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1976/77 Annual Report*

LEAGUE FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD EDUCATION

Covering the Year
February 1, 1976 - January 31, 1977

OBJECTIVE

The League is formed to coordinate and direct the efforts of the cooperating professional organizations towards the solution of the world food problem.....The areas of the League's interest are food, including food production, formulation, processing, packaging, marketing, distribution and storage, and nutrition in its broad sense including, in addition to the above, public health and clinical aspects, education, and the use of mass communications.

---By-laws of the League for International Food
Education

PROGRAM

L.I.F.E. seeks to accomplish its objective through a multi-faceted program that draws upon the resources of its constituent consortium of scientific and technical societies. Principal program components as identified in AID Contract TA-C-1071 are:

1. Collaboration with private voluntary organizations to provide technical support for their efforts to solve the food and nutrition problems of the poorest majority.
2. Involvement of individual members of the consortium societies in responding to requests for technical information and assistance from the international development assistance community, and as members of standing committees that work on special food and nutrition problems of significance throughout the developing world.
3. Publication of a monthly newsletter, reference lists, proceedings of conferences, and special reports, all relating to food and nutrition in international development.
4. Maintenance of information files consisting of replies to inquiries received; worldwide data on commercial, institutional and developmental food products; and a specialized library on food and nutrition in international development.

*As required in Article I, C. Reports, AID/ta-C-1071

EVALUATION

The worldwide distribution of L.I.F.E.'s communication network involves clients working on all levels of nutrition development, from national research institutes to small/village level technology....L.I.F.E. has been credited with providing significant assistance in solving malnutrition problems....In DA's judgement, the benefits derived by AID....are more than commensurate with the resources invested.

---Evaluation of AID's Scientific and Technical Support Project, Development Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C.,
Nov. 30, 1976

1976/77 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

1. Collaboration with Private Voluntary Organizations

To increase the linkages between private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and the American Society of Agronomy, and to provide technical information in support of the interest of PVOs in family food production, L.I.F.E. organized and implemented a Workshop on Small Scale Intensive Food Production in Santa Barbara, California, October 24-27, 1976. In addition to members of the American Society of Agronomy and representatives of a dozen PVOs, participants included practitioners of the French Intensive/Biodynamic method of intensive gardening.

The workshop established that this low resource approach to food production, utilizing plots of land normally considered too small to be classed as small farms, is based upon sound scientific principles. All three groups of participants agreed that the approach should be tested, particularly in tropical climates, to determine its potential for improving the nutritional and economic status of the most impoverished families.

The L.I.F.E. Newsletter was utilized frequently during 1976/77 to disseminate more widely information about projects and activities of the private voluntary organizations. The twelve issues contained ten separate items supplied by six different PVOs. The American Institute of Nutrition and the American Society of Agronomy assisted International Voluntary Services in efforts to recruit volunteers for projects in developing countries.

Drawing upon its roster of experts (members of the consortium societies who have volunteered their services), L.I.F.E. responded to 32 requests for technical information and assistance from 18 different PVOs during the year. To bring the resources of L.I.F.E. to the attention of more PVOs, and to seek new means for collaboration, the Executive Director of L.I.F.E. visited the offices of fifteen individual agencies, as well as the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service and Private Agencies Collaborating Together.

2. Involvement of Consortium Society Members

A total of 123 requests for technical information and assistance were received. Responses from L.I.F.E. varied from a prompt and complete answer based upon information previously received from members of the consortium societies, to the initiation of continuing exchange of correspondence between the requestor and a L.I.F.E. "expert" (consortium society member). A list of the 45 impact countries and a breakdown of sources of request by type of organization is shown in Attachment 1.

A number of standing committees of the consortium societies were active during the year. The World Food Program Committee of the Institute of Food Technologists continued to monitor the progress of IFT/L.I.F.E./AID Project on Food Technology in Latin America. Members of the AIChE AID/L.I.F.E. committee were active in American Institute of Chemical Engineers' project on conversion of Food Waste to Food or Feed.

The Committee on International Nutrition (COIN) of the American Association of Cereal Chemists submitted a project proposal to the Office of Nutrition of AID to develop a Methodology for the Assessment of Post-Harvest Grain Losses. The proposal was accepted, the project was funded by a grant to L.I.F.E., and work began in July. In addition, the COIN committee continued its work on a monograph on Concentrated Wheat Protein.

The L.I.F.E. Committee of the Agriculture and Food Chemistry Division of the American Chemical Society met several times to develop a proposal for a project to identify the key sources of variation in the methods being used for the biological evaluation of protein quality. The ASA/L.I.F.E. committee of the American Society of Agronomy participated in the L.I.F.E. Workshop on Small Scale Intensive Food Production, and subsequently met to submit to the Executive Committee of the ASA its recommendations for increased member involvement in this activity.

To update its roster of consortium society member experts, L.I.F.E. conducted a survey of approximately 700 persons who had volunteered their expertise at one time or another over the first eight years of L.I.F.E.'s existence. The information sought pertained to current interests, professional affiliation, language capability, and availability for short term overseas assignments. At the close of the year, the returns from the questionnaire were continuing to be received.

3. Publications and Conferences

In September, L.I.F.E. convened the Second Workshop on Improving the Nutrient Quality of Cereals for the Offices of Nutrition and Agriculture of AID. Approximately fifty crop scientists, plant breeders and geneticists, and food technologists were brought together in Boulder, Colorado, to review the progress since the first such workshop in 1970, examine issues that had been receiving increasing attention, and consider whether major changes in research direction should be recommended. The 330-page proceedings of the workshop was being prepared for publication at the end of the year. The proceedings of the L.I.F.E. Workshop on Small Scale Intensive Food Production (described above) will also be published early in the 1977/78 year.

Efforts continued during 1976/77 to utilize the monthly Newsletter to disseminate information on the development activities of the Office of Nutrition of AID and of the private voluntary organizations. The October issue focussed on the AID-sponsored Workshop on Improving the Nutritional Quality of Cereals by Breeding and Fortification, and the December issue initiated a series based on the Circular Airgrams that the Office of Nutrition of AID is sending to the USAID missions. The subject material of the private voluntary agency reports included Vitamin A and Blindness, Rural Development in Papua New Guinea, Village Level Technology for Textured Vegetable Protein and for Solar Drying of Vegetables, a Supplemental Food Project in Sri Lanka, and a Beekeeping Project in the Dominican Republic.

The continued requests for and dissemination of L.I.F.E. Reference Lists and Special Reports provide evidence that this aspect of the L.I.F.E. publications program is still of value to persons working in developing countries on problems of hunger and malnutrition.

4. Maintenance of Information Files

The maintenance of the L.I.F.E. Information Files is a continuing operation designed to assist in responding to requests for technical information and to provide an information resource on food and nutrition in international development. Information on commercial, institutional, and developmental food products is added as it is obtained. To improve the efficiency of retrieving information from the files the task of developing a thesaurus of subject terms was undertaken.

EVALUATION OF L.I.F.E.'S SERVICES

To determine what benefits L.I.F.E. contributes to the AID nutrition program and whether such benefits are commensurate with the AID resources committed, AID entered in contract with Development Associates, Inc. to evaluate the utilization of the technical field services provided by L.I.F.E. The results of the evaluation are in a report by Development Associates to AID, dated November 30, 1976.

The evaluation consisted of two parts. One, a mail survey of L.I.F.E.'s clients identified through its mailing list and technical assistance log; and two, a field visit to four less developed countries to interview former and present users of L.I.F.E.'s services. The following paragraphs taken from the executive summary of the report give the basis for the conclusion that the benefits derived by AID are more than commensurate with the resources invested.

The utilization of the technical assistance provided by L.I.F.E. has had a substantial "impact" on the development of projects to solve malnutrition problems and has covered a broad range of topics and issues in international nutrition programs. Generally, L.I.F.E. was viewed by those who received direct technical assistance and by those who were on the L.I.F.E. Newsletter mailing list as an important source of technical information and assistance. Many of the persons who were the subjects of this study were government scientists working on national projects to combat malnutrition in the country. The L.I.F.E. Newsletter was considered to be one of the few sources of information on the latest developments in food technology. Evidence from the field visits indicates the Newsletter is circulated widely in the nutrition community.

L.I.F.E. has directly assisted in the research and development of specific projects to solve the problems of malnutrition in LDCs. Some of these projects were national efforts by LDCs to develop high protein, low cost foods for the malnourished population. Other projects were directly related to malnutrition problems in that technical assistance was provided to projects in commercial research to enrich cereals and grains in various products, while other technical assistance was provided to persons involved in nutrition education at the village level.

Despite the significant influence which L.I.F.E. is exerting on solving problems of malnutrition and food technology for various clients in LDCs and in the international nutrition community, there is evidence of a much greater potential in assisting LDCs to resolve their problems in nutritional development. While comments from the questionnaire respondents and field interviewees indicated that L.I.F.E. is a valuable source of technical assistance information, many clients felt that L.I.F.E. could have a more significant impact on malnutrition in LDCs if there were more direct contact with appropriate persons in the LDCs. Some of the more common opinions on how L.I.F.E. could realize its potential were that L.I.F.E. should visit LDCs which have severe food problems in order to gain first-hand knowledge of what the problems are and what specific programs and/or projects are in need of assistance.....A significant number of respondents wished to see L.I.F.E. continued and to expand its services.

Hugh J. Roberts, Ph.D.
Executive Director

April 11, 1977

"PROJECT" REQUESTS BY COUNTRY AND SOURCE 1976/77

TOTALS	IMPACT COUNTRY	Category Unknown	REQUESTING ORGANIZATION										International Organization (e.g. UN)	
			United States						Another Nation					
			AID	Peace Corps	Other Gov't	PVO	Univ	Pvt Ind	Gov't	PVO	Univ	Pvt Ind		
2	Argentina													2
4	Bangladesh				4									
1	Belize													1
1	Bolivia	1												
2	Brazil									1	1			
1	Cameroon													1
4	Caribbean Region													4
3	Chile							1		2				
4	Colombia				2		1							1
1	Dominica	1												
1	Ecuador									1				
7	El Salvador			1				1						5
1	Ethiopia				1									
4	Ghana			2	2									
1	Grenada							1						
1	Guatemala			1										
5	Honduras				2								3	
6	India				2		1						3	
3	Indonesia	1			2									
1	Iraq									1				
1	Jamaica							1						
2	Liberia			2										
3	Malaysia			1				1			1			
3	Mexico							1		1				1
1	Micronesia				1									
1	Nepal							1						
3	Nicaragua			1				2						
1	Nigeria				1									
5	Pakistan		1						1		2			1
3	Papua New Guinea				3									
1	Paraguay			1										
2	Peru													2
5	Philippines		1							2	1			1
3	St. Vincent								3					
1	Sierra Leone			1										
1	Singapore													1
1	South Africa								1					
1	Spain													1
7	Sri Lanka				1			6						
2	Tanzania							1		1				
2	Thailand	1										1		
2	Tunisia						1							1
6	Turkey				1		1			2				2
1	Uruguay													1
2	Zaire				2									
10	All LDCs				1	2	2	1	1	2		1		
123	Totals	4	2	10	2	25	2	5	17	7	11	13		25