

National Academy of Sciences
Agency for International Development
Science Book Program

*Final Report
and
Recommendations*

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May 3, 1968

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES -
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCIENCE BOOK PROGRAM
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Background

The Science Book Program of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the Agency for International Development (AID) was established as an experimental project in June 1963. It is an enterprise designed to bring to scientists and educators in a limited number of developing countries scientific and technical books and journals at prices their institutions can afford to pay.

Essentially the program provides a way for scientific and technical, educational and research institutions to acquire books and journals in the social, natural, and applied sciences, education, public and business administration, and related technical fields, as well as general reference works, at a fraction of their actual costs. Each participating country is asked to establish a small and informal book program committee consisting of representatives of the major scientific and educational organizations participating in the program. This committee allocates dollar quotas for the purchase of books and journals by each institution and arranges an administrative mechanism to handle orders and local payments. Participating institutions pay between 20% and 50% of the retail price of the publications, using either local currency, U.S. dollars, or UNESCO book coupons. Payment and ordering procedures are established with the advice and help of local AID missions and orders are submitted directly to the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D. C. Here they are reviewed for program applicability and forwarded to Acme Code Company, which gathers the books and mails them to the recipient institutions. Dollars or UNESCO book coupons flowing into the program from recipient countries are deposited to individual country "accounts" and are used to purchase more books or journals.

Multiple copies of texts and publications in the fields of fiction, the humanities, journalism, linguistics, law, and history, and back issues of journals, have been excluded from the program. There is reason to believe, however, these exclusions should not be adhered to vigorously in future program operations.

As of June, 1968, the NAS is prepared, with the approval of AID, to turn the program over to Franklin Book Programs, Inc. for administration and operation. This paper constitutes a final report to AID and recommendations to AID and Franklin.

Those interested in the detailed history of this program will find it in the first four reports about the program submitted to AID.

The following guidelines distill the experience gained over the past five years.

SUMMARY GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF A SUBSIDIZED BOOK-PURCHASE PROGRAM

The prime objective of a subsidized book-purchase program should be to assist carefully selected institutions in developing countries to acquire needed books at a modest cost. Several corollary objectives will be discussed below, but first it is useful to examine the implications of this statement of the prime objective:

First, a subsidized book-purchase program is, by definition, a device to provide financial assistance, not gifts. As such, it should be regarded as temporary. Thus, while clearly the subsidy should not be guaranteed, there should be some assurance of several years of continuity before such a program is initiated. If such assurance does not exist, experience suggests that the recipients and the donors are using the program for extraneous purposes.

Second, limitations on the subsidy should be imposed and clearly established by mutual agreement between donor and recipient at the outset. This means limiting the total amount of the subsidy and the types of purchases permitted, i.e., the kinds of books and journals to be included in the program by discipline and subject matter as well as place of origin, value, date of publication, etc.

Third, methods of purchase may or may not be directed, but if the program is to be monitored in any effective way, some centralization of purchase order review will have to be imposed, preferably in the field. This review point will, in all probability, become the administrative focal point for the program.

Fourth, the recipients must develop a meaningful selection system. This is greatly facilitated by insisting they pay a significant fraction of the cost of all acquisitions--even if the fraction is in local currency. This practice also fosters self-respect and self-discipline, which are essential to the success of the program.

Fifth, the program should be used to institute or accelerate change in traditional societies and antiquated administrative systems. Some of the potential of the subsidy as a lever is illustrated by the experience of the NAS Science Book Program. This is not an exhaustive list and could be expanded with a bit of imagination.

1) In libraries of institutions of higher education this program has been used for:

- a) the institution of open-shelf library policy,
- b) the development of union card catalogs,
- c) the institution of Library of Congress or other standard cataloging systems,
- d) training of local librarians, bookbinders, etc. by Peace Corps volunteers,
- e) the creation of inter-library loan systems,
- f) the institution of long-term faculty and student check-out privileges,
- g) erosion of the concept of the book as a piece of state property.

2) Among the leaders of recipient institutions it has been instrumental in encouraging:

- a) the creation of inter-institution library and book committees for policy-making and administrative purposes,
- b) the establishment of standards and common practices among the recipient institutions of a country,
- c) steps to provide a focal point (in a book committee) for national legislation or policy with respect to libraries and librarianship training.

3) Scientific and technical documentation centers are a "growth industry" in developing countries and have great potential for contributing to the processes of economic development, educational reform, and intellectual integration. The Science Book Program has been used in several countries to enhance the prestige, the resources, and the service capacity of fledgling documentation centers.

4) Finally, this program has been a modest instrument of educational change and reform among institutions of higher education and a way to gain a voice for these institutions in councils of educational policy formulation.

Among U.S. agencies such a program can be directly linked to development goals while capitalizing on the ubiquitous and politically neutral character of our technical books and their great appeal all over the world. The provision of funds to set up specific library resources, whether it be for a department in a university, a specific program in an institute, or a general program of assistance to a group of institutions, provides an opportunity to set the stage for change and to reward excellence.

Finally, it is essential to a subsidy program that those in control of it be interested in the program. This relates directly to the magnitude of the program in relation to other donor activities and in relation to the interests of the recipients. Without putting too fine a point on it, a penny-ante game attracts penny-ante players.

There is much to be said for the subsidized book-purchase program as a device to assist in institution building, the use of English as a second language, the development of library competence, the expansion of intellectual resources among the professional elite, and the compression of the time lag in the dissemination of knowledge.

An appendix to this report provides an analysis of the basis for these conclusions in a question-and-answer form, which synthesizes the experience gained over the five years of Science Book Program operation and observations made during an extensive evaluation trip in February and March 1968.

OPERATIONAL REVIEW

The operational problems with which this program has been faced since its inception have been largely the result of the novelty of the program and have been related chiefly to the performance of the book supplier.

The Acme Code Company, AID's preferred contractor, has manifested a high degree of honesty, but has not consistently met the performance standards asked of it. There appears to be no way to enforce those standards. AID regulations about the use of U.S. ships for sea freight, labeling books with an AID sticker pasted in the cover, and Acme's spotty performance in meeting order deadlines have resulted in excessively slow delivery of books to recipients--sometimes as much as a year from time of order to receipt.

This time problem has been partially solved by using parcel post and APO where available, but Acme has rarely been able to deliver books in less than three or four months under the best of circumstances.

A second problem has been Academy-field communications. Aside from my periodic trips to visit with recipient institutions and discuss the program with AID mission officers, there has been a general weakness of communications from the Academy to the field and vice versa.

The institution of a single title order form was the Academy's answer to a pressing problem of order bookkeeping both in the United States and in the field.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

1) Eliminate the use of the AID sticker in the front cover of the book. Stickers cannot be placed in journals in any event and seem to have little use in the books except for identification in follow-up and assessment review. If AID insists upon the sticker, it should be applied in the field rather than by the supplier in the United States. It will be cheaper to have it done in the field with local labor and it will be possible to institute drop shipments and reduce the cost and time of handling by the supplier.

2) As a corollary to the above, it is strongly recommended that the contractor be permitted by AID to use whatever supplier seems most qualified and least expensive--including direct orders to publishers--and that serious consideration be given to the development of an entirely new supply system utilizing standard commercial arrangements rather than complicated and difficult AID contracts, which are not designed for single-copy orders.

3) The contractor should be involved in the managerial or technical aspects of publishing, librarianship, bookselling, distribution, documentation, science and technical information programs, and education in order to justify his employment by AID. The Academy undertook this program as an experiment and has continued it for several years beyond the original experimental period as an accommodation to AID. At present we are only modestly involved in a fraction of these other areas and have not been asked by AID to provide any expertise to supplement the straight book-purchase activity. The clerical and operational aspects of the book-purchase activity could be carried on by AID employees as well as by Academy staff and presumably this would apply to any other contractor. The validity of transferring this program to Franklin Book Programs is by virtue of that institution's capability to become involved in all the complementary projects clustered about a subsidized book-purchase program.

4) As a result of experience with the Science Book Program, it appears to me the AID field follow-up on the use and disposition of books has suffered from the constant turnover of AID personnel. This is a somewhat delicate matter because, by definition, the recipient who has paid something for the book should have a substantial say in its disposition and should not be held to a strict accountability, particularly as conditions and situations change over time. Neither should AID mission officers feel obligated to make minute investigations of recipient institutions or onerous demands on their systems in order to accommodate a standardized set of criteria or rules. In the long run, it appears sufficient for the AID mission to have reasonable assurances from people in the recipient institutions that the program is meeting agreed-upon goals and that they

are welcome to and do make spot checks when and if circumstances permit. Perhaps every two years, as new AID officers assume responsibility for the program in any given post, it will be well to spend a day or so reviewing activity in the recipient institutions.

A general statistical summary of the National Academy of Sciences - Agency for International Development Science Book Program follows.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES - AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCIENCE BOOK PROGRAM
 Report of Expenditures Inception (June 23, 1963) through April 30, 1968

Participants	FUNDING				EXPENDITURES				% of Book Quota
	TCR	Mission	Country	Total Funding	TCR	Mission	Country	Total Expenditures	
Brazil	\$ 42,900	\$ 20,900	\$ -0-	\$ 63,800	\$ 42,900	\$ 18,800	\$ -0-	\$ 61,700	97
Indonesia	27,300	60,000	-0-	87,300	27,300	50,050	-0-	77,350	87
Korea	30,800	40,000	18,900	89,700	30,800	13,500	18,900	63,200	70
Ethiopia	15,040	-0-	3,060	18,100	16,000	-0-	-0-	16,000	94
UAR	22,400	-0-(b)	-0-	22,400	15,000	-0-	-0-	15,000	67
Turkey	27,300	15,000(a) 20,000	-0-	62,300	27,300	15,000 9,500	-0-	51,800	83
Iran	19,500	15,000(a)	550	35,050	19,500	13,000	-0-	32,500	93
Pakistan	-0-	40,000(a)	-0-	40,000	-0-	27,000	-0-	27,000	68
Costa Rica	7,800	-0-	1,390	9,190	5,000	-0-	-0-	5,000	54
Guatemala	13,720	-0-	3,950	17,670	14,000	-0-	100	14,100	80
Honduras	6,240	-0-	1,230	7,470	5,380	-0-	-0-	5,380	72
Nicaragua	7,240	6,000	2,920	16,160	7,240	6,000	1,900	15,140	94
Thailand	-0-	100,000	100,000	200,000	-0-	12,500	12,500	25,000	13
Ghana	<u>-0-</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>16,000</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>16,000</u>	100
	<u>\$220,240</u>	<u>\$324,900</u>	<u>\$140,000</u>	<u>\$685,140</u>	<u>\$210,420</u>	<u>\$173,350</u>	<u>\$41,400</u>	<u>\$425,170</u>	

(a) CENTO Funding

(b) \$20,000 provided by mission to support continuation - program cancelled June 1967

Notes: 1) The above figure of \$425,170 includes \$6,700 worth of scientific and technical journals and represents the cost of sending approximately 45,000 U.S. books overseas. 2) Some previous reports provided statistical resumes in retail dollar value of books ordered. This report provides actual dollar expenditures incurred to send books to recipient institutions, i.e., the discounted cost of the book, plus handling and packing by Acme Code Company, and overseas shipping costs. The above figures do not reflect the Academy's administrative costs or bibliographic aids provided recipients which amounted to \$66,590 over the 5-year period of the program.

APPENDIX

1968 FIELD ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES - AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCIENCE BOOK PROGRAM

In preparation of this final report, I traveled to Ghana, Ethiopia, Turkey, Iran, Thailand, Indonesia, and Korea, asking a standard set of questions. These questions and the synthesis of the answers received are set forth below. It will be evident that these questions and answers were pertinent to the preparation of the guidelines provided in the report of which this is an appendix.

Questions for the Mission:

- Q. - Is the program of sufficient size to warrant the expenditures of the staff time needed to start it and maintain it?

- A. - Tentative or tiny programs in big and busy missions tend to be swallowed or ignored. Because this is a highly personalized and selective program, it is neither efficient nor effective to operate outside the scale normally used in the mission except perhaps when there is a fully qualified and long-term local employee in whom the mission has full faith. Then it may be possible to put the program in his hands with but nominal supervision. This program suffered badly at the outset from the application of simple mathematical division of the available funds among highly differentiated countries. In those countries where the budget is substantial the missions have consistently provided well-qualified and interested supervision.

- Q. - Is there any local reaction (positive or negative) that makes the program particularly visible or that leads to the conclusion it is a worthwhile enterprise?

- A. - Local reaction has been uniformly positive among librarians, scholars, university administrators, and allied specialists. It is not particularly visible to others. Its "image" seems to be directly related to effectiveness in acquiring books for people who need them, i.e., it is not as well understood or as highly regarded if there are several levels of administrative apparatus between the people needing books and the actual source of books.

- Q. - Do mission staff people understand and value the program?

- A. - This is a moot point. All trips and correspondence suggest the answer is yes, but the answer to the question below may be more revealing.

- Q. - If the mission values the program, does it request funds to carry the program on in the next fiscal year? Are there suggestions for improvement either in operations or in the content of the program?

- A. - When missions designate funds for the extension of the program, there appears to be a direct correlation between the size of the program and its priority. The larger the program the higher the priority in the mission scheme of things. The bulk of the suggestions for improvement come from the recipient institutions, as one might expect, rather than from the AID missions.
- Q. - How does the mission evaluate the operational aspects of the program? Is there mission follow-up with respect to the use of the books and journals, and what are the results of such post-audits? Is there evidence of any failure by recipients to live up to either the spirit or the letter of agreement?
- A. - Mission follow-up tends to be casual and sporadic; however, this is preferable, in my estimation, to rigid policing and enforcement practices. The program has extended well beyond the tours of most of the people who have been associated with it. Thus, normally the local AID mission staff members and the local recipient institution administrators know considerably more about what is really happening with the program than the AID man who happens to have this as collateral duty. This, I hasten to add, is not said or meant in a perjorative sense. Any other long-term project has similar characteristics, particularly if it is a low-visibility and low-priority operation. Happily, virtually all the recipients seem to want genuinely to live up to both the spirit and the letter of the agreements.

Questions for the Recipients:

- Q. - Are the books getting to the users?
- A. - While the program has not been as useful as originally predicted in getting needed U.S. technical reference books into the hands of people actually doing research, it has been effectively used in virtually all recipient countries to supplement the foreign-exchange budgets of important libraries, many of which are desperately in need of U.S. reference books for teaching faculty members and graduate students. The one exception was in Iran in the early phases of the program, when neither Iranians nor AID mission officers followed up on the receipt of books. There is now no way to evaluate this early endeavor except by obvious inference.
- Q. - What is the operational experience with the order procedure, the receipt of books, the payment in local currency or dollars, and the use of the local currency funds accumulated?
- A. - This varies greatly from country to country but is consistent in that each has worked out a modus vivendi that has stood the test of time. One serious problem has arisen around the accumulation of local currencies. Unfortunately most of the countries in which this has been the preferred method of payment have made

no provision for the use of those accumulated currencies. As a consequence, in those countries where the program is phasing out there exists a bank account of local currency for which there is no particular use. Clearly people will discover uses, but it would have been better if the AID and local committee members had planned for this in advance.

- Q. - What suggestions do recipients have to improve the program?
- A. - Most of the recipient suggestions for operational improvement have been accepted and acted upon; i.e., the single-title order form, shipping by parcel post and APO rather than sea freight, a number of improvements in the bookkeeping of orders and notification procedures for the recipients. Suggestions from recipients about the substantive aspects of the program were to include journals and the disciplines of education, business and public administration, and linguistics. Recipients have also requested that the program include audio-visual aids and allied new media material. (This request was forwarded to AID by the NAS in September 1967 and has just, March 30, 1968, been acted upon.)

Basic Questions:

- Q. - Is a subsidized book-purchase program a sensible way to meet highly selective needs in institutions of higher learning and research institutes?
- A. - Despite the use of the Science Book Program for other than this one basic purpose I believe the answer is an unqualified "yes." There are, however, several alternative ways the same goal could be approached, ranging from direct gifts to the provision of book credits with publishers or wholesalers, that might work equally well. The great advantage of this program seems to me to be in the leverage it has given AID mission officers to institute educational reforms, strengthen various institutions, and gain entry to organizations with which they might not otherwise have reason for extensive contact.
- Q. - Is there a logical or natural cut-off point for subsidy operation?
- A. - The logical cut-off observed in the functioning of this program is when the local recipients have enough foreign currency (no matter what the source--foundation grant, AID loan, institutional affluence) to take care of their acquisition needs in relation to their capacity to absorb new materials. (In other words, while no librarian is ever satisfied, the library normally can only acquire so much at a time, the limits being its capacity to catalog and shelve.)

Q. - Are journals appropriately included in this program?

A. - Yes, although it appears they are not as extensively purchased under the program as we thought they would be. There seems to be a very sensible approach among librarians that this indefinite-duration program should be used to purchase those books they could not otherwise acquire and to use whatever regular foreign-currency budget they have and can reasonably expect to continue to get from their administration for the purchase of journal subscriptions. On occasion, however, some of the librarians are subscribing to journals through this program and leveraging those subscriptions into permanent augmentations of their foreign-currency budgets.

Q. - Are recipients anxious to handle the subsidy directly through their own order procedures rather than using the NAS and Acme as intermediaries?

A. - While most of the librarians and administrators are too polite to look this gift horse in the mouth, upon gentle questioning they admit they would like some arrangement that bypasses all the middle men. This is largely because Acme has been so slow in shipping orders. Most recipients also see some advantage in having a tie to the National Academy of Sciences for prestige purposes tenuous and non-negotiable as that may be.