

PD-ABC-668

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Women's Training & Advisory Services (OPG)  
Project No. 517-0146

PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

The Women's Training & Advisory Services Project was designed to establish an institution which could coordinate resources from government and the private sector to improve employment opportunities to women in urban areas with low income and limited education. Specific objectives of the project were to plan, administer, support, and supervise skills training and human development training programs to assure that women possess the skills required to perform their jobs safely and efficiently. Counseling and employment-related services were provided to these women in understanding and in effectively utilizing available resources in the fields of health, education, housing, employment, legal rights, and nutrition.

An AID grant was approved for \$407,000, and local counterpart contribution amounting to \$141,793. The project was authorized on August 27, 1980, and PACD was December 31, 1984. The project was implemented by the Dominican private institution Acción Pro-Educación y Cultura (APEC), an indigenous PVO.

As for the achievement of project targets, the final evaluation indicated that 5,200 women were recruited and screened. The original plan only contemplated 2,000. A total of 1,328 women received skills training (500 planned); 1,127 received training in human resources (300 planned); 132 received training in microbusiness management; and 341 received individual counseling in legal matters and psychological problems. Target outputs were surpassed in most cases while changes were made in others to respond to specific needs of project participants and realities of the job market. By the end of the project, approximately 46% of the registered women were working as compared to 2% when the project started. Other indicators, such as changes in income of beneficiaries, access to credit, etc., are more difficult to measure. Of the 200 women interviewed at the end of the project, 56% reported having a monthly income above the minimum wage level as compared to 5% before the project.

The project is terminated, and expenditures to date amount to \$405,798.27 with an undisbursed balance of \$1,136.80 to be deobligated. The end-of-project evaluation carried out in August 1984 indicates that a Training Center has been established, all programmed training courses have been carried out, all equipment is in place, and a rotating fund has been established to finance micro-enterprises initiated through the project, thus indicating that the project fulfilled its goal of assisting target beneficiaries.

Lessons learned under this project include, among others, that women in low income, marginal neighborhoods can increase their income with a little additional training, and under correct guidance. A combination of individual willingness to improve with proper orientation and training can greatly increase job opportunities for low income women as proven under this project.

However, one of the major difficulties encountered under subject grant was the lack of credit for the target group. This was highlighted in the final project evaluation. The activities started under the project still continue, but at a lower pace. Although AID maintains contact with APEC and its leadership, no follow-up actions are required to close out the project.

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