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Research and Reference Services

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1993

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Project Director's Highlights

Fiscal year 1993 saw much activity as Research and Reference Services began to implement the R&RS Strategic Plan. The plan was published and presentations were given to the Academy for Educational Development and Agency for International Development management in the first quarter of FY93, at which point it became a working document, stating goals for the project for the next several years.

Two of our five goals received particular attention in FY 93: to implement a human resources development plan that ensures staff's ability to provide excellence in service and remain a dynamic force in A.I.D.; and to ensure the project's continued ability to anticipate and respond to A.I.D.'s complex environment with timeliness and innovation. As this report will show, R&RS has made strides towards this first goal, creating professional development opportunities such as the Technical Advancement Track program, developing promotion opportunities for staff, and providing ongoing staff training.

A key R&RS strength identified during strategic planning -- flexibility -- has contributed greatly to R&RS's continuing success in achieving the second goal. R&RS's ability to meet tight deadlines, respond to unusual and demanding requests, reassign staff quickly, and understand and respond to emerging trends and new directions in A.I.D. while maintaining quality and objectivity continue to be hallmarks of the project.

The new Administration and A.I.D.'s dramatic reorganization created special information needs that tested R&RS's flexibility, among them a history of A.I.D., analyses of lessons learned in major sectors, and targeted information for transition teams and task forces. R&RS's comprehensive understanding of the Agency, plus our global view of development and flexible, responsive working style, have been invaluable to A.I.D. during this challenging time.

Linda Leonard
Project Director

Research

Management

Realizing our ability to anticipate cutting edge issues, the research staff produced a research agenda detailing the proactive analytical work goals for the first six-months period. Enthusiastically received by A.I.D. management, the research agenda is already in full swing. Research staff are producing papers examining sustainable development, ethnic conflict, nature-based tourism, and alternative dispute resolution, among other topics.

Research staff have engaged in a wide variety of activities for the Agency and have generated much substantive work, particularly for POL and A/AID, including lessons learned papers, strategy implementation guidelines, "facts" for the Administrator, and bibliographies for the Deputy Administrator. Work for the Evaluation Office has led to TDYs for one researcher, who has paved the way for others to join technical assistance teams doing assessments in the field. Outreach to the Europe Bureau and R&D has generated more work for these important Bureaus, including a major piece on ethnic conflict and the inclusion of an R&RS staff member on the agribusiness working group. Work on the sustainable development issue brief led to collaboration with the IRIS (Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector, formerly the International Development Management Center) at the University of Maryland.

A new personnel structure and promotion guidelines for the research staff have been approved by AED. They give the staff a means to grow within the project and allow managers to reward high achievers. Guidelines serve to prevent inequities by instituting a review process and clear understanding of what is needed to move from one position to another.

Fees and buy-ins in regional bureaus were successfully collected by DI management, who attributed this success to the visibility and good work of the bureau liaisons. This achievement was especially notable in a climate of budget cuts.

A Management Information System (MIS) working group of research staff began assisting the operations manager in identifying problems with the current MIS and ascertain what needs to be done to create a better system for researchers and managers.

The Research Units

Over the past year, the performance of the research staff has changed dramatically. One year ago, six of the ten Rosslyn researchers had either just been hired or had been with the project for less than two months. Today four research teams mirror the Agency's four strategic areas, each team serving as the project's central resource in the four sectors.

A.I.D. bureau staff continue to show confidence in the work done by the R&RS liaisons, increasingly incorporating them into the daily life of the bureaus and asking the liaisons to work on more substantive, long-term projects. At the beginning of the year, bureau liaisons were located in Africa, Asia, LAC, Near East, and PRE bureaus. Early in the year the PRE liaison resigned to accept a Foreign Service appointment. To fulfill our obligations to PRE, research analysts from the Rosslyn staff filled in on a temporary basis.

The principal challenges of the past year for research were twofold. First, the Clinton Administration's transition compelled R&RS to fill gaps in information quickly and anticipate needs in new areas. Second, the A.I.D. reorganization and rightsizing made it necessary to underscore our

project's analytical capacities and high-quality, responsive research. The research staff met these challenges in three ways --

1. a series of new research initiatives,
2. outreach to new clients, and
3. contributions to the efforts of other units on the project.

The following are highlights of accomplishments.

Major Request Work

Community Based Natural Resource Management in Guatemala. USAID/Guatemala asked R&RS to help defining which types of local organizations have had success in promoting environmentally sound production and the major problems they have faced due to policy, institutional, or human resource constraints. We reviewed A.I.D. and NGO literature and provided the requestor with a summary memorandum and an annotated bibliography on the subject.

Employment Generation Effects of Aggregate Economic Growth Compared with Sectoral Growth. At the request of USAID/Cairo, we reviewed existing literature on the effects of aggregate economic growth versus sectoral growth on increase of employment. Because the topic has not been widely studied, we supplemented the few relevant articles we found with anecdotal material obtained from interviews with several knowledgeable individuals and with sources of information we found already existing in Egypt. All these resources were identified for the mission.

Markets and Methods of Preparation for Medicinal Plants. USAID/Burundi received a request from a local export promotion agency and asked R&RS to provide information on markets and methods of preparation for medicinal plants. R&RS pulled together materials from A.I.D.,

Canada's International Development Research Centre, and several private sector resources. The Center for Trade and Investment Services (CTIS) also contributed a list of large importers of medicinal plants by country.

Private Sector Participation in the Telecommunications Sector. USAID/Harare contacted R&RS for information to help in developing a project to support private sector participation in the telecommunications sector. The project will have two components: to provide technical assistance to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for legislative and regulatory reform; and to provide assistance for leveraging policy change in the telecommunications sector. R&RS provided the mission with A.I.D., World Bank, and other open source materials.

Policies for Industrial and Hazardous Waste Management in Russia. An A.I.D. member of a team to study industrial and hazardous waste in Russia asked R&RS to investigate the status of Russia's pollution inventories, standard setting, institutional development, and policy upgrading activities. The team, sponsored by the World Bank, was composed of participants from the Environmental Protection Agency and A.I.D., as well as Bank staff. R&RS contacted the former Institute for Soviet American Relations, Worldwatch Institute, World Resources Institute, and other professional contacts working in the NIS on environmental issues. The A.I.D. team member was then briefed by R&RS, provided with a list of contacts in Russia, key documents, and other assorted information leads.

Evaluating the Impact of Participant Training in Cameroon. USAID/Yaounde approached CDIE for assistance in developing a methodology to evaluate the impact of their 30-year old participant training program. R&RS compiled a set of materials by CDIE, Africa Bureau, and Latin America Bureau that provided guidance on alternative methods for evaluation, including sample surveys, case

studies, and focus groups. Methodologists from R&D/OIT and CDIE were consulted and their recommendations summarized in a fax to the field.

Lessons Learned for USAID/Philippines' Barefoot Media Initiative. USAID/Philippines asked CDIE for assistance identifying lessons learned that would be appropriate for their new "barefoot media" initiative. This initiative is both a journalism training project for village representatives and an advocacy project to ensure that villagers' concerns are voiced by representatives in local media and policymaking bodies. R&RS identified several analogous initiatives sponsored by A.I.D. and other donors and provided the mission with descriptive information. A number of short articles from the *Development Communication Report* covered journalism training and advocacy initiatives undertaken by a variety of NGOs.

A.I.D.'s Experience with the Logical Framework for Tokyo. A.I.D.'s representative in Tokyo asked R&RS for information on A.I.D.'s experience with and lessons learned from using the logframe in project design, monitoring, and evaluation. The materials will be used for a presentation at an international conference in Tokyo. In particular, the requestor was interested in specific A.I.D. project applications, historical background, and suggestions for graphics that could be used in presentation. R&RS interviewed key individuals involved with developing the logical framework to obtain background and case study application examples. In addition, R&RS contacted Team Technologies, the firm that sells a computer application for the logframe to A.I.D. and other international donors. A summary memo was drafted to highlight A.I.D. findings concerning the impact of the logframe, contacts, and a selection of journal articles and other documents on the subject, as well as the entire set of handouts used at A.I.D.'s New Entry/Project Design course for the logframe were sent to the A.I.D. representative.

Assistance for Tunisian Women's Federation to Develop Bibliographic Database. USAID/Tunis requested R&RS assistance to help the Union Nationale de Femmes Tunisiennes (UNFT) develop a bibliographic database on the role and status of women in Tunisia. R&RS compiled several bibliographies drawing from databases available to CDIE/DI and covering material from A.I.D., the World Bank, UNESCO, several bilateral donor resources, and a selection of materials from academia. A complimentary copy of a 1992 International Center for Research on Women report entitled *Engendering Development in Asia and the Near East: A Sourcebook* was sent to UNFT together with annotated bibliographies.

USAID/San Salvador and Challenge Grants. USAID/San Salvador asked CDIE about A.I.D. experience in providing funding to PVOs via "challenge" or "matching" grants and making grants contingent upon the PVO raising a predetermined amount of its own funds for a particular project or activity. R&RS provided information concerning the FHA/PVC's 12 years of experience implementing the "Private and Development Cooperation: Matching Grants to PVOs" program, a world-wide activity. Currently, 40 such projects in areas as diverse as the environment, democracy, and health care are being implemented. To help the mission develop the concept, R&RS provided the internal memo entitled *Guidelines: FY 1993 Matching Grant Program* as a possible model for a similar mission activity, a copy of *Audit of Cost Sharing/Matching Grants with Private and Voluntary Organizations*, and A.I.D. policy guidance in *Program Financing Arrangements with Independent Organizations*.

Training in NIS Countries. The NIS Task Force was starting up a \$90 million five-year project for all NIS countries in the area of health and environmental training, as well as training needs assessments previously carried out in NIS countries. R&RS reviewed A.I.D. and World Bank

literature and provided the requestor with annotated bibliographies. Additional Information on area libraries and their resources was supplied as well.

New Initiatives, Outreach, and Contributions to other Units

New Initiatives. While maintaining the traditional responsibilities of the R&RS research staff -- responding to regular requests for research from the field -- the research staff also have taken on many new initiatives that increase project visibility, stability, and serve to make the project essential to the Agency. Research staff have taken on extra work, to a large degree at their own initiative.

In response to A.I.D.'s four new program areas, research staff actively participated in many aspects of the development of Agency's Strategy Papers, were major contributors to papers on health and population, economic growth, democracy, and the environment, and actively participated in Agency policy discussions and produced key sections for the numerous drafts of the papers.

Staff authored an evaluation of the Agency's trade and investment programs in the Near East, which will be published by CDIE as part of their worldwide program assessment of Agency trade and investment programs. This is the first time an R&RS staff member has been the sole author of a CDIE published evaluation.

Outreach. Special efforts in outreach to the Agency have been pursued by all research staff. This is especially important during this time of transition within the Agency -- the growth R&RS has experienced over recent years is attributable to the combination of highly effective work and strategic marketing of our services.

Numerous presentations and outreach -- to R&D, A.I.D. missions, the NIS Task Force, and more -- have produced new users and encouraged repeat clients to tap our resources more comprehensively.

One prominent example of outreach to new clients has involved writing a research paper for the Europe Bureau on lessons learned in ethnic conflict resolution. For five weeks, a research staff member worked exclusively on the project, demonstrating the usefulness of our project's services to the Europe Bureau.

Contributions to Other Units. The research staff contributed greatly to the work of other units of the R&RS project and of CDIE.

Research staff contributed numerous articles to *Requests and Responses*, distributed to Agency personnel. Articles written covered such subjects as democratic elections, monitoring and evaluation systems, trade and investment support services, and environmental education.

For CDIE, research staff actively participated in policy team work in a number of areas, including the Agency's relationship to PVOs. A number of staff have contributed to A.I.D.'s PRISM initiative for improved "management for results."

To assist the project's Regional Information Clearinghouse (RIC) in Guatemala, the environment research analyst spent a week in Guatemala helping the RIC with a variety of research projects from Washington.

Africa Bureau Information Center

FY93 has been a year of growth, reaching more missions and A.I.D. Washington staff, and solidifying ABIC's working relationships with its base group of users in the Bureau. This year ABIC concentrated on strengthening the resources and encouraging more substantive use of ABIC staff and resources. Highlights for this year include regular publication of three newsletters for the Africa Bureau; researching and writing 30 democracy and governance profiles; and increased support for and outreach to the democracy and governance advisors assigned to missions in Africa.

Although the structure of the reorganized A.I.D. is not clear, it is certain that democracy and governance (D/G) will continue to be an area of emphasis for A.I.D. and ABIC is likely to continue to have a role in providing research, publications, and reference services to the Africa Bureau, and perhaps beyond to other bureaus.

Major Requests and Activities

Democracy/Governance Profiles. One of the major tasks undertaken by ABIC during the past year was writing 30 democracy and governance profiles for AFR/ONI/DG in preparation for the Africa Bureau's focus country exercise. The profiles examined the overall performance of the Bureau's focus, watch, and other countries in Africa during the past year in five areas related to democracy and governance: freedom of expression, freedom of association, human rights, public sector transparency and effectiveness, and public accountability. ABIC also assisted ONI/DG with developing a methodology for scoring and ranking these countries.

In addition, ABIC put together 48 short democracy and governance profiles for the Bureau's new AFRMIS information system. Each profile contains summaries taken from the Department of State country human rights reports and lists FY92 and FY93 democracy- and governance-related projects and activities.

ABIC is also working with desk officers in the Africa Bureau to help them format and write general country profiles for the AFRMIS system.

D/G Advisors. A new area of emphasis for ABIC during 1993 was providing support for the half-dozen or so democracy and governance advisors assigned to missions in Africa. These advisors are specialists in areas related to democracy and governance. They work with individual missions as well as the regional offices to provide guidance and support for D/G-related activities.

Elections Issue Brief. ABIC's research analyst worked with the Rosslyn research supervisor to write a CDIE issue brief, *The U.S. Agency for International Development and Elections Support: A Synthesis of Case Study Experiences*.

USAID Mission Requests on Democracy. During 1993, ABIC answered an increasing number of mission requests (from a greater number of missions as well as from our core of regular users, which includes the D/G advisors) for information on D/G and other issues. Requests this past year covered such topics as conflict resolution, arbitration, and mediation; informal justice mechanisms; elections assessments; the role of the military in democratization; demobilization and reintegration of the military in post-conflict societies; support for political parties; strengthening national legislatures; NGO information; country background information; and other D/G project lessons learned.

ABIC Publications

ABIC is now publishing quarterly three newsletters for the Africa Bureau and is providing other outreach tools and publications technical assistance to the Bureau.

African Voices covers A.I.D. activities in democratization in Africa and provides a forum for ongoing dialogue with Africans about these activities. Recent issues have focused on such topics as African organizations working in area of democracy and governance; administrative corruption in Africa; the role of civil society in developing democracy; the relationship between political and economic organization; and elections. This newsletter is sent to more than 1,000 organizations and individuals worldwide working in or interested in democracy and governance issues.

ARTS Abstracts is a technical bulletin of ARTS's analytical work that includes reports from a range of sectors such as the environment, natural resources management, agriculture, health, education, and economic resources.

State of the ARTS is designed to foster a better understanding of ARTS' activities, particularly among missions in Africa. Through the newsletter, ARTS is able to share its research and analytical information on African development issues with A.I.D. missions, African governments, and international donors.

ARTS Technical Publication Series. ABIC participated in an ARTS working group to plan a new ARTS technical publications series. ABIC published the first technical paper in this series in January: *Overview of A.I.D.'s Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Currently, ABIC is editing another publication for ARTS, *Education Policy Reform in Africa: A Comparative Study of Five Countries*.

Articles Alerts. ABIC issues bi-monthly "Article Alerts," which are a compilation of the tables of contents that highlight recent books, periodicals, articles, essays, and current news items related to democracy and governance issues in Africa. These are sent to ONI/DG staff and contractors and mission staff, who may then request copies of specific items listed. The alerts are particularly valued by the D/G advisors as well as other A.I.D. mission project staff working on D/G issues.

Project Services

Development Information Center

Fiscal year 1993 was an exciting year for the staff of the A.I.D. Development Information Center (DIC). Patron usage of the DIC resources was 38 percent higher than the previous year.

The DIC was renovated during the summer months, including new carpeting and new paint. The DIC was closed to all users for two weeks while the work was completed. During this period, the DIC staff provided limited telephone reference service every afternoon for two hours allowing Agency staff and the general public to continue to access A.I.D. information during the renovation.

The DIC hosted several *Development Dialogues* throughout the year, providing a forum for Agency personnel and other interested parties to discuss development topics. The *Development Dialogues* offered this year were primarily focused on the issue of private enterprise development.

Reference Services. The DIC staff evaluated the entire DIC collection in FY93. Over 1200 items in the circulating and reference collections were removed from the DIC and sent to the "Books for Africa" program. The DIC's Integrated Library System (ILS) was updated to reflect the changes. The DIC staff also evaluated and reorganized the DIC's collection of A.I.D. program documents. The DIC serials collection also was evaluated.

Collection development activities continued to focus on strengthening the collection in areas that are of primary interest to the Agency. Areas of major concern included sustainability, trade and investment, privatization, and the Newly Independent States.

To enhance the CD-ROM collection of the DIC, the World Bank's IntlEc CD-ROM (Index to International Economics, Development, and Finance) and PAIS (Public Affairs Information Service) were added to the CDIE LAN for access by staff and DIC patrons. The DIC also received a free copy of the U.S. State Department's Infoexpress CD-ROM, which contains the Foreign Affairs Manual, the Foreign Affairs Handbook, and the State Department's Post Reports.

The DIC staff worked on a major project whereby approximately 50 A.I.D.-sponsored documents that were previously in the DIC collection were pulled from the collection to be fished and added to the computerized A.I.D. Development Information System.

Several of the DIC policies were rewritten this year, including the circulation policy, the collection development policy, and the interlibrary loan policy.

DIC staff started to use the resources available through the Internet system for collection development, reference, and interlibrary loan purposes.

The DIC staff continued to work closely with the staff of the A.I.D. Office of External Affairs (XA) to coordinate the efficient handling of written public inquiries between XA and CDIE.

Technical Services. The DIC staff continued to acquire commercial publications not only for the DIC, but also for the Bureau of Research & Development's Women in Development Office, the Africa Bureau Information Center, the Center for Trade and Investment Services program, and the Regional Information Clearinghouse in Guatemala.

The conversion of the DIC collection from the Dewey Decimal System to the Library of Congress (LC) system of

cataloguing continued throughout the year. The entire reference collection was recatalogued using LC by mid-year. By the end of the fiscal year, more than half of the DIC's circulating collection was catalogued using the LC system.

The DIC staff created a "Policy and Procedures Manual" for all technical services operations of the DIC.

Interlibrary loan services were improved through a new account with UnCover2, a service of the Colorado Alliance for Research Libraries (CARL). This service enables the DIC staff to provide A.I.D. staff with overnight document delivery for articles requested through interlibrary loan. Guidelines were written for R&RS staff on how and when to best use the UnCover2 service.

The DIC staff spent a great deal of time this year researching integrated library systems (ILS). The ILS currently used by the DIC staff, The Assistant, is no longer being maintained by the vendor that developed the system. As a result, R&RS must purchase a new ILS. A user survey for The Assistant was developed and distributed to R&RS staff and DIC patrons. The DIC staff also attended user meetings and demonstrations of new systems. By the end of the fiscal year, the DIC staff had identified two potential new systems.

Publications. The DIC staff continued to produce and distribute three key publications, the *Current Contents Bulletin*, the *Topical Updates*, and *New This Month*. The *Current Contents Bulletin* was produced quarterly and covered five sectors. The *Topical Updates* were produced semiannually and covered twelve topical areas of primary interest to Agency staff. *New This Month* continued to inform Agency personnel of additions to the DIC collection.

Document Delivery. The DIC staff continued to respond to requests from A.I.D. personnel worldwide for articles and documents highlighted in the various DIC publications and the R&RS publication *Requests and Responses*. Document delivery statistics for the fiscal year indicate that 4500 articles and documents were distributed to A.I.D. staff by the DIC.

Outreach. The DIC coordinator attended the third annual Foreign Acquisitions Workshop in Crystal City, Virginia. The workshop was sponsored by the U.S. Air Force, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The DIC coordinator's presentation to the workshop attendees focused on how to obtain A.I.D. information, particularly through the services of the A.I.D. Development Information Center.

Contributions to Other Units. The DIC staff collaborated with other R&RS staff members in a variety of areas, including collection development activities, research requests, and determining procedures for efficiently referring incoming information requests among R&RS units. The DIC staff continued to coordinate online database training for all R&RS staff.

A DIC reference librarian worked on a short-term consultancy at the Center for Trade and Investment Services (CTIS) to review the collection, materials, and procedures used by the CTIS staff. A final report was provided to the CTIS manager.

Human Resources and Communications

As a result of the strategic planning process and its emphasis on developing and maintaining R&RS professional staff, a Human Resources Development Task Force (HRDTF) was formed in FY93 to examine the ways in which staff training and professional development could be strengthened. Representatives were drawn from Rosslyn research, bureau research, and the DIC.

The task force worked for about six months, reviewing training courses, writing learning objectives, and reviewing a proposal for a professional development opportunity. With personnel changes, staff reductions, and greater TDY activity, all of which affected staff on the HRDTF, the task force suspended operation in late FY93.

Professional Development. One of the first tasks of the HRDTF was to review a proposal for a potential professional development for R&RS. Called the Technical Advancement Track (TAT), this program would allow interested researchers who had been with R&RS for at least one year to pursue in-depth research on a development topic of interest to A.I.D. The task force was able to adapt this program to all the units of R&RS and issued guidelines for the application to the program and requirements for review and completion.

The program was finalized and approved by the end of April. The project director was able to secure funding from the Academy on a pilot basis to allow TAT program participants to attend conferences or other events that would contribute to their projects. By the end of FY93, the program had received its first application.

Personnel. R&RS always has been able to draw competent, highly skilled professionals in information and development for its staff. We continued to do so in FY93. But with the

restructuring that had taken place the previous year and rapid changes in work responsibilities that demanded even more of staff, it became clear that R&RS required an equitable personnel structure that allowed for professional growth and promotion opportunities for staff. The new research manager began the process of examining the structure, promotion opportunities, and guidelines for research staff.

Using this initial step as a guide, the project services manager took the process further and redesigned the grade and step structure for the entire R&RS staff, working with supervisors to define requirements for each grade in each R&RS unit. By the end of FY93, the structure had been approved by the Academy.

Training. Friday morning training continued during FY93. A particular highlight was a two-session information interviewing course developed and given by the the R&RS senior advisor. Refresher courses in search techniques and information memorandum writing were also given. By the end of FY93, preparations were being made to offer search technique sessions focusing on Dialog, a particular need for R&RS.

Communications. During the first quarter of FY93, a new communications assistant joined R&RS, who brought a greater capability in desktop publishing than R&RS had previously known. R&RS acquired new software, and eventually new hardware, to enhance in-house desktop capability.

Despite this new talent, *Requests and Responses* actually became more difficult to produce because production of *R&R* relies heavily on output from the MIS. Other means for collecting material from staff are being explored. *Requests and Responses* will be reconceptualized in the new fiscal year not only to simplify production, but also to focus on customer needs.

Communications began working with a group of R&RS staff members to develop the text for a new R&RS brochure. Design

for the brochure will spin off into other materials, such as report covers and information packets about the project.

Much time was spent editing major R&RS documents, including the Strategic Plan and a series of research issue briefs. Communications also produced the graphic design for the Strategic Plan and oversaw production of the final document.

Assistance to DI Management. In early FY93, the project services manager was asked to serve on the DI committee charged with revising the DI sections of Handbook 18 as part of the Agency's overall effort to update the Handbook series. The task was a mammoth undertaking, requiring a complete reorganization and rewrite of all DI sections of the Handbook. A survey was created to elicit information necessary for the rewrite. The project services manager contributed lengthy sections and helped reorganize material.

On another front, the communications assistant was heavily involved in the DI video effort. He assisted the crew during two days of shooting footage around DI offices and contributed to packaging the video for distribution to the missions.

The project service manager also did considerable writing for DI management on the fee structure of DI in conjunction with budget exercises during FY93.

Collaboration with Other Units. Although nearly everything accomplished in project services is in support of other R&RS project units, one particular collaborative effort stands out in FY93. The Administrator's office asked R&RS through DI to produce a series of "facts" illustrating how foreign assistance produces favorable repercussions for the American public, focusing on the four strategic areas of the Agency. This monumental effort was accomplished in 24 hours with contributions from many research and DIC staff. The project services manager was charged with pulling all the contributions together in a coherent form.

Planning, Evaluation, and Technical Assistance

Planning. The first quarter of FY93 saw completion, publication, and distribution of the *R&RS Strategic Plan*. The unpublished report, *Information Need & Use Practices of A.I.D. Professional Program & Project Staff: Result of a Survey, June - November 1992*, which was generated in the process of strategic planning, continued to be the basis of service decision making in FY93.

Evaluation. During the second quarter of FY93, much attention went to conceptualizing and framing an evaluation plan for the R&RS project, working with the research, liaison, and DIC staff on issues of quality, value, and value added in terms that matter to the client rather than in terms that matter to R&RS or specify what R&RS does. Long habit has ingrained in both DI management and R&RS staff speaking of "analysis," which is what research does, when what matters to the user are time saved, relevance, and validity.

The *A.I.D. Research and Reference Services Evaluation Plan, August 1993* (draft) includes a framework specifying value R&RS adds to information, a revised feedback form, and a new "information impact" form for eliciting value from requesters. The plan has yet to be reviewed. To implement the plan will require not only a suitable MIS but also a significant training component for both staff and supervisors. Staff and supervisor training, with repeated reinforcements, will result in much more effective reporting to DI management.

Supervisors will also need training in quality-based management and its potential impact on the staff's work and supervision.

Concepts of customer satisfaction and customer-perceived value will also need to be taught to the entire staff.

Technical Assistance. A two-session training program in information interviewing for R&RS staff applied some of the value work previously mentioned. The information interviewing training sessions are easily replicable, both for R&RS and other offices and organizations.

A lengthy systems requirements statement for prospective consultant use in developing a new MIS was written in FY93.

Research and Outreach. A program of research to define information as a sector in economic and social development was funded by AED in its new Technical Advancement Track program. The first result was making contact with most major European development research and training institute information operations by attending the triennial conference of the European Association for Development Research and Training Institutions (EADI) in Berlin in September 1993, contacts that present an opening to further possible cooperative or collaborative opportunities. An extensive contact list was generated and made available to staff.

At the same conference, the senior advisor gave a presentation on strategic planning for an information service, drawing on R&RS experience of the last year, and marketing information services.

Receiving an Internet logon through LTS gave access to information resources and experts not otherwise easily located.

Operations and Special Projects

Operations Unit

FY93 was the first full year of business for the operations unit. Six key areas received management attention: managing project finances; monitoring contract deliverables, obligations, and subcontractor compliance; overseeing report preparation; overseeing communications systems and equipment support; coordinating contract and personnel functions for R&RS staff at the Academy; and managing project administrative support.

Finance. Operations developed detailed FY93 and FY94 budgets for all buy-ins, core, and fee-based work and automated financial management reporting, including automated monthly financial reports for buy-in activity. A database for tracking invoices, educational benefits, travel expense reports, and other financial transactions was developed to ensure prompt and accurate processing from the Academy.

Administration. New project operations procedures were developed covering administrative, financial, and contractual issues as they relate to the daily operation of R&RS. These guidelines have helped increase productivity in R&RS primarily by clarifying R&RS and Academy roles and responsibilities.

Operations assisted the Academy personnel office in getting R&RS fully staffed in FY93. The AED/R&RS liaison supported this effort by not only screening resumes and references, but also by expanding R&RS contacts with local institutions that may provide appropriate candidates to meet R&RS's unique staffing demands.

Subcontract Management. The operations unit managed the portion of the subcontract with LTS that provides

computer systems technical assistance to R&RS. In this management oversight capacity, operations identified and managed all R&RS computer hardware needs; represented R&RS on the systems development group of LTS; developed database directory of online databases used by the project; and monitored the interlibrary loan and DIC acquisition payments.

Systems. Ever since the development of the current CDIE MIS system, R&RS has been plagued with problems in tracking its own work, building on its own past experience through its own institutional memory, and producing reports required by DI management. Though proposed upgrades promised to make the technical input-output functions faster, no proposed upgrades have been able to create a system that meets R&RS's daily work needs. Not only have research and DIC been affected by the dysfunction of the MIS, but also other project deliverables and reporting, such as production of *Requests and Responses* and monthly reports.

Operations was charged with handling further development regarding the MIS. Operations analyzed the MIS's ability to meet the demands of CDIE/DI management and the R&RS staff and determined that statistical reporting, project reporting, and project time allocation were three major areas that warranted further review. Expected directions are outlined under "Plans for FY94."

Operations also assisted in coordinating the conversion from Novell to Banyan, represented CDIE/DI/R&RS on the Magellan file management system development team, and coordinated training on Internet for six R&RS staff members.

Operations Technical Assistance. Operations was instrumental in the start-up phase of the new Regional Information Clearinghouse in Guatemala City. Operations

staff successfully located office space and in-country systems support, and briefed the ROCAP Office and Guatemala mission on the RIC project development. In addition, operations coordinated all contract and budget modification requirements for this new overseas component of the R&RS project, as well as developed a detailed operating budget, developed overseas project management operating procedures, and implemented a process for handling RIC administrative, financial, and contractual matters.

Center for Trade and Investment Services

Since its formal opening in September 1992, the Center has counseled and provided information to over 5,000 callers and visitors from the private sector, trade associations, private voluntary organizations, government agencies, and international organizations, who seek information on trade and investment opportunities in developing countries.

CTIS has received inquiries concerning business opportunities in all regions in which A.I.D. operates, with the greatest interest expressed in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. As a result, CTIS has a large and growing database of U.S. businesses and trade associations interested in A.I.D. and developing economies.

Compared with many other government information centers that typically provide general, prepackaged materials, CTIS is distinctive in its ability to provide value-added counseling and conduct specific research on behalf of its clients. CTIS staff are highly adept at accessing a wide range of information sources to identify and analyze critical market intelligence and transaction opportunities for businesses.

CTIS Management Information System. In FY93, CTIS staff coordinated the conceptual design and technical development of a computer-based tracking and reporting system for the Center. The Center's MIS was modeled on a similar Department of Commerce system, tailoring and extensively reprogramming the database to meet CTIS needs, including developing a reporting module. This option saved considerable start-up time, allowing staff to electronically produce statistics and data on CTIS accomplishments early in 1993. CTIS has been able to successfully prove itself a vital player in A.I.D.'s efforts to be more accessible to the U.S. private sector through documentation provided by the CTIS MIS.

Liaison and Outreach. CTIS staff have worked hard to develop close working relationships in the Agency, giving presentations of the center's resources for project officers, country desk officers, mission directors and field staff, and other A.I.D. staff involved in trade and investment. Over 300 missions and posts received an information packet describing the Center.

Analysts have worked to strengthen linkages with missions that express an interest in working more closely with the Center. In addition, staff are actively involved in developing linkages to a CTIS sister project -- the International Executive Services Corps' Business Development Service Project.

Equipped with comprehensive knowledge of A.I.D. and other U.S. government services, CTIS staff are able to guide clients to the individual or institution best able to serve them. CTIS staff not only keep up to date on the range of services to businesses offered by the U.S. government, but also the trade and investment activities of other institutions. CTIS has amassed an impressive array of contacts and networks in USG agencies, trade associations and the private sector.

CTIS's Flash Fax service is another outreach tool that uses the fax machine for mass communciation. Business opportunities can be faxed to "mailing lists" compiled on computer and sent via fax modem.

CTIS Marketing. To inform small and medium-sized businesses across the U.S. about the services offered by the Center, staff prepared a comprehensive CTIS marketing plan. Major changes within the Agency have delayed its official adoption, but informally, much of the plan has been implemented. These include designing and distributing a popular CTIS rolodex card; preparing and distributing an information packet on CTIS to 300 overseas A.I.D. representatives; contributing to newsletters and articles promoting CTIS services; giving speeches and participating in conferences and other assemblies; giving presentations and demonstrations of CTIS's services to interested parties, such as the General Accounting Office, the State Department's Economic Bureau, and the Department of Commerce.

Regional Information Clearinghouse

If there is one message that merits emphasis as the Regional Information Clearinghouse's (RIC) first year of operation comes to a close, it is that at perhaps no other time in recent history has an opportunity such as now present in Central America presented itself to all those who are interested in the Region. There is more talk of regional cooperation and integration in Central America today than there has been at any time since the 1960s. Regional agreements are being reached and enacted on national level schemes. From Belize to Panama, former attitudes of isolation and apathy towards the isthmus are being replaced by a renewed vigor of regional harmonization. The information revolution is just now gaining steam, from the increased application of advanced telecommunications and information technologies to the growing formation of formal and informal institutional and personal networks in the region.

Start-Up. The first year of operation of the RIC at USAID/ROCAP (now USAID Guatemala/ROCAP) was event filled. Administrative challenges confronted the contract team, but the enthusiasm for the RIC activity in A.I.D. missions and among other organizations with which the team had contact was strong. There was nearly universal agreement among all these parties that there was a need in the region for the RIC, and that it was incumbent upon A.I.D. to play a leadership role in support of the information and networking revolution spanning across political, economic, social, environmental, and other sources in Central America.

The RIC team responded to this enthusiasm by aggressively pursuing the goals outlined for the activity in the amendment to USAID/ROCAP's Regional Development Support (RDS) project. Focusing on ROCAP's strategic objectives in the regional economy, natural resource

management, and municipal management/democratization, and working closely with A.I.D. staff in ROCAP's technical offices, the RIC began to establish and extend its network of contacts in the region. Travel and attendance at key regional meetings and visits to A.I.D. bilateral missions, regional organizations, and other institutions helped the contract team develop a sense of regional information needs and existing resources.

Products. Deliverables for the RIC described in the RDS project amendment include regional information bulletins, tailored information packages, and an annual state of the region report (scheduled for after this annual report was prepared). Regional information bulletins (RIBs) proactively communicate important and timely information on key regional issues. During its first year of operation, the RIC produced three RIBs: 1) an introduction to the RIC and A.I.D. information sources; 2) a focus on regional economic integration and trade and investment topics; and 3) a look at municipal development and democratization issues. RIBs are issued in English and Spanish versions and distributed to A.I.D. missions and a wide audience outside of A.I.D. A fourth RIB on natural resource management was in preparation as this annual report was printed.

Tailored information packages (TIPs) are responses that the RIC prepares to requests for regional information. The goal of five TIPs was far exceeded, as the RIC prepared 23 TIPs on a variety of topics. TIPs included such materials as data tables, journal articles, book chapters, "grey" literature, and bibliographies. While requests for regional information were few during the early phases of RIC start-up, requests were received with increasing frequency as awareness of the RIC grew.

The RIC also introduced the special report to its printed deliverables. The need for this type of report was felt since certain topics in high demand deserved special treatment

that could not be given in a bulletin. The first RIC special report (issued in English and Spanish) dealt with NAFTA's implications for the United States and Central America. Another special report on a unique group of Central American trade and investment information professionals was in preparation as this annual report went to press.

Services to Technical Offices and Regional Organizations. Finally, the RIC recently entered an exciting phase of providing information-related services to A.I.D. technical offices and selected regional organizations. These services include assistance in the design of information brochures, newsletters, and other printed materials, design of computerized presentations, information management systems, databases, and computer equipment consultations. A.I.D. regional technical offices and important regional organizations such as the Federation of Central American Municipalities (FEMICA), the Central American Integration System (SICA) have responded enthusiastically to the RIC's assistance in their regional information-related needs.

Plans for FY94

Research and Reference Services has targeted several areas for particular attention in FY94:

- The development of an R&RS Management Information System will be a top priority for FY94. Plans are underway to identify a consultant who can recommend appropriate measures either to adapt the current system or develop an entirely new system. Although R&RS will take great care in seeing that the new MIS meets project needs, we also believe it is crucial to have a viable system up and running as soon as possible.
- Over the next year, the research staff will solidify the progress begun this past year. Staff expectations are high, and it will be difficult to continue to meet the competing demands on them from various groups while also inviting new business from the Global Bureau, ENI, and others. For the research staff to maintain the standard that has been set this year, several changes (some already planned, others unanticipated) will be needed, including:
 - sector teams capable of responding to analytically challenging requests, producing materials for the research agenda, and mentoring junior staff;
 - priorities regarding request workload, particularly the proportion of work that is to be done for missions; and
 - creative approaches to the entire spectrum of R&RS work to allow the staff to pursue the research agenda, as well as contribute to *Requests and Responses*, respond to occasional requests from the public, perform work for bureaus and offices that do

not pay a fee such as LPA and GC, participate in task forces and Agency working groups, sponsor brown-bags, give debriefings, conduct outreach to the field or particular groups within AID/W, coordinate with and assist both the rest of the project and other DI contractors, and finally continue to do work for CDIE/FO, PPC, A/AID, and FA.

- The DIC will purchase and install the new integrated library system. The DIC staff faced many problems with The Assistant, the DIC's integrated library system. The Assistant software was sold during FY93, and the company that bought the software provided us with very little user support. Many DIC staff hours were spent this year fixing problems associated with The Assistant.
- Specialized training in writing and research will be developed in FY94 to enhance staff ability to produce top quality research products, particularly issue briefs.
- A.I.D. staff will soon have access to the Internet, as IRM gradually implements Internet tools for the Agency. Since R&RS has been using Internet for more than a year, our expertise is a distinct advantage. We can offer A.I.D. not only a knowledge of information resources but also insight into appropriate applications of Internet capabilities in support of A.I.D. programs. Accordingly, we plan to implement targeted awareness and training activities for R&RS and DI staffs, our requestors and readers of *Requests and Responses*. Activities will be focussed on programmatic applications of Internet capabilities.
- CTIS will be looking to strengthen its relationship with the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership (US-AEP), linking U.S. environment-oriented businesses to opportunities in Asia. The program mobilizes

U.S. technology, expertise, and financial resources to strengthen environmental protection and promote sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. CTIS would be working primarily with newly opened U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service offices in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan.

- Though the Regional Information Clearinghouse does not claim omniscience about Central American Information sources, the contacts and networks it has established in its first hectic year of operation are a good place to start for finding out what is going on. Certainly, although internal events at A.I.D. may not have been entirely favorable for the formation of this activity at this time, there is no question that now is the right time in the development of the Central American region for this type of activity.

R&RS Impact

I was just beginning my research when I asked for Mr. Martin's help. As I have progressed and learned more about the subject matter, the documents provided by him were just what I needed. He was knowledgeable, where I was not, he anticipated my ultimate needs. He should be commended.

- LAC/DR/E

Your response was extremely useful, and co-incidentally arrived as we are designing the Privatization of Education Support Services Project. This is the first time that I have used CDIE services in connection with project design. You may be assured that I will use them more frequently. Good work!

- USAID/Jakarta

I am truly wonderstruck over the responsiveness and excellence of your research into property management automated management systems and international financial risk management. The materials you've unearthed are of considerable value to our efforts in providing technical assistance and for our grantees themselves. All I can do is applaud your work and give you my earnest thanks.

- RHUDO, USAID Jamaica

Thank you for your assistance and the really interesting and diverse information on traditional legal systems. I am certain this is going to be of great help to the project research director, and a very good reference source for people here in Maputo interested in traditional authorities.

- USAID/Maputo

I would first like to add my recognition and appreciation for your efforts to expedite the information on family planning and population. The rapidity of your work and the quality of the information will surely have significant impact on our efforts in family planning.

- USAID/Bamako

In summary, we cannot emphasize enough the importance and usefulness of the materials provided. As a consequence, we were able to achieve in one mission what may have taken two or more missions to accomplish. In addition, it helped us gain quick acceptance from the Russians, which is very important in this politically sensitive region. On behalf of the rest of the team, please accept our thanks.

- PRE/CAP

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