

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT DATA SHEET

1. TRANSACTION CODE
 A = Add
 C = Change
 D = Delete

Amendment Number 1

DOCUMENT CODL 3

COUNTRY/ENTITY
 Republic of Zaire

BUREAU/OFFICE
 AFR

3. PROJECT NUMBER
660-0079

5. PROJECT TITLE (maximum 40 characters)
Area Nutrition Improvement

PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION DATE (PACD)
 MM DD YY
09 30 87

7. ESTIMATED DATE OF OBLIGATION
 (Under "B" below, enter 1, 2, 3, or 4)
 A. Initial FY 82 B. Quarter 4 C. Final FY 84

8. COSTS (\$000 OR EQUIVALENT \$) =

A. FUNDING SOURCE	FIRST FY			LIFE OF PROJECT		
	B. FX	C. L/C	D. Total	E. FX	F. L/C	G. Total
AID Appropriated Total						
(Grant)	(1,014)	()	(1,014)	(4,300)	()	(4,300)
(Loan)	()	()	()	()	()	()
Host Country		382.7	382.7		1,913.5	1,913.5
Other Donor(s)						
TOTALS	1,014	382.7	1,396.7	4,300	1,913.5	6,213.5

9. SCHEDULE OF AID FUNDING (\$000)

APPROPRIATION	B. PRIMARY PURPOSE CODE	C. PRIMARY TECH. CODE		D. OBLIGATIONS TO DATE		E. AMOUNT APPROVED THIS ACTION		F. LIFE OF PROJECT	
		1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan
		1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan
FN	300	340		4,300				4,300	
TOTALS				4,300				4,300	

SECONDARY TECHNICAL CODES (maximum 6 codes of 3 positions each)
 350 390

11. SECONDARY PURPOSE COD.
 392

SPECIAL CONCERNS CODES (maximum 7 codes of 4 positions each)
 A. Code NUTR
 B. Amount

PROJECT PURPOSE (maximum 480 characters):
 The purpose of this project is to demonstrate cost-effective nutrition interventions capable of reducing by 10% the levels of acute malnutrition among children less than five years old in the Bandundu region of Zaire by the end of FY 1987 (PACD, five-year LOP).

SCHEDULED EVALUATIONS

Interim MM YY MM YY Final MM YY
09 84 09 87

15. SOURCE/ORIGIN OF GOODS AND SERVICES
 000 941 Local Other (Specify)

AMENDMENTS/NATURE OF CHANGE PROPOSED (This is page 1 of a _____ page PP Amendment.)
 The purpose of this project is to: 1) demonstrate cost-effective interventions, and a method for conducting them, capable of reducing by 25% the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children five years of age and under in Bandundu by the end of FY 1987; and 2) build the institutional capabilities of CEPLANUT.

Other changes proposed are described in the body of this document.

7. APPROVED BY
 Signature: [Signature]
 Title: Director, USAID/Zaire
 Date Signed: MM DD YY
15 16 87

14. DATE DOCUMENT RECEIVED IN AID/W, OR FOR AID/W DOCUMENTS, DATE OF DISTRIBUTION
 MM DD YY



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Agency for International Development
Kinshasa



ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

DATE: May 14, 1985

FROM: Carol Payne, PHO

SUBJECT: Project Paper Supplement, Area Nutrition Improvement Project.
660-0079

An interim evaluation of the Area Nutrition Improvement Project, 660-0079, designed in 1982, was recently completed. Project 660-0079 should be modified to reflect the recommendations of the evaluation team.

The recommendations of the evaluation team are contained in the attached Project Paper Supplement. The Project Data sheet has been revised to reflect evaluator recommendations. PHO requests your approval to amend the Project Paper by adding the Supplement and revised Project Data Sheet.

APPROVED: 

Richard L. Podol
Director

PROJECT PAPER SUPPLEMENT
AREA NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT, 660-0079

Very high rates of acute and chronic malnutrition among rural Zairians are inhibiting improved agricultural productivity, contributing to learning difficulties in children, and depressing the overall quality of life. The Area Nutrition Improvement Project (660-0079) is designed to fund micro-level nutritional interventions within the Bandundu Region of Zaire through a council of religious and non-religious private institutions operating in the region. The project is also designed to strengthen the capacity of the National Nutrition Planning Center (CEPLANUT) to monitor the nutritional situation in Zaire. It will provide long-term assistance to CEPLANUT to develop its capacity to plan and implement effective nutritional strategies and interventions throughout Zaire. Finally, it will adapt or create training and educational materials that are effective and relevant to the Zairian situation. The purpose of this project is to demonstrate cost-effective nutrition interventions capable of reducing by 10% the levels of acute malnutrition among children less than five years old in the Bandundu region of Zaire by the end of FY 1987 (PACD, five-year LOP).

An interim evaluation of Project 660-0079 was held in November, 1984. Major findings of the interim evaluation team include the following:

1. The purpose of 079 is very ambitious. First, the difficulty of travel in Bandundu, given its size, would make it difficult to implement project activities throughout the region in five years. Second, due to ethnic, agro-climatic, and rural infrastructural diversity, the causes of malnutrition are site-specific, discouraging uniform regional approaches to the problem. Third, addressing the problem of acute malnutrition requires targeting the poorest subpopulation in each Bandundu village. The project does not have the resources for addressing acute malnutrition on a village basis for the entire region.
2. The Food and Nutrition Council of Bandundu (CRANB), organized by Project 079 staff, has already demonstrated success in channeling resources to micro-level interventions which increase food production. In only a year of existence the CRANB has become a viable working group and has funded ten sub-projects in Bandundu. However, the methodology of CRANB procedures is not closely linked to nutritional impact. Stronger ties between the CRANB, nutrition education, and data-gathering components of the project could significantly accelerate positive outcomes.
3. The project is not notably strengthening the institutional capacity of the National Nutrition Planning Center (CEPLANUT) in Kinshasa, in contrast with institution-building through the field activities .
4. At present there is no stated strategy for CEPLANUT activities nor is there a plan for staff development and training.

5. Nutritional surveillance work has evolved into widescale data collection on variables ranging from market prices to monthly rainfall. The relationship between project data collection and attainment of the project purpose is tenuous.
6. Nutrition education activities were included in the project design without a prior determination that lack of knowledge is a significant factor accounting for malnutrition in the Bandundu region.

Based on these findings, the evaluators recommended, and USAID/Kinshasa and CEPLANUT concur, that the following actions will be taken:

Staff roles and responsibilities will be realigned to foster institution-building and improve Zairian-American working relations. In accordance with a revised implementation plan and revised scopes of work for expatriate staff, agreed to by USAID and CEPLANUT, Zairians should direct project activities with the advice, support, and -- in the case of fiscal as well as technical and administrative matters -- joint signature of the American counterparts. Project funds will be used to assist CEPLANUT/Kinshasa to examine its mandate and more narrowly define its own role. CEPLANUT should critically examine its projected resources and staff levels and formulate its institutional priorities and objectives.

The project purpose will be redefined to make it more likely of attainment and to promote project focus. The new purpose will have two parts: (1) to demonstrate cost-effective interventions and a method for conducting them capable of reducing by 25% the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children five years of age and under in Bandundu by the end of FY 1987; and (2) to build the institutional capabilities of CEPLANUT.

In the first element, the word "level" has been changed to "prevalence" to make it clear that the aim is to reduce the current percentage of malnourished children by 25% by the end of FY 1987. For example, in a project area where the prevalence of acute malnutrition is 20%, the project will reduce this level by (.25) (.20), or a total of 5%. Post-project prevalence of malnutrition should therefore be 15% (20% minus 5%).

To achieve the original project purpose, as defined in the PP, a region-wide reduction in the prevalence of malnutrition would have to occur by September 1987. The evaluators regarded this goal as quite unrealistic. On the other hand, to demonstrate replicable, small-scale interventions, capable of reducing malnutrition is an attainable goal. The evaluators stated that if activities were focused, and interventions were more stringently designed and monitored, a 25% reduction in the prevalence of malnutrition at intervention sites is not unreasonable. Based on this revision, impact will be measured with before/after surveys at intervention sites only. Data from individual intervention sites will then be used to identify least-cost approaches to solving the problem of malnutrition.

The second element of the revised purpose will strengthen CEPLANUT's capability to:

- a) set up the framework for a national nutritional surveillance system based on health zone age-for-weight measurements of children five years of age and under;
- b) set up and service an office which will organize Regional Food and Nutrition Councils capable of seeking other outside financing for nutrition interventions after the close of the project;
- c) develop nutrition education curricula for primary schools for diffusion within the national education curriculum; and
- d) establish standardized procedures for growth monitoring and a curriculum for primary health care personnel within the national health zones, to be incorporated into in-service and institutional training.

Project implementors will discontinue activities in surveillance that exceed, both structurally and technically, the institutional capacity of CEPLANUT. The Nutritional Surveillance System (NSS) initiated by the project consists of setting up "surveillance posts" in at least every health zone in Bandundu region to collect data on: local market prices of maize, manioc, beans, rice, peanuts, kerosene, sugar, sardines and beer; rainfall; movement of produce from the region; prevalence of birthweights less than 2500gm; arm circumference-for-height (QUAC stick) measurements of primary school children; and percentage of preschool children in Under-5 clinics with weight-for-age below the "M" line on the official Zairian growth chart. These data are collected by volunteers, teachers, and clinic staff, and reported monthly to CEPLANUT/Kikwit.

Although a system to collect this wide range of surveillance information is currently being implemented, no one has defined the pertinent questions to be answered by the data. Nor has it been determined exactly which decisions, taken by whom, will be influenced by the information produced. For this reason, it is impossible to determine which indicators might prove most useful, how precisely to measure them, how frequently to report them, what type of analysis to use and how best to report the findings.

Currently, most of the effort in surveillance activities is devoted to collecting data, rather than tabulating and analyzing it. Only the first part of the original region-wide baseline survey has been analyzed, and a substantial amount of raw data describing the nutritional status of villagers in project areas funded by the CRANB still awaits preliminary sorting.

The complexity of data collection efforts threatens to undermine the successful establishment of any region-wide system. The data currently being collected includes certain parameters which require interministerial cooperation to gather, and others which exceed the non-nutritional technical competence of most nutrition institutes. Until such time as pertinent questions to be answered by a surveillance system are made explicit, the best use of available resources would be to provide answers to nutritional questions of general interest to the nation and of use to the project.

Nutritional status by area of residence would be of interest and use. The baseline survey answered the question, "Where is nutritional status of preschool children the worst?" A subsequent question could be, "How is nutritional status changing? What are the trends in the various areas?" A system could then be set up to answer these questions.

In line with this approach, the evaluators also recommended waiving the project paper requirement to establish a region-wide triple-function NSS. Instead, the team recommended establishing a system to provide basic nutritional status data for regional health system planning purposes. This same data could be used to assist the CRANB to target and monitor its interventions. To implement these recommendations, project staff will:

- a. Work through the health zones at the local and regional level to organize and graph trends in malnutrition among preschool children seen in under-five clinics. The compiled data and any further analysis should be made available by CEPLANUT to the health zones for their use.
- b. Cease collection of data on birth weights.
- c. Cease collection of QUAC stick measurements on primary school children. Cease the accompanying studies comparing QUAC stick measurements of malnutrition in primary school children to anthropometric measurements of malnutrition in pre-school children.
- d. Cease efforts to create an early warning system; stop the collection of rainfall, market-price and movement-of-produce data.
- e. Cease development of nutrition messages and programs for radio. Provide impact evaluation support to CRANB activities. Baseline and endline surveys should be performed on both the villages which are sites of interventions and control villages. (To the extent possible, control villages should be matched to project site villages by similar characteristics.) All other data collection activities should be given a low priority and only begun once the more crucial data intervention and baseline survey data have been adequately analyzed. The road survey planned for early 1985 should not be carried out.
- f. Eliminate the requirement to perform an endline survey of the entire Bandundu Region at the conclusion of the project.
- g. Analyze the remaining portions of the Baseline Survey as soon as possible.

Project implementors will focus nutrition education efforts on supporting CRANB nutrition interventions, training health personnel, and refining the primary school curriculum already drafted by the project.

Project staff will produce nutrition education materials only when the effective use of these materials is assured and when their development does not duplicate similar efforts by other groups. To achieve this objective, project staff will:

- a. Confine testing and implementation of the primary school curriculum to the Kwilu subregion.
- b. Cease development of training materials for agricultural extension agents and community health workers.
- c. Concentrate on strengthening training materials for nurses.
- d. Cease all flip chart production except that destined to complement primary school lesson plans.
- e. Cease development of nutrition messages and programs for radio.
- f. Explicitly link nutrition education efforts to CRANB interventions so as to increase project impact.
- g. Hire a field nutritionist with training and experience in agricultural extension, nutrition education, and non-formal educational methods.
- h. Work with a consultant to review the primary school curriculum and develop an evaluation methodology to measure impact.
- i. Modify the Project newsletter, Saka-Saka, to make it more useful to its audience.

Project implementors will put a priority on servicing the Regional Nutrition Council (CRANB) and altering the project budget to reflect this new priority. Discontinuation of most current surveillance activities will permit the Field Nutrition Intervention and Surveillance Coordinator to devote full-time energies to CRANB servicing and CRANB-connected data analysis. This would also permit the supervisor of the surveyors to devote more time to collecting, tabulating, and graphing data of concern to CRANB members. Because the CRANB Secretariat will need to conduct endline surveys of intervention sites in the near future, it is imperative that the data already collected be processed as soon as possible. Data analysis findings will be essential to the CRANB Secretariat as it develops a method for measuring the cost-effectiveness of individual nutrition interventions.

To achieve this end, project implementors will:

- a. Improve CRANB preliminary review procedures so that CRANB can target its interventions and can influence the design of proposed interventions in a way that will maximize their nutritional impact. Every CRANB pre-acceptance site visit team will include: (1) a sociologist or anthropologist (part-time contract), (2) nutritionist or epidemiologist, (3) a member of the CEPLANUT/Kikwit Education Bureau (to assess the potential role of nutrition education in the proposed project), (4) an agronomist, fish culture specialist, sanitation engineer, or other technical expert (part-time contract), and (5) at least one surveyor to

collect arm-circumference data (to be hand-tabulated with a calculator). Site visits to proposed projects even in distant areas of the region must be team endeavors of 2-3 days, or else the information collected will not be comparable with that available for other projects under consideration. The comparison of arm circumference data will indicate relative malnutrition levels from site to site, thereby assisting the Executive Committee to decide where projects are most needed.

b. Augment and make more comparable the information available to the CRANB Executive Committee on projects requesting assistance. In order to attain 079 goals, the CRANB needs to possess the following information on proposed projects before granting funds:

- an estimate of the prevalence of malnutrition in the subproject area;
- a qualitative analysis of the micro-level causes of malnutrition in the subproject area;
- a feasibility report assessing the capacity and capability of the submitting institution to perform the proposed work;
- a strategy for relating project benefits (often from increased agricultural production) to increased food consumption by the target group (malnourished children);
- a logical framework incorporating: phased funding; a work plan that includes commodity, training, and salary costs; intermediate objectives to be verified before financing of the final phase; and an evaluation plan that will assess success on the basis of appropriate direct and indirect indicators.

A suggested methodology for obtaining the above information follows:

- i) Members of the Executive Council receive written proposals and make initial eliminations through desk reviews.
 - ii) A carefully-structured site visit is performed, to assure that complete, adequate and comparable information is provided in the CRANB application for assistance;
 - iii) All completed site visit reports are sent to Executive Committee members at least one week before the scheduled meeting.
- c. Modify some of the administrative structures and procedures of CRANB, its Executive Committee, and its CEPLANUT Secretariat.
- i) Institute disciplinary measures for inappropriate use of CRANB funds by recipient institutions.
 - ii) Develop a streamlined proposal application process for those institutions previously awarded CRANB funds and whose activities have produced the expected results.
 - iii) Ensure that staff who act in a CEPLANUT Secretariat function (visiting and evaluating proposed projects) do not have Executive Committee functions (voting on the projects) as well.

- d) Establish ways to design and amend interventions to promote effective use of CRANB funds, leading to achievement of the 079 project purpose.
Example: Near the end of a sub-project's life it is found that soya culture technology has been successfully extended. However, to achieve enhanced food consumption a way is still needed to teach villagers methods for soya preparation and storage.

These "links" between a subproject's immediate objective (e.g. increased production of soya) and increased food consumption should be identified and addressed during initial subproject assessments. For these current sub-projects that have successfully attained immediate objectives, but which lack this final direct link to improved food consumption, the Secretariat should provide assistance to forge this link. Such assistance would include an analysis of the site-specific causes of malnutrition, a follow-on work plan to lead from increased production to increased consumption (if that is the indicated remedy), and an amendment to the original subproject to provide the additional funding or technical assistance necessary.

CEPLANUT should develop greater capability among its staff

As conceived, the Area Nutrition Improvement Project (660-0079) offers an excellent opportunity for CEPLANUT to achieve a quantum jump in its capability to do nutrition planning. In practice, however, the project is falling short of its potential as an instrument to strengthen CEPLANUT. The major reasons are:

- insufficient attention to training, and
- insufficient participation by Zairian staff in the work of the project.

To achieve the foregoing objective, the evaluators recommend that:

- a. More emphasis should be given to conducting short, intensive courses of one to four weeks duration at CEPLANUT/Kinshasa and CEPLANUT/Kikwit. Once CEPLANUT has developed a feasible action plan and staffing pattern, a training plan complementing the action plan and revised staffing pattern should be developed. In-service training should encompass both technical and managerial subject areas.
- b. The number of long-term trainees at CEPLANUT/Kinshasa should be doubled, if justified based on discussion regarding CEPLANUT's long-term role. Operating under a relay mechanism, a new group should be slated to depart three to six months following the return of the first group. This would not only produce several additional highly-trained personnel; it would also make CEPLANUT less vulnerable should events lead to the loss of one or two of the newly-trained people.

CEPLANUT should increase staff participation in the work of the current project

One of the best ways to develop skills is to work alongside others who have had training and prior experience in these skills. Development of skills will not occur by merely observing the work of others; it requires participation in

the thought processes that lead to the selection of various activities and in the carrying out of the activities selected (assessing ongoing activities and making adjustments as needed are another part of this process). People learn by doing. To achieve this objective, the following actions should occur:

- a. The agreement between USAID/Kinshasa and the Senior Project Advisor should be modified and a directive issued to make clear to all parties that ultimate responsibility for project implementation rests with the Director of CEPLANUT;
- b. A de facto change in the relative responsibilities of the Senior Project Advisor, his counterparts and the CEPLANUT Director should also occur; and
- c. The roles of the Senior Project Advisor in Kinshasa and the technical advisors in Kikwit should be revised to ensure that they provide assistance to CEPLANUT and work under its supervision to carry out the project activities approved by CEPLANUT and USAID.

CEPLANUT and USAID/Kinshasa should take steps immediately to re-align administrative responsibilities

Re-aligning the roles of CEPLANUT and its expatriate advisors need not affect the close monitoring of budget disbursements. The Price-Waterhouse audit report underscores the need for continued close monitoring of disbursements and improved skills in budgeting, accounting and bookkeeping. The present arrangement requires agreement by both CEPLANUT and the responsible technical advisor before any expenditure can be made. The evaluators maintain that the sound financial practice of duplicate signatures should be continued. Yet they recommend these alterations take place:

- a. The procedure should be that CEPLANUT initiates funding proposals and the Senior Project Advisor is asked to concur. The Senior Project Advisor may suggest how funds should be used in his role as an advisor, but CEPLANUT should ultimately initiate all funding requests and solicit the advisor's concurrence.
- b. USAID/Kinshasa should make it clear to all concerned that the Senior Project Advisor is acting on the U.S. Government's behalf and following USAID guidelines in deciding whether or not to concur in disbursements. These guidelines should be made available to CEPLANUT. In the event that CEPLANUT and the Senior Project Advisor are unable to agree on a funding decision, it should be submitted to USAID/Kinshasa for final determination.
- c. The project design, as revised, should make the 079 project an integral component of CEPLANUT's program. Increasing CEPLANUT staff's access to information regarding the project and expanding opportunities for their participation in support capacities would improve morale and assist the Kinshasa staff in understanding the dynamics of regional coordination.
- d. These proposed re-alignments of project responsibilities should be accompanied by clear job descriptions, for both American and Zairian staff, that explicitly distribute responsibilities.

- e. Problems detected by the Price-Watnerhouse audit should be corrected. Many of these errors, such as the failure of the administration to impose state taxes on certain salaries, are negatively affecting morale of CEPLANUT staff.

CEPLANUT should resolve other administrative issues

Currently, information does not flow satisfactorily between Kikwit, CEPLANUT/Kinshasa and USAID. In Kinshasa, information from Kikwit is not shared with all CEPLANUT staff members. Requests made by the CEPLANUT Office in Kikwit are not "processed" quickly enough by CEPLANUT/Kinshasa. The CEPLANUT office in Kikwit sometimes receives contradictory commands which are not countersigned from different staff members in Kinshasa. Furthermore, there is a very sharp separation between CEPLANUT and O79 project administration, which undermines morale and good collaborative relationships between CEPLANUT's non-project and project staff. The responses to the evaluator's questionnaire contained repeated references to this communication problem.

To address these problems, the evaluators offer the following recommendations:

- a. More effective lines of communication need to be developed to inform CEPLANUT's Comité de Gestion and the USAID Project Officer of project activities prior to or as they occur.
- b. All directives or requests sent to the Kikwit office should be in writing and countersigned.