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CENTRAL AMERICAN CORSO

"Volunteer Action and the Family in a Changing Society"

San Francisco de Veraguas

Panama

May 13-29, 1972

FINAL REPORT

FOR INTERNAL INFORMATION ONLY - OEF

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## I BACKGROUND

The Central American Curso was the third in a series of three cursos held in Latin America with the technical assistance of the Overseas Education Fund in the Spring of 1972. The curso grew out of the recommendations of OEF egresadas that top priority be given to in-country training programs which would permit wider dissemination of the concepts and techniques utilized in OEF programs.

### Objectives

The general objectives and guidelines, as well as the dates for the Cursos were developed by the Curso Sub-Committee\* during the fall of 1971. It was agreed that there would be two national Cursos in South America and a Regional Curso to include Central America, Panamá and the Dominican Republic. Because of the distant needs and realities of the various countries, each Curso would have a separate design within the framework of the general guidelines developed by the Sub-committee. It was planned that the OEF egresadas would have as great an in-put as possible into the organization and planning of the Cursos.

The Curso Sub-committee felt that in each country where a Curso was to be held it would be desirable to work with local groups, with which OEF could coordinate its Curso-related activities. Ideally, these groups would include organizations dedicated to community service and development, as well as OEF egresadas.

The specific objectives of the Curso as elaborated by the OEF Sub-Committee for the Cursos were:

- 1) To offer the opportunity for advanced training to persons of Central America, Panamá, and the Dominican Republic who had had some previous professional or voluntary experience and training.
- 2) To achieve an exchange of ideas and experiences during the training, exploring and using local resources in order to apply theory to action.
- 3) To encourage the training of persons who are active in the development of their communities.

On the recommendation of the Field Representatives, the Curso Sub-Committee established the policy that for the Central American Curso each country would raise the funds needed for the participation of its representatives, and if they were unable to obtain the necessary amount, OEF would assist with transportation expenses. Administratively, the responsibility for managing the funds allotted by OEF for the Curso was handled by the Field Representative who worked most closely with the Organizing Committee in Panamá.

\*Sub-Committee Members: Marguerite Crimmins, Chairwoman; Gretel Clark; Lorita Fisher; Katherine Massel.

### Host Country Selection

The selection of the host country for the Central American Curso was influenced by several factors. Due to the strained political climate still existing between Honduras and El Salvador, neither country was considered as a possibility. Guatemala and Nicaragua were not selected because the former had been the site for the OEF Curso in 1969, and the latter had hosted the Central American Workshop in 1970.

OEF egresadas in Costa Rica and Panamá expressed interest in hosting the Curso. However, since the Ad Hoc Committee for the Regional Civic Center was to hold its preliminary meeting in San José, Costa Rica, Panamá was chosen as the site for the Curso.

### Co-Sponsorship: Organizing Committee

The OEF egresadas of Panama participated as co-sponsors of the Curso. At the beginning of preparations early in the fall of 1971, the Panamanian egresadas met to decide whether to accept the responsibility of co-sponsorship. Initially they indicated interest in the role of hosts only. After several meetings they agreed to assist in both the planning and implementation of the Curso.

In November 1971, when Mrs. Joyce Hoyt, and Dr. Graciela Quan met with the egresadas of Panamá, they exchanged ideas about the Curso, discussed its financing and heard reports on possible training sites. In a trip through the six Central American countries they received suggestions for the Curso theme.

In December 1971, the OEF Panamanian egresadas organized themselves as the "Comité Organizador" (Organizing Committee), and selected Sra. Marta de Chanís as the Coordinator. They also designated several working committees including Hospitality, Finance, Participant Selection (of the Panamanian participants), Public Relations, and Program.

In February 1971, together with the Technical Team, the Organizing Committee prepared the guide for the pre-Curso study. The Organizing Committee met periodically with OEF Representatives to review details related to the Curso. The committee collaborated in all administrative aspects of the Curso and in recreational activities within the program.

A major part of the work of the Panamanian egresadas involved raising funds for the financial support of the Panamanian participants and for expenses for hosting the Curso. They were able to obtain funds from several private enterprises and civic organizations, and from AID/Panamá, which contributed \$1000 based on a budget of projected expenses submitted by the Committee.

### National Coordinating Committees

In October 1971 each country was asked to form a Coordinating Committee, which, in collaboration with other persons and agencies in the country, would be in charge of the search for and selection of candidates for the Curso. The Coordinating Committees were responsible for the identification

of candidates to be interviewed by the OEF Field Representative, and to make the final selection with her. Each Committee also had the task of raising funds for the room and board (\$100) and transportation of the country's participants in the Curso. The Field Representative provided consultation to the Committees on fund raising. The Coordinator of each Committee served as the link with the Organizing Committee in Panamá.

### Technical Team

The staff for the Curso included Ligia Jaén, OEF Latin American Field Representative, Graciela Quan, OEF Central American Field Representative and Sandra Wishner, Coordinator for OEF 1972 Cursos. In accordance with one of the stated objectives of the Curso that it also provided further training for participants in past OEF programs, the training team included three egresadas from Panamá.

Criteria for selection of egresadas on the Technical Team, as elaborated by the Curso Sub-Committee were: Candidates should have:

- participated in a U.S.-based OEF Training Program or in the Curso in Guatemala in 1969;
- demonstrated responsibility and the desire to participate more fully in community activities, with the necessary time to do so;

availability to join the team preferably for one week, but a minimum of two days before the Curso begins, participate throughout the duration of the Curso, and remain if possible for one day of post-Curso evaluation.

Although there were several egresadas interested in participating, a complete Technical Team could not be formed for the duration of the Curso due to personal, work, and study schedules. Nevertheless, the following egresadas joined the staff for the time indicated: Sra. Marta de Chanís (3 1/2 days), Sra. Adeline de Larroche (5 days), and Sra. Carmen de Navarro (5 days). All three had been active on the Organizing Committee in the preparation for the Curso, and contributed to the post-Curso evaluation meeting of the Technical Team on May 29th.

### Curso Preparations

In meetings in Washington during the first week of January 1972, the staff selected the Curso theme, "Voluntary Action and the Family in a Changing Society," which incorporated the suggestions made by the egresadas. Immediately a letter was sent to key egresadas in each country announcing the theme, details of the Curso, and the OEF Technical Team members who would work in the program.

The OEF Technical Team, Program Officer, and Program Assistant also drafted the Curso prospectus at that time. One Field Representative traveled to the participating countries during the final weeks of January to deliver the prospectus to the Coordinating Committees and to discuss Curso plans. The Coordinating Committees and Field Representative decided the dates for selection

interviews and final selection in each country. They agreed to send to Panamá all the applications along with a list of the selectees and to continue communication with the Organizing Committee.

In February the three OEF staff members on the Technical Team met again in Panamá to prepare the macro-design of the Curso, the "opinionnaire" (a program tool used during the Curso), to meet with the Organizing Committee to discuss Curso plans and prepare with them the guide for the pre-Curso study to be carried out in the home countries.

Communication among the Coordinating Committee, the members of the technical team, and the Washington office was maintained throughout the Spring. Two weeks prior to the opening date of the Curso, the team arrived in Panamá to finalize Curso plans.

### Training Site

During early fall of 1971 the Panamanian egresadas investigated several possible sites for the Curso, including EMAUS, ICI (Instituto Cooperativo Interamericano), Santa Clara, and El Valle. In November they discussed costs, facilities and accessibility of these places. An OEF Field Representative who was familiar with the facilities of each, suggested the Centro de Capacitación Central Juan XXIII as an alternative. After some discussion the egresadas chose this Centro as the site for the Curso.

The Centro Juan XXIII is located in San Francisco de Veraguas, a rural community about 4 1/2 hours from Panamá City. Although the Centro lies within the town itself, the atmosphere is quiet and conducive to undistracted work. The Centro has ample, well-ventilated conference rooms, large dormitories, and provides bedding and laundry facilities. The food is abundant and varied, with a pleasant and hard-working kitchen staff.

### Participant Profile

Selection criteria, as developed by the Curso Sub-Committee were:  
Individual candidates should:

- be active and have initiative in organizations within the community;
- have the capacity to work with all socio-economic levels within the community;
- have participated in training courses and worked in programs of organizations with which OEF has collaborated, or in programs or organizations with similar purposes. (Egresadas of U.S.-based OEF programs and the 1969 OEF Curso in Guatemala were not eligible);
- be responsible persons who have motivation and adequate time to participate actively in community activities;

General guidelines of the Curso Sub-Committee recommended that the total group should be representative of various socio-economic levels within the region. Individuals were to be considered without reference to formal education, and without political, social, religious, or racial discrimination

Originally, OEF had planned that a total of 28 participants would attend the Curso, which would include 4 representatives from each of the six countries of Central America and the Dominican Republic. Last minute problems prevented the presence of the four Dominicans and one participant from El Salvador. A total of 24 participants attended the Curso, including a fifth representative of Panamá who was from a rural town near the training site.

In view of the fact that the theme for the Curso was "Voluntary Action and the Family in a Changing Society," the Technical Team urged the Coordinating Committee to include youths and adults, males and females from both rural and urban areas among the four participants from each country. Most of the teams included two adults and two youths. However, only one participant was male, and only one came from a rural setting. All but one of the participants were engaged in voluntary activities in their communities.

Ages of the participants ranged from 17 to 65 years. Five participants were teenagers; six participants were in their twenties; eight participants in their thirties; four participants in their forties; and one participant was 65. Marital status of participants included 11 single, 10 married, and 3 divorced. Eleven of the participants were either students or housewives. The 13 gainfully employed participants included 3 social workers, 3 secretaries, 2 nurses, 2 teachers, 1 librarian, 1 journalist, and one textile worker.

#### Pre-Curso Study

The Technical Team, with the in-pit of the Organizing Committee in Panamá, prepared a pre-Curso study guide which was given to each principal and alternate prior to the Curso. The first section of the study consisted of a general statistical survey of national census data for 1950, 1960 and 1970, which would demonstrate changes in the family such as the number of childless wives, working mothers, and types of institutions involved in family welfare. The second part of the study involved an overview of a special volunteer family program, which they considered the most effective in their countries.

In the case of most of the participating countries, not only the participants and alternates worked on the project, but members of the national Coordinating Committees and others also helped. This pre-Curso study served as a basis for certain activities during the Curso, initiated participant team work before the Curso, and involved others in the work as well.

## II PROGRAM

### Objectives

The Central American Curso had as its theme "Voluntary Action and the Family in Our Changing Society," in response to the concern expressed by the egresadas of the participating countries about the pressures on the family resulting from rapid social change and what citizens can do to deal with the effects of these changes. In incorporating these suggestions, as well as the objectives for the 1972 Curso series elaborated by the OEF Curso Sub-Committee, into the program design, the Technical Team identified the following specific objectives for the Central American Curso:

- Study of the social, economic, cultural and civic changes that effect the family today;
- Consideration of problems that are produced in the family as a result of these changes;
- Development of positive attitudes toward the challenge that the present day family situation offers to voluntary action;
- Exploration of the possibilities for positive action in dealing with said problems.

The rationale for the methodology implemented throughout the Curso stemmed from the belief that an adult learns most effectively when he/she has the opportunity to identify learning needs and interests, define the learning objectives, and is actively involved in achieving those objectives. In a broader context, this philosophy implies that the most effective social change occurs when a community can identify its own needs, develop its own action goals, and participate in a collective effort to attain those goals.

### Participant Expectations

In consonance with the philosophy of participatory learning described above, on the first day, the participants listed their expectations from the Curso. The expectations, which fell into two categories included:

#### Family issues

- action programs dealing with social problems in the family
- the generation gap
- communication between generations
- rebellion of youth against adult standards
- unification of adult/youth standards
- development of pre-and adolescent personality
- promotion of parental responsibility

- family education
- sex education
- recreational programs
- demographic problems

#### Organizational Techniques

- how to organize work groups
- how to maintain membership interest
- how to work more effectively
- motivation and recruitment of members
- leadership development
- coordination of voluntary organizations
- extension of affiliates
- how to encourage the support of authorities
- preparation for back-home application
- awareness of national problems

These expectations were then incorporated into the planning of daily activities.

#### Program Components

The framework of the Curso was designed to give the participants experience in the study and analysis of change affecting the family; in group dynamics through the use of human relations exercises to acquire increased knowledge of themselves and of the dynamics of groups, which could be applied to group work in their communities; organizational techniques which contribute to more effective functioning of organizations; and in action techniques through the practice of methods which lead to community action.

Although the components were intermeshed throughout the program, rather than in self-contained units, in general it may be stated that the emphasis of the first week was on developing insight into and understanding of changes in the family and an introduction to group dynamics. This served as a background to the second week's accent on translation of theory into action through a study of programs that relate to the family, and experiencing organizational techniques which promote effective approaches to action. Examples of Curso activities through which these components were developed are described below.

#### Study and analysis of change in the family

At the beginning of the Curso the participants completed a questionnaire designed by the Technical Team to surface attitudes toward various family-related

issues. The "opinionnaires" were then tabulated to ascertain attitudinal differences among the various age groups. The differences were explored in group discussions throughout the program.

Early in the first week, the participants divided themselves up into committees according to individual interests. These were composed of one representative from each country. Each committee addressed itself to a study and analysis of changes affecting the family and the problems resulting from these changes in one of four areas: social, economic, educational, and cultural. Each group shared its conclusions with the other groups and a resource person, Dr. Roberto Arosemena, a sociology professor from the University of Panamá. An exchange with Dr. Arosemena on the topics of "Marriage as a Family Base" and "Barriers and Communication among the Generations" added further depth to the study and analysis of change in the family.

Through a panel discussion on "New Foci of Family and Youth," experts in the fields of religion and social work explored conflict among the generations resulting from alternative life styles, as well as programs involving youth in creative ways.

#### Group Dynamics

The methodology of the Curso demonstrated and gave practice in ways of working with groups according to their needs and through use of internal and external resources. Through participation in small discussion groups and work teams, and analyses of these experiences, participants gained insight into their individual strengths and weaknesses in participation, and into factors which lead to effective group work. Through exercises such as the "Fishbowl", "Know How to Listen", and "Three Dimensions" participants also probed some of the issues encompassed by the theme. Thus, in the "Three Dimensions" exercise, all participants under the age of twenty-five were asked to form a subgroup, all those over 35 formed a second sub-group, while those in between joined the age group with which they most identified. Each group then brainstormed for adjectives which they felt best described three aspects: 1) how we see ourselves, 2) how we see the other group, 3) how we think the other groups see us. The ensuing discussion on the similarities and differences of opinion between the two groups pointed out differences of perception, stereo-typing, and also surfaced similarities between the two age groups which neither group had previously been aware of.

#### Organizational Techniques

Through the "Sandwich" exercise, participants expressed their learning needs and personal resources, and explored the importance of identification of needs and resources within an organization. Several opportunities for participation in small discussion groups and work teams gave insight into the effective organization of committees and their value in increasing participation and productivity in organizations. The simulation exercise of creating an organization aided in developing awareness of and skills in determining organizational goals and objectives, use of the committee system and suggestions for program, funding, membership and public relations activities. Sociodramas introduced the utilization of the techniques as a communication medium in organizations and communities.

### Action Techniques

From the time of the initial consultation with egresadas in the Fall of 1971 and during the staff planning sessions prior to the Curso, the underlying urgency for training to emphasize action was very much in evidence. The program component focusing on action techniques integrated this felt need into the Curso experience. After the groundwork had been laid during the first week to bring out participant expectations, to study and analyze changes affecting the family, to experience and reflect on group work, the activities of the second week were designed to go from theory to action. As part of the pre-Curso study, the participants from each country investigated a model program in their country which related to the family in several cases with the support of the alternates and members of the Coordinating Committee. The participants, invested an impressive amount of time and effort in developing the studies, which were on: the "Sociedad Protectora del Niño" (Society for Children Protection) of Guatemala; "Club de Amas de Casa" (Housewives' Club), a national Church-sponsored movement for development in Honduras; the "Centro de Rehabilitación Familiar Cristiana" (Christian Family Rehabilitation) of El Salvador; the "Instituto Juan XXIII de la Universidad Centro Americana" in Nicaragua which has been organized by youth to work in community action programs in Open #3, a flood relief area of Managua; "IIIAS: Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social" (Mixed Institute of Social Assistance) of Costa Rica which works primarily with low-cost housing; and the "Comité de Salud" (Health Committee) of San Miguelito, Panamá, which involves citizens in a government-sponsored health program.\* The team from each country presented its findings and copies of the studies for back-home reference.

Through the simulation mentioned previously, participants increased their knowledge and skills in defining the criteria for the selection of action programs. They then subjected several proposed action projects to the criteria analysis to determine which one would be most effective and realistic in achieving the objectives of the organization. The experience of analyzing and discussing the steps in the program planning process complemented the learning experience of these activities.

### Other Aspects of the Curso

Several films relating to themes in the program were shown in the evening, and were opened to residents of San Francisco. Resource materials and work developed by the participants were mimeographed and distributed throughout the Curso. Included in the program were recreational activities such as a visit to the Canal, a trip to Mata de los Caballeros, which was celebrating its 450th anniversary, and a farewell dinner offered by the Panamanian egresadas in Panama City. Although the Curso was relatively short, a warm and friendly relationship with the inhabitants of San Francisco quickly developed. The evening prior to the departure of staff and

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\*Reports of the Pre-Curso studies are on file in the OEF Office

participants to Panamá City, the residents of the town held a dinner and a lively farewell party for all those related to the Curso.

Following is a schematic overview of the Curso program. A further explanation of the Curso activities appears in Appendix A.

\* \* \*

CENTRAL AMERICAN CURSO PROGRAM OUTLINE

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
13 -Arrival of participants -Over-night stay in Panama City	14 -Travel to San Francisco -Inauguration -Orientation	15 -Interviews among participants -Expectation -Needs & Resources -Opinionnaire -Exploration of concept of family -Tabulation of opinionnaire	16 -Analysis and report on tabulation of opinionnaire -Identification of themes for discussion	17 -Fishbowl Exercise -Study of Changes in the family in small groups -Formation of Committee for utilization of resource person	18 -Presentation of group studies -Discussion with Dr. Arosemena on Marriage	19 -Discussion with Dr. Arosemena on generation gap -Analysis of study groups' presentations and functioning -Evaluation of activities with Dr. Arosemena -Know How to Listen Exercise & Analysis -Three-Dimensions Exercise -Film
20 -Continuation of Three Dimensions -Free Afternoon -Visit to Datá de los Caballeros anniversary celebration -Party for participants & Staff given by community	21 -continuation of Three Dimensions -Sociodramas on conclusions -Film	22 -Presentation of action programs relating to family by each country -Sharing of the value of the investigative experience -Intermediate Evaluation of Course with OEF-contracted evaluators	23 -Panel on "New Foci on Youth and Family" -Small group discussion with resource persons on panel	24 -Reflection & Evaluation of panel as a group technique -Simulation activity -Dinner given to participants & staff by community	25 -Analysis of the simulation activity -Discussion of concepts add types of leadership -Discussion on programming in voluntary associations -Discussion on steps in the planning process -Film	26 -Open Forum -Information on OEF -Opinionnaire -Activity "Packing our suitcases" -Feedback of Opinionnaire Results -Distribution of resource materials -Written evaluation -Hidden Treasure -Closing Ceremonies -Farewell party given by community
27 -Return to Panama City -Trip to Canal	27 (Cont.) -Free Afternoon -Farewell	28 -Return to Panama City				

### III. EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

#### Methods of Evaluation

Throughout the Course, participants orally evaluated the program activities, and discussed their back-home application. A committee of participants prepared and distributed an evaluation form regarding the work of the four committees (Economic, Educational, Social, and Civic changes affecting the family), and the utilization of the resource system, Dr. Robert Rosemberg.

Early in the second week of the program (May 22), an afternoon was set aside for an evaluation of the first week and to discuss the use of the remaining days of the Course. Participants met in groups of 10, each with an OIE contracted evaluator, Mr. James Eyles, Mr. George Landwehr, and Miss Carmen Lopez. The results of the group sessions were shared with the Technical Team and served as a guideline for the rest of the Course.

A final evaluation of the Course was held on Friday, May 25, through an 8:00 am Open Forum, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm "Facting Out Substances", 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm evaluation questionnaire.

#### Open Forum

The Open Forum of the last day of the Course provided a means for the participants to obtain clarification of the subject of the Course, of its being topics not previously covered in the Course. One participant suggested that it would be desirable for all recommendations from the Course to date back to their organizations. The group agreed to discuss, develop and implement recommendations to the organizations. The results of the Open Forum and the activities resulting from the Open Forum were discussed at length during the 10:00 am to 12:00 pm "Facting Out Substances" session. Recommendations were discussed in detail and a list of recommendations was prepared.

It was noted that a positive reaction to the use of the Open Forum by participants was noted. The Open Forum by the participants was followed by an evaluation of the Open Forum by the participants. The results of the evaluation of the Open Forum are listed in the evaluation questionnaire.

#### ACTIVITY: "Facting Out Substances"

Participants evaluated the effectiveness of the members each to discuss with their fellow members from the Course. In a total group session, each participant indicated the principal item from the Course which they would like to use with their family and family, etc., not professional or volunteer work, and for community.

Personal learning objectives that were mentioned included greater understanding to bridge the generational gap, personal changes, friendship among the students, increased skills in critical analysis, self-evaluation, and communication.

Participants indicated several techniques of working with groups, [Organizational] programming, motivation, and specifics such as brainstorming and the opinionnaire, would be helpful in their voluntary and/or professional

work. One nurse stated that techniques used in the Curso would be applicable in her efforts to improve the relations between staff and patients. A teacher felt she could apply many techniques to improving communication with her own students. Many expressed a desire to return with the ideas on techniques acquired in the Curso to bring about new ways of working in their organizations.

On the community level, some participants indicated specific learning experiences in the areas of housing, nutrition, and minority groups. Most noted increased personal motivation, enthusiasm, optimism, and faith in voluntary action.

### Final Written Evaluation

A three-page evaluation questionnaire was distributed in the final session of the Curso, and participants were asked to complete the questionnaire individually. All twenty-four participants completed and returned the questionnaire.

The evaluation instrument was developed in five parts which included: 1) general reaction to the Curso; 2) extent to which the 21 expectations of the participants were achieved and how; 3) aspects or activities of the Curso considered to be of greatest utility in voluntary and or professional work; 4) recommendations for future Cursos; 5) comments on the live-in experience, the training site, and the duration of the Curso.

#### --General reactions to the Curso

Using a Likert scale of 1 (very little value) to 5 (great deal of value), the participants indicated their general reaction to the Curso. Twenty-three participants gave the Curso experience as a whole a rating of 5, while one did not answer. The responses to this question can be considered reliable because in subsequent numerical ratings of the expectations, 92% of the participants utilized a full range of responses (1 to 5), with only 2 participants creating a "halo effect" by rating all items 5.

#### --Extent to which the expectation of the participants were achieved

This section of the evaluation requested participants to evaluate the realization of the expectations they had expressed the first day of the Curso. The rating scale again was of 1 (very little value) to 5 (great deal of value).

TABLE I

### REALIZATION OF PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS

<u>Mean rating</u>	<u>Expectation</u>
4.95	How to organize work groups
4.95	How to work more effectively
4.90	Preparation for return back-home
4.79	Action programs dealing with social problems of the family

<u>Mean rating</u>	<u>Expectations</u>
4.73	Family Education
4.69	Communication between generations
4.66	How to maintain interest in members
4.65	Generation Gap
4.58	Rebellion of youth against adult standards
4.52	Motivation and recruitment of members
4.38	Unification of adult/youth standards
4.20	Awareness of national problems
4.16	Promotion of parental responsibility
4.13	Leadership development
4.04	Coordination of voluntary organizations
3.95	Recreational programs
3.82	Development of pre-and adolescent personality
3.64	Sex Education
3.36	Motivation of authorities to give support
3.05	Extension of affiliates
2.69	Demographic problems

As shown in the above chart, 15 of the 21 items received a mean rating of considerable value (4 plus). Participants felt the highest realization of their expectations were in how to organize working groups and how to work more effectively.

The expectation which received the lowest rating was that of demographic problems. Although not studied specifically in the Curso, this aspect was included in the pre-Curso study, and the reports of the six countries were distributed to all participants as resource materials to be reviewed upon return to their communities.

#### --Aspects or Activities of Greatest Utility

Eight of the participants indicated that the techniques of motivation, recruitment, and maintenance of members had been the aspects of the Curso of greatest utility. Seven indicated organizational techniques in general. Several techniques to facilitate communication were mentioned. Some participants indicated high satisfaction with the overall methodology of the Curso which used the resources of the participants and involved them in the development of the program.

#### --Recommendations for Future Cursos

Several participants suggested that similar Cursos should be held with greater frequency, and that they should be national rather than multinational.

Four felt that the schedule was too full, work too intensive, and that there should be more recreational activities.

In regard to pre-Curso arrangements, participants had several suggestions. They felt a need for improved communication with the coordinating committees in each country. Others recommended that persons selected as alternates should help in the pre-Curso study. One participant suggested that a follow-up questionnaire should be sent to determine the extent to which the learning experience was applied in their countries.

--Live-in Experience, Site, Duration of the Curso

Participants were enthusiastic about the live-in experience as a means to develop friendships, exchange knowledge, and learn of the countries represented. As to the site of the Curso, although several participants indicated concern about the isolation of the Centro, and the lack of telephone and telegraph communication, the overall reaction was very positive. Seven participants indicated that the climate (extreme heat) was often unbearable.

Nearly half of the participants felt that the Curso should have been longer. Nine felt the duration was appropriate, although it could have been longer, but family obligations would not have made their attendance possible.

Attitudinal Change Indicated by Opinionnaire

Although the opinionnaire was used primarily as a technique to open discussion on family-related topics, it also served as one measurement of attitudinal change resulting from the Curso experience. In comparing the before and after responses, many dramatic changes in attitude on specific items introduced in the opinionnaire were indicated by individual participants. In terms of the total group means, for purposes of this report changes of .6 or more were explored.<sup>1</sup> Following is a table of attitudinal change reflected by the Opinionnaire.

TABLE II

ATTITUDINAL CHANGE: PRE-AND-POST-OPINIONNAIRE

	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Difference</u>	
Tend to:	2.6 (agree)	3.8 (disagree)	1.2	Parents always try to know what their children think about fundamental issues that interest them.
Tend to:	2.9 (agree)	4.0 (disagree)	1.1	For the welfare of the children it is better that an incompatible marriage be maintained that ended in divorce

<sup>1</sup> Numerical scale of responses was: 1) total agreement; 2) partial agreement; 3) no opinion or neutral; 4) partial disagreement; 5) total disagreement. (Midpoint: 3.5)

	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Difference</u>	
Tend to:	3.3 (agree)	4.1 (disagree)	.8	Children, before being in agreement or disagreement with the ideas of their parents, analyze them and try to understand the reasons on which they are based
Tend to:	4.4 (agree)	3.6 (disagree; almost neutral)	.8	It is preferred that grandparents or aged parents live with others of their own age in retirement communities or homes for the aged than live with their children.
Tend to:	3.4 (agree)	4.1 (disagree)	.7	Children raised by mothers who do not work outside of the home are more socially adjusted than children of working mothers.
Tend to:	3.1 (agree)	3.7 (disagree)	.6	The problems of youth today are attributable to the lack of discipline in the home.

It appears from these statements, and others in the opinionnaire where there was less change relating to the same fundamental issues, that participants became more aware of the lack of open communication between parents and children, more accepting of the working mother, more encouraging of independence of children, and more democratic/equal relations between parent and child, and husband and wife.

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## IV EVALUATION BY STAFF

### --Timing

The staff felt that there should have been more uninterrupted time spent in planning in Washington in January and fuller incorporation of the Washington based staff in the program. Staff felt there had been sufficient time for contact with the coordinating committees, and in participant selection. The trips that the two OEF Field Representatives made to each of the participating countries greatly facilitated the execution of the Curso.

Not enough time had been given to the participants to develop their pre-Curso investigations. Although the investigation guide was sent to the Coordinating Committees two months prior to the Curso, there were delays in reproducing and distributing the guide to the participants who were selected.

### --Participant Selection

The staff was pleased that the final participant group included proportional representation of youth and adults, and would recommend continued emphasis on the inclusion of youth in OEF programs. There was disappointment, however, that more males did not participate, although the one male participant had no problems in incorporating himself into the group. It appears that several male candidates were considered in the selection, but they were not able to obtain leave of absence from their universities. The staff also felt the need for selecting more alternates in the case that principals could not attend.

A serious problem resulted from the slow notification of the individuals selected by the Coordinating Committees. In some cases the Committees did not notify the individuals until a few days before their departure. Another problem was identified as a result of the funding policy. Since the Coordinating Committees raised the funds themselves, in some cases they selected "their" candidates, who were not considered by the Field Representatives to be the best choice.

### --Duration of the Curso

The staff felt that the 15 days allotted for the program were adequate. It was recommended that a longer break (free time) be provided after the first week, rather than continued intensive activity throughout the 15 days (with the exception of one half-day) followed by one free day on the last day of the program.

### --Curso Site

The site was generally considered to have been most adequate, with the exception of the communication problems, and the distance from the capital city. The climate was unseasonably hot which at times caused some physical discomfort.

--Committees

All felt that the Organizing Committee of Panamanian egresadas offered an invaluable contribution to the Curso. The Coordinating Committees varied in efficiency from country to country. It was felt that there were communications problems between OEF and both the Organizing and Coordinating Committees, and that many of the problems that occurred could have been minimized by more written communication.

--Technical Team

The team was most pleased in how members had worked together. Although full-time participation of egresadas was desired, it was felt that their "coming and going" was not disruptive. Because of their participation in the Organizing Committee in pre-Curso arrangements, the egresadas were able to incorporate themselves into both the technical team and the participant group with ease. The three egresadas expressed that the Curso experience had been of great value to them, and added that "OEF training really produces a true change in attitudes."

One egresada said that the experience had helped her very much personally and was of benefit to her family. She cited the use of the opinionnaire with her family and the profitable discussion between them afterwards. She also expressed increased self-confidence in her ability in working with groups.

Another egresada strongly recommended incorporation of egresadas in future training programs. She stated that the participants liked the idea that egresadas were part of the staff team. Participants had expressed their admiration to them for volunteering to serve on the team. Others had remarked that they were stimulated by the egresadas' participation since it showed that as ex-participants, the egresadas had learned through their training and were now able to function on a training team to extend their learning to others. Participants also felt that the technical team had been a good model of shared leadership since there was no one member who directed the team.

--Follow-up

The need for follow-up of the participants was strongly felt by the technical team. Continuing contact will be maintained by the Field Representatives in Central America. In short training programs in three countries, participants have been asked to serve as technical team members.

## V RECOMMENDATIONS

### Finance:

1. Firmer guidelines should be established regarding OEF financial assistance to Curso participants. For example, OEF should commit itself to pay travel of two participants from each country.
2. OEF should determine the Curso budget and its category allocations with anticipation in order to more fully orient staff.
3. One member of the staff should continue to be in charge of the Curso budget and its allocations.
4. Participant insurance should be arranged in-country if said services are available.

### Coordination and Communication:

1. One OEF staff member should be available on a full-time basis for one complete month before the Curso to work with the Organizing Committee on all Curso preparations.
2. All decisions made, especially responsibilities, should be communicated in writing to the Coordinating Committees.
3. Communications channels should be established between OEF Washington, Co-sponsor Organizing Committee, Coordinating Committees, and in-country field Representative (s).

### Technical Team:

1. Continue the Technical Team consisting of OEF egresadas and OEF staff starting from initial planning stage.
2. Permit the partial attendance of egresadas on the Technical Team as long as they have been actively working and knowledgeable of Curso plans.
3. OEF should provide the opportunity for upgrading of training skills for technical personnel on a periodic basis and in different fields, and should provide the opportunity to share this learning with other training

### Other:

1. Explore alternatives to the 15-day multi-national Curso; e.g., National cursillos involving urban and rural sectors.
2. Continue the use of the pre-conference studies in-country for the preparation of participants.
3. Secretarial help should be contracted with sufficient time.

APPENDIX A

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CORSO

Saturday, May 13

Afternoon  
and  
Evening

Arrival of the participants

Sunday, May 14

Morning

Travel to San Francisco de Veraguas, with stops in  
Pencm  and Santiago at the homes of OEF graduates.

Afternoon

Inauguration

- Welcome by:

Marta de Chan s, General Coordinator of the Panamanian  
OEF Graduates

Nelson Caballeros, Director of the Centro

A representative of the San Francisco Community

- Inauguration by Miss Sandra Wishner in the name of  
the OEF

Orientation Session

- Creation of an atmosphere of trust and better  
understanding among the participants ("Know your  
Neighbour")

- Information about the Corso and the facilities at  
the Centro, including recreation.

- Group Decision on work schedule:

Sessions from 8:00 to 1:30, and from 3:00 to  
6:30

- Presentation of the schedule on the wall  
(To demonstrate the flexibility of the program  
and its adjustments to the needs of the group).

Monday, May 15

Morning

- Increase in the knowledge of each other among  
participants (Interviews)

- Expectations of the participants (division into  
national groups)

Monday, May 15

Morning

- Synthesis of those expectations (full group)

Afternoon

- Exploration of the personal resources and needs among the participants (sandwich exercise)
- Identification of differences between the generations; introduction of themes of greater interest and basis for measuring change of attitudes in the participants (opinionnaire).
- Exploration of family concept. (individual drawings and general concept of each group formed).

Evening

- Analysis of the family concepts in the area (full group)
- Tabulation of the Opinionnaire (with the cooperation of 17 volunteer participants divided into 5 groups)

Tuesday, May 16

Morning

- Analysis of the tabulation of the opinionnaire (with the same small groups of the previous night)
- Selection of the statements in the opinionnaire which are considered most controversial and of those in which there would appear to be more differences among the categories of participants (special team of 7 who did not participate in the tabulation)

Afternoon

- Report on the result of the tabulation of the opinionnaire (5 groups plus the special team)
- Analysis of the experiences; value and applicability of the opinionnaire (full group)
- Identification of major interest themes to be discussed later (full group)

Wednesday, May 17

Morning

- Introduction to group discussion and practice in participation and observation (Fishbowl exercise)

Afternoon  
and  
Evening

- Study changes in the family and problems resulting from said changes (division into 4 multinational groups: social, economic, cultural, and civic, formed according to the individual interests of the participants)
- Formation of a committee for planning activities of the following day with the resource person. (composed of a member from each work group).

Thursday, May 18

Morning

- Continuation of group work
- Presentation of studies made by the groups with comments from Dr. Arosemena Jaén and his assistant Mr. Virginio Carrera.

Afternoon  
and  
Evening

- Theme Discussion: Marriage as a Family Base (Dr. Arosemena and Mr. Carrera)

Friday, May 19

Morning

- Barriers and communication among generation and rebellion of youth regarding adult criteria (Discussion of Dr. Arosemena with some additions by Mr. Carrera)
- Analysis of the process followed by the work groups the previous day as to their group functioning and the realization of the task (work groups each with consultation from the technical team).

Afternoon

- Evaluation of the work of the committees and the activities with the resource persons.
- Discussion of controversial themes (Exercise: Know how to Listen)
- Sharing and analysis of the above exercise (full group)
- Exploration of perceptions which influence communication between generations. (Exercise: "Three Dimensions" or adaptation of Johari window). (division into 2 groups: youths, adults)

Evening

- Film "Roots of Happiness"

Saturday, May 20

Morning

- Continuation of previous activity "Three Dimension" (in 2 groups)
- Presentation of work of both groups (full group)

Afternoon

- Visit to the City of Natá de los Caballeros, which was celebrating its 450th anniversary.

Evening

- Party offered by the San Francisco Community to the participants.

Sunday, May 21

Morning

- Continuation of activity "Three Dimensions" to analyze the work done, reach conclusions and prepare presentation to the full group (work in two mixed groups: youth and adults)

Sunday, May 21

Afternoon

- Presentation and analysis of the work of each group (socio-dramas)

Evening

- Films: "John without Brains" and "Ignacio"

Monday, May 22

Morning

- Presentation by each national group of the programs of volunteer action related to family, investigated in their countries.

and  
Evening

- Analysis of the importance and utility of this pre-Curso investigation and the process of its development (full group)
- Intermediate evaluation (Division into three groups which worked with James Pines, Carmen Muñoz and Santiago Saldoval, evaluators contracted by OEF).

Tuesday, May 23

Morning

- "New Foci of family and Youth" (Panel formed by Fr. Pedro Moraza, Clarita de Riba and Madre Angela Brannen, (Miss Luz Rodríguez was the moderator)

Afternoon

- Family Functions and Interchange with speakers (Division of the participants into three study groups, with the resource persons rotating).

Wednesday, May 24

Morning

- Reflection on the previous day's activity and evaluation of the panel as a technique. (Full group)
- Experiential learning situation on the organization and functioning of voluntary organizations developed in two stages:
  - a) Adoption of organizational objectives
  - b) Functioning of four basic Committees: Membership, Program, Finances, and Public Relations(Collective simulation: each step included total group meetings and small work groups (4) formed randomly in the first stage, and voluntary in the second. The Technical Team members acted as resource persons).

Afternoon

- Presentation and discussion of the work of the Committees (Full group)

Evening

- Dinner offered by Prof. Evangelina Ruiz, ex-Director of the elementary school of San Francisco.

#### Thursday, May 25

Morning

- Analysis of the simulation and discussion of concepts and types of leadership (full group)
- Programs of volunteer associations: their importance and the criteria for program selection (full group)

Afternoon

- Adoption of a program on "Family Education" using the criteria formulated earlier as a basis (4 groups of 6 participants each)
- Explanation of the steps in program planning (full group)
- Film "Journey through Latin America" (Action programs by Youth in four Latin American Countries)

#### Friday, May 26

Morning

- Reflection on the Curso in general and the techniques used (open forum)
- Information on OEF and its programs (full group)
- Second administration of opinionnaire

Afternoon

- Preparation for return: what the participants take with them from the Curso for themselves, for their professional and volunteer work and for their community (Activity - "Packing Our Suitcases")
- Feedback of opinionnaire results. Contrasting pre- and post Curso attitudes
- Distribution of resource material and books
- Written evaluation of Curso
- Recreational activity - "Hidden Treasurer"
- Closing ceremony and distribution of diplomas (during dinner)
- Farewell party offered by the community

#### Saturday, May 27

Morning

- Return to Panamá City
- Visit to the Panamá Canal

Afternoon

- Free

Evening

- Farewell dinner, offered by the OEF graduates of Panamá, at the home of Mrs. Amy Firfer

#### Sunday, May 28

- Return of participants to their countries

Materials Used in the Course

**Opinionnaire**

The Family, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the Creation of Social  
Environmental Blueprints in a World in Transition

Summary of Participant Expectations

Outcome of Sandwich Board Exercise

Group Observation Sheet

Expectations of Each Country

Participant Address List

Evaluation Form

Results of the Opinionnaire  
- Before-After Mean Scores on Items  
- Difference Between Age Groups

**Civismo**

Economic Changes in the Family

Results of Three-Dimension Exercise

A Declaration of Rights for Volunteers and a Code of Responsibilities

Model Opinionnaire on Women

Results of Simulation Exercise: Reports from Committees

Final Evaluation

Some Considerations Regarding the Strengthening of the Family in Latin  
America

How to Motivate Volunteers for Committee Work

Changes in the Family in the Social Aspect

Developing Leadership

How to Develop and Tabulate an Opinionnaire