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**Final Evaluation of the  
Farmer-To-Farmer Program**

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Prepared for:

**Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance/PVC  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC**

by:

**William L. Rodgers  
Gerardo Berthin  
Valerie Estes**

Submitted by:

**Development Associates, Inc.**  
1730 North Lynn Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22209  
(703) 276-0677

**April 4, 1994**

**DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES, INC.**  
**MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENTAL CONSULTANTS**

1730 NORTH LYNN STREET  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22209-2023

U S A

(703) 276-0677

FAX NO. (703) 276-0432

April 4, 1994

Mr. John A. Fasullo  
Coordinator for Cooperative  
Development, BHR/PVC  
Room 731  
U.S. Agency for International Activities  
1515 Wilson Boulevard  
Rosslyn, Virginia 22209

RE: AEP-0085-I-00-3002-00  
Delivery Order #16

Dear Mr. Fasullo:

Development Associates is pleased to submit five bound copies of the Final Report for the Worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer Program Evaluation.

We appreciate having had the opportunity to conduct this evaluation of the worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer (FTF) program. We expect to deliver to you the draft of the N.I.S. FTF program evaluation within the next few days.

We at Development Associates thank you and your colleagues most sincerely for the help you have extended to us throughout this evaluation process.

Sincerely,



Jack Sullivan  
Vice President for  
International Activities

JS:nr

Enclosure: As stated

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### I. The Project

The Farmer-to-Farmer Program (FTF) of the U.S. Agency for International Development was authorized by the U.S. Congress in FY 1985 as a result of a belief that direct person-to-person relationships between American agriculturalists and their counterparts in developing countries could make a lasting contribution both to agricultural production and international understanding.

The purpose, as stated in the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act (PL-240), is "...to assist in increasing food production and distribution, and improving the effectiveness of the farming and marketing operations of farmers." To carry this out, the FTF Program utilizes the services of U.S. farmers, agriculturalists, land grant universities, private agribusinesses and non-profit farm organizations on a voluntary basis in response to the needs of host country farmers and farmer organizations.

The worldwide FTF Program currently operates in more than 60 countries spread throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Volunteers participate in a wide variety of field assignments including animal health, field crop cultivation, fruit and vegetable growing, food processing, honeybee and honey production, marketing, agricultural inputs, agricultural extension and management development for cooperatives and other farm groups.

To implement the FTF Program, the Agency signed a number of Cooperative Agreements with several institutions starting in FY 1986 with Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA); in FY 1991 a Participating Agency Service Agreement (PASA) with Peace Corps; later that same year the program was expanded to include two new organizations, the National Association of the Partners of the Americas (Partners) and Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development (Winrock). The fifth and last group, the National Farmers Union (NFU), was added in FY 1992. These five

implementors are responsible for coordinating and implementing the worldwide FTF Program.

Funding for the FTF Program comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (PL 480) resources and is administered by FHA/PVC. In recent years it has averaged \$3-4 million a year.

## **II. The Evaluation Process**

USAID requires the FTF Program be evaluated periodically to determine if that program as actually carried out meets the purposes established by Congress and the Executive Branch. As described in the scope of work, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess implementor performance and program effectiveness under the current worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer grant. A primary purpose of this assignment is to assist BHR/PVC in determining what, if any, program adjustments are warranted in anticipation of a follow-on grant.

Specifically, the evaluation scope of work called for the following:

- Provide a general assessment of implementor performance and program impact;
- Assess BHR/PVC management of the worldwide program;
- Assist BHR/PVC in determining what, (if any), program adjustments are warranted in anticipation of a follow-on grant;
- Assess the validity of implementor performance indicators and how they might be better measured;
- Identify information gaps or data that would be useful for future evaluations; and
- Assess whether the program is meeting the "people-to-people" objectives on which Farmer-to-Farmer is based.

### **III. Methodology**

The final evaluation was carried out in the U.S. by a two-person team, over a period of 6 weeks. Essentially, it was a desk study that focussed its attention on assessing the performance of the five implementors by reviewing materials and documents, including cooperative agreements, evaluations and other relevant background materials; a review and synthesis of the responses to an Agency-wide cable questionnaire sent to USAID Missions where the centrally-funded FTF Program has been active.

The team also conducted interviews with BHR/PVC staff; with all five FTF implementor headquarters staff including Peace Corps -- and, in one case, field staff. A telephone survey/interview was conducted with a representative number (53) of volunteers using a questionnaire as a basis for the interview.

### **IV. Major Conclusions**

- A. While noting the diversity of approaches, the team believes that the FTF Program is a good use of USAID funding. It provides an important link between the agricultural and agribusiness community of the United States with counterparts in the countries that USAID serves. This point must be emphasized "up front" lest the contribution being made by the program be lost in the team's recommendations for improving performance. In short, we find FTF Program generally sound and recommend that it be continued.
  
- B. In general, the majority of the returned volunteers believe in the FTF Program and are satisfied with it. They like the direct people-to-people approach free from bureaucratic layers between their know-how and, what many term "the client." The overall comments about the support they received from their implementors was complementary. Similarly, a majority of the interviewed volunteers felt that they had adequately addressed the problems of the clients given the time and

resource limitations. A great majority also felt that their work had been either useful or very useful for the client. Most were able to cite specific changes that had occurred in the client's enterprise or operation as a result of the volunteer presence.

- C. As the expansion of the FTF Program gathers momentum, the danger of becoming another unwieldy and unmanageable operation -- more form than substance -- increases. The worldwide FTF Program currently operates in 60 countries and 4 continents. Some of the implementors are seeking to expand even further -- beyond their present staff and monitoring capabilities -- justifying this by the assertion that the program is demand driven.
- D. While the overall comments given about the support they received from their implementors was complementary, lack of follow-up and feedback on recommendations is almost a universal complaint of volunteers. This is true regardless of the geographic region or of the implementor of assignment.

## **V. Major Lessons Learned**

- A. The core strength of the FTF Program are its volunteers. Dedicated, enthusiastic and highly motivated, these skilled professionals need to feel that their recommendations are acted upon or at the least, followed-up. Implementors must take care in choosing that the host country counterpart organizations have the capacity to absorb the technical assistance provided and be able to act on the recommendations of the volunteer.
- B. With an annual budget of \$3-4 million, the maximum number of implementors should not be increased and probably should be reduced. Moreover, having the FTF Program spread out over 60 countries places an undue burden on efficient

program management and implementation. The number of countries wherein these implementors operate should also be substantially reduced for the same reason.

- C. When a USAID Mission provides active support to the program, the success ratio of an in-country FTF project rises and the impact of the volunteer's technical assistance as well as the sustainability of the project, are increased.
- D. Provision of repeat volunteers onto a particular project in a consecutive manner, increases the chances of that project's success.
- E. Structured short-term training of a pragmatic nature, in the U.S., of host country farmers and technicians is a good way to ensure sustainability of a project. These individuals would be identified by the volunteers on the project and would be trained, through a Reverse FTF Program, through the implementor mechanism.

## VI. Major Recommendations

This section summarizes the recommendations and indicates the offices to take the responsibility for follow-up action.

- A. **Reduce the number of implementors in the next design phase of the program.** For reasons of efficiency of program management and implementation, three organizations may be the maximum number that can be supported by an approximately \$3-3.5 million annual budget. **Action: BHR/PVC**
- B. **Establish universal impact measures.** These should be critical indicators, standard to all projects, and should be included in all contracts and agreements. Related to this, the implementors and USAID should assume greater responsibility in monitoring the impact of FTF-funded projects, utilizing existing networks and resources. **Action: BHR/PVC**

- C. **Promote coordination and communication among implementors by holding semi-annual workshops in Washington to be hosted, in turn, by each implementor.** The agenda of topics and issues should be set by mutual agreement with USAID before the meeting with additional inputs as to issues and problems submitted by the field. **Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**
- D. **Reduce number of countries in the worldwide FTF Program from 60 to approximately 10.** The selection criteria to be used are: 1) those countries that have shown the greatest activity over the past 3 years in the number of volunteers fielded and projects completed; 2) those host country counterpart organizations that have demonstrated the greatest support and follow-up to FTF Programs; 3) countries that have, or plan to have, a permanent office and staff member to track and monitor projects and respond to new project requests.

Use the reduced number of countries to assign a larger number of volunteers per country. The criteria for these "countries of concentration" are those countries where a development objective, e.g., improved management of producer cooperatives, can be targeted and an impact measured. The actual numbers of volunteers assigned would be approximately 10-15 per year. This would provide a critical mass of volunteers and repeat volunteers, to accomplish the goals and objectives. Use an adaptation of the VOCA/Uganda model. Work with countries, if possible, where Peace Corps is active, thus assuring that projects will be grassroots and with small to medium size enterprises. **Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**

- E. **All implementors should ensure that the host country counterpart organization(s) have the institutional capacity to absorb the technical assistance provided and be able to act on recommendations of the volunteer.** **Action: Implementors**

- F. **In designing a project description for a new grant for the implementors, the scope of work should include sections on methods to handle volunteer feedback and project recommendations, follow-up, volunteer newsletter published quarterly featuring projects, and project success stories. Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**
- G. **Establish and promote a Reverse FTF Program to bring the more promising private agricultural producers and processors to the U.S. for short-term, hands-on technical training. Reverse FTF candidates would be selected from within those FTF projects where repeat site visits and follow-up has already established a high probability for sustainability. Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**
- H. **In any new follow-on grant, the PASA with Peace Corps should be amended to provide them with funding for 3 years for two full-time positions dedicated to managing the PC/FTF Program. This would necessitate a high level policy decision on the part of the Peace Corps Administration to authorize two FTEs, or, an agreement on the part of BHR/PVC to subcontract out the recruitment of VOCA/PC volunteers presently handled by VOCA. Action: BHR/PVC and Peace Corps.**
- I. **The BHR/PVC office should hire a full-time administrative support person who could devote his/her attention to keeping the files current, the implementor's reports current, keep track of the myriad country clearances for volunteers, as well as other administrative backstop chores and thus free up the management staff to manage and monitor the program. Action: BHR/PVC**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Farmer-to-Farmer Program (FTF) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was authorized by the U.S. Congress in FY1985 as a result of a belief that direct person-to-person relationships between U.S. agriculturalists and their counterparts in developing countries could make a lasting contribution both to agricultural production and international understanding. USAID requires that the program be evaluated periodically to determine if it is actually being carried out according to the purposes established by Congress and the Executive Branch. As described in the scope of work, a primary purpose of this evaluation of the Worldwide FTF Program is to assess the performance/effectiveness of implementors and to provide USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Response, Office of Private and Voluntary Corporation (BHR/PVC) useful guidance for a possible follow-on Worldwide FTF Program.

As originally authorized in 1985, the FTF Program was conceived as a vehicle to provide short term technical assistance on a people-to-people basis in developing countries. The Legislation was amended in 1990 to assist in increasing farm production, improving farm operations and farm incomes in middle income countries and emerging democracies worldwide. It is implemented through various types of voluntary organizations, such as PVOs, to bring American farming and agribusiness expertise to farmers worldwide. For USAID, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), land grant universities, agribusinesses, non-profit farm organizations and U.S. farmers, the FTF program is an opportunity to work with host country farmers and farm organizations on a participatory basis.

Unlike some of USAID's economic programs which may have hidden political agendas, the FTF approach is "as American as apple pie." For many it has the solid ring of the family farm. The program has grown since its inception in 1986 with one implementor, Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA), until there are now five entities funded under the worldwide FTF Program, a total of 1,309 volunteers assignments, located in 60 countries.\* As the program

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\*Under the 1991-94 FTF round the five implementors have fielded approximately 400 volunteers (see Exhibit VI-3).

is demand driven, a major assumption is that it will continue to expand and that a follow-on grant will be authorized. The five implementors are: VOCA, Peace Corps, Partners of the Americas (Partners), Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development (Winrock), and the National Farmers Union (NFU), although their approach and geographic regions sometimes differ, establish and maintain an extensive network of U.S. volunteer agricultural experts, which are linked to beneficiary farmers through indigenous organizations. This approach, whereby the capabilities of farmers in developing countries to acquire and manage modern agricultural technology and knowledge directly from U.S. volunteer farmers and agribusiness experts on a people-to-people basis, has great appeal.

But, does it work? Is the FTF really effective -- a nice idea, but is it realistic, especially when compared to the more traditional, long-term agricultural technical assistance projects, USAID and other donors still practice? Answers are needed to questions such as: Can a program as diverse as this one be monitored effectively? Should programs focus on fewer countries or expand on demand? Would a critical-mass approach to technical assistance have a greater impact and sustainability and overcome the issue of long-term vs. short-term? Is the FTF Program appropriate during this era of reduced budgets? Lastly, is one of USAID's key strategic objectives, sustainable development, achievable and measurable through use of short-term volunteer technical expertise?

This evaluation will address these and other issues and at the same time provide USAID's Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Response (BHR/PVC) with sufficient information and suggestions on which to base a decision for a follow-on grant for a Worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer program. Given the previous evaluations of the implementing institutions, the focus is on what lessons have been learned, that is, using the past to move forward.

## II. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the Worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer Program (FTF) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (PL480) and managed by USAID's BHR/PVC. The general aim of this evaluation is to assess the implementors' performance and the overall impact of the FTF Program. Essentially this is a desk-study that focuses on assessing the performance of the five program implementors in terms of their FTF activities, their organization, and in meeting their workplan objectives. In addition, this evaluation attempts to assess the implementors' monitoring activities (i.e., program follow-up), performance indicators, degree of collaboration between and among different actors involved in the FTF Program, and lessons learned.

The FTF Program is the final result of congressional legislation dating back to the 1960s. The FTF project began as a pilot project in 1985 by providing technical assistance to farmers in Central America and the Caribbean. After the first year of operation, the FTF Program was expanded into other countries around the world. The purpose of the Farmer-to-Farmer Program is "...to assist in increasing food production and distribution, and improving the effectiveness of the farming and marketing operations of farmers." Since its inception in 1985, the FTF Program has provided technical assistance in areas such as food production, distribution, and marketing, as well as environmental awareness and improvement of the effectiveness of farming operations. In 1990, the Agricultural Development and Trade Act amended the original FTF legislation to foster support for emerging democracies and middle-income countries and to encourage the participation of PVOs, cooperatives, non-governmental and other private organizations.

In response to requests from host country organizations, volunteers under the FTF Program are recruited to perform a variety of activities including, but not limited to, agricultural marketing, veterinary services, irrigation, crop and seed production, livestock management, agroforestry, natural resource management, soil conservation, fisheries management, harvest handling and storage, agricultural extension, and cooperative and farm-group development. The Program has grown since it started in 1985 with one implementor, Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative

Assistance (VOCA). Since 1991, there are five organizations funded under the Worldwide FTF Program, with a total of over 400 volunteer/assignments\*\*. Although FTF volunteers operate and serve in over 60 countries, the FTF world-wide program has been most active in 22 countries. As the Program is demand driven, a major assumption is that it will continue to expand and that a follow-on grant will be authorized.

Currently, the program is implemented through five organizations: VOCA, which is a private, non-profit organization created in 1970 to serve as the international volunteer arm of the U.S. cooperative movement; Partners, a PVO created by USAID in 1964 as the people-to-people component of the Alliance for Progress; NFU, one of the oldest and largest farm organizations made up of small farmers and several state organizations; Winrock, a private and voluntary organization whose mission is to alleviate poverty and hunger through sustainable agricultural and rural development; and, the U.S. Peace Corps. Although their approach and geographic regions sometimes differ, the implementors establish and maintain an extensive network of U.S. volunteer agricultural experts which are linked to beneficiary farmers in host countries around the world. Since the beginning of the FTF Program, and through FY 1993, over \$10.0 million has been committed to the worldwide program.

The people-to-people approach, whereby U.S. volunteers extend modern management, agricultural technology and knowledge to the farmers in developing countries, appears to have great appeal in USAID, as well as among the volunteers and implementors. The FTF provides an opportunity for the U.S. agricultural sector, i.e. farmers, processors, scientists, to take the leadership role in providing technical assistance to emerging democracies and middle-income countries, to transfer know-how and to create long-term market relationships. Because agriculture could be critical to strengthening and expanding democratic and economic reforms, the FTF Program appears to fit USAID's general goals and objectives.

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\*\*This number represents approximately 50 percent of the overall 3-year target.

### III. EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The general aim of this evaluation was to assess the implementors' performance and the overall impact of the FTF Program. Essentially, it was a desk study (no field visits) that focused its attention on assessing the performance of the five program implementors in terms of their FTF activities, their organization, management and in meeting their workplan objectives. The evaluation attempted to answer the following questions:

- How are the five program implementors carrying out their FTF activities?
- How are implementors carrying out monitoring and following-up activities?
- Are there any performance indicators that provide the basis for valid measurable program appraisal?
- What is the degree of collaboration between and among different actors involved in the FTF Program?
- What has been the short- and long-term impact and results of the FTF Program?

To answer these questions the evaluation team established three goals: (1) provide an overall description of the FTF Program, including implementors, activities, and number of volunteers; (2) determine the degree to which FTF Program is meeting the objectives set forth in the legislative mandate; and (3) recommend appropriate program changes.

Several steps were taken to collect data for this evaluation:

- **Interviews.** The team conducted a series of personal and telephone interviews and follow-ups as part of its inquiry with FTF project directors, USAID officials, and others. (The names and identifications of all those interviewed may be found in Appendix A.)
- **Telephone Survey.** In order to better assess the impact and results of the FTF Program, a structured survey using a standard questionnaire was conducted with a sample of approximately 300 former volunteers that completed overseas assignments through any of the five implementors. Completed interviews totaled

53 or 13 percent of the total number of volunteers that have completed assignments from 1991 to the present (see Exhibit VI-3). A copy of the standard questionnaire may be found as Appendix B.

- **Document Review.** The team reviewed the Cooperative Agreements and other relevant literature, reports and background materials (including previous evaluations). A list of the more important references are attached at the end of this report.
- **USAID Mission Survey.** The team reviewed and synthesized the responses to the USAID wide cable inquiry sent to USAID Missions where the centrally-funded FTF Program has been active.

The body of the evaluation can be found in the following section. It is divided into three sections that assess the FTF Program, the management, and other related issues. The evaluation report was contracted with Development Associates, Inc. The team was composed of William L. Rodgers -- Team Leader, and Gerardo D. Berthin -- a Senior Researcher for the firm. Valerie Estes also contributed to the assignment. It should be noted that this was a Washington, D.C.-based "desk study." The evaluation team relied on a range of primary sources for its information rather than direct field observation. Given the nature of the assignment this method of operating was deemed sufficient by USAID.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> The terms of the team's inquiry were established by a scope of work prepared by the BHR/PVC FTF Office. The terms can be found in Appendix C.

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<sup>\*\*\*</sup>At the same time that Development Associates was undertaking this evaluation of the Worldwide FTF Program, another team from the firm was doing a field study of the considerably larger FTF Program for the Newly Independent States (N.I.S.) of the former Soviet Union.

## IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

### A. The FTF Implementors

Implementation of the FTF Program by the five implementors to date as compared to the project objectives is difficult to measure. In reviewing the documents and other material as well as in the interviews with the headquarters staff of each of the five implementors, a quantifiable and concise picture of the impact each entity has on the program is difficult to assess. Each organization brings different sets of objectives and impacts. All outcomes are expressed in general terms. The task was further complicated due to the numbers and variation among the five implementors. VOCA has been at the business of implementing the FTF Program the longest (since 1986), a total of 8 years. It has acquired considerable expertise which it appears reluctant to share with the others. At the other extreme was the NFU, which is the newest member (1992), and had worked in one country, Hungary. Not all of the five implementors have developed key measurable indicators, as is called for in cooperative agreements and workplans with USAID.

While noting the diversity of approaches, the team believes that the FTF program is a good use of USAID funding. It provides an important link between the agricultural and agribusiness community of the United States with counterparts in the countries that USAID serves. This point must be emphasized "up front" lest the contribution being made by the program be lost in the team's recommendations for improving performance. In short, we find the FTF program generally sound and recommend that it be continued.

However, the overall performance of each of the five in carrying out FTF activities varied. In terms of established processes, VOCA clearly leads, with Peace Corps, Partners, Winrock and National Farmers Union following in that order. All implementors were cited by returned volunteers for shortcomings in backstopping the volunteers once they were on site or in following up of volunteer recommendations. There is very little, if any, coordination and program communications between implementors. This has been

carried over to the volunteers and field staff, some of whom feel it necessary to run down the competition. Compounding the situation, each implementor has a different set of baseline indicators, objectives, and target volunteer numbers to contend with, as well as different levels of institutional capability to monitor and evaluate their programs. The lack of universal impact measures, and diverse monitoring and evaluation processes made it more difficult to assess the performance of the five program implementors. Based on the small sample of interviewed volunteers (13 percent), this may not appear as a serious issue, but along with other issues that accompany increased expansion of the program and the subsequent growth in the numbers of volunteers, what is now a glimmer could become a glare.

To re-emphasize what was stated earlier, while the five implementors demonstrated vast capacity to recruit, select, and field FTF volunteers to country of assignment, most implementors showed little evidence (according to volunteer interviews) in backstopping the volunteers once they were on site or in follow-up of volunteer recommendations. As a result of encountering unexpected problems in the field as well as bureaucratic and administrative delays, almost all implementors have not been able to fully complete their target goals and objectives. For example, some implementors have high rates of postponed assignments, while others have had to adjust and adapt their management system to fit FTF program demands.

In order to provide a general assessment of implementors performance, it may be useful to describe and analyze each of the implementors separately, and then offer some general recommendations and suggestions to improve or strengthen their performance.

## **1. Peace Corps**

USAID executed a 3-year Participating Agency Service Agreement (PASA) with the Peace Corps in FY 1991. This PASA provides funding to Peace Corps to maximize their participation in the FTF Program by enabling Peace Corps

Volunteers (PCVs) to request on-site technical assistance from VOCA for short-term (3-week) assignments with host country farmers, producers and agricultural related organizations. Under this arrangement, VOCA volunteers provide a much-needed focused skill training to PCVs and their host country counterparts in response to site-specific problems such as decreasing loss from animal or plant diseases or improving management efficiencies of agricultural operations. Though not without its problems, this arrangement has worked out well. According to returned VOCA/Peace Corps "repeat" FTF volunteers interviewed by the team, their experience compared without the intervention and follow-up of a PCV, has lacked the same impact. This VOCA/Peace Corps joint project approach -- "A match made in heaven," according to one VOCA official -- when executed properly, provides structure, focus and feedback to VOCA volunteer and client organization.

According to the interviewed volunteers, Peace Corps seems to have accomplished the objectives of its PASA with USAID. For example, through the FTF program the Peace Corps has been able to increase its level of technical expertise in the field. In turn, the Peace Corps program itself has been expanded and diversified. The FTF program has also broaden the participation activities of the Peace Corps.

A number of volunteer experiences illustrate the VOCA/Peace Corps accomplishments. For example, a California veterinarian worked in Ecuador and Honduras as a VOCA/Peace Corps volunteer. In Honduras he was requested by a PCV who had had veterinarian training and had been assigned to work with a cattle breeders association. Together, she and the doctor were able to improve herd management practices and raise calf production rates for farmers in the region. In Ecuador he volunteered twice: teaching at the Veterinary School of the University of Loja, once on nutrition and the second time on surgery techniques. To this day, the volunteer maintains contact with the students and faculty and has followup questions with the PCVs regarding workshop and training materials. He

feels that the impact of his knowledge and input to the program was increased ten-fold due to the PCV. The VOCA volunteer speaks Spanish and travels throughout Latin America on his own. The two entities cooperate closely in the field. In essence, Peace Corps provides the regional cultural knowledge and VOCA provides the technical skills. But this works only when the individual players in the field, i.e., PCV, local counterparts, VOCA/Peace Corps Volunteer, have the will and imagination to cause it to happen.

Another example that illustrates this is the close three-way collaboration between a PCV, Peace Corps/Uruguay, a VOCA volunteer, who is a Professor of Apiculture from the Entomology Department of a Western State University and a member of the Uruguayan Beekeepers' Association. The entomologist has made two volunteer trips to Uruguay at the request of Peace Corps and the counterpart beekeepers' organization. The project objectives were to provide technical assistance to Uruguayan beekeepers via a series of workshops and on-site visits to individual beekeepers; instruct them on techniques of queen bee management; assess the potential for applied breeding programs; assess the intrusion of the African honey bee in the local bee colonies and advise on the appropriate management techniques. These objectives were accomplished; not only were many valuable beekeeping techniques provided to the Uruguayan producers, but also much was learned about the African bee that was applicable to U.S. honey producers as well. This information has been made available to the USDA Beneficial Insects Laboratory at Beltsville, Maryland. Both of these projects illustrate clearly, that when carried out as the legislation intended, the FTF Program is able to make a measurable impact which could easily be supported by measurable indicators. There are many other positive examples, but there are also many examples of wasted resources through a lack of program preparation, such as: volunteer mismatches with a project, non-communications to the volunteer regarding the specifics about the project, apathy on the part of individuals and/or staff, both in the implementor's headquarters and field offices, USAID Missions,

and host country counterpart organizations and institutions with regard to fully utilizing a volunteer's resource capacity and providing feed-back and follow-up.

Based on the team's interviews with returned volunteers, there also seems to be room for improvement between Peace Corps and VOCA. For example, there needs to be more communication between Peace Corps field offices, VOCA and Peace Corps representatives in Washington to better coordinate assignments and matches, as well as between Peace Corps and their FTF volunteers. Some returned volunteers felt that their assignments lacked proper program preparation before departure, and in turn, their skills were mismatched with the problem. Also, returned volunteers complained about the lack of follow-up and post-assignment communication with their implementor.

Recent budget cuts and "down-sizing" have affected the management capacity of the Peace Corps/FTF program. The Peace Corps/FTF headquarters office is understaffed given their workload. For example, the FTF Coordinator position was abolished. This activity is now part of the agricultural section in the Office of Training and Program Support; and what was one full-time position has now become two positions with 20 percent of each person's time allotted to the FTF Program. The impression given is that Peace Corps no longer places the worldwide FTF Program high amongst its priorities.

**The Peace Corps needs to have more support for two full-time positions dedicated 100 percent to running the PC/FTF program, or an agreement on the part of BHR/PVC to sub-contract the VOCA/PC recruitment activities now funded as a line item in VOCA's budget.**

2. **Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA)**

VOCA is a private, nonprofit organization created in 1970 to serve as the international volunteer arm of the U.S cooperative movement. They specialize in the provision of short-term technical assistance to cooperatives, government agencies and farm commodity organizations in the developing world. Since 1985, VOCA has received funding from USAID to implement the FTF Program.

VOCA has recently added staff to headquarters and have decentralized their recruitment operations. They have almost met their targets in terms of number of volunteers in the field as outlined in the workplan objectives. VOCA is a dynamic and highly effective organization for recruiting and placing volunteer technicians into the field. For example, in Latin America (the oldest and largest of the VOCA FTF worldwide programs), they carried out a total of 69 projects for a total of 1,988 consultancy days in FY-93. They worked in 8 countries with 54 target organizations. Eighteen of these projects were with cooperatives with the remaining projects working with private producers organizations and community based groups. This did not include VOCA/Peace Corps volunteers which are viewed by VOCA as a separate exercise. In general, VOCA volunteers are of a high technical caliber and have come across in their interviews as strongly committed to the beneficiaries as well as possessing a strong loyalty to VOCA.

According to the interviews with volunteers and field staff, timeliness of volunteer selection, recruitment, and placement is excellent. In general, VOCA has good management systems in place to support volunteer assignments in-country, but they are under increasing strain as the numbers in the worldwide program grows. While volunteers feel that they are provided with adequate briefing materials of a general nature in advance of their assignment, backstopping is mixed and followup and feedback, in their opinion, is inadequate. VOCA has placed a high priority on improving and strengthening its monitoring and evaluation process, as

well as in their post-assignment communication with returned volunteers. VOCA has developed program assessment instruments to get feed-back not only from their returned volunteers, but also from the host country organizations. For example, VOCA has recently developed an instrument to get reaction of the FTF program from host country organizations, that consists of an initial inquiry after three months of the experience and a follow-up after nine months. This ensures communications with host country organizations, as well as provides recommendations for improvement. VOCA is currently working to develop a procedure whereby returned volunteers are able to share the feedback from host country organizations.

VOCA's overall performance in implementing the FTF program has been effective. For this evaluation period VOCA's activities, based on their cooperative agreements and borne out in their annual reports, is as follows: VOCA has demonstrated great capacity to recruit and field volunteers, and is the closest among the implementors in fulfilling its three-year target volunteer goal. Other VOCA accomplishments were, the establishment of an office in Kampala/Uganda, and the establishment of relations with several host country organizations.

However, there are a few areas that need to be improved upon and/or strengthened. For example, like the other implementors, VOCA has not fully developed appropriate, quantifiable, critical indicators to measure the impact of the FTF program. Also, VOCA was not as effective in following-up and in keeping communication channels open with returned volunteers. Despite VOCA's concerted effort to improve and expand its level of communications with returned volunteers and host country organizations, VOCA returned volunteers expressed strong concern about not knowing whether their recommendations were implemented and sustained over time. They also felt they needed more contact with implementor after assignment has been completed.

**VOCA needs to develop mechanisms to maintain communications with the host country organizations and with returned volunteers.**

**3. Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development (Winrock)**

Winrock has had a long and bright career with USAID, doing a good job in their field of expertise (animal science) in the international development arena. They took on the additional load of the FTF Program in FY 1991 and immediately found themselves enmeshed in an organizational dilemma. First, they opted to have their base of operations at the Winrock International Headquarters, rather than utilizing Winrock's existing Rosslyn, Virginia office. Second, they subgranted the National Association of Wheat Growers Foundation (NAWGF) providing them with FTF program responsibilities. However, as was reported in Winrock's First Annual Report, "the inability of the foundation to respond to volunteers and implement the program," forced Winrock to cancel its contractual obligation with NAWGF and absorb the responsibility. This corrective action, temporarily backlogged volunteer assignments and affected overall operations of the program. It took Winrock time to recover from this debacle. Winrock has also experienced a high rate of postponed assignments, especially in Mexico and Central America. As much as 53 percent of volunteers are delayed because of internal programmatic conditions in host countries. According to Winrock officials, the absorptive capacity of host country organizations is very limited.

The aggregate result of these obstacles has been a set-back for Winrock. To date Winrock has fielded less than 50 percent of their target number of volunteers (approximately 60 out of 130), and a sizeable portion (approximately 60 percent) of their budget has been unutilized.

Winrock, did not fully identify or develop baseline indicators to measure the progress of the FTF program. However, they developed and presently maintain

computerized data base of potential volunteers, and entered into collaborative agreements with over 12 host country organizations. Slowly but surely, Winrock is establishing mechanisms to sustain linkages and develop networks utilizing selected agricultural publications, direct mail, and electronic mail.

In reviewing documents and other materials plus interviews with Winrock, it was clear that **they needed to increase their staffing, particularly in the areas of recruiting, monitoring and followup.** While returned volunteers were very satisfied with the support they got from Winrock, there are certain areas that need to be improved and strengthened. In particular, Winrock lacks staff in the field who are familiar with the local situation and can resolve problems before they get out of hand. **Similarly, Winrock has to find ways to expand the absorbing institutional capacity of its host-organizations so as to process more than one volunteer at a time.** Winrock has had more project success in those situations where the local USAID Mission, as in the case of Nicaragua, takes an active and supportive interest in the FTF Program. For example, Winrock was able to bring down a highly qualified volunteer in response to a request from a group of onion producers who planned on exporting sweet onions from a region of Nicaragua. The volunteer, a professor of horticulture from the University of Georgia, worked with the local farmers. He was followed over a period of several months, by two other volunteers, one from New Mexico, and another from Texas, each individual a specialist in another phase of the production and harvesting cycle. The result was a success story: the famous Sebaco Valley Sweet Onion, where production went from zero to 12.5 million pounds in three growing seasons (1991-1993), and export markets earned the small farmers in the valley several times their annual income.

This is an example of the impact of the "repeat volunteer" concept, that is, applying a critical mass of technical volunteers to a problem until a solution is found. It illustrates what cooperation and support from a mission can accomplish,

and last, but not least, what results can be obtained when volunteers work with a counterpart group that can absorb technology and are willing and able to follow-up and implement recommendations.

In order to carry out more of these types of successful projects, **Winrock needs to open up offices in the various countries where it has projects and staff them with local people who are capable administrator/technicians as well as believe in the FTF concept. As the number of volunteers increases, in-country representation should be strengthened.**

**4. Partners of the Americas (Partners)**

Partners was granted a 3-year program beginning in FY 1991 to carry out the FTF Program in seven countries in Central and South America. Partners has fulfilled almost all of the activities specified in their Cooperative Agreement. For example, projects were identified for all countries participating in the FTF program, focusing primarily on a limited number of projects per country. Partners also expanded and strengthened mechanisms to sustain the linkages between the U.S. and the host country partnerships. Since 1991, Partners has fielded over 80 volunteers. Partners goals are modest; they appear not to be caught up in the numbers game and their approach has differed from the others as well. In the first place, they limit themselves to Latin America; but most important, they are unique in the FTF Program in that they have a network of "partnerships" in place in each of the countries they work with. Not all partnerships are effective for the FTF Program goals; but when they do work, they have brought about an almost textbook illustration of a typical FTF project. An example of this is the Panama project.

The Chiriqui Chapter of the National Association of Apiculturalists requested technical assistance to their U.S. Partners in Delaware for help in rebuilding their

honey production industry to the levels prior to the presence of the African bee. A professor of entomology and extension specialist at the University of Delaware went to Panama and together with his counter-part from the Beekeepers Association, they did an assessment of the situation. A timetable and schedule were developed and agreed upon. To this date a total of five volunteers (specialists in everything from beehive management, raising queens, improved wax production, disease control to marketing honey) have worked with several producer groups in the region including an Indian tribe who had recently formed an enterprise for producing honey. There is a continuous communication flow to the Association and followups. Production has increased, and the project appears sustainable according to the volunteers.

Partners also seemed well organized in providing orientation and information to volunteers prior to departure. Volunteer are provided with their objectives in a clearly stated and concise way. Partners appears to be well organized and administered; and of the implementors they appear the best managed. The lesson to be learned here is to keep it small and simple. Currently, while Partners remains focused on the seven FTF countries, there are plans for future expansion of the FTF program. As long as Partners continues to manage the FTF program in a consistent and effective way, the addition of one or two more FTF countries may not required much institutional strain, but more logistical arrangements in-country of assignment.

Partners did developed a set of indicators as required by its agreement. They were presented in 1991 to the former BHR/PVC staff, but Partners did not receive any feedback. Since then, Partners has continued to modified its list of measurable indicators, and is in the process of developing a strategy to obtain measurement in key indicators (i.e., increase in production, increase in income, utilization of information share, increase in partnership agricultural activities, transfer of technology). Currently, some Partners/FTF projects have already provided

measurable indicators, but more time is required to measure the impact in areas such as transfer of technology, increase in production, and increase income. However, there is not yet in place a reporting system to collect new data and to provide updates of the indicators. **Partners should continue to develop measurable indicators and begin to provide some data. If Partners is planning to expand its FTF program, the most effective and less costly strategy should be developed. Country action plans should specify technical needs for potential volunteer assignments.**

5. **National Farmers Union (NFU)**

NFU is one of the oldest and largest farm organizations in the U.S. Awarded a contract in 1992 for 18 months to send a group of 20 farmers to Hungary to assist in technology transfer as well as the development of democratic farm organizations. The NFU FTF Program had three objectives: a) To stimulate the development of democratic farm organizations, b) Transfer knowledge about U.S. farming and farm organizations through the volunteers and c) Transfer information about agricultural markets to Hungarian farmers as input for business decisions. NFU is collaborating with the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) of Iowa State University and five Hungarian Agricultural Universities --- including Budapest University of Economic Sciences.

According to the NFU volunteers, the Hungarian counterparts were generally as professional as the Americans. Most of the volunteers considered their Hungarian hosts as technically proficient, and in one case of honey production, of higher proficiency than comparable U.S. enterprises. The Hungarians needed credit to buy machinery, not advice, according to the reports from the volunteers. As was stated in NFU's program description, an important component was the cross-cultural exchange and "...the allowing of farmers from both nations to establish lasting friendships."

The last NFU Annual Performance Report listed some significant successes of its FTF program. For example, the number of Hungarian farm organizations and membership has grown, technical knowledge has been transferred through workshops given to Hungarian farmers, and U.S. Volunteers have forged lasting linkages with their Hungarian counterparts. Given the fact that NFU worked in a sophisticated country, implemented the FTF program with very little guidance and with one-person organizational structure, NFU appears to have fulfilled the terms of the agreement. From a promotional or public relations point of view, especially on the latter point, NFU accomplished their job description. Although NFU transferred some technical assistance (especially in terms of cooperative organization and marketing), the very nature of its agreement limited and restricted additional technical accomplishments. NFU has developed plans to strengthen its relation with USAID/FTF program, and there are plans to propose additional activities under the current FTF program. **Perhaps it would be fair to give NFU additional time and funds to demonstrate its innovative and technical capabilities. However, if NFU is to continue as a FTF implementor, it should be given a more technical task and a new target country or region.**

Similarly, another way to maintain NFU active in the FTF program would be in a Reverse FTF program (See discussion of the Reverse FTF). **A role for NFU could be played in the Reverse FTF. Several of the volunteers expressed a willingness and a desire to host and provide hands-on training to selected farmers and agricultural processors on NFU members operations.**

#### **B. Impact of Program: Response of USAID Missions**

In October, 1993, USAID/FHA/PVC Office sent a cable inquiry to those USAID Missions where the centrally funded FTF Program has been especially active, asking them to provide their comments and views of the FTF Program. Missions were asked to rate the performance and impact of the FTF Program in eight categories, (overall performance,

results and impact, management and administrative function, coordination with USAID Missions, host country relations, implementor performance in monitoring and evaluation, and quality of FTF volunteer), as well as to provide specific responses with regard to the continuation, expansion, or modification of the FTF Program in their country (see Exhibit IV-1 at the end of the report). Eighteen Missions responded to the USAID's request to provide views on the FTF Program. Of the 22 Missions where the FTF Program is most active, 15 responded to the request. We summarize below some of the most important results of the USAID Mission inquiry.

Concerning overall performance, almost half of the missions in the survey rated the program as Effective, and another 40 percent thought it was Very Effective. However, only two-thirds of the Missions that responded, actually provided ratings; the other third provided general comments. In terms of results and impact, the majority of the missions rated the Farmer-to-Farmer Program as either Very Effective and/or Effective. Forty-four percent of the Missions rated the FTF Program Effective in terms of management and administrative functions of the implementors, while 22 percent believed it was Somewhat Effective. In terms of implementors' coordination with USAID, over two-thirds of the Missions felt it was Effective or Very Effective, while one-third believed it was Not Effective or Somewhat Effective. Almost 90 percent of the Missions indicated that the FTF implementors had strong relations with host country. Finally, in terms of quality of FTF volunteers most Missions indicated that volunteers were Effective and/or Very Effective.

In terms of the overall implementors' performance, the Missions rated them as: Very Effective and Effective. Only 18 percent thought the implementator was Somewhat Effective. Similarly, a majority of the Missions (72 percent), rated the implementors' performance of program monitoring and follow-up as Very Effective or Effective. The Missions were also complementary of the FTF Program in terms of results and impact. More than two-thirds of the Missions rated the results and impact of the FTF Program as

Very Effective or Effective, while almost one-third provided a more negative rating of Somewhat Effective, or Not Effective.

With regards to the future of the FTF Program, most Missions believed that the FTF Program should continue. Some of the reasons offered were: *"because of its valuable contribution to the host country; ...it is very complementary to on-going projects; because of its success; because of the need in host country for inexpensive technical assistance and services, ...its potential and effectiveness in addressing pressing needs."* Only one Mission felt the FTF Program should not be continued because of its limited impact due to the lack of priority areas, and, because the Mission felt the project was not cost effective.

Finally, when Missions were asked to comment as to whether the FTF Program should be expanded or modified, most indicated that the FTF Program should be modified and/or slightly expanded. Some suggestions included: *"limit the scope of the FTF program's objectives; it should be expanded to reach more people; it should be modified by working more closely with ongoing USAID projects; expanded to work with NGOs directly; and it should be modified as to have more planning and follow-ups."* Some Missions expressed strong feelings toward maintaining the project at current levels without modifications or expansions.

### **C. Volunteers Views on FTF Program**

Interviews with volunteers were conducted over a period of a little over 2 weeks (from March 3 to March 21, 1994). The sample list for FTF volunteers was compiled from lists provided by FTF implementors. There were four separate lists with a total sample of 300 assignments. Out of that sample, 53 telephone interviews were conducted. Exhibits IV-2 and IV-3 show a profile of the sample by region and implementor. Most of the interviewed volunteers had assignments in Latin America, followed by Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia/Middle East. Similarly, most of the volunteers interviewed were VOCA

volunteers, while NFU had the least number of volunteers interviewed. The survey sample profile by region and implementor, closely corresponds to the profile of the worldwide FTF program, as Latin America receives most of the volunteers, and VOCA fields the greatest number of volunteer assignments.

The evaluators spoke with volunteers by telephone and discussed the questionnaire that consisted of background information on the volunteers plus 21 questions that covered the following issues:

- Level of awareness and knowledge of FTF Program before assignment;
- Country and length of assignment;
- Host country organization;
- Description of volunteer assignment;
- Volunteer experience;
- Frequency of volunteer experience;
- Volunteer level of satisfaction with support from implementor;
- Short- and long-term impact of assignment;
- Assignment followups; and
- Lessons learned.

The overall result of this telephone survey showed that a majority of the volunteers have positive attitudes and expectations about the FTF Program. As can be seen by Exhibit IV-4, almost 90 percent of the sample indicated they would volunteer again if they had a chance. Of those volunteers that said that they would not volunteer again, a majority listed physical condition or illness as their main reason for not repeating the experience. The majority of the volunteers heard about the FTF Program through the implementors, which does speak to the recruiting abilities of the implementors. Other volunteers heard about the FTF Program through colleagues and/or friends. As can be seen by Exhibits IV-5, 50 percent of the volunteer assignments lasted between 3 to 4 weeks, a little over 20 percent lasted between 1 to 2 weeks, and 18 percent lasted between 2 to 3 weeks. Most of the assignments were in Latin America and Eastern Europe, followed by Africa and Asia and the Middle East.

On the issue of "repeat" volunteers, an impressive 33 percent of the respondents were "repeat" volunteers, serving an average of three assignments with the original implementor (see Exhibit IV-6). The range of times a "repeat" volunteer had served before was from 2 to 7 times. Meanwhile, 67 percent of the respondents were "first-time" volunteers (see Exhibit IV-7). Volunteers seemed happy with their FTF experience. Almost two-thirds of the respondents were "very satisfied" with the process and support they got from their implementors, while 26 percent said they were "satisfied." Less than 12 percent of the volunteer sample expressed low levels of satisfaction.

While the overall comments about the support they received from their implementors was complementary, volunteers offered some constructive feedback. The main issues that emerged with regards to improving implementor support were mainly related to communications with implementors before, during, and after assignment. The issue of follow-up was frequently mentioned by interviewed volunteers as a top concern of implementors' support, specially in the context of their recommendations and communications after assignment was completed. Many volunteers complained that after the FTF assignment is completed, the progress or status of their project was often never updated or reported to them by their implementors or the in-country counterparts. Similarly, volunteers were very concerned about the insufficient, sometimes non-existent, support provided in country by USAID Missions, implementors' country representatives, host country organizations, and other in-country FTF actors. Volunteers specifically focused on the lack of information, and the inability of host country organizations to be effective in providing information and logistical support. These concerns were also reflected in the recommendations returned volunteers offered, as a way to improve and/or strengthen the FTF program. The main issues that emerged with regards to implementors' support and the respective volunteer recommendations are summarized in Exhibit IV-8 and IV-9.

A majority of the interviewed volunteers felt that they had adequately addressed the problems of the clients, given the time and resource limitations. A great majority also

felt, that their work had been either useful or very useful for the client. Again, almost all interviewed volunteers believed that the clients were able to implement their recommendations. Most were able to cite specific changes that had occurred in the client's enterprise or operation as a result of the volunteer presence.

However, less than half of the respondents felt that those specific changes would be sustained over-time. Over half of the respondents, did not have any knowledge about whether these changes were sustained over time. This finding corroborates the volunteer's concern that there is not enough communication or feedback from implementor after the assignment has been completed. According to a majority of the volunteers, after assignment has been completed, there is very little communication with host country organization, in-country clients, and implementors. (More will be said about this issue in a subsequent section.)

When asked how they thought this type of program could be improved, volunteers' answers varied greatly, but reflected concerns in areas such as communications, follow-ups, and length of assignments. As was mentioned earlier, the general range of concerns is summarized in Exhibit IV-9.

One specific recommendation returned volunteers had was **Reverse FTF**. FTF volunteers felt that a key complimentary part of the FTF program was the idea of Reverse FTF in which the counter-part technicians of the host country come to the U.S. for training. This could be handled through the various implementors, and returned volunteers would work with the returned volunteer. Such idea corresponds closely to the 1990 Congressional FTF legislation which calls for USAID to develop a Reverse FTF program. This could be a useful development tool to ensure that training would continue and provide a multiplier effect to the country project.

## V. USAID/BHR/PVC: MANAGEMENT OF THE FTF PROGRAM

The overall management record of the worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer Program has been mixed. The USAID Missions, with some notable exceptions, indicated earlier, have played a passive role in the FTF Program. A few Missions have been counterproductive, holding up country clearances, demanding veto power on projects, but offering no logistic or country project support when requested. The BHR/PVC management of the program, until fairly recently, has not been consistent in its guidance and monitoring of implementors. This has changed with the new management team, all of which have come on board within the last 2 years, with the Project Coordinator and the Program Assistant arriving within the last six months. There has been a decided turn toward a more rigorous style of management. The office is staffed with professionals that have had field and Washington experience in a variety of agricultural and senior management positions, including Peace Corps Volunteer and staff positions. However, approximately 20 percent of these professional's time is consumed by administrative chores of a mechanical nature such as obtaining country clearance for volunteers from recalcitrant Missions. In order to keep the program moving in a timely manner, at times the Office Director or FTF Program Coordinator has to personally explain the program to a new Country Desk Officer or Mission Director in order to release held up clearances. Backstopping chores of this nature detract from the monitoring of implementor performance. It is obvious, therefore, that prudent management would call for the hiring of a full-time administrative support person who could devote his/her attention to moving those administrative details and free up the management staff to manage the program.

All of the implementor headquarters give the new BHR/PVC office team high marks for guidance and backstopping. Apparently this was not always true in the past, with several of the recent implementors, who were unfamiliar with USAID/W procedures, complaining that they were not provided with guidance by PVC. All were high in their praise on the extra effort that BHR/PVC has taken to obtain country clearances from USAID/W and the field missions on behalf of the volunteers. Both the Peace Corps and the implementors praise the PVC office and the staff as being highly professional in their program guidance.

Due to budget restraints, limited staff and travel restrictions, FHA/PVC was not able to monitor implementor performance as closely or as often as needed during the time period covered by this evaluation. Reports from the implementors are not sent into the PVC office on a timely basis and thus the project files are slightly out of date. This is in the process of being corrected with the new program assistant and the recently arrived Project Coordinator. Again, the evaluators felt that this was not an efficient use of the Project Coordinator's or the Program Assistant's time, but, could be best handled on a continuing basis by hiring a full-time administrative type to keep the files and reports up-to-date.

## VI. OTHER ISSUES

The scope of work for the evaluation team emphasized a number of special issues for review. These are contained in this section with the questions that have been raised by the scope for team response.

***Special Issue #1: Assess implementor volunteer follow-up, including periodic monitoring by implementor field staff, using repeat volunteers, building on previous assignments ("pyramiding")***

Follow-up of the volunteer assignment by the implementor is haphazard and poor. It appears to be a case of the luck of the draw. This is true of all of the implementors. Nearly all of the volunteers contacted, complain of this deficiency. Successful projects nearly always involved one or more repeat volunteers, usually when they were built on previous assignments or worked with an on-site Peace Corps volunteer. The case of the Partners/Panama honey producer project, is a good example. After the initial exploratory trips by a volunteer entomologist, several repeat volunteers, built on previous assignments, went to the project site to identify and attack the problem of managing the African bee. Similar project successes, utilizing this appraisal system approach have worked. Repeat volunteers can be essential to the full accomplishments of all project objectives and thus overcome the criticism of short-term technicians not accomplishing the objectives as effectively as long-term (2 years or more) technicians. The key to success is planning and management.

***Special Issues #2: Render an opinion on the overall effectiveness of assigning a large number of volunteers per country v. fewer volunteers to more countries***

The current FTF Program (1991-1994) attempted to increase the focus of FTF assignments in specific countries. One of the most concrete examples is VOCA/Uganda. In FY 1992, VOCA was awarded funding to carry out a 2-year "focus country" FTF Program in Uganda. A critical mass of volunteers was brought to bear on one country with the thought that this would enhance

the potential for impact and sustainability. The justification by the FTF Review Committee that met on March 5, 1992, to review the merits of the VOCA/UGANDA proposal (Action Memorandum for AA/FVA from DAA/FVA/PVC dated: 6/5/92) was that VOCA's "...proposed activities are complementary to USAID/Kampala's strategy and program which seeks to promote non-traditional exports." VOCA also opened up an office in country and obtained mission funding for local currency costs.

VOCA, volunteers and the Mission cable response (see Exhibit IV-1, USAID Missions' Views On The FTF Program) confirms their views that assigning a large number of volunteers together with a critical mass of resources to support them produces a more effective program.

In the opinion of the evaluation team, there are distinct advantages to this approach. Development experience has shown that by having an in-depth presence in a country as opposed to relying on vague, intermittent requests from host country counterparts, increases the ability to identify priority technology needs. Once these needs are identified, a critical mass of technical assistance can be brought to bear on the problem. It becomes a case of the right volunteer for the right job. More care can be taken during the selection process to ensure that each volunteer requested fits the current technical needs of the counterpart organization. Experience has further shown, that followup on recommendations, repeat assignments, back-and-forth communications between the volunteer and his/her clients, are enhanced when a particular country or sector is focussed upon. The reason being is that the implementor has usually set up an office within the country, staffed it with experienced people, established in-depth contacts with local groups and has formed a working relationship that is sustained on a long-term basis. A point that was stressed in interviews with several of the "repeat" professional volunteers, is that assignments can move up in technical sophistication as the members of the farmer's organization gain from exposure to subsequent inputs of technical assistance. The opportunity to establish positive relationships with the local USAID and Peace Corps mission is enhanced. Though not always the case, the result is usually a better FTF Program.

The reverse side of this issue of larger numbers of volunteers per country as opposed to small country programs, is one of image. That is, the perception of the FTF by the host country. Size of the program can bring a number of negative side effects that were not contemplated under the FTF approach, indeed, that FTF was created to eliminate. Foremost among these possible negative results of larger country programs, is an increased bureaucracy and layering of the simplest of functions. This comes about because as programs become larger, the USAID/Embassy/Agricultural Attache want oversight rights. This eventually can lower the effectiveness of the program. The other negative of a larger program is a higher in-country profile with an increase on resource demand including, but not limited to, short-term technical assistance. Requests for credit, equipment and other commodities increase several fold. This can have a counterproductive impact on overall effectiveness.

On balance, and given the current position and experience of the FTF Program, the evaluators feel there would definitely be an increase in overall effectiveness of assigning a larger number of volunteers per country along the lines of the VOCA/Uganda model.

***Special Issues #3: Assess if implementor performance indicators and benchmarks provide the basis for valid/measurable program appraisal***

Implementor performance indicators and benchmarks are distinct, depending on each organization and do not currently provide a basis for a valid program appraisal. Rather all appear to depend heavily on their own volunteer reports.

A majority of the interviewed volunteers felt that they had adequately addressed the problems of the clients given the time and resource limitations. A great majority also felt that their work had been either useful or very useful for the client. Again, almost all interviewed volunteers believed that the clients were able to implement their recommendations. Approximately 70 percent of the respondents were able to cite specific changes that had occurred in the client enterprise or operation as a result of the volunteers' presence. The changes that were cited were

related to the nature and extent of the volunteer activities and or to the needs of farmers and rural development organizations in the host country.

After analyzing the data from the volunteer telephone interview, six areas that could provide the basis for appraisal indicators were identified by volunteers. The first of these were, changes in the process or production phase of their clients enterprise or operation; for example, changes in harvesting procedures for oranges, modernization in the production process of onions, and institutional reorganization of production process, such as more monitoring. Volunteers identified a second major area where changes occurred: in the level of awareness of the clients towards production process, procedures, methods and techniques. That is, change was cited in the level of receptiveness to new ideas, methods, and approaches to production; for example, having a better understanding of the complexity of their problems; more willingness to look at new approaches and techniques; better understanding of equipment usage; enhance and strengthen ability to diagnose problems, and find solutions; more creativity; more receptiveness to domestic and foreign market expansion for their products; and more awareness of environmental safety concerns.

Volunteers also cited changes in the output of the clients's operation or enterprise; for example, increase in the level of productivity, diversification of products, increase ability to combat viral diseases, improvement in the quality of product, increase acreage and yield, seek out new domestic and foreign market areas, and an increase in reproduction rates for herd. In a related area, volunteers also mentioned management. For example, better management of cooperatives, better ways to train personnel, and more structure and accountability in management style.

Finally, volunteers cited changes in the area of new technology. For example, upgrading the clients' planting system and seeding techniques, relocation of pumps for better irrigation, and new logging techniques. In addition to application of new technology, interviewed volunteers cited other specific changes, such as increases in personal income for the clients served, and more leadership capacity to organize members of cooperative or farming associations.

From the perspective of the volunteers and through the specific changes they cited, one can argue that the original purpose of the Farmer-to-Farmer Program is being fulfilled. As stated, that purpose was to, "... assist clients in increasing food production and distribution, and in improving the effectiveness of their farming and marketing operations." However, while the result of the survey supported the argument of fulfilling the purpose of the program, it also provided evidence that those changes might not be sustainable over time. As shown in Exhibit VI-1, only 40 percent of the respondents knew that those specific changes were sustained over time. Over half of the respondents did not have any knowledge about whether these changes were sustained over time. As was mentioned earlier, this finding corroborates the volunteers' concerns that there is not enough communication or feedback from implementor after assignment has been completed. According to a majority of the volunteers, after assignment has been completed, there is very little communication with host country organization, in-country clients, and implementors.

As shown in Exhibit VI-2, although 81 percent of the volunteers made recommendations about following up their respective assignments, only 43 percent knew for sure that their assistance was actually followed up. An overwhelming two-thirds of the sample, had no knowledge as to whether follow up occurred. Again, this finding also corroborates one of the volunteer's main concerns: lack of followup. Only one-third of all respondents, knew if any action had been taken by implementor on the suggestion to follow up. Almost 70 percent, did not know whether any action was taken on their recommendations.

From here we can begin to extract two contrasting but very important indicators that begin to provide some basis to evaluate the Farmer-to-Farmer Program. On the one hand, we have the anecdotal accounts of volunteers who cited some very specific changes. Their accounts allege short-term program impact. However, there was no evidence to evaluate the long-term impact of the program. Based on the assertion that a majority of the volunteers had no knowledge as to whether these changes were sustained over time, it is difficult to measure sustainable impact. Since the scope of work of our evaluation did not allow field visits, there was no way to verify their assertions. The lack of feedback and/or information about the sustainability of specific operation and enterprise changes, denies an important indicator to measure the program. Unless,

there is a reporting system that gathers and monitors project impact periodically, it is very difficult to measure progress.

***Special Issues #4: Assess the degree of implementor collaboration and information exchange***

The FTF Program began as a pilot project in 1985 with VOCA as the sole implementor. VOCA, by trial and error, successfully built the project into a viable vehicle to provide technical assistance to farmers in Central America and the Caribbean. The pilot project received a positive evaluation at the end of its first year and the FTF Program, together with VOCA, successfully expanded worldwide. The following year, 1987, USAID and Peace Corps signed a PASA whereby Peace Corps would identify specific assignments with host country farmers and VOCA would recruit and fund U.S. farmer/volunteers to provide short-term technical assistance to those Peace Corps identified assignments. The arrangement proved successful and a amended PASA for 38 months was signed in September 1991.

Following passage of the 1990 Farm Bill and the doubling of available funds, USAID sought to institute a more dynamic program and to make the funding available on a competitive basis to various organizations. As a result, Winrock International and Partners of the Americas received a 3-year grant. Finally, the fifth implementor, the National Farmers Union, (NFU) was awarded an 18-month grant to work in Hungary.

Like the eldest child in a family of five younger siblings, VOCA is proud of its development and accomplishments and jealous of its prerogatives. The other implementors have the impression, that VOCA regards them with disdain. As the first on the FTF scene, VOCA suffered the over solicitness of USAID parents, and is reluctant to hand over this hard-gained experience to others. Larger in program operations by a wide margin (see Exhibit VI-3), VOCA receives over half of the funding; i.e., \$2.4 million of the FTF worldwide budget.

The evaluation team could find very little evidence of collaboration among the implementors and almost no formal nor informal information exchange. On the contrary, when a volunteer

entomologist of one implementor was asked by another implementor's volunteer to give a similar workshop on beehive management to another group of honey producers in a nearby province, the evaluators were told by the home office that it was not standard procedure and would not be repeated.

In interviews with volunteers, it was found that many professionals in their discipline were unaware that their counterparts from another university department (e.g., plant pathology, entomology, animal diseases), were working on the same problems involving the same toxic viruses, but for different implementors. A cross fertilizations of ideas between implementor groups would enhance all projects, but is presently not practiced.

The implementors realize that there is virtually no communication between their headquarters offices, but claim that this is not the case in the field. Based on interviews with implementors' U.S. and field staff, and returned volunteers, this did not appear to be accurate. Indeed, volunteers from all groups spontaneously run down the other groups, as not fitting the true mold of the FTF Program.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is an old piece of philosophy that wafts up and down the corridors of Washington: "Where you stand is where you sit." Thus, how one views the FTF Program may depend on where one is located. If you sit in headquarters of the five implementors, or in Peace Corps or in BHR/PVC, or USDA/PL-480, the tendency may be viewed as a numbers game, a turf battle, another project that involves the legalities of grants and cooperative agreements, sub-contracting and expansion.

If you sit in a small town or a rural community of one of the farm states, you view it as a people-to-people program, an opportunity to put your skills to use helping farmers like yourself solve common problems at the local level. Volunteers take time off from their work, in many cases utilizing vacation time or lax periods on their farms or businesses to do so. Of the volunteers interviewed, most would volunteer again. They believed in the program, liked the direct people-to-people approach free from bureaucratic layers between their know-how and what they term as the "client." This genuine interest to lend a helping hand to their fellow human being has great appeal out in the U.S. heartland. It is expressed in articles on volunteer experiences that appear in the farm journals across the country, in the videos and documentaries taken of some of the trips and projects that have been shown on television stations across the farm belt and in the written reports from the volunteers.

However, as the FTF Program gains in popularity, there is a risk that the gap between points of view as to what this program is meant to accomplish may widen. As the expansion of FTF gathers momentum, the danger of becoming an unwieldy and unmanageable operation increases. The worldwide FTF Program currently operates in more than 60 countries and 4 continents. Some of the implementors are seeking to expand even further -- beyond their present staff and monitoring capabilities -- justifying this move by the assertion that the program is demand driven.

Unless BHR/PVC carefully manages and modifies the FTF Program and brings it back to its original purpose in the anticipated follow-on grant, FTF will fall into the trap of earlier volunteer programs such as Peace Corps; i.e., leaving the substance of grass-roots development of the small rural enterprise for the bureaucratic world of form. This is not what was intended when the FTF legislation was enacted.

#### **A. Major Conclusions**

During the evaluation the team interviewed over 53 returned volunteers, implementors staff, headquarter and field, PVC staff, Peace Corps, in addition to reviewing pages of documents, evaluations and volunteer reports. At the end of all this, a pattern emerged as to some of the lessons to be learned if an effective FTF Program is to continue to make an impact on economic development.

1. While noting the diversity of approaches, the team believes that the FTF Program is a good use of USAID funding. It provides an important link between the agricultural and agribusiness community of the United States with counterparts in the countries that USAID serves. This point must be emphasized "up front" lest the contribution being made by the program be lost in the team's recommendations for improving performance. In short, we find FTF Program generally sound and recommend that it be continued.
2. In general, the majority of the returned volunteers believe in the FTF Program and are satisfied with it. They like the direct people-to-people approach free from bureaucratic layers between their know-how and, what many term "the client." The overall comments about the support they received from their implementors was complementary. Similarly, a majority of the interviewed volunteers felt that they had adequately addressed the problems of the clients given the time and resource limitations. A great majority also felt, that their work had been either useful or very useful for the client. Most were able to cite specific changes that

had occurred in the client's enterprise or operation as a result of the volunteer presence.

3. As the expansion of the FTF Program gathers momentum, the danger of becoming another unwieldy and unmanageable operation -- more form than substance -- increases. The worldwide FTF Program currently operates in 60 countries and 4 continents. Some of the implementors are seeking to expand even further -- beyond their present staff and monitoring capabilities -- justifying this by the assertion that the program is demand driven.
4. While the overall comments given about the support they received from their implementors was complementary, lack of follow-up and feedback on recommendations is almost a universal complaint of volunteers. This is true regardless of the geographic region or of the implementor of assignment.

## **B. Lessons Learned**

1. The core strength of the FTF Program are its volunteers. Dedicated, enthusiastic and highly motivated, these skilled professionals need to feel that their recommendations are acted upon or at the least, followed-up. Implementors must take care in choosing that the host country counterpart organizations have the capacity to absorb the technical assistance provided and be able to act on the recommendations of the volunteer.
2. With an annual budget of \$3-4 million, the maximum number of implementors should not be increased and probably should be reduced. Moreover, having the FTF Program spread out over 60 countries places an undue burden on efficient program management and implementation. The number of countries wherein these implementors operate should also be substantially reduced for the same reason.

3. When a USAID Mission provides active support to the program, the success ratio of an in-country FTF project rises and the impact of the volunteer's technical assistance as well as the sustainability of the project, are increased.
4. Provision of repeat volunteers onto a particular project in a consecutive manner, increases the chances of that projects success.
5. Structured short-term training of a pragmatic nature, in the U.S., of host country farmers and technicians is a good way to ensure sustainability of a project. These individuals would be identified by the volunteers on the project and would be trained, through a Reverse FTF Program, through the implementor mechanism.

### C. Recommendations

This section summarizes the recommendations and indicates the offices to take the responsibility for follow-up action.

1. **Reduce the number of implementors in the next design phase of the program.** For reasons of efficiency of program management and implementation, three organizations may be the maximum number that can be supported by an approximately \$3-3.5 million annual budget. **Action: BHR/PVC**
2. **Establish universal impact measures.** These should be critical indicators, standard to all projects, and should be included in all contracts and agreements. Related to this, the implementors and USAID should assume greater responsibility in monitoring the impact of FTF-funded projects, utilizing existing networks and resources. **Action: BHR/PVC**
3. **Promote coordination and communication among implementors by holding semi-annual workshops in Washington to be hosted, in turn, by each**

**implementor.** The agenda of topics and issues should be set by mutual agreement with USAID before the meeting with additional inputs as to issues and problems submitted by the field. **Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**

4. **Reduce number of countries in the worldwide FTF Program from 60 to approximately 10.** The selection criteria to be used are: a) those countries that have shown the greatest activity over the past 3 years in the number of volunteers fielded and projects completed; b) those host country counterpart organizations that have demonstrated the greatest support and follow-up to FTF Programs; c) countries that have, or plan to have, a permanent office and staff member to track and monitor projects and respond to new project requests.

Use the reduced number of countries to assign a larger number of volunteers per country. The criteria for these "countries of concentration" are those countries where a development objective, e.g., improved management of producer cooperatives, can be targeted and an impact measured. The actual numbers of volunteers assigned would be approximately 10-15 per year. This would provide a critical mass of volunteers and repeat volunteers, to accomplish the goals and objectives. Use an adaptation of the VOCA/Uganda model. Work with countries, if possible, where Peace Corps is active, thus assuring that projects will be grassroots and with small to medium size enterprises. **Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**

5. **All implementors should ensure that the host country counterpart organization(s) have the institutional capacity to absorb the technical assistance provided and be able to act on recommendations of the volunteer.** **Action: Implementors**
6. **In designing a project description for a new grant for the implementors, the scope of work should include sections on methods to handle volunteer**

**feedback and project recommendations, follow-up, volunteer newsletter published quarterly featuring project success stories. Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**

- 7. Establish and promote a reverse FTF Program to bring the more promising private agricultural producers and processors to the U.S. for short-term, hands-on technical training. Reverse FTF candidates would be selected from within those FTF projects where repeat site visits and follow-up has already established a high probability for sustainability. Action: BHR/PVC; Implementors**
- 8. In any new follow-on grant, the PASA with Peace Corps should be amended to provide them with funding for three years for two full-time positions dedicated to managing the PC/FTF Program. This would necessitate a high level policy decision on the part of the Peace Corps Administration to authorize two FTEs, or, an agreement on the part of BHR/PVC to subcontract out the recruitment of VOCA/PC volunteers presently handled by VOCA. Action: BHR/PVC and Peace Corps**
- 9. The BHR/PVC office should hire a full-time administrative support person who could devote his/her attention to keeping the files current, the implementor's reports, keep track of the myriad country clearances for volunteers, as well as other administrative backstop chores and thus free up the management staff to manage and monitor the program. Action: BHR/PVC**

## LIST OF EXHIBITS

- EXHIBIT IV-1:** USAID Missions Views on the FTF Program
- EXHIBIT IV-2:** FTF Telephone Survey: Region of Assignment
- EXHIBIT IV-3:** Telephone Survey Sample: Percentage of FTF Volunteers by Implementor
- EXHIBIT IV-4:** Would You Volunteer Again for the Farmer to Farmer Program?
- EXHIBIT IV-5:** FTF Program: Length of Assignment
- EXHIBIT IV-6:** Repeat Volunteers: How Many Times Have You Volunteered Before Under the FTF Program?
- EXHIBIT IV-7:** Was This the First Time You Volunteered for Your Original Implementor Under the FTF Program?
- EXHIBIT IV-8:** Constructive Feedback From Volunteers Concerning IMPLEMENTORS' SUPPORT
- EXHIBIT IV-9:** Spectrum of Recommendations to Improve the FTF Program Provided by Volunteers
- EXHIBIT VI-1:** Were the Changes That Occurred in the Clients Enterprise As A Result of FTF Sustained Over Time?
- EXHIBIT VI-2:** 1) Did You Make Recommendations That Your Farmer to Farmer Assignment Be Followed-up? 2) Was Your Farmer to Farmer Assignment Followed-up? 3) Do you Know if Implementor Took Any Action?
- EXHIBIT VI-3:** FTF Program: Total Number of Volunteer Assignments by Country and Implementor (1991-1994)

**EXHIBIT IV-1  
USAID MISSIONS VIEWS ON THE FTF PROGRAM**

U.S. POST	RATING IN TERMS OF...				
	OVERALL PERFORMANCE	RESULTS & IMPACT	IMPLEMENTOR'S PERFORMANCE	IMPLEMENTOR'S RELATIONS WITH HOST COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTOR'S COORDINATION WITH USAID
1) ALBANIA	Mission rated the overall impact of the FTF program as effective. It also indicated that FTF may have tried to work in too many areas instead of focussing on few and providing continued follow-up. FTF Volunteers have had a very positive impact working with private farmer associations and vocational agriculture high schools.				
2) BOLIVIA	Very effective	V. effective	Effective	Very Effective	Effective
3) BOTSWANA	Effective	S. effective	Effective	Effective	Effective
4) BURKINA FASO	Somewhat effective	N. effective	Somewhat effective	(Unable to Respond)	Not effective
5) COLOMBIA	Mission had no comment on the FTF Program as there were no centrally, regionally or (see next page)...				
6) CZECH REP.	Very effective	V. effective	Very effective	Very Effective	Very effective
7) DOMINICAN REP.	Very effective	V. effective	Very effective	None	Very effective
8) GAMBIA	Effective	Effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Effective
9) MEXICO	Due to limited contact with FTF Program Mission was unable to comment on the effectiveness (see next page)...				
10) INDONESIA	Mission had no comment or results on impact of the FTF Program because there were not (see next page)...				
11) MOROCCO	Mission did not provide any specific response because the FTF Program is not active. (see next page)...				
12) NICARAGUA	Very effective	V. effective	Very effective	Very effect.	Somewhat effective
13) PANAMA	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Somewhat effective
14) PHILIPPINES	Mission did not provide a specific comment because there are no coordinated activities (see next page)...				
15) POLAND	Not effective	N. effective	Somewhat effective	Somewhat effect.	Somewhat effective
16) TANZANIA	Mission has no management or implementation responsibility for the FTF program, (see next page)...				
17) UGANDA	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Very effective
18) URUGUAY & ARGENTINA	Effective	Effective	Very effective	Effective	Very effective

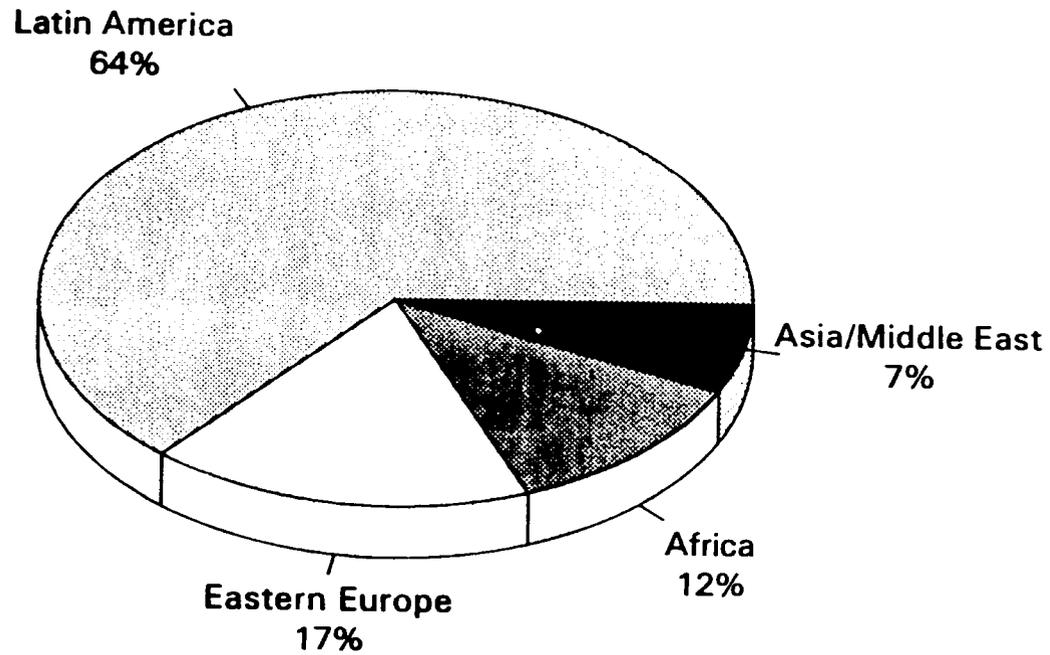
**EXHIBIT IV-1  
USAID MISSIONS VIEWS ON THE FTF PROGRAM CONT'D.**

U.S. POST	RATING IN TERMS OF...		
	IMPLEMENTOR'S PERFORMANCE OF PROGRAM MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP	QUALITY OF FTF VOLUNTEER	MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF IMPLEMENTOR
1) ALBANIA	Mission also believed that, as USAID efforts towards agricultural restructuring gets underway that the FTF program would be able to better focus its activities.		
2) BOLIVIA	Effective	Effective	Effective
3) BOTSWANA	Effective	Somewhat effective	Effective
4) BURKINA FASO	Somewhat effective	(Unable to respond)	(Unable to measure)
5) COLOMBIA	Mission funded FTF activities in Colombia.		
6) CZECH REP.	Mission had no additional comments.		
7) DOMINICAN REP.	Effective	Very effective	Effective
8) GAMBIA	Somewhat effective	Very effective	Somewhat effective
9) MEXICO	of the program. The Mission provides clearances and receives periodic debriefings from FTF volunteers.		
10) INDONESIA	on going cooperative agreement with Farmer to Farmer implementors.		
11) MOROCCO	Mission reports only one FTF Volunteers that worked through IESC.		
12) NICARAGUA	Very effective	Very effective	Very effective
13) PANAMA	Effective	Effective	Effective
14) PHILIPPINES	with the program. Mission is aware of the program and is kept informed on in-coming volunteers.		
15) POLAND	(Unable to respond)	Effective	Somewhat effective
16) TANZANIA	thus has no basis to offer specific comments.		
17) UGANDA	Very effective	Effective	Very effective
18) URUGUAY & ARGENTINA	Very effective	Effective	Very effective

Source: USAID Mission Survey, October 1993.

EXHIBIT IV-2  
FTF TELEPHONE SURVEY: REGION OF ASSIGNMENT

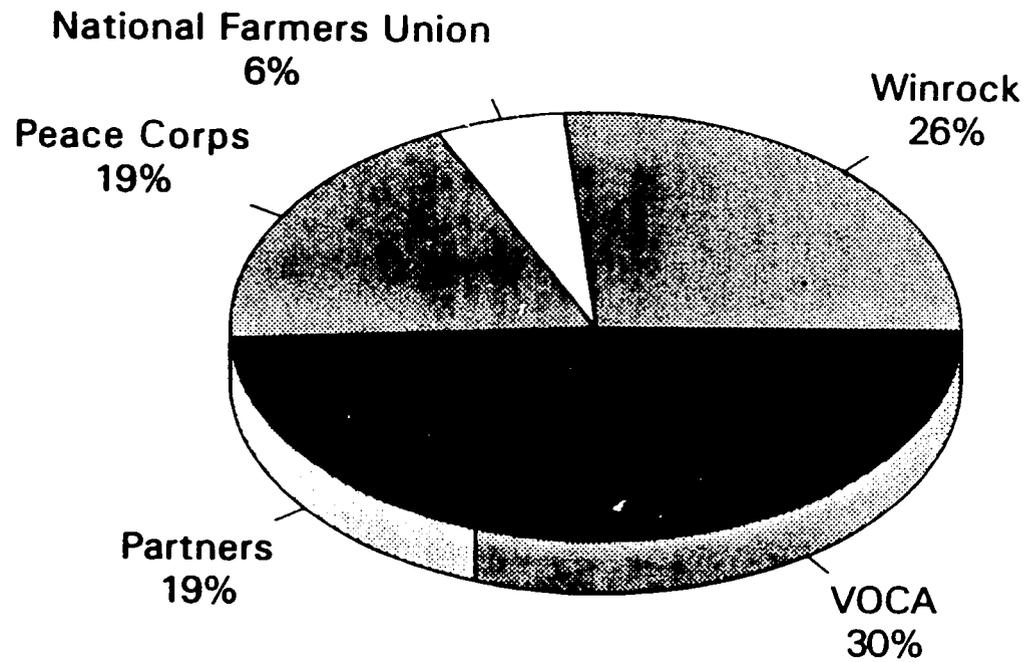
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Source: "Farmer to Farmer Volunteer Telephone Survey," Development Associates, Inc., 1994.

EXHIBIT IV-3  
TELEPHONE SURVEY SAMPLE: PERCENTAGE OF FTF VOLUNTEERS BY IMPLEMENTOR

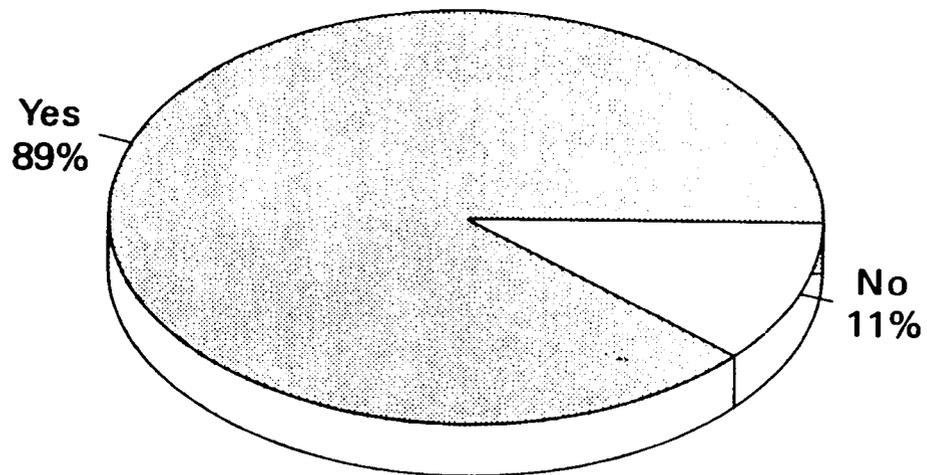
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Source: "FTF Volunteer Telephone Survey," Development Associates, Inc., 1994

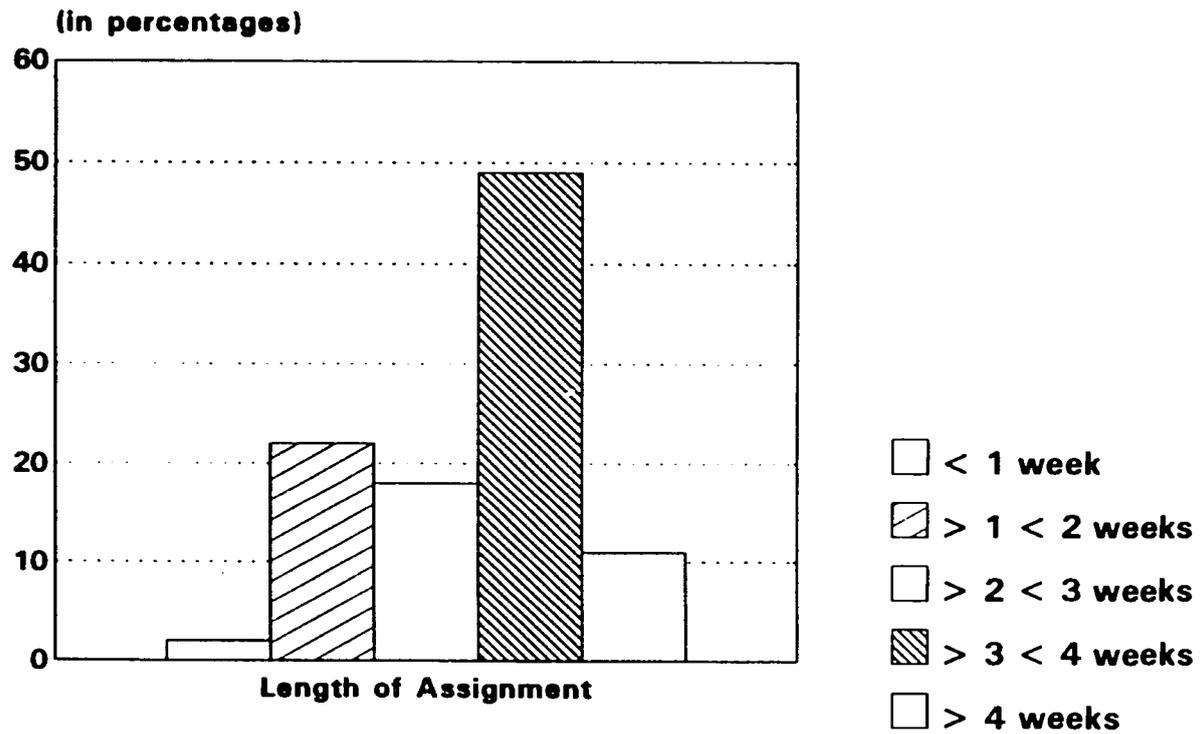
**EXHIBIT IV-4**  
**WOULD YOU VOLUNTEER AGAIN FOR THE FARMER TO FARMER PROGRAM?**

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Source: "Farmer to Farmer Volunteer Telephone Survey," Development Associates, Inc., 1994.

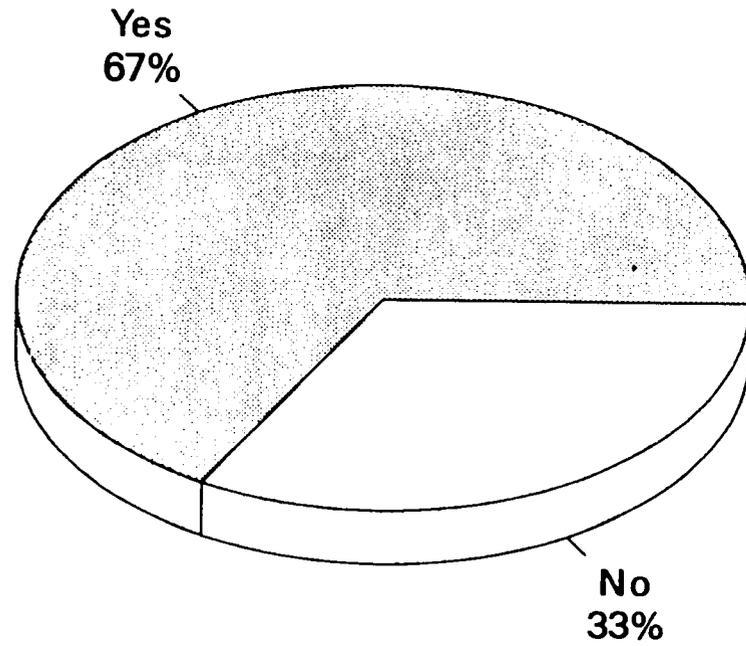
EXHIBIT IV-5  
FTF PROGRAM: LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT



Source: "Survey of FTF Volunteers,"  
Development Associates, Inc., 1994.

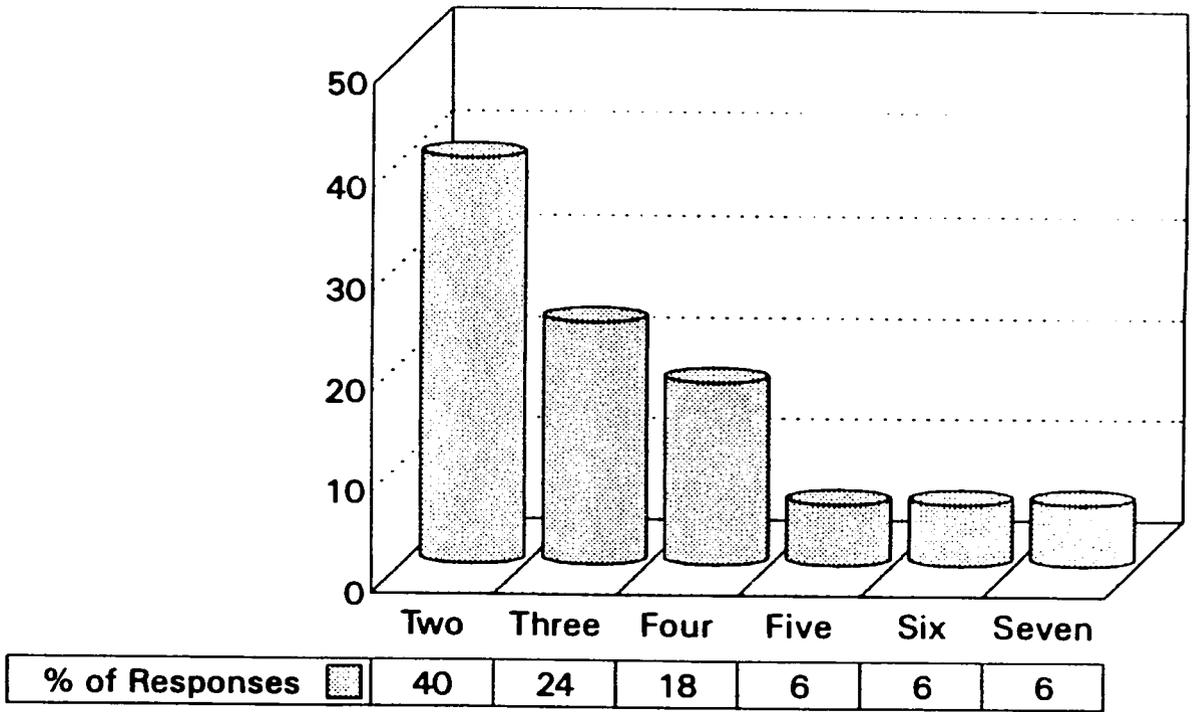
EXHIBIT IV-6  
WAS THIS THE FIRST TIME YOU VOLUNTEERED FOR YOUR ORIGINAL IMPLEMENTOR UNDER THE FTF PROGRAM?

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Source: "FTF Volunteer Telephone Survey," Development Associates, Inc., 1994

EXHIBIT IV-7  
REPEAT VOLUNTEERS: HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU VOLUNTEERED BEFORE UNDER THE FTF PROGRAM?



Source: "FTF Volunteer Telephone Survey," Development Associates, Inc., 1994.

EXHIBIT IV-8

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS CONCERNING IMPLEMENTORS' SUPPORT

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- ▶ *No follow-up on my recommendations*
- ▶ *Lack of coordination and information in-country*
- ▶ *Better post-assignment communications with implementor*
- ▶ *Implementor has to be more than a travel agency*
- ▶ *Implementor has to be effective, non-bureaucratic, and has to have good rapport with counterpart institutions*

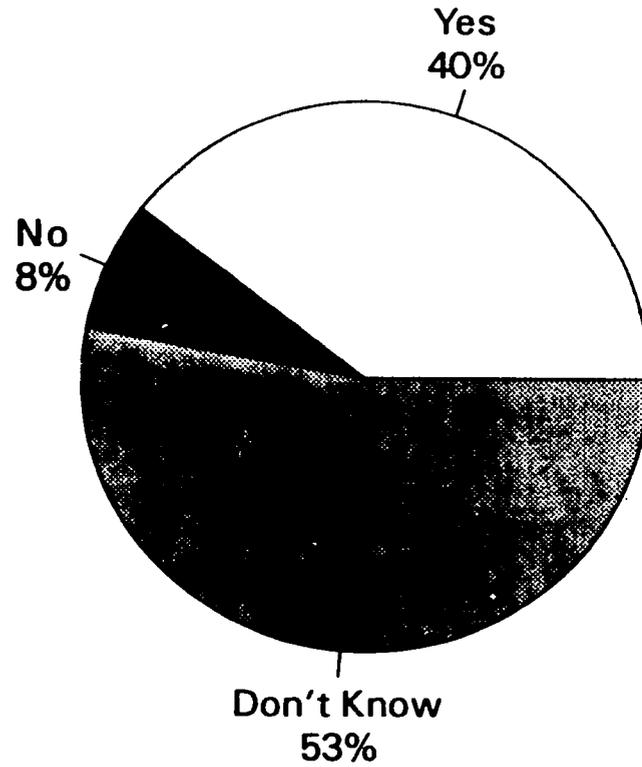
## EXHIBIT IV-9

### SPECTRUM OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE FTF PROGRAM PROVIDED BY VOLUNTEERS

- More communications between volunteers and implementors
- More information to volunteers about assignments before departure
- Period of assignment should be lengthened
- Reversal FTF for additional training (bring clients to the U.S.)
- Follow-up on recommendations
- Networking between new and former volunteers, and organize a conference for volunteers to share experience
- Program should be designed or set up to help needy small farmers, in most cases wealthy farmers get the most assistance
- Implementors need to develop a data base of exit reports for "instant retrieval" to be able to analyze and evaluate issues related to project
- Allow spouses to travel with FTF volunteer
- Change recruiting practices as to attract more minorities and women
- Slow down growth pattern of implementor, before it grows faster than its infrastructure
- Follow up visit should be part of the program
- More regional officers for a limited number of countries, as opposed to one person handling a large region
- Require reports from host country organization
- Language should be a requirement for FTF volunteers
- Host country organization has to be well-organized and able to delegate responsibility once FTF volunteer leaves
- More public relations to try to capture best volunteers
- U.S. agencies in-country should be more receptive or supportive of FTF volunteers
- Number of volunteers in-country should not be emphasized as an indicator of success
- More volunteers for shorter assignments, but spread out into more countries
- Small number of volunteers in one country at the same time and more overlapping and following-up
- Set up a seed-fund or resource fund for equipment and technology (to buy a ph-meter, a soil test kit, fertilizer, etc). In order for this agricultural experience to be complete, in addition to transfer of knowledge, there should be some transfer of technology
- Volunteers in-country should be trained so they could help in the effort. This would provide the FTF with a "team approach"
- Encourage linkages between implementor and volunteer and between volunteer and country of assignment
- Demonstrations are not sufficient. There needs to be a permanent set-up in-country that can have the capacity to provide advice and support.

EXHIBIT VI-1  
WERE THE CHANGES THAT OCCURRED IN THE CLIENTS ENTERPRISE AS A RESULT OF FTF SUSTAINED OVER TIME?

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Source: "Farmer To Farmer Telephone Survey," Development Associates Inc., 1994.

EXHIBIT VI-2: 1) DID YOU MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT YOUR FARMER TO FARMER ASSIGNMENT BE FOLLOWED-UP?  
2) WAS YOUR FARMER TO FARMER ASSIGNMENT FOLLOWED-UP? 3) DO YOU KNOW IF IMPLEMENTOR TOOK ANY ACTION?

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	YES	NO	I DO NOT KNOW
1) Recommendation?	81%	19%	---
2) Followed-up?	43%	21%	36%
3) Action?	31%	22%	47%

52

**EXHIBIT VI-3  
FTF PROGRAM:  
TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS  
BY COUNTRY AND IMPLEMENTOR  
1991-1994\***

Region/ Country	Implementors and Number of Volunteers					Total Volunteers
	NFU	PARTNERS	PEACE CORPS	VOCA	WINROCK	
AFRICA	---	---	8	71	9	88
ASIA	---	---	8	21	---	29
LAC	---	94	37	76	20	227
NEAR EAST	---	---	7	---	---	7
EUROPE (?)	20	---	---	---	29	49
TOTALS	20	94	60	168	58	400

Source: "Implementors' reports and interviews," 1994.

\*These are the total number of volunteers that served between 1991-1994. This number does not include repeats or sub-grants as September 1991.

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#### **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

Summary description of the Worldwide FTF Program (USAID).

Two articles prepared by BHR/PVC to be used for publicity purposes (USAID).

Analysis of distribution of FTF volunteer assignments by category of country -- developing, middle income, or emerging democracy (USAID).

Outgoing cable and responses of USAID Missions that have hosted FTF volunteer assignments requesting their views of the program and the incoming responses (USAID).

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A  
LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED**

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## LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

### AID:

#### AID/BHR/PVC

John A. Fasulo, Coordinator for Cooperative Development  
Larry W. Harms, Coordinator, Farmer to Farmer Program  
John L. Champagne, Technical Advisor, FTF  
Karen Nelson, Program Assistant

### VOCA:

Donald Cohen, President  
Brad Langmaid, Jr., Vice President for Programs  
Dennis Diligent, Latin America Programs  
Stacey Kamin, Program Research and Evaluation  
Coordinator  
Robert Cater, LAC Regional Representative

### PEACE CORPS:

Roberta Bemis, Coordinator, FTF  
Weyman P. Fussell, Agriculture Program Specialist  
Katy Hogan, Program Assistant  
Richard A. Record, Consultant/Evaluator

### WINROCK:

Dr. Andrew Martinez, FTF Program Manager  
Steve Reiquam

### PARTNERS:

Anabella Brucá, Director, FTF

### NATIONAL FARMERS UNION:

Bob Denman, Director, FTF

**APPENDIX B**

**STANDARD QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR RETURNED FTF VOLUNTEERS**

**FARMER TO FARMER EVALUATION**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RETURNED VOLUNTEERS**  
**SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR PHONE INTERVIEW**

Name of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

State of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Attempts \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Development Associates, Inc., a consulting firm in Arlington, VA. We have been assigned by USAID to conduct an evaluation of the Farmer to Farmer program to assess the implementors performance and the overall impact of the project. With that purpose we would like to ask you some questions about your participation as a volunteer and your opinion about the impact of the FTF program.

1. In which country were you a volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How did you hear about the FTF Program \_\_\_\_\_

3. How long did you volunteer in [country mentioned in question 1]? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Who was the implementor for your assignment? \_\_\_\_\_

4a. Who was your host country organization? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Could you briefly describe your volunteer assignment?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Briefly what has been your experience in this area?

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7. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Was this the first time you were a volunteer for [name of implementor]?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

8a. If not the first time, how many times have you volunteered for (implementor) before? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have you been a volunteer for other organizations?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)  
No \_\_\_\_\_

10. Overall, how satisfied were you with the process and support for your assignment that you got from (name of implementor)?

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Somewhat satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Not satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Comments and Suggestions:

11. Do you think you adequately addressed the problems of the client? If yes, how? If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Overall, how useful do you think your work was for the (organization, family, bank, etc.) you worked with?

- Very useful \_\_\_\_\_
- Useful \_\_\_\_\_
- Somewhat useful \_\_\_\_\_
- Not useful \_\_\_\_\_

Comments and Suggestions:

13. Do you think the clients were able to implement your recommendations? If yes, how? If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. From your perspective, what specific changes occurred in the clients enterprise operation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Were these changes sustained over-time?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_



16. Was your assistance followed-up? If yes, how?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

17. Did you make recommendations about follow-up at the end of your assignment?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you know if any action was taken on your suggestions?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

Comments and Suggestions:

19. Would you volunteer again?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not?

20. How do you think this type of program could be improved? What were the lessons learned? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15

21. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Farmer to Farmer program? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME. YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS STUDY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.**

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**APPENDIX C  
SCOPE OF WORK**

TASK # 2

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE WORLDWIDE  
FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE: The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess implementor performance and program effectiveness under the current worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer (FTF) grant.

The evaluation will: a) provide a general assessment of implementor performance and program impact; b) assess FHA/PVC management of the worldwide program; c) assist FHA/PVC in determining what (if any) program adjustments are warranted in anticipation of a follow-on grant; d) assess the validity of implementor performance indicators and how they might be better measured; e) identify information gaps or data that would be useful for future evaluations; f) assess whether the program is meeting the "people-to-people" objectives on which Farmer-to-Farmer is based.

II. BACKGROUND: The FTF Program originated with Section 406 of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act (ATDAA) of 1954 (P.L. 480), as amended in 1966 and again in 1990. The program was initiated in 1985 with the aim of providing short-term U.S. agricultural technical assistance, on a people-to-people basis, to developing countries worldwide. The program purpose, as stated is "to assist in increasing food production and distribution, and improving the effectiveness of the farming and marketing operations of farmers." The program utilizes the services of U.S. farmers, agriculturalists, land grant universities, private agribusinesses and non-profit farm organizations on a voluntary basis in response to the needs of host country farmers and farmer organizations. The ATDAA was amended in 1990 to cover "emerging democracies and middle-income countries."

FTF volunteers participate in a wide variety of field assignments including animal care and health, field crop cultivation, fruit and vegetable growing, livestock operation, food processing and packaging, farm credit, marketing, inputs, agricultural extension, strengthening of cooperatives and other farm groups, etc.

In FY 1986, A.I.D. signed a Cooperative Agreement with Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA), a U.S. private voluntary organization, to implement an FTF activity in Central America. In FY 1991, a Participating Agency Service Agreement (PASA) was executed with the Peace Corps to engage that organization in FTF operations. These two organizations were

responsible for coordinating and implementing the worldwide FTF program from FY 1986 through FY 1991. In FY 1991, the program was expanded by adding two new organizations; the National Association of the Partners of the Americas (Partners), and Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development (Winrock). A fifth implementor, the National Farmers Union (NFU), was added in 1992. Funding for the FTF Program comes from USDA (PL-480) resources and is administered by FHA/PVC. Over recent years, funding for the worldwide program has averaged \$3.0 - \$4.0 million.

III. STATEMENT OF WORK: The worldwide FTF program currently operates in more than 60 countries and 4 continents (Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Among the 60 or so countries receiving PL-480-funded FTF support, some 20 countries have received the heaviest attention and will be the primary focus of the evaluation.

A. Specific Tasks

- Assess the performance of the five program implementors in carrying out FTF activities to include, organization, management, staffing, timeliness of inputs (e.g., volunteer selection, recruitment, placement and backstopping), and in meeting workplan objectives.
- Evaluate FHA/PVC management of the worldwide program to include monitoring implementor performance, and providing necessary guidance and backstopping.
- Assess implementor volunteer follow-up, including periodic monitoring by implementor field staff, using repeat volunteers, building on previous assignments ("pyramiding") etc.
- Render an opinion on the overall effectiveness of assigning a larger number of volunteers per country vs. fewer volunteers to more countries.
- Assess implementor performance indicators and benchmarks provide the basis for valid/measurable program appraisal.
- Assess the degree of implementor collaboration and information exchange.
- Assess "lessons learned" and (as appropriate) recommend modifications in program strategy and focus.

On the basis of the above, render an opinion on the cost-effectiveness of short term vs. longer-term technical assistance as a means of transferring U.S. agricultural "know how."

IV. METHODOLOGY: The frame of reference for this evaluation report is contained in the FTF authorizing legislation, the A.I.D. authorization memorandum, the individual implementor Cooperative Agreements, and A.I.D.-approved implementor workplans. Copies of these documents are available in FHA/PVC.

The worldwide final evaluation will be carried out as a desk study and conducted entirely here in the U.S. The evaluation team's report will be based on: a) a review and synthesis of the responses to the AIDWIDE cable questionnaire sent to USAID missions where the centrally-funded FTF program has been active; b) a review of the individual Cooperative Agreements and other relevant background materials (including any previous evaluations); and c) interviews of FTF implementor headquarters staff (all 5 organizations are located in Washington, D.C.), telephone interviews of a representative number (5 to 8 percent of the 1,000 or so volunteers fielded to date), FHA/PVC program staff, and Department of State and USDA officials.

V. CONSULTANT REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS

The worldwide final evaluation will be carried out by a two-person team: a) Program and Policy Analysis Specialist/Chief Investigator; b) Survey Research Specialist. The individuals selected should possess the following mix of skills: a minimum of 8 years evaluation experience; a knowledge of the latest evaluation techniques (including preparation of questionnaires and interviewing); a good grasp of agricultural technology transfer techniques; and be able to present their findings, conclusions and recommendations clearly and succinctly. As indicated above, evaluation Task #2 will be conducted in the Washington, D.C. area, where all five program implementors as well as A.I.D., State and USDA etc. are located. No additional travel is anticipated.

A. Work Days Ordered\*

Position

Work Days

\* A five-day work week is authorized for this work order.

VI. LOGISTICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT: The IQC contractor is responsible for all logistical and administrative support for this evaluation. FHA/PVC will provide clarification (as needed) on technical matters pertaining to the scope of work. The A.I.D. Office of Procurement will address any questions concerning the terms and conditions of the IQC Work Order.