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SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT AT IRRI: A CASE STUDY

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recommendations for IRRI management and administration

1. *IRRI needs to define its overall policy towards spouse employment.* IRRI is encouraged to define "spouse employment" broadly to include a range of productive activities outside of work in the home – employment within and outside of IRRI, volunteer work, study and internships. IRRI is also encouraged to view spouse employment as an organizational, as well as a personal and family, concern. It is recommended that IRRI adopt an approach which supports, but does not substitute for, spouse initiative. IRRI can remove unnecessary encumbrances and provide basic support to spouses. Transparency in policies is key.
2. *IRRI administration should adopt a service role to support spouses seeking work and/or study opportunities.* Spouse employment assistance should be viewed as a service, not as an individual or one-time favor. This includes a range of services such as compiling information on constraints and opportunities for employment and study; linking with other international organizations and embassies in the region to share information and job announcements; assisting spouses to make initial contacts; and lending support to spouses seeking visas or work permits. IRRI administration should seek to maintain an active dialogue with spouses on employment issues.
3. *IRRI should appoint a focal person within administration to be responsible for spouse employment issues.* This task should be seen as an integral part of the person's job description, not as an "add on" responsibility.
4. *IRRI should provide consistent and accurate information on opportunities and constraints for employment and study within the Philippines.* Accurate information is a prerequisite for a sound organizational strategy as well as informed individual decisions. Better information is needed on visa options and legal restrictions for different types of employment in the Philippines; the types of opportunities available; the internal and external constraints to spouse employment; and IRRI's policies and practices towards spouse employment both within and outside the Center. Such information should be provided to spouses of current staff members as well as those of short-listed candidates.
5. *IRRI should appoint a consultant or staff member in administration on a short-term basis to compile information on spouse employment and study opportunities outside IRRI.*
6. *IRRI should clarify its policies and practices regarding hiring spouses within IRRI.* In order to allow for experimentation, IRRI may want to consider a more flexible approach to appointing spouses to internationally-recruited staff (IRS) positions and, in particular, to fixed-term positions, such as visiting scientists or postdoctoral fellows. IRRI is encouraged to make explicit its policy of not hiring spouses for nationally-recruited staff (NRS) positions. It should also clarify its policy and practices for hiring spouses for short-term consultancies.
7. *IRRI should continue to experiment with innovative approaches, such as its "shuttle research" arrangement, which allow families to adapt to spouse employment constraints.*

8. *Administration should routinely consult spouses' CVs when considering hiring consultants for specific tasks. When qualifications are equal, priority should be given to hiring spouses.*
9. *IRRI should strive to open up research and training opportunities for spouses, including Masters, Ph.D., postdoctoral research opportunities, and internships. It should seek to provide institutional support to spouses seeking research grants in areas related to IRRI's mandate.*
10. *IRRI should invite candidates to bring their spouses at the time of interview.*
11. *IRRI should invite spouses to participate in seminars and training courses on a space-available basis.*
12. *IRRI should support spouses in their efforts to organize "skill development" workshops.*
13. *IRRI should communicate that spouses are encouraged to use the library and other facilities such as computer and language labs.*
14. *IRRI should seek to recognize spouses' professional and educational accomplishments in public fora.*
15. *IRRI should actively communicate to spouses and staff its policies and practices towards spouse employment as well as positive actions taken.*

B. Recommendations for the spouse community

1. *The spouse community should organize to work together and take initiative on spouse employment concerns and issues. Spouses should seek to join forces with IRRI administration and share responsibility for action.*
2. *The spouse community should organize a Spouse Committee on Employment. The Committee's first task should be to serve on the proposed IRRI Task Force on Spouse Employment and to work with management to implement the proposed actions (ref. recommendation D.1 below)*
3. *The Spouse Committee on Employment should pull together information, experiences, and knowledge available on employment and study opportunities within spouse community. This effort should complement the inputs from the consultant and/or administrative staff (ref. recommendation A.5 above).*
4. *The Spouse Committee on Employment should take the lead in organizing "skill development" workshops. Such workshops would respond to the needs and interests of a large number of spouses who are planning to re enter the work force in the near term. They would be held in IRRI training facilities at times of low use.*
5. *The spouse community should identify 2-3 members who can serve as resource people on spouse employment. These people should be available to advise and assist*

newcomers or spouses contemplating study or employment for the first time in the Philippines.

6. *Spouses should recognize that securing viable opportunities for productive activities outside of the home takes time, persistence, and often requires some sacrifices.* IRRI can, and should, facilitate, but in the end success will result from individual and group initiatives within the spouse community.
7. *Spouses should work together to share experiences and pool knowledge.* All spouses should assume responsibility for sharing new information about work and study opportunities. Interested spouses are encouraged to meet periodically to share information on employment and study opportunities and constraints.

C. Longer-term initiatives

1. *IRRI should consider designating a person within administration to serve as a resource person and liaison with the spouses on "employment" issues and opportunities.* This would be a more formal assignment with a broader set of responsibilities than the focal person described above (ref. recommendation A.3). It would also require a greater investment of resources. An alternative option is to hire a spouse on a part-time basis to serve in this role.
2. *IRRI should seek to secure more favorable conditions for spouse employment in future negotiations with the Philippine government on its Headquarters Agreement.*
3. *IRRI should work with other international organizations to encourage the Philippine government to relax the legal restrictions on foreign spouses working in the Philippines.* Unified efforts for policy change have often proven more effective than individual institutional initiatives.

D. Next steps

1. *IRRI should establish a Task Force on Spouse Employment.* The Task Force should be comprised of members from the Spouse Committee on Employment, IRRI staff members, and representatives from senior and middle-level management and administration.
2. *The Task Force should review the proposals of this report and develop an action plan.*
3. *The action plan should be implemented over the course of the next two years.*
4. *Administration and the Spouse Committee on Employment should jointly monitor progress and assess the outcome of implementing the plan after two years.* IRRI's policies and practices for spouse employment should be reevaluated at this time.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is designed to give IRRI practical suggestions on how it can address problems of spouse employment and support the initiatives of spouses of internationally-recruited staff who are seeking opportunities to study or work outside of the home.

"Spouse employment" is broadly defined to include a range of productive activities outside of work in the home – employment within and outside of IRRI, volunteer work, study and internships. It includes opportunities both within and outside of the organization.

A. Rationale

The premise is that spouse employment is both an organizational concern as well as a personal and family concern. With the marked growth in dual-career and dual-income families world wide and the changing roles and ambitions of women, organizations are having to adapt to a wider range of family models and aspirations. International organizations, which long relied on having a spouse follow and support the professional staff it hired, are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff due to spouse employment constraints. Spouse employment is becoming widely recognized as one of the most pressing human resource management concerns facing public and private sector organizations around the world (Ricklin, 1991; Blair, 1992).

International agricultural research centers are operating in an increasingly competitive world of shrinking funds and expanding research challenges. They can ill afford to not be able to recruit first-class scientists. Nor can they afford the unnecessary costs of disrupted research and premature attrition resulting from family discontent and frustrations. Improving opportunities for spouse employment at IRRI will not only benefit families and improve the quality of life for many spouses in the Philippines. It will also benefit IRRI by strengthening its capacity to recruit and retain high quality scientists and professionals – both men and women. Experiences from other organizations indicate that addressing spouse employment concerns has the additional benefit of increasing staff productivity. Staff productivity tends to be higher when frustrations and concerns at home are reduced and staff feel that the organization is concerned about their personal and family needs (Blair, 1992).

B. The Study

Recognizing the need to adapt and respond flexibly to the changes in the world around it, IRRI began to address constraints to spouse employment several years ago. Policies have been developed regarding employment within IRRI, but, to date, little attention has been paid to providing support to spouses interested in working outside of IRRI.

This study was commissioned to help IRRI:

- determine the extent and nature of demand within the spouse community for assistance with spouse employment; and
- design a strategy and action plan for addressing spouse employment concerns that was compatible with IRRI's goals, priorities, and resource base.

The scope of the study is limited to spouses of internationally-recruited staff based at Headquarters in the Philippines.

The study is based on data collected from in-depth interviews carried out with spouses and IRRR staff and managers during a 3-day diagnostic visit to IRRR in December 1992 and a two-week consultancy in February 1993 (ref. Annex 1).

IRRR spouses, staff, and managers contributed many ideas and much time and energy to the study. Proposals for action were jointly developed through two workshops with spouses, a workshop with senior and middle-level managers, and a meeting with the senior management team in February. The analysis and recommendations presented in the report are a product of these intensive interactions.

The analysis and recommendations also draw heavily on the ideas and findings emerging from a comparative study of spouse employment policies and practices in 17 international organizations working in the areas of research and/or agricultural development (Blair, 1992).

C. The Report

The report is written for IRRR management, administration, spouses, and staff. It seeks to provide an analytic basis and practical recommendations for developing IRRR's approach to spouse employment. The report seeks to emulate the openness and frankness of the discussions held at IRRR. Strengths and weakness of the current situation are spelled out plainly. Areas of concern, as well as opportunities, are identified and practical actions proposed.

Paraphrases of statements from interviews are interspersed through out the text to emphasize points and/or ground them squarely within the IRRR situation. These are used primarily to supplement points made about the more intangible areas of organizational culture and values. Statements have been paraphrased to ensure anonymity of the speaker and protect confidentiality. The paraphrased statements were selected to illustrate commonly expressed views, not anecdotal opinion.

It is hoped that this report will provide the basis for action and stimulate a concerted effort of IRRR management, spouses, and staff to tackle the difficult issues of spouse employment both within and outside of IRRR. The goal is to provide greater support to spouses seeking productive opportunities outside of the home and open up a wider range of options for them. This should not only improve the quality of life for spouses and staff at IRRR, but strengthen the organization as well.

The report is also designed to serve as a case study on spouse employment within an international agricultural research center. It is hoped that the analysis and proposals developed for IRRR can serve as a model and source of ideas for other Centers tackling this challenging area of human resource management.

II. DIAGNOSIS

A strategy for addressing spouse employment should be based on:

- A) an assessment of constraints and opportunities both external and internal to IRRI;
- B) as assessment of current and future demand for spouse employment;
- C) organizational interests and priorities;
- D) resources available for addressing the problem.
- E) a review of current policies and practices

These five components are reviewed below.

A. Factors Affecting Spouse Employment

Some factors affecting spouse employment can be changed by IRRI and others are immutable. The task at hand is to determine where IRRI has room to maneuver to improve the situation. The ideal may not be achieved, but there is certainly room for improvement.

Constraints

External factors. The key external factors constraining spouse employment opportunities are laid out below.

- *Limited local opportunities.* There are few opportunities for foreigners to be employed in Los Banos. The University of Los Banos, probably the largest local employer, is part of the civil service. This severely restricts employment opportunities for non-Filipinos. Moreover, it is over staffed in relation to its operating budget. Given the excess of human resources at the University, it does not provide many opportunities for volunteer work or internships.

Some spouses have found fulfilling volunteer or part-time employment in Los Banos and its environs, but the opportunities are limited, especially for those who do not speak the local language. The lack of local opportunities means that residents, unable or unwilling to commute regularly to Manila, look more to IRRI as a potential source of employment.

- *Distance from Manila.* Most opportunities for employment are found in Manila where the international agencies, schools, embassies, and large national and multinational companies are located. Although IRRI is only 60 kms from Manila, the commute can take from 1.5 to 3 hours. Many residents at IRRI find the commute a strong deterrent to full-time work in Manila. Most spouses and staff indicated that the opportunity would have to be highly rewarding to offset the burden of the commute. Nevertheless, the constraint is not insurmountable: children travel daily to the international school in Manila, commuting time can be reduced by traveling at off hours, and some professionals have adjusted by residing several days a week in Manila to reduce the number of days spent commuting. Other solutions are to seek part-time employment or arrange consultancies which only require presence in Manila a few days a week.

While Manila can provide opportunities for professionals who are seriously committed to their careers, the commute makes it much less viable for people with more general skills and earning lower salaries. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that in large cities of many developed countries people often commute 1 or 2 hours to work. In the Philippines the burden of such a commute is reduced because drivers can be hired at reasonable rates. It is clearly not a desirable situation, but it is a feasible one.

- *Highly skilled Filipino work force*. Given the level of education of the Filipino work force, their internationally, and widespread competence in English, there are fewer niches which foreigners can fill, with a unique set of skills, than in many other developing countries. This limits job opportunities for both professional and general skills workers.
- *9E visa*¹. IRRI spouses enter the Philippines under a 9E diplomatic visa and are categorized as a "dependent spouse". The advantages of this visa is that it provides diplomatic immunity (the holder cannot be sued, for example) and it allows the holder to enter and exit the country with minimal scrutiny from customs and immigration. Officially, person carrying this visa as a dependent spouse is not allowed to work. Foreign Affairs could revoke the visa of someone discovered to be working and earning a Filipino-based income. In practice, there is little monitoring of the visa status of workers in the Philippines.

Spouses engaged in permanent or long-term employment in the Philippines would want to change their visa status. Those employed by an international organization would most likely receive their own 9E visa. For others there are numerous options, including working under a temporary visitor's visa for tourism or business (9A), a prearranged employment visa (9G), a treaty trader's visa (only applies to USA, Japan, or Germany), or a 47(2)A visa which permits work or study in the Philippines (this is visa used by staff of Winrock International).

All of these visas have some drawbacks including losing diplomatic immunity, being subject to taxes, and incurring encumbrances with immigration and customs when exiting and entering the country. The extent of these problems varies with the visa type. Nevertheless, the important point is that, contrary to conventional wisdom at IRRI, visas and work permits are possible to obtain for many types of employment. The options available would depend on the nationality and profession of the person to be employed, the nature of the employing agency or company, and the type of position to be filled. Legal counsel should be sought to determine the most appropriate option for a particular individual's situation.

Internal factors. Several key factors within IRRI were identified within the interviews as constraining spouse employment.

- *Limited opportunities within IRRI.* IRRI cannot, ethically or politically, open up positions designated for nationally-recruited staff (NRS) to non-Filipino spouses. This constraint is even more acute given the recent downsizing of staff at IRRI. This means that as a potential employer of spouses, IRRI's room to maneuver is limited to internationally-recruited positions and temporary consultancies. Given these constraints, the leverage for improving work opportunities for spouses will have to be largely outside of IRRI. IRRI can, however, support spouses interested in studying and obtaining advanced degrees.

- *Campus life.* While providing many benefits, the campus life isolates families from Filipino society and culture. This makes it harder for spouses to understand how Filipino society works, to network and make contacts with people who might assist in finding jobs or identifying professional opportunities, and to develop effective strategies for seeking employment.

Moreover, since most IRRI families both live and work at IRRI, sensitivities and concerns about having spouses in the workplace are heightened. Problems at work can easily spill over to community life and vice versa and privacy issues become more prominent. This further restricts the opportunities available at IRRI for spouse employment.

- *Precedence and norms.* The most frequently repeated refrain across the interviews with spouses was the statement that "IRRI spouses can't work". This perception, while not accurate, prevails and colors people's perceptions of their opportunities, as well as the values of the community, from the moment they are introduced to IRRI. Although the "Welcome to IRRI" video does draw attention to the opportunities for study at Los Banos, it does not address employment concerns until well into 50 minutes of information on domestic and child rearing concerns. Even then the treatment is quite superficial. The message gleaned is that spouses at IRRI, whether at Headquarters or abroad, rarely pursue outside professional opportunities.

Due to the lack of experience with and attention to spouse employment in the IRRI community, the information spouses pick up when they arrive is often inconsistent and rarely illuminating on the constraints and opportunities for employment. Spouses who are working are few and their experiences do not appear to be widely known through out the community.

More subtle deterrents are community values which seem to reinforce a traditional model of a family with a professional (usually male) working at IRRI and a dependent spouse. The "dependent spouse" is seen primarily as someone who supports the IRRI staff member, taking care of all domestic and child rearing responsibilities, but rarely acknowledged for his or her intellectual or professional qualities or skills. There are many subtle messages indicating that IRRI counts on spouses to support its staff members, free them from domestic concerns, and accommodate their professional needs and demands. This cultural norm breeds resentment and passivity among many spouses and is increasingly out of step with changing family models both in developed and developing countries.

" IRRI gives a lot of support to one lifestyle, but not to a professional one".

" The spouse at IRRI is defined as the extension of the husband. We are seen as dependent and unimportant. We get little positive feedback"

" Never at an official IRRI cocktail party have I been asked what I do."

" IRRI is a closed society for spouses. I do not feel welcome on campus or visiting my spouse's office".

" IRRI should give support to the spouses – the people who support its scientists"

Such norms would clearly breakdown as more spouses engage in professional activities, but they are strong inhibitors at the moment.

- *IRRI work ethic and demands.* The strong work ethic at IRRI and the consistent pressure and demands placed on staff for long hours, extensive travel, and work on weekends leaves little room for IRRI staff with families to take on major responsibilities for parenting. Many spouses with children cited this as a key constraint to their pursuing professional opportunities. Without a spouse to share parenting, they did not feel that they could take on the commute and demands of a job as well as raise their children. The IRRI work ethic depends heavily on having a non-working spouse in place to manage domestic and family concerns. This model may benefit the Center in the short-term, but could have higher costs in the long term with respect to recruiting and retaining high quality professional staff.

"The biggest source of hurt is the limited amount of time IRRI staff can spend with their families."

- *Lack of organization in the spouse community.* The absence of a spouse organization makes it more difficult for spouses to express the views and concerns to IRRI management. It also makes it more difficult for IRRI management and administration to communicate with spouses since there is no focal point in the community. It also reduces opportunities for spouses to share learning, experiences, and knowledge about employment and study opportunities. To address spouse employment concerns in a concerted fashion and link effectively with administration, spouses will have to organize themselves more formally.
- *Fixed-term contracts.* Many IRRI staff are now hired on short-term contracts of 2-3 years and with the understanding that contracts are not likely to extend longer than 5 years. Viewing the tenure at IRRI as short-term, many spouses decided to give up their job and "take a break" to raise children, study, pursue artistic interests, travel, etc. This is often a welcomed respite. The problems arise when, as often happens, contracts get extended and the original 2-3 year "break" turns into a 5-7 year period of unemployment. Spouses then find themselves out of the job market, in a foreign country, and unsure of their professional skills. By this time, it is much harder for them to reenter a work life. Moreover, their bargaining power within their families for seeking other options is reduced. Since they have been out of the job market for an extended period of time, their earning power is reduced.

" After several years here, I will have to start all over again [in the job market] when we return home. Frankly, I do not know if it will be worth it to look for a job.

" What worries me most is that I will lose my professional skills. I will probably have to go back and take courses when we return".

Recognizing these problems, half of the spouses interviewed made it very clear that they had a fixed time frame for which they were willing to stay at IRRI and forgo opportunities for work and study. Their strategies for organizing their lives were based on this clearly defined time frame. The short-term nature of the IRRI contracts can relax some of the pressure on spouses to seek opportunities for work outside of the home. But it can also cause serious problems for retention of IRRI staff and family harmony when research or institutional needs result in several contract renewals. The staff member may not stay because of family pressure, leading to costly disruptions in research. Or they do stay, but often with increased tension at home. Realistic estimates of the tenure required to do a job, would allow families to plan better and make more informed decisions.

Opportunities

Despite the constraints identified above, the IRRI community and location in the Philippines also offers some clear advantages for spouse employment.

- *Availability of househelp and child care.* The availability of domestic workers and people to assist with child care relieves spouses of many of the day-to-day chores of running a family. With this kind of domestic support, they have more time and flexibility to pursue professional activities outside of the home and to cope with the constraints identified above.
- *Presence of international organizations and volunteer agencies.* There are numerous embassies, UN, international, volunteer agencies, and multinational companies with headquarters in Manila. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) alone employs 600 professional staff recruited primarily from Asia, North America, and Europe. These agencies are potential employers for spouses looking for full-time professional positions or consultancies. Currently, one IRRI spouse works full-time at ADB and two others have had short-term consultancies.
- *Universities.* There are numerous universities in the Philippines which offer excellent opportunities for further study, especially since all instruction is given in English (a language in which most spouses have competence). The nearby University of Philippines at Los Banos (UPLB) is a well-respected agricultural university which also provides courses in related subjects such as computer science and communications. Several spouses have studied there either to gain extra skills or to pursue advanced degrees. In Manila, the University of Deliman in Manila is well recognized in social and political sciences and offers opportunities for advanced study. The renowned Asian Institute of Management provides opportunities for both short courses in finance, administration, and management, as well as MBA programs.²
- *Language.* Most Filipinos have English as a second language and English is used commonly in the workplace. While this is a constraint for employment opportunities where spouses could market their skills in English, it is, on a more general basis, an opportunity. Language does not provide a barrier to employment or pursuit of professional opportunities for those spouses who have English as a first or second language.
- *IRRI resources, training opportunities, and facilities.* Although IRRI can only provide limited opportunities for employment, greater advantage could be made of its resources and infrastructure to assist spouses interested in professional skill development. IRRI has excellent training facilities, language and computer labs, which could be made available to spouses for individual or group study. Training courses are open to IRRI spouses, on a space available basis, but few spouses seem aware of these opportunities. IRRI also has an established program for graduate students to conduct thesis research at IRRI. IRRI spouses, interested in careers in agricultural sciences, could also avail of these opportunities. Currently, one spouse is carrying out Msc research at IRRI in conjunction with a US university.

Implications

IRRI spouses face a range of constraints to engaging in productive and fulfilling activities outside of the home. Some of these are concrete and immutable, such as the commute to Manila. Others are more subtle, such as organizational values and community norms, but these can be very difficult to change or work around as well. The clear implication is that a narrow focus on traditional employment will not be sufficient in the IRRI context. A range of options, approaches, and innovative solutions must be sought for spouses who are currently seeking or are preparing themselves for productive employment outside of the home.

The opportunities available to spouses will vary depending on their backgrounds, professions, skills, previous work experience, family responsibilities, and degree of commitment to their careers. For some, opportunities in the Philippines are truly scarce and creative solutions must be sought. For others, a range of options are open depending on the investment and adjustments that the spouse and family are willing to make. IRRI management, staff, and spouses need to work together to ensure that the unnecessary obstacles are removed and that the fullest range of possible options are tapped.

B. Nature of Demand

The profile of spouses and the assessment of current demand is based on interviews with 31 spouses, representing approximately 45% of the spouses at Headquarters. The sample of spouses was not randomly selected, but purposively chosen to provide a range of diverse backgrounds, ages, family status, work and study experiences, and aspirations (ref. Annex 2 for key indicators of people included in sample).

Profile of spouses. Of the pool of 68 spouses of international staff currently at Headquarters, the vast majority are women. There are only 5 male spouses. Approximately 45% of the spouses are from North America, Europe, and Australia, 50% from Asia and 5% from other developing country regions. The sample of spouses interviewed resembled this distribution by sex and nationality, but with a somewhat higher representation of women from developed countries.

Of the 31 spouses included in the sample, two-thirds were middle-aged (between 35-54); about 60% had children residing with them at IRRI, and 65% had been at IRRI for relatively short periods of four years or less. In terms of professional and employment qualifications, 70% had at least four years of work experience and 35% had eight years or more. 85% of the spouses had university degrees and almost 40% had advanced degrees (Msc and above). 40% had previous experience in living in foreign country.

Expectations. Of the spouses interviewed, 20% had high expectations for being productively engaged outside the home when they came to IRRI, 30% had moderate expectations, and 50% had no or low expectations. The level of expectation was closely correlated with age. More than 75% of both the group of spouses who had moderate expectations and the group who had high expectations were younger than 45. Half of those with low or no expectations were over 50. Nationality was not a distinguishing factor. The spouses with moderate to high expectations were evenly divided between those from Asian countries and those from Western countries.

Expectations were also obviously shaped by personal interests and by family circumstances. Some spouses with small children viewed the time at IRRI as an excellent opportunity for child rearing. Expectations were also greatly colored by information gleaned from IRRI at the time of recruitment. The information received, or at least understood, by staff and spouses on potential employment opportunities within and outside of IRRI varied considerably across the spouses interviewed.

Current situation. Despite constraints to spouse employment, a third of the spouses interviewed were employed full- or part-time (6% outside of the Philippines). An additional 22% were studying for a degree. For 17%, volunteer work, was their primary productive activity outside of the home. For example, two medical doctors, who cannot practice in the Philippines, volunteer their services part-time at a free clinic close to IRRI. Two spouses, or 6%, were actively seeking employment at the time of the interview. In all, more than three-quarters of the spouses were productively engaged outside of the home.

Of the spouses engaged in productive activities outside of the home, 73% were involved part-time, reflecting the constraints identified above. Only 27% were working or studying full-time. Table 1. shows the breakdown of the sample based on the predominant productive activity in which the spouses were engaged.

Table 1: Dominant productive activity outside of the home of 31 spouses interviewed

Working full- or part-time for an organization (incl. IRRI)	13%
Self-employed and/or free lancing full- or part-time	13%
Working outside of the Philippines (part-time)	6%
Studying full- or part-time	22%
Volunteering part-time	17%
Actively looking for work	6%
Not working outside of the home or studying	23%
	100%

It is interesting to note that 50% of the 16 spouses interviewed who had moderate to high expectations for employment when they came to IRRI are now working full- or part-time. Two of these, however, for lack of local opportunities, commute back to their home countries at regular intervals to work part-time.

The data show that many spouses are finding ways to be productively engaged outside of the home. Nevertheless, for many, these were viewed as "coping strategies", making the best out of a constrained situation. Only a minority felt professionally fulfilled and many were involved in work or study activities which they saw as compromises compared to what they felt that they could be doing in their own countries.

" Studying is my lifeline."

"I thought about studying, but then I asked myself "why". There would be no opportunities for me to work here anyway."

" I have always thought that I would be a career person. But now with so many obstacles, I am worried that I will become lazy and give up trying to find a job."

" I like to work. I need to feel productive, to feel that I am doing or creating something"

" I realize that my self-esteem is based on my ability to earn money. It is difficult to be dependent".

"IRRI spouses find ways to fill up their lives. But it has a high cost."

A clear limitation to finding productive employment is the type of skills and prior work experience of many IRRI spouses. Many have quite general skills and experience, such as administrative, clerical, or lower level management positions in the service sector. For these types of positions there is no lack of qualified people in the Philippines. Moreover, many spouses do not feel that such jobs would be sufficiently rewarding to compensate for the lower, peso-based, salaries and the commute to Manila.

Opportunities are likely to be greater for people with more unique professional skills where the pool of qualified Filipino candidates for such positions would be smaller. To date, the types of professionals who have been able to find full-time employment are: teachers, writers, accountants, and entrepreneurs. An obvious caveat applies to doctors and lawyers who need to go through a battery of exams in order to be able to practice in the Philippines.

Extent of demand. Although clearly a subjective assessment, it was estimated that 80% of the spouses interviewed were interested in being involved, at least part-time, in productive activities outside of the home now or in the near term. About 40% had a strong interest in pursuing work or educational activities. Of these, 50% were interested in work outside of IRRI, 40% were interested in work at IRRI, and 40% were interested in studying for a degree. Table 2 shows the pattern of interest in different types of employment among the spouses interviewed.

Table 2. Nature of demand for work and study opportunities

People who are working full-time or hope to in near term	39%
People who are working part-time or hope to in near term	19%
People actively engaged in studying or who expect to be in near term	22%
People who have decided to take time off from work for personal or professional reasons. Do not expect to work in near term	13%
Not interested in work or study now or in near term	7%
	100%

In an unconstrained situation, such as in their home country, at least 50% of the spouses interviewed indicated that they would seek full-time employment. Since only 13% are working full-time now, the gap highlights the difference between what spouses aspire to and what they have been able to attain residing at IRRI. Many are not willing to make the tradeoffs in terms of the commute and sacrifice of parental support to the family. Others simply cannot find appropriate positions. In either case, it is a source of frustration, leading almost half of those interviewed to plan for a limited tenure at IRRI.

It is often asserted that concerns about spouse employment is a Western phenomena, but the situation at IRRI contradicts this. As noted earlier, the level of expectation and interest in pursuing productive activities outside of the home was essentially the same for Western and Asian spouses. 25% of both groups, for example, expressed a high level of interest in obtaining employment outside of IRRI.

As noted earlier, age was a distinguishing factor in spouses' attitudes towards employment. Younger spouses, on the whole, were more interested in seeking employment than were spouses over 45. This was largely a generational difference, reflecting the changing roles of women in both developed and developing countries.

" My daughter would not do what I am doing. Life has changed. In my day women were supposed to follow their husbands. This is not longer true. Women can't drop out for 10 years."

" In earlier days, IRRI actively discouraged spouses from working. A lot has changed. Younger people want to work. IRRI will not be able to recruit the people they want in the future if they do not recognize this change."

Future demand. The fact that the younger IRRI spouses had higher expectations and stronger interest in seeking employment, augurs for spouse employment becoming an even greater concern in the future. The growing number of dual career families in both developed and developing countries means that this problem will not go away nor abate. It will become more acute. Moreover, women are making up a larger share of the pool of scientists from which IRRI recruits³. Many of these women are and will be married to professional spouses⁴. Concerns about spouse employment are likely to increasingly affect IRRI's ability to recruit and retain high quality scientists and professionals.

Some IRRI managers and staff think that the new approach of using short-term contracts of up to five years will mitigate the problem. But while some professional spouses may be willing to take a three year break from their careers, few would be willing to take a five year break. On the other hand, some scientists question whether a solid piece of research can be completed in only three years. If the expected tenure of an IRRI staff member at IRRI is to be five years, then IRRI will have to begin to make special efforts to improve the opportunities for spouse employment if it is to attract the world-class scientists it seeks.

C. Organizational Interests and Priorities

In contrast to some of the other Centers, many managers at IRRI do not yet perceive problems with spouse employment as a major constraint to recruiting and retaining high quality staff. Although many managers interviewed were concerned about the quality of applicant pools for jobs recently advertised, most did not associate this with constraints to spouse employment. Similarly, although most managers interviewed cited one or two cases where a candidate had declined an offer because of spouse employment constraints, they still viewed this as the exception rather than the rule. Most managers anticipated spouse employment problems to increasingly affect human resource management in the future, but at this point it was viewed more as an irritant than a pressing organizational concern. In contrast, most staff and spouses interviewed saw spouse employment as a significant problem for attracting and retaining staff.

What cannot be measured is the degree to which concern about lack of spouse employment opportunities reduces the field of scientists and professionals applying for jobs at IRRI. A second intangible is the degree to which spouse discontent affects the productivity of IRRI staff members and leads to premature attrition. Managers need to keep in mind these potential costs as they design a strategy for addressing spouse employment and consider the level of investment they are willing to make to address the problem.

They also need to bear in mind the potential, albeit difficult to measure, benefits of taking a positive stance towards spouse employment. If IRRI develops a reputation as an organization which takes spouse employment concerns seriously and has taken action to assist spouses, this could considerably enrich the pool of scientists and professionals interested in working for IRRI. It can also foster stronger loyalty and commitment among existing staff⁵.

D. Resources

As with all Centers in the CG System, IRRI's core funding is declining in real terms at the same time that its research challenges grow more complex. This has put the Center and its staff under considerable pressure in recent years. While recognizing that spouse employment constraints may be affecting the quality of its human resources, IRRI does not have the financial resources available to make major investments in mechanisms to address spouse employment problems. It is not in the position at this time, for example, to create positions for spouses or to hire a liaison person to deal with spouse employment problems. The funding constraints are real and have to be factored into the strategy for addressing spouse employment. Any strategy will have to be innovative and low cost, mobilizing existing resources and knowledge, and harnessing the creativity, commitment, and contributions of IRRI spouses, staff, and management.

E. Current Policies and Practices

IRRI has only recently begun to view spouse employment as an organizational concern. Consequently, policies and practices are in the early stages of development and experimentation. IRRI management, staff, and spouses realize that more can and should be done to assist spouse seeking productive activities outside of the home.

Employment within IRRI⁶. Recognizing the need for greater flexibility in addressing spouse employment, IRRI changed its policies about three years ago to permit spouses to be employed in IRS positions. The conditions for such appointments and the benefit package are clearly defined in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual. The conditions for such appointments are strict: the policy only pertains to the appointment of a spouse of an already appointed internationally-recruited staff; there has to be an advertised vacancy; regular search procedures must be followed; and the spouses cannot be in a direct reporting relationship.

While IRRI is to be commended for developing such a clear and transparent policy, the conditions do limit opportunities to experiment with some of the more innovative approaches to spouse employment, such as allowing spouses of the same field to share a position or making joint appointments of a couple to two distinct positions⁷ (Blair, 1992). It is also not clear whether these policies apply to the more temporary postdoctoral fellow or visiting scientist positions where IRRI could potentially have more room to maneuver. There is currently only one example of a couple holding two IRS positions, but this couple met and married while at IRRI.

Beyond formal IRS positions, IRRI policies also state that short-term appointments for specialized professional services can be approved in situations where "regular qualified staff are not available." There have been a few such appointments, but they are more the exception than the rule and the policy is not without its detractors. Most of these appointments have come about through initiatives of spouses and through ad hoc, informal, contacts. IRRI

indicates in its policies that it invites spouses to submit their biodata to be kept on file for filling such positions, but only a couple of CVs of current spouses are on file. To date, administration has not taken systematic steps to try to match spouse skills with institutional needs.

The current policies, as defined in the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual for IRS staff, are ambiguous about the appointment of spouses to positions classified as NRS⁸. In practice, IRRI would not hire a non-Filipino spouses into such positions. This practice needs to be made explicit since it has created misunderstandings and false expectations among some staff and spouses recruited in the last 3 years.

" We had the impression that there might be opportunities within IRRI. We saw the situation very differently when we arrived."

" Written policies say one thing, but practice is quite different."

" I did not bother inquiring about job possibilities at IRRI for my spouse, because they made it clear, from the bottom to the top, when I interviewed that there were no opportunities for spouses" .

" IRRI did not offer to help my spouse find employment, but I do not think it is their obligation."

Employment outside of IRRI. IRRI has not focused yet on developing its approach to supporting spouses who want to work outside of IRRI. Currently no organized program exists within IRRI or the spouse community to assist spouses interested in working outside of the home. In a few cases, IRRI has made special efforts to assist spouses seeking employment, but this is not a consistent policy. Little information is readily available on opportunities and legalities of working in the Philippines and what information is available is often incomplete or inconsistent. Similarly, little information is available for newcomers on educational opportunities. Until recently, spouse employment has been viewed very much as an individual and family issue, not as an organizational concern.

Flexible arrangements for IRRI staff. A clear exception to this general situation is the innovative, "shuttle research", arrangement made with one IRRI staff member. This arrangement allowed the staff member to relocate to the USA where she could join her husband, a practicing veterinarian. He had returned to the USA after one year of not being able to find suitable employment in the Philippines. The arrangement fit both IRRI's organizational interests for linking upstream with centers of advanced science as well as the staff members' personal and professional interests. It represents a flexible and creative response by IRRI management and staff to a spouse employment constraint. This experiment should be monitored by the Center to see if it is an arrangement which could be more widely used in the future.

Informal sanctions. Organizational values and norms are subtle and difficult to identify in a short consultancy. Nevertheless, a common perception among spouses and among some IRRI staff was that there were informal sanctions against spouse employment. Within the spouse community, people were concerned about jealousies, about exclusion occurring from not maintaining social obligations within the community, and about their ability to deal with community responsibilities, such as "bus mother" (to avoid gender stereotypes, this should be called "bus parent") when working. Some spouses and staff also perceived sanctions, or at least ambivalence, on the part of IRRI management and administration towards spouse employment. Some staff indicated that they were reluctant to approach administration to discuss spouse employment opportunities, thinking that this was not viewed as a legitimate

concern or that it would jeopardize their own position within the Center. These messages against breaking with tradition and the norms for the community appear to affect female more than male spouses. Such attitudes, when added to the difficulties of long commutes and penetrating a foreign culture, can be strong disincentives to seeking employment.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

If progress is to be made in relaxing constraints to spouse employment, it will take a concerted effort by three groups: IRRI management and administration, spouses, and IRRI staff. These groups will have to work together to develop a common agenda and implement it effectively. Each group will need to assume responsibilities and contribute where it has a comparative advantage.

Recommendations are clustered into two groups:

- A) those aimed at IRRI management and administration,
- B) those aimed at the spouse community.

Recommendations are for actions for the near term. Most of these have limited resource requirements. The recommendations are followed by a several proposals for more resource-intensive options in the longer term. The final section lays out steps to be taken to implement the recommendations.

A. Recommendations for IRRI Management and Administration

1. **IRRI needs to define its overall policy towards spouse employment.** IRRI is encouraged to define "spouse employment" broadly to include a range of productive activities outside of work in the home – employment within and outside of IRRI, volunteer work, study and internships.

IRRI is encouraged to view spouse employment as an organizational, as well as a personal and family concern. It is recommended that IRRI adopt an approach which supports, but does not substitute for, spouse initiative. IRRI can remove unnecessary encumbrances and provide basic support to spouses. IRRI's policy should recognize spouses as a valuable resource for the organization, acknowledge that spouses often have professional interests outside of the home, commit to providing basic information on opportunities and constraints to spouse employment, and offer assistance in areas where it has comparative advantage, such as facilitating entrance into the professional community in the Philippines. Transparency in policies is key. IRRI is clearly not obliged to find spouses employment opportunities, nor should spouses expect this. But IRRI can play a facilitating role which could benefit both the organization and the families of the staff who work there.

- 2 **IRRI administration should adopt a service role to support spouses seeking work and/or study opportunities.** The administration has not given much attention to supporting spouses seeking professional or productive activities outside of the home, except in a few cases. Similarly, most spouses do not see the administration as a potential source of support or information and have not asked for assistance. If IRRI accepts that spouse employment is an organizational concern, then the administration should assume a more consistent and proactive approach to providing support to spouses seeking opportunities to be productively engaged outside of the home.

Spouse employment assistance should be viewed as a service, not as an individual or one-time favor. Spouses should be recognized from the time of recruitment as people who have multiple roles which extend beyond being a domestic partner and parent. Just as IRRI lends them support in settling in domestically, they should also lend support in settling in professionally.

Recommended actions include the following:

- a) *communicate a willingness* to assist spouses with aspirations for work and/or study from the beginning of the recruitment and selection process
 - b) *assemble and provide information* on constraints and opportunities for employment and study
 - c) *work with members* of spouse community who have taken initiative in this area and encourage them to serve as resource people to be available to give advice and information to spouses of prospective short-listed candidates and new recruits.
 - d) *link* with other international organizations and embassies in the region to share position announcements, information on consultancies, and policies and practices towards spouse employment. IRRI currently exchanges position announcements with ADB. This practice should be extended to a wider range of organizations. Position announcements from other organizations should be regularly published in the IRRI weekly.
 - e) *assist* spouses to make initial contacts. A representative from administration should contact spouses of new recruits shortly after their arrival to see if they need basic information or assistance in identifying potential employment or study opportunities. This could be incorporated as a standard part of a more systematic orientation process for new recruits.
 - f) *lend support* to spouses seeking visas or work permits. Although the employing organization should take the lead in these efforts, often it can be more successful if two international organizations lend their weight to the request.
3. **IRRI should appoint a focal person within administration to be responsible for spouse employment issues.** Such a focal person would improve communication between spouses and administration, ensure commitment and follow through, and build up institutional memory. This person should serve as a focal point on spouse employment, be accessible to spouses and fully conversant in IRRI's policies and practices regarding spouses employment. Responsibility should lie with the Director of Administration, but may be delegated to one of his or her staff. This should be considered a formal part of the person's job, not a "add-on" responsibility. Assignment of this responsibility should be communicated to spouses.
4. **IRRI should provide consistent and accurate information on opportunities and constraints for employment and study within the Philippines.** Providing accurate and consistent information is a prerequisite for a sound organizational strategy as well as for informed individual decisions. IRRI needs to :

- a) *provide accurate and comprehensive information* on the various visa options available to spouses who wish to work. This information should not be limited to describing the legal status of different visas and the requirements for obtaining them. It should also lay out the implications for the holder in terms of taxes, entrance and exit from the country, and diplomatic immunity. Again, this information should be provided to short-listed candidates as well as new recruits. To reduce costs, IRRI may want to commission such a document in conjunction with ADB which is planning a similar exercise. IRRI should also be able to recommend a lawyer to advise spouses on their visa options.
- b) *prepare a briefing paper* for IRS staff and spouses. The paper should describe the types of opportunities available locally and in Manila, the internal and external constraints to spouse employment, the legal implications and visa options for working in the Philippines, and IRRI's policies and practices towards spouse employment. It is recommended that the briefing paper be prepared jointly with a Task Force of IRRI staff and spouses. The paper should be provided to new recruits and current staff and spouses.
- c) *brief prospective candidates systematically* on the constraints and opportunities for spouse employment. A discussion of spouse employment with staff from administration should be included as a standard part of the interview process for short-listed candidates. To ensure consistency and accuracy of information, staff serving on Search Committees should be encouraged to defer questions about the legal and policy aspects of spouse employment to representatives from Administration. Short-listed candidates should be given the briefing paper proposed in recommendation (4b) above.

5 **IRRI should appoint a consultant or staff member in administration on a short-term basis to compile information on spouse employment opportunities.** Information should cover formal employment, volunteer, entrepreneurial, and study opportunities. This exercise should be done in conjunction with spouses (ref. recommendation B3). Information will also have to be collated from international organizations, embassies, multinationals, and service organizations such as "In-Touch". This information should be compiled in a set of files which are readily accessible to members of the spouse community.

IRRI could consider hiring a consultant from the spouse community (preferably someone with experience in seeking opportunities and knowledgeable about Filipino society and culture) to assist with this task. To reduce costs, IRRI may be able to arrange to do the part of the project covering opportunities in international organizations in Manila jointly with ADB which is planning a similar exercise.

6. **IRRI should clarify its policies and practices regarding hiring spouse within IRRI** (ref. Highlights and Section 5.6 in Personnel Policies and Procedures for Internationally-Recruited Staff, 1991)

- a) *consider* allowing more flexibility in the policy towards hiring spouses into IRS positions in order to allow for experimentation with joint or shared appointments should a suitable opportunity arise. It is also recommended that IRRI take advantage of those positions, such as postdoctoral fellows, visiting scientists, and

special project assignments, where it has more flexibility in making appointments to experiment with appointing qualified spouses.

- b) *make explicit* IRRI's policy of not hiring non-Filipino spouses of IRS staff for NRS positions. The inference in the Highlights section of the Personnel Policies and Procedures is that spouses may apply for any type of position at IRRI, but the policy actually applies to IRS positions only.
- c) *harmonize* policy and practice on hiring spouses for short-term professional consultancies. The statement in the 1991 Personnel Policies and Procedures (Section 5.6) on short-term appointments appears more positive than actual practice within the Center. The statements have been misunderstood by a number of recently recruited staff and spouses, creating disappointments and frustrations.

IRRI is encouraged to draw more on spouses for short-term consultancies, but through a process that is consistent and transparent. Transparency should help dispel some of the ambivalence about hiring spouses still felt by many within the IRRI community. Such consultancies should not be viewed as bestowing favors, but as availing of professional skills within the community. Hiring locally can lead to considerable cost savings.

- 7. **IRRI should continue to experiment with innovative approaches**, such as the "shuttle research" arrangement, which allow families to adapt to spouse employment constraints.
- 8. **Administration should routinely consult spouses' CVs when considering hiring consultants for specific tasks.** Spouses of current and newly-appointed staff should be invited to submit up-to-date CVs. In making such requests, IRRI should make clear that it is not in position to create special positions or jobs, but will seriously consider qualified spouses for opportunities that arise. When spouses have skills potentially useful to IRRI's work, the CVs should also be forwarded to relevant Department or Center Heads. When qualifications are equal, priority should be given to hiring spouses. .
- 9. **IRRI should strive to open up research and training opportunities for spouses**, including Masters, Ph.D., postdoctoral research opportunities, and internships. This is an area where IRRI has greater flexibility to respond positively in widening opportunities for spouses. It is recommended that IRRI strive to be more proactive in assisting spouses to take advantage of such opportunities. IRRI could also provide institutional support to spouses bringing their own research funds or applying for grants in research areas related to IRRI's mandate .
- 10. **IRRI should consistently invite candidates to bring their spouses at the time of interview.** This practice, which has been used intermittently in recent years, should become standard practice for applicants for management and senior scientist positions. It should be considered for associate scientist positions as well. Such a policy signals that IRRI values spouses and recognizes their concerns in relocating. It also allows a couple to make an informed decision about the potential for finding employment and the magnitude of the constraints. IRRI could further assist by providing some initial contacts and helping to set up meetings with people who may be able to assist in the job search. Meetings with relevant resource people in the spouse community should also be organized.

11. **IRRI should invite spouses to participate in seminars and training courses on a space-available basis.** Although this is current practice, few spouses are aware of these opportunities. Similarly, IRRI needs to inform spouses that they can have access to computer training courses and facilities and to the language labs. It should be noted that if the courses have a cost-per-head basis, then spouses would be expected to cover their costs. A list of planned courses could be circulated periodically to spouses or posted in the "IRRI Week".
12. **IRRI should provide support to spouses in their efforts to organize "skill development" workshops.** Although the initiative for organizing such events should lie with the spouses, IRRI could provide facilities and administrative support in helping spouses to organize a series of "skills development" seminars and workshops for spouses (see recommendation B4 below).
13. **IRRI should communicate to spouses (and library staff) that spouses are encouraged to use the library for study and work.** When the renovations are complete, individual study areas will be available which spouses can use as quiet places for study or work outside of their homes
14. **IRRI management and staff should seek to recognize IRRI spouses' professional and educational accomplishments in "IRRI Week" or other community fora.** This would help considerably in communicating that IRRI values spouses in various dimensions of their lives – professional as well as domestic and parental.
15. **IRRI should actively communicate to spouses and staff its policies and practices towards spouse employment as well as positive actions taken.**

B. Recommendations for the Spouse Community

1. **The spouse community should organize to work together and take initiative on spouse employment concerns and issues.** Spouses should seek to join forces with IRRI administration and share responsibility for action. They should also seek to work together. In many cases, progress will come more easily through group action than through dissipated individual initiatives.
2. **The spouse community should organize a Spouse Committee on Employment.** The Committee should include members of diverse backgrounds, ages, sex, and professional and educational experiences. The Committee's first task should be to serve on the IRRI Task Force on Spouse Employment proposed above and to work with management to implement the proposed actions. It is crucial that a formal committee be formed so that IRRI management has a focal group within spouse community with whom it can work. It is recommended strongly that the roles and functions of this committee not be combined with those relating to other aspects of residential life at IRRI, such as housing, schooling, etc.

3. **The Spouse Committee on Employment should pull together information, experiences, and knowledge available on employment and study opportunities within spouse community.** This information should be compiled into a set of files located in Administration. This effort would complement the inputs from the consultant and/or administrative staff proposed above (see recommendation A. 5 above). The Committee should strive to keep these files current and organize a process for incorporating new information. The Committee may wish to organize periodic meetings with interested members of the community to share experiences and information on opportunities.
4. **The Spouse Committee on Employment should take the lead in organizing "skills development" seminars or workshops** (see recommendation A.12 above). Such workshops would respond to the needs of a large number of spouses who are planning to re-enter the work force in the next few years, either in the Philippines or in their home countries. To prepare for future employment or volunteer work, many spouses indicated that they would like to develop a wider range of professional skills. Interests include job counseling and career development; preparing effective CVs; developing interview, writing and communication skills; improving computer skills; management; editing; and bookkeeping/accounting.

The idea would be to have a series of short courses held in the evenings when IRRI's facilities are not in high demand. Staff from IRRI's training program could, at least in the beginning, assist spouses to design a curriculum and locate resource people. The spouses would be expected to carry the costs of bringing in outside resource people. IRRI would contribute the infrastructure and training facilities. [The Research Management Center at UPLB and "in-Touch" in Manila could be potential sources of resource people].

5. **The spouse community should identify 2-3 community members who can serve as resource people.** Knowledge and experience with spouse employment is dissipated throughout the spouse community. It would be very useful to have some resource people who would be willing to provide advice and counsel to newcomers or to current spouses who, due to changes in age of children or interests, want to begin to pursue professional activities outside of the home. Administration should be aware of the resource people so that they can refer newly arrived spouses or spouses of interviewing candidates to them for information.
6. **Spouses should recognize that securing viable opportunities for productive activities outside of the home takes time, persistence, and often requires some sacrifices.** IRRI can, and should, facilitate, but in the end success will result from individual and group initiatives within the spouse community.
7. **Spouses should work together to share experiences and pool knowledge.** All spouses should assume responsibility of sharing new information about work and study opportunities. Interested spouses are encouraged to meet formally and informally to share information on employment and study opportunities and constraints.

C. Longer-Term Initiatives

1. **IRRI should consider designating someone within administration to act as a resource and liaison person with the spouses on employment issues and opportunities.** This would be a more formal assignment of responsibility than described above. The person would be responsible for networking with organizations who could be potential employers, keeping up with developments in job opportunities, maintaining the information files, and working with spouses seeking opportunities for productive work outside of the home. This assignment would probably require about 4-6 hours per week. The person should be someone who is accessible to spouses and understands their concerns. The person should come under the direction of Director of Administration. An alternative option is to hire a spouse on a part-time basis to serve in this role.
2. **IRRI should seek to get more favorable conditions for spouse employment in its next negotiations with the Philippine government on its Headquarters Agreement.** In the interim, senior IRRI officials should meet periodically with representatives of other international organizations in order to develop a consistent set of requests to the Philippine government regarding spouse employment. Consistent, low keyed, but unified pressure, from several organizations has been successful in bringing about changes in policy towards spouse employment in other countries.
3. **IRRI should work with other international organizations to encourage the Philippine government to relax the legal restrictions on foreign spouses working in the Philippines.** The Asian Development Bank is working on the same issue. Unified efforts for policy change have often proven more effective than individual institutional initiatives⁹.

D. Next Steps

1. **IRRI should establish a Task Force on Spouse Employment.** The Task Force should review the recommendations proposed in this report and develop an action plan. The Task Force should be comprised of members from the Spouse Committee on Employment, IRRI staff members, and representatives from senior and middle-level management and administration. It would be very useful to have the Human Resources Development Officer, Ms. Excy Ramos, serving on the Task Force as well. She is both an expert in human resource management issues and knowledgeable about local opportunities and constraints to employment.
2. **The Task Force should review the proposals of this report and develop an action plan.** The action plan should define the objectives to be reached, the activities to be undertaken, the responsibilities for action, and criteria for success. The action plan should be communicated widely to IRRI managers, staff, and spouses. It would also be useful to submit the action plan to the Board for its review and endorsement since their support may be need to implement new policies in the future.

3. **The action plan should be implemented over the course of the next two years.** Action should be taken as quickly as possible on those recommendations which are relatively easy and low cost to implement. This will help to maintain momentum and reaffirm both management's and spouses' commitment to the issue.
4. **Administration and the Spouse Committee on Employment should jointly monitor progress and assess the outcome of implementing the plan.** Monitoring ensures institutional learning. After two years, IRRRI should review its progress in implementing the action plan and reassess its policies and practices for spouse employment in light of that review

In conclusion, it should be stressed for managers, staff, and spouses alike, that dealing creatively with spouse employment concerns is a new challenge in human resource management. It is a challenge facing many organizations in both the public and private sector (Blair, 1992). There are few "right" answers or "tried and true" solutions. Organizations and individuals committed to addressing these issues need to be willing to take some risks, experiment, and monitor the outcomes of these experiments in order to develop a set of policies and practices which are appropriate for the organization and responsive to spouses needs.

ANNEX 1: PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

IRRI Spouses

Dr. Pia Bennet
Ms. Lucille van de Berg
Dr. Emeliana Bernardo
Ms. Faizun Bhuiyan
Ms. Elane Bottrell
Ms. Millie Bronson
Ms. Susan Cassman
Ms. Pam Denning
Ms. Sue Fischer
Mr. Tim Hein
Ms. Patti Heong
Ms. Darlene Hunt
Ms. Christine Ingram
Ms. Kate Kirk
Ms. Nynke Kropff
Ms. Harwant Khush
Ms. Ann-Marie Lampe
Ms. Brigitte Matthews
Ms. Tita Mew
Mr. John Miller
Ms. Karen Moody
Ms. Uschi Neue
Ms. Jean Nunn
Ms. Jing Tan Peng
Ms. Kumari Pingali
Ms. Marlene Quick
Dr. Chantal Savary
Ms. Margaret Setter
Ms. Kini Singh
Ms. Le Thu Nguyet Tuong
Ms. Siew-Fing Wong
Ms. Inderjeet Virmani
Ms. Crissan Ziegler

Spouses attending workshops but not interviewed

Ms. Parveen Hossain
Ms. Virginia Matheny
Ms. Francoise Prot
Ms. Prasanna Raab

IRRI Senior Management/Administration

Dr. Klaus Lampe, Director General
Dr. Nanding Bernardo, Deputy Director General, International Programs
Dr. Ken Fischer, Deputy Director General, Research
Mr. Michael Goon, Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration
Dr. Benjamin Vergara, Director of Administration

IRRI Staff

Dr. John Bennet
Dr. Ken Cassman
Ms. Carolyn Dedolph
Dr. Guy Kirk
Dr. T.W. Mew
Dr. Susan McCouch
Dr. Rebecca Nelson
Dr. Shaobing Peng
Ms. E.C. Ramos
Dr. Upendra Singh
Dr. Paul Teng
Dr. Sarah Tisch
Ms. Lina Vergara
Dr. Robert Ziegler

Information from interviews with IRRI managers and staff conducted by Dr. Sarah Ladbury during her study on recruitment were also incorporated into the analysis.

Other people interviewed

Ms. Josafina Prain, Spouse of CIP staff member
Mr. Charles Coe, Manager, Human Resource Division, Asian Development Bank
Mr. Victor P. Laratin, Senior Partner, Angara, Abello, Concepcion, Regalia & Cruz
Ms. Victoria Loanzon, Attorney-at-Law, Angara, Abello, Concepcion, Regalia & Cruz

ANNEX 2: KEY DESCRIPTORS OF SPOUSES INTERVIEWED

Number of spouses interviewed = 31

Sex

93% female; 7% male

Region of Origin

29% North American
23% South East Asian
19% European
16% South Asian
13% Australian/Pacific

Age

27% 25-34 years
48% 35-44 years
19% 45-54 years
6% 55+ years

Children residing at IRRI

42% no children
58% children at IRRI

Highest degree

16% High school
45% Bachelors
29% Masters
10% PhD or advanced professional degree (eg. MD)

Years at IRRI

19% <= 1 year
46% 1-4 years
16% 5-9 years
19% 10+ years

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NOTES

- 1 Based on discussions with Atty. Victoria V. Loanzon of Angara, Abello, Concepcion, Regala. Information should be verified and legal advice should be sought before changing visa status.
- 2 The Asian Institute for Management has a special program for women in management which could be of specific interest to many IRRI spouses. The program is headed by Victoria Licuanan.
- 3 See D. Merrill-Sands and P. Sachdeva. "Status of Internationally-Recruited Women in the International Agricultural Research Centers of the CGIAR: A Quantitative Perspective." CGIAR Gender Program, Working Paper No 1, 1992. Washington DC: The World Bank, CGIAR Secretariat.
- 4 See A. Gibbens. "Two Career Science Managers:." *Science*, vol. 255, 13 March 1992.
- 5 For an expansion of this argument, see M. Blair, "Spouse Employment in Organizaitons Around the World: A ToolKit for Developing Policies and Practices". CGIAR Gender Program Working Paper, No 2., 1992. Washington DC: The World Bank, CGIAR Secretariat.
- 6 Source: Personnel Policies and Procedures for Internationally-Recruited Staff, IRRI, 1991, section 5.6.
- 7 IITA is currently experimenting with spouses having a shared position in plant pathology and CIP has recently hired a couple for a joint appointment.
- 8 These include researcher positions as well as lab technicians, administrative and clerical staff, etc.
- 9 ISNAR has been working for two years with other international organizations in the Netherlands to encourage the Dutch government to relax restrictions on employment of non-EEC members. Their concerted efforts appear to now be yielding results.