PD-ABC-511

A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY - PART I

1. BEFORE FILLING OUT THIS FORM, READ THE ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS.
2. USE LETTER QUALITY TYPE, NOT "DOT MATRIX" TYPE.

IDENTIFICATION DATA

A. Reporting A.I.D. Unit:
Mission or AID/W Office: ST/POP
(ES# _____)

B. Was Evaluation Scheduled in Current FY Annual Evaluation Plan?
Yes [ ] Slipped [XX] Ad Hoc [ ]
Evaluation Plan Submission Date: FY ____ Q ____

C. Evaluation Timing
Interim [ ] Final [XX] Ex Post [ ] Other [ ]

D. Activity or Activities Evaluated (List the following information for project(s) or program(s) evaluated; if not applicable, list title and date of the evaluation report.)

Project No.	Project /Program Title	First PROAG or Equivalent (FY)	Most Recent PACD (Mo/Yr)	Planned LOP Cost (000)	Amount Obligated to Date (000)
936-3024	Natural Family Planning Education and Training		5/88	$1,100,000	$1,983,777

ACTIONS

E. Action Decisions Approved By Mission or AID/W Office Director

Action(s) Required	Name of Officer Responsible for Action	Date Action to be Completed
Recommendations of the team will be given to the Project Director of the Natural Family Planning Project with Georgetown University (the Institute for International Studies in Natural Family Planning) for review and action as appropriate. Further support to the Family of the Americas Foundation, Inc. (FAF) for training or materials development would be required to come from that umbrella project. (Note: Since 1986, it has been the ST/POP policy that all NFP-only projects must be reviewed, and if approved, funded under this Georgetown University NFP Project.)	Project Director	As approp.

(Attach extra sheet if necessary)

APPROVALS

F. Date Of Mission Or AID/W Office Review Of Evaluation: (Month) January (Day) (Year) 1990

G. Approvals of Evaluation Summary And Action Decisions:

	Project/Program Officer	Representative of Borrower/Grantee	Evaluation Officer	Mission or AID/W Office Director
Name (Typed)	POP/R, Jeff Spieler POP/IT, Charlotte Ureksoy		ST/PO, Fern Finley	Duff G. Gillespie
Signature	Charlotte Ureksoy	(see Sec.L Comments)	Fern Finley	
Date	1/18/91		1/28/91	1/25/91

ABSTRACT

H. Evaluation Abstract (Do not exceed the space provided)

Executive Summary

This is an evaluation of the A.I.D. Cooperative Agreement with the Family of the Americas Foundation (FAF). This agreement provided FAF with $1,983,777 between 1984 and 1988 to carry out activities whose goal was to make information on natural family planning (NFP)* more widely available, primarily in developing countries, in order to expand the choices available to couples who wish to plan their families.

The Cooperative Agreement stipulated that FAF was to implement an information and training program directed toward the following:

- Producing and distributing a film on the Billings Ovulation Method (BOM)** for family planning service workers;

- Producing and distributing educational materials for teaching and practicing the BOM worldwide (these materials included teaching posters and user charting kits in five languages -- English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Arabic -- as well as a teaching curriculum, book, and slide show in English, Spanish, and French); and

- Developing and conducting a U.S.-based training course for 250 participants from around the world (but primarily from Latin America) who wished to become BOM teacher trainers.

---

*The term "natural family planning" describes methods of planning or preventing pregnancy based on periodic abstinence and that rely on women's observations of naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of the menstrual cycle.

**BOM or the cervical mucus method of NFP is based on self-observation of the changes in the texture and quantity of the mucus produced by the cervix (neck of the uterus) that are detectable at the opening of the vagina (vulva) and that occur throughout the menstrual cycle under the influence of different hormones.

COSTS

I. Evaluation Costs

1. Evaluation Team

Name	Affiliation	Contract Number OR TDY Person Days	Contract Cost OR TDY Cost (U.S. $)	Source of Funds
Ms. Deborah Rogow	Independent Consultant	29.00	$9,357.65	ST/POP
Dr. Anna Flynn	Univ. of Birmingham, England	18.75	8,471.78	ST/POP
Dr. Patricic Mena	Univ. of Chile, Medical Faculty	21.5	9,419.45	ST/POP

2. Mission/Office Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) 20-25

3. Borrower/Grantee Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) 10-12

SUMMARY

J. Summary of Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations (Try not to exceed the three (3) pages provided)
Address the following items:

- Purpose of evaluation and methodology used
- Purpose of activity(ies) evaluated
- Findings and conclusions (relate to questions)
- Principal recommendations
- Lessons learned

Mission or Office:	Date This Summary Prepared:	Title And Date Of Full Evaluation Report:

Project Impact

- The Film. There has been no positive impact on the ability of family planning programs to inform clients about the basic fertility cycle or about natural family planning (NFP), as the film directed toward this audience was never made. Therefore, family planning programs will continue to be deficient in these areas and in their attempts to provide informed choice on all contraceptive options. It is important to note that the current film could easily be adapted for this audience by an organization that is accustomed to and comfortable with family planning programs.

- Materials Development. The materials produced are generally, but not uniformly, technically accurate, visually attractive, and durable. Both field responses and professional review indicate that the teaching posters are the most useful among the materials produced, while the user kits are the least useful. There are, however, some fundamental questions about the cultural appropriateness and practicality of the materials produced. In addition, no target audience pretesting was done on any of the materials.

- Training. The long-term impact of the training will be to professionalize, standardize, and increase the training of new BOM instructors. It will also be to increase the public profile of the trainers in their countries as they carry out promotional and policy activities with greater confidence. In most cases, these activities are aimed at promoting NFP. In some cases, however, participants developed more negative attitudes toward other contraceptive methods and/or more motivation to denigrate these methods, and are attacking the family planning agencies that provide these methods. Where this is true, the training may result in aggravating the conflictive relationship between NFP and multi-method providers. Continued biases on both sides will only produce misinformation which acts against the informed choice of the public.

- Overall Impact of Activities on NFP User Levels. Although any potential long-term impact on BOM use cannot be conclusively analyzed with the currently available data, three to four years after most participants received their training and materials, there appears to be little to no significant impact on general user interest in the Billings Ovulation Method.

4. In future contracts and Cooperative Agreements that involve materials development, A.I.D. should ensure systematic pretesting in the target audience by qualified experts as part of the development process.

5. In places where distribution of more BOM instructional materials is a priority, there should be independent testing, with the posters taking precedence. However, given that user data indicate a probable greater need for NFP promotion (and possibly institutional development) than for more materials, extensive retroactive field testing of all the materials produced by FAF is not indicated at this time.

6. A.I.D. (and its umbrella projects) should fund only those agencies that can demonstrate a willingness and ability to cooperate with A.I.D. and other Cooperating Agencies and that conform with A.I.D. population policy. In the field of NFP, such organizations do exist.

Project Implementation

The BOM Film

FAF failed to comply with several aspects of the Cooperative Agreement with respect to the film. First, FAF did not respect the originally defined film audience. As a result, there is still no film on NFP appropriate for family planning service providers. However, portions of the current film (and possibly of the preprint and original footage) are adaptable for the originally intended audience.

Second, the Cooperative Agreement stated that FAF was to deliver all original footage, preprint materials, and the master print to A.I.D. There is some dispute as to the technical definition of the "master print" and whether that has been delivered. It is more important to note, however, that FAF has not delivered either the preprint materials or the original footage, which is in fact what is required to continue generating new "internegatives" for new prints and/or to adapt the film. FAF has further demonstrated its sustained intent to relinquish as little control of the film as possible (content as well as materials); there is some concern that a misunderstanding over the master or internegative version of the film may have been influenced by this intent.

The evaluation team considers these failures to comply with the deliverables as described in the Cooperative Agreement to be of a serious nature.

Curriculum and Training

The training workshops appear to have been well organized and the faculty was appropriate (with the exception of the instructor of the French courses who spoke no French). Although the curriculum is lacking in some important pedagogical and didactic areas, most basic information is included and is generally technically accurate. The curriculum remains a useful document, particularly as a reference tool.

Concerns about how FAF conducted the training include 1) FAF's rigidity and lack of cooperation in respecting the priorities and guidance of A.I.D. in the selection of countries and participants, in the issuance of invitations to take part in the training, etc.; 2) FAF's apparent failure to exercise caution in avoiding treatment of controversial topics beyond the content of the curriculum; and 3) the overwhelming amount of administrative backstopping required of A.I.D. staff to assist FAF in the implementation of training-related activities.

Cooperating Agency Relationship with A.I.D.

The stormy and intense review process associated with this project indicates a lack of cooperation on the recipient's (FAF) part. In the view of the evaluation team, FAF cannot be called a "cooperating agency" of A.I.D. in any meaningful way, and failed to respect both the letter and the spirit of the terms of the Cooperative Agreement.

For its part, A.I.D. appears to have engaged in a thoughtful but exhausting effort to make the materials produced by FAF more responsible, accurate, and appropriate, but eventually gave up. When the review and recommendation process failed to bring about an acceptable resolution, however, perhaps the project's Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) should have continued insisting on changes and even brought the project to a halt.

A.I.D.'s formal approval at each stage of the project appears to have been given for a variety of reasons: A.I.D. staffs' frustration with the lack of responsiveness on the part of FAF to proposed changes; the desire not to delay or cancel production; the disproportionate amount of time this project was demanding of A.I.D. staff; a possible failure to recognize that not all outputs were being delivered; and there may have been political pressures within A.I.D. that precluded bringing the FAF project to a halt for technical reasons. In addition, the Cooperative Agreement did not specifically require that materials developed by FAF be field tested before production, a technical requirement that A.I.D. assumed would have been part of any materials production project.

Although refusing approval or obtaining professional pretesting might have allowed A.I.D. the control it needed to avoid or resolve disputes, it is possible that neither measure was feasible. Nor would these measures have substituted for having a cooperative and flexible recipient agency: It is reasonable to assume that the work might have been accomplished more efficiently and with less frustration on both sides if there had been more tolerance and flexibility on the part of FAF.

Project's Funding Process

A review of project files and discussions with A.I.D. staff involved in the project indicated that A.I.D.'s decision to fund this project may have been due to the influence of some members of the U.S. Congress.

Because a possible integration of religious doctrine into the NFP training courses carried out by FAF might have had the net effect of advancing religious doctrine and fostering excessive entanglement with religion, there is also concern that A.I.D., in supporting this project, may have violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which precludes the use of tax revenues for activities other than those that are purely secular.

Recommendations

1. A.I.D. should secure all original (including the 35mm) footage and preprint materials for the film immediately and make internegatives or prints available to FAF as needed.

2. A.I.D. should arrange for the film to be adapted in order to make it more appropriate for family planning service workers. This adaptation should be carried out by an agency such as the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), The Pathfinder Fund, or Johns Hopkins University, with technical collaboration from Georgetown University. (Any treatment of BOM in an adaptation should, of course, adhere to any copyright conventions that might require the Billings' authorization for any adaptation or change.)

3. A.I.D. should support broad-scale efforts to develop training and user materials that will allow multi-method programs to incorporate into the cafeteria of contraceptive options basic information about fertility and its application to family planning, including referral to NFP programs. The evaluation team views such efforts as a major strategic recommendation for narrowing the gap between NFP and multi-method providers. These information and training efforts should be carried out by a collaboration of population organizations (that are open to NFP) jointly with NFP organizations (or individual consultants) that are equally willing to support multi-method approaches.

6

ATTACHMENTS

K. Attachments (List attachments submitted with this Evaluation Summary; always attach copy of full evaluation report, even if one was submitted earlier; attach studies, surveys, etc., from "on-going" evaluation, if relevant to the evaluation report.)

Copy of Evaluation Report is attached.

COMMENTS

L. Comments By Mission, AID/W Office and Borrower/Grantee On Full Report

ST/POP believes this Evaluation Report is thorough and accurate. We believe this Report is as close to a consensus document as possible under the circumstances (one team member, chosen by FAF, on reflection did not agree with all aspects of the Report).

The Grantee took great issue with several of the weaknesses identified in the draft report. To the extent possible, the report was edited/revised to accommodate the Grantee's position. We have not heard from the Grantee since the final Report was distributed.