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**TRIP REPORT: PROGRAM
MANAGEMENT**

**LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM,
BANGLADESH**

JANUARY 27 - FEBRUARY 10, 1994

**Alison Ellis
Paul Fishstein**

FAMILY PLANNING MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

**Project No.: 936-3055
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I. SUMMARY

Alison Ellis, Regional Director, and Paul Fishstein, Senior Program Officer, Asia/Near East (ANE), Family Planning Management Development (FPMD) Project travelled to Bangladesh during the period January 27 - February 10, 1994. The trip was one of several country assignments each had in the Asia region over an approximately four-week period, and work on the Local Initiatives Program (LIP) was one of two assignments in Bangladesh during the two-week visit. The primary purposes of the assignment were to address various program management issues and to orient Mr. Fishstein to the project.

This was Ms. Ellis' second assignment in Bangladesh since joining FPMD in January 1993. Mr. Fishstein was appointed to FPMD in November 1993, and although he has had extensive experience in the Asia region, this was his first visit to Bangladesh. The time available to work with LIP, though brief, proved to be effective. We were able to coordinate on and plan for a variety of activities. Mr. Fishstein's involvement in discussions on project management issues, his participation in a LIP staff meeting and the two field visits conducted, were useful for furthering orienting him to FPMD in general, and to increasing his understanding of LIP's objectives and activities, and its unique contributions to the national family planning program as well as to the overall FPMD portfolio.

II. BACKGROUND

Since May 1987, the Local Initiatives Program (LIP), launched initially as the Upazila Initiatives Project (UIP) under USAID's Family Planning and Health Services Project, has been operating to improve the performance of the national family planning program at the grassroots level through strengthening of the management capability of thana (sub-district) family planning staff and local leaders. The project is designed to enable the Government of Bangladesh family planning staff at the thana level and below to increase their effectiveness in offering high quality, sustainable family planning services to a greater proportion of eligible couples (ELCOs). LIP is assisting the national family planning program to introduce a decentralized management system at the thana level and below. Seventy one thanas are currently covered by the project. Through an innovative package of carefully tailored training, technical assistance and small grants, LIP has developed high level support and local commitment for management teams, and has introduced management skills in planning, implementation, and monitoring. Local management teams have strengthened overall community participation in program activities and have promoted greater accountability for program performance.

LIP has been implemented under a series of buy-ins from USAID/Dhaka to the FPMD Project as well as to its predecessor project, Family Planning Management Training (FPMT). FPMT and, currently, FPMD have subcontracted with Technical Assistance, Inc. (TAI), a local organization, to establish a FPMD/Dhaka program office. This office implements the LIP, with technical and management support from FPMD/Boston.

III. PURPOSE

The primary purposes of the assignment were to address various program management issues and to orient Mr. Fishstein to the project. Specific objectives included:

1. Finalize the 1994 LIP workplan in collaboration with the Project Director;
2. Develop an agenda for the monitoring and supervision workshop to be conducted in 1994; and
3. Coordinate and follow-up on the status of ongoing technical activities, including LIP staff preparation of publications and evaluation activities.

IV. ACTIVITIES

The activities described below were implemented through periodic meetings with Mr. Abu Sayeed, LIP Project Director, during the two-week assignment. A brief meeting was held with the USAID/Dhaka Population Officer at the beginning of the assignment to review plans and expected outcomes. See Annex 1 for a list of persons contacted.

A. Project Management Issues: Mr. Sayeed and Ms. Ellis reviewed the status of and took action on a number of pending issues, including:

- The draft LIP final report covering the period January 1991 - October 1993 and draft semi-annual report covering the period July - December 1993 were reviewed and edited. LIP staff will incorporate recommended changes and submit the final reports to FPMD/Boston in early March.
- The draft 1994 workplan for the project was reviewed, including the proposed format and information to be contained in the document. Planning for technical assignments by FPMD/Boston-based staff and consultants, including follow-up technical assistance visits in support of ongoing evaluation and publications activities, as well as an anticipated technical assignment by the FPMD Project Director, were discussed and a tentative time schedule was agreed upon. The final workplan will be submitted to FPMD/Boston in early March.
- The final list of equipment (e.g., computers, printers) to be procured by FPMD/Boston for the project was reviewed and outstanding specifications for select equipment items were obtained. A time schedule for procurement and shipment was developed.
- The status of several ongoing project activities which involve a high level of collaboration with and support from FPMD/Boston was reviewed. These include:

- analysis of data collected by LIP on community volunteers, Family Welfare Assistants (FWAs), and Family Planning Inspectors (FPIs) working in LIP thanas. Input and analysis of the data has been delayed due to dislocations resulting from the recent move of the project to new office space, and frequent brownouts. However, sufficient data is expected to have been input by the time Sallie Craig Huber, FPMD evaluation consultant, arrives in Dhaka in late February so that next steps for analysis and use of the data for program planning may be undertaken.
 - The status of LIP staff preparation of sections and chapters of several training materials and "briefing notes" on LIP was reviewed during the monthly LIP staff meeting which Ms. Ellis and Mr. Fishstein attended. The publications workplan prepared with LIP staff in November 1993 is very ambitious with respect to the volume of materials LIP staff are writing during December 1993 through March 1994. Preparation of several of the documents is a month or more behind schedule due to events which have consumed significant amounts of staff time, including the Population Fortnight, office move, and routine project activities.
- An agenda was developed for Mr. Sayeed's annual visit to FPMD/Boston for coordination and planning purposes. Activities during this visit will include attendance at the National Council for International Health (NCIH) meeting in June, meetings with technical staff (e.g., evaluation and publications) to discuss the status of activities and for program planning, and meetings with Operations and Contracts staff to review administrative and financial issues.
 - The status of the project's reorganization was discussed and the draft final organogram was reviewed. Recruitment plans for new positions, especially a medical officer, were also discussed.

B. Field visits: Mr. Sayeed, Ms. Ellis and Mr. Fishstein conducted two field visits. For the first, to Bhaluka thana, they were joined by Ms. Rokshana Begum who was conducting an evaluation of LIP for the Planning Ministry. This evaluation, the first in four years by the Government of Bangladesh, is expected to be completed by March. The purpose of the second field visit, to Ghior thana, was to meet with concerned local government and family planning officials to prepare for the visit the following week of Margaret Carpenter, Deputy Administrator, Asia/Near East Bureau, USAID/Washington. Both visits afforded Ms. Ellis and Mr. Fishstein an opportunity to strengthen their understanding of LIP activities in the field. The visit to Ghior, in particular, allowed us to

meet with several FWAs and community volunteers and to informally interview them about their activities in support of LIP and family planning in their communities as well as their use of ELCO maps as a management and monitoring tool.

C. Monitoring and supervision workshop: LIP plans to conduct a workshop for district and thana-level managers in May in support of the project's work to strengthen supervision of field-level activities and to introduce the concept of performance-oriented supervision. Prior to going to Bangladesh, Ms. Ellis forwarded a number of technical materials which LIP could use to conceptualize and design the workshop. Materials included sample monitoring/supervision instruments presented by participants at the FPMD-sponsored Francophone Regional Advisory Committee (FRAC) meeting on supervision of family planning activities held in Tunis in November 1993; background materials from a monitoring and supervision technical assistance project FPMD is undertaking in Burkina Faso; various relevant training materials on monitoring/supervision from MSH's Management Training Program curricula which could be adapted for use during the workshop; as well as a training curriculum on supervision from an FPMT project in Nigeria. She also prepared a list of critical issues and questions which LIP should consider in designing and conducting the workshop. These materials can assist LIP in getting further oriented to similar supervision-related projects which FPMD has undertaken in other countries and regions, and to issues which need to be addressed in conceptualizing the workshop and in determining expected outputs. Unfortunately, the materials did not arrive in Dhaka until late in the visit due to delays in customs; thus Mr. Sayeed did not have an opportunity to review them prior to our arrival. Mr. Sayeed did advise, however, that the materials would be useful for workshop preparations.

A brainstorming session was convened with all LIP staff in which Ms. Ellis and Mr. Fishstein participated. The purpose of the meeting was to describe the current supervision system in the government family planning program and to discuss its strengths and weaknesses. This session was very useful and revealing. Discussions highlighted that the current "supervision system" is in actuality a reporting system, from the lowest to the highest levels of the family planning service delivery system. The system does not directly address the performance of family planning (FP) professionals from a supervisory perspective. There is not a systematic mechanism to ensure the quality of program, clinical, and community based distribution operations. Moreover, the current system cannot encourage FP staff to perform to their maximum potential. A reporting system cannot lead to these goals, although if collected data are used appropriately, it can contribute.

Time did not permit the preparation of a draft workshop agenda. However, it was decided that LIP staff would organize focus group discussions with key district, thana and field-level officials and FP professionals to obtain their input on monitoring/supervision -- current activities and how the "system" should be changed -- which could be used as a basis for designing the workshop. It was also agreed that an FPMD consultant who will be travelling to Bangladesh in March/April for other FPMD business would be made available to Mr.

Sayed to talk specifically about the FRAC workshop on supervision for which she was the lead organizer. In addition, Ms. Ellis prepared a detailed memo for Mr. Sayeed providing additional input and considerations for the workshop design. The memo covered such topics as: a definition of performance-based supervision; suggested goal statements for the workshop; suggested specific outputs of the workshop; a draft workshop agenda; a model outline for the monitoring/supervision guidelines to be produced at the workshop; sample questions for the proposed focus groups; and suggestions for field testing the supervision guidelines and instrument following the workshop.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

While our work on FPMD's other project in Bangladesh (CA/NGO Project) proved to be more demanding and time-consuming than we had anticipated, and thus the amount of time we were able to devote to LIP was diminished, the time available was nevertheless well spent and the majority of objectives of the visit were met. In particular, discussions with Mr. Sayeed, LIP staff and the field visits were especially useful in further orienting Mr. Fishstein to project activities and the relationship between LIP and FPMD/Boston.

Next steps resulting from this assignment include:

- Coordinate on progress in the design of the monitoring/supervision workshop and assure adequate technical assistance from FPMD/Boston
- Coordinate on progress in the preparation of training materials and re-examine the feasibility of the workplan in collaboration with Mr. Sayeed and FPMD/Publications Unit staff
- Continue planning and preparations for Mr. Sayeed's visit to Boston and the FPMD Project Director's visit to Bangladesh
- Initiate procurement of equipment

ANNEX 1

LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

FPMD/Dhaka

Abu Sayeed, Project Director
Mukarram Chowdhury, Deputy Project Director
Tariq Azim, Program Officer
Khalil Ur Rahman, Program Officer
Badruddin Khan, Finance Manager
Emad Uddin, Program Officer
Najmul Haque, Program Officer
Shabbir Ahmed, Program Officer
Md. Ali Bhuiyan, Senior Program Officer
Ahmedul Ghani, Senior Program Specialist
F.M. Mostaque, Senior Program Officer
A.H. Sikder, Senior Program Officer
S. K. Zaman, Senior Program Specialist
Farid U. Ahmad, Senior Financial Analyst
Farhad Hossain, Administrative Officer
Ashiur Rahman, Executive Secretary

USAID

Rob Cunnane, Population Officer
Belayet Hossain, Program Specialist

Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Planning

Rokshana Begum, Deputy Director, IME Division

