

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT ON EVALUATION

Supported in part by AID Grant

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LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines LWR monitoring and evaluation activities, highlights learnings from these activities and summarizes changes affected or anticipated as a result of these findings. Lutheran World Relief's Development Assistance Program funded in part by an AID Matching Grant (AID/SOD/PDC-G-0124) has supported 75 projects through 27 counterpart agencies in 11 countries. These projects address needs in 5 programmatic sectors: Agricultural Development, Institution Building, Community Development, Health and Welfare and Human Resource Development. Each project contributes to at least one of following purposes:

- To stimulate individual communities to undertake their own development by participating successfully in projects designed to meet basic human needs.
- To support the development of an infrastructure (network) in Third World countries which is capable of and committed to continued development assistance beyond the period of the grant.
- To assist indigenous counterpart agencies to become more effective in planning, implementing and evaluating development programs in collaboration with local communities.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. LWR support from its constituency was augmented in 1979 by an AID Matching Grant (AID/SOD/PDC-G-0124) awarded in support of its development assistance program (DAP). During the grant period LWR supported 75 projects through 27 indigenous organizations in 11 countries.
- 2.2. LWR evaluation and monitoring activities were based primarily on project level reporting, site visitation, and third-party evaluations. The third-party evaluations focused on DAP supported projects in Niger and the Andean Region. LWR submitted to AID annual reports which included assessments of the above activities.
- 2.3. Most DAP supported projects (65) assisted communities to meet basic needs. Nearly half (30) reported positive achievements in increased food production, improved health care, increased literacy, increased access to or participation in public services, or higher levels of income. It is too early to evaluate project achievements for another 30 projects. Only 5 projects have demonstrated uncertain or inadequate performance.
- 2.4. Six projects have improved the capability of local and regional institutions. Farmers' unions, cooperatives, extension services and other public services have been led to work together as a result of program activities. Seminars for counterpart agencies in the Andean Region initiated new relationships between 15 indigenous agencies affecting exchange of ideas and experience. Contact between some of them is continuing at their own initiative.
- 2.5. The grant proposal anticipated up to 5 years for the full impact of individual projects to be achieved. LWR is examining the feasibility of evaluating projects supported during this grant during the next phase of the DAP.
- 2.6. LWR's monitoring and evaluation system has been upgraded and made more explicit. A document describing LWR's reporting requirements has been prepared for guidance to project holders. LWR staff have provided assistance to counterpart agencies in project design, management and evaluation, and have observed improvement in evaluation components of project proposals.

2.7. Because the overall assessment of the DAP and of AID collaboration in providing grant support is positive, LWR plans to:

- continue support to projects enabling communities to meet human needs;
- increase support for organizational development within counterpart agencies;
- support additional opportunities for exchanging experience among counterpart agencies;
- apply for a second matching grant.

3. MONITORING & EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Monitoring and evaluation activities related to this program are described in the four categories below:

3.1. Project level reporting to LWR:

Agreements between LWR and project holders require quarterly progress and financial reports and annual project evaluations and audits. These reports are a primary source of information concerning project implementation and accomplishments. LWR staff review and follow-up these reports as appropriate. A majority of the projects were current in their reporting as of June 30, 1982. There remains, however, room for improvement both in timeliness and quality of project reporting. Section 5.2 describes LWR's efforts to facilitate such improvements.

3.2. Field Visits:

LWR staff visit each counterpart agency at least annually. These staff visits afford opportunities for: visiting project sites; discussing program and project issues with project holders; and offering consultative assistance in such areas as project reporting and evaluation, program management and planning new program activities. LWR has regional representatives for the Andean Region and for Central America, country staff in Niger, and a counterpart in India which coordinates LWR program reporting and evaluation activities. Discussions with and reports from each of these are an integral part of LWR monitoring and evaluation activities.

3.3. Annual reviews:

LWR has submitted annual reports followed by a review with AID during the period covered under this program. Based on internal reviews of information in project reports and understandings developed from staff visits to counterpart agencies, these annual reports have included some assessments of program impact, administrative issues, analysis of program expenditure and summaries of individual projects.

3.4. Third Party Evaluations:

LWR arranged third party evaluations of its programs in Niger and the Andean Region of Latin America. These evaluations were based on scopes of work discussed in advance with AID, who concurred with LWR's choice of consultants in both cases. The evaluation in Niger was carried out by Marilyn Hoskins and Fred Weber. The Andean Region evaluation was carried out by Loren Finnell and Daniel Santo Pietro.

These areas were chosen for third party evaluations because: 17 of the 75 DAP supported projects are in Niger and 21 are in the Andean Region; projects in Niger represent approximately 33% of total DAP commitments and 50% of matching grant commitments; projects in the Andean Region represent 18% of total DAP commitments and 21% of matching grant commitments; most counterpart agency staff training and development projects supported by DAP are in the Andean Region.

Field staff have been asked to give their responses to findings and recommendations of these evaluations by September 30, 1982. The responses in the appendices are therefore tentative and incomplete.

4. EVALUATING PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENT

LWR has supported 75 projects through this program during the present grant period. 65 most directly contribute to purpose A, 6 to purpose B and 4 to purpose C. This section analyses contributions projects have made to each of these purposes.

Individual projects are supported for up to 3 years with the expectation that project impact should be clear within five years. Because the program was initiated in 1979, it is too early to draw definite conclusions about the impact of many projects. For this reason LWR staff are considering the feasibility including these projects in the scope of evaluation for a second phase of DAP.

4.1. Purpose A - Stimulate individual communities to undertake their own development by participating successfully in projects designed to meet basic human needs.

Sixty-five projects help communities to meet basic needs. Thirty of these 65 have already reported positive achievements in at least one of the following: increased food production, improved health care, increased literacy, increased access to or participation in public services, or higher levels of income. For 30 additional projects, it is too early to evaluate project achievements. Five have had either uncertain or inadequate performance.

The Niger program evaluation, which has been shared with AID, noted increased food and water production by grass roots farmers which resulted in increased farmer income. The evaluators stated that project activities have apparently encouraged gardening among people who did not participate in the project; increased the supply of fresh vegetables in local and regional markets, and helped to decrease rural exodus by stabilizing settlements. (See Niger Evaluation report, p.5).

The Andean Regional program evaluation concluded that projects supported in that region are highly participatory and assist low-income persons to meet basic human needs. The evaluators concluded that projects: helped communities become aware of their problems; promoted local planning of appropriate responses; and provided requisite levels of technical assistance and monitoring to bring these activities to a

successful conclusion. Observable results included improved diet, and health, increased and diversified agriculture production, and general improvement of quality of life through community development and organizational processes. (See Andean Region evaluation report, p.33-34).

- 4.2. Purpose B - Support the development of an infrastructure (network) in third world countries which is capable of and committed to continued development assistance beyond the period of the grant.

At the community level, projects have fostered the formation or increased effectiveness of existing local institutions such as farmers' unions, cooperatives, health clinics, small scale irrigation management societies, household industries, etc. At the village-to-village level campesino groups improved small farmers' returns on marketed produce; locally organized groups of slum dweller worked together to gain access to improved public services. The Andean Regional Office facilitated exchanges among both communities and private agencies, to enable them to learn from one another.

Projects supported the development of new services for several groups of villages. Demonstration and extension centers in India linked with a mobile veterinary clinic through a private charitable trust to improve services to and production level of small farmers. A program for genetic improvement of goats benefit a number of communities.

Some projects in Niger established new linkages between implementing services and the communities they serve. The evaluation found this contributed to improved morale and performance by service personnel. A DAP supported fruit tree nursery in Niger services an entire district enabling small farmers to have access to fruit trees. A school garden project assists in the development of a more appropriate education curriculum for rural children.

Regional Seminars organized by the Andean Regional Office facilitated exchange of ideas and experiences among 15 indigenous private agencies which previously had little or no contact. LWR sees in this initiative a significant potential for undertaking coordinated regional approaches to common problems.

- 4.3. Purpose C - Assist indigenous counterpart agencies to become more effective in planning, implementing and evaluating programs in collaboration with local communities.

Four seminars sponsored in Central America and the Andean Region were designed to contribute directly toward this purpose through workshops in specific skill areas related to program management and evaluation. The Evaluation found that these workshop seminars raised counterpart agency staff awareness and interest in evaluation and management systems, but did not reveal immediate results in improved systems within partner agencies. The seminars were a first step toward this purpose, but additional activities are needed more fully to achieve the purpose. A secondary objective - exchanging program experiences and ideas - was found by participants to be of primary value and importance.

LWR staff visits to counterparts have included consultative assistance in management and program development. Subsequent to such visits LWR staff have observed improved reporting on current projects and better project proposals. LWR's has employed the Inter Church Service Agency of India to coordinate project reporting and to participate in project reviews. This has produced a noticeable improvement in project reporting and new project designs.

5. EVALUATION OF LWR PERFORMANCE

5.1. Program Implementation

Support to projects has been consistent with the plan both in terms of quantity of funds committed and number of projects assisted (75). The grant was extended by 1 year because limitations not anticipated in LWR's proposal resulted in a slow rate of commitments during the first half of the grant period.

LWR anticipated using matching grant funds to support projects developed by its Geneva based counterpart the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). However, LWF policy disallows audits by governments whose funds are seconded to it. LWR's failure to obtain a waiver of this AID requirement precluded channeling AID funds through the LWF. A second constraint to the use of AID funds developed in India. After lengthy negotiations, it was determined that approval processes required by the GOI were too lengthy and complex to warrant use of AID funds. Private funds were subsequently used for all DAP projects in India.

5.2. Project Monitoring and Evaluation System

LWR's monitoring and evaluation system has been substantially upgraded during the life of this grant. Prior to this program LWR monitoring activities were based on annual staff visits to counterpart agencies supplemented by occasional progress, evaluation, finance and audit reports from project holders. Concurrent with initiating this program, LWR began making grant agreements with project holders. The agreements require either quarterly or semi-annual progress and finance reports and annual evaluations and audits. By the end of the second year, the uneven quality and timeliness of reporting was recognized as a problem. Since that time, the following corrective measures have been taken:

- During field visits staff have stressed LWR reporting requirements and offered counsel on design and implementation of evaluation;
- A centralized system was established in New York for review and follow-up of all DAP progress, financial and evaluation reports;
- A procedure was recently initiated to tie funds transfers to projects to receipt of adequate financial and progress reports.

LWR has compiled a document outlining the LWR project system which will be made available to project holders in the near future. This includes new guidelines for progress, evaluation and audit reports. Preliminary review of the document with some project holders indicates that they will find it helpful.

5.3. Learnings from Third-party Evaluations

5.3.1 Niger:

The primary learnings from this evaluation were:

- the need to develop a more effective live fencing program;
- the need to concentrate geographically to avoid excessive staff time in travel;
- the need more effectively to institutionalize project benefits at the local level.

5.3.2 Andean Region:

The primary issues requiring follow-up from this evaluation are:

- the need to limit the geographic scope of the Andean Regional Office;
- the need to develop a better reporting system at the regional level and better communications with New York headquarters.
- the need to review LWR funding processes to reduce time required for project decisions;
- the need to focus more sharply LWR objectives in organizational development within counterpart agencies.

Field staff responses to evaluation recommendations are due in late September. The above points are among the issues to which they will respond.

6. CONCLUSION

The matching grant has:

- supplemented LWR's privately raised resources;
- enabled LWR to extend its support to more communities of the poor;
- enabled LWR to support the programs of more indigenous agencies and;
- stimulated LWR to improve its monitoring and evaluation systems.

Present estimates are that private resources from the LWR constituency by 1985 will be double what they were in 1980. It is not possible to determine whether the AID grant has influenced this development.

APPENDIX I

PRELIMINARY RESPONSES TO NIGER EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

LWR has asked its field staff to participate in determining how best to implement recommendations made by the evaluators. Because field staff responses are not due until late September, LWR's responses below are partial and preliminary.

The recommendations of the Niger Evaluation are found in summary form on page 6 and in a more elaborated form on pages 41 to 44.

1. Stay with projects that focus on providing more water and food

This represents an endorsement of the emphasis of LWR projects to date.

2. Select six major project clusters and concentrate resources there

The recommendation will be considered.

3. Carry each project until enough "progress" has been made for it to continue without further assistance

The recommendation will be considered.

4. Avoid assisting one group at the expense of another

The recommendation will be considered.

5. Staff should spend more time in the field.

The recommendation will be considered.

6. Assure tighter financial control and project administration

The recommendation has been implemented.

7. Develop a more effective live fencing maintenance and exploitation formula

The recommendation will be considered.

APPENDIX II

PRELIMINARY LWR/NEW YORK RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN THE REPORT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE ANDEAN REGION PROGRAM

LWR has asked its field staff to participate in determining how best to implement recommendations made by evaluators. Because field staff responses are not due until late September, LWR's responses below are partial and preliminary.

The recommendations of the Andean Regional Program Evaluation are found in pages 51-55 of that report. The responses below follow the order in which the recommendations are presented in the report.

Andean Regional Office

1. The recommendation will be considered.
2. The recommendation will be considered.
3. The recommendation will be considered.
4. The recommendation will be considered.
5. The recommendation has been implemented.

The ADFP (page 52)

1. The recommendation will be considered.
2. The recommendation will be considered.
3. The recommendation will be considered.

Project Grants (page 52)

1. The recommendation will be considered.
2. The recommendation will be considered.
3. The recommendation will be considered.
4. The recommendation will be considered.
5. The recommendation reflects current practice.
6. The recommendation reflects current practice.
7. The recommendation will be considered.
8. The recommendation will be considered.
9. The recommendation has been implemented.

Seminars/Training (page 54)

1. The recommendation will be considered.
2. The recommendation will be considered.
3. The recommendation will be considered.
4. The recommendation will be considered.
5. The recommendation will be considered.