.

Although Guatemala has responded less to strategy and coordination development efforts, the PROPAG relationships with individual agencies offer great promise for continued improvement of program operations. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Development already receive regular consulting help, addressed to inventory control and other specific management deficiencies. The Secretaria de Bienestar Social (Social Welfare Secretariat) was represented at

the Regional Seminar on Strategy and the newly appointed Director seemed receptive to PROPAG involvement. Working with individual agencies on improved management is often a more effective way to build coordination and strategy than holding intermittent gatherings of senior program staff.

Although documents abound, there have been few significant changes in national strategies. Financial limitations prevent new initiatives and existing programs are not easily reduced or eliminated. The PROPAG emphasis on strategy has been useful for directing attention to the food programs, assembling information about them, and identifying problems. It has not led to strategy changes and should not have been expected to, judging from earlier INCAP experience with food and nutrition strategy. The PROPAG is most effective where it is most oriented to action and staff recognize this. Better coordination and tangible improvements in operations are more likely to occur, and more valuable, than continued general discussions of strategy and guidelines, though these provide motivation and build political support for action.

Harder to document and attribute to the project are the many multiplier effects already occurring. The project has been a catalyst for national coordination and training efforts in all of the countries, in varying degrees. PVO and donor representatives comment already on the increased interest and understanding exhibited about food programs, their management and their relation to broader food and development issues. How much action this will be translated into remains to be seen and is not exclusively within project control. Presence of facilitators, especially in the more promising situations in Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras, would increase national activities, as would better linking of research to immediate problems, but the Project seems otherwise to be well on track.

AID should recognize that the improved planning of food programs, already evident as a result of the PROPAG activities carries, important consequences for administration of PL 480. The countries are taking greater care in calculating their costs for accepting "free" food. This seems likely to reduce willingness to receive donations indiscriminately, as some have done previously, and will also increase pressure for monetization to cover costs. It is important that ROCAP reinforce the positive impact of the PROPAG on food program planning by encouraging Missions to manage food aid in ways consistent with the new national perceptions.

It is early to assess institution-building results of PROPAG. Nevertheless, Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica are well on the way to the kind of institutionalization of capability, in relation to food programs, contemplated in the Project Paper.

III. THE FUTURE

The PROPAG document Avances y Perspectivas (April, 1987) describes in detail the many activities already carried out by project staff. Interviews at INCAP, and visits to country programs in Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama, during the evaluation, confirmed accuracy of the reporting and also assessed response in the countries. The PROPAG document reflects faithfully what has been done. It fails to convey an adequate sense of the interest, momentum, and hopes generated among those directly involved with food programs.

The many regional and national seminars have created positive expectations among most participants and those interviewed exhibited generally high regard for project staff. While some technical assistance and training related to specific operating problems of individual programs has been given, the Project's prevailing tone is still very abstract and general. This was clearly necessary, as PROPAG staff educated themselves and built the required support base within each country.

It is important, however, that the project move rapidly to a more concrete level, before cynicism sets in. Although enthusiastic and impressed, many people working in food programs, especially at basic technical levels, share the pessimism of experience. They hope the PROPAG will differ from other projects that promised much but delivered little. They are not yet convinced that it will deliver concrete benefits.

Reports from the PROPAG seminars and ad-hoc group documents abound. They summarize the outcomes of bringing together "political level" people and, in the countries, "technical level" people as well. Many interviewed knew well the many problems and impressive plans developed jointly. Most had "bought into" the project, an impressive achievement for the time and money involved. Some acknowledged increased understanding of food programs but none could really say much about what is being done differently. It is far too early to expect that, but the challenge is clear. The "high-level" staff come and go, a big drawback in the work, but there is more stability among field people. They await support eagerly and the PROPAG is positioned well to provide it.

It is not yet clear what "coordination of food programs" really means and what outcomes can be expected from it. Each country provides separate answers and, because the PROPAG can succeed only by responding first to country concerns, the Project can offer few generalizations applicable to all.

The project's future will be more promising if, at both the coordination and program operations levels, PROPAG concentrates on some very limited and

specific goals. Regional and national seminars have stimulated interest and identified dozens of problems. There is substantial risk that, as happened with multi-sectoral nutrition planning, with so much to coordinate, nothing will actually change. Food program "strategy" and "lines of action" do not always translate easily into doing something.

In coordination, for example, avoiding duplication and agreeing on geographical coverage by different programs or donors are often easier than actions that require more substantial modifications of conduct or funding. PROPAG should encourage country coordinating groups to do a few simple things and discourage further pontifications about the many problems and the need for strategy. The project has done a remarkable job of building interest and momentum. Staff have the creditability and skills to get things done. The rest is up to the country groups, but they need help in moving from abstraction to action.

The problem is less serious with respect to operational improvements. The PROPAG staff are working on specific problems that will eventually result in tangible improvements. Here, too, it is important to resist the temptation to do everything. Instead of "operations research" in general, the programs need concentrated simple research on a few visible deficiencies. All are understaffed and underfunded. Most are being called upon to do more as AID and other donors increase support in Central America. Small but important, PROPAG must continue to focus sharply on key bottlenecks.

Although the project clearly cannot control country responses, there is a basis for cautious optimism that, if present activities continue and are modified as suggested in this report, planning and operation of food programs in Central America will enjoy some visible improvement. This will, in turn, contribute to more effective food security, better nutrition, and more self-sufficient communities.

A. DONORS AND INTERMEDIATE AGENCIES (PVO'S)

INCAP recognized from the start that any food program strategy must involve donor agencies, who supply much of the food, and the international and local PVO's, who operate many projects. These groups participated in the initial Guatemala seminar and express generally favorable views of a) timeliness of the PROPAG, b) Project concept, and c) INCAP execution of it. Nevertheless, both INCAP and the groups agree that involvement of the non-governmental and international organizations is not yet adequate.

This is not necessarily bad initially. In Honduras, for example, early efforts deal with governmental coordination and there is much to be done before participation of others becomes critical. When Government knows better how it wants to use the food, it will be better able to deal with and learn from the others. USAID, WFP, and CARE representatives, interviewed in Honduras, welcomed Government efforts, and complimented INCAP's initiative, but felt that SECPLAN, the Honduran coordinating unit, had not yet done much. The agencies feel that INCAP communication with them might be improved, though all knew the project well.

Since knowledge of donor and PVO resources, rules, and priorities is a key aspect of government food program planning, the PROPAG should encourage training presentations by the private and international groups. Using (e.g.) CARE or CRS consultants occasionally will also educate the PROPAG staff and build relationships. It should be reassuring to know that PROPAG and non-governmental interests coincide, there is little resistance or defensiveness among the organizations, and prospects for greater collaboration seem excellent. The Project need only continue to build the relationships and encourage the national coordinating groups to do the same.

Apparent reluctance of the PVO's to send their people to PROPAG training has no special significance. Some do their own training, intra-agency delays prevented timely response, and group needs vary. Continued regular contact, coupled with more formal involvement of the agencies as trainers and consultants, should produce a more effective combined effort to improve Governmental planning and management of food programs.

B. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The most recent project plan introduces "community participation" as the third major "línea de trabajo" (work direction), accompanying food program strategies and improved food program operations. There is little in earlier documents, including reports of CTAS meetings, to explain this new emphasis. Although most of the countries have talked about, and even devoted funds to promoting, community participation for many years, food programming has not usually been linked to it. Food-for-work, which lends itself well to community-based approaches for example, continues to be primarily short-term income supplementation.

Because the community offers the main hope for widespread development of permanent, self-sustaining nutritional adequacy among the poor, especially in

rural areas, the emphasis on community participation merits further attention. Nevertheless, it is clear that many PROPAG staff have only the vaguest ideas about the relevance of community participation to their work and the implications of it for staffing and other aspects of Project execution.

Community participation can be emphasized, for example, without becoming a goal similar to country strategies and operational improvements. The PROPAG could simply indicate a concern, based on its experience or that of others, for popular participation in planning, materials design, and other aspects of projects. This concern could influence the PROPAG approach without becoming a program goal.

If the project intends a more substantial involvement, the recent statement must be interpreted only as an indication of direction. It is not clear, for example, that community development agencies in the countries, or other sources, cannot provide the technical assistance in community participation that may be useful for food programs. If there is need for PROPAG help, the kind of assistance and the people who can give it need to be specified. The political implications of work on community organization and participation may need more consideration, since there are often sensitive areas.

When viewed in relation to the extensive planning that went into development and execution of other components, the proposed community participation involvement clearly needs considerable work. It is not clear who, among the current PROPAG staff, have the time and skills to do it. Nevertheless, the substantial impact possible from more effective community participation makes it desirable that PROPAG explore potential roles more carefully.

The concern for community participation emphasizes the need to link food programs with agricultural and other interventions that can bring about community nutritional self-sufficiency. This forces attention to distinguishing between the "welfare" population without potential for self-sufficiency and low-income groups with good possibilities for improvement, a distinction essential for rational planning of food program strategy. If the PROPAG intends to become more involved in encouraging and improving community participation, the implications for its own information system and those of the countries should be identified.

C. LONG-TERM CONSULTANTS IN THE COUNTRIES (FACILITATORS)

The Project originally contemplated assignment of full-time professionals to three of the countries. This has not occurred, partly because the many different kinds of assistance mentioned in plans seemed to require use of various short-term consultants.

It has become apparent, at least to Project staff working on coordination and on improvement of operations, that full-time Project presence in Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica is desirable. They emphasize the need for a "facilitator", to follow up on national response to commitments made during short-term consultations, to be a catalyst for promoting and stimulating cooperation among national agencies, and to serve as a continuing liaison between Project and country. While the facilitator should have enough special skill to be credible and to provide intermittent technical help, the primary role is much broader. The facilitator might eventually be a kind of resident advisor to any food planning agency, coordinating group or individual program that merits strong PROPAG support.

The idea should be tested, because it has emerged from serious consideration of initial Project problems in making technical assistance effective. Without deprecating their abilities, the PROPAG staff suggest that current full-time INCAP representatives are understandably occupied primarily with health matters and cannot meet the PROPAG need.

The assignment of facilitators will also increase Project effectiveness by reducing staff travel time. Although distances are short within the INCAP area, elapsed time for short visits is often substantial, departure times are wearing, and delays make planning difficult.

Substituting a permanent consultant for short-term specialists involves budgetary considerations that must be addressed. Nevertheless, if any of the countries will accept the facilitator proposal, appropriate financial adjustments do not appear to be an obstacle. Eventually, if not initially, the countries may be willing to contribute to support of a facilitator, especially if the presence produces significant economies in food program operation. This would be an important step toward institutionalization of the PROPAG. The tradeoff between having a long-term expatriate consultant in the Project and spending the same funds for facilitators should be reviewed, if current plans for a resident consultant do not materialize.

D. CREATIVE PROGRAMMING

The PROPAG has dealt primarily with the traditional conventional food program categories of MCH, school feeding, and food for work (FFW). Central American conditions also required project emphasis on emergency and refugee programs, but the approach to food program strategy would benefit from a more open view of possibilities than is afforded by this standard program structure. Food programmers often discuss "more creative" use of food, but this has typically meant adding more complementary services to existing programs. Present budgetary restrictions and the wide reluctance to permit monetization of donated food encourage a search for creative ways to convert food into capital within current financial limits and donor regulations.

The project offers an outstanding opportunity for developing and testing new uses of food, especially those that contribute to community self-sufficiency. Food banks, revolving funds, and self-sustaining FFW activities are some of the new approaches being explored by PVO's and others. If the PROPAG staff are to help bring about more effective food program strategies, they need more familiarity with the state of the programming art.

This is not intended as criticism of current activities, but to emphasize that the time may come when significant changes in strategy are possible. With its interest in community participation and self-sufficiency, the PROPAG needs to prepare itself better to take advantage of food programming alternatives related to these concerns. Dissemination of information about new program models will be an increasingly important PROPAG activity as improved coordination and operation of food programs allows more opportunity for innovation.

E. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not too early for PROPAG to address the problem of surviving after the Project. INCAP needs to clarify any plans for continuation of the group and PROPAG should be concerned that services considered effective can continue for as long as necessary.

Institutionalization of the group and its services requires immediate attention to methods and sources of financing. The PROPAG resembles a consulting firm, with the advantage of being able to offer clients a free sample of its services. The time will arrive when, if the services are to continue, someone other than

ROCAP must pay for them. If the clients cannot pay directly, various third-party sources may be available. However, the long lead time required to generate project support means that PROPAG and the clients should begin developing "marketing plans" now.

INCAP may also wish to explore institutionalization of the PROPAG services outside the Institute. A separate consulting group and a foundation, for example, have both been mentioned. Some attention should also be given to development of national capacities, within ministries for example, to provide similar services. Current project assistance to individual agencies and programs contemplates relationships long enough and sufficiently well defined to make likely the achievement of improved national skills in certain areas. There will, however, remain various needs for more help of the kind now provided by the project.

ROCAP can play a major role in the institutionalizing of Project services by alerting USAID's to the PROPAG resource and encouraging them to look for ways to help finance continuation of it. Having spent a substantial sum to help develop a technical facility that can continue to serve PL 480 and other projects well, ROCAP has an interest in perpetuating it.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND IMPROVING OPERATIONS

1. ROCAP should allow the Project to test effectiveness of assigning full-time "facilitators" to one or more countries.
2. ROCAP should encourage PROPAG to clarify, and explore implications of community participation as an aspect of improving food programs.
3. ROCAP should make every effort to assure that USAID PL 480 projects are planned with, and respond to, coordinating groups formed with PROPAG help.
4. The PROPAG group should clarify their concern for community participation and, if activities related to it are to be initiated, should get qualified staff and short-term consulting help before beginning implementation.

5. PROPAG should use CARE, Catholic Relief Services and other PVO staff as consultants, to take advantage of their practical experience and to mobilize their support for the Project.
6. The PROPAG group should help their collaborating countries to distinguish and identify a) the "welfare" population with little potential for self-sufficiency and b) those in the poverty population with good possibilities for achieving nutritional independence with PAG and other help.
7. PROPAG should give less emphasis to food program strategy and concentrate on a) building shared information systems, b) encouraging cooperation among PAG's, and c) providing alternatives for reducing program costs.
8. The Project should link the research component more closely with the immediate information needs for improving country PAG's, and should take immediate steps to present and disseminate research results in ways most useful to consultants working with country programs.
9. The research component should include some modest efforts to document specific positive outcomes (e.g., reduced food losses, cost savings) attributable to identifiable technical assistance delivered by the project.
10. The Project should include preparation for PROPAG staff on current "creative uses" of food aid and food programs being developed, especially those related to capital formation and self-sufficiency.
11. PROPAG should take immediate steps to develop a "marketing plan" for replacing the ROCAP grant when the Project ends.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The new directions and specific recommendations proposed in the "Avances y Perspectivas Abril 1987" are sensible recommendations based on the experience to date in training and education. These involve:

1. Move the emphasis from subregional training courses to ones at the national level (for the food management workshop, educational technology workshop and evaluation workshop).

2. Evaluate both the process and results of the national training plans now being developed through project assistance.
3. Develop more and better educational materials for all types of training under the project.
4. Provide technical assistance to personnel at the regional and local levels in improving community involvement in food programs.

In addition to these recommendations advanced by the project leadership, several other recommendations should be considered. These recommendations are based on a review of the training material and discussions with those responsible for project training.

5. In order to make the workshops as practical as possible for the participants, every effort should be made to involve some of the more experienced voluntary agency food management personnel in the workshop training process. These individuals could be involved as training consultants, teachers of some sections of a workshop or in helping to prepare background material for the participants.
6. Given the diversity of training approaches now being used in AID projects worldwide, PROPAG should discuss and consider how to increase the use of audio visual training materials in their program activities. Such materials can consist of films, videos, and slide programs with sound. They can be produced for courwill, in turn, contribute to more effective food security, better nutrition, and more self-sufficient communities.
7. Efforts should be made to explore sources of aid centrally funded or other technical assistance in the development of audio-visual materials.
8. Flexibility in planning and financing training activities should be allowed so that the training and education coordinator can make necessary revisions for project effectiveness. For example, the consideration to reduce the size of observation visits and allow some of these resources to be put into training materials should be favorably considered by ROCAP.
9. Where possible within the project budget, translate more documents from English into Spanish so that results of food program planning, management and evaluation can be better disseminated to the Central American countries.
10. Develop more audio-visual materials for project training purposes and for exchanges of program information between countries and among dif-

ferent Ministries within a country. At least one video or slide presentation should be developed per country. Depending on utility of these materials, consideration should be given to documenting the experience of other successful programs in Latin America. Such documentation might have to be funded by other sources, however, if project funds are available under PROPAG, such activities warrant priority consideration.

11. ROCAP should help to insure that the latest available information from AID on Food Programs is made available to the PROPAG information dissemination activity.
12. Administrative assistance to the Information Center for mailing the numerous documents should be assured under existing project resources. While it may not be necessary to have a secretary located in the information center unit of PROPAG, this assistance should be provided whenever needed.
13. An informal evaluation such as a simple questionnaire regarding basic user information should be conducted before the planned formal evaluation.
14. There should be greater sharing of experiences from the training and education workshops with the research component of the project. Similarly, the design and results of research can be a useful tool for workshops and seminars. Participants in the workshops can be a valuable resource in identifying operational research problems and in providing the field sites for carrying out such research.
15. The Training and Education and Information Dissemination components of PROPAG should help to identify appropriate bibliographic materials and projects for inclusion in the distribution network of the ORT, Growth Monitoring and Education Project of INCAP.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATIONS AND APPLIED RESEARCH

1. **ROCAP and INCAP should redefine the research component of the PROPAG.**
2. **In Costa Rica, the project should be further developed within an operations research approach:**
 - a. **Phase One, institutional development, should be terminated with rapid movement to Phase Two, diagnosis and problem identification.**
 - b. **Phase Two should be focused on problem analysis; data collection activities should be directly related to this problem analysis and limited.**
 - c. **Phase Three, solution design, should be primarily concerned with the methodology for solution development; validation should be an independent phase.**
 - d. **Phase Four, solution validation should not necessarily focus on experimental or quasi-experimental designs for validating a solution; in some cases, demonstrations are a useful strategy to validate solutions.**
 - e. **Both the INCAP and Costa Rica teams should be provided with external technical assistance to assure the operations research character of the investigation.**
3. **The Operation research project for food assistance programs in Guatemala should be eliminated from the list of research activities of PROPAG since is not clear how such an approach will help to improve PAGs nor is there a governmental commitment to pursue such an effort.**
4. **The PROPAG research team should increase its operations research skills so that the research activities become a fundamental support to those working in the development of group coordination, improvement of PAG operations and training. The research team should be able to respond quickly to specific problems and supply solutions to be used in the operation of PAGs.**
 - a. **The operations research activities should be integrated with other PROPAG components.**
 - b. **PROPAG should assure the formation of a coherent research team whose members, even if not assigned on a full-time basis, have clear assignments and responsibilities**
 - c. **PROPAG should provide the research team with a leadership that assures the increasing involvement in operations research and an in-**

tegration of the research activities with the other PROPAG components.

5. Due to the situation of the operations research project for the MCH food program in Guatemala, the impact investigation must be re-evaluated. One approach might be to include the impact study in the evaluation of the "centinelas" post program of the MOH; this could be done by designing both a process and impact evaluation for the food assistance component of this program.
6. The PROPAG should further explore translating the scientific findings of the completed study on MCH program screening, discharge decisions, and growth monitoring into practical recommendations that can help food program managers to address actual operational problems.
7. Given existing studies, PROPAG should seriously reassess whether it should conduct a food assistance program for displaced persons. The PROPAG might play a modest role in the situation of displaced persons in El Salvador by assisting in some data analysis. However, before the team explores this possibility and makes any commitment, INCAP should redefine the entire research component.
8. The PROPAG should continue its technical assistance to DIDECOS in the design and implementation of an information system for food assistance programs in El Salvador. The team should consider the participation of experienced food assistance program personnel in the design of such a system.
9. The PROPAG should not initiate any new research activity until it redefines the entire research component. An exception could be made with the ethnographic study of intra-family food distribution in small communities, since it is already underway, and its implementation does not compromise significant resources of the research team.

APPENDICES

A. PERSONS INTERVIEWED

INCAP

Dr. Luis Octavio Angel

Dr. Hernan Delgado

Dr. Maarten Immink

Dr. Edmundo Alvarez

Dr. Arnulfo Noguera

Lic. Maria Teresa Menchú

Dr. Alfonso Mata

Dr. Roberto Cuevas

Ing. Ramiro Montealegre

Lic. Jenaro Sánchez

Lic. Tito Rivera

Ing. Fernando Fuentes

Lic. Mara de Galindo

Lic. Juan Caviedes

Lic. Isabel Nieves

Dr. Patricia Engle

Lic. Alexandra Praun

Lic. Verónica de Palma

Lic. Raquel Flores

Lic. Ernestina Ardón

PANAMA

Dr. Carlos Parrilla	Ministerio de Salud
Lic. Pedro Villaverde	Ministerio de Educación
Lic. Rafael Ostía	Ministerio de Desarrollo Agrícola
Lic. Carlos Sánchez	Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económica
Ing. Elio Alvarez	Instituto de Recursos Naturales Renovables
Dra. Susana Icaza	Despacho de la Primera Dama
Lic. Maritza M. de Aguilera	Despacho de la Primera Dama
Lic. Flavio Velásquez	Despacho de la Primera Dama

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Licda. Roberta Palma	SECPLAN
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Profa. Isabel de Rivera	Ministerio de Recursos Naturales
Dr. Yanuario García	Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social
Dr. Germán Hernández	Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social
Lic. Gilberto Pinto	Ministerio de Educación Pública

Ing. Carlos Flores	COHDEFOR
Ing. Oscar Carcamo	SECOPT (Sec. de Obras Públicas y Transporte)
Lic. Gloria Oquelf de Macoto	JNBS
Lic. Mirna de Zaldaña	Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social
Leslie Brandt	CARE
Sr. Arturo Posadas	PMA
Sr. Juan Castillo	AID
Sr. Francisco Meraz	CARITAS

EL SALVADOR

Lic. Olga Tatiana Osegueda	Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social
Dr. José Luis Lovo Castelar	Ministerio de Planificación y Coordinación del Desarrollo Económico y Social
Licda. Miriam Trejo de Portillo	Vice-Ministro, Desarrollo Social, Ministerio del Interior
Lic. Otto Vidaurre	DIDECO, Ministerio del Interior
Prof. Arnulfo Sandoval	DIDECO, Ministerio del Interior
Sra. Gladys Martínez	Ministerio de Educación Pública
Lic. Nery Granados	Comisión Nacional de Asistencia a la Población Desplazada (CONADES)
Ing. Rafael Navas	Banco de Fomento Agropecuario
Sr. Gerald Foucher	AID
Sr. Francisco Roque Castro	PMA

Sr. Gilberto Gallegos

CARITAS

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Ministerio de Educación

Lic. Julio Quirós

Ministerio de Salud

Licda. Eunicia Murillo

Ministerio de Educación

Licda. Ana Mercedes Brealy

Ministerio de Planificación

Dr. Guillermo Araya

Ministerio de Educación

Dr. Lorenzo Guadamuz

Ministerio de Educación

Lic. Mario Rodríguez

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Licda. Celina Alfaro

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