

ISA 85499

PD-ABH-342

APPENDIX D
A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY - PART I

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

IDENTIFICATION DATA

A. Reporting A.I.D. Unit: Mission or AID/W Office: <u>R&D/H/AIDS</u> IES# _____		B. Was Evaluation Scheduled in Current FY Annual Evaluation Plan? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skipped <input type="checkbox"/> Ad Hoc <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation Plan Submission Date, FY '92 <u>0 2</u>		C. Evaluation Timing Interim <input type="checkbox"/> Final <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ex Post <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
D. Activity or Activities Evaluated (List the following information for project(s) or program(s) evaluated, if not applicable, list title and date of the evaluation report)					
Project No.	Project /Program Title	First PROAG or Equivalent (FY)	Most Recent PACD (Mo/Yr)	Planned LOP Cost (000)	Amount Obligated to Date (000)
DPE 5972 GSS 9027	International Forum on AIDS Research (IFAR)	09/28/89	06/30/92	\$300	\$300

ACTIONS

E. Action Decisions Approved By Mission or AID/W Office Director	Name of Officer Responsible for Action	Date Action to be Completed
Action(s) Required 1. Close out IFAR project at end of FY '92 because it is expected that actions taken by the Global Management Committee (GMC) in response to a recent evaluation of the World Health Organization's Global Program on AIDS (WHO/GPA) will result in the establishment of even more effective methods to improve coordination and exchange of information about plans, progress, accomplishments, and gaps/needs in HIV/AIDS research in developing countries.	Dr. Helene Gayle	16 November, 1992 (45 days after end of FY '92)

25 FEB 11 1993
SIGNATURE RECEIVED

(Attach extra sheets if necessary)

APPROVALS

F. Date Of Mission Or AID/W Office Review Of Evaluation:			(Month) July	(Day) 13	(Year) 1992
G. Approvals of Evaluation Summary And Action Decisions:					
Name (Typed)	Project/Program Officer	Representative of Borrower/Grantee	Evaluation Officer	Mission or AID/W Office Director	
	Helene Gayle		Genease Pettigrew	Robert L. Wrin Acting	
Signature	<i>Helene Gayle</i>		<i>Genease Pettigrew</i>	<i>Robert L. Wrin</i>	

4-20-93

H Evaluation Abstract (Do not exceed the space provided)

The International Forum on AIDS Research (IFAR) was established in 1988 to improve coordination and exchange of information about HIV/AIDS research in developing countries; to enable donor agencies to achieve greater complementarity; and to marshal support for high-priority HIV/AIDS research. The evaluation was conducted as planned to assist in decision making about further support because the initial support was to end in September 1992. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess lessons learned from the organization and activities of IFAR; to determine whether IFAR was still needed; and to provide USAID with recommendations for IFAR's future. Through personal interviews and telephone conversations with IFAR members and with IFAR staff at the Institute of Medicine, the evaluator determined that IFAR membership criteria were never clearly defined. There were no members from outside North America; that IFAR members had no clearly defined financial or other obligations; that IFAR staff and donor agency members of IFAR frequently disagreed and were disappointed about the agendas and/or proceedings of IFAR meetings; that IFAR staff never satisfactorily completed the creation of an IFAR database to facilitate exchange of information; but that IFAR meetings and activities had ceased by the time of the evaluation because WHO/GPA and most other members has withdrawn support in favor of efforts to establish a more effective coordinating body through the Global Management Committee and WHO. The key lesson learned was to obtain agreement and commitment from the organizing members at the outset on membership, financing, goals, methods, and outcomes to be achieved by such a forum.

C O S T S

I. Evaluation Costs

1. Evaluation Team		Contract Number OR TDY Person Days	Contract Cost OR TDY Cost (U.S. \$)	Source of Funds
Name	Affiliation			
Dr. Richard Cash	Harvard School of Public Health	7 Person Days 2 Trips: Boston-DC	\$1,662.81	AIDSCAP
2. Mission/Office Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) _____ 4		3. Borrower/Grantee Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) _____ 2		

A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY - PART II

SUMMARY

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

Address the following items:

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

- Principal recommendations
- Lessons learned

Mission or Office:

Date This Summary Prepared:

21 October, 1992

Title And Date Of Full Evaluation Report:

Evaluation of the IFAR 23 : 1992

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the evaluation was to obtain an independent assessment of: (1) the lessons that have been learned from the organization and activities of IFAR; and (2) the question of whether an IFAR is still needed and if so to define the organizational structure, terms of reference, and administrative location.

METHODOLOGY:

Telephone interviews and personal conversations, where possible, were used to gather the information needed to carry out this evaluation (See Appendix I). In addition, program descriptions and memos supplied by IFAR and USAID were reviewed. IFAR meetings were not attended by the reviewer.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR IFAR:

The objectives of IFAR were to improve coordination and exchange information about plans, progress, accomplishments, and gaps/needs in HIV/AIDS research in developing countries; to enable members to achieve greater coherence, complementarily, and productivity in research; and to marshal support for high-priority collaborative activities.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Membership

Observations: There appeared to be limited criteria for admission to IFAR other than geographical location (North American donors could join). The size of the group was often too large to create an environment where active exchange could occur. Also, the individuals attending from each group varied from meeting to meeting.

Obligation of Members

Observations: There were neither written nor verbal policies reflecting any obligation, financial or otherwise, demanded of the participants.

Coordination of Meetings and Setting the Agenda

Observations: The implementing organization and the participants were not always in full agreement as to the agenda of each meeting. This led to unfulfilled expectations on the part of both groups. When the IOM took charge of the agenda, it was not always agreed upon by the participants. On the other hand, the donor agencies did not always step forward with a clear agenda of their own.

The sessions devoted to a review of current research seem to have been well appreciated. Agendas were very full, however, and little time was available for discussion.

Data Base

Observations: The first objective of IFAR was to facilitate the exchange of information on activities and programs between funding groups. One of the first tasks of IFAR was to establish a data base that would document ongoing activities of the member groups and others. It eventually was to include all requested input from the funders. A data base was developed by the US government to document its AIDS research activities, but it was reported that it did not meet the needs of all the IFAR members. It was viewed as more of a management tool. IOM/IFAR staff never completed the creation of an IFAR database.

Benefits of IFAR and Future Directions

Observations: IFAR provided a valuable opportunity for donors to meet with others who they otherwise might not have engaged. The meetings provided contacts which have been built upon. Most, in fact, would have preferred that there was less structured time and more time available for open discussion.

Many of the scientific sessions were much appreciated, as these sessions exposed members to topics that they might not be supporting. It would seem, however, that too many presenters were invited to the meetings allowing less time for in depth discussion. Many felt that there was not adequate follow-up to the meetings; that is no specific activities took place in the interim.

Some felt that by the time IFAR actually began operations, there were other meetings that had begun to provide similar opportunities. The need for an IFAR now seems less clear to many of the participants. As stated by one person, it is an idea whose time is now past. Others lamented the loss of this collegial environment, where ideas could be expressed in an open forum without the constraints often imposed by a more formalized structure. Many felt that if IFAR or some other group was to be reconstituted, it must be conducted in a form that would allow for an open exchange. If members were afraid of offending major players in the AIDS community, the value of these meetings would be greatly diminished.

Principal Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

Recommendations: With the limited information at hand, it would be presumptuous to either recommend the continuation of IFAR in some other forum or its disbandment. There are certain issues, however, that should be addressed in any future activity similar to that which IFAR was mandated to do. These include the following:

- There should be agreement from the outset by members and the forum on specific goals and outcomes expected.
- Participation should be limited to donors who are supporting research at some predetermined level.
- Members should be from the larger international community.
- Researchers and program implementers can participate but only upon invitation rather than being permanent members of the group.
- Participation of members should carry some financial or programmatic obligation to the forum.
- Individuals in decision making roles and technical experts should be encouraged to attend each meeting (consistency of attendance is important).
- Meetings should be held 2-3 times per year (maximum) and should be at least 2 days in duration.
- Adequate time needs to be set aside for discussion by group members so that ideas can be discussed and debated.
- A data base with information from all groups should be established as early as possible with adequate flexibility to update and add additional information. The format should be determined prior to or at the first meeting.
- The direction of the forum should either rotate amongst the participants or be at an organization that does not in itself benefit from funders.
Participants should not feel under any constraint to express their views.
- The forum should continuously seek opportunities for members to collaborate on funding research activities and/or take other cooperative action.

ATTACHMENTS

K. Attachments ... attachments submitted with this Evaluation Summary always attach copy of full evaluation report even if one was submitted earlier. Attach studies, surveys, etc. from ongoing evaluation if relevant to the evaluation.

Final evaluation report (23 June, 1992)

COMMENTS

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

It is expected that actions taken by the Global Management Committee (GMC) in response to a recent evaluation of the World Health Organization's Global Program on AIDS (WHO/GPA) will result in the establishment of even more effective methods to improve coordination and exchange of information about plans, progress, accomplishments, and gaps/needs in HIV/AIDS research in developing countries.

In light of developments described above and in the evaluation report, U.S.A.I.D. has determined that it will no longer be necessary to support the IFAR which has been capably managed by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). In making this decision, we wish to express our sincere thanks to you and your staff, and to Dr. Harrison and the Division of International Health of IOM for your dedication, hard work, and accomplishments during the past several years.



TO: Neil Brendan
Family Health International

FROM: Richard A. Cash

RE: Evaluation of IFAR

DATE: 23 June, 1992

Evaluation of the International Forum of AIDS Research (IFAR)

BACKGROUND:

The International Forum on AIDS Research (IFAR) was established in 1988 after a group of agencies funding AIDS research recognized the need for such a forum. After initial efforts to establish IFAR in an international setting were unsuccessful, the core members requested the Institute of Medicine, US National Academy of Sciences (IOM/NAS) to direct IFAR activities. Membership was limited to US and Canadian funders. The initial period of USAID support for IFAR under the auspices of the IOM/NAS will end in September 1992 with further support unlikely.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION:

The purpose of the evaluation was to obtain an independent assessment of: (1) the lessons that have been learned from the organization and activities of IFAR; and (2) the question of whether an IFAR is still needed and if so to define the organizational structure, terms of reference, and administrative location.

METHODOLOGY:

Telephone interviews and personal conversations, where possible, were used to gather the information needed to carry out this evaluation (See Appendix I). In addition, program descriptions and memos supplied by IFAR and USAID were reviewed. IFAR meetings were not attended by the reviewer. No attempt will be made here to review the events leading to the establishment of IFAR as it is best that those directly involved write the history of IFAR. It is clear, though, that what developed as IFAR was very much a distillation of the original intent of a collaborative

group.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR IFAR:

The objectives of IFAR were to improve coordination and exchange information about plans, progress, accomplishments, and gaps/needs in HIV/AIDS research in developing countries; to enable members to achieve greater coherence, complementarity, and productivity in research; and to marshal support for high-priority collaborative activities.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section examines a selection of issues relevant to IFAR. The first segment of each section reflects the opinions of the interviewees and the observations of the reviewer through discussions and reading; this is labeled "Observations". The second segment represents the suggestions of the reviewer based on these observations and is labeled "Recommendations".

Membership

Observations: There appeared to be limited criteria for admission to IFAR other than geographical location (North American donors could join). The size of the group was often too large to create an environment where active exchange could occur. Also, the individuals attending from each group varied from meeting to meeting.

Recommendations: Specific criteria for membership should have been established early in the development of IFAR. Criteria might have included, for example, a specific funding level. Familiarity of participants invariably leads to greater openness.

Obligation of Members

Observations: There were neither written nor verbal policies reflecting any obligation, financial or otherwise, demanded of the participants.

Recommendations: Some membership obligations, however vague, should have been established. If a commitment of financial support for IFAR itself could not be supplied, the participants might have donated time, meeting venues, or taken responsibility for an activity such as developing the scientific agenda for a meeting or preparing a position paper. There was no policy on this.

Coordination of Meetings and Setting the Agenda

Observations: The implementing organization and the participants were not always in full agreement as to the agenda of each meeting. This led to unfulfilled expectations on the part of both groups. When the IOM took charge of the agenda, it was not

always agreed upon by the participants. On the other hand, the donor agencies did not always step forward with a clear agenda of their own.

The sessions devoted to a review of current research seem to have been well appreciated. Agendas were very full, however, and little time was available for discussion.

Recommendations: Activities such as IFAR are by their nature difficult to conduct. Groups may have a common goal but each member has their own agenda. The leadership in these meetings then is critical. It is important that the person directing the meeting have meeting leadership skills. For participants to be adequately prepared for meetings, written materials need to be received well in advance, the amount of material should be limited in volume (anything over 20 pages usually won't be read), the questions to be discussed should be clearly defined, and the agenda limited in scope. Instead of having full agendas with limited discussion time, three or four outside experts per meeting would have sufficed.

Data Base

Observations: The first objective of IFAR was to facilitate the exchange of information on activities and programs between funding groups. One of the first tasks of IFAR was to establish a data base that would document ongoing activities of the member groups and others. It eventually was to include all requested input from the funders. A data base was developed by the US government to document its AIDS research activities, but it was reported that it did not meet the needs of all the IFAR members. It was viewed as more of a management tool.

Recommendations: The creation of an IFAR data base should have been one of the first items on its agenda. It need not have been complicated, however. Rather a simple compilation of data such as project title, country, institution, investigator(s), duration of activity, collaborators and budget would likely have provided enough information at the outset. More information could have been added at a later date. By creating this data base, all participants would have known at a glance what was taking place and a clear product would have been produced by the project. All donor groups would have been required to fill out forms to supply this information. The data base could also have been used as a point of discussion for future meetings.

Benefits of IFAR and Future Directions

Observations: IFAR provided a valuable opportunity for donors to meet with others who they otherwise might not have engaged. The meetings provided contacts which have been built upon. Most, in fact, would have preferred that there was less structured time and

more time available for open discussion.

Many of the scientific sessions were much appreciated, as these sessions exposed members to topics that they might not be supporting. It would seem, however, that too many presenters were invited to the meetings allowing less time for in depth discussion. Many felt that there was not adequate follow-up to the meetings; that is no specific activities took place in the interim.

Some felt that by the time IFAR actually began operations, there were other meetings that had begun to provide similar opportunities. The need for an IFAR now seems less clear to many of the participants. As stated by one person, it is an idea whose time is now past. Others lamented the loss of this collegial environment, where ideas could be expressed in an open forum without the constraints often imposed by a more formalized structure. Many felt that if IFAR or some other group was to be reconstituted, it must be conducted in a form that would allow for an open exchange. If members were afraid of offending major players in the AIDS community, the value of these meetings would be greatly diminished.

Recommendations: With the limited information at hand, it would be presumptuous to either recommend the continuation of IFAR in some other forum or its disbandment. There are certain issues, however, that should be addressed in any future activity similar to that which IFAR was mandated to do. These include the following:

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- Participants should not feel under any constraint to express their views.

- o The forum should continuously seek opportunities for members to collaborate on funding research activities and/or take other cooperative action.

APPENDIX I

Seth Berkley
Assistant Director
The Rockefeller Foundation
New York, NY

Robert Bernstein
R&D/H Office of Health
AIDS Division
Agency for International Development
Washington, DC

Kenneth Bridbord
Chief
International Studies Branch
Fogarty International Center
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD

Lita Curtis
Formerly with IFAR
Institute of Medicine
National Academy of Science
Washington, DC

Helene Gayle
Chief
International Activity Division of HIV/AIDS
Centers for Disease Control
Atlanta, GA

Jeff Harris
R&D/H Office of Health
AIDS Division
Agency for International Development
Washington, DC

Polly F. Harrison
Director, Division of International Health
Institute of Medicine
National Academy of Sciences
Washington, DC

David Heymann
Chief, Office of Research
Global Programme on AIDS
World Health Organization
Geneva, Switzerland

Dana Hotra
Staff, IFAR
Institute of Medicine
National Academy of Sciences
Washington, DC

Christopher P. Howson
Director, IFAR
Institute of Medicine
National Academy of Sciences
Washington, DC

Ron St. John
Pan American Health Organization
Washington, DC

Linda Reck
Senior Program Analyst
Office of AIDS Research
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD

Pat Trites
Coordinator, AIDS Committee
International Development Research Centre
Ottawa Ontario, CANADA

Karl A. Western
Assistant Director of International Research
National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, MD

Rita Fineberg
Program/Liaison Officer
AIDS TECH (Washington Office)
Rosalyn, Virginia