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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

HOPKINS POPULATION CENTER

POPULATION INFORMATION PROGRAM
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July 30, 1981

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Susan Robbins
Lyle Saunders
Al Bernal
James Heiby

FROM: Phyllis T. Piotrow
Director
Population Information Program

Phyllis Piotrow

RE: PIP Evaluation

Enclosed is our write-up of the Population Information Program mail survey evaluation undertaken between November 1980 and June 1981. This summary was prepared by Jacqueline Sherris, who has just joined PIP as a Research Associate and I think it brings out the main points in the response to the survey.

If you would like any additional information about the points raised, please let me know. Most of you will already have seen, in full detail, the open-ended responses to the questionnaires as well as questionnaire forms in which the preliminary percentages were written down opposite each question.

PTP/vja
encl.

POPULATION INFORMATION PROGRAM

1980-81 MAIL SURVEY

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POPULATION INFORMATION PROGRAM

1980-81 MAIL SURVEY

I. INTRODUCTION

In November, 1980, the Population Information Program (PIP) initiated an evaluation by a mail survey of Population Reports and of POPLINE services. The evaluation process involved the development of questionnaires appropriate to respondents, the selection of specific respondents, mailing and collection of questionnaires, and then tabulation and summarization of questionnaire results. The questionnaires were in part based upon concerns identified during analysis of previous Population Reports evaluation activities. In addition, issues suggested by AIID were targeted for evaluation. These concerns included the perceived usefulness of Population Reports and of POPLINE services, the relative effectiveness of various Population Reports functions, the degree of awareness of additional PIP services, the degree of utilization of POPLINE services, and suggestions for future Population Reports topics or of PIP services which should be expanded or improved.

An evaluation undertaken by mail in 1974 resulted in an 8% return of questionnaires. A 1978 survey resulted in an 11% return of questionnaires. One of the goals of the current evaluation activity was to elicit a higher questionnaire return rate. Some of the procedures which were designed to increase the return rate were asking fewer

and in some cases more carefully chosen people to complete a questionnaire, and utilizing local AID Population Officers to distribute and collect questionnaires.

II. PROCEDURES

Questionnaire Development

The questionnaires used in the current evaluation effort were developed by Susan Robbins and Lyle Saunders, APHA consultants serving as evaluators, James Heiby, Office of Population, USAID, and by Phyllis Piotrow, Population Information Program Director. The development took place between June and September, 1980. As discussed above, the questionnaire items were designed to address concerns isolated from previous evaluation activities and concerns voiced by AID. Two questionnaires were developed and they will hereafter be referred to as Questionnaire A and Questionnaire B.

Questionnaire A was written for an international group of population professionals including representatives of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), The Population Council, The Center for Population and Family Health (CPFH) of Columbia University, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Family Planning International Assistance (FPIA), the Ford Foundation and the Pathfinder Fund, stationed in developing countries.

Questionnaire A consisted of 8 forced choice items and 2 open-ended items. The first two items of Questionnaire A asked the questions:

1. Do you receive Population Reports?
2. Do you read Population Reports regularly?

Thus, it was assumed that, although most of the recipients of this questionnaire were Population Reports readers, some

may have been unfamiliar with the publication. Both questionnaires A & B are displayed in Appendix A.

Questionnaire B was written for an audience of individuals randomly selected from the PIP mailing list, then totalling about 70,000. The questionnaire consisted of 10 forced choice items and 3 open-ended items. As can be seen from the copy displayed in Appendix A, questionnaire B included questions such as

1. How much of Population Reports do you read?
2. Are the Reports useful to your work?

which assumed that the respondent received Population Reports regularly. Also questionnaire B included more questions regarding the use of POPLINE than did questionnaire A. Five forced choice questions and one open ended question were identical on the two questionnaires.

Questionnaire Distribution

Questionnaires A & B were distributed in different ways. Questionnaire A was sent directly to 95 chosen professionals from the population organizations listed earlier. The specific individuals who received questionnaire A were decided upon by Robbins, Saunders, and Piotrow.

Questionnaire B was distributed through AID Population Officers in 43 countries. Six of these countries were in Asia, 5 in the Middle East, 16 in Africa, and 16 in Latin America. Appendix B displays the specific countries which received questionnaires and the numbers of questionnaires sent to and returned by each country. The number of people

to receive questionnaires in a country was determined as a proportion of the number of people on the PIP mailing list for that country. It ranged from 10 to 30. Selection of individuals involved dividing the number of questionnaires to be sent into the number of names on the mailing list for a country. The resulting quotient was then used as a means of randomly choosing names from the mailing list. For instance, if the quotient was 500, every 500th name on the mailing list was selected to receive a questionnaire.

In November, 1980, each of the 43 AID Population Officers was sent an evaluation packet consisting of an explanatory letter, questionnaires with the name and address of each randomly selected reader for the specific country indicated, addressed forwarding return envelopes for each questionnaire, and a summary sheet for recording when questionnaires were sent and received. In addition, the AID Population Officers were supplied with five extra questionnaires to utilize if a few of the randomly selected readers were not available. The officers were instructed to send questionnaires to the selected readers with return postage included, complete a questionnaire themselves, and record the dates of questionnaire return. One month after local mailing of questionnaires, all returned questionnaires were to be sent to Dr. J. Speidel at AID. The importance of a high return rate of questionnaires was specifically stressed.

Questionnaire Tabulation

Questionnaires were returned to AID from January to July, 1981. Returned questionnaires were then analyzed by PIP staff members. The answers on each questionnaire were coded, placed on a data file, and then tabulated. Forced choice items were tabulated according to the numbers of individuals who selected each answer choice. Open ended items were tabulated according to the number of individuals who responded to the items. In addition, PIP staff members read all responses to open ended items and noted the types of responses which occurred more than once.

III. QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

The response rate for Questionnaire A was 48%.

Forty-six of the 95 population professionals to whom questionnaire A was sent returned the questionnaire to PIP. Because of the two stage process by which questionnaire B was sent to randomly selected readers (PIP/AID → AID Population Officers → readers), the response rate for Questionnaire B must be explained in two different ways.

A total of 796 B questionnaires were sent to randomly selected readers. Of these 796, 138 returned questionnaires. Thus the overall response rate for randomly selected readers was 17%. However, only 26 of the 43 AID Population Officers to whom evaluation packets were sent returned evaluation materials to the AID/PIP team. In the 17 countries in which AID Population Officers did not respond, it is unknown whether the randomly selected readers received questionnaires and/or whether completed questionnaires were returned to the U.S. Within countries from which AID Population Officers did respond, 131* of 522 randomly selected readers completed questionnaire B. Thus the response rate within these countries was 25%. Even though 26 of the 43 AID Population Officers returned evaluation packets, only 14 of the 43 completed questionnaires. Thus the questionnaire B response rate for AID Population Officers was only 33%. Table 1 summarizes the response rate data.

*Seven questionnaires were received directly from readers.

Table 1. Questionnaire Response Rates

Questionnaire	Type of Respondent	Response Rate
A	Population Professionals	(46/95) 48%
B	Randomly-selected readers	(138/796) 17%
B	Randomly-selected readers from countries with responding AID-Population Officer	(131/522) 25%
B	AID-Population Officers	(14/43) 33%

IV. RESULTS

The results of this evaluation survey will be described according to items relating the various PIP services, (Population Reports, other publications, POPLINE, etc.) and a special section will discuss responses to open-ended questions. When items appeared on both questionnaires A & B, results will be discussed together. Results from the 14 B questionnaires received from AID Population Officers will be discussed only briefly. In general, responses from the officers were similar to responses from the randomly selected readers. Only a few exceptions to this statement were noted. These exceptions will be discussed in the appropriate section. The few regional differences in responses will be discussed in a separate section.

Utilization and Perceptions of Population Reports.

The following tabulations were made from the responses of the 46 population professionals relating to utilization of Population Reports.

	Yes	No	No Answer
A1*. Do you receive <u>Population Reports</u> ?	78%	20%	2%
A2. Do you read <u>Population Reports</u> regularly?	82%	9%	9%

The following tabulations were made from the responses of the 131 randomly selected readers relation to their use and perception of Population Reports.

*A1 refers to questionnaire A, item 1.

	All	Part	Summary Only	No Answer
B1. How much of each <u>Population Reports</u> do you read?	41%	50%	5%	4%
	Useful	Not Useful		No Answer
B2. Are the Reports useful to your work?	94%	2%		4%

These two sets of percentages indicate that Population
Reports is a widely read and appreciated publication among
individuals in population and related fields.

Effectiveness of Population Reports Functions The

following tabulations were made from the combined responses of both population professionals and randomly selected readers (n=177) in relation to their perception of the effectiveness of the five Population Reports functions listed (item A3 & B3).

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Not Effective	No Answer
a) conveying up-to-date news of important developments				
population professionals	53%	29%	2%	16%
randomly selected readers	72%	26%	0%	2%
b) providing background information for policy formulation				
population professionals	38%	47%	2%	13%
randomly selected readers	43.5%	40.5%	6%	10%
c) providing information & materials useful for research or reference				
population professionals	65%	22%	2%	11%
randomly selected readers	66%	27%	3%	4%
d) providing information and materials useful for research and training				
population professionals	53%	29%	2%	16%
randomly selected readers	54%	35%	4%	7%
e) introducing new project or program ideas				
population professionals	22%	58%	2%	18%
randomly selected readers	49%	42%	5%	4%

These data suggest that population professionals and randomly selected readers feel that Population Reports is very effective or moderately effective in performing each of the five major functions. The randomly selected readers appear to perceive a higher degree of effectiveness than the population professionals, especially with respect to news of

important developments and introducing new ideas. For no function is Population Reports seen as not effective by more than 6% of the respondents.

Awareness and Utilization of PIP Services other than
Population Reports

The following tabulations were made from the responses of population professionals and randomly selected readers in relation to their awareness of the scope of PIP services.

	Yes	No	No Answer
A5, B6 Have you known of the availability of multiple copies of <u>Population Reports</u> ?			
population professionals	53%	38%	9%
randomly selected readers	44%	54%	2%
A7, B8 Have you known that we operate a POPLINE computer service?			
population professionals	60%	27%	13%
randomly selected readers	38%	34%	28%
AID Population Officers*	71%	7%	22%

*included because of differences from randomly selected reader response

The following tabulations were made from the responses of population professionals and randomly selected readers in relation to their degree of utilization or anticipation of utilization of PIP services other than Population Reports:

	Yes	No	No Answer
A6, B7 Have you in the past two years requested additional copies of <u>Reports</u> [for teaching or distribution at meetings]?			
population professionals	33%	56%	11%
randomly selected readers	20%	76%	4%
A9, B11 Have you ever requested copies of articles, documents, or other printed materials from us?			
population professionals	33%	54%	13%
randomly selected readers	16%	79%	5%
B8a* Have you ever requested or received a POPLINE search?			
randomly selected readers	9%	86%	5%
B8c* Do you anticipate using the POPLINE service in the future?			
	72%	10%	18%

*items not included on questionnaire A

The tabulations displayed in this section indicate that, in general, one third to one half of the individuals in population and related fields are not aware of the scope of PIP services and 56 to 80 percent have not utilized available services. Population professionals appear to be more aware of and to utilize the services more often than do the randomly selected readers. However, the response to item B8c may indicate that, once responding Population Reports readers become aware of a service, i.e. POPLINE, they plan to use it during future activities.

Usefulness of Possible PIP Services

The following tabulations were made from the responses of population professionals and randomly selected readers to specific possibilities related to the following question:

A8, B10 Would it be useful to you for us to prepare and distribute other publications or provide other services such as:

	Useful	Not Useful	No Answer
a) an up-to-date selection of abstracts of key articles from other publications?			
population professionals	60%	22%	18%
randomly selected readers	86%	2%	12%
b) bibliographies on subjects of special interest?			
population professionals	51%	29%	20%
randomly selected readers	71%	9%	20%
*AID Population Officers	36%	50%	14%
c) bibliographies plus abstracts on subjects of special interest?			
population professionals	60%	20%	20%
randomly selected readers	75%	7%	18%
d) an index to items in POPLINE, the computerized data base?			
population professionals	62%	18%	20%
randomly selected readers	59.5%	13%	27.5%
e) wall charts or posters, or other visual aids based on materials appearing in <u>Population Reports</u> ?			
population professionals	56%	29%	11%
randomly selected readers	82%	7%	11%

*included because of difference from randomly selected reader response.

These data show that at least 50% of the questionnaire respondents perceived each of the five services listed as useful. As compared to the population professionals, a higher percentage of the randomly selected readers perceived each service as potentially useful. The difference in perceived usefulness between the two groups of respondents was particularly marked for items 'a' (86% vs. 60%) and 'e' (82% vs. 56%).

Effectiveness of PIP Services

The following tabulations were made from the responses of questionnaire respondents in relation to their experience with specific PIP services. Half of the items were present on questionnaire A only, thus half of the items were answered only by randomly selected readers.

	Yes	No	No Answer
B5a Population Reports are published in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic. Are you getting copies in the right language? randomly selected readers	90%	5%	5%
B8b If you have received a POPLINE search, were the materials useful to you? randomly selected readers (n=12)	100%	0%	0%
A9a, B11a If you have requested copies of articles, documents or other printed materials from us, did you receive them? population professionals (n=15) randomly selected readers (n=21)	100% 76%	0% 19%	0% 5%
A9b, B11b Were the requested materials useful to you? population professionals randomly selected readers	93% 81%	0% 5%	7% 14%

Responses to these four items indicate that, in general, the PIP services requested by individuals are being received and are useful to almost all recipients. The low numbers of people who responded to the 3 items relating to specific services must be considered before conclusions are made from

these data. Also, it should be noted that even though most appear to be satisfied with PIP services, 83% of the randomly selected readers felt that it would be useful if PIP developed links with one or more local institutions to improve distribution of PIP services (item B12).

Regional Differences

For the majority of questionnaire items, regional differences in answer choice frequencies were very slight. However, two important exceptions to this general finding were noted. The first group of exceptions relate to awareness and use of PIP services. The tabulations by region shown below reflect responding randomly selected readers only.

	Yes	No	No Answer
B6 Have you known that multiple copies of <u>Population Reports</u> can be provided for teaching purposes or distribution at meetings or conferences?			
Asia (n=29)	59%	34%	7%
Mid East (n=19)	63%	37%	0%
Africa (n=34)	35%	65%	0%
Latin America (n=49)	35%	63%	2%
B7 Have you in the past two years requested or used additional copies of <u>Population Reports</u> in this way?			
Asia	28%	69%	3%
Mid East	42%	58%	2%
Africa	18%	79%	3%
Latin America	8%	86%	6%
B8 Have you known that we operate a POPLINE computer service?			
Asia	66%	28%	6%
Mid East	63%	37%	0%
Africa	35%	62%	3%
Latin America	14%	16%	70%
B11 Have you ever requested copies of articles, documents, or other printed materials from us?			
Asia	28%	69%	3%
Mid East	21%	79%	0%
Africa	21%	73%	6%
Latin America	4%	88%	8%

These data indicate that respondents from Asia and the Mid East are better informed on PIP services and utilize PIP services more than do respondents from Africa and Latin America. Latin American Population Reports readers appear to be particularly uninformed about additional PIP services. This may be because the additional services, such as POPLINE and documents cited are in English rather than Spanish. The difference between Asia/Mid East and Africa/Latin America is especially noticeable on item B8 concerning awareness of POPLINE. However, in response to item B8a, which asks: Have you ever received a POPLINE search?, the yes answer percentages were: Asia - 17%, Mid East - 5%, Africa - 9%, and Latin America - 6%. Thus the marked difference in awareness of POPLINE services between Asia/MidEast and Africa/Latin America were not maintained in terms of actual POPLINE usage.

Regional differences also were observed in perceptions of effectiveness of various Population Reports functions. The tabulations shown below display regional differences in response to question B3 which asked readers to indicate the degree to which Population Reports has been effective in each of the functions listed.

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Not Effective	No Answer
a) conveying up-to-date news of important developments				
Asia	65%	35%	0%	0%
Mid East	68%	32%	0%	0%
Africa	71%	27%	0%	2%
Latin America	78%	18%	0%	4%
b) providing background information for policy formulation				
Asia	35%	55%	3%	7%
Mid East	48%	42%	5%	5%
Africa	38%	41%	9%	12%
Latin America	51%	31%	6%	12%
c) providing information and materials useful for research or reference				
Asia	62%	38%	0%	0%
Mid East	53%	32%	10%	5%
Africa	65%	27%	6%	2%
Latin America	74%	18%	0%	8%
d) providing information and materials useful for research and training				
Asia	62%	35%	0%	3%
Mid East	37%	47%	5%	11%
Africa	59%	29%	3%	9%
Latin America	53%	35%	6%	6%
e) introducing new project or program ideas				
Asia	52%	45%	0%	3%
Mid East	42%	42%	11%	5%
Africa	56%	35%	3%	6%
Latin America	45%	45%	6%	4%

As can be seen from these data, more randomly selected readers from Latin America appear to feel that Population Reports is very effective in regards to the first three

categories than do readers from other countries. This may reflect the fact that Population Reports is distributed throughout Latin America in Spanish (or Portuguese). On the other hand, fewer randomly selected readers from the Middle East appear to feel that Population Reports is very effective in the listed functions with the exception of function b (providing background information for policy formation).

Response to Open Ended Questions

Both questionnaires included a question which solicited suggestions of areas or topics which Population Reports could include to make them more useful to the field (item A and B4). Thirty-eight percent of the population professionals (17 individuals) and 49% of the randomly selected readers (64 individuals) responded to the question. The following topics or issues were mentioned five to seven times as suitable for inclusion in a Population Reports issue:

- Population and/or sex education;
- Current research on contraception;
- Economic development vs. population problems;
- Population profiles of specific countries;
- Management aspects of family planning programs.

An item which requested additional comments on Population Reports was worded differently on each questionnaire. Item A10 simply asked for "additional comments" whereas item B13 asked respondents to comment on the value of Population Reports - including specific issues that were or were not useful - and make suggestions for improving the series.

Thirty-three percent of the population professionals (15 individuals) and 71% of the randomly selected readers (93 individuals) responded to the items.

Nine of the A questionnaire respondents and 53 of the B questionnaire respondents commented on the usefulness and/or high quality of Population Reports. Representative comments are listed below.

Randomly selected reader - Asia

"Excellent as an authoritative review, overview and summary of current topics of importance in family planning circles."

Randomly selected reader - Middle East

"Population Reports are of great value and importance to the practicing gynecologist especially to those running family planning centers, they provide up-to-date informations from nearly every part in the world"

Randomly selected reader - Latin America

"all these publications have seemed very important to me... and have been very useful to me."

Population professionals

"We always look forward to receiving copies of your Population Reports, they are the most practical and convenient reference source."

"an important service to the scientific community as well as to pop. programs"

"Publications of consistently high quality comprehensive, reasonably balanced, well written, good format, well illustrated, an invaluable service to the field"

Nine of the additional responses on B questionnaires

related to delivery problems of Population Reports and/or to the delay in receiving foreign language editions.

Two other open-ended questions were included in questionnaire B only. One (B9) asked for suggestions to improve the POPLINE services. Thirty-four individuals (26%) responded to this item. Three people suggested that sample POPLINE searches should be included in issues of Population Reports. Five people suggested that POPLINE services should be locally available and five people stated that more practical examples and information concerning POPLINE was needed in order for it to be utilized. The second open ended B item was B12a which asked for suggestions of institutions with which PIP could develop links to improve distribution. Seventy-nine percent of the randomly selected readers responded to this question.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Population Reports: Current Status

Among the individuals who responded to the evaluation questionnaire, Population Reports is a widely read and appreciated publication. More than 50% of the respondents see it as very effective in conveying up-to-date news, in providing research and reference material and in providing research and training material. Eighty percent or more of the respondents felt that the Reports are moderately or very effective in providing information for policy formulation and for introducing new projects or program ideas. Regional differences in terms of these perceptions of effectiveness were not great. However, there was a tendency for more Latin American respondents to perceive Population Reports as a very effective publication, especially in comparison to Mid Eastern respondents.

A clear majority of the additional comments by respondents indicated that the Reports were very valuable to population, health, and community workers in less developed countries. Other comments addressed two basic areas, suggestions for future topics and improvement of distribution procedures. The suggestions for future Reports topics include some (i.e. Population Education) which are already scheduled for publication. Other suggestions which conform with PIP policies are being considered. A few respondents complained of delays in receiving Population Reports copies and in receiving foreign language editions. These problems are generally unavoidable due to postage

systems and to the time involved in accurate translating of manuscripts. However, the PIP distribution department is working to keep the Reports mailing list current and accurate so as to assure that readers receive issues promptly.

Additional PIP Services: Current Status and Future Possibilities

The evaluation questionnaire results indicated that, in general, the Population Reports reprint service, additional publications services, and the POPLINE services are underutilized by all Population Reports readers. Less than 50% of respondents were aware of the Population Reports reprint service and only 38% of the randomly selected readers were familiar with the POPLINE services. Even lower percentages of both population professionals and of randomly selected readers had ever utilized one of the services. This lack of knowledge and utilization of additional PIP services was particularly marked for respondents from Mid Eastern and Latin American countries. It should be noted, however, that POPLINE only became publicly available and widely promoted through the National Library of Medicine in December 1980. Before 1980, these services were available under the name POPINFORM but were not widely promoted or disseminated.

Those individuals who had utilized a specific PIP service were satisfied with the service and perceived it as useful to them. Most respondents indicated an interest in utilizing the services, although it would appear that more

information about the services would increase the chances of additional utilization.

In response to the list of five possible services which PIP could provide, over 50% of the respondents indicated that each of the five would be useful. Over 80% of the randomly selected readers indicated that two particular services, providing an up-to-date selection of key abstracts and providing wall charts or other Population Reports-related visual material, would be useful.

The apparent enthusiasm with which PIP services other than Population Reports are viewed contrasts with the current underutilization of these services. Many comments in response to question B9 (which asked how POPLINE could be made more useful) indicated that the underuse of POPLINE is mainly due to ignorance about the service. It seems probable that ignorance also contributes to underuse of other PIP services. The PIP staff is working to develop a means by which POPLINE and other services can be better described and promoted.

Future PIP Evaluation Efforts

The problem of inadequate questionnaire return rate in this evaluation activity was an important one. The current return rates were significantly greater than the rates of the 1974 and 1973 surveys. Nevertheless, even the relatively high questionnaire A return rate (48%) is low enough to pose serious threats to the validity of the evaluation results. The logistic problems which plague a survey of this type make commonly accepted return rates of

90% or greater nearly impossible. Inefficient postal systems, long mailing times, uncertain addresses, and domestic instability are just some of the problems which may prevent communication between PIP and selected readers. To illustrate the magnitude of this communication problem, on July 8, 1981, PIP received a completed 1978 evaluation questionnaire which had been mailed from Togo, West Africa, in December of 1980. A 6-month or one-year delay is hardly rare, but a four year communication delay seems noteworthy.

The use of AID Population officers as intermediaries in the mailing and return of questionnaires is not recommended for future use. In defense of the officers, many of them received the evaluation materials in December, and thus holiday leaves were undoubtedly a factor in their low response rate. Nevertheless, Population Officers are extremely overburdened. Asking them to mail questionnaires, record mailing and return dates, and forward evaluation packets to the United States was not successful in this evaluation activity and it is doubtful that it would be successful in another, similar activity. It is probable that the only way to obtain return rates greater than 50% is through repeated mailings to each evaluation participant. Even then, according to the Population Officers, there are some countries where a return rate of 50% would be extremely unusual.

Repeated mailings have been effective in increasing the reader response rate in other communications between PIP and Population Reports readers. When the PIP distribution

department contacted the Tanzanian AID Population Officer concerning the current status of the PIP mailing list for Tanzania, the officer, on his own initiative, wrote to the 262 names on the mailing list. He obtained a 37% return to his initial mailing. By sending a second letter in which readers were told that non-response would result in removal of their names from the PIP mailing list, PIP was able to prompt an additional 32% return which resulted in a total response rate of 57%. A third mailing might have increased this total response even more, with the result being a respectable response rate for the type of mailing situation encountered in less developed countries. It is suggested that future evaluation activities include at least two and preferably three mailings to questionnaire recipients. If possible, an incentive of some kind (an interesting publication or visual aid) should be offered to respondents. In addition, the time of year should be carefully considered so that holidays do not lessen the chances of successfully communicating with Population Reports readers.

Results tabulated by Wayne
Quillin and written up by
Jacqueline Sherris, Ph.D.
July 28, 1981.

QUESTIONNAIRE A

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November 20, 1980

The Population Information Program, which publishes and distributes POPULATION REPORTS and, in cooperation with Columbia University Center for Population and Family Health, offers the POPLINE information retrieval service, wants to learn how it can better serve its clientele. An AID-appointed evaluation team has been reviewing the program and a questionnaire has been mailed to a random sample of readers of REPORTS.

We specifically need comments from population agency representatives on the usefulness of POPULATION REPORTS to the field. We will appreciate it if you can take the time to complete the few questions below and return this form to us as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Phyllis T. Piotrow

Phyllis T. Piotrow, Ph.D.
Director
Population Information Program

-
1. Do you receive POPULATION REPORTS? Yes _____ No _____
If you are not receiving POPULATION REPORTS and would like to, check here
 2. Do you read POPULATION REPORTS regularly? Yes _____ No _____
 3. POPULATION REPORTS tries to serve the following functions. Please indicate the degree to which they have been effective in each:
 - a) conveying up-to-date news of important developments; _____
very eff. mod. eff. not eff.
 - b) providing background information for policy formulation; _____
very eff. mod. eff. not eff.
 - c) providing information & materials useful for research or reference; _____
very eff. mod. eff. not eff.
 - d) providing information and materials useful for research and training; _____
very eff. mod. eff. not eff.
 - e) introducing new project or program ideas _____
very eff. mod. eff. not eff.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE LETTER BEFORE THE FUNCTION YOU CONSIDER MOST USEFUL TO THE FIELD.

PLEASE CHECK BEFORE THE LETTER OF THE FUNCTION YOU CONSIDER MOST USEFUL TO YOU.

4. What other areas or topics could POPULATION REPORTS include to make them more useful to the field?

5. Have you known that multiple copies of POPULATION REPORTS can be provided for teaching purposes or distribution at meetings or conferences?

Yes _____ No _____

6. Have you in the past two years requested or used additional copies of REPORTS in this way?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Have you known that we operate a POPLINE (formerly POPINFORM) computer service that can provide, to those who request them, bibliographies with abstracts on population topics?

Yes _____ No _____

8. Would it be useful to you for us to prepare and distribute other publications or provide other services such as:

___ a) an up-to-date selection of abstracts of key articles from other publications? Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ b) bibliographies on subjects of special interest? Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ c) bibliographies plus abstracts on subjects of special interest? Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ d) an index to items in POPLINE, the computerized data base? Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ e) wall charts or posters, or other visual aids based on materials appearing in POPULATION REPORTS? Useful ___ Not useful ___

* (Please write in number "1" next to the service you would find most useful, a number "2" for the second ranking service, and so on.)

9. Have you ever requested copies of articles, documents, or other printed materials from us?

Yes _____ No _____

a) If yes, did you receive the requested materials?

Yes _____ No _____

b) Were they useful to you?

Useful ___ Not useful ___

10. Additional comments. _____

d) providing information and materials useful for research and training

very eff. mod. eff. not eff.

e) introducing new project or program ideas

very eff. mod. eff. not eff.

* (Please circle the letter before the function you consider most useful to you.)

4. What other areas or topics could POPULATION REPORTS include to make them more useful to you? _____

5. POPULATION REPORTS are published in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.

a) Are you getting copies in the right language

Yes _____ No _____

b) If not, which language would you prefer? _____

6. Have you known that multiple copies of POPULATION REPORTS can be provided for teaching purposes or distribution at meetings or conferences?

Yes ___ No ___

7. Have you in the past two years requested or used additional copies of POPULATION REPORTS in this way?

Yes ___ No ___

8. Have you known that we operate a POPLINE (formerly POPINFORM) computer service that can provide, to those who request them, bibliographies with abstracts on population topics? (A form for requesting this service will normally be found inside the back page of issues of POPULATION REPORTS)

Yes ___ No ___

a) Have you ever requested or received a POPLINE search?

Yes ___ No ___

b) If yes, were the materials you received useful to you?

Yes ___ No ___

c) Do you anticipate using the POPLINE service in the future?

Yes ___ No ___

9. Can you suggest ways through which our POPLINE search and retrieval service could be made more useful to you and others? _____

10. Would it be useful to you for us to prepare and distribute other publications or provide other services such as:

___ a) an up-to-date selection of abstracts of key articles from other publications?

Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ b) bibliographies on subjects of special interest?

Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ c) bibliographies plus abstracts on subjects of special interest?

Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ d) an index to items in POPLINE, the computerized data base?

Useful ___ Not useful ___

___ e) wall charts or posters, or other visual aids based on materials appearing in POPULATION REPORTS?

Useful ___ Not useful ___

* (Please write in number "1" next to the service you would find most useful, a number "2" for the second ranking service, and so on.)

ever requested copies of articles, documents,
printed materials from us?

Yes ___ No ___

Yes ___ No ___

Useful ___ Not useful ___

did you receive the requested materials?
they useful to you?

to be useful to you and others in your country
to try to develop links with one or more insti-
s in your country to improve the distribution of
POPULATION REPORTS and other materials and to improve
quality of our service?

Yes ___ No ___

so, what institutions or organizations would you suggest?

use comment on the value of POPULATION REPORTS - including specific issues
if they were or were not useful -- and make suggestions for improving the series.

Best Available Document.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Distribution

<u>Region</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>No. Sent</u>	<u>No. Returned</u>	<u>% Returned</u>
Asia	Bangladesh	25	11	44%
	India	30	0*	0%
	Indonesia	25	5	20%
	Nepal	20	6	30%
	Philippines	25	0*	0%
	Thailand	25	8	32%
	TOTAL	150	30	20%
Middle East	Egypt	25	5	20%
	Jordan	15	5	33%
	Monocco	20	6	30%
	Syria	10	0*	0%
	Tunisia	20	5	25%
	TOTAL	90	21	23%
Africa	Botswana	15	2	13%
	Cameroon	15	2	13%
	Gambia	10	0*	0%
	Ghana	25	8	32%
	Ivory Coast	15	0	0%
	Kenya	21	3	14%
	Liberia	14	0*	0%
	Mali	10	4	40%
	Niger	10	0*	0%
	Nigeria	25	0*	0%
	Rwanda	15	4	27%
	Somalia	10	0*	0%
	Swaziland	10	2**	20%
	Tanzania	20	6	30%
	Upper Volta	10	1	10%
	Zaire	15	3	20%
TOTAL	240	35	15%	
Latin America	Barbados	10	0	0%
	Bolivia	20	5	25%
	Brazil	30	4	13%
	Columbia	25	1**	4%
	Costa Rica	20	7	35%
	Dominican Republic	20	0*	0%
	Ecuador	20	0*	0%
	El Salvador	20	4	20%
	Guatemala	20	0*	0%
	Guyana	10	8	80%
	Haiti	16	2**	13%
	Honduras	20	6	30%
	Jamaica	20	2**	10%
	Mexico	30	8	27%
	Panama	15	5	33%
	Peru	20	0*	0%
	TOTAL	316	52	16%

* No response from AID Population Officer

** No response from AID Population Officer. Questionnaires returned directly from randomly selected readers.

AN EVALUATION OF
THE POPULATION INFORMATION PROGRAM
OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

A Report Prepared By:
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During The Period:
SEPTEMBER 8-12, 1980

Supported By The:
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
(ADSS) AID/DSPE-C-0053

AUTHORIZATION:
Ltr. AID/DS/POP: 1/21/82
Assgn. No. 582058

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Population Information Program (PIP) is a relatively autonomous activity of the Hopkins Population Center of the Johns Hopkins University (JHU). It is funded by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Its principal concerns are the publication and worldwide distribution--in five languages--of Population Reports and the development and maintenance of a computerized literature-search service, POPLINE. Population Reports is a comprehensive and authoritative review of population issues; it is produced six times a year in an attractive and readable loose-leaf format. POPLINE services are provided in collaboration with the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and the Center for Population and Family Health (CPFH) of Columbia University.

Seventy-eight Reports have been published and distributed to a mailing list that now includes some 80,500 addresses in 125 countries. New addresses continue to be added to the list. PIP's goal is to expand the list to at least 100,000. Seventy percent of the addresses are in less developed countries (LDCs); slightly more than half are identified with health or medicine. Approximately 105,000 copies of each issue were distributed in mid-1981; 56 percent of the copies were in English.

The Reports series is comprehensive in its coverage. The articles are highly readable, timely, and scientifically sound. The series is highly regarded by professional people in population organizations and by readers in all regions of the world. Issues remain in print as long as there is a demand for them, and bulk copies are available to training institutions upon request.

The evaluation team could find little fault with either the topics selected for the periodical or the method of writing, editing, and publishing the articles. The mailing list needs attention, however. Moreover, production staff are concerned about the length of the issues, which now average approximately forty pages. Some readers, especially those of non-English editions, have expressed their dissatisfaction with the length of time it takes Reports to reach them.

The evaluation team offered several recommendations to improve production and publication of Population Reports. The recommendations are summarized below.

- Efforts to reduce the length of the Reports should be continued, but not to the extent that completeness of coverage or readability is impaired.

- More publicity should be given to the availability of back copies and multiple copies for teaching purposes.
- Attention should be given to the problem of reducing delivery time, perhaps by arranging for local distribution through LDC organizations.
- A special effort should be made to increase circulation to individuals and institutions in Africa.
- Consideration should be given to the distribution in Malaysia of the proposed Indonesian-language edition.
- Consideration should be given to the development of better ways to categorize the names and addresses on the mailing list.

The subcontracted POPINFORM has been transferred to the NLM as a collaborative effort of the PIP and the CPFH, and it has been renamed POPLINE. POPLINE now contains approximately 70,000 records; the entire file of Population Index will be put into the system during the next six months and will be kept up to date thereafter. Approximately 500 journals are being examined regularly, and nearly 700 items a month are being added. Requests for literature searches are running between 100 and 150 per month; 75 percent of the service is being provided to LDCs.

Although POPLINE is described regularly in Reports, a survey of readers indicates that many persons do not know about the service. The evaluation team, therefore, recommends that steps be taken to increase knowledge of POPLINE among readers of Reports. Perhaps this could be done by publishing a special issue of Reports that is devoted to information sources, including POPLINE, or a brochure that describes all aspects of the service, including its availability, and that is distributed periodically with the Reports. A new activity proposed by the PIP--the monthly distribution to carefully selected LDC addresses of 600 abstracts of important citations that have been added recently to POPLINE--should help to publicize the service, and it may lead to its increased use.

Briefings on the PIP and its services are given to the more than 200 trainees participating in the Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics (JHPIEGO) who come to Baltimore each year and to approximately 150 other visitors. Press releases issued through the Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health help also to increase awareness of the PIP's services and materials.

The management and administration of the PIP are excellent. The relatively small staff is remarkably productive, producing a large and comprehensive volume of Reports, maintaining a library and documentation service, keeping POPLINE up-to-date with current materials, and incorporating large backlogs of other materials such as Population Index.

As part of the evaluation, a questionnaire-survey of a random sample of readers of Reports, AID population officers, and professionals in other population organizations was undertaken. Incomplete returns indicate that the Reports series is read and valued widely, is highly rated by professionals in the field, and is serving the purposes for which it was intended. The returns also reveal a substantial regional difference in knowledge about and use of the PIP's services and a lack of knowledge about the POPLINE service among a considerable number of readers. A detailed account of the responses to the survey is attached as Appendix G.

Mailing List Improvements
Population Information Program

In response to the comments of the Evaluation Group (Lyle Saunders and Susan Robbins) about the PIP mailing list and the need for more attention to the list, PIP staff has devoted considerable time and effort to correction, elimination of duplicates, and careful checking before any new names are added. These efforts began in 1981 and have intensified during 1982. In July of 1981, the mailing list for Population Reports reached a high of over 80,000 addresses. This was in accordance with contract requirements (Modification No. 5, Feb. 20, 1980) that "the contractor shall make an organized and systematic effort to increase the international mailing list to 80,000."

For the past 12 months, PIP has taken extensive steps to improve the quality of the list, in addition to adding new addresses in response to specific requests and continuing to make additions from lists of population related organizations and individuals. The net result of the effort has been to maintain the list at the 80,000 level, improve its accuracy, increase the number of addresses in LDC's by 2,500, and bring the number of addresses added or corrected within the last 2½ years to 52.5% of the total.

The following 12 specific measures have been undertaken or are underway:

- Mass Mailing List Review: In February 1982, seventeen members of the Population Information Program staff were each assigned a segment of approximately 5,000 mailing list entries for review for address and coding errors and duplication. This two-day long effort resulted in approximately 3,000 deletes of duplicate or incomplete entries and over 5,000 corrections to Names/Addresses and Coding. The computer was updated with all of these actions prior to June 1.
- Experimental Mailing to Senegal and Peru: To determine what the response rate might be if addressees were contacted directly and to minimize the expense of such a test, trial mailings were sent in March 1982 to Senegal and Peru. The total number of addresses was 1,265. The entire cost for envelopes, printing, translation, artwork, computer, labor, and postage was \$.93 per address. At the end of two months, 444 responses (35%) had been received. The response rate was 38% for Peru and 27% for Senegal. A follow-up mailing to the 821 addresses that had not responded was made in June.
- Experimental Mailing to Thailand: In this experiment, the Clearing-House and Information Section at ESCAP in Bangkok agreed to mail letters to all Thai addresses using PIP material, but applying local postage. ESCAP agreed to absorb the local postage costs and handling. The PIP cost is \$.12 per address. The total mailing consisted of 1,195 letters sent in May. By June, 104 (8.7%) replies had been transmitted to Baltimore, and ESCAP advised that more were being accumulated and would be returned to PIP.
- Special Requests to Population/Family Planning Centers: Letters were sent with copies of appropriate parts of the roster to a responsible person at seventeen locations, such as the World Bank, Center for Disease Control, The Ortho Research Foundation, Harvard, etc., where a number of individuals were receiving copies of the Reports. The lists consisted of over 400 names. Most were returned with corrections, deletions, and requests for addition of new names.

- Requests to AID Population Officers: Country lists consisting of over 16,500 addresses were given to thirteen Latin American Population officers on April 22, 1982 asking for their review. So far, three of these lists have been returned with corrections and changes which are being input to the system. A review had been requested previously (in 1980) from AID Population officers throughout the world, and so far 15 responses, with corrections and additions have been received.

- Verification of Student Addresses: On June 8, 1982 letters were sent to 180 addresses that are coded as "Student" in an attempt to weed out any that had moved or were no longer interested in Population Reports. By June 21, 35 had replied, all requesting to remain on the list. The majority are no longer students and supplied information that allows the coding to be corrected.

- Review of Southeast Asian Mailing List by ESCAP Personnel: A listing supplied to ESCAP in April has been returned with corrections or changes obtained from comparing their records with PIP listings. These changes are now being made. In addition, they have supplied a current copy of their Population Division mailing list. Appropriate names from this list will be added to the PIP mailing list after the usual checking for duplicates.

- Check on Moroccan Chief Medical Officer List: In February, PIP sent letters to 41 addresses in Morocco receiving relatively large shipments (27 to 500 copies) of Reports in French and Arabic. About 40% of the addresses were eventually removed from the list for failure to reply. Within a month following this action, the Ministry of Public Health requested that all of the addresses that had been deleted be reinstated and that two medical schools that had not previously received copies be added. This request was for copies in both French and Arabic.

- Verification of Multiple Copy Addresses: There are 836 addresses on the mailing list receiving five or more copies of Population Reports. Letters have been sent to all of them to verify that the Reports are still wanted and that the multiple copy requirements are correct.

- Correction of Name Problems: In the mass review of the mailing list, a large number of names in Spanish speaking areas were found to be alphabetized incorrectly because the input clerk had assumed the matronymic was the family name. In addition, a number of Portuguese names had been entered incorrectly because of confusion about the proper use of the Portuguese equivalent for the English "Junior." 375 letters were sent out on May 14 in an attempt to correct the Portuguese problem. So far, about 100 replies have been received. All of the problems with Spanish names have been corrected by relaying the information. This lack of consistency in alphabetizing caused some duplicate mailings, but the duplicates are now being deleted from the list and procedures to prevent future problems are in place.

--Revised Handling of JHPIEGO Address Lists: PIP adds the names of all JHPIEGO trainees to the mailing list immediately after each class is completed. PIP had been receiving a preliminary address list that was frequently incomplete for input to the computer. Now only the final confirmed address list will be input. In an effort to correct past problems, PIP obtained the lists for the last ten classes (226 names) and checked them against the list making corrections as needed.

--A mailing is being prepared for all LDC names coded Media, Journalist, Press etc. to determine whether Population Reports are being directed to the right individuals and publications, and whether these individuals want press releases, air mail copies, or other information in order to provide better coverage in the mass media. About 800 names are involved in the English mailing.