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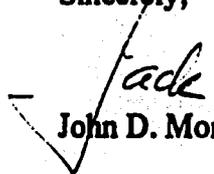
Mr. Gary Nederveld
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee CRWRC
2850 Kalamazoo Avenue, SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49560-0600

Dear Gary:

Since you wrote the initial letter inviting me to carry out the evaluation with your colleagues, I assume the final report goes to you. Here it is, ready for distribution to AID and CRWRC as you see fit.

I hope it turns out to be useful.

Sincerely,


John D. Montgomery

JDM:vk

Enclosure: CRWRC Report

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Executive Summary

Progress toward goals of Cooperative Agreement. All provisions of the Cooperative Agreement are on track. The detailed goals developed by the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) for the country activities supported by AID have been converted to country programs, and the degree of goal attainment, recorded in annual and semi-annual reports, has been, in the judgment of this team, satisfactory. Field evaluations have been frequent and, for the most part, comprehensive (see Annex 7).

Performance and Effectiveness in Belize and Bangladesh. Benefits delivered to farmer groups and refugee communities have been identifiable and are recognized by the intended beneficiaries. The degree of institutional sustainability is still in some doubt in both northern and southern projects in Belize, and alternative approaches to their continued usefulness and viability are under review. Prospects for institutional adaptation in that country will constitute the major concern for the future of the program, which is scheduled for phase-out by 1993. Both Bangladesh sites show evidence of group institutionalization and mounting activity. The establishment of a national board is under way to assume responsibility after CRWRC's support has been withdrawn.

Recommendations to AID/PVC. Relations between AID and CRWRC/Grand Rapids are formal but distant. AID's policy of rotating personnel has precluded the development of strong personal ties; AID has responded perfunctorily but for the most part adequately to CRWRC initiatives, but without much consideration for CRWRC's distinct qualities as a PVO, especially in matters involving financial flexibility. Technical assistance has been rendered effectively to field operations through joint AID-CRWRC training activities. AID's field missions have not had close relations with CRWRC staff members, especially in Belize, but the general posture has been supportive and sympathetic, especially in Bangladesh. Distribution of this report within AID/PVC should be accompanied by a frank discussion of future relations between the two parties, held at AID's expense in Washington and including three or four CRWRC representatives.

Recommendations to CRWRC. Communications between Grand Rapids and the field are excellent. There is some reason to believe that evaluations and field visits have been, if anything, too frequent to be cost-effective. The policies regarding abstention from the direct supplying of capital to beneficiaries are sound, given the goals of the program, and given CRWRC's ingenuity in generating support from other sources that could provide longer-term continuity to the local institutions involved. But the goal of sustainability needs to be reviewed carefully to insure that it does not result in unwise and premature withdrawal from projects that could continue to benefit from continued collaboration. The austerity of the management style dominating project operations is appropriate and cost-effective, and should not be altered. The interjection of diaconal goals is in harmony with the basic philosophy of the organization and is a powerful support to field operations and the morale of both staff and beneficiary participants. The use of quantitative indicators as measures of progress should be continued, but the formal reporting of goal attainment should be simplified, and the field should devote less attention to the injection of numbers and more to the consequences (including indirect effects) of CRWRC outputs. The indicators themselves should be carefully reviewed to insure that they do not displace other measures of success that would be more meaningful to field workers.

THE AID-CRWRC NEXUS: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Program

The Cooperative Agreement between AID and the Christian Reform World Relief Committee (1 May 89) originated from a shared common purpose, to eliminate some of the causes of poverty in Belize and Bangladesh. The purpose of the Agreement is

"to assist the Recipient to improve the quality of life of the rural poor people in Bangladesh and Belize."

CRWRC spelled out its program goal in these words:

"to increase farmer incomes, and decrease infant mortality and improve the nutritional levels of children in the target population. This includes the support of approximately 32 cooperatives and 160 local communities in Bangladesh, and 1 cooperative, 2 rural development organizations, and 6 village committees in Belize."

In its first annual report, Jan. 1990, CRWRC described the results it expected to achieve in the three-year program:

"In Bangladesh, the development of 160 local groups, 32 central committees, and possibly a regional organization which will assist 1,921 families. Child malnutrition rates will be reduced from 70% to 50%, and incomes will be increased by \$17 per family."

"In Belize, the development of seven committee and cooperatives and as many as two regional organizations which will assist 400 refugee and impoverished farm families. Child malnutrition rates will be reduced from 57% to 20%, and incomes will be increased by \$100 per family."

CRWRC has followed up on its first annual report with a semi-annual report for each of the two countries. The first year results were described as follows:

"In Bangladesh in 1989, the formation of...83 cooperatives...at Jamalpur. 1747 families were involved and 201 target children identified."

"In Belize, ...408 families were involved and 442 children identified. In Northern Belize, 183 children were under supervision, and the number of malnourished children decreased from 80 (44%) to 54 (30%). In the Valley of Peace, 259 children were under supervision and 11 of 42 malnourished children improved a degree, reducing the rate from 16% to 12%."

The expectations for the second year were defined with equal clarity:

"In Belize,...local committees will be functioning, 600 children will be in the health program, and the number malnourished will be reduced from 194 (32%) to 105 (17.5%). 450 families will have increased yields and incomes."

"In Bangladesh,...122 community cooperatives will be functioning,...300 children will be in the health program, and the number malnourished will be reduced from 180 (60%) to 120 (40%). 3300 participants..will increase their incomes by an average of \$17 per family... 410 of 684 adult illiterates will "begin reading..."

The semi-annual reports, prepared in April, 1990, were somewhat less specific:

"[In Bangladesh], we are working with 3,264 participants...[In the community development project] progress is on target with exception for SRS...[In SoShiKa Jamalpur Project]...we are meeting or exceeding targets."

"[In Belize], 253 families participated in the food crops objective...About 73 out of 123 families doubled their corn yields..., about 23 of 105 families reached goal in the bean projection objective..., a total of 55 families planted a small amount of [soybean] seed for home use...182 families participated in the home gardens objective..., about 110 families received velvet bean seed..., only about 40...actually planted the seed...47 families participated in the chicken rearing objective...18 cane farmers [are] participating in the research and development stage of a sugar cane experiment....A total of 112 children from 63 families were monitored..."

This report will examine these and other results of the AID-CRWRC cooperation and consider some future steps that might serve their common objectives.

2. The View from Grand Rapids Headquarters

Since the middle 1960s, CRWRC has been operating poverty-reducing programs abroad, and it began expanding its domestic programs in 1981, primarily for inner city refugees. In the early phases of its activities its projects were designed to help *individuals* gain skills and habits that would improve their life chances. Moving beyond individual programs, CRWRC turned in its next phase to traditional *community development* activities, and, in its current aspirations it seeks to develop skills that will permit both individuals and community groups to be *organizationally self-sustaining*. All three of these elements are important objectives of the two country programs evaluated in this study.

A unique feature of CRWRC's operations is the effort to apply the same strategies in both domestic and foreign settings. In both cases, the emphasis is on finding links between disadvantaged individuals and their communities. Both include among other clients efforts to serve the needs of refugees. There are, of course, differences: most of the domestic clients are urban, most of the foreign ones rural. It is currently operating in 25 foreign countries, about half of which have a resident field staff; and it has completed or terminated operations in several more. CRWRC has about 60 professional staff members, of whom about 6 are in the Grand Rapids headquarters.

Some of its overseas efforts, including projects in Belize and Bangladesh, are carried out with Canadian support (CIDA); AID is supporting about half the costs of operations in Belize and Bangladesh. The amount of Canadian support to CRWRC is about \$1m, about 4 times the AID funding level, but spread over several countries. The remainder of the budget is derived from donations by members of CRWRC. The administrative costs are currently absorbing 16-17% of the operating budget, slightly above the target of 15% and earlier levels of about 13%. The reason for the temporary rise is the decision to set up joint operations between Canada and U.S., necessitating some expansion in the management team and in headquarters facilities. Management operations, including financial, account for 8%. About \$1.2m of the budget comes from CIDA, about \$250,000 from AID. The accounts are kept separate, funds (but not accounts) may be co-mingled at field for efficiency. One function of the headquarters team is coordination of activities and policies supported by the different donors.

Procedures for releasing funds seem easy and trouble-free: headquarters provides cash to the field as needed, which is drawn down from the AID or other donor account only after the charges have been reviewed. AID funds are somewhat more closely monitored to

accommodate policy restrictions than are other CRWRC funds. Operating budgets are proposed in the field on a line item basis, in three forms, at "planned," "expanded," and "restricted" levels. They are then reviewed by regional directors, renegotiated if necessary, then reviewed again in Grand Rapids, with both Canadian and US elements participating. If necessary, additional fund-raising requirements are discussed with CRWRC's board, and approved as amended. Thereafter a budget reporting form is developed that permits the field to show how its funds are being spent.

The theoretical foundations of CRWRC operations draw from a variety of sources: evangelical aspirations, guidelines developed for business leaders, and examined field experience. To a greater degree than most voluntary agencies, it attempts to follow current business practices in its management approaches (a favorite on the management's reading list is Peter Drucker rather than Robert Chambers or Albert Hirschman). Its field operations are oriented to achieve "measurable results," their local directors employing "management by objectives" procedures at all levels. In order to implement this MBO style, it is necessary to make use of quantifiable, or at least observable, indicators of progress.

Social indicators of this order are derived from an important but controversial body of theory. Clearly it is possible to count changes in agricultural yield (though it is not easy to attribute them to project-related factors like new seed varieties or fertilizer use, in the presence of externalities like weather changes or price policies) or income improvements (which, again, have to be closely monitored to account for numbers of workers, days of sickness, and other variables). Community development achievements may also be counted with some accuracy (number of common facilities created by volunteer labor or participation or membership in local institutions, for example), though again important variables like previous experience with cooperative ventures have to be considered in weighing progress. But organizational sustainability is hard to measure, harder to predict. CRWRC theory defines "sustainability" largely in terms of institutional survival and fiscal viability, but a more profound definition was implied in our discussions with staff members, one that would link organizational effectiveness to continued service to members for which they are willing to pay, and define sustainability to include the development of capacity to anticipate and provide such services.

Much of headquarters' policy guidance is based on evidence of success in achieving the prescribed goals, or problems encountered in the process. Instructions to the field for preparation of 1991-92 plans could hardly be more specific: "We view your annual plans as a statement of expected outcomes." Guidelines from Grand Rapids depend, therefore, on the quality and timeliness of feedback from field operations.

This approach, in spite of its "blueprint" appearance, is intended to allow scope for flexibility and creativity in the field by leaving it to local management to develop implementation procedures. At the same time, of course, it imposes a burden of extensive reporting requirements at local levels. But this reporting feedback in turn affects headquarters' articulation of goals and the definition of indicators and thus gives field offices a voice in major program decisions. For example, the original definition of the "participation" unit was families, but because the concept of family differs from country to country, family counts "are not longer the primary method for measuring efficiency"; and when standards used for the measurement of malnutrition came into question, new approaches were authorized. To be sure, not all experimental successes end up as supported activities. A project in Bangladesh began pre-school "Head Start" training, an activity that was not originally contemplated in the annual plan. Unfortunately, in this case the activity received no encouragement from Grand Rapids and was soon dropped in spite of promising results in the trial stage.

The Management Information System measures project impacts first by indicators of progress at the level of individual beneficiaries, disaggregated into the following categories on the reporting form:

Agriculture/-Income (increased income from \$--- to \$---, increased crop production from --- to --); Health (reduced malnutrition among the --- children (0-6) of --- families from --- to ---; reduced the number of deaths of children from --- to ---); Literacy (the number of individuals reaching each of 4 levels of skill); and Diaconal Development (a less well defined measure of progress in religious commitment and service).

These indicators are reported for each site, each project, each country, and each region, the numbers being aggregated for the different levels of reporting.

Project impact is also to be measured at the institutional level, based on the attainment of skills or capacities deemed necessary to survival (management, techniques, finance, and local or community control, and, where appropriate, holistic ministry, church linkage, and evangelism skills). These qualities are rated by quality (excellent, adequate, needing improvement, or unsatisfactory). There is also a judgment of sustainability, ranked also in each field by estimation (ranging from independent, using consultation, requiring cooperation, and dependent, down to not functioning at all). In addition to the rather elaborate reporting system in use, field visits are scheduled from headquarters staff, with ratings to be applied to each project site and reported on a detailed 10-page form supplemented by general observations.

There are four possible objections to the use of such management-by-indicators: (1) all outputs are treated as being of equal importance, there being no weighting to distinguish between, for example, improved income and improved diaconal development; (2) numbers added together to represent achievements at different levels are likely to conceal more than they reveal; (3) attributing "outcomes" to "inputs" assumes causality that is not easy to demonstrate in most cases; (4) confining output analysis to these elements may draw attention away from other results, including side-effects. The statistical validity of these indicators is therefore somewhat questionable. The present evaluation will devote primary attention to validating the reported achievements by pursuing "benefits" from records to individuals in the two countries, but some consideration will also be given to indirect results of CRWRC programs.

The usual result of the management-by-objectives style is that it tends to impose on its staff what is sometimes called the "blueprint model," though to be sure the "feedback loops" bestow upon field operators some discretion in setting up procedures for obtaining objectives. Failure to achieve prescribed goals occurs, of course, and is the subject of periodic discussions at different levels to review targets and consider changing circumstances that might lead to revising hard-to-reach goals. Failure is thus officially viewed as a learning process. CRWRC uses the phrase "chain of responsibility" to describe the procedures by which different levels of authority act. Under this approach, individual staff members are said to "contract" with each other to perform designated services. The degree of flexibility in field operations will be examined in each country setting.

Field experience has reinforced CRWRC staff discipline and produced a high degree of commitment in the Grand Rapids headquarters (see Annex 5). The MBO mind-set sometimes produces unrealistic objectives that keep the field staff on its toes, and sometimes they have had to be modified to accommodate unexpected developments or complexities, another illustration of flexibility in operations: headquarters personnel recount several events that illustrate this problem. In one case a field team was expected to

restore declining farm incomes by introducing new crops, to merge agricultural and health services, and to generate self-sustaining community organizations to support the innovations, all within a three-year period (in the event, the period was extended to five years, and adoption rates suggest that another extension may be forthcoming). In another country, when a local board was reported functioning satisfactorily, a field evaluation found otherwise, and responsibilities previously exercised by the "paper" board were turned over to a local church. After three years, however, the project was able to develop more accurate procedures for monitoring individual progress toward self-sufficiency and was catching up on target objectives.

Headquarters Grand Rapids is strongly oriented toward the function of supporting field operations rather than justifying its own independent existence, as is sometime the case with international development operations. This attitude is illustrated by the types of activities engaged in by the Grand Rapids staff. Staff members, on describing their own experience in the critical incident study, listed most frequently of all functions that of rendering personnel services to the field, including not only recruitment but also training, advice and information, and dealing with personal problems of field staff. Next in importance is finding ways to improve the leadership and service capacities of local employees and organizations, an activity that seems to provide the greatest job satisfaction that CRWRC workers enjoy. Third in line is developing relationships with other organizations, including both AID and the voluntary organizations that collaborate in country-level functions. These and other headquarters activities are described in more detail in Annex 5, and in the evaluation of field operations that follows.

3. The View from Belize

CRWRC began planning for operations in Belize in 1985. Within a year it had accepted an invitation from the Presbyterian Church to provide agricultural and health/nutrition services through community organizations in the northern district of Corozon. A few months later, in response to the refugee problems the government of Belize was facing in the south, it started a program for settlers in the Valley of Peace. Currently CRWRC has a staff for both projects consisting of one project director, an agriculturalist, a health educator, and a health assistant, all expatriates from the U.S. and Canada. There are, in addition, 5 Belizean *promotores* (i.e., field or extension workers) in agriculture and 6 in health. The expatriates are thus serving two very different projects, separated by 3 hours of hard driving across roads that were occasionally impassible. In Northern Belize, the original project is located in settled, even flourishing communities with many churches, two strongly organized and highly conscious political parties, and families, several generations old, of Mayan, Spanish, and English speakers, all of whom are well known to each other. In the South, the 400 refugee families, mostly from El Salvador, are nevertheless strangers to each other, occupying newly cleared ground, enjoying the services of perhaps three struggling churches, and working in an agriculture that resembles frontier conditions.

Project Inputs. Most of the expatriate staff serve both projects, requiring a weekly commute that placed heavy demands on their patience and their constitutions, as well as the 3 vehicles at their disposal. Working with an annual budget of perhaps \$125,000 they can offer these communities little but themselves and their skills. There are few other resources: CRWRC is consciously seeking to avoid creating a condition of dependency or arousing expectations of handouts. For example, staff members have decided to make use of public transportation as the transition to independence proceeds. The staff is also attempting to develop capital resources from local sources. Thus it arranged for ZOA, a Dutch voluntary organization, to present 20 cows to the refugee a year ago, and hopes it will add another 15 soon; and from the same source it secured cement and other materials

for 95 latrines, 50 of which have been constructed by local volunteer labor. In short, each community group is expected to generate its own capital with some help from CRWRC.

Most of the staff time (apart from travelling!) is devoted to working with Belizean nationals, either the *promotores* or the directors and members of cooperatives and other community groups. Their primary assets are the skills and technologies they can bring to bear on problems of poverty and community organization: specifically, in agriculture, technical knowledge in crop and soil sciences, experimental methods, and familiarity with other sources of information if required; and in health, nursing and nutrition skills and knowledge about preventable diseases and community health practices. In both cases, practical skills in developing and nourishing leadership and management capacity are essential, since both projects are planning a phased but complete withdrawal of assistance by 1993 at the latest. The necessity for leaving a self-sustaining operation behind is a constant consideration. Several opportunities for opening new program activities have had to be refused out of concern that the time remaining would be insufficient to achieve sustainability.

The technologies in use here are for the most part familiar in development projects. The only ones that might be considered unique to CRWRC are those known locally as "diaconal," i.e., systematic concern for the personal welfare and development of the project beneficiaries. This approach, which is derived primarily from evangelical sources, means everything from providing opportunities for participative leadership in major community and organizational decisions to social and personal reinforcement of individual Belizean counterparts and colleagues. On the basis of experience elsewhere, CRWRC expects its diaconal work to contribute to self reliance and institutional sustainability.

Management. Individual staff members each have distinct responsibilities of their own, though, as in any development activity, they are not routine or well defined. There is a fair degree of exchange of information and workload among the staff and flexibility in pursuing project goals. As suggested in the review of the headquarters procedures, the goals and targets are defined by interaction between Belize and Grand Rapids personnel, and are usually perceived in the field as realistic, though there is some tension between the headquarters demand for quantitative information regarding beneficiary achievements and the field's concern for solving diverse personal and community problems, working through, and developing, their local counterparts, including *promotores* and group leaders. Staff members uniformly report that they must spend considerable time "counting" the number of beneficiaries, their gardens, the seeds they planted, the children weighed and the status measured, to say nothing of yields and benefits received and put to use. But this effort is not considered wasted: all acknowledge the advantage of keeping their attention focussed on results, and they attempt to use the information-gathering function, however awkward they consider it, to reinforce their technical assistance role.

Communications with Grand Rapids headquarters are rapid (fax is available and long distance calls are quickly arranged). Monthly and other reports keep headquarters informed, at least of quantitative measures of achievement, and occasional commentaries are entered on the reports to supplement the formal submission, often adding information beyond that captured by statistics. Field staff initiatives take the form of proposed annual plans; after they have been approved in Grand Rapids, the tendency is to try to "follow orders," perhaps in recognition of the impending phase-out of the Belizean program.

Relations with USAID are distant but friendly. Mission personnel who had approved the original projects in 1986 and 1987 are no longer here, and since CRWRC acts independently and makes few demands on the aid mission, their successors know little or nothing about their operations (there are, of course, many voluntary agencies working in Belize; it would

be a full-time task to keep track of them). USAID itself is in the process of reducing its Belize presence because its needs are less than those of many other countries. It plans to discontinue some activities in order to concentrate on tourism and health care facilities, which have little connection to the CRWRC program. The *promotores* themselves, when asked about their relations with USAID, could give very few examples of such contacts, and those that were mentioned usually reinforced the image of a friendly remoteness.

The government of Belize has not been asked to provide physical or other support to the CRWRC project. Most external assistance has come from other NGO donor agencies such as CARE, ZOA, and IADF. *Promotores* and group leaders interviewed did express gratitude that the government has provided them access and recognition, but the support and exchanges among the *volags* seem much more important in their lives. Conferences, exhibits, and workshops involving different international agencies have been an important source of information and encouragement to them.

CRWRC is in constant - daily and nightly - contact with Belizean beneficiaries, including both the *promotores* and group leaders and individual farmers and their families. Staff members occasionally accompany the *promotores* on their rounds, and they meet the group leaders and board members every week or so. The staff is well informed about the history and the needs of the people with whom they are working. We found that their personal knowledge extends far beyond the reports listing field achievements.

Impact. Reported results of current project activities probably do not fully reflect the progress achieved toward CRWRC's long-term objectives, since they are (1) seasonal, (2) hard to attribute to CRWRC inputs, (3) not linked to any baselines preceding CRWRC's coming, and (4) not susceptible to independent confirmation except at exorbitant cost.

Agriculture On the basis of spot checks, we have no reason to doubt, for example, that, as reported, 63 families in Northern Belize had demonstration plots of corn in Oct., 1989, that some of them had tripled their yields, or that 130 families were growing velvet beans, 60 growing vegetables, 76 growing soy beans, 32 raising chickens who had none before, or, finally, that a total of 229 families (more than the goal of 225) had been reached. In fact, we observed several flourishing farms and heard the farmers describe changes in their agricultural practices that they attributed to CRWRC interventions. Nor does the March, 1990 report seem unreasonable in noting that 253 families had now participated, apparently an increment of 24 over the previous report, and more still if there have been some dropouts; and that by using a CRWRC "technical package," 73 of them doubled their corn yield (though we observe in passing that such averages might have concealed the fact that some families might have been far above and some distinctly below that number). The report continues, plausibly, that 105 families planted beans, of whom 23 "reached goal" in production; perhaps that figure includes the 53 who planted soy beans and consumed these nutritious but unfamiliar crops at home (again, in passing, we note that the sheer numbers presented in this form are only a profile of achievements). Realistically, the report states that only 40 families had planted velvet beans this season because of the disappointing previous crop. Other statistics abound in the reports, but we do not recap them here because they have already been supplied in annual and semiannual form.

What is more important is our observation that meticulous records are kept of adoptions and their consequences, in computerized form so that CRWRC planners in field and headquarters can appraise progress and revise goals. We reemphasize our observation about the depth of knowledge of these farmers the CRWRC staff displayed, and about the personal nature of the commitments and relationships involved. No doubt the positive nature of the processes we observed outweighs the goal definitions and attainments appearing in these reports.

Health and Nutrition Similar findings inform our judgment of the child weighing program and the reported incidence of malnutrition of the first, second, and third degree. Over recent months, these figures show some fluctuations in malnutrition, and the reports offer speculations about the reasons for the changes (better or worse water supplies, attention to parasites, improved diets caused by the access to gardens, failed crops, etc.) As in the case of agricultural changes, there are seasonal variations: a child recovered from malnutrition can sink back into that condition again, and some did. Unlike the agricultural program, community demand for public health services is not cumulative, and in the refugee settlements of the Valley of Peace, especially, there is a degree of public suspicion and even latent hostility toward local health committees when they appear at the door, scales in hand, to weigh the pre-school children. In the Valley of Peace the community health groups in fact are now moribund, isolated from a community that has still to be created but which they had hoped to serve in the meantime. Their history is an object lesson in institutionalization: an active group was left leaderless when its president moved on, and the board members are innocent of any realistic plans for the future. Child weighing can continue in other ways, however; and the CRWRC staff is now considering, in connection with a local health center, abandoning field weighings and leaving them in the hands of the nurse and her aides. CRWRC would identify the troublesome cases, and make house calls on them, a task which the clinic can hardly ever perform. This division of labor would take advantage of the unique characteristics of both groups, the curative personnel in diagnosis of self-selected patients, and the public health staff for follow-up home visits to take remedial steps and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Belizean helpers. The most important contribution CRWRC will bequeath on its departure in 1993 is almost certainly the trained and dedicated *promotores* who will be qualified to carry on the work of extending technical knowledge to the farmers and villagers. We were able to observe them more fully than other Belizeans affected by the project. During the course of our visit we elicited 101 work incidents from those working in the North, describing their work in both its successful and frustrating moments.¹ When we examined them in detail, it was clear that what they considered the most successful of CRWRC's activities from their point of view were the Workshops, Conferences, and Exhibitions they attended (22 incidents), aspects of its project operations (9, the most positive of which involved gardens and agriculture), and field visits from CRWRC (7). They wrote positively about their work with community groups (7), a somewhat disappointing total in view of project goals. The worst scores were those incidents in which lack of follow-through by one group or another was suggested (5), along with changed directions or confused policies (5) and public indifference to their work (5). When we analyzed the incidents further to discover what elements seemed most fruitful in their experience, we discovered that relations with other voluntary agencies came in just behind those with CRWRC and next came those with the beneficiaries themselves (there were 17 of these, 11 being positive, especially those involving home gardens and agriculture). We were surprised that all 14 incidents in which other volags figured were positive (examples: they helped them win recognition and identity, and produced the workshops, conferences, and exhibits and training that were frequent sources of benefit. An equal number of incidents involved the Presbyterian Church, which had been the original sponsor of the project. But the incidents reported were divided 7 and 7 between positive and negative. The church was helping with local meetings and donations, but has been discouraging the *promotores* by down-playing their work. These data strongly suggest the advisability of seeking other institutional supports for sustaining the work of the *promotores* in the north.

¹The incidents themselves were sometimes hard to interpret because of the rather low level of literacy among the respondents.

In addition to the incidents we gathered during an afternoon with the *promotores*, one member of the team conducted a two-day planning workshop with them, during the course of which he observed their dedication to their tasks, their receptiveness to the expectations and needs of the communities, and their commitment to continuing their services to community boards and participants after the CRWRC phaseout.

He identified three major needs as the Belize program moves toward phaseout:

Community groups. There are currently six community troupes, five of which are in Northern Belize, one in the Valley of Peace. The objective of becoming independent is to be achieved by the mastery of five skills (technical, management, financial, community control, and holistic ministry). Three have developed governing boards, but can function only with the assistance of the *promotores*.

Organizational Structure. No regional organization has been established as yet to coordinate the programs in Northern Belize and the Valley of Peace.

Financial Base. There is no support base other than CRWRC or AID funding. Plans for assuring a dependable funding base are still in the future.

Plans and Prospects. The two-day workshop, held at the request of the field office, was designed to encourage the *promotores* to formalize plans to continue their work with community groups under an organizational structure that will replace CRWRC after the phase-out. The group formulated the following statement of their two-year goals: "To be able to provide health education and agriculture education in order to develop the country of Belize and to introduce new technology for the improvement of both the social and economic standards of the Belizian people; to ...[help] groups...implement development that will benefit all members of the community; to facilitate the spiritual and physical development of people in need; to assure that there are human and material resources available to carry on development work in communities; to develop means of mutual support among the *promotores* so that [they] can continue [their] work in the communities."

Three goals were formulated: to organize so as to be able to sustain themselves within resources available; to assure that the organization has enough capital to carry on its work; to train people in such a way that they can transmit their skills to others.

The group is conducting a search for a national director, a health care coordinator, and an agriculture coordinator.

Recommendations. On the basis of the week-long visit, we recommend:

1. The phase-out should proceed as planned. Conditions in Northern Belize do not correspond to CRWRC's (or USAID's) priority of working with very poor countries. And prospects for institutionalizing service to the refugees in the south will require much more time in the field than funding will permit. We considered the possibility of moving CRWRC resources from the north and redirecting them southward, but decided that premature withdrawal would risk institutional sustainability in the North and not be sufficient to achieve it in the South.

2. Among the options for providing institutional sustainability among the *promotores* in the North, the most promising is to help them organize themselves into an independent unit that could provide a sense of identity, facilitate access to technical services

from other voluntary agencies and from the government, and at the same time reinforce their commitment to the local community. The prospects for effectively attaching the *promotores* to the Presbyterian Church seem too remote to justify working in that direction, even if it turns out that the new pastors scheduled to arrive shortly are more interested in this secular mission than their predecessors have been.

3. Current discussions of linking the public health community workers to the apostolate clinic should continue. The mixture seems very promising and should improve the focus of both parties.

4. We think leadership and managerial training (either short in-country or state-side courses) for the *promotores* and community workers would improve prospects for developing self-sustaining institutions, and we urge CRWRC to investigate the prospects.

5. We were somewhat disconcerted by the frequency and apparently haphazard timing of evaluations in Belize. Our own visit was one of several in the past few months, all of which might well have been coordinated to reduce the burden on the field staff. We recommend that the field office receive much more advance notice of evaluation visits in the future and that they be consulted in connection with other scheduled reviews. We were cordially received, to be sure, and graciously afforded every opportunity to conduct our inquiries, but we were also aware of difficulties our visit posed for the Belizean parties as well as CRWRC staff.

6. We note that the Cooperative Agreement calls for a mid-term and/or final evaluation at the end of the contract period, presumably 1992 or 1993. These evaluations are costly, disproportionately so in this austere program. The out-of-pocket expenses and opportunity costs of the current evaluation were several times more than the entire annual budget assigned to agriculture or health in either north or south Belize. These costs should not be borne out of CRWRC's budget, especially since the evaluations themselves serve AID's needs more than they do those of the Grand Rapids headquarters, which already has its own evaluation system in place. We therefore recommend that if AID requires a final evaluation, it be financially supported by AID itself.

4. The View from Bangladesh

In 1973 CRWRC began operations in Bangladesh with a rural development project located in Bogra District. Ten years later the SoShiKa (Somobaya O Shikhkha Karjokrom or Cooperative and Education Program) Project in Jamalpur District began, after a survey that identified local areas where poverty levels seemed to justify priority interventions. At the time of this evaluation, two locations in Jamalpur were in full swing, a total of 121 groups (73 men's, 48 women's) serving the needs of 2451 members.

Project Inputs. The Jamalpur field office consists of one expatriate project director, one expatriate Program Manager (men's groups) and one host national Program Manager (women's groups). At the two project locations, five field managers supervise the work of 25 field assistants. At the present time, most of their efforts are in the areas of nutrition, health, family planning and agriculture. Following CRWRC's policy of avoiding a dependency-creating relationship, these advisors do not offer capital assistance or operating funding but instead focus on group (cooperative) formation and organization, and training through non-formal education.

Staff members accept responsibility for relations with their individually assigned groups, which in most cases they have helped create. In the early organizing years, group meetings are held at the call of the responsible Field Assistant, but more "mature" groups continue to hold meetings on their own. Responses from the critical incident survey presented numerous examples of group problem-solving that had apparently occurred on the basis of internal initiatives.

Field assistants (FAs) are not allowed to advise more than 7 groups at a time (one FA complained that this policy limited his potential range!), which means that nearly every day they must schedule themselves to meet with a group. Since men's groups meet at night (being engaged in the field during the day) and women's during the day (not being encouraged to leave home at night); thus the weekly agenda for the FAs is rather crowded.

The incidents gathered from the FAs revealed several occasions on which they felt disadvantaged because they were unable to supply funds, equipment, or capital inputs that other voluntary agencies provided. Indeed, competition among donors for the loyalty of group members is a permanent fact of life on both of Jamalpur's project sites, and for both men and women. The Grameen Bank, for example, aggressively pursues potential client groups, and its preference for creating its own groups has prevented it from joining forces with CRWRC's work with local groups. Field Assistants have not found an effective way of dealing with such competition (loans are offered even the absence of project proposals), or with its repeated charges that CRWRC is engaged in proselytizing, or that foreigners should not be entrusted with group funds.

***Project Impact.* The impact of the training and assistance rendered to the groups is easily observed. "Graduates" of the literacy training classes were usually able to write their own names, and sometimes, rather slowly, to read (slowly) the monthly newsletter CRWRC publishes for its beneficiaries. Mothers were able to produce and interpret their children's health records and to display their knowledge of nutrition in responses to questions posed by the evaluation team. In all groups, savings records and pass books were presented and explained upon request. Group investment decisions were duly reported by members, who were able to list the purchases of stocks of food (rice) the group had decided to hold for price rises, equipment to be used by the group (land leases and livestock purchases were cited). Loan records and repayment levels proved to be well known among the membership as well as the Field Assistants and the group leaders. Field assistants, for their part, were increasingly successful in persuading groups to diversify their investments away from individual loans (which are vulnerable to non-payment or even embezzlement) into more productive and lower-risk uses. Most of the income generated in the groups seemed to produce growth in the collective assets rather than increases in family income, however. We were interested to observe that women's groups seemed more prone to investing in collective activities than the men, who appeared to prefer to engage in loans to individual members.**

Institutionalization of groups was also observable in their historical development. For example, the normal progression is from savings and income generation to the implementation of the fruits of literacy, health, family planning, and agricultural training. Groups have learned to help each other; their membership has stabilized over time; leaders have rotated on the basis of elections; and savings have moved from individual projects to group investments. As yet no group has "graduated" from CRWRC support, however, and indeed, no clear criteria for such "graduation" has appeared (except for the group Skill Rating System used by CRWRC to appraise institutional progress). As for impacts reaching beyond the group to the community at large, we were unable to find any evidence except for the willingness of group members to share with non-members their newly-acquired skills in child nutrition and health. There were occasions when groups disbanded (often because of embezzlement or misconduct), but on more numerous situations, groups reinforced each other and helped them overcome discouragement and deal with criticisms from outsiders. For example, when a cow was stolen (a major investment of the group), another group encouraged them to persist in their collective efforts.

Sustained impact is not yet measurable. For example, there does not appear to be any means by which individuals can continue to gain from literacy, once their ability to write their names has been acquired. There are few materials written in simple Bangla to freshen their literacy skills. Moreover, there seems to be little motivation for individuals to remain in the group once their initial gains have occurred (for example, a division of group profits among the membership so that personal and institutional advantages are reinforcing).

The evaluation team was able to track the benefits down from the macro-level of numbers reported in the monthly and annual MIS documents to individual records, which, on a spot check basis, were verified by interviews.

Management. The headquarters office in Dhaka does not provide day-to-day guidance to the field office in Jamalpur, which in effect operates with a fair degree of independence. It does, however, take some initiatives such as initial program development, negotiating with government and other donor agencies, collating field reports for transmission to Grand Rapids, and, currently, in considering how to develop a job creation program. It is also reviewing the possibility of organizing an urban employment generation program, following the same techniques used in dealing with rural poverty. According to Field Managers and Field Assistants, its main function is to provide training (some of which is supported by AID funding). Invariably, the reports of training provided were favorable (apparently this form of professional reinforcement is profoundly significant in their lives). It is currently seeking to develop a board capable of taking responsibility for the SoShiKa operation. At the moment the Board is located in Dhaka, which will, in time, present difficulties in relating to the SoShiKa management in Jamalpur. The Project Coordinator is located in Jamalpur, which is much more central to the communities being served.

An annual audit is required by CRWRC and the Government of Bangladesh. The team reviewed the accounts to insure that an adequate paper trail exists for the documentation of costs to planned objectives. Since Mar., 1990, a registered Bangladesh accountant has reviewed and modified the SoShiKa accounting system, adding a few steps to the process and creating a clear "audit trail" for monitoring expenditures. He is qualified to conduct field inspections if invited to do so. We examined documentation from field office expenses to the submission of the SoShiKa monthly financial report to the CRWRC head office. All expenses are documented with a signed receipt, which in turn is recorded on a pay-out voucher approved by the Field Manager. The field offices keep a cash book, which is reviewed by the program heads and forwarded on monthly statements to the Jamalpur office, where they are collated and submitted to Dhaka, and thence to Grand Rapids.

Plans and Prospects. CRWRC does not plan to withdraw from Bangladesh: plans assume the necessity for a continued presence. As projects achieve their objectives, they will be terminated (as was the case at Bogra, which has been turned over to a local organization known as BEES). Other projects will be opened up as the need becomes demonstrated. An urban project is contemplated; there is some possibility of introducing micro-level projects in conformity with national development plans that address the rural sector or designated poverty groups; there is even the possibility that some consideration might be given to developing projects that will minimize the effect of environmental deterioration in the country (i.e., ecologically sustainable agriculture practices, anticipated sea level rise associated with global warming).

Recommendations. Most of the recommendations that flowed from the field visit are marginal or incremental changes in present procedures and policies. They range from accounting practices to priority setting:

1. The Dhaka Office should aggressively pursue the options for generating projects that would take into account the national priorities displayed in the Bangladeshi government's national five-year plan, including environment-related priorities.
2. CRWRC should consider the possibility of inaugurating one or more urban projects in Dhaka to test the relevance of the group formation tactics successfully used in rural areas.
3. Mr. Akhtar S. Ali, the Dhaka office accountant, should be assigned to visit and inspect field accounts and records on an annual or preferably semi-annual basis.
4. The practice of including expatriate staff international travel and expatriate housing costs in the SoShiK a budget should be discontinued, and these items inserted in the Dhaka budget. They are not a part of long-term project operating costs, and they are subject to misinterpretation by local managers. The recommended change will enhance the marketability of the project for potential donors.
5. CRWRC should avoid creating new institutions that require registration with the government, and instead should seek to join its group activities with those of existing organizations, both to reinforce their local credentials and to advance their prospects for sustainability.
6. CRWRC should consider alternatives for conducting its proposed phaseout. For example, instead of moving from 100% financing with an expatriate presence to zero in both counts, it might maintain a 15-30% funding commitment over 3-5 years with a declining staff, and develop strategies to broaden SoShiKa's funding base while examining the experience of groups that have "graduated" from current operations.
7. The project should continue to review the proportion of money given out in individual loans versus co-operative projects to appraise their effect on co-operative sustainability.
8. The Jamalpur Office should consider the community impact of the cooperatives it has established and review the benefit of training they have received. The impact analysis of indirect effects of this type should be considered annually, once a community baseline has been established and indicators developed.
9. A preferred pattern of sequential development needs to be established after the initial steps of savings, literacy, individual loans have been shown to lead to more complex cooperative projects.
10. The Soshika Board should establish procedures for member selection, replacement, rotation, and relationship to the recipient community. For this purpose, appropriate changes should be made in the Board constitution.
11. AID's funding of training and the recommendations it has made regarding training topics have had a strongly positive effect on field operations. Training has been unanimously ranked as the most positive contribution from "headquarters," and much of that has been an increment added to CRWRC's operations by AID. Training should continue to be a major contribution from AID.
12. AID should consider the desirability of funding research on project experiences CRWRC has had in Bangladesh, perhaps on the basis of an RFP focussing on "grassroots" organization development.

13. On the basis of the achievements already demonstrated in Bangladesh, AID should renew the cooperative agreement with CRWRC for continued work in this country and possibly elsewhere.

5. Conclusions

AID has rarely derived so much benefit from such a small investment. There are minor problems in the conceptual framework within which CRWRC is working, but they tend only to place added burdens on its own staff and impose no serious limitations on field results. The reporting system, while perhaps overly elaborate in its all but insatiable demand for hard data describing benefits delivered, has the advantage of keeping the staff members' eyes focussed sternly on results.

CRWRC has rightly placed "sustainability" high on its agenda. It has defined the concept in terms of institutional survival after CRWRC's withdrawal from a project, and has included financial viability and organizational perseverance as indicators. It has developed a series of criteria it believes permit it to predict "sustainability," and to measure progress toward that end. It has maintained a fierce determination not to create a dependency relationship with the organizations it has created and supported.

Beyond sustainability lies a still more important concept: continued service to the community. An organization that survives bureaucratically or on the basis of a permanent endowment or assured sources of income does not necessarily meet that test, however "sustainable" it may be financially. Moreover, the search for sustainability can also become an excuse for abandoning a project prematurely once its immediate dependency has met its scheduled end.

We urge CRWRC to treat the concept not as an end in itself, but as a means to the end of self-renewing service. Withdrawing CRWRC support according to a schedule can mean abandonment, or a mere turning to other donors for support, an act that may be resented by such donors as well as by the institutional orphan created by the policy. Thus we perceive terminating aid to the project in Northern Belize as reasonable, given the rather feeble institutional claims of the Presbyterian pastors whose predecessors initiated the project. In that case, sustainability would require some CRWRC consideration of support to a union of *promotores*. On the other hand, the absence of the prerequisites to institutionalization in the Valley of Peace would argue for continued CRWRC involvement or abandonment of the hope of sustainability. The successful organization of groups in Bangladesh, likewise, suggests that the potential gain from a continued presence in that country is far from exhausted.

We gave some thought to the issue of whether the U.S. government is wise to rely upon a religious organization to perform developmental functions, especially in a Moslem country where religious sensibilities may be involved. We recognize that there are some costs to that policy, but came away convinced that the risks are minor. The dedication and devotion of these workers spoke as eloquently for their country as for their church.

Annexes

- 1. Scope of Work**
- 2. Purpose of the Evaluation**
- 3. Team Composition and Study Methodology**
- 4. Interview Respondents in Grand Rapids, Belize, and Bangladesh**
- 5. Critical Incidents Gathered in Grand Rapids, Belize, and Bangladesh**
- 6. Documents Consulted**
- 7. A Field Evaluation**

Annex 1
SCOPE OF WORK

(to be inserted)

Mid-Term Evaluation
SCOPE OF WORK

DRAFT
6/18/90

PURPOSE:

To evaluate Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's (CRWRC) performance in providing oversight and support to Matching-Grant funded activities in Belize and Bangladesh; and to assess the field impact of these activities. Their progress and performance will be measured against the goals and objectives established in cooperative agreement OTR-0158-A-00-9079-00, effective May 1, 1989 through April 30, 1992.

BACKGROUND:

In February of 1989, CRWRC submitted a revised Matching Grant proposal to FVA/PVC which was subsequently funded for three years at \$250,000/yr. The programmatic goal is to improve the quality of life of rural poor people in Bangladesh and Belize; specifically to increase farmer incomes, decrease infant mortality and improve the nutritional levels of children in the target population. Their goal included providing training to beneficiaries to enable them to manage their own health, income and nutritional projects. To accomplish these goals, CRWRC planned to establish and/or strengthen effective independent community organizations and establish links between local, regional, national, and PVO organizations. Major activities includes:

- establishing and training community groups;
- establishing and training local community boards in organizational management and financial management;
- identify target children and develop community level monitoring systems; and
- assist communities in developing priorities among;
 - mother/child health education;
 - potable water/sanitation systems;
 - literacy;
 - improved nutrition; or
 - group savings programs.

Terms of the cooperative agreement require a mid-term and final evaluation.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess CRWRC's progress towards and effectiveness in carrying out the oversight and support activities specified in the grant, which are aimed at improving the quality of life of people in Bangladesh and Belize (improving their health and income status) through the establishment or strengthening of effective and independent national and community organizations or groups. Country programs in Belize and Bangladesh will be examined.

2. To analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of CRWRC's headquarters in providing technical, financial, policy and programmatic oversight and support to field activities in both Matching Grant countries.
3. To assess CRWRC's major accomplishments and organizational capacities as well as to determine what, if any, problems and constraints are preventing them from reaching the goals outlined in the cooperative agreement with FVA/PVC.
4. To develop specific recommendations for CRWRC regarding technical modifications to field implementation and headquarter-centered responsibilities, including field backstopping, reporting, administrative procedures, and staff development.
5. To determine what has been the impact of CRWRC's projects on the project beneficiaries they are serving (specifically, have beneficiaries experienced improved health and income status as a result of CRWRC activities?)
6. To assess whether activities complement health and economic related policies of A.I.D. and the host government.
7. To examine what steps are being taken to institutionalize projects in order to assure the sustainability of benefits.
8. To examine whether CRWRC's recommendations/plans for future activities (as found in their January 1990 Annual Report) are appropriate for each country.

EVALUATION OUTPUTS:

The outside independent evaluator will serve as team leader and will be responsible for preparing and delivering 10 copies of the final report to A.I.D./FVA/PVC. (Prior to this, the team leader will provide a copy of the draft report concurrently to CRWRC and A.I.D. for their review and comments.)

The report should include the following:

1. An assessment of CRWRC's progress towards the goals of the cooperative agreement.
2. An evaluation of CRWRC's performance and effectiveness in Belize and Bangladesh as well as problems and constraints that are influencing progress towards the established goals.
3. Recommendations to AID/PVC for actions to support future progress of CRWRC.

4. Recommendations to CRWRC for actions to support their future progress.

REPORT FORMAT:

The report should contain the following:

- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Key Findings and Recommendations
- Purpose of the Evaluation
- Team composition and study methodology
- Annexes
 - Scope of Work
 - List of Documents Consulted
 - List of Individuals/organizations consulted

SCOPE OF WORK:

The evaluators will make their recommendations based on the following:

1. CRWRC Matching Grant Cooperative Agreement.
2. CRWRC Matching Grant Annual Report submitted January 1990.
3. CRWRC monitoring and evaluation documentation as well as other documents considered relevant by both parties.
4. Interviews with CRWRC headquarters staff, CRWRC field staff, staff of host country counterpart organizations, government representatives, etc.
5. Interviews with and/or surveys of project beneficiaries.

SCHEDULE:

- _____ Headquarters evaluation and team planning meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- _____ Field Evaluation in Belize
- _____ Field Evaluation in Bangladesh
- _____ Drafting of Evaluation Report

Evaluation Questions and Issues: Listed below are questions and issues that FVA/PVC/PDD has developed to direct the evaluators during the course of the evaluation. Some questions are more relevant for the field than headquarters, and vice versa. The evaluation team should use these questions as a guide; it is not expected that each will be separately addressed in the final report.

Project Design and implementation capability:

- Is the CRWRC program strategy appropriate and are activities consistent with the focus of the grant?
- Is there evidence that project beneficiaries have benefitted from CRWRC's involvement in their communities?
- Does field guidance, training materials and promotional materials reflect state of the art knowledge (Health, nutrition, etc.) and sensitivity to cultural constraints?

Relationship between field and headquarters:

- To what extent does Headquarters provide policy and program guidance to field staff?
- How does headquarters support field efforts? What has been the nature of administrative or program staff visits to targeted countries? Is technical assistance initiated by headquarters or field?
- Does CRWRC have sufficient staff support at headquarters to effectively do its job? Has headquarters technical capacity increased in recent years and have new strategies for backstopping field activities been developed?

Financial Management/Tracking:

- Is financial planning done at the field level or at headquarters? Is there an appropriate relationship between program objectives and expenses?
- How well do actual expenses relate to planned levels?
- Have other activities (other than those planned for each country) been initiated?

Is the focus of activities consistent with the terms of the grant agreement?

Organizational Development in the Field:

- Does the field staff have the training and skills necessary to perform project functions?
- What type of training is available/has been provided to staff? Was it appropriate?
- Are expatriate or host country nationals performing administrative, training, evaluation or activities requiring technical skills?

Project Monitoring and Evaluation:

- What type of system has each project site developed to monitor and measure costs, progress and effectiveness of activities?
- Who is responsible for the data collection and analysis? Do they have the training and skills necessary to do the job?
- To what extent have findings by field level managers resulted in program changes or redirected resources?
- What are the indicators of progress in program activities?

Linkages with Community groups and local Partner Organizations:

- How successful has CRWRC been in establishing partnerships with local non-governmental organizations?
- Has appropriate training been provided? How effective has it been?
- Do projects complement policies and programs of the host government and A.I.D.? Has this project contributed to, or otherwise impacted government activities in related fields (health, agriculture, income generation)?

Sustainability:

- What financial and organizational strategies have been implemented to promote program sustainability?
- Are plans being made to phase out of certain activities and to turn responsibility over to the community/host government?
- Do communities believe that the projects meet their

Annex 2

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is required by the terms of the AID/CRWRC Cooperative Agreement No. OTR-0158-A-00-9079-00, effective May 1, 1989 and continuing through Apr. 30, 1992. It is conducted primarily for the benefit of AID, largely to insure on the basis of independent observation, that the terms of the agreement are being met. There are intended benefits to CRWRC as well, since its own frequent audits and evaluations are conducted internally and by staff members or employees of CRWRC and members of the Christian Reformed Church and its World Relief Committee. The composition of the team includes one outsider who was, prior to this assignment, completely ignorant of CRWRC's programs, two U.S. staff officials from CRWRC, and two Canadian staff officials, all of whom took on the assignment with the assumption that the three donors (AID, US., and Canadian public and private groups and individuals) would benefit from a holistic appraisal that did not attempt to distinguish among the specific contributions of each funding source.

The perspective of the team was to take an objective view of the central and field activities, making only incremental recommendations designed to improve performance within the context of existing structures and doctrines.

Annex 3

TEAM COMPOSITION AND STUDY METHODOLOGY

The Chairman of the Team is John D. Montgomery, of Harvard University. The CRWRC members consisted of Wayne Medendorp, of Grand Rapids, and Harry Weldstra, of Toronto, who joined in the Belize site visit; and Harry Spaling, Land Evaluation Group, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, and Lou Haverman of the Bangladesh office, who joined the team in Bangladesh. The site visit in Grand Rapids took place Aug 1-5, 1990; the Belize site visit, Aug. 15-20; and the Bangladesh visit, Sept. 3-13, 1990. Individual team members remained behind in both countries to gather supplementary information.

The evaluation did not require the development of new methodologies, the only unusual procedure being the use in all three sites of the critical incident method described in Annex 5. Team members interviewed CRWRC officials and staff in all three sites, and in both countries devoted most of their attention to local employees (notably village level workers in health and agriculture), group leaders (notably cooperative officials and committee or board members), and beneficiaries (through visits to homes, farms, and cooperative or group meetings). Documents of the kinds described in Annex 4 were consulted in Grand Rapids and the field, and made the basis of interview questions and field inspections. Records of the interviews were kept in writing, as were the responses of individuals to the questionnaires administered as part of the critical incident procedure.

This report was drafted by the Chairman, and amended and augmented by the team members. It represents consensus in its present form.

Annex 4

INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS (listed in chronological order by the first interview)

JOHN DE HAAN, U.S. Director, CRWRC
MIKE BRUINOOGE, Special Programs Administrator
TOM POST, former field director, Belize
KURT VER BEEK, ex-Honduras staff member
WAYNE MEDENDORP, Director of Planning, Training and Evaluation,
HARRY WELDSTRA, coordinator of overseas operations, CRWRC Canada
MERLE GREVENGOED, Director of Finance, CRWRC.
CHRIS COK, Accountant.
GARY NEDERVELD, Foreign Programs Director

Interview Respondents - Belize (listed in chronological order by the first interview)

ALBERT ZANTINGH, CRWRC project director and acting field director.
MS. LYDIA ROLAND, immigration officer, Government of Belize
MS. B. B. ESSAMA, USAID/health division
RUBEN CHAN, Manager, Small Farm Resource Development Center.
JOHN HAMSTRA, CRWRC Proj Director, Agriculture
CARLOS LANA, Presbyterian pastor
RAFAEL KU, Presbyterian pastor
ELADIO CHAN, Presbyterian Communion
BETTY KALDAN, consultant in health
DEBRA SCHOUT, Educator/nurse, CRWRC
DAWN DE JONG, Nutrition and Health Education advisor, CRWRC
ORLANDO JIMENEZ promotore in agriculture (?)
ELEODORO and **EMILIA CHAN**, cooperative board members
Twenty unnamed members of a Valley of Peace cooperative

Interview Respondents - Bangladesh (listed in chronological order by the first interview)

LOU HAVEMAN, Acting Field Director
M.G.NAYEEN WAHRA, Program Coordinator, Association of
Development Agencies in Bangladesh
CHAS BAILEY, Director, Ford Foundation, FF.
DR. MOH. AKHTAR RAHMAN, Chairman, SoShiKa Bd,
ROY BERKENBOSCH, Field Director designate.
SAIFU ISLAM ROBYN, Director, Bangladesh Education Extension
Service (BEES)
NANCY TEN BROEK, Project Coordinator, SoShiKa;
BRIAN CLARK, Men's Program Head
KOSHIMA DARINA, Women's Program Head.
A. K. MUBIN, Project Manager, Planning Commission.
JOSE M. GARZON, Program Officer, USAID

Annex 5

CRITICAL INCIDENTS - GRAND RAPIDS, BELIZE, and BANGLADESH

The Grand Rapids Study. All six of the headquarters staff members in residence who had any connection with the two programs completed "critical incident"² questionnaires designed to explore their experience with relevant field operations. A total of 71 incidents were generated and coded from this exercise (some, falling into more than one category, were coded several times). Taken as a body, they provide some quantifiable insights into the nature of the "headquarters-field" relationship as experienced in Grand Rapids.

The unusually high response rate (91% of the possible responses to the questionnaire generated usable incidents; questions left blank invariably lay outside the immediate experience of the respondent) suggests a correspondingly high level of staff commitment and discipline, since even educated and committed respondents are rarely able to supply incidents for all questions. Moreover, there were relatively few negative incidents or criticisms of operating conditions. This fact does not necessarily reflect the actual distribution of "success" and "failure" in operations, since it could be a result of inappropriately worded questions, or the fact that the small group of respondents participating in the exercise might have discouraged critical remarks because it made anonymity difficult to protect, or even of the possibility that the group itself suffers from a lack of self-critical judgment.

But another indicator of high morale is less easily discounted: the greatest source of job satisfaction for these respondents appears to arise from successes achieved by their counterparts in the host country (one of the key objectives of the operation being to advance the sustainable self-sufficiency of community groups). This finding suggests that the prime organizational objective is identical with the greatest individual satisfaction on the job. Finally, a search through the incidents for examples of team responsibility showed them working together more frequently than not; the resolution of conflicts over policy or administrative issues seemed relatively easy.

²The method employed is derived from the "critical incident" procedure, which was developed during World War II to determine whether and how training and organizational changes could improve the performance of combat pilots. It has since been employed thousands of times for purposes of studying human performance in different situations, private, professional, military, and civilian. The seminal articles on this experience are J.C. Flanagan, "Critical Requirements: A New Approach to Employee Evaluation," *Personnel Psychology*, vol. 2, 1949, pp. 419-425. For a recent bibliography on the subject, see Grace Fivars, *The Critical Incident Technique: A Bibliography* (Palo Alto, CA., American Institutes for Research, 2d ed., 1980). This method should not be confused with survey techniques, which are intended to elicit information about opinions, and when used to generate conclusions characterizing large groups, have to rely on statistical sampling techniques to prevent distortion. In the critical incident method, it is the most recent experience of the respondents that is to be gathered. It is the incidents and not the respondents that constitute the universe to be analyzed. It is random in the sense that its selection of events requires each respondent to cite the most recent incident in his/her experience. Some of the findings developed from a study of integrated rural development management in Asia are reported in John D. Montgomery, *Bureaucrats and People, Grassroots Participation in Third World Development*, Baltimore, Md., 1988.

The major purpose of the survey was to identify and analyze the functions performed by Grand Rapids headquarters staff in their role of providing resources and guidance to field operations. These functions seem to cluster about 7 categories, of which the most important (23 incidents of the 71 coded) was "personnel services." The other functions, in descending order of importance, were: "leadership development and support to host national groups" (17 incidents); "dealing with AID" (8), "training" (7), establishing and maintaining links or "relationships with other voluntary organizations" (6); dealing with "policy issues" (6); and "finance" (6).

Most of the personnel actions described in the survey involved helping staff members make a transition from one post to another (3) or developing services such as fringe benefits for employees (4). Recruitment problems (3) or successes (1), along with issues of delegated responsibility for personnel decisions made in the field (3) represent the next most frequent type of action reported. Other issues included providing for post orientation, dealing with a dishonest local counterpart, motivating staff members, and the usual run of matters of communications, promotion, and staff rotation plans. Here are some examples of the incidents describing personnel actions:

- "I talked with the field director about a person who wanted to work on secondment to CRWRC and I assured him we were open to such action and described the steps needed to gain approval in Grand Rapids. I also warned him that such arrangements have had mixed results."
- "I thought we should improve the performance of a consultant I had hired, but didn't want to take over the direct responsibility and discussed the problem with the field director, who agreed to review her work."
- "There was a note of alarm about the way a field director was making changes in the office operations, but I suggested that field decisions had to be idiosyncratic and perhaps it's a good idea to "unclog" things once in a while."
- "As field director, I tried 2 give post training but failed to dislodge some negative attitudes on the part of one participant, and heard from another that my course did not meet the needs of another group."
- "I was unable to give two recruits adequate information about the post conditions, and as a result they were frustrated when they arrived."
- "My colleague was able to reassure a new family about some uncertainties such as sharing schooling costs."
- "I was disappointed when a hiring decision was made without consulting me because I had overall responsibility for such actions."

The next most important function was the exercise of leadership, usually in connection with the encouragement of good performance on the part of local staff members (17 incidents). The incidents were dominated by references to satisfaction the respondent derived from helping national staff members overcome problems (7), helping them motivate their own staff members (3), or failing to do so, and working together as a team with other staff members (3), or failure to do so (2). Most of these functions are the equivalent of personnel activities, except that they all refer to host nationals rather than the internal staff. Here are some examples:

- "When I was field director I was pleased that a staff member working with a mothers group was able to get the leaders in to see the PM about a water supply problem. The PM ordered water trucks sent to relieve the problem at the end of the dry season."

•“I got interested in a problem in the field when visiting there, and resolved to offer continued encouragement to people working on it. But when I returned, I neglected the follow-up after all.”

•“One of my colleagues was able to resist pressure to continue support to a project that was only creating a dependency relationship, but he discontinued the funding tactfully, without losing the “good will” of the beneficiaries.

•“I thought our organization ought to do something about PR, but couldn't get the others to agree that changes are needed. We weren't working with each other in a complementary way.”

•“I wasn't present at a meeting to resolve a problem of generating health indicators. They sent me a letter expressing consternation and concern at their inability to work effectively at the community level.”

•“We had a field and regional directors meeting and built up our sense of shared values, and a frame of reference.”

•“This morning the US and Canadian directors expected me to do something that would be disruptive and useless, but we talked it over and worked out a softer action plan.”

Relations with AID were reflected in 8 incidents, about half of which were positive (provided good technical assistance to staff, making funds available that could not be generated from CRWRC sources). The negative incidents were predictable: bureaucratic obstacles, ambiguous feed back on project performance. Examples:

•“The AID health consultant's visit provided helpful training and brought about a renewed interest and focus on medical problems.”

•“AID officials evaluated our grant proposal critically and helped us improve it and later achieve our goals.”

•“AID hasn't approved our use of matching grant funds for training and consultations in related fields outside the technical area of the agreement, though such opportunities would enable our people to gain broader insights into their work.”

•“AID told us we could not cover costs for training and consultation outside the two countries we were working on, which was not consistent with our previous discussions and will limit the value of the consultants and impede the expansion of our child survival programs.”

Policy guidance activities (6 incidents) were next in line, with as many incidents as those involving linkages to PVOs and those in which finance was the issue. The policy-related incidents were too few and too scattered to provide much information: there were two cases where externalities (such as food prices and floods) had not been incorporated into project plans and thus affected desired results, and a series of other incidents involving evaluation, the use of indicators to measure progress, and the need to establish regional and national organizations to give weight or body to local groups. Examples:

•“Our policies have enabled us to be effective in establishing local community institutions but don't do much for regional institutions.”

•“Our community-level staff can't make much of our accountability system based on measurable objectives while they are essentially engaged in classical CD work. They keep asking questions that beg for simple answers to complex and ambiguous questions.”

The problems of developing linkages with other voluntary organizations were equally divided between positive experiences (gaining assistance or funds) and disappointments

**(group failure, inability to find appropriate PVOs for collegial operations when needed).
An example:**

"I wanted our staff to work through an independent local development organization outside the church network, but that approach lay outside my area of responsibility."

The finance-related incidents, too, were divided equally. The positive cases involves the use of the budget as a management tool and assistance with purchasing. Negative incidents included evidence of dependency that surfaced when funding sources turned out to be unstable, and an example of what appeared to be excessive centralization in a funding decision. Two examples:

•"There was confusion about the level of Canadian funding for a project, and I talked the problem over with our Canadian director. He had received a request for funds but I told him the request was based on inaccurate information. I think he may hold up the funds."

•"The Canadians were cutting back on the project, and our board had to vote funds to phase out some of the work."

The last category of activity was training (5 instances), most of which involved setting up courses or developing materials for use in the field (field directors in CRWRC are responsible for administering training to interns in one-week doses administered on the job). One report of inappropriateness of a training venture appeared as well (already quoted).

During the hour when these surveys were administered, a field director passed through the office, and he volunteered to take the same survey. His responses were coded with the others, and when they were reviewed, they fell easily into the same categories, though several had to be double-coded because they ran across fields. The largest number of cases involved leadership (4), linkages (3), dealing with AID (2), policy (2) personnel (2), training (2), and finance (1). More of them involved issues of local staff (8) than those reported by the headquarters staff.

Two areas of potential concern emerge out of this exercise: how CRWRC goes about establishing relationships and dealing with other voluntary organizations in the field, and how it deals with the concept of sustainability. The first issue appears only indirectly at the headquarters level, since relationships with other voiaqs are essentially field responsibilities (though as a matter of policy there might be things a headquarters unit could do to encourage such links). This issue will be explored in the field.

The second issue, too, will be clarified as field data emerge. Headquarters data make it already clear, however, that indicators of success in eradicating the symptoms of poverty through individual "capacitation" can be tested much more easily than can the sustainability of institutions. Indeed, it is not even certain that the latter should be taken as an end in itself. The CRWRC philosophy of engendering individual capacity for self-fulfillment obviously maps well onto the developmental objectives of AID's country programs; but the suggestion all institutions that are created for that purpose should be self-sustaining and self-fulfilling may not. Treating institutions as means rather than ends suggests that other indicators than capacity to survive should be developed. One respondent put the case nicely in defining an end goal that could also convert to indicators of success:

"projects that have reached a point of maturity at which they no longer need CRWRC's consultation services, but can recognize and work toward solutions to their own problems"

The Study in Belize. We gathered an additional collection of critical incidents in Northern Belize. Over a two-hour period, we asked 11 *promotores* and field workers from CRWRC to complete forms. They produced 101 incidents (a fairly respectable 9 per respondent), out of a possible 187 that would have been available in the unlikely event that everyone had answered every question. The incidents were written in Spanish in most cases.

The largest number (23) dealt with relations between CRWRC and locals, and only 1 of these was negative. Next in frequency were incidents involving beneficiaries - 17, of which 11 were positive (home gardens and agriculture especially). Relations with other vol-ags came in third - 14, all being positive (helping win recognition and identity, with workshops, conferences, and exhibits and training being the most frequent sources of benefit).

An equal number involved the Presbyterian Church, original sponsor of the project, but the incidents were divided 7 and 7 between positive and negative. The church helped with local meetings and donations, but discouraged the *promotores* by down-playing their work. Surprisingly, the host government came off well - 11 incidents, 8 of which were positive (providing access, bringing CRWRC into the picture). Relations with community groups appeared in only 10 incidents, and of these only 6 were positive (poor attendance and lack of follow-through being the source of negative experiences). CRWRC policy was mentioned in 10 incidents, four of which were negative (lack of transportation, changed program directions). Only 3 involved international donor agencies, all being negative (failure to visit project sites). Things that are going the best are Workshops, Conferences, and Exhibitions (22), project operations (9), field visits from CRWRC (7), and the work of community groups (7); this ranking is much less than we had expected, or that the project would suggest. Agriculture and gardens together produced 8 incidents, all positive. The worst scores were from lack of follow-through by one or another group (5) changed directions or confused policies (5), and public indifference (5).

In the Valley of Peace we interviewed 21 members of the agricultural cooperative (including the chairman) and the cattle project in a single group, the only way we could reach more than one or two families. During the interviews, we counted benefits brought to individuals as follows: the building constructed by members themselves, with materials provided by the IADF, 13, the individual benefit being the expectation of increased value of their crops because of the storage and drying capacity. The second benefit mentioned, again a by-product of the coop, was access to loans (13). Next came the cows, provided by CRWRC's intervention with ZOA (12). We saw 15 of the 20 cows, but apparently some of the owners did not attend the meeting. Services provided by the coop that were mentioned most frequently were marketing and transportation of crops (12). Another function they listed as valuable was help in planning crops (we were not able to count the frequency of mention because the discussion went into kinds of planning involved, and it appeared that this service means different things to different members). Last came information and technical knowledge presented at meetings (3), though none were able to recall any specific skill or knowledge they had put to use. We also asked them to describe some of the disappointments or frustrations they had encountered. Complications and confusion over their loans took first place (7 incidents, including interest charged on the whole loan instead of the capital outstanding, excessive promises made by representatives of the foundation supplying the funds, the required documentation for obtaining the loan, and staff shortcomings such as conducting the required field visit when the borrower was away, or nonavailability of the staff during a visit to the office). Two more complained because they had been refused loans with no better reason than that there were no funds left or for no stated reason.

The Study in Bangladesh. In Jamalpur, Bangladesh, 4 cadre (including 1 Bangladeshi) completed a 17-question form, and generated 60 incidents (34 positive, 26 negative). The largest number involved relations with CRWRC (24 for the Grand Rapids headquarters, 4 the regional office). The balance for Grand Rapids was 13/11; at regional level, 2/2.

The next most important relationship was with the communities, including beneficiaries (21, divided 14/7. USAID-related events accounted for 3 (1/2); and relations with the Government of Bangladesh, 8 (4/4).

The substantive issues described in these incidents predominantly involved institutional experiences, 22/19. A disproportionate number of negative issues were derived from institutional experiences. Examples:

One of my cooperatives succeeded in getting its members to participate in drawing up the annual plan, which was confirmed upon review."(+)

"When an officer of one group embezzled the cooperative funds, the group dissolved, and several other groups also went out of business."(-)

Second were technical matters, scoring 11/4. Example:

"A technician came out and told us to drill wells, but they didn't go deep enough to reach the water table."

Personal/cultural issues were less important than might have been expected: 2/2. Example:

"A technical advisor brought her child to the training session, though the trainees were forbidden to do so. The group was offended."

The implication of these balances is that the Jamalpur project is having more difficulty with institutional questions than with technical issues. This finding led us to examine the institutional incidents further, to determine whether the events described were likely to be important enough to affect the "sustainability" objective. We coded 20 incidents as positively affecting institutional prospects and only 11 negative ones. Our conclusion is that the Jamalpur cadre is experiencing more difficulty with institutional than with technical issues, but that most of them did not adversely affect prospects for sustainability.

All 5 field managers, joined by one agriculturalist who was working in Jamalpur, also took the survey, providing 63 incidents (40 positive, 23 negative). Since their work is more directly concerned with the local population than is that of the cadre, it is not surprising that most of the incidents (32) involved community groups and beneficiaries (18+, 14-). Most of the positive incidents involved inputs like training; while the negative ones produced such unexpected findings as the degree of suspicion encountered (4 incidents) and the public's disappointment at the limited amount of help CRWRC was giving, especially in not providing capital aid (5 events). Examples of training inputs:

"Group members thought spinach caused cancer, but the rumor was discussed by the staff and corrected."

"Our group began using de-worming medicine after a talk by the health educator."

And, alternatively,

"the technical advisor from Grand Rapids told us to use tubewells and latrines but did nothing to help us get them."

An example of the suspicion encountered:

"My group thought foreigners would take money out of the bank, and decided not to open a bank account."

"Several local residents threatened not to join CRWRC and sign up with another cooperative that was free of the Christian influence."

One particularly interesting incident contained both positive and negative elements: a group had a cow stolen, and SoShiKa refused to help by replacing it. When the group began to disband, another group became concerned at the outcome, and convinced them to continue in business.

There were only 12 incidents involving CRWRC, of which all but one were positive, and all involved training or examples of personal support. Similar positive results were obtained from screening the 4 incidents in which the Dhaka office was discussed. There were also 7 incidents involving the government, 6 of which were positive (training, helping link the group to other volags, for example). The negative incident involved bureaucratic behavior (refusing to let the group call itself a cooperative because it was not registered).

The only overwhelmingly negative set of incidents involved the newly-created SoShiKa board: 7 incidents were reported, all of which were negative (board members acting impatient, interrupting them, not being sure what they were supposed to do, engaging in intimidating behavior, or generally inviting distrust). We decided to gather some incidents from the Board itself, which are reported below.

The evidence about institutional problems at the field level led us to reexamine these incidents, too, to determine how many involved technical matters (of which there were 29 instances, 25 being positive), and compare them with those involving institutional issues (of the 29, no fewer than 15 were negative), as contrasted with personal/cultural matters (only 1 out of the 5 was positive). In this case, unlike the cadre studies, only 25 instances seemed likely to be related to the objective of sustainability, but 17 of these were negative.

Over a two-day period we administered a survey to 17 Field Assistants, producing no fewer than 136 incidents (81/55). The perspective of these groups was community-and-group based, and we learned of problems and approaches that had not been apparent before.

For example, we found a much more positive view of the government's role than we had encountered at higher levels of CRWRC, largely because of inputs (vaccines, e.g.) that helped achieve group goals. There were 14 references to the government, 11/3.

The most surprising finding was the extent to which other agencies (especially the Grameen Bank) impeded CRWRC field work, by attacking the groups directly, by spreading rumors, by building on suspicion of foreign presence and religious differences, and by offering more than CRWRC was able to. The role of other volags was the single largest item in the code (16 references, all negative). Religious and other sources of distrust accounted for 10 negative incidents. Clearly the greatest source of achievement emerging from the FAs was encouragement from cadre to their work with community groups (13 references, only 1 negative). And finally, support for the SoShiKa board was much stronger among FAs than among field managers, who seem to regard it as a source of trouble. The FAs appreciated the Board's spiritual support and encouragement, perhaps because it is a link to prestigious groups that are otherwise remote from them.

Our last use of the critical incident method was the administration of the survey form to SoShiKa Board members. Three members (the only ones available) gave us 20 incidents (9/11), of which 3 involved relations with CRWRC/Grand Rapids (all negative, policy-related), 5 involved the Dhaka office (3/3, involving rather minor incidents but suggesting that there is lack of clarity regarding their respective roles and responsibilities), 5 touched upon the CRWRC staff itself (2/3), and 6 described events concerning organized groups of beneficiaries in the field (4/2, the negative ones relating to high interest rates and a side effect of relief operations). Examples:

CRWRC had rejected the initial memorandum of understanding proposed by the field and the Board, So how much authority does the field director have anyway?

The SoShiKa staff had attended the August Board meeting at the request of CRWRC/Dhaka, but the board had not authorized their attendance.

The variety of impressions conveyed by different groups' attitudes toward the Board suggest that that institution has not progressed very far in self-identification.

Annex 6

DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Cooperative Agreement (May 1, 1989)

Directive on 1991-92 Plans (Apr 26, 1990)

Field Audits (Belize and Bangladesh, 1989, 1990)

First Annual Report (Jan., 1990)

Leaders' Resource Manual

(modules on Foreign Program Strategies, Leadership, Applied Leadership, Spiritual Discipline, Guidance within Relationships, Purpose and Value of Training, Evangelism and Church Linkage Skills, Board Development and Control Skills, Management Skills, Financial Record-keeping and Planning Skills, Technical Skills, Adult Non-Formal Education Skills, Change Agency Skills, Human Relations Skills, Disciplining Skills, and Self-Management Skills)

Primary source materials (critical incident statements at three sites)

Semi-Annual Reports (Belize and Bangladesh, 1990)

Three-Year Matching Grant Proposal, Feb., 1989

Accounts and beneficiary field records in Belize and Bangladesh

Annex 7

SAMPLE FIELD EVALUATION

(To be supplied)

BANGLADESH FIELD AUDIT

May 1990

Auditor: Westerhof

Experimental Use of New Project level audit form.

Project Stages: CDP (Partner Church of God) Revised Phase-over
SoShika "Early Phaseover"
BLMD (not audited) staff recruitment in process

Note: Documentation (D) and Performance (P) shown in order.

D P

Section One Management

I. Purpose of Organization

- A. Does the project have a clearly stated purpose?
CDP 2 2 (but it's quite old)
Sosh 2 2 FIELD 2 2
- B. Is the purpose consistent with that of CRWRC?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2 FIELD 2 2
- C. Does the purpose include helping the poor solve their basic human needs through agriculture, income generation, health care, and/or literacy?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2 FIELD 2 2
- D. Does the purpose involve a community development approach that leads communities toward self sufficiency?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2 FIELD 2 2
- E. Is the purpose of the organization expressly Christian? In some areas this will not be explicit in the official purpose for legal or culture reasons but should be explicitly stated elsewhere.)
CDP 2 2
Sosh .5 2 FIELD 1.3 2

WHAT are the MAJOR ISSUES identified by CRWRC and project staff for SoSHIKA?

- board development;
- identifying men's program head counterpart;
- strengthening the management staff;
- income generation: how to genuinely develop family income capacity in ways appropriate to women;
- improving board/staff relations, and building a tight unified organization in preparation for phase-over;

What are the MAJOR ISSUES identified by CRWRC and project staff for CDP?

- how to clarify and live out a contextualized Christian dimension, with community credibility;
- moving groups to independence faster and tracking it better;
- leadership development (in groups);
- staff and board making better use of MIS data for improved decision making;

2. GOALS

A. Are goals derived from, and consistent with, the purpose statement of the organization?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

B. Do goals specify measurable out-comes of both the number of families or individuals served, and the quality of the outcomes?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 1 Progress in Sosh. on monitoring individual income, but still group focused)

FIELD 2 1.5

C. Do goals specify time-frames for completion?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

D. Do goals specify the cost for completion?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

3. Management information system

A. Is the frequency of reporting results monthly in all areas?

CDP 2 2

SoSh 2 2

(Sosh does not collect men's income data monthly; Sosh is now reporting on health data!)

2

B. Does the report include the following quality indicators:

health (baby weights and/or mortality)
CDP n.a. (There may be an opportunity here for CDP to do a major innovation, as there is a need, and the COG clinic seems now willing, as it was not before, to let CDP to carry out primary health care programs)

Sosh 2 2

agric

CDP n.a.

Sosh semi annually 2 1

literacy

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

(monitoring progress is a little less than rigorous for both; Sosh has initiated a commendable follow-up study)

income gen.

CDP 2 2

Sosh 1 1

evangelism link

CDP 2 1

Sosh n.a. (cultural issues)

FIELD 1.8 1.8

C. Is the reporting initiated at the local level?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

D. Is information on results, staff morale, programmatic problems, etc regularly and systematically (at least monthly) passed from local level to board?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 0 2

FIELD 1.5 2

E. Is information on results, policy changes, budget, and the like regularly and systematically passed from board level to local level?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 0 0 (board not yet functioning at this level)

FIELD 1.5 1.5

F. Are staff on all levels able to freely state opinions and give input into the decision making process?

CDP 1 2

Sosh 2 1 (some staff concerns expressed about communication to board)

FIELD 1.5 1.5

G. Are organizational decisions and planning on all levels based on valid information that is disseminated throughout the organization?

CDP board 2 2
staff 1 1
Sosh board 1 1
staff 2 2

FIELD 1.5 1.5

4. Efficiency

A. Does the organization know the actual cost of serving each family and each unit? (Including use of CRWRC funds and funds from other sources)

CDP 1 2
Sosh 2 2

FIELD 1.5 2

B. Is the cost the lowest possible and comparable with the cost of other efficient programs in the area?

CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

C. Is there a steady increase in cost effectiveness over the life of the organization?

CDP 2 2
Sosh 1 2

FIELD 1.5 2

D. Are dysfunctional or inefficient activities and programs being discontinued?

CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

5. Staff supervision

A. Does each staff person have a clear idea of what is expected of him?

CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

B. Does each staff person have a job description that is reviewed at least yearly?

CDP 1 1 (not annually)
Sosh 2 2

FIELD 1.5 1.5

C. Does each staff person have a periodical contract that includes: resources, standards of performance, responsibility, accountability?

CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

D. Does each staff person receive monthly feedback from his or her supervisor?

CDP 2 2
Sosh 1 2

FIELD 1.5 2

E. Does each staff person receive a yearly performance audit?

CDP	2	2		
Sosh	2	2	FIELD	2 2

F. Is each staff person competent in the skills he or she needs to accomplish the work assigned?

CDP	2	1 (staff training requested)		
Sosh	2	2	FIELD	2 1.5

G. Are competent staff promoted?

CDP	2	1 (a flat organization with out "steps")		
Sosh	2	2	FIELD	2 1.5

H. Are financial and other rewards given on the basis of competence?

CDP	0	0 (experience based)		
Sosh	2	2	FIELD	1 1

I. Are hygiene factors of income and fringe benefits kept up to date?

CDP	2	2		
Sosh	2	2	FIELD	2 2

J. Do staff at all levels feel that they have input into the organization's decision making process?

CDP	1	2		
Sosh	2	1	FIELD	1.5 1.5

K. Do staff feel that their supervisors are giving them adequate support?

CDP	2	2		
Sosh	1	1 (my notes show "1's" here, but I have no notes or recollections to indicate why not a "2")	FIELD	1.5 1.5

Staff Development

A. Does each staff person have a plan of self development?

CDP	0	1		
Sosh	0	0	FIELD	0 5

B. Does the organization have an overall training plan which serves organizational and individual needs?

CDP	2	2		
Sosh	2	2	FIELD	2 2

C. Are training plans periodically monitored?

CDP	2	1 (budget underspent for training)		
Sosh	2	2	FIELD	2 1.5

7. Finance

- A. Are budgets tied to program goals?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2
FIELD 2 2
- B. Does book keeping comply with local standards?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2
FIELD 2 2
- C. Is the book keeping kept up to date?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2
FIELD 2 2
- D. Do annual audits reveal only minor recommendations?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2
FIELD 2 2

8. Planning

- A. Are there annual plans developed by projects that include finance, personnel, and program expectations?
CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2
FIELD 2 2
- B. Are there long range plans developed for the project which increasingly reflect independence?
CDP 2 1
Sosh 2 1
FIELD 2 1
(There has been a haziness on this field about phase-over philosophy and implementation; consequently there are unresolved issues and some hitches in the process. There is increasing clarity, consensus, and competence among the staff on this.)
- C. Does the project have plans to become independent of CRWRC support?
CDP 2 1
Sosh 2 1
FIELD 2 1
(But see note under B above)
- D. Are priorities established among the goals and activities of the project so that an increase or decrease of resources could be managed well?
CDP 0 0
Sosh 0 2
FIELD 0 1
- E. Is there a coherence between past planning and results obtained?
CDP 2 1
Sosh 2 2
FIELD 2 1.5

F. Does the planning exhibit challenging but achievable results that motivate staff?

CDP 2 2
Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

9. Management of the External Environment

A. Are external environmental factors being managed well?

CDP 1 1 (e.g. networking, relating to potential funders)

Sosh 1 1 (networking with other "sister" organizations, as well as funders)

FIELD 1 1

B. Are appropriate groups within the CRC denomination receiving necessary support, especially other denominational agencies?

applicability to these projects unclear.

C. Does the project cause CRWRC any problems with its external environment and if so are these being managed well both by CRWRC and the project?

CDP 1 1

Sosh 2 2

FIELD 1.5 1.5

(I think the haziness about phase-over in Bangladesh, particularly the lack of clarity in explaining it and implementing it, has cost CRWRC some credibility among international NGO funders. This issue needs more work, both in Bangladesh and in CRWRC more broadly.)

SECTION II
BOARD DEVELOPMENT

A. Is the board composed entirely of nationals?

CDP 1 1 (constitutionally CRWRC FD is a member. The board believes this is important. I believe it sends a signal of dependency.)

Sosh 2 2 (unclear....I THINK the expats role on the board is limited to "consultant", but the number and actual role bears examination.)

FIELD 1.5 1.5

B. Does the board have a method of regularly selecting new membership?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 1 (not working the system yet)

FIELD 2 1.5

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- C. Is the board free of conflicts of interest such as staff persons or representatives from funding sources serving as board members?
 CDP 1 1 (CRWRC FD serves as member)
 Sosh 2 1 (see A above)
 FIELD 1.5 1
- D. Does the board meet at least quarterly?
 CDP 2 2
 Sosh 2 2
 FIELD 2 2
- E. Is the board knowledgeable of the structure and purpose of the organization?
 CDP 2 2
 Sosh 2 2
 FIELD 2 2
- F. Does the board supervise the Executive Director?
 CDP 0 1
 Sosh 0 0
 FIELD 0 .5
- G. Does the board set the standards of performance for the organization?
 CDP 1 1
 Sosh 1 1
 FIELD 1 1
- H. Does the board set the direction and purpose of the organization?
 CDP 2 2
 Shosh 1 1
 FIELD 1.5 1.5
- I. Does the board interfere in the execution of programs or preempt the responsibilities of the director?
 CDP 2 2
 Sosh not applicable since no formal role for the board has yet been developed in this area. BUT some clarity and mutual agreement on this and other appropriate board/staff distinctions are needed.
 FIELD 2 2

SECTION III
Community Development

1. Selection
- A. Is the project selecting communities and participants within the communities that are the most needy?
 CDP 2 2 (as usual, note presence of some church members who might not strictly fit)
 Sosh 2 1.7 (staff has recently discovered some group members (10X?) who are outside target group)
 FIELD 2 1.9

B. Is baseline data gathered?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

C. Is the project developing local level groups that can become independent?

CDP 2 2 (some older groups folded last year; none recently)

Sosh 2 2 (under 10% of groups are casualties)

D. Is the identified target population being adhered to in each project?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

(see notes under A above)

FIELD 2 2

E. Are new projects being implemented, and are existing projects being expanded, modified, or phased out?

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

FIELD 2 2

2. Local organization

A. Are staff of community organizations and community participants being developed in the skills of:
management

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

finance

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

Technical

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

Community Control

CDP 2 2

Sosh 2 2

Evangel/church linkage

CDP 1 1

Sosh staff 0 1

Sosh groups 0 0

FIELD 1.5 1.5

B. Are phase out dates in each skill area and appropriate ways of measuring them defined in each community?

CDP 2 2 (behavioral indicators may be so rigorous that groups are more independent than SRS indicates, and staff may end up working with groups longer than necessary.)

Sosh 2 2

- C. Has the program prevented polarization in the community?
CDP 2 2.
Sosh 2 2 (on one occasion staff wondered if lack of polarization might indicate that the program wasn't doing enough to liberate the poor from the control of the wealthy!)

Program Strengths--as noted by KW and/or staff!

- SOSHKA**---national staff are committed and are taking responsibility;
-staff demands and facilitates groups' growing independence;
-good emphasis on training, and good use of it, particularly AID funded consultants' training on health and water!
-clear goals and commitment to meeting them;
-planning starts at the village level;
-staff held together by spiritual glue;
-good expat modeling;
-increasing program "integration", i.e. of groups into community, between men and women groups, focus on families in health care; linking of sanitation and water concerns;
- progress on networking, e.g. with government services;

Weak areas SoShika (as noted by KW and/or staff)

- some groups may over emphasize loans as Income Gen projects, and in a few cases "non collectables" keep being counted as group assets; in a very few cases, books show "cash in hand", but it's not in hand and no one knows where it is;
--over dependence on income projects that don't increase either employment or productivity, e.g. "playing the rice market" or making loans;
--lack of specificity as to who is responsible for the SoShika project has been hampering institutional development;
--getting clarity, consensus, ownership, implementation of the CRWRC "institution building" vision with Soshika;
--some work needs to be done on how to get the health care training agenda transmitted over into the men's program; felt need is low, and staff needs some training in how to do the training;

Program Strengths CDP--as noted by staff and/or KW!

- staff see themselves as an asset to the organization;
- CDDP has helped to "close the gap" between Christians and the local population (more contact, trust, respect);
- an innovation: each staff person now takes responsibility for the graduation of a specific number of groups in the annual plan;
- board members noted they felt more informed, trained, and interested than in the past;

Weaknesses CDP --as noted by staff and/or KW!

- great distances involved....communication problems;
- competition from other programs, e.g. Grameen Bank;
- again, as with Shoshika, the implanting of the CRWRC institution building vision, needs work here;
- lack of NETWORKS with other agencies, and funders;

Some miscellaneous notes/recommendations appended:

1. As we discussed when I was there, the Shoshika Project Coordinator needs to become the formal "Project Director" with full and clear responsibility for all of the Shoshika enterprise. This is vital for relationships with the board, for institutional development, for management effectiveness, and for the transition time between field directors.
2. As we discussed, both CDP and BLMD could really benefit from some planned consistent indepth consulting, and Nancy has the expertise and the availability. This should be pursued assertively---with CDP immediately, and with BLMD as soon as it's appropriate.
3. As Peggi recommended (I'm told) and as we discussed, I think CDP should think seriously about innovating---getting into primary health care. They should NOT assume CRWRC funding! But I would be open to receiving a proposal from them which would put CRWRC into the role of limited funding partner for this very specific program component and time table. I would stipulate that we would strongly desire to continue in a management consulting role if we are funders! I think CDP would continue to benefit from CRWRC institutional development consultation, but I'm very concerned we not signal them that we'll continue to Prop THEM UP indefinitely if they need us!
4. The experience with the USAID-prompted and -funded training has been instructive for me, and I believe for staff in Bangladesh. There was early resistance, caused in part by the home office getting ahead of the field, which in turn was caused I believe by USAID getting ahead of CRWRC! But there is also resistance which has nothing to do with the home office. It is simply resistance to any hint that perhaps something could be

improved and consultants might be able to help with it! I think this is partly defensiveness and partly our insularity. We learned in Bangladesh that such consultation can be exciting, stimulating, and very very productive! The staff in Bangladesh has helped to chip away at our inappropriate defensiveness and insularity. Thanks to them! And thanks to fine consultants and trainers, Paul Ippel, Peggi Vander Meulen, Arie Vreeken!

(staff did note that communication about the training---ALL dimensions from purpose to content to logistics---was abysmal. NOBODY KNEW NOTHING! or at least they weren't telling. Staff didn't know travel detail, consultants didn't know expectations, etc etc etc)

5. Lou's role in the interim transition seems to get more and more in focus as the one who is THERE for the staff and the national partners. He's the support, the visible presence of the organization giving continuity, and caring, during a time of turbulence. Everybody will be under extra stress, and within the programs themselves there's significant transition going on, so someone to just "be there", is the most important thing. New stuff, or innovation, or any additional turbulence, will be contraindicated! Staff indicates a clear need to have someone there who will "back stop " them, listen, support, steady them when things are rough, and just have a steady hand on the tiller for the CRWRC enterprise during the changing of the command.

Karl J Westerbe