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Strengthening
Institutional Strengthening of the YMCA
for
Development Work

M. Kilbridge
Cambridge, Massachusetts
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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Maurice Kilbridge
Professor of Urban Planning

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Ms. Judy Gilmore
Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation
Bureau for Private and Development Cooperation
Agency for International Development
Department of State
Room 246A SA-8
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Judy,

Here is the paper on "Institutional Strengthening of the YMCA for Development Work" requested at our May 26 meeting. Its essential purpose is to help AID and the YMCA in developing a funding relationship for future Matching Grants.

Looking back at the paper since completing it, I believe it needs a bit more of the YMCA perspective to make it as mutually helpful as we wish. In writing it, my old AID instincts returned and my view of the Agency's position was perhaps clearer than my view of the YMCA's position. I do not suggest rewriting the report, but balancing it with the thoughts presented here. Therefore, I suggest that this letter be made an addendum, or better, perhaps, a preamble, to the attached report, and its content be taken into consideration in Matching Grant negotiations. My thoughts are organized under eight points.

(1) The entire report is written in the context of matching grant relationships. We should not fail to acknowledge that this relationship has been difficult for both AID and the YMCA. For reasons that some of the following points illustrate, the YMCA has been unhappy with various matching grant restrictions. As a non-bureaucratic, loosely structured movement, the YMCA has difficulty assuring compliance with these guidelines and, if pressed too far to comply, may find that it cannot in good faith accept further matching grant funds. This would be an unfortunate loss both to the YMCA and AID, to say nothing of

the poor whom the YMCA serves.

A strong argument exists in this circumstance for development program grants or block grants with fewer restrictions on the use of funds and less stringent reporting and control requirements. Nothing in this report is meant to argue in favor of matching grants or against block grants as the appropriate funding mechanism.

(2) The root problems in the AID/YMCA grantor-grantee relationship are: 1) the different interpretation of the work "development" and the need for the YMCA to fit AID's definition into its broader objectives; 2) the YMCA bridles under the AID concept of "restricted grant"; 3) the AID audit provision for sub-recipients is generally unacceptable to the YMCA.

(3) The YMCA is a non-authoritarian, world-wide movement held together by a fellowship bond. Each unit is autonomous and organizational forms differ. There are sometimes very strained relationships between Orient and Occident, North and South, developed and less developed countries, just as there are in the larger world of international relations. The US YMCA ID has to be most circumspect not to appear to be Yankee meddlers in the internal affairs of foreign YMCAs, and AID should do all it can, within its legal and policy constraints, to relax the terms of grant agreements so as not to put the US YMCA into an awkward position in this regard.

(4) As a corollary to the above point, reference is made to specific suggestions in the attached report that pertain to the structure and management of the development efforts of recipient YMCAs and area offices. They are urged to hire development secretaries conforming to job descriptions prepared by the ID, for example. And they also are urged to establish information centers with specified functions. It must be kept in mind that these are internal affairs of the recipient YMCAs and the ID's influence in them must be subtle.

(5) The YMCA might reasonably hesitate to build a separate or out-growth super-structure of development directors, training programs and information centers that would strengthen it for development work, but, in the event of support withdrawal, might become a financial burden it could not carry. This implies either working more fully within the present structure, or generating increased internal and alternate sources for development support.

(6) It should be made clear that the recommendations of this report pertain only to the use of Matching Grant funds, whether from AID or the YMCA match, and not to the quite substantial development funds coming to the ID from other internal and external sources.

(7) The issue of AID's right to audit sub-recipient grants has not really progressed much from where it was a year ago. It is becoming a cause within the YMCA and could lead to a breakdown of the funding relationship.

(8) Throughout the report, the word "project" might better be read as "program", connoting continuing, broad and long-lived efforts. The YMCA, as a very permanent, community-based institution, is program oriented and prefers to engage in fundamental social action, rather than one-shot activities.

Sincerely,

Maurice Kilbridge

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for

Development Work

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CONTENTS

Suggested Guiding Principles

 Definition of "Development"

 Realities of the YMCA World-Wide Organization

 Increasing Professionalism

Strengthening the Organization

 Local and National YMCAs

 U.S. International Division

 Area Offices

 The World Alliance

Future Funding

 General Considerations

 Personnel Support

 Program and Project Reporting

 Funding Amounts and Priorities

 Evaluation of Institutional Growth

Institutional Strengthening of the YMCA for
Development Work

Suggested Guiding Principles

To strengthen the YMCA international movement for the more effective conduct of development activities it is suggested that the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and the International Division of the U.S. YMCA (ID) be guided in their grantor-grantee relationship by three principles. The first is to agree on a definition of "development", the second is to recognize the realities of the YMCA world-wide organization, and the third is to respond to the need for increased professionalism in development work in the YMCA.

Definition of "Development"

The YMCA definition of "development" is not the same as that of AID. There are differences on two levels. The more general use of the term development in the YMCA means internal institutional growth, or expansion of the movement — increase in the number of YMCA units, in their budgets, programs, participants and members. Since it is usually argued that expanding and strengthening the YMCA movement itself in developing countries must precede increased involvement of indigenous YMCA's in social and economic development programs, some of the DPG and MG funds have been used in support of executives engaged in

development work of this broad definition. At another level, a second YMCA definition of development means "human development" in the fullest sense, both social and personal. This definition seems to include the AID concept of equitable social and economic growth to improve the living conditions of poor people, but goes beyond it to include the concept of balanced individual growth - physical, mental and moral. Society is after all the sum of its individuals. Under this definition of development athletic facilities can hardly be excluded (although none have been funded under the DPG or MG).

The merits of pursuing development under these various definitions is not at issue, but it is essential that there be agreement between AID and ID on a precise definition if we are to know how institutional strengthening of the YMCA is to be managed for that purpose. The goal of the matching grant, as stated in the original contracting letter is "to improve the quality of life of poor people in Asian, Latin American and African LDCs". This is in itself quite close to the AID definition of development, lending strength to the position that this narrower definition is more functionally useful in the grantor-grantee relationship than the broader ones of the YMCA, and probably closer to the grantor's intention.

The implication of applying the above definition is that the YMCA is to emphasize strengthening those parts of its institution that relate directly to external development efforts, such as hiring development officers and the development training of staff, rather than supporting area offices or general program efforts.

Realities of the YMCA World-Wide Organization

The YMCA might be called a "bottom-up" organization. Its strength lies in its national movements, and within these in the greater metropolitan groups such as New York, Chicago, London, and Tokyo. These movements generally pre-date the area offices and even the World Alliance. Historically and currently the flow of strength, responsibility and authority is from the national level upwards. The area offices and the World Alliance are creatures of the national movements having only those powers delegated to them by their national members. Functionally they are small parts of the worldwide organization and yet they have achieved some measure of political power as representing area interests.

The implication of applying this organizational concept in the AID/ID relationship is that funding should not flow counter to the flow of power in the institution. Specifically, funds should not be granted to area offices to be allocated in turn to national movements or projects, or to the World Alliance to be allocated to area offices.

Increasing Professionalism

Social and economic development of the kind supported by the matching grant, and on the scale now undertaken, is a relatively new activity for the YMCA, requiring in its management different skills and knowledge from the traditional YMCA programs. The time has come to increase the degree of professionalism in the conduct of YMCA development work.

The volume of development activities in the YMCA has outgrown the competence of many of the development personnel. The gifted amateur will soon have to be replaced or trained to become a development professional; not every YMCA secretary is qualified to conceive and manage development programs. Specific education is needed at all levels. Training and education for development are prerequisite and key to increased institutional capacity for development work. Specialized technical skills, financial and operational development management skills, and a more comprehensive program of education for development are required to meet the current and growing YMCA demand for these skills.

The practical implications of recognizing this need are improved training programs for YMCA executives working in developing countries and the hiring of a limited number of executives and technical advisors with records of achievement in development work.

Strengthening the Organization

With the above points in mind we can examine how best to achieve one of the main purposes of the matching grant: to increase the capacity and competence of the worldwide YMCA to take on social and economic development work in the less developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Consistent with the above discussion of the realities of the YMCA organization, we will start where most of the action is, namely, at the local and national levels, and continue to broaden our scope to the area offices and the World Alliance.

Local and National YMCAs

Three basic ingredients are required to strengthen the national YMCAs for development work: qualified personnel, continuous training, and timely information.

The single greatest need is for qualified development secretaries at the national level. These persons are central to the development effort and must give leadership to it throughout the country. Experience in community development work and an educational or formal training background in social and economic development at the college level should be minimum requirements for the position. Lacking these prerequisites, only a very exceptional and dedicated person can fulfill the opportunities of the position, and, if it is necessary to hire such a person, he or she should receive training before assuming the responsibilities of development secretary.

The development secretary's job description should include no non-development activities and should spell out as clearly as possible the development role, including: training local secretaries, development personnel and volunteers in development work; organizing and using lay committees for development policy, planning and financing; formulating a national YMCA development plan; stimulating, and in some cases managing, individual development projects; seeking program and project funding, including proposal writing; establishing and maintaining a national development accounting and reporting system.

The role described above obviously is not to be filled by a high school graduate, or a lack-luster YMCA secretary shifted to the position as a matter of convenience, or a person with no development background. It probably would be better in most cases to leave the position unfilled and let the city and local YMCAs go their own development ways, rather than appoint a grossly unqualified national development secretary.

In the larger national movements having sizeable regional, urban or local branches (India, for example) it will be necessary to appoint development secretaries at these levels. Their qualifications and functions are roughly the same as those of the national secretary, but somewhat scaled down.

Next to hiring qualified development personnel, there is an urgent need for continuing professional training at the national and local levels on the practical aspects of development work. If the YMCA is not to grow a separate development wing, having only a staff relationship to the parent organization, and with its own reporting channels and promotional ladder, an organizational evolution that most persons familiar with the YMCA movement would reject as inappropriate, then it must rely heavily on the training of YMCA executives already in the organization to take on development work. This does not imply that professional development personnel hired from outside for that function only are not required in the organization, but that such persons will be in the minority.

YMCA development training programs to date mostly have been general and motivational rather than specific, technical or case-oriented, how-to-do-it, workshops. They are fine as far as they have gone, but the time has come for more specific help. The short-term workshops or weekend seminar approach to development training is simply no longer adequate to provide the development theory and conceptual base, the specialized technical skills or financial and operational management skills needed for YMCA development programs which continue increasing in scope, number and complexity. By now there are many case histories of successful YMCA development programs that could be drawn upon for teaching materials. More comprehensive education for development could be organized with careful selection and design of curricula and with a clear and relevant application to current YMCA field work.

The third essential for the growth of institutional capability at the national level, after personnel and training, is the need for an information and communications center (or perhaps centers, for example, in India). Although this is basically a small development library, it is more than that. The core of the development information center would be perhaps about a hundred volumes on: community development, rural development, appropriate technologies, cooperatives, and so forth, plus the short "how-to-do-it" publications from the YMCA itself, other PVOs, the UN, the Center for Research in Appropriate Technologies, and dozens of similar organizations. These would be supplemented by country-specific demographic, economic, and geographical indexes, atlases and handbooks. The center also would subscribe to perhaps a dozen current development periodicals.

Each center would assume responsibility for being the locus of information about current and past YMCA development activities in the nation. Here would be copies of all YMCA program and project proposals and reports and project photographs and slides..

In addition, the center would serve as a training materials center. Projectors, films, slides, and other visual aids could be kept there, along with a duplicating machine and an inventory of training literature. The center also would be the natural place from which a national development newsletter could be issued and other public relations activities could be launched.

Such development information centers would add a sense of professionalism, substance and continuity to the development effort and provide a visual reminder of the YMCA's commitment to development work. The library could broaden the horizons of junior executives and inform lay committees of development opportunities and methods.

U.S. International Division

The U.S. International Division (ID) is the key to the successful use of AID matching grant funds. It is a lean and competent management unit, well administered and staffed with dedicated professionals. Despite the political and institutional undesirability of the US YMCA becoming involved in the internal affairs of other YMCA national and area movements, the ID cannot escape doing so, for it must assume responsibility for the effective use of the grantor's funds. Since matching grant

funds flow out to the worldwide movement through the ID, it must be properly staffed to evaluate proposals for both institutional and program funding and for monitoring and reporting on the use of these funds. Consistent with our principle of recognizing the reality of the YMCA's organizational strengths, funds intended for national YMCA use would go directly to the national level, and not be funneled through an area office. This implies that the ID must have direct contact with funded national and local movements through liaison representatives.

These liaison representatives would not be assigned to an area office but would represent the ID directly to funded national movements of a region. The regions of assignment need not match geographically the domains of the area offices; in fact, it would ease matters politically if they did not. Since the area offices generally have not welcomed a U.S. presence, there is no need to impose one; the regional ID representative can be headquartered in another country.

The number of ID liaison representatives required will depend on the volume of future project funding, which depends largely on the size and nature of future matching grants by AID and other grantors, and on other development funds available to the ID. If substantial project funds were available, and more or less equally distributed geographically, three representatives would be required for the following regions: Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia, Oceania and South East Asia; and Africa and the Middle East.

It may be necessary also to strengthen the Chicago office of the ID with the appointment of another development officer, especially if future matching grants contain substantial project funds.

Area Offices

Each area office should have a development secretary whose responsibility is development, and development only, and by the definition of social and economic development given at the beginning of this paper. The area secretary reports, of course, to the chief executive officer of the area office and has four essential responsibilities: development training, technical assistance in project development and management, funding assistance, and assistance in financial planning for development. He or she is responsible for fostering development activities in the area regardless of funding source. Needless to say, area development secretaries must have a background and good track record in development work.

Each area office should have a development information center similar to that recommended above for national offices. Here YMCA development program activities for the area would be documented and from here the national movements would be kept informed of the programs of other nations. This also would be the center for development training materials and equipment.

The World Alliance

Since the consultant did not visit the World Alliance specifically for the purpose of this evaluation (although he visited the Alliance on a previous occasion) the suggestions of this part should be taken tentatively.

Again, the essential need is for a qualified professional development secretary. This person's essential functions are not training or technical assistance, which should take place at the area and national levels, but policy guidance, information and funding assistance.

The Nottingham and Kampala statements provide a very broad declaration of intention regarding development programs, but they do not contain the principles or rationale to support a structured theory of action. What, really, is the meaning of development in the YMCA? How does "human development" relate to social development, and to political action? At the national level one can infer, from observing the programs launched, a set of underlying principles in operation which would include the concepts of: self-help, eventual self-support, community representation and participation, replicability, starting small, people orientation, broad-based and comprehensive in scope - "the whole person" and the entire village - consistency with national development plans and objectives, and so forth. The concept of urban-rural integration for development, as used in the YMCA, requires further delineation. Does this mean rural and urban exchanges, rural-urban linkages, urban to rural extension, all of the above?

Should not these and other YMCA ideas be pulled together into a structured theory, illustrated and explained? The World Alliance could provide leadership in meeting this important challenge.

Better communications are essential both within the movement and with the outside world. Even within a country it is not uncommon for one major YMCA not to know what the other YMCAs are doing. Improvement in communication facilities is particularly needed at the World Alliance level. Upgrading the quality and distribution of a regular medium to inform the movement of its own development activities and promote feedback would be useful. Other forms of communication also need further study (for example, films, television, and so forth). The YMCA should better inform itself and the world of its development achievements.

The third major function of the World Alliance development secretary is helping the national YMCAs to place proposals for funding, especially with European sources and international agencies headquartered in Europe.

Future Funding

In this section we suggest how the Agency for International Development might best direct its future matching grant funding to achieve the YMCA organizational strengthening discussed above. These thoughts are directed generally to the design of a second matching grant, but particular points will apply also to the third year of the present grant. Although it would be difficult at this

stage of the game for the YMCA to alter basically its planned allocation of development funds for next year, some changes of emphasis are possible, and certainly more stringent reporting by those whose salaries are funded by the matching grant can be insisted upon.

General Considerations

We may assume that the goal of the next matching grant will continue to be "to improve the quality of life of poor people in Asian, Africian and Latin American LDCs" and that the YMCA will again propose both institutional and project support. It has been made clear by AID that the Agency intends future matching grant funding to be used in support of institutional strengthening directly related to development capability, and further, that, generally speaking, the matching funds of the YMCA also are to be used for this purpose, although borderline or certain peculiar expenditures may be made from the YMCA matching funds that would be disallowed from the AID portion. Under this rubric the YMCA will be more constrained in using the next matching grant funds, but not painfully so; the opportunities for such direct institutional support, no doubt, will continue to exceed the funds available.

Consistent with the earlier discussion of the structure of the YMCA worldwide organization, it is suggested as a second point that matching grant institutional funds be allocated directly to their level of use within the organization. That is, there should be no trickle-down or sub-allocation financing. Support for national development personnel should be allocated directly by the U.S. International Division to the national

offices and not to area offices for distribution. Support for area development secretaries should be directly from ID to the area office. And so forth.

A third point, much like the second, derives from lessons learned from administration of the present matching grant and pertains to the allocation and use of project funds. Such funds should in the future be allocated directly by the ID to national projects and not through intervening agencies such as the Asia YMCA Development Fund. Furthermore, project funds, other than for training activities, should not, in general, be given to area offices for their direct use. (The LAC "Job Creation" project is a case in point.) The area offices have no business running national development projects; their essential development functions are training, technical guidance and fund assistance.

A corollary to this point relates to the AID audit provision in the document of understanding required to be signed by sub-recipients. A provisional resolution to this impasse appears in the making and, if the resulting procedure is manageable, it will be a happy achievement. But project work must go forward regardless. There should be more than enough project proposals from national movements willing to sign the DOU to use all project funds available. The rationale that YMCA development efforts must be balanced among nations is not compelling. The goal of the matching grant is to elevate the living conditions and opportunities of the poor in LDCs, not to satisfy an abstract concept of "balance" within the YMCA movement.

Personnel Support

The above points provide a frame of reference for the future funding of personnel positions. To narrow the range of interventions and be more responsive to precise needs, the matching grant should specify the positions, or types of positions, fundable. At the national and local levels, the area offices and the World Alliance the great need is for qualified development secretaries for whom development is, generally, an only and full-time assignment. In the U.S. International Division the first need is for liaison representatives and another development executive in the Division office. In support of all these development positions, funds should be available not only for salaries, but also for travel, secretarial and related office expenses.

Job descriptions of each position to be supported should be prepared by the ID in cooperation with the recipient local or area office, and when an appointment is made the appointee's C.V. should be sent to the ID for comparison with the job description. It is not recommended that the ID approve these appointments, but that it be kept informed. Until and unless a development secretary is appointed, no development funds, other than for direct project support should be allocated to that organizational unit.

The above job descriptions should be as thorough as possible in stating the specific responsibilities of the positions and the education and experience required. Performance standards should be incorporated to the extent possible. Where, of necessity, a position combines development with other responsibilities,

this should be made clear, and the percentage of time devoted to non-development work should be stated.

Each executive, whether development secretary, liaison representative or other, supported in whole or in part by the matching grant should be required to report periodically to the ID on the use of his or her time and the achievements of the period. The reporting format should be drawn by the ID in preparation for the next matching grant and should be attached to the job description of each development executive. The reports of national and local secretaries should be verified by frequent visits of the ID liaison representatives and reports from the area offices, World Alliance and liaison representatives themselves should be verified by the ID central office. Where reports and visits indicate that a development executive is not performing up to job specifications, the ID should cease funding the position until changes are made. No position should be funded that does not allow for this reporting and visitation requirement.

Program and Project Reporting

Project proposals for MG support should be sent directly to the ID for consideration with courtesy copies to the relevant area office. Area office approval should not be required for MG project support. All programs and projects for which matching grant funds are allocated directly by the ID should be reported to and monitored by the ID, whether they are at the local, national, area, or World Alliance level. The Intermovement Support and Development Assistance Unit (ISDAU)

of the ID has the knowledge and skill to do this if, as suggested above, the staff is increased by another development executive. A start has been made with the "Modified Logical Framework" given in the MG Evaluation Report. To this format should be added a time and rate-of-expenditure frame and a reporting schedule. This management system should be put in place before the next matching grant funds are committed.

In the past few years the ISDAU of the ID has spent considerable time in the administration of Operating Program Grants for LDCs made directly to the ID. As development secretaries join the national and local units and become competent in project funding and management there should be less need for the ISDAU to be directly involved in OPG project management, thus releasing time for matching grant project proposal evaluation and surveillance.

Funding Amounts and Priorities

The questions have been raised as to whether AID funding should continue for institutional support of area offices and the World Alliance and what should be the appropriate balance between institution building and project funding.

It seems to the consultant that the highest priority for institutional funding should be at the national level and in the U.S. International Division, but that development secretaries in the area offices are also essential and that they and their educational programs and information centers should be funded as a second priority. The World Alliance would receive third priority in the allocation of institutional funds.

Despite the great need for institutional support, it is the consultant's opinion that it is time now for the next matching grant to be allocated about one-third for institutional support and two-thirds for projects. If an annual grant of \$1.5 million were made, for example, one-half million might be devoted annually to development personnel salaries, development office support and information centers, that is, institutional support, and one million might be devoted to projects at the national level and training programs conducted by area development secretaries.

Evaluation of Institutional Growth

The growth of capability of the worldwide YMCA as a development institution can be measured in three dimensions: personnel in place, programs and projects launched, and funds committed. Each should be measured with reference to the three levels of organization: local and national, area office and World Alliance. To get a measure of growth over the period of the matching grant an inventory should be made at the start of the period and compared with annual evaluations.

The measure of development personnel should include the number and types of appointments and the percentage of time each person regularly devotes to development work. The measure should include not only professional YMCA personnel, but also lay leaders and workers and volunteers. For all professional personnel a time record with a log of activities and a separate list of achievements should be required, perhaps quarterly.

A second measure of development capability is the volume of project activity underway. The number of projects and their size, measured by their duration, budget and number of beneficiaries, are essential indicators.

Another growth indicator, which overlaps on both measures of personnel and projects, is the total development budget of the unit. Financial records should be kept in such a form that development expenditures can be seen distinct from all others. The sources of development funding also should be recorded in such a way that their growth over time can be seen. An element in the measure of development capability is the record of fund raising from non-AID and non-YMCA sources, both public and private.

These three measures — personnel, projects and budgets — taken at the beginning of AID funding for each organizational unit, and recorded over time, should provide a reasonably good indicator of the growth of institutional capability for development work.
