



International Science and Technology Institute, Inc.

EVALUATION OF THE PL 480 TITLE II PROGRAM
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
FINAL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
PREFACE TO THE FINAL REPORT	
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Purpose of the Evaluation	1
B. Organization of the Report	1
C. Program Overview	2
II. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS	5
A. Study of MCH/Nutrition	5
1. Organizing the Study - Defining the Issues	5
2. Field Visits to Various Project Types	6
3. Wrapup Sessions and Conclusions	10
4. Suggestions and Activities for MCH Replanning	13
B. Study of Rural Development/Food for Work	17
1. Organization and Management of FFW	18
2. Description and Commentary on Rural Development/ FFW Projects	24
3. Overall Benefits of the FFW Component	31
4. Suggestions and Activities for FFW Replanning	33
III. ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION	44
A. Areas of Common Interest.....	44
B. Significant Differences in Method.....	46
C. Private Voluntary Agencies' Directions and Concerns.....	48
D. USAID Directions with Title II.....	50
E. Overall Program Size and Balance	54

IV. FACILITATING SELF-EVALUATION: SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE METHOD	57
A. Background	57
B. Description	57
C. Critique and Lessons Learned	58
D. Replication	59

ANNEXES (Bound Separately)

A. ANALYSES AND PLANNING PROPOSALS OF PVOs AND GORD AGENCIES

1. Food and an Integrated Community Development Project of SSID
2. Food in a New Community Without Organization (Monte Cristi)
3. CARE Action Plan (Phase I)
4. CRS/Caritas' Action Plan (Phase I)
5. CWS/SSID Assessment (Phase I)
6. Possible Policies of the New Government of the Dominican Republic Regarding Land Reform, Employment, Food Self-sufficiency and Nutrition and Consequences for PVOs
7. Report on the Supplementary Feeding/Nutrition Program of the Dominican Agrarian Institute
8. Proposal for Food Production on Lands of the State Sugar Council (CEA)
9. Memorandum: Planning of the New Title II Program (1984-86)

B. EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS AND MATERIALS

10. Information Collection Guide for MCH/Pre-School Projects
11. Topic Guide for Nutrition Discussions
12. Information Collection Guide for Food for Work Projects
13. Cases for Discussion of Food for Work Projects

C. SPECIAL ANALYSES

14. Nutrition Conditions and Plans in the Dominican Republic
15. The Food in Food for Work

D. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

16. Rural Development (FFW) Projects
17. Program Plan for 1983 - CARE
18. Program Plan for 1983 - CRS
19. Program Plan for 1983 - SSID
20. Combined Program Data for 1981
21. List of Participants

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FVA

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There were hundreds of campesinos and campesinas, regional officials, members of the clergy, project administrators, and field-level technicians who marked our passage, sat through endless questions, dropped their normal work to escort us, and educated us to the realities of rural and urban fringe life in the Dominican Republic. We hope we have reported their circumstances and views accurately.

Now the real work begins, and it falls on the shoulders of those mentioned above and many others to build on the introspection, exchanged information, commitment to change, and those of our suggestions which are feasible, to move to the next stage -- a more effective Title II program based on teamwork and shared goals to improve the conditions of the poor of the Dominican Republic. We are confident that the dedication and talent is there, and hope to receive news of progress from time to time.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AID: Agency for International Development (entire agency, especially Washington Headquarters)

Asentamiento/asentado: Land reform settlement/settler

Batey: Housing area for workers on sugar plantations

CEA: Consejo Estatal de Azucar - State Sugar Council

CSM: Corn-soya milk

Cibao: North-central region of the Dominican Republic

Convite: Traditional system of voluntary shared farm labor in return for food

FFW: Food for Work

IAD: Instituto Agrario Dominicano - Dominican Agrarian Institute

IAF: Interamerican Foundation

INAPA: Instituto Nacional de Agua Potable - National Potable Water Institute

MCH: Maternal-child health

OCF: Other Child Feeding

OPG: Operational Program Grant

PVO: Private Voluntary Agency

SBS: Servicio Básico de Salud - Basic Health Service

SESPAS: Secretaría de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social - Secretariat of Public Health and Social Assistance

USAID: Field Offices of AID - in this case, USAID/Dominican Republic

WSB: Wheat-soya blend

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Method

The main purpose of this two-phased consultancy was to stimulate self-assessment of the Title II program by CARE, Catholic Relief Services and its counterpart Caritas Dominicana, and Church World Service's counterpart Social Service of Dominican Churches, and to develop with them a process for improving the major components, maternal-child health and food for work.

The method in Phase I (June-July, 1982) was to involve representatives of the PVOs, USAID, and GODR agencies as evaluators. Semi-structured workshops were held to develop issues and information collection guides. Interagency teams went to the field and visited 48 projects. Conclusions and plans for action were developed collectively, and a joint replanning effort was designed. A draft report on Phase I was delivered in English and Spanish in September. Phase II (December, 1982) focused on workshops to set standards and objectives for each agency's three-year plan (1984-1986) and operational plan for FY 1984, to chart specific planning activities and technical assistance required to produce those plans by April 1984, and to discuss with USAID/DR the kind of support which the Mission can provide.

The Title II Program

FY 1983 plans called for reaching 229,000 beneficiaries with nine million kilograms of donated food valued at \$2.9 million. CARE operates with government agencies in maternal-child health, and small programs in pre-school feeding and institutional feeding. Caritas, with food received through CRS, has extensive MCH and food for work programs. Social Service of Dominican Churches (SSID), through CWS, has a small program by comparison with the others, focused on MCH and food for work. All three agencies have operated in the Dominican Republic since 1962, evolving from their original roles as relief agencies to increasing involvement in development programs, many of which do not use Title II as a principal resource.

Conclusions and Suggestions

MCH/Nutrition

The expanded evaluation team concluded that the MCH component of the program would benefit by improved targeting on identified areas and groups experiencing or at risk of malnutrition. The variety of recuperation/education models, some of them quite effective, deserve further study in order to identify a combined model of increased effectiveness. MCH feeding centers, most of them dispensing dry rations, can be made more effective by a series of steps, including merging some with health centers, increasing educational activities, and linking them to local food production. Caritas' Applied Nutrition Education Program, which does not use Title II food, is a potential alternative model to replace at least some of the existing PL 480 centers. In all aspects of this component of the program there is a need to improve selection criteria, surveillance and monitoring, and information systems to permit program adjustments and impact evaluation. Closer

collaboration with the Secretariat of Health's nutrition program is considered essential. There needs to be more sharing of experiences among agencies about their pilot projects, both those using and those not using Title II, and documentation of the outcomes when Title II food is phased out, or one approach is changed for another.

Rural Development/Food for Work

SSID and Caritas have placed major emphasis on the goal of developing self-sustaining, problem-solving organizations, using FFW as a major resource. One result has been a growing network of farmers' associations, mothers' clubs, and community development groups. This network provides the basis for extending many kinds of public and private-sector development programs to the community level. In addition, production of both basic foods and commercial crops has been increased, rural infrastructure has been created or repaired, and a host of non-formal educational activities have taken place. The food itself has provided nutritional supplements needed periodically in drought-prone areas or during certain seasons in the farming cycle.

Here, as in the MCH component, there is potential for improvement. Feeder roads projects are in need of technical and material inputs. Agricultural production could be more actively focused on producing basic nutritious foods. Construction projects (housing, potable water) could be more efficiently carried out if PVO staff skills were enhanced. Soil conservation, a major need in the Dominican Republic, could be promoted through basic skills and education with farmers' groups working hillside plots. Community promotion activities need to be focused on development rather than relief.

More broadly, we discussed some of the underlying issues in using food as a resource in rural development. It was agreed that given the increased capacity of the Dominican government to reach the rural poor with development resources, and the PVOs' own evolution toward development work, the PVOs need to reassess their role. This might involve more cooperation with government in sharing the results of innovative projects or ways of working with communities, perhaps doing this under formal but flexible interagency agreements. The PVOs' intent to focus on marginal groups needs to be more carefully planned, again in collaboration with government, so as to reduce duplication or conflict. Caritas, in particular, might strive to give preference to a smaller number of types of projects, developing special capacity in a few widely needed areas, such as water supply or basic food production. In their targeting of FFW, PVOs could identify and classify communities according to a profile or set of indicators. For those groups which have reached a higher level of economic improvement and organizational effectiveness, the PVOs would work to reduce such groups' dependence on food as a supporting resource, and assist them in mobilizing credit, materials, and technical assistance. Poorer communities would receive a different treatment, perhaps a simpler food package, and PVO help in doing less complex projects of general benefit, with emphasis on training and organization of these groups to take on more complex tasks.

The issue of equity in providing food and in the distribution of project benefits was highlighted as a means of avoiding divisiveness among and within communities. The difference in FFW rations provided by SSID and Caritas needs to

be adjusted (reduced or eliminated). In agricultural work crews, care must be taken to assure that many landless workers are not providing food-compensated labor for a few landed farmers. The PVOs should build upon and extend the skills among some of their staff members in designing and carrying out projects with the land-poor.

It was agreed that changes such as the above will have important implications for the training of PVO staffs in such areas as project/project management, community organization focused on the landless, and technical fields like agriculture, soil conservation, road drainage and repair, and construction management. Finally, the PVOs concurred with the need to intensify their search for resources (funds, equipment, technical assistance) to complement Title II food. This in turn would require public awareness of their activities and accomplishments, as well as efforts to improve internal management, monitoring, and evaluation, thus making them more able to attract funds from a variety of sources.

Action for Replanning

At the conclusion of Phase I, each PVO prepared its own general plan of action for replanning its program in light of the conclusions of the evaluation workshops. Building on this, the Phase II workshops prepared a joint set of criteria for change, and an activity plan for the December - April period when 3-year plans will be developed.

The agreed characteristics of a changed program are:

1. Linkage of food for work with nutrition programs;
2. Linkage of the "other programs" of the PVOs with their Title II activities;
3. Focus on increasing family incomes;
4. Reducing the number of projects which don't pay off with ones that do;
5. Directed toward available resources (priorities and programs of government, AID, and other sources);
6. Do fewer things and do them better;
7. Focus on projects that can be terminated successfully; and
8. Innovative, being laboratories of development.

The major objectives of the planning exercise are:

1. Establish criteria for nutrition sub-programs (geographic areas, communities, and beneficiaries) to improve the focus on needs and avoid or eliminate duplication.
2. Clarify the situation with nutrition recuperation/education models in order to adjust or reprogram them, and plan changes in the distribution centers to achieve preventive objectives.
3. Unify the agencies' criteria for the use of Title II food in rural development/FFW.
4. Plan to focus activities in crop/livestock production on the improvement of the family food basket, applying basic soil conservation techniques wherever necessary.
5. Formulate a plan for feeder roads and animal trails.
6. Formulate a plan for construction projects.

Within this common framework, the essence of the agency-by-agency action plans is as follows:

- CARE plans to (a) implement a program of improved supervision and reporting for all of its Title II programs; (b) reorganize and expand the pre-school feeding program; (b) continue planning and action to phase 75% of its Agrarian Reform and Sugar Council feeding centers over to SESPAS health posts; (d) launch a pilot alternative feeding center model with a kitchen, a garden, and a fishpond; (e) continue working with the Sugar Council on food production on selected plantations; and (f) collaborate more closely with the other PVOs in Title II program matters.
- Caritas intends to (a) improve the educational and nutrition impact of its MCH centers; (b) improve targeting of its program on the most needy; (c) improve the internal communications and coordination of Caritas among its different departments and with the dioceses; (d) provide additional technical support and training to its field staff; (e) improve coordination and cooperation with USAID, other PVOs, and government agencies, (f) work to reduce dependency of community groups on Title II food; and (g) improve internal reporting formats and systems to make them more useful.
- SSID's special interests are to (a) improve the quality of feeder road projects through cooperation with USAID and Public Works; (b) take an active role in soil conservation work, upgrading the skills of field staff in this area; (c) tie into the SESPAS nutrition surveillance system, expanding the number of SSID nutrition centers in accordance with SESPAS' guidance and data (while phasing out of MCH dry distribution); and (d) work closely with the other PVOs in establishing priority areas for using Title II resources.

Collaboration and the USAID Role

This report assesses the current state of interagency collaboration. It was found that USAID, the PVOs, and the GODR (as well as the Peace Corps and a number of private Dominican development associations) share many goals, though methods of achieving them may differ. In the search for complementary activities, the terms "collaboration" and "linkage" are preferable to "integration". Integration suggests more control than the PVOs find comfortable, whereas collaboration suggests a more equal partnership. Linkage refers to internal complementarity between the PVOs' Title II activities and their other programs.

The USAID Mission has an opportunity to work more closely with PVOs, supporting their replanning efforts and new program directions in a number of areas where they coincide with the Mission's strategy. This ranges from using influence and leverage with the Dominican government, to more directly funding or technically assisting specific PVO programs in nutrition and rural development, training and education, natural resource and energy conservation, and the like.

At the conclusion of Phase II, the Mission had taken some initial steps to follow up on the evaluation, largely through the Program Office (which handles Title II), and the engineering office, which has a special interest in animal trails and larger feeder roads. Mission executives agreed that the senior staff team should study the outcomes of the evaluation and action plan for reshaping the Title II program, and decide how they can support the planning and the longer-range program itself.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Evaluation

From the outset, the approach to this evaluation was different from others which have been conducted of Title II programs. Responding to initiatives of USAID/DR and the PVOs in Santo Domingo, it was not intended to be an assessment of the impact of programs using Title II food. Rather, the main purpose was to stimulate action to improve the program by the PVOs who manage the resource. During Phase I (June-July, 1982), our three-man consulting team sought to induce self-evaluation, rather than do an evaluation for the agencies. In Phase II (December, 1982), following delivery of our team's report, a specific set of activities was jointly identified, which would lead to a three-year plans to re-direct both the nutrition (MCH) and rural development (food for work) components of the program. The three year plans are to be prepared during the December, 1982 - April 1983 period.

B. Organization of the Report

This final report incorporates the outcomes of both the evaluation and preliminary planning phases of the consultancy. Following the introduction, Section II discusses the two major components of the program, beginning with the MCH/Nutrition portion. This and the rural development/FFW portion are described and analyzed based on the workshop discussions held in Santo Domingo. The consulting team's additional reflections are included as suggestions to guide the re-planning effort. This is followed in each subsection by a presentation of the followup activities which the PVOs, with USAID support, intend to pursue during the coming months.

Section III is an analysis of the potential for increased interagency collaboration among the PVOs, USAID, the GODR, the Peace Corps, and private Dominican development associations and foundations. The main focus is on the continuing evolution of the PVOs from being relief agencies to being development organizations, and on USAID's role and approach to increased integration (or collaboration, as we prefer to call it) of its strategy with PL 480 Title II.

Section IV treats the consulting process which was used to achieve the purposes of this effort. It briefly reviews how the work was carried out, offers a critique of the method, and summarizes recommendations for such evaluations in future which were offered in September to the evaluation office of the Bureau for Peace and Voluntary Assistance. *the Food for*

The extensive number of Annexes serve different purposes. They show the extent to which contributions were made to this study by all of the concerned agencies who participated. Our information collection and workshop guides are included for those with more than a passing interest in the methodology. Special analyses by members of the consulting team are provided as they may benefit both the replanning work in the Dominican Republic, and ongoing work of the Food for Peace evaluation staff. The PVOs' and USAID's program descriptions are offered for those desiring more detail about the program as it was operating at the time.

C. Program Overview

1. The Implementing Agencies

The US PVOs responsible for carrying out the Title II program in the Dominican Republic are CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and Church World Service. CARE works directly with agencies of the Government of the Dominican Republic, including the Secretariats of Health and Education, the Dominican Agrarian Institute, and the State Sugar Council. CRS works through Caritas Dominicana, the social action arm of the Dominican Catholic Bishops. CWS's program is operated by the Social Service of Dominican Churches (SSID). All three US PVOs have additional development activities in addition to their Title II programs. Caritas and SSID also operate projects with resources from multilateral donor agencies and funds from Canada and European countries.

2. Title II Program Components

There are four components to the Title II effort in the Dominican Republic: Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Food for Work (FFW), Pre-School Feeding (PSF) and Other Child Feeding (OCF).

All the of the PVOs participate in the MCH component, which reaches about 54 percent of the Title II beneficiaries for FY 1983. The MCH effort seeks to combat malnutrition by providing supplemental food to young children and pregnant or lactating mothers. This is done by a variety of means, including nutrition education/recuperation centers aimed at treating the identifiably malnourished, and distribution of dry or cooked rations to mothers of families regarded as being at risk, in such areas as urban fringe communities, land reform settlements, state-run sugar plantations, and isolated rural communities subject to drought or other agricultural problems.

Caritas' and SSID's FFW activities account for 37 percent of the FY 1983 beneficiaries. CARE is not presently involved in FFW. The agencies use FFW as stimulus to organize and train community groups, including farmers' associations, mothers' clubs, and literacy groups. The groups engage in a wide range of rural development activities, including crop production, water supply, feeder road construction and maintenance, soil conservation, self-help housing, and construction of community facilities.

The PSF and OCF components are operated by CARE, and account for 9 percent of the Title II beneficiaries. The pre-school feeding is provided in pre-school centers for disadvantaged children. Other Child Feeding is carried out in pediatric and obstetrical wards of public hospitals, orphanages, and special education centers. CARE is planning to divert a portion of its PSF resources to support a new radio education project aimed at out-of-school youth in the southwest.

3. Scope of the Program

CARE and CRS/Caritas operate their nutrition and rural development programs nationwide. CWS/SSID has, since the late 1970s, concentrated its program in the depressed southwest region and the northwest border area.

FY 1983 plans called for reaching a total of 229,000 beneficiaries with 9 million kilograms of food valued at \$2.9 million. At projected levels, and based on prevailing estimates of the incidence of malnutrition in the country, the MCH program can affect about 25% of the at-risk population.

4. Coverage of the Evaluation

During Phase I, two teams were sent to rural areas, one to the southwest, the other to the northwest. Smaller teams also visited sites in the general area of Santo Domingo (central-south and east). A total of 48 project sites (see Table 1 on the next page) were visited, as well as a number of nutrition and rural development projects of special interest which do not rely on Title II food.

TABLE 1
TITLE II EVALUATION - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Project Sites Visited

<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Agency</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>SSID</u>	<u>CARITAS</u>	<u>CARE</u>	
<u>Feeding/Nutrition</u>				
Nutrition Ed. & Recuperation Center	4	2	5	11
Food Distribution (dry & cooked)		3	5 CEA* 2 IAD	10
Pre-School			2	2
Meals at Cost		1		1
<u>Subtotal nutrition</u>				<u>24</u>
<u>Community Development/Food for Work</u>				
Feeder Roads	4	1		5
Ag. Production	3	5	Not	8
Irrigation	1	2		3
Water Supply		1	Applicable	1
Soil Conservation		2		2
Housing		2		2
Integrated Development	1			1
Community promotion		1		1
School construction	1			1
<u>Subtotal community level</u>				<u>24</u>
<u>Agency totals</u>	14	20	14	
<u>Total Sites</u>				48

*CEA - Consejo Estatal del Azucar (State Sugar Council)

IAD - Instituto Agrario Dominicano (Dominican Agrarian Institute)

Others visited not using Title II Food: Plan Sierra, Women's Promotion, Fresh milk distribution center (Sec. of Health), CARITAS nutrition education centers, sugar plantation production unit.

II. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A. Study of MCH/Nutrition

1. Organizing the Study - Defining the Issues

The principal outcome of the initial meetings with the PVOs was the establishment of a working relationship which became a major strength in the evaluation process of the following weeks. In addition, these initial sessions provided baseline impressions on how the PVOs view their programs -- the objectives, operations, strengths and weaknesses. The three agencies were candid in their acknowledgement of past shortcomings and demonstrated that they were already taking steps toward developing more effective programs.

The objectives of the MCH programs as described by each of the agencies emphasized different aspects of the same basic theme represented in the following set of relationships: (a) achieve efficient distribution of the Title II foods, which leads to (b) increased consumption of nutrients by preschool children and pregnant and lactating mothers, which leads to (c) reduced incidence and severity of malnutrition in that part of the population resulting in (d) improved physical and mental development of preschool age children. CARE seemed to give more emphasis to the food distribution (a) while CWS/SSID and CRS/Caritas spoke more often of the developmental aspects (d). This difference in emphasis results in operational variations among the agencies' programs.

The discussion of strengths and weaknesses of the programs of each agency revolved primarily around issues of targeting, monitoring and integration with other services. CARE noted that in the past its selection of communities and beneficiaries has not assured targeting the most needy populations. They plan to improve this situation through close coordination of their program with SESPAS' (Secretariat of Health) rural basic health service program which includes nutritional surveillance. CRS/Caritas commented that their more successful projects were those which integrated Title II food distribution with other services or activities such as their applied nutrition education program and their efforts at community organization. They acknowledged that this type of integration does not occur as frequently as it might. CWS/SSID also mentioned as a principal strength their integration of Title II food distribution with other project services. They commented that they needed a more adequate strategy for following up on the recuperation of malnourished children. Both SSID and Caritas cited the need for more equipment for monitoring nutritional status.

In terms of the MCH-nutrition programs, all three PVOs considered SESPAS as the main government agency with which to collaborate. However, as with the other issues, the degree and form of collaboration contemplated by each of the agencies was different. Where CARE anticipates a fairly close integration of activities, Caritas and SSID look toward exchange of information and complementary activities. The role of the PVOs and their relationship to government development efforts became a major topic for discussion during the evaluation and is considered in Subsection 3(d) below.

During the initial meetings, all three PVOs expressed considerable concern over the reductions in quantity and quality of Title II resources available. The nutritional implications of switching to nonfortified foods was discussed. The concerns expressed during the first meetings were fairly general, but by the final week the agencies were able to state more specifically the implications that these reductions or changes would have on their programs.

2. Field Visits to Various Project Types

The second and third weeks of the evaluation were spent visiting various Title II project sites. The field visit teams were well represented by the USAID Mission, the voluntary agencies, and various government agencies involved in the projects. One of the primary benefits of these field visits was the opportunity for members of organizations with diverse philosophies and responsibilities to observe and discuss a variety of projects with very different characteristics. This cross-fertilization of ideas should be valuable to all of the agencies in designing and modifying programs to be more effective and efficient.

During the second week separate teams visited remote project sites in the northwest and southwest. Day trips in the south central areas (near Santo Domingo) were made during the third week. In addition to the various types of Title II MCH/nutrition projects, an attempt was made to include several non-Title II projects which might serve as alternative or complementary models for meeting the nutrition objective. The information gathered for each project (particularly Title II projects) followed the open ended questions found in Annex 10.

a) Feeding/Nutrition Projects, with and Without Title II

CARE dry food distribution centers: Under the present system CARE has three mechanisms by which it distributes PL480 food rations. In the sugar plantation communities (bateyes) the distribution is administered locally by the State Sugar Council (CEA). In the agrarian land reform settlements it is administered locally by the Dominican Agrarian Institute (IAD). In the other communities a locally selected committee and director administer the program.

Although it varies somewhat from community to community, the principal selection criterion is to include all "needy" families with pre-school children and/or pregnant or lactating women. The definition of needy is not clear and varies depending on availability of food. There is no selection based on, nor monitoring of nutritional status. A systematic method for selecting communities was not apparent.

The proposed new mechanism for distribution should achieve a more effective targeting of beneficiaries. Although final details are pending installation of the newly-elected government, CARE and SESPAS discussions have begun which would seek to assure that in the future all communities will be selected based on their malnourishment rates and individuals will be selected based on their nutritional status.

This is to be achieved through close coordination with the SESPAS basic health services (SBS) program which provides for nutrition monitoring by local health promoters attached to rural health clinics. This also has the potential benefit of providing some nutrition education which is not a part of the current distribution activity.

CARE nutritional education and recuperation centers: In this activity CARE provides PL480 food to nutrition education and recuperation centers which are run by SESPAS in some larger towns and cities. These centers provide feeding (PL480 plus local foods), medical treatment, physical stimulation, and education for the mothers. These services are available to infants (up to two years old) who are severely malnourished (second or third degree). The malnourished children are referred by a health center, brought directly by their mothers or identified in door to door surveys.

Because the recuperation centers operate on an outpatient basis, the services are only available to families who live within a distance of about a half hour walk of the center. The centers operate in the morning and up to midafternoon. Feeding includes two meals and probably covers about 60-70% of the child's requirements. This recuperation program appears to be fairly effective, but is only able to reach a small portion of the population.

CARE preschool feeding program: CARE provides PL 480 food to a Secretariat of Education pilot program in the southwest. This activity supports preschool centers in rural communities which are designed to develop skills and attitudes which will better prepare rural children to enter primary school. The children receive a warm meal of PL 480 food prepared with other local food. The costs of food, firewood and preparation are met by contributions from the families.

The food is seen as an incentive for mothers to enroll their children, knowing that they will receive a warm meal while they are away from home. All children three to six years old in the community are eligible, and in fact, encouraged to participate in the program. Specific data on program coverage (in terms of numbers and kinds of communities with preschool centers) was not obtained but it does appear to be reaching a significant number of small disadvantaged communities. While this is not specifically a nutrition program and nutritional status is not monitored, the Secretariat of Education has carried out an evaluation which includes nutrition parameters.

Another potential program which can be included in this classification is the AID funded radio education project (RADECO). The RADECO project plans to solicit Title II food from CARE to provide a prepared meal for the students in their program. The objective of this food, however, is not to act as an attendance incentive but rather as a vehicle for teaching nutrition education. It is not yet clear what the role of essentially non-indigenous foods would be in this nutrition education and hopefully RADECO will give more consideration to other

approaches and resources for meeting this objective. RADECO and CARE have agreed to collaborate on the design of a feeding activity. In terms of coverage, RADECO will initially be working in a relatively few communities. But RADECO's planning surveys in the southwest indicate that they are communities with critical needs where few services are presently available.

CRS/Caritas distribution of PL 480 of foods: Most of the CRS/Caritas distribution of PL 480 foods is in dry form, but there are a few centers where the food is prepared each morning and the mothers take the cooked food back to their homes for consumption. As with other MCH supplementary feeding programs, the food is designated for children under six years of age and pregnant and lactating women. Selection of recipients is made by a lay parochial committee. The principal criterion used is "need" or poverty and not necessarily malnourishment. Nutrition monitoring is generally not included but in some communities there is close collaboration with SESPAS rural health promoters.

The decisions on the national coverage of this as well as other Caritas programs are made at a meeting of directors from each diocese. The actual programmatic decision process is fairly decentralized, resulting in a diversity of projects based on personalities and situations found at the parochial level.

CRS/Caritas "Comedores" (feeding centers): Caritas runs a few comedores where meals are prepared and served at a nominal price. These are located in poorer communities or neighborhoods, but there is no further selection in that anyone can go into the center for a meal. One of the comedores visited uses PL 480 foods in the preparation of the meals, but another one works strictly with locally available foods.

The one that uses only local foods (the Women's Promotion program run by Maria Colemont in Barahona) has developed many locally acceptable nutritious recipes. Maria Colemont abandoned the use of PL 480 foods and increased nutrition education activities in the late 1970s because she felt that the mothers did not supplement the child's diet with enough other foods due to a tendency to overestimate the value of the PL 480 foods. She has carried out studies which document children being more malnourished when they are given Title II foods, and improving their nutritional status when the foods are withheld in favor of local foods.

CRS/Caritas nutrition recuperation centers: This activity is similar to the nutrition recuperation centers run by SESPAS. However, in addition to the two daily meals served in the center, a third meal is prepared and sent home with the child. In this way they attempt to assure that each child receives 100% of its nutritional requirements. Only second and third degree malnourished children under two years of age are included in the program. The malnourished children are referred to the centers by the hospitals or are identified in house to house surveys conducted by staff at the centers. The program includes medical attention and physical stimulation for the children, and health and nutrition education for the mothers who take turns assisting at the centers.

CRS/Caritas applied nutrition education program: For more than five years, CRS/Caritas has carried out a comprehensive nutrition education program which trains and supports community level promoters who work on a broad range of nutrition related problems. The selection and training process for the promoters is quite extensive and takes about two years to complete. The training includes nutrition, health, sanitation, small scale agricultural production, analytic techniques, educational methodologies, and community organization. Each promoter works in from 1 to 5 communities (depending on size and proximity) through various community organizations, such as mothers' clubs.

The two communities which were visited both had developed projects for local production of basic foods including rice, beans and vegetables. One of the communities had identified a serious health problem resulting from fertilizer and insecticide contamination in the irrigation and drainage canals used for the water supply. They were meeting to lobby with the National Institute of Potable Water (INAPA) to drill a well and install a hand pump.

There are some communities which have both Caritas food distribution centers and the nutrition education program. In these cases some local-level collaboration occurs. In general, however, the PL 480 program and the nutrition education program have been run separately. CRS and Caritas are now beginning to look at ways to integrate these two programs, and at the costs which this would involve.

CWS/SSID nutrition centers (PL 480 foods): Most of the CWS/SSID activity in the MCH/Nutrition area is based on what they call nutrition centers. These are similar to the CARE/SESPAS and CRS/Caritas nutrition recuperation centers but on a slightly lesser scale. The children are brought in for one meal a day of prepared PL 480 food. The mothers receive instruction in a variety of materials, including nutrition and hygiene. The program is for children 0-5 years old and selection is based on nutritional status, although some normal children are included. An SSID promoter takes anthropometric measures at three-month intervals. Communities are included in the program when a serious nutritional problem is apparent and when they have demonstrated the necessary interest and organization.

CWS/SSID nutrition centers (local food): Slightly over half of the SSID nutrition centers are not operated with PL 480 foods. These are operated in much the same way as the PL 480 centers, but the meals are prepared using foods purchased locally. This is done with funds donated from Holland. Communities are designated for this program when they have not had previous exposure to PL 480 foods, and when there exists some potential (land) for family or community food production.

SSID plans to try weaning a few of the communities which have had this support for a number of years, in order to take on new ones. It is hoped that the communities will continue to operate the centers with local resources derived from economic activities or increased local food production. This transfer to local resources is planned for PL 480 as well as local foods nutrition centers.

Both types of centers (PL 480 and local foods) are closely coordinated with SESPAS clinics and promoters when these are present in the community. This collaboration includes reliance on SESPAS promoters for nutrition surveillance and educational talks for the mothers.

b) Other Activities

Several other nutrition related activities or projects were visited which might be useful when considering new models for program design. For example, the health center in Oviedo, Pedernales has a fresh milk distribution program which provides a 24 oz. ration of fresh milk to children under two years old who are the most needy based on weight for age. SESPAS contracts with the local milk producers' association to provide the milk to the health center for distribution. This helps create a demand (increase production) for the milk which would not otherwise exist due to the extreme poverty of most of the population. This SESPAS program apparently functions in some other areas as well.

At the Ingenio Santa Fe (state owned sugar plantation) in San Pedro de Macoris, an experimental project is producing local foods (sweet potatoes, beans, cowpeas, okra, cassava, yucca, and plantain) on land set aside from sugar production. The food is then sold in the poor bateyes at a quarter to a fifth of the regular market price (which is high because the food must be brought in from other regions). The project is in its first year so that it is not clear whether these lower prices will cover the production costs. Nevertheless, the response from the recipients has been overwhelming. This pilot project is the result of the personal interest and creativity of the plantation administrator, coupled with the encouragement and advice from CARE staff working in the area. But as experience and knowledge are developed, it may become a valuable model for other state-owned sugar plantations. (This project is described further in the CARE/CEA proposal in Annex 8.)

3. Wrapup Sessions and Conclusions

During the final week of the evaluation process, work groups were convened to encourage the volags to draw their own conclusions from the previous weeks' experience. The Tuesday inter-agency work group was presented with a tentative discussion outline together with some simplified data and information to stimulate a dialogue (see Annex 11).

a) Size of Need - Size of Title II Resources

The group first made a rough estimation of the size of the problem by agreeing that at least sixty percent of the 0-6 year old population (800,000 children) were either presently malnourished or at serious risk of becoming malnourished. When this was compared to past, present, and projected numbers of beneficiaries it became clear that the Title II resource was only able to reach about 20-25% of the problem. This led to two basic observations:

- To simply reach the malnourished or at risk children does not necessarily assure the most effective use of the food resource. There is a need for better methods to target the resource toward the more serious cases of malnourishment.
- In order to reach a larger portion of the malnourished population, it is necessary to find other food resources and integrate other activities, such as local food production, into the program.

The need for additional kinds of activities and resources was further emphasized when the size of the food ration was considered. Only in the case of the recuperation centers does the quantity of food make up a significant portion of the beneficiary's nutritional requirements. It was assumed that in the other programs (particularly dry food distribution) there was a tendency to distribute benefits among other family members. While this is not necessarily a "bad" use of the resource, it does mean that the PVOs need more information on effects of different ration size, and they talked about the possibility of collaborating on a study to learn more about this.

b) Composition of Title II Food Supply

Considerable concern was expressed about the possibility that fortified foods would be less available through Title II during 1983. The CARE staff had calculated that if fortified foods were eliminated, the result would be in a 63% reduction in protein. Most acknowledged that the reintroduction of nonfat dry milk into the PL 480 program will help alleviate this situation somewhat. However, several problems were noted concerning the use of nonfat dry milk. These included: (a) increased storage problems, (b) increased diarrhea brought on by mixing with contaminated water or by lactose intolerance, and (c) possible disincentive effects on local milk production. In general, it was agreed that the reduction or elimination of fortified foods would mean that the PL 480 rations would in the future provide an even smaller contribution to meeting the beneficiary's nutritional requirements.

The principal conclusion from the group discussion on the size and content of the PL 480 ration was that much more emphasis must be placed on the "supplemental" aspects of supplemental feeding programs. That is, more work is needed to assure that the families of malnourished children have available the foods which PL 480 is supposed to supplement. This implied a need for more emphasis on projects which increase local production of beans and vegetables, and projects which improve the economic buying power of the families. Also much more emphasis must be placed on the educational component of the programs. It is crucial that the families understand what the food is and, more importantly, what the food is not. As a one PVO staff member put it, "A program based solely on the distribution of supplemental foods is not a complete nutrition program".

c) Changes in Title II Availability

In further discussing the need for more and better nutrition education, reference was made to the disruptive effect of the lack of stability in the amount and content of PL 480 foods. Because the foods available through Title II are not traditional foods of the communities, a certain amount of energy is required to gain acceptance for the food, teach new methods of preparing the food, and explain what additional local foods should be added. Part of this energy is lost and must be reinvested when the products are changed, or when old beneficiaries are dropped and new one are added. Likewise, short term interruptions resulting from bureaucratic or logistic problems can disrupt consumption patterns. In general, the instability of the PL 480 food requires additional educational burdens and create complexities for nutrition education efforts. (See discussion in Special Analysis Annex 14.)

d) Collaboration with GODR

Another issue which was raised and discussed in the Tuesday meeting is the role of PL 480 and other PVO programs with respect to the government's nutrition programs and policies. It was generally agreed that social problems such as nutrition are the primary responsibility of the government and that the PVOs' activities should be complementary to the government's programs. Essentially the PVOs see themselves as temporarily providing services that the government cannot provide and reaching populations that the government is unable to reach. It was decided that renewed efforts were needed for collaborating with government programs. For CARE this will probably take the form of actual integration of jointly executed programs. In the case of CRS/Caritas and CWS/SSID, better collaboration probably means increased coordination among the PVOs and government projects. It was agreed that both models will require more communication than has taken place in the past.

The geographic distribution of feeding/nutrition activities is a major topic requiring improved collaboration and increased communication. The realization that the Title II resources could only reach about 20-25% of the target population indicated that efforts should be made to assure that communities of greatest need were being covered. When the group compared the overall regional distribution of Title II beneficiaries to indicators such as infant mortality and their personal knowledge of the country, they concluded that a different distribution of Title II resources might be more effective in reaching the neediest communities. It was decided that each volag would draw up list of all of their MCH/nutrition projects, broken down to the community or municipal level. The lists would then be compared to the data or incidence of malnutrition being produced by the SESPAS nutrition monitoring program. (See Annex 14, Nutrition Conditions and Plans.) This information will then help the volags to plan modifications, when appropriate, in the location of PL 480, as well as other nutrition related projects.

The group spoke with a less unified voice when it came to government collaboration in the actual selection of individual beneficiaries within a community. The new CARE food distribution system being proposed with SESPAS will rely heavily on SBS health promoters to make this decision, based primarily on nutritional status criteria. CRS/Caritas and CWS/SSID, on the other hand, want to leave this decision responsibility with their community organizations whom they feel have a better sense for the needs of the individual families within the communities. These two volags do, however, see considerable value in extensive use of SESPAS nutritional status data, and in discussions with SESPAS on some degree of standardization of selection criteria.

4. Suggestions and Activities for MCH Replanning

At the conclusion of Phase I, and in the earlier draft of this report, we made a number of suggestions for improving program. Based on this, the Phase II workshops produced an activity plan for the agencies to follow while replanning the program. This section presents our original suggestions, along with an update on the results of Phase II.

a) All PVOs

(1) At the conclusion of Phase I, we encouraged the PVOs' decision to meet and work together to improve the overall effectiveness of this component of the Title II program. In order to be effective, this has to be a continuing and planned commitment. This would have to begin with a detailed plan of the issues to be resolved (those below, and others that may emerge or that we may have overlooked); as well as definition of the necessary actions to be taken, and of the specific outcomes expected. The plan for the process would spell out where the PVOs expect to be by next round of AERs and program plans, and the kinds of financial or technical support they will need along the way. The following points were highlighted for inclusion in this process.

(2) Each PVO should develop a profile of the actual criteria and practices used in the field by their various MCH and recuperation project models to select and discontinue beneficiaries. We believe that by sharing and discussing this information in their meetings, the PVOs can arrive at a more realistic and systematic method of reaching the most needy communities and families within communities.

(3) Each of the three agencies' ability to manage its program would be enhanced by improving the collection, organization, and use of information such as community surveys and nutrition status checks, and keeping it in such a way as to be useful for planning and decision-making. This would require developing more explicit models including (i) objectives, (ii) activities, (iii) assumptions or theories relating activities to objectives, and (iv) indicators which measure completion of activities and attainment of objectives.

(4) It seemed essential that the three PVOs join in carrying out or sponsoring a comparative evaluation of nutrition centers (SSID) and recuperation centers (CARE/SESPAS and CARITAS). Such an evaluation might include:

- (i) detailed descriptions of the objectives and operational methodologies of each project model.
- (ii) analysis of the nutritional impact data, attendance data, and other measures of effectiveness; and
- (iii) analysis of the coverage of each of the programs in relation to needs.

Such an analysis could draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the different models in order to combine the best elements of each. It could also result in a strategy for coordination and selection of communities to maximize coverage of the most needy.

(5) We urged that work continue on the comparison of key indicators of nutritional need and the present geographic distribution of PVO-supported feeding/nutritional activities. This requires consultation ~~with~~ with SESPAS officials and data sources such as those available from the National Planning Office. This will be the first major step in realigning the overall component to more adequately combat the severe national nutritional problem.

During the Phase II workshops, two main objectives were set for the MCH/Nutrition component:

- (i) To establish criteria for nutrition sub-programs (geographic areas, communities, and beneficiaries) to improve the focus on needs and avoid or eliminate duplication of effort.

Activities include updating and comparing data on the present distribution of feeding and nutrition centers, and SESPAS data on nutritional needs, to have an information base for making decisions for rechanneling the MCH resources. The work will also involve a comparative review of the nutrition surveillance systems of Caritas, SESPAS, and SSID. This information is to be fed into a workshop on targeting and other proposals for change. An AID nutrition team is needed to advise on targeting and surveillance.

- (ii) To clarify the situation with the various recuperation/education models in order to adjust or reprogram them, and to plan changes in the distribution centers to achieve preventive objectives.

The work will include a comparative assessment of the agencies' recuperation/nutrition centers (with AID expert assistance), and self-analysis by each agency of its MCH distribution centers and plans for improvement. Participants also decided to open a dialogue with top levels of the GODR about access to PL 480 Title I funds to support their efforts, and to develop an information bank on private as well as public (bilateral and multilateral) donor agencies supporting nutrition programs.

b) Suggestions for CARE

(1) CARE was urged to analyze the implications of aligning its MCH activities more closely with the SESPAS nutrition monitoring program. Working with the statistician at the Nutrition Division, and with the regional offices, CARE can apply knowledge of the present and projected coverage of the nutrition surveillance system in order to assess its implications for redirecting the CARE food distribution. This analysis would form the basis for discussions with the new Secretary and his staff, and with the other agencies (IAD and CEA) involved.

(2) CARE's present levels of Title II food probably will not provide for the coverage which the SESPAS system will require (See nutrition sector discussion, Annex 4). We envisioned three possible responses to this situation:

- (i) SESPAS may have to adopt less than ideal criteria;
- (ii) More Title II food will be needed; and/or
- (iii) CARE will have to shift allocations from its other feeding programs.

In particular, CARE may want to evaluate the tradeoffs between their new strategy for more targeted coverage, and their other feeding efforts (Other Child, Pre-School and the RADECO proposal), to see if they make a significantly strong contribution to reaching the most nutritionally at risk population of the country as a whole.

(3) CARE was urged to continue discussions begun with IAD and CEA about improving the coverage and impact of their activities on the land reform settlements and sugar plantations. Among the matters for discussion were:

- (i) Whether programs will be targeted according to SESPAS criteria, or others developed by IAD and CEA; and especially
- (ii) How to respond to the IAD proposal (see full text in Annex 7), particularly the first alternative, which would combine a ranking of settlements by economic need with measures of nutritional status, and incorporate a food for work/food for production activity; and
- (iii) How to build in the Santa Fe plantation experiments in food production with CEA (see writeup in Annex 8), again using a combination of family feeding and FFW.

A scheme might emerge in which Title II food is provided where plantation land is set aside for food production, say for two years. After that period, only plantations continuing to show high malnutrition (under SESPAS' monitoring) would have Title II distribution (MCH and/or FFW).

During the time of Phase II, CARE was focusing on improvements in its food delivery and accounting systems and strengthening its field supervision. They are working to bring the actual number of Pre-School beneficiaries in line with projected levels, and to improve management of PSF through consolidation into fewer, larger centers. There is also interest in conducting an impact evaluation of the Pre-school effort.

CARE has advanced in discussions and plans with SESPAS to integrate 75% of the MCH feeding centers now operating under Agrarian Institute and State Sugar Council with the rural health network. It appears that CARE and SESPAS have to more carefully analyze with IAD and CEA the tradeoffs involved in this changeover (beneficiaries who might be left behind, capacity of health centers to manage the food, etc.). CARE hopes, over the next two years, to reach a situation in which all Pre-school and MCH food is provided directly to targeted beneficiaries in cooked form, in order to reduce its dilution among family members who are less at-risk. Monitoring of nutritional status will be tighter, and beneficiaries will be receiving health education and basic health services along with their rations at health posts.

CARE is launching a pilot project in one province to upgrade a feeding center with kitchen facilities, a vegetable plot, and a fishpond. This might become an alternative model for the present Title II - dependent feeding centers.

c) Suggestions for CRS/Caritas

(1) Caritas has much to contribute by encouraging such local nutrition experiments as the pollen project in Bani, and the feeding/education experiment in Santo Domingo, and in disseminating the results of those experiments to the other PVOs, the GODR, and USAID.

(2) Caritas has a special need for the kind of basic program information recommended in 4-a), because of the variety of project models in existence. Such descriptive and evaluative information about its diverse program will permit Caritas to support and encourage the most successful ones, and to influence changes in those of less value. As a first step to building this information base, Caritas was urged to hold a series of workshops to encourage information exchange among clergy and lay workers in nutrition, and to formulate an information-sharing system which can be institutionalized.

(3) As the current evaluation of the applied nutrition education program was being completed, we suggested that Caritas develop plans to increase the number of communities served and the coverage within the communities. We were expecting that modification of the program would reflect the results of the evaluation, and include increased connections with Caritas' other nutrition related activities (particularly Title II MCH). The program would also benefit from more coordination with other government programs and services in health/nutrition and agricultural production.

Since Phase I, Caritas, and its USPVO counterpart, CRS, have made some initial steps in the internal dialogue with the Bishops and Caritas Diocesan Directors which Caritas decentralized structure requires. Under consideration is a proposal to hold a planning retreat of a few days' duration to bring together the promoters, Diocesan Directors, and key head office staff of Caritas to talk through the implications of redirecting the program, especially the rural development component, along the lines suggested by the evaluation.

CRS has submitted a grant proposal to USAID to expand and improve Caritas' Applied Nutrition Education Program (ANEP), which operates without Title II resources. Part of this expansion may involve phasing over existing Title II MCH distribution centers to the ANEP model, which uses locally produced foods and educational messages and activities geared to each community's circumstances.

d) Suggestions for CWS/SSID

(1) As SSID studies their nutrition centers in the joint evaluation suggested above in 4-a, they may find that the effectiveness of that model can be increased significantly by increasing the feeding from one to two meals a day, and using the period between the two meals to provide more training for mothers of children being fed.

(2) SSID operates equal numbers of similar nutrition centers, some using Title II foods and others using only local foods. This offers an excellent opportunity for a comparative monitoring of nutritional impact, acceptability, changes in the diet, etc., between the two approaches. Such information would be of value to all of the private and public agencies involved.

(3) As SSID was planning to discontinue support for two nutrition centers (Carbonera using Title II and Higuerito with local food) next year, we urged them to monitor the effects and document the process in order to more effectively carry out such phaseouts in the future. The results of this experiment should be shared with other PVOs, with SESPAS, and with USAID.

As part of Phase II followup, SSID will be participating in the comparative assessment of nutrition recuperation centers and surveillance systems. They are also taking a leading role in comparing the geographic distribution of their present and planned nutrition centers with SESPAS' information about nutritional needs.

B. Study of Rural Development/Food for Work

The evaluation teams visited Food for Work (FFW) projects between the 22nd of June and the 3rd of July, 1982. These projects are small-scale development efforts, fairly accessible by road, undertaken by communities with the participation of Caritas and the Social Service of Dominican Churches (SSID). In all but one case, PL480 food rations are being distributed to the participating workers in exchange for their labor time. The projects in which this labor is employed are quite varied, including road repairs, schoolhouse construction, well digging, soil conservation and agricultural work crews.

The FFW projects attempt to achieve one or a number of objectives, including: (1) the creation of community infrastructures such as roads, canals, schools, and clinics, which in turn imply certain benefits for most if not all of the residents of the community; (2) the stimulation of agricultural production through the organization of work crews for agricultural labor or the installation of soil conservation ditches and terraces on farms; and (3) the direct provision of calories and proteins directly to those families who are without the economic capacities to buy needed food.

For both of the FFW sponsoring agencies in the D.R., however, the underlying rationale for the use of food is more than just the stimulation of labor commitment to various types of infrastructure and production-related projects or the provision of food to the poor. Generally, both agencies hope to achieve these objectives, but more fundamentally they hope to create in each community the organized local, self-help capabilities to resolve a range of problems which each community faces. In this sense the Food-for-work projects are misnamed in the Dominican context and should be called something like Food-for-Organization. This focus shows the evolution of PVO philosophy and practice -- from welfare and charity to a stimulation of local people to combine their limited resources into an organized local, non-governmental development effort. This shift in focus requires special staff preparation and the development of procedures for working with communities in a participatory way. The agency must open itself to the poor people of rural and urban communities and help them to help themselves. In practice, these challenges mean finding ways to instill hope in the hopeless while minimizing both dependence on the PVOs and Title II food, and destructive confrontations with the powerful. PL480 food is a resource which can be useful in this struggle, but it also can produce distortions. This part of our report describes how the PVOs in the Dominican Republic are handling these challenges, and presents improvements that might be made.

1. The Organization and Management of FFW

Food for work is presently sponsored by Caritas and SSID. It accounts for approximately 70 and 80 percent of their food programs, respectively. The FY 1983 FFW component is planned to reach about 72,000 recipients through Caritas, and 7,000 through SSID.

As they operate their programs, Caritas and SSID work with complex organizational structures and procedures based on community groups, extending in some cases through federations or other second-level associations, to the PVOs themselves. Along the way there is frequent interaction with public and private development agencies.

a) The Structure of Community Organizations

(1) Community Groups

The most common form of community organization utilized in the FFW projects was the farmers' association (asociación de agricultores). These associations are legally recognized entities which have their own statutes and rules. They range in membership from 20 to 100, at least in the communities we visited, and are composed of people who farm land, even though the lands they farm may be rented or of very small size. Most of the associations visited were formed in the mid to late 1970's or early 1980's. Some were formed to get credit as a group, others to receive and use the PL 480 food, and yet others to get land through the agrarian reform. These associations typically have a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer who are elected yearly by the membership. When the groups operate as a credit association they obtain a production credit from the bank or from a private agency such as Caritas, and distribute the funds among the membership, or they may request an investment credit for such items as yoke of oxen.

In addition to their credit functions, the associations have broader concerns. One of the fundamental problems of most rural communities is the shortage of land, especially for the children of campesinos who already have relatively little land. The associations act as a pressure group in dealing with the IAD and other governmental agencies for the purpose of acquiring land through the agrarian reform. This issue of land access for the landless or near landless is growing in importance, especially since the state is the holder of substantial underutilized lands and since many acres of privately held land are largely abandoned. Both of these conditions attract especially younger peasant farmers to the associations, to search for more land resources to begin farming or to provide a better life for their families.

These associations act as the most common organizational channel for handling the PL 480 food and managing the projects which are implemented. Usually a particular individual of the association, who may be the president or another member, is responsible for the FFW projects. He maintains the lists of participants, coordinates the work, and is responsible for getting the food to the village and distributing it.

In some communities a special committee has been formed to handle the FFW project, which permits the participation of people who may not have land and are not, therefore, members of the formal farmers' association.

Many other community organizations exist in many communities, some active and others inactive. The most typical are mothers' clubs, parent-teacher associations, savings and loan associations, and youth clubs. A couple of communities had created a coordinating organization formed of representatives of all the community's organizations. Its function is to coordinate the various development activities which occur simultaneously in the community.

(2) Second level organizations

As the development of local self-help private organizations at the community level has grown, PVO promoters and community leaders have recognized that local resources are limited on the one hand, and that there is a certain power of association on the other. To increase the access to outside resources as well as to help in the representation of campesinos in the councils of government, some of the associations of farmers are combining into regional federations. This process of integrating the community structures into regional ones is a long and often painful process, but it has begun.

Private development associations and foundations have been created in certain areas of the country during the past ten years, most notably in the Cibao and in the San José de Ocoa regions. These associations provide some resource options for community level groups as do other private foundations based in Santo Domingo such as the Dominican Development Foundation and Fudeco.

b) Management of FFW at the Community Level

A major function of many community associations is the management of the FFW projects including the transport of the food to the village, its storage, the selection of people who receive the food, and the design and implementation of projects which use the food as a stimulus and payment for labor on the projects.

(1) Transportation and storage of the food

The associations work out with the PVOs and other agencies the transport of the food which typically arrives at some central point, at times in the community itself and at times at a urban center some distance from the community.

The food is typically not held in the community for any amount of time. It is usually distributed to the participating families immediately on its arrival in the community. If the food is to be parcelled out on work days, it is placed in the house or shed of the local coordinator of the FFW project. The association's leadership, which oversees all activities of the group, provides assurances to the membership that resources for which the association is responsible are being used properly.

(2) Selection and organization of participants

The selection of participants for the FFW projects is quite varied, by type of project and community. In the case of the convite work crew where the farmers organize work for clearing land, planting, weeding and the like, the participants are usually other land holders in the community or their family members.

For other kinds of projects, the participants are likely to be a mixture of those for whom the project (such as a feeder road) has direct benefit, or others, often landless day laborers, for whom the Title II food is a needed support for their families. Members of a pre-existing association may participate because they know that later they will receive labor assistance or other services from the association, either directly or indirectly. Where a single-purpose "food committee" has been formed, there may be the expectation that this will lead to a more permanent mutual benefit society for individuals previously not included in other groups. See the discussion of equitable participation and benefits on page 39.

(3) Selection and management of projects in the community

The process of problem identification and needs assessment at the community level is more a result of a continuous dialogue among the community leadership, and with the community development staff of the PVOs (who add their suggestions about available resources and priorities of funding agencies), than it is one of systematic analysis, planning and discrete project design.

The projects selected in a community without an effective organization may be very simple, involving a limited number of people and resources. The clearing out of an abandoned house for use as a local school in the Monte Cristi batey is an example. The repair of a short piece of dirt road is another example. In the communities of the north coast where no organization and little agricultural activity exists, the first step may be experimentation with a few yucca plants and the demonstration of the feasibility of such production under those climatic and soil conditions.

In other communities, much more ambitious efforts are undertaken. Construction of a school for a hundred students, rehabilitation of a three-kilometer canal, clearing and irrigating 150 hectares of abandoned state land -- all of these require substantial technical and community organization capabilities. The nature of the projects, then, derives from the experiences of the community and its PVO promoters as well as the commitment of funding agencies to provide at least part of the needed resources which cannot be generated locally. In general, in most of the FFW projects, the quality and dedication of community people to define these needs is impressive as is the dedication of the PVO promoters to help satisfy these needs with a minimum of financial or other material support. There are, of course, cases where community leaders are more self-centered and PVO staff less capable and less dedicated than others, but these conditions provide the challenges for future actions to develop community organizations and improve the PVOs' own capabilities.

c) The Organization of the PVOs for FFW

Both Caritas and SSID use a relatively decentralized method of management at present. Through this they seek to be responsive to community desires and yet provide the necessary management structure to coordinate national programs and to respond to other agencies which provide resources.

(1) Caritas

While Caritas began in 1962 as a charitable organization, and provided essential services on a large scale during times of national disasters, it has evolved into a different organization following a restructuring in 1967. Previously its primary purpose was to distribute food and clothing to needy people. Presently its goal is the development of the poor and their own capacity for resolving their problems. The commodities of PL 480 are one of the resources utilized to achieve this end, not an end in themselves.

The variety and extensiveness of Caritas's program is demonstrated in Table 2, which also shows the evolution of the organization since 1975. PL 480 food is a major resource, even an overwhelming one, if we consider only the value of the food handled. However, in terms of the goals of the organization and the nature of resources which are

needed in the other programs to help achieve these goals, the food is just one resource, and at times is of limited usefulness. Steps are now underway, however, to help assure that the PL 480 food resource is more useful in achieving the Caritas goals of promocion y desarrollo.

The base organization of Caritas is the community structure described above, the association of farmers or the food committee. This organization is linked to a particular parish, which in turn is linked to the diocese. There are about 800 parishes in the country organized into 8 dioceses. There is a Caritas director in each diocese who coordinates and supports village level and other promoters. The community organizations present the project which they would like to undertake to the diocese through the parish. These projects are then evaluated for their feasibility by the diocesan director and his staff, at times calling for the advice of specialists in Santo Domingo and of parish priests. The diocesan committee and Director decide which projects to support with the PL 480 food. This decision is made by considering the general economic well-being of each of the communities, and by trying food on the most needy. The communities are allocated food on a rotating basis, so that each community gets food at some time or another, depending on the amount of food available. If there are some communities which do not have a viable community organization, or if there is one that has proved to be an untrustworthy channel for the food, these communities may not be supported with food until some sort of organization exists or the past problems have been corrected.

The national committee of diocesan directors allocates the food to the eight dioceses according to a traditional percentage formula. The diocesan directors then decide on the uses of the food and evaluate the programs.

Interlinked with this Caritas structure is the ecclesiastical structure of local priests, lay workers and bishops. Their interest in the details of the development efforts of Caritas varies considerably, although their support is critical for the programs to really function effectively. See Annex 18 for more of the details of Caritas' management procedures.

(2) SSID

The FFW projects of SSID are located principally in the Southwest and Northwest of the country. In each of these regions, there is a regional coordinator of community projects who works with each community, usually over a period of years, to define and implement feasible projects. Like Caritas, SSID maintains a staff in Santo Domingo which provides technical support to these two regional coordinators, advises on the design of projects, and helps resolve technical and administrative problems which may arise during their implementation.

SSID seeks to support community initiatives with technical and financial assistance (its own or arranged through other agencies), especially those which will result in increased agricultural production

Table 2: Amount and Type of Financing
Received by Caritas Dominicana.
(in thousands of dollars)

PROGRAMS	1975		1976		1977		1978		1979		TOTAL	
	Inter- national	Local										
Community Education and Promotion							38.0	8.0	40.0	7.0	78.0	15.0
Community Promotion Center							10.2	6.0			10.2	6.0
Housing					5.0	2.5			126.0		131.0	2.5
Agricultural Projects			78.4	20.0			110.0	30.0	6.0		144.4	50.0
Workshops					12.0	5.0		5.0			12.0	10.0
Parochial and Diocesan Organization of Caritas	10.0	3.0	10.0	4.0							20.0	7.0
Vehicles									11.0	4.0	11.0	4.0
Social Medicine			107.0		500.0	12.0	239.0	0	208.5	37.0	1054.5	49.0
Rotating Loan Fund					5.2	1.5	41.6	4.0	240.0	10.0	306.5	15.5
Feeder Roads					10.0	2.4	5.0		27.0		42.0	2.4
Nutrition Education							50.0		100.0		150.0	
Food			5000.0		7000.0		4300.0		4500.0		20800.0	
Clothing, shoes, etc.			470.0		239.0	148.0	693.0		178.0		1580.0	148.0
TOTAL	10.0	3.0	5665.4	24.0	7771.2	171.4	5486.8	53.0	5456.5	58.0	24333.4	309.4

Source: Lic. Rafael Calderón Martínez: Sondeo General sobre Ayuda Internacional y Grado de Incidencia de la Caritas de Centro America, México, Panamá, y el Caribe en la Promoción y Desarrollo de la Comunidades. Mimeo, Santo Domingo, 1981.

and income. The regional coordinators receive requests for help, including Title II food, visit the communities, and then discuss the most likely proposals with a regional committee made up of representatives of community groups. Projects are approved at the regional level, taking into consideration the kind of project, the effectiveness of the organization, the needs of the people for food, and the expected food allocation for the coming quarter. The project writeups are sent into Santo Domingo as information to the community development department of SSID. They are ranked in priority order, so that in the event that food deliveries are smaller than expected, or delayed, the central office can send food to those having the highest ranking. The promoters and regional coordinators follow the progress of the projects, and SSID sends its own inspector to the communities to check on the projects and the handling and distribution of Title II food. See Annex 19 for additional details of SSID's management procedures.

2. Description and Commentary on Rural Development FFW Projects

As shown in Table 1 on page 5, 24 rural development projects using food for work were visited during Phase I. An interview schedule was prepared with the PVOs before going to the field (see Annex 12). It was not used as a formal questionnaire, but rather as a guide for noting certain characteristics of each project and community. Based on this, a set of profiles for each site was prepared. Those interested in the details will find these profiles in Annex 16, organized by broad project category. The profiles include information on community projects since 1979, to give an idea of the level of organizational development in each place, and a summary writeup about the context of each specific FFW project.

As the profiles in Annex 16 show, the circumstances of each FFW project are widely variable. For some communities, FFW is a frequently-used resource, for others it was a first experience. Some of the community organizations tap into a variety of public and private resources of which food through a PVO is one, while others rely on Title II as a major stimulus to getting things done on a communal level. Some of the projects appear to benefit a few peoples' individual agricultural plots, while others result in improved community infrastructure accessible to all.

For the purposes of this analysis, we have grouped the projects into five categories: (a) feeder roads, (b) agricultural production, (c) construction, (d) natural resource conservation, and (e) community promotion. The discussion below includes a brief overview of the kinds of projects observed in each category, and issues or conclusions reached about projects of that type. This is followed by an overall analysis of the benefits of this use of Title II, a discussion of some of the cross-cutting issues to be faced by Title II planners in the future, and a report on the outcomes of the Phase II replanning workshop on rural development/FFW. An analysis of the role and value of Title II food in FFW is provided in Annex 15.

a) Feeder Roads

Five projects were visited, two of which were animal trails, the others intended for use by light trucks. The sections being repaired or extended ranged from three to nine km. in length. In the project

at Caletón, near Barahona, the workers were all tenant farmers organized for only this project, while at Vaca Gorda, the project was run by a ten-year association which had carried out a number of projects apart from road work. Some participants were landless farm workers, motivated primarily by the food ration, which could amount to one-third of the family's normal supplies for a month. Others had their own small farms, would benefit directly from the road, and saw the food as a means of assuring workers' regular attendance and thereby speeding up the pace of the work.

Most of these trails or roads had been in existence for many years. The repair work was to maintain the width of the road where rains or heavy traffic had reduced its usefulness.

Notable in all cases was the lack of sufficient and appropriate tools for dealing with rocks, roots, and other obstacles, ~~as for~~ moving quantities of earth, ^{and} technical advice ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~being~~ ^{was} ~~talking~~ ^{was} on how to improve drainage, and to minimize erosion and the need to be continually rebuilding or repairing the road or trail.

In 1981, feeder roads accounted for 48% of the beneficiaries and 46% of the FFW projects supported by Caritas and SSID combined. In spite of the large proportion of these types of projects, we found mixed enthusiasm for this activity among PVO field staff. One diocesan director for Caritas expressed a strong bias against road projects because of the repetitive nature of the effort, the need for complementary resources (equipment, technical advice) to make the road last through heavy rains and use, and the length of time needed to do the work. In some communities, we noted that road repair work crews were made up of a few laborers who work for the benefit of a large number of farming families. The benefits of improved roads -- easier market access and regular arrivals of vehicles or pack trains -- are significant, especially during peak cropping periods. They also provide more rapid access to towns and health facilities in times of emergencies.

To upgrade the quality of the roads and trails, reducing the need to rebuild them each year, complementary resources are needed. One idea for providing cash needed for tools and engineering advice, and perhaps for paying laborers and hiring equipment for grading, stump or rock removal, is to arrange for OPGs or Title I funds. Another possibility is to allow community groups to charge a minimal fee for cargo loads passing during peak marketing periods (two or three months a year), thereby establishing a road maintenance fund.

Title II food in this situation is cooked on site during work days. Rations are also sent home with the workers. Organizers of the work teams said that food allowed people to forego a day of paid labor without being concerned with that day's family meals, as well as encouraging the members to take part in other activities of the association, including educational sessions.

Another concern explored in connection with feeder roads, as well as other FFW activities, was whether groups who have already demonstrated problem-solving and work completion abilities should continue to receive Title II foods, or whether other kinds of support (credit, technical assistance, material inputs) shouldn't be mobilized to support them. This would allow the food resource to be focused on situations where basic local organization is just getting under way, and where it can be a more important tool in gaining access for the promoter, putting the group through a problem-solving experience, and teaching them how manage and account for a resource. Having a second-stage strategy, and resources to move to this stage, would be critical in order to phase out the food without destroying the organizations' initiative and commitment.

b) Agricultural Production

Eight project sites were visited. This broad category includes groups producing a mixture of basic crops largely for family consumption and community sale (Arroyo Dulce) as well as production under contract to a processor of commercial crops such as peanuts or tomatoes for canning (Colonias de Juancho, Cristobal). The work is performed by teams working four to six days a month on members' individual holdings, continuing the tradition of the convite (see below). In hillside areas, forested slopes were being cleared (the wood converted to charcoal) for traditional short-term crops. In lowland areas, the work included repair or extension of irrigation systems to permit rice and sorghum production once the commercial crops had been sold. In all cases observed, the farmers' group was well-organized, and had carried out a number of community projects, with and without Title II food. Food is regarded as one of several resources needed by the community (credit, seeds, technical knowledge, and of course land being others). Title II food helps to widen and make more regular the community members' participation in projects, as they might otherwise be looking for day labor jobs to assure their family's diet. This is especially true for those without land, and for those who have land during periods of little or no production due to drought or cropping cycles.

The positive aspects of this activity were apparent to all of us, as it makes a direct impact on the root cause of rural poverty. It produces basic foodstuffs for both local consumption and to send to larger markets. Potentially, such FFW projects can be linked directly to feeding activities providing some commodities for pre-school feeding and MCH projects. It provides opportunities for farmers grouped in an association to produce for commercial markets like processing plants, which they could not do as individuals, each with a small volume of production. It potentially exposes them to new farming techniques and inputs, and to other kinds of technical knowledge and skills. It builds on the Dominican tradition of the convite. This custom historically involved a group of farmers working on another's land in exchange for a meal, and moving around to each member's plot to help clear land, do weeding, planting or harvesting, put up a fence, work on irrigation ditches, and the like. Farmers' plots are now smaller, however, and

there are fewer animals available for slaughter. The Title II food permits the custom and the service to be maintained, without requiring that the marginal tenant or small landholder to share his scarce food.

A number of concerns about this activity were also brought up on the field trips and in the seminar sessions. One was the divisiveness that this activity can create in a community if the food and the work are not allocated in ways which are seen as equitable. Members of the convite groups tend to be those with land, or access to land, thereby leaving families who may be more needy, but landless, out of the picture. Landless people may work in convite groups, receiving only the immediate benefit of the food during the scheduled period, but not the benefits of increased production or newly cleared land. As mentioned in the Tendler report, this is collective work for private, rather than public, benefit.

Work on agricultural projects are also likely to be open-ended in terms of duration, rather than discretely scheduled, like schools, or water systems. Once the irrigation system is in, the group needs to level the land, then plant it, then weed it, then harvest it, then start another crop, and so on. The participating communities may make claims for continuing Title II support over a year or more for such projects.

As in the case of the feeder roads, groups that are already active in a number of community activities tend to get involved in agricultural production. A recurring question is whether these are the groups that most need Title II food, or whether other kinds of support might be more important, once they've reached a certain stage of organizational sophistication.

The agricultural production projects also tend to bring the farmers into conflict with forestry officials who are protecting wood resources, and with absentee landholders. Sometimes these problems are worked out to mutual satisfaction, but in others they are not, and an ongoing struggle develops with the farmers on one side, the landholder or government on the other, and the PVO in the middle.

In the Carbonera case, SSID made a formal agreement to carry out rural development over four years on an IAD settlement. This case is highlighted (see Annex 1) as it demonstrates both the opportunities and the problems of creating a highly developed community organizational structure while evolving a relationship with a government rural development agency. The project was explicitly designed to be innovative, to use the experiences and resources of SSID to experiment with new forms of community organization. The results were to be used by IAD to modify and apply in other communities with conditions similar to those found in Carbonera.

While much has been accomplished in Carbonera in terms of both measurable development and community organization, weaknesses have occurred in the interagency collaboration. IAD has assigned four different settlement administrators and five different regional directors

to the area during the four years. Budgetary and other problems have plagued IAD, like other GODR agencies, and it has not been able to fulfill its commitments. SSID's technical directors, based in the capital, perhaps did not maintain the kinds of close relationships with the project and with IAD which were needed.

This suggests the need for clarity about roles when agreements are drawn up between PVOs and GODR agencies, but perhaps more importantly, the need for a regular system of review, replanning, and revision of the agreement as changes occur over the life of the project in conditions, laws or regulations, and personnel. As the community organization develops, it should be included as a party to the agreement, and involved in drawing up plans, budgets, and operational manuals for the project. Such annual or semiannual review and replanning events could be the occasion for joint training of PVO field staff, government agency staff, and community leaders.

Finally, we were concerned about the longer-term effects of the land clearing and planting on the scarce soil cover on sloping lands. The farmers are planting lowland short-term or annual crops on slopes, applying methods appropriate to level ground. As they move higher into the hills, forced by circumstance and encouraged to produce, they find that heavy rains carry off the very soil they need, that moisture is not held on the slope, and that the number and yield of crops is less than what they want and expect. So the immediate result may be new land in production and increased income for the farmer, but in a few years the result may be permanent damage to both the farmed area and the lower reaches of the watershed.

One of the keys to limiting these effects is the provision of skilled intervention by the PVO promoters in both organizational and technical aspects of the activity. Because of the tradition of the convite and responding to economic pressures and limited access to land, Dominican farmers will continue to practice slash and burn agriculture, and to push into lands claimed or protected by others. They will do this whether the PVOs provide Title II food or not. The challenge here is to make the PVO intervention, whether by SSID or Caritas, as positive as possible, both in organizational and economic terms.

c) Construction

In this category five projects were visited, two involving housing, one a school building, and two water projects (one for potable water, the other for irrigation). The rural housing projects were replacing dwellings destroyed by Hurricane David in 1981. Private organizations were supporting the community groups with construction skills training, credit, and technical oversight. The project in La Cienaga involved not only housing, but food and small animal production, a clinic and a school. The pipe and taps for the potable water system in Arroyo Dulce, as well as engineering oversight, are provided by INAPA. Food is an incentive for the donated labor component of these projects. In the housing projects, the donated labor is also counted toward the down

payment on the houses. Well-digging for irrigation is part of an SSID integrated project in a dry northern border community. Title II food facilitates the participation of people who would not be able to sacrifice four or six work days per month as an investment in better housing or to learn a new skill, such as block-laying or electrical wiring.

Therefore, aside from the general community benefits from construction of infrastructure like a school building or a water system, and the family benefits of improved housing, these projects often leave the participants with new or improved skills which may be marketable and thus allows them to improve their income levels. The La Cienaga project is purposefully designed to offer benefits (health center, demonstration of new agricultural technology, etc.) not only to the 83 who will receive new or improved houses, but also to the hundreds of families in the town. We also saw community centers built with some community labor (but not Title II) which enabled the community to have a site for a pre-school feeding activity, a place for the farmers' associations and mothers clubs to meet, and generally acted as multipurpose facilities.

On the other hand, it was clear that the labor input, even when given continuity and critical mass by the food incentive, is only a small portion of what is needed to have a successful, lasting construction project. Materials, expert advice, training of the workers -- all of these constitute a high proportion of the total cost of a school or piped water system, and must be provided in quality, quantity, and timeliness when the labor force is available. This requires that the PVO promoter, or the community group itself, have good skills in estimating, planning, organizing, and resource mobilization, or be able to turn to government or other technicians who have those skills. It appears that the construction projects are often the result of community initiatives, pressures placed by local groups on politicians or agencies, demanding that services and materials be provided. Given the variety of this activity, and its ad hoc nature, it seems clear that the PVOs cannot expect their field staffs or volunteers to master the technical skills needed, but that they might be able to upgrade the more generic management techniques of those who work directly with communities.

d) Natural Resource Conservation

At the two sites visited, teams of farmers and farm laborers were digging retention ditches and drains, planting hillside crops like coffee bushes and fruit trees, and installing plant barriers to conserve the soil cover. At one site, a small group of owner-farmers was assisting one of the members who worked along with the others. At the other site, a much larger group appeared to be provided benefits to one owner who was absent on the work day.

The two sites are in the San José de Ocoa watershed, where Father Louis Quinn identified the dramatic erosion problems, and began recruiting technical help through private channels in 1973. Now the local development association, which Quinn advises, the Soil Conservation

Service of the Agriculture Secretariat, farmers' associations, Caritas, and USAID are participating in this activity. Caritas provides food for the farmers' associations, and field technicians of the SCS visit the work sites and provide technical supervision.

At the first site, the farmers were committed to conservation, and knowledgeable about why they were doing it, and how to do it. One farmer responded eagerly to the idea of travelling to other threatened areas as an educator/spokesman for the effort. According to studies conducted with USAID support, and observation by the untrained eye, this erosion of mountain slopes is one of the most serious problems facing the D.R. At the same time, it is a problem of which general consciousness is still low, and the institutional, technical, and financial capacity to deal with it is also extremely limited.

The GODR is not presently able to mount a major attack on this problem in the near future, though initial steps are being taken with USAID support. The PVOs were struck by the contradiction inherent in their support for agricultural production activities in hilly areas which contribute to soil loss, and their effort, presently through Caritas, to support methods of combating the problem. The PVOs may be able to take help launch the needed national effort. They can spread consciousness of the problem through educational efforts, and begin to introduce and experiment with simple, labor intensive changes in hillside farming and drainage. This would help create the climate for the major effort needed, and contribute to developing the state of the art of knowledge and methods which will have to be disseminated through private and public channels to thousands of small-scale hillside farmers.

Again, this implies new or expanded knowledge on the part of Caritas and SSID field personnel, so that they can identify problems, and work with farmers in this vital area, using the entree they already have in other FFW activities.

e) Community Promotion

One situation of this type was visited at Monte Cristi, and became the subject of one of the special case studies (see Annex 2). Rather than a project, this is a series of activities carried out on an abandoned banana plantation by fluctuating numbers of families, where there is no formal organization or plan. The food is used to help sustain the families, and involves particularly the women in construction of community buildings and short courses in handicrafts and vegetable gardening.

This situation exemplifies a set of difficulties which FFW projects may encounter when the PVOs seek to serve populations and areas which are beyond the reach of most public sector agencies. In this particular case, an energetic priest, Padre Ramoncito, with little patience for bureaucracy and paperwork, provided optimism and a sense of accomplishment to a group of families for whom the PL 480 food meant survival as well as a point of organization. The priest could not anticipate

how many families would be on site from month to month, nor the kinds of activities that would be needed and possible. If he had limited food distribution only to those families originally approved as beneficiaries, he would have had severe problems with the others (as many as 100 families at different times), given that the settlers had not arrived as a group from one place, but came from several poor communities, and had no concept of themselves as a community, or experience of sharing limited resources.

In some respects, community promotion efforts such as Padre Ramoncito is carrying out are the real essence of community development, creating a community where none existed before, giving some of the most needy people an experience of working together to accomplish something of general benefit, and responding agilely to the shifting size and need of the community.

In the D.R., as in the rest of Latin America, this is a response to situations found in both urban and rural spontaneous settlement areas, both of which are growing as populations grow and shift. As the case illustrates, in these situations development workers do not have stable, rooted families and an established social structure on which to base an organization. The people are continually on the edge of survival, getting by on a handful of coins, buying things in small amounts every day as their day labor permits, and suffering all the symptoms of their status at the bottom of the economic ladder. Title II food can be an appropriate resource to meet those immediate needs, to begin to form nucleus communities, to organize people for educational activities, and creatively to respond to a range of longer range requirements. Voluntary agencies' goals and methods are particularly well suited to this work. The challenge is to develop methods of working with such groups and then move them beyond immediate relief, and toward some form of planned community building, income-earning capacity, and decent living conditions.

3. Overall Benefits of the FFW Component

While our field work planning had expressed bias in favor of activities considered by the PVOs to be particularly successful or innovative, we believe that we saw a good selection of situations, including ones where a great deal of improvement is possible, where lessons have or can be learned from failures as well as successes.

As the preceding descriptions and commentary reveal, the FFW component of the Title II program is producing benefits in four broad areas of interest to the PVOs and to USAID: (a) improved economic and family well-being, (b) social/nutritional benefits, and (c) organizational benefits, and (d) improved rural infrastructure.

The economic/benefits and family well-being accrue both to individuals (in new crops for family use and sale, improved yields from soil conservation, and new housing) and to communities (reliable water supplies, improved road networks).

The social and nutritional benefits occur because the PVOs are reaching out to people in isolated areas, to those experiencing extreme economic hardship, and giving them an opportunity to begin to solve some of their most urgent problems through a modified version of the traditional convite system. The food represents a significant part of many of the families' diets or food budgets, (as much as one-third for many families, based on our informal questioning), particularly during preharvest or drought periods.

The organizational benefits take the form of an extensive and growing network of well-established community groups which have been formed or strengthened, as indicated by their

- ability to manage food
- ability to identify problems and manage work to solve them;
- mobilization of other resources (technical and material)
- shared leadership within the groups; and
- commitment to non-formal education as a component of FFW activity.

These groups offer a resource for development programs seeking to improve conditions in the rural areas through local action, such as the soil conservation project. Many of us on the evaluation team, particularly some of the CARE staff who had been away from community development for a number of years after starting their careers in that field, were impressed by the farmer leaders whom we met, compared to the posture and attitudes of such people only a decade ago. The farmer leading a community group or project speaks directly, answers questions candidly, analyzes his and his community's circumstances succinctly, and often has a clear sense of where he and his people are heading. His wife may be a community health promoter, trained for a few weeks by SESPAS, his son involved in a youth group, and signing up to be trained as a paratechnician in soil conservation. The timidity, close-in isolation, and feigned ignorance which served as the protection of the campesino under the Trujillo regime, seems finally to be fading away. The farmers' groups stand up for what they need, know where to get it, and work out their leadership and management problems among themselves and with their local promoters.

Based on our brief experience, it would be overstating it to say that the PVOs' FFW work with community groups is a major factor in this network of self-confident local leadership and groups, but we think they've played a notable role in helping this happen.

The infrastructure, such as the potable water systems, community centers, or drainage or irrigation canals, were all the product of local initiative, and we think that this accounts for our observation that most were maintained by the community groups as part of their ongoing activities. Much of what we saw, of course, was relatively new, having been constructed or reconstructed following the devastation of Hurricane David in 1979.

We have been asked to assess the extent to which this work would have been accomplished had there been no Title II food for work program. How essential is Title II? It's a very mixed picture, and made more difficult due to the history of repeated disasters in the country, which have brought

in large amounts of food as relief, which was often used to stimulate rebuilding. In most instances, PVO promoters and community leaders described the food as an "aid", a "stimulus", and "impulse" which allowed workers to give up paid work days for community efforts. The donated food gave community leaders experience in managing resources on behalf of the community, and helped assure that the needed number of workers would come to the work site on a regular basis. Many rural Dominicans live literally from day to day, their wages barely covering the cost of that day's family food and shelter. Much might have been accomplished without Title II, but it would have been on a smaller scale, by smaller groups of relatively more affluent, dedicated farmers, or by groups making more strident demands on government agencies to deliver materials and services or cash wages. Groups in more isolated areas of the country, who are reached by PVO promoters, might not have been encouraged to focus on their needs and to take the joint action that the food incentive provided.

4. Suggestions and Activities for FFW Replanning

a) Project Categories

Summing up the analysis of the different categories of projects, the following suggestions were offered at the end of Phase I:

- ° Steps need to be taken to upgrade the quality of the technical work done on feeder roads through the provision of technical advice, better tools and equipment, and cooperation with government in project selection and alignment.
- ° Agricultural production projects should be focused as much as possible on producing food for nutrition, improving the family food basket in the community, producing for nutrition centers, and improving the lot of people working on sugar plantations and land reform settlements.
- ° Construction projects (housing, irrigation, potable water, community centers, etc.) require careful coordination of design skills, construction skills, and materials. While food for laborers may represent a small proportion of total project inputs, the management skills required of PVO promoters are considerable, and may require upgrading to assure that projects are well-done within a limited time period.
- ° Caritas and SSID can play a more active role in soil conservation, both by introducing basic practices in their agricultural production activities, and extending environmental education as the D.R. gears up its natural resource conservation program.
- ° Community promotion activities with fluctuating or transient groups require special organizing skills, and need to be geared as soon as possible away from relief toward development, while maintaining accountability for Title II food.

In the Phase II workshop on rural development/FFW, the agencies agreed to develop plans to focus community groups' agricultural production activities on the improvement of the family food basket, applying basic soil conservation techniques. Agency representatives will gather information from and hold conversations with the Secretariat of Agriculture about food production plans, programs and requirements, and about soil conservation training and community education. They intend to discuss potential technical assistance needs with the Peace Corps, and visit some pilot projects involving basic foods and swine production. The group will also investigate family nutrition education, food preservation, and food marketing programs to complement the effort. Training programs for promoters will be based on the plans which emerge. Technical assistance from USAID and AID/W will be requested as part of the planning activity between January and April. The areas of need are food production, soil conservation, and nutrition education messages.

A plan will also be developed to improve the feeder road activity. A working group will be formed, consisting of PVO representatives, the USAID engineer, and the feeder roads unit of the Secretariat of Public Works. They will work on refining a recent proposals for a new USAID-supported GODR program in animal trails, intended to complement and support the FFW work in this area. This committee will also discuss the issues involved in repairing or extending motorable feeder roads.

Though it was less thoroughly defined due to time limitations, the agencies expressed interest in setting up another working group to discuss and set directions for construction projects. They intend to examine the current range of projects and related resource needs, and develop training for promoters in the management of such projects.

b) The PVO Role in Rural Development Strategy and Operations

Apart from steps that can be taken to improve the development impact of specific types of projects, there are across-the-board concerns about the PVOs' role in rural development through food for work which were discussed during Phase I and carried over into Phase II. While these matters seem especially important in the context of the relatively unstructured FFW component, they are also relevant to other areas of PVO programming as discussed in Section III. Here the focus is on the following points:

- Overall FFW program strategies of SSID and Caritas in relation to government programs;
- Alternative ways of working with community organizations;
- Equitable treatment of community participants;
- Organization Development/Training implications for PVOs of changes in strategy and operations; and
- Use and sources of complementary resources to accompany food.

(1) Program Strategy Alternatives - Roles in Relationship to Government

As stated in Section III, the PVOs are acted on as well as actors in the process of change in the D.R. This requires periodic reassessments of their roles in relationship to national development needs and govern-

ment programs, to resources available through foreign and national institutions, and to pressures within their own organizations and their constituency of community organizations. Here are some ideas which were raised during our Phase I meetings in the D.R., augmented by subsequent reflection and discussion within the consulting team.

(a) Development Laboratory

The PVOs have, in recent years, provided services to communities not reached by government programs, and have gotten involved in innovative activities which government was not equipped or willing to carry out. Examples of using FFW in this way include the Carbonera integrated development intervention, and introducing the production of animal protein sources (fish, rabbits, poultry). These activities are all of potential importance to broader-scale development programs in the D.R. In carrying out these activities, the PVOs have relied on local materials, community volunteers, private donations (both national and international), and technical advice which they have mobilized in a number of ways. These projects are by necessity low-cost, shoe-string efforts, and while there have been failures, there have also been successes. Working under formal agreements with government agencies to test new approaches is complicated and difficult, as SSID learned, but this should not rule out experiments like this, or others, by both SSID and Caritas.

The PVOs have the opportunity to assess their innovative rural development projects, understand why some failed and others didn't, and make these findings known to government agencies concerned with rural development. If SSID and Caritas choose to make more of their role as "laboratories for development" at the community level, this may give them more clarity of purpose, a framework for attracting additional funds and technical assistance, and a new rationale for selecting and training their field staffs.

(b) Preferences in Project Selection

Both agencies, but especially Caritas, have considered the idea already adopted to some degree by SSID, of giving preference to certain kinds of community projects when allocating Title II food and complementary resources. This has the effect of moving the private agency away from the pure responsive mode in which community wishes, however diverse, are the single determinant of which projects receive Title II food. As expressed by Caritas, this might mean that their promoters and diocesan committees would respond selectively to communities in certain areas where communities face similar problems, such as lack of drinking water, soil erosion, or a need for storage centers for cash crops. They would give preference in food allocation to those communities willing to meet the area's priority needs for basic foods or infrastructure. This need not eliminate a wider range of responses to specific community needs which fall outside the list of preferred projects.

This "planned" response, as Caritas expressed it, or system of preferences, would connect logically to the "laboratory of development" approach mentioned above. It would have a similar effect of giving a rationale for building certain specific kinds of development skills, both technical and organizational, in the field personnel, whether paid promoters or volunteer workers. It would likewise be an aid to mobilizing other kinds of resources, whether public or private, and allow the PVO to show the impact of its work in more discrete developmental as well as organizational terms.

For Caritas to move in this direction, it will have to actively conduct the program of dialogue and education which it has sketched out in its action plan. It will mean surveys, workshops, and special sessions within the Catholic Church-Caritas structures to explore needs, options, and alternative ways of doing business differently. For SSID, it would mean further fine-tuning, perhaps in the form of technical and management training for its regional and local promoters.

(c) Food for Nutrition

One way to combine the laboratory and preference concepts is to seek more actively to link FFW-supported food production with the feeding/nutrition components of the PVOs' Title II and non-Title II programs.

This can be managed as an operational problem, leaving it to field staff to see the potential and make the linkage in situations where a farmers' association has produced a surplus, or is producing nutritious by-products (like yucca or squash leaves) which could be used in a nearby nutrition center.

We suggested that while this approach will be of some benefit, there are more purposeful ways to connect FFW food production to nutrition activities, building on ideas and actions of the PVOs. As described in the nutrition section, CARE could work with CEA to expand on the Santa Fe plantation experiment with food production. During the second visit, we learned that CEA is considering a new policy to produce food on the sugar plantations. Similarly, CARE could develop a program with IAD, focusing on the newest and poorest land reform settlements, and combining FFW with MCH.

On a broader scale, CARE, SSID and Caritas could collaborate more closely with government plans to resolve some of the country's basic food problems. According to the preliminary scheme described in Annex 6 on food, land, and nutrition policy, the government is considering a campaign to increase production of a "mini-basket" of basic nutrition foods like rice, beans, oilseeds, sorghum, and chicken. To the extent that the PVOs' staffs have influence with community groups and with agencies like IAD and CEA, and technical knowledge (or access to that knowledge), they can give preference to FFW projects which promote the production of the national mini-basket.

Short of that kind of strategic decision, the PVOs can consult regionally with agriculture officials to learn more about appropriate crops or small animals for each area, marketing potential for different crops or products, and about current agricultural practices being developed or promoted. They can use this information in advising farmers' associations engaged in crop or small animal production.

(2) Working with Community Groups: Entry, Support, Evolution

The staffs of all three of the PVOs have extensive experience in working with community groups through both public and private agencies. As we found during our meetings and conversations, this is a rich mine of wisdom and of historical perspective. It is possible that a more systematic use could be made of this experience by both the PVOs and USAID.

The selection of communities and families for participation in FFW projects, and for their continued participation in the program can be more systematically based on two kinds of community analysis, organizational and economic. Organizational analysis refers to the capability of local groups to solve problems by effectively mobilizing and utilizing resources. Economic analysis refers to the needs of the group for food, for income, for basic services, and supports the PVOs' attempt to reach those groups whose needs are greatest.

(i) Organizational Analysis

The existing organizational criteria for guiding the use of PL 480 food are at times intangible, and sometimes contradictory. Some promoters prefer to work with groups that already have a track record. They know that the food will get to the intended people, that it will be stored and accounted for, and that the physical work will be completed. "I like to work with groups that won't cause me any problems, where I know we'll get results," one says. Another prefers to work with groups that are just struggling to get started, focussed on one simple physical accomplishment. "I like to teach them about leadership, about administering food, about filling in forms to get resources. I get satisfaction from seeing the group grow, stand up, and move from one accomplishment to the next," says another. Some of the promoters are spending significant periods of time moving their groups to the next stage of development as organizations, where they can contract with food processors, form federations to influence government programs at the regional level, and diversify their activities in other ways.

It was generally acknowledged that community development is more an art than a science, and that under the decentralized mode of operation of the PVOs, it does not lend itself to systems and standard procedures. Yet it may be possible to tap the body of experience of community development in the D.R. represented by the PVOs' field staffs, and bring a bit more science into the art. The purpose for doing this is so that the PVOs can assure themselves

that they are really reaching those that most need help, that their project work with FFW is producing both the tangible and organizational effects they aspire to, and perhaps to be able to document the knowledge which now rests inside the heads of the promoters and regional coordinators.

As described in Section II B-1 many factors, from promoters' personal styles to a desire to spread the food around to many groups, enter into decisions about which groups and what kinds of projects receive Title II resources (or other forms of PVO assistance). Perhaps some key indicators could be gathered and agreed to by the field staffs, in a structured discussion forum, which would define (a) when a community should begin to receive support (b) what the organizational and economic stage is where support could be changed from food to other needed items like credit, materials, or technical education, and (c) when the food stops being a support or a means of achieving unity, but rather is producing either dependence or divisiveness in the community or group.

Like other social groups, there may be generally observable stages that community groups go through, and that can be observed and tracked, as they proceed from dependence, to interdependence, and finally to independence, and reach the point at which they are ready and able to affiliate with some higher purpose or larger body. During the field trips that it was possible to look at such indicators as shared and rotated leadership, ability to administer resources effectively, to manage people and draw on their skills for the benefit of the group, and of course to identify, prioritize and solve problems.

(ii) Economic Analysis

Indicators of the level of community economic well-being might also be derived, which would permit better decisions about introducing and phasing out (perhaps replacing) food as a supporting resource. PL 480 food priority would be assigned to the poorest communities for a fixed period. When the members of a community group have achieved a certain level of increased family income, or have family food reserves planted or stored which will last them for at least six months, then food would no longer be the appropriate form of support.

(iii) Differentiating Communities and Treatments

SSID and Caritas could combine these organizational and economic indicators to identify and group poorer and relatively less-organized communities for one kind of treatment with FFW, while the relatively more productive and organized communities would be supported in a different manner.

The poorer, less-organized communities would be assisted with a simple activity requiring little more than the members' labor, such as community cleanup. A single-function organization would

be formed for the purpose, giving the members the experience of forming a group, to plan and complete work, and manage a resource (food). As they showed ability to complete these tasks, they would be assisted to move on to another activity, with an immediate reward in the form of continued food supply. In addition, the foods from the Title II package in such communities might be limited to those which are similar to local ones (only oil or corn flour, perhaps). This would result in less loss if the groups failed, and reduce the time spent by promoters in acquainting people with unfamiliar items like bulgur or CSM (See discussion in Annex 15).

In the relatively more developed and organized communities, the strategy would be to mobilize other kinds of resources, perhaps under a regional OPG, which would provide for production-related activities such as land reclamation, soil conservation, or agro-industries. Relatively more attention might be given to educational events, and to working out innovative projects in association with government-run programs. PVOs might consider providing new services, such as legal assistance in securing clear title to lands the community members already occupy and use.

We do not propose that this subject be approached as an academic exercise, but as a practical one, working with the practitioners of community development to see how decision-making can be more founded on agreed criteria. Pilot projects might be set up, or one diocese might offer to be a laboratory for varied approaches. We think that with the D.R.'s extensive history in community development using food, some valuable knowledge can be distilled which will improve program management, training of staff, and help reach the goals of community self-reliance which the PVOs profess.

During Phase II discussions, the PVOs and USAID decided to set as an objective for future planning to unify the agencies' criteria for the use of Title II food in rural development/FFW. A team of agency representatives, including field promoters, will review the socioeconomic and organizational criteria now being used to pick communities and projects. They intend to classify communities according to key indicators, and develop a strategy for working with groups or communities at different levels of development. This strategy will be discussed within each agency before it is adopted for the Title II program as a whole. Assistance from an AID expert in rural community profiles will be requested.

(3) Equitable Treatment of Community Participants

This issue has various parts to it, all of them having the potential for divisiveness rather than the desired unity among community members. One is the differing ration levels being provided for FFW by SSID and Caritas. SSID's ration, intended in part for greater nutritional impact, and for much small numbers of communities and participants, is roughly three times that of Caritas' (see details in Annex 15). Caritas seeks organizational results through FFW, rather than

emphasizing nutritional impact on families. These differing organizational strategies have the effect in some communities of creating competition between groups and between the PVO promoters themselves. We would urge that the agencies find a way to offer a more similar ration, whether within the context of the "different levels of development" plan, where more needy communities would get a larger, standardized ration of fewer items, or under some other logic.

Second is the matter of equitable benefits and participation from agricultural work crews. The work is generally organized so that the same number of person days are worked on each farm, thereby controlling for the differences in farm size. However, in some communities we found instances where convite teams are made up of landless laborers who appear to be providing services to farmers with land, and were providing a major part of the heavy labor on those farms.

In projects such as soil conservation, which require a substantial time spent in the digging of drainage and diversion ditches and the construction of terraces, the organization of work teams to work on a limited number of larger farms in the community may be highly inequitable. This can contribute to the conflicts in the community regarding the use of the PL 480 food.

Such conflicts are not inevitable, however, and in most of the communities visited the work crews were organized in such a way to give equal benefits to all members of the association regardless of the amount of land each member has. The mechanisms and means for assuring this equity in such cases where the food is being used to help private production processes should be carefully studied. Controls to assure equity could be introduced into the design of the projects by the PVOs and communities.

This raises a third point about the PVOs' professed aim of reaching the most needy. In the rural areas of the Dominican Republic, these are often people with little or no land. The challenge of the PVO is to involve those people whose only asset may be their labor, to help them obtain access to land or water or other means of improving their income, without coming into conflict with landed elites, who may also be interested in the resources of the PVOs (food, credit, or agricultural inputs). Some of the PVOs' field staffs have experience in these problems and how to deal with them without falling into either league or battle with the local elites. This wealth of experience needs to be tapped and passed onto the younger, the less experienced, or the less effective field staff members in a continuing effort to maintain SSID and Caritas' integrity.

(4) Organizational Development/Training Implications for the PVOs

Organizational development is most often defined as a process of planned change. It begins with awareness of a need for change, based on either external changes affecting the organization, and or on dissatisfaction expressed within the organization. A change in one part of the system will almost always require change in all or most of the subsystems.

For the PVOs in the Dominican Republic right now, this little bit of theory is very real. External changes are significant. There is expressed internal dissatisfaction from the level of top managers down to the promoters in the field. New purposes are being explored. New ways of doing business are under consideration. Tentative steps have been taken to establish new alliances or collaborative arrangements, breaking some of the distance and isolation of the past.

As these changes begin to take more concrete form, they will have direct impact on personnel at all levels of the PVOs, and on many of the people in the organizations with which they work. Much of what has been discussed during this evaluation/replanning period will require that managers, technicians, administrators, and promoters refresh old skills or acquire new ones, and begin to acquire new knowledge. The training implications of program change will require frequent attention in order to retain and motivate staff, and transfer skills within and between the agencies.

Below are mentioned some of the topics which the PVO training agenda might cover.

(i) Program/Project Management

Senior as well as mid-level staffs of the PVOs might benefit from refresher courses in the functions of working in teams, setting goals, programming and planning, and monitoring and evaluation.

The state of the art in these functions in the context of rural development, and how they interrelate, has been evolving of recent years. This might assist the PVO managers in responding to new demands associated with becoming more effective development agencies.

(ii) Organization and Consultation with Communities

The older, more experienced Caritas and SSID staff have much to offer to other agencies in techniques of working with newly-formed as well as more seasoned community groups. Many of the CARE staff have similar skills, but may not have used them in recent years. A joint seminar on community development, and perhaps an opportunity to work for a time in integrated teams in the field, might make up a good training plan. Some topics to be explored, in addition to those proposed above in 2-b(2), might include:

- ° special problems of working in communities of landless people;
- ° problems of class differences in communities of landed and landless agriculturalists; and
- ° working with different situations of concentrated leadership, conflict within communities or community groups, communities of transient people or fluctuating populations.

Participants could bring in real situations they face, and work with others on alternative ways of coping with such problem situations. The results of seminars and structured field work could eventually be the basis for a community worker's manual, which would be valuable for a number of Dominican organizations engaged in rural development.

(iii) Technical Training

As with community development, at least some of the resources needed to upgrade the technical skills of PVO staff, especially promoters, exist within the PVOs themselves. CARE, in particular, has staff who have formal training in agriculture. The areas of technical training needed will emerge as the PVOs redirect their programs, and survey the wishes of their staffs. Some of the topics discussed during our work in-country included crop and small animal production, soil conservation, energy conservation, techniques of road drainage and repair, and skills related to monitoring and upgrading nutrition programs. The agricultural institute in Santiago, ISA, may have appropriate courses. In some instances the PVOs may have to make special arrangements. Hopefully the training can follow the method suggested under community organization and consultation, which emphasizes training people in immediately needed skills, with visits and work conducted in village situations, such as the Ocoa watershed, or on an animal trail that's being reconstructed.

The PVOs can work together where their interests coincide, and organize joint training sessions, perhaps including village leaders, church volunteers, and others who will be able to apply the training in specific projects.

(5) Complementary or Alternative Resources

Food alone won't do it. In many of the construction projects, labor makes up only 20 to 40 percent of the total project cost, the rest being equipment and materials. In construction, feeder roads, agriculture production, and soil conservation, technical assistance is required if the project is to be well-executed and long-lasting.

The PVOs, and the projects they sponsor, need access to technical knowledge, education and advice, and to management and organization training, to complement the food which encourages the labor. There are at least the following five ways of obtaining these complementary resources:

- (i) From their own resources, including their local staffs, local and international collections or donations, by hiring consultants;
- (ii) From government agencies, or from selected individuals working in technical agencies;
- (iii) Directly from AID, the Interamerican Foundation, Appropriate Technology International, The Interamerican Development Bank

- or other agencies which provide funding to PVOs, whether as grants or loans of funds or time from technical experts involved in related projects;
- (iv) From private Dominican development associations and foundations; and
 - (v) From local volunteers, business people, or other individuals interested in promoting development in their areas.

SSID, Caritas and CARE have shown that they are skilled at searching out these sources, preparing project proposals, and responding to the inevitable monitoring and reporting requirements. They are conscious that in nearly every instance some degree of freedom of action must be given up in return for the additional resource.

As the agencies evolve further as development agencies which interact with other development organizations, they will find it beneficial to have their own standard procedures for planning, management and evaluation, thus minimizing the creation of special systems for each activity or new funding source.

To the extent that the PVOs can publicize what they are doing, maintain general relations with sources (even when a specific proposal is not pending), they can expect to have funding agencies seeking them out to help design and implement programs to reach rural populations, try out new techniques, or otherwise enhance the solution of development problems. They will also be known in a more general way, so that when they have a special requirement, familiarity and confidence (which is often as important in funding decisions as are elegant project designs) will already have been established with funding or technical agencies.

In connection with plans for improving the MCH component of the program, the Phase II workshop participants resolved to pursue two activities. One is to begin an educational dialogue at the level of the Technical Secretariat of the President of the Dominican Republic, providing updated information on the PVO's programs and accomplishments. It is hoped that this will lead to more informed government decisions regarding support for the private efforts, including allocations of PL 480 Title I proceeds. The second activity is a review of sources of funding, equipment, and technical assistance for nutrition programs, including multilateral agencies (UNICEF, FAO, PAHO, WHO), bilateral programs (AID, CIDA), and private organizations (Miserios of Germany, OXFAM, CRS, CWS, and CARE/New York). This information will be used during the planning period to shape some aspects of the nutrition component so that they qualify for available funds.

As their plans are developed, the agencies have agreed that certain standards will be met. They will set clear targets for each programming area, and establish systems for monitoring, program adjustments, evaluation, and termination of projects at the community level. They intend to build into their plans indicators of accomplishment for each activity. Training programs for staff and community leaders will be identified as the plans are developed.

III. ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

During our activities in the D.R., we continually explored with the participating agencies a variety of ways of linking their programs and increasing inter-agency collaboration. While the initial impetus for this was the AID expectation that this topic would be treated, the subject also came up naturally in the course of our discussions. This was due in part to the way the teams and work were structured, also to the interest and curiosity of the various agency representatives. Many times we heard "Aha! I didn't know you were doing that!"

Collaboration and linkage are carefully chosen words here, preferable to integration, since integration implies a standardization and control which private agencies find uncomfortable for reasons discussed below in Sub-section B. Collaboration implies exchange of information, mutual assistance (access to rural groups through the voluntary agencies, with technical advice from AID or a GODR agency, for example), coordination of plans and coverage, and the like -- a complementary relationship which recognizes both similarities and differences of interests and ways of conducting programs.

Linkage refers to internal connections within the private agencies' own programs. In recent years all three agencies have tended to compartmentalize their supplementary feeding program from their "other programs". This has been both a conceptual and organizational compartmentalization. Feeding programs were one thing, development efforts were something else. The evaluation helped the PVOs focus on this anomaly, which in most instances had a valid origin, but now deserves and is receiving reexamination. Specific instances of this are discussed below.

A. Areas of Common Interest

In broad terms, the agencies with which we have had contact (including the GODR, the PVOs, USAID and the Peace Corps) share a number of common goals as they confront the current development problems of the Dominican Republic. They are all dedicating the largest part of their resources to the problem of rural poverty and its causes and symptoms. In a number of areas they are engaged in the same or complementary activities.

The FY 1984 Annual Budget Submission (ABS) of USAID/DR tentatively identified the following areas of potential integration of Title II with current or planned Mission projects.

<u>Title II Activity</u>	<u>AID Project</u>
Other Child Feeding	Radio Education
Food for Work	Rural Feeder Roads Special Development Activities Fund (Peace Corps)
Food for Work and/or Nutritional Education	Health Sector III
Maternal Child Health and/or Nutritional Education	Freshwater fisheries <u>OPB</u>

As the ABS states, "this does not exhaust the list of possibilities."^{1/} In fact, this list does not mention an existing collaboration, namely the involvement of Food for Work through CARITAS in the soil conservation activity in the San José de Ocoa watershed begun by private efforts, now part of USAID's Natural Resources Management project.

Taking a step back for a broader view and piecing together the various bits of information we absorbed and talked about along the way, we can see that the areas of mutual interest are numerous.

1. Basic Food Production, Marketing and Rural Income

This is a major area of emphasis for AID, assisting the GODR in providing services and developing institutions to serve the small farmer. The GODR, through such institutions as the Secretariat of Agriculture, the Agrarian Institute, the Feeder Roads unit of Public Works, and other agencies, seeks to improve cropping and marketing of basic food crops as well as commercial crops like coffee. At the same time, the private agencies, in both their food for work and their "other" programs, are promoting the production of basic crops as well as commercial arrangements with peanuts and tomatoes; facilitating marketing through feeder roads projects; assisting groups in building or improving irrigation systems; providing credit to farmers' associations; and promoting the production of fish in ponds. The Peace Corps also has volunteers working in nearly all of these activities.

2. Nutrition and Basic Health

USAID has supported a series of health programs of the GODR. In the last several years a network of rural health facilities and health workers has been put into operation. The National Institute of Potable Water is reaching many more rural communities with gravity-fed water, wells and pumps. Regional programs of malnutrition treatment and nutrition education are operated by the Secretariat of Health and Public Assistance. The PVOs pursue many of the same objectives. Aside from nutritional recuperation, and some medical assistance through Caritas, they focus primarily on preventive health, leaving curative medicine largely to the GODR system. Food for work is used as an aid to the installation of potable water systems. Caritas has a program of chlorination of water and SSID has a wells program. FFW is also used in latrine construction, and to some extent in other kinds of environmental sanitation (community cleanups) activities. The Peace Corps has an active program in primary health care, largely through GODR channels. A major effort of the PVOs is the feeding/nutrition program aimed at families with vulnerable mothers and children (MCH).

^{1/} USAID/DR FY 1984 ABS pp. 63-64

3. Natural Resource Management

This is a new area of activity in the Dominican Republic. The first significant work on this problem was initiated by the Plan Sierra, a special integrated program of GODR now almost 8 years old, which has included soil conservation and reforestation in the north central cordillera. AID's Natural Resources Management project is now getting underway, and as it evolves, will extend soil conservation to additional watersheds, and incorporate activities in reforestation and range management, as well as environmental education. CARE is exploring involvement in reforestation, possibly involving FFW. As mentioned above, Caritas is the channel for the FFW/soil conservation work in Ocoa. Peace Corps is bringing in a number of foresters this year.

4. Energy

The Energy Conservation and Resources Development project of USAID is starting this year. Peace Corps Volunteers are working in a number of areas of the country installing wood/charcoal-conserving Lorena stoves, some of which are being used in CARE and Caritas feeding centers where prepared food is provided for MCH and FFW recipients. The collaboration here is ad hoc, rather than planned. At the same time, it is clear that the D.R.'s economic difficulties are energy-related to a great extent, and that it is a growing area of common concern to public and private agencies alike, whether motivated by their own budgetary limitations, or by concern for the more general problems of energy supplies and costs to rural people and the economy.

5. Education

USAID's Education Sector Loan has focused on formal, primary education, and is scheduled for continuation. Schools in the provinces where the AID project operates have been built by contractors. In other parts of the country community groups using FFW have contributed to the improvement, repair and construction of schools. Caritas and SSID have been more active in non-formal education for youth and adults, in such areas as nutrition, basic health, child care, agricultural practices, and sewing and household skills. SSID appears to have the most active educational effort, linking adult literacy and other forms of education to both feeding/nutrition and FFW projects in nearly every case. Caritas promoters often act as educators, or bring in health or agricultural extensionists to give talks. Guidance is provided by promoters from SSID and Caritas to community groups in identifying needs, selecting and planning projects, managing resources (food and others), and generally conducting the business of a community organization. As stated elsewhere in this report, these educational efforts constitute for PVO's one of their highest goals, giving the campesino the skills and knowledge to pursue problem-solving on his own.

B. Significant Differences in Method

While broad areas of common concern and activity cited above seem to offer multiple opportunities for collaboration and linkage among some private agencies and with public ones, we should note some significant differences which act as

real constraints on joint action. While sharing a number of common aims, the typical methods of working towards them are different between AID and the GODR entitles on the one hand, and the Private Voluntary Agencies and to some extent the Peace Corps, on the other. At the risk of exaggerating the differences, here is a summary:

1. The scale of operation of AID and the GODR is, perforce, grand, while the PVOs attack problems on a community-by-community or micro-scale, for the most part.
2. The channel to communities on the part of Caritas and SSID is direct, while that of AID is through the GODR to official entities and their regional or local offices, which in turn serve and respond to communities. CARE, in contrast to other PVOs, also operates through these official channels in nearly all cases.
3. AID and the government agencies start from surveys and other forms of accumulated information, formulate plans and strategies, and often approach communities to form organizations to carry out programs locally, such as health clubs, parent-teacher groups, or farmers' associations to receive agricultural credit. Caritas and SSID tend to build on existing groups (although they often form or restructure groups as well), and respond to the concerns of those groups, which may be very limited to one activity (such as road repair), or broader in purpose. The public sector agencies generally practice top-down development, as contrasted with the PVOs' preference for working from the bottom up. On the whole, the PVOs emphasize process (skills in doing development) and the public agencies focus more on the outcome (specific program accomplishments).
4. The PVOs enjoy an autonomy and freedom of activity which managers and technicians in government agencies do not. Political pressures, changes in program direction, legal and regulatory restrictions, and limited personnel and budgets are acknowledged by many government officials as obstacles to providing the kinds of services to the rural poor which they would like to offer. While the PVOs suffer some of the same obstacles, they have relatively more scope to draw on a variety of funding sources, develop their own staffs as they need to, and formulate their own and management methods in accordance with their institutional philosophies. They can make realistic commitments to rural people, in line with their known capacities, whereas a GODR regional office director may have been handed a set of overly ambitious goals to meet, without the requisite resources to implement the program.

As noted above, these differences (here we are not ascribing any value of better or worse to either approach) are often perceived as constraints by GODR, USAID and private agency personnel. They can also, however, be viewed as complementary strengths, especially where there is a shared development objective. The PVO interest in strengthening community groups offers an outreach network for government programs. The PVOs are also concerned, as mentioned below, with the development

impact of their work, and need resources available through USAID, the government and their private sources. Scientific, technical and community development personnel exist in the PVOs, and their skills need to be effectively utilized and transferred to others.

C. Private Voluntary Agency Directions and Concerns

CARE, Caritas, and SSID are in a genuine state of reexamination of their programs. This process was under way before our arrival but some new aspects emerged from the evaluation. Caritas and SSID are looking for ways of internally linking what they're doing with food in nutrition and community action with the activities of their other programs. CARE, Caritas, and SSID are seeking to carry out nutrition and other projects that have more demonstrable impacts on family well-being, food supplies, income and infrastructure. All three agencies see a need to complement the food resources with material, financial, and technical assistance resources. The agencies are also continually conscious of the instability of the Title II food resource and wish over time to gradually seek ways to complement the food so as to be less dependent on it.

In the D.R., the PVOs handling the PL 480 food began after the death of Trujillo as charitable organizations which simply distributed food and clothing to the needy of the country. Periodically after that, the agencies became immersed in relief and reconstruction efforts following disastrous hurricanes. However, in recent years the organizations have sought to evolve from being charitable organizations to being effective "development agencies." By describing themselves in that way, the agencies mean that they are attempting to resolve some of the underlying problems which produce the symptoms of poverty which their charitable activities had previously been treating.

During this same 20 year period, the GODR has been developing and improving public institutions for combating that poverty and underdevelopment. A number of national private agencies have grown up as well, but the primary responsibility for treating the conditions of development and solving some of the problems of the poorest of society has fallen to the national government. These programs have been impressive in improving health care delivery systems, education and internal transportation and electrical networks, agricultural credit and extension, etc.

This transformation of national governments into more effective welfare and development organizations has occurred at the same time as the private agencies' goals and capabilities are changing. This mutual simultaneous transformation often leads to conflicts between public and private agencies concerning appropriate areas of action, and to difficulties in coordinating their efforts, both of which are critical to resolving at least some of the problems of the poor of the country.^{2/}

^{2/} See Judith Tendler's observations on this point in Turning Private Voluntary Agencies Into Development Agencies: Questions for Evaluation. U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, D.C. April, 1982.

This situation has been developing in the D.R. for some time and probably will continue into the near future. It is critical, therefore for the PVOs and the government to begin directly to analyze their roles, and to agree on what the special contributions of the private agencies are as they pursue including their Title II rural development and nutrition programs, as well as their other development activities.

It appears that in the D.R., these special contributions might include the following:

1. The private agencies can devote their resources and energies especially to areas of the country and parts of the population which are presently not being reached by governmental welfare or development efforts. To a certain extent this is occurring in the D.R., the best examples being (a) the concentration of SSID projects in the poorest areas of the country, and (b) the Catholic Church and Caritas's more active priests and promoters to directing their work towards the truly marginal and poor people. There seems to be a great interest on the part of the PVOs to further focus their efforts into the truly marginal areas and populations, and this focus should be encouraged, and more consciously planned in coordination with government agencies and local private development association.
2. The PVOs can also develop innovative programs and techniques which can be tested under Dominican conditions and later adopted by governmental agencies. The example presented in Section II of the report of the Carbonera self management model for the land reform settlements is a type of effort which could be expanded and emphasized. In such cases the private agency is particularly suited to experimentation since it can more carefully limit the promises made to campesinos and at the same time can more easily assure the delivery of promised resources, because of its relatively small size and non-political nature. In the feeding/nutrition component, both SSID and Caritas have active nutrition units conducting pilot projects and comparative studies which have potential value for government policy and operations, and which deserve support from foreign as well as national organizations.
3. The third way that PVOs can complement governmental agencies is to stimulate private, economic and social organization through technical and financial resources and assistance. Such non-political institution building, particularly at the community level, can be managed over several years and can mobilize local resources. Such efforts therefore can also develop independently of the particular political regime and assure that the campesino voice is heard in any governmental environment. Of course, this option is feasible only where public policy encourages a strong private sector. This is certainly the case in the D.R. where government policy has encouraged organization and participation of community groups in agriculture, health, and education.

These three areas of complementary PVO and governmental development efforts provide a clearer reference point for judging how well the PVOs are doing their development business, and for seeing how well they are integrating PL 480 food into their own as well as nationally based development program.

As we have seen, the agencies are reassessing their relations with USAID and GODR programs, and are attempting to better focus their resources. SSID made a major step in this direction during 1976-77, when it limited its operations to the northwest and southwest regions, placed special preference for FFW on agricultural production, and developed skills in well-digging, inland fish culture, nutrition/health and basic education. They looked at needs systematically and adopted a development strategy. Caritas is larger, and more a cumbersome agency to change, given its interlocking structure with the Catholic Church, but it is now sketching out a process to look at needs, formulate the different kinds of programming directions, and perhaps work selectively in collaboration with public sector programs as well as with other PVOs. CARE is looking both to upgrade the quality of its feeding and nutrition programs, mainly through government channels, and to diversify its program in areas such as shrimp and fish culture, reforestation, and production of local foods.

D. USAID Directions with Title II

The AID Mission has made a firm public commitment to support improvements and possible expansion of the Title II program, as stated in FY 1984 Country Development Strategy Statement and Annual Budget Submission. The Mission's main argument for this was based on the food and nutrition difficulties which are widespread and evident in rural areas of the D.R. The inclination of the Mission was that feeding/nutrition activities could be expanded, and that FFW might be reduced, with both programs being refocused and integrated more closely with AID/GODR projects.

This level of overall interest and commitment on the part of the Mission, together with the PVOs' mood of reassessment, augurs well for positive changes in the Title II effort, and perhaps in a broader sense, in the relationships between the Mission, the private agencies, and the government, in their approaches to development problems in the D.R.

After listening carefully to all parties for three and a half weeks, we think it likely that the kinds of changes, and pace of change, may differ somewhat from those conceived by the Mission in its FY 1984 documents.

Within the various offices of the Mission, we found active interest in what the private agencies were doing, and a willingness to explore new kinds of partnerships. We counsel that the approach be one of learning from each other, rather than trying to move rapidly to "integrate Title II projects into AID activities".

The Mission and the PVOs now have a framework which has identified the program areas and issues that will be looked at first, and time frames for reaching closure on them. This framework has specified initial technical assistance needed. This process needs to be actively pursued, to avoid frustration, and to be sure that the momentum of the recent months isn't lost. Some things Mission staff can do:

1. Share programming expertise and data with the PVOs when they request it, by commenting on proposed program changes or project proposals;
2. Share information the Mission may have about the GODR's new plans, programs, or potential budget changes;

3. Share information among the Mission staff about potential areas of program collaboration with the PVOs, whether involving Title I or other resources;
4. Bring the PVOs into discussions of new projects, where their grassroots knowledge and experience can be valuable in targeting programs and running them through a network of private community groups to reach the most needy;
5. Listen carefully to and support PVO initiatives (financially and technically) where they complement or extend broad areas of Mission interest, even if not directly "integrated" with major projects and;
6. Be helpful to the PVO's in presenting issues of Title II policy, composition of commodities, ration levels, etc. to AID/W, and taking an advocacy position on those matters, as well as concerning PVO access to some of the Title I resources. What we are arguing here is a stance of helpful support.

Here are some more specific areas of support for consideration by USAID/DR, should the PVOs request it.

a) Planning, Organizational Change, and Training

The Mission may be able to provide specific information on organizations, individuals, and materials available either in the D.R., or through AID/W's human resources office, which would be of help to the PVOs as they work individually or collectively on modifying their programs. The Mission could inform the PVOs of local programs being supported under its management training projects, as well as the services of USDA's Development Project Management Center and international agriculture/rural development management training courses. The USDA courses are regularly conducted in the U.S., but they can also be delivered in-country. The Mission might also explore other ways of directly funding on-site assistance by management consultants or contributing to the costs of workshops or conferences. We would expect that CRS/Caritas would be a primary client for this kind of information and support, given the broad nature of their plan for change.

b) Studies of Feeding/Nutrition Models

Our consultancy was not intended to conduct impact assessments of the various nutrition models being sponsored by the PVOs, but together with them, we did identify a need for the PVOs to reach a better understanding of the relative effectiveness of the different MCH activities. The Mission now has an initial request for help by experts capable of assisting the PVOs in these studies. It is expected that USAID/DR and AID/W will provide funds, whether under the health program, or other grant categories, to make a contribution to building the PVOs' capacity to carry out such studies, and to set up systems to permit self-administered monitoring and evaluation in the future.

c) Project or Program Funding

As reported to us, CARE is farthest along in identifying new rural development projects which are candidates for OPGs, a portion of Title I funds, or grants from the Embassy's Special Development Activities Fund. Their agroindustrial project ideas, such as the shrimp and fisheries project, are in accord with the GODR's interest in creating rural employment. The reforestation idea which is in its exploratory stages certainly falls in line with both natural resources and energy priorities of the government and the Mission. While these may or may not involve Title II food, they help the PVO to build its capacity and credibility as a development agency, and related to that, to develop technical and management skills that can be applied to improving the effectiveness of food programs.

Caritas, through CRS, is requesting OPG funds for the expansion and improvement of its Applied Nutrition Education Program. With some refinement, this program can be a replacement for at least some of the Title II feeding centers, and form part of USAID's nutrition assistance strategy.

As SSID and Caritas consider linkages within their programs between their Title II activities and their other services, such as agricultural credit, they may require additional funding which USAID could supply or help arrange through the GODR or private Dominican sources. SSID's existing fisheries and wells projects are also candidates for expansion funding.

SSID and Caritas, more than CARE, identified potential needs for equipment, vehicles, and increased staff in order to improve their feeding/nutrition components, and expand on their innovative MCH activities. Health Sector funding might be a source for this, either directly designated for the PVOs, or channelled through SESPAS in some way. In addition, Mission technicians can refer the PVOs to other donor agencies whose resources are available in areas where AID's are insufficient or already programmed.

d) Technical Assistance by Mission Personnel

While we recognize that the staffs of the technical offices of the Mission are more than fully occupied with their existing project portfolios, there are a number of areas where occasional consultation and information-sharing with the PVOs would be of benefit. They could share their libraries of technical training materials, assist with setting up field demonstrations on road repair or soil conservation, review project proposals, and perhaps arrange jointly-scheduled field trips which would be of educational value for PVO managers and staff, and for the USAID staff as well. If they are bringing consultants to the D.R. whose talents would be helpful to the PVOs, some days might be allocated for exchanges of ideas with the private agencies.

Construction engineering of the most basic kind, agricultural techniques, resource conservation (soil, water, forests, energy), current knowledge of nutrition -- all of these are important to both USAID and the PVOs, and while the Mission certainly has no monopoly of wisdom on these subjects as they apply in the D.R., there are many opportunities for more formal and informal dialogue in the future.

e) Review of Title II Regulations and Community Development

During our sessions with the PVOs, a topic arose which we believe deserves further attention on the part of the agencies and the Mission. The parties involved in administering and monitoring FFW projects should explore the extent to which the practices used in allocating food, whether these are based on regulations or on routines that have been built upon over the years, are supporting community development or regulating it.

The normal practice is to identify a project within a community, assign it a period of time and set number of recipients to receive food (50 families for four months, for instance), and hold the community accountable for giving food only to those families for that period, and to complete the project within the assigned time. SSID and Caritas may, on consultation with the community, extend the time period if problems delayed completion of the project. While this system has its merits for both AID and the PVO, in terms of managing and accounting for food, it may in certain instances work against the overall FFW aims of community organizing, and in other cases be overly rigid.

In the Monte Cristi case, the food management system seems to be interfering with treatment of a situation where discrete, pre-planned projects are difficult to define, and where the number of beneficiaries may be fluctuating. USAID and the PVOs may want to set aside a certain amount of food, with different ration levels, perhaps only one or two commodities (oil and corn flour), to respond to such conditions.

As one of the PVO staff members put it, "One successful experience of completing a community project does not mean that a community group is really organized, stabilized, and able to take on additional projects." In some communities it may require two or three such experiences, of increasing complexity, extending over several months, before the group is strong enough to function without the catalytic input of food (see the discussion about "Working with Community Groups", on page 37.

As the PVOs examine the community development methods they use, and explore the potential of treating different types of communities in different ways, they should study whether the food administration rules and practices, either their own or AID's, are consistent with their objectives and ways of working with or communities, or whether they need to be modified.

(f) USAID Followup

Following Phase I, the USAID Mission's Program Office participated actively in PVO planning sessions focusing on the draft report. The three-year plan idea was proposed, and Phase II assistance was defined to help the agencies move forward. In addition, the Mission's engineering office developed a proposal, in consultation with Caritas, to include a component for 500 km. of hand-built animal trails in the extension of the USAID-GODR feeder roads project. This would work in collaboration with the PVOs' community organization/FFW system and a special unit to be established within the Secretariat of Public Works' feeder roads division.

In the health sector, prospects appear to have dimmed for a major nutrition component in the Health III loan. This is due to a number of factors, but critical among them is the severe financial crisis of the GODR which is causing a number of cutbacks in the new loan package. In addition, at the top levels of SESPAS it is believed that a significant nutrition effort requires that Health and Agriculture work under a common program strategy, rather than having Health carry the main burden. At present, the Mission sees limited scope for the integrated kind of public sector program that most observers feel is needed. The Mission now has the option of assessing the potential for funding additional nutrition activities through the PVOs, while continuing to encourage a largerscale, long-range intersectoral commitment by the GODR.

The agriculture/rural development office had not fully reviewed the evaluation report in terms of its implications for the existing and upcoming project portfolio, technical assistance activities, and the like. The natural resources program manager participated in the Phase II planning workshop session on soil conservation.

In our closing conversations with Mission executives, it was agreed that the USAID senior staff should hold discussions focusing on this report and the action plans for Title II. The purpose would be to decide as a team how the Mission's resources, influence, and talents can best be mobilized to (a) support the PVOs as they define changes to improve the quality of the Title II program, and (b) collaborate over the longer run with the PVOs in ways which advance the USAID strategy and the Dominican Republic's development agenda.

E. Overall Program Size and Balance

Although this issue was not included in our original scope nor mentioned in briefings, we have been asked to give our opinion on how big the D.R. Title II program should be, and what the relative balance should be between MCH and FFW. As mentioned previously, the Mission's 1984 ABS requests about a one million dollar increase in the value of food, and suggests that the FFW portion might be reduced in favor of increased attention to MCH.

We don't believe that the data are yet in place which would allow either us or the USAID/PVO planning group to make firm judgements at this time as to an appropriate overall size. The nutrition surveillance and income/expenditure survey data discussed in Annex 14, sections B and C, offer opportunities yet untapped for documenting the degree of need at the national level, as well as the geographic location of severe poverty and malnutrition. Our brief review of these data, along with our observations in rural and urban fringe communities, support the Mission's contention that the Dominican Republic's national per capita income ranking is not a reliable indicator for decision-making about food/nutrition assistance. We have witnessed serious poverty in much of the population, and critical poverty in a significant portion. In many of the communities it was common to find children with clinical signs of malnourishment. It is our judgement that current levels of Title II support could be doubled and the projects still would not be able to reach all of those in need.

The issue which ran through all of our work with the PVOs and the Mission, and which is the main theme of this report, is the one of effectiveness. This means deciding which MCH models are most worth continuing support, how and where they will be focused geographically, how the various agencies will collaborate, and fitting all of this into a long-range national program linked to food policies. We estimate that the planning process which has been initiated should be able to produce clearer answers to these questions by early in 1983. In the meantime, we have counselled that the Mission provide or otherwise make available support for the planning effort, assist in mobilizing the needed complementary resources, and that AID/W try to assure at least stability of both quantity and quality of Title II food for the next couple of years. As plans are improved, and resource needs of the PVOs and the GODR become clearer, program levels can be related to desired objectives.

Regarding the balance between the two main components of the program, we have described much of value in both FFW and MCH. We found areas where the two activities can be mutually supporting, with FFW providing food for nutrition, and supplementary feeding activities opening the way for community organization. For CRS/Caritas and CSW/SSID, community promotion work, developing self-reliant problem-solving in communities, is a major goal, with FFW as the primary means. MCH is 30 and 20 percent, respectively, of their Title II programs. We hesitate at this point to recommend that they make major changes in their program mix, before the analysis and planning work has advanced. Within the diverse Caritas-Catholic Church structure there is a wide range of views about the value of Title II-supported MCH, as we found and have reported. It will take time, and an active series of internal discussions, for Caritas to reach consensus and adopt new directions. These could affect Caritas' emphasis between MCH and FFW, and decisions about increased or decreased use of Title II. SSID's position is that failing the addition of complementary resources and training, they prefer to improve and possibly expand in a small scale their limited activities in MCH. This of course, may change as they work with the other PVOs and with SESPAS.

CARE is firmly committed to its feeding/nutrition programs, and to rechanneling them along with their various counterpart agencies. They have a general belief that their program could be expanded, but this will be dependent on some policy and operational changes in the GODR.

In summary, while there is an understandable interest now in clear judgments about overall program size and mix, our counsel is to protect the program against dramatic changes in the supply of PL 480 food, and from changes in the balance between MCH and food for work. The Mission should support the process of detailed assessments, consultation and planning which is underway, looking for more clarity around these decisions in March-April, 1983.

IV. FACILITATING SELF-EVALUATION: SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE METHOD

A. Background

This brief analysis summarizes a document submitted in September to Judith Gilmore, Food for Peace Evaluation Officer. The purpose of both is to describe and assess concisely the program evaluation method used by our three-man team who worked in the Dominican Republic from June 15 - July 10, 1982. We believe that the consultancy was successful and that the method is valuable under a number of circumstances when the desired outcome is significant commitment by the program's managers to make concrete program improvements.

This section is offered for those interested in replication of this approach as one more among AID's set of evaluation tools.

B. Description

The objective of the evaluation in the Dominican Republic was to stimulate action to improve the PL 480 Title II program. The consulting team sought to induce self-evaluation by the private voluntary agencies who manage the food resource, and to a lesser extent, by the USAID Mission and certain agencies of the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR). The evaluation focus was on the overall program content, management, and results of the food for work and nutrition/maternal-child health components. Minimal attention was paid to the actual movement, storage, and accounting for commodities, nor was this intended to be, at this stage, a rigorous impact analysis.

Our approach was to seek the activities and projects considered by the agencies to be most successful, to work with them to identify success factors, and to see how they might be repeated and further improved. We tried to avoid drawing our own judgements and announcing them. Rather, by raising questions and creating supportive situations, we encouraged the PVO personnel to analyze their work against their own as well as AID's standards.

We used a variety of techniques. Strategy and operational issues were raised and explored. We provided initial drafts of data collection guides based on the PVOs' and AID's criteria. Situations were created to encourage interagency dialogues and exploration of each others' activities and methods. The team sought out people and organizations with different approaches to solving Dominican problems and brought those people or their ideas into formal and informal sessions. We used semi-structured workshop methods, having expanded the "evaluation team" to include a total of 20 people, and having some sessions with about 30 participations. The participants were consulted regularly about the content and activities for the sessions. All work was conducted in Spanish, mostly in the PVOs' offices or in field locations.

During the three weeks our team (a) organized workshops; (b) participated in trips to the field for information collection; (c) conducted individual interviews with GODR officials, USAID staff, and others; (d) carried out specific data collection/analysis work; and (e) led closing seminars to agree on conclusions and followup action. In the startup sessions we established the goals and tone of the consultancy, defined with the participants the standards of the

evaluation, and planned the information-gathering work. During the field trips, which combined PVO, GODR, and USAID members, mini-seminars were held to review methods, information, and findings. Following the field work we held in-depth interviews of PVO top staff against the background of field experience, and separately gathered data on nutrition problems, rural development programs, and other topics. The goals of the closing seminar were to draw conclusions about strengths and areas for improvement in the program, and to draw up agency-by-agency action plans.

C. Critique and Lessons Learned

The following points are a summary of the positive aspects as well as difficulties encountered, and lessons for the future.

Elements which favored the positive outcome of this consultancy were:

- We found an actively supportive climate in the form of a demonstrated interest and initiative from the USAID Mission and the PVOs.
- We were given well prepared background information and an initial plan of work assembled by USAID and the PVOs.
- We saw among the involved parties the development of improved communications, and a growing awareness of shared problems, mutual respect, and potential for collaboration.
- General plans for change and followup were produced, and commitment to working together was demonstrated by commitment to holding regular planning and technical meetings among the PVOs and AID. These factors resulted in an unusual degree of expressed satisfaction on the part of the PVOs in Santo Domingo and New York, as well as by USAID/DR and AID/W offices.

The problems or difficulties arose primarily because of the experimental nature of this consultancy:

- The consulting team, newly-acquainted for this job, would have benefited from additional intra-team preparation time, to discuss roles, work plans, individual skills, etc.
- There was continual underlying tension within the team and with the clients between our roles as evaluators and as consultant/facilitators.
- Involvement of GODR agencies was not pre-planned, and had to be arranged during the in-country startup.
- The action plans resulting from the closing seminars could have been more specific had those sessions been structured for tighter focus on major, identified program problems and opportunities.
- This kind of intervention can be made into more of a learning event by purposefully transferring evaluation skills to the PVO/USAID/GODR program managers by the inclusion of brief instructional events.

Lessons from this experience, from the consultants' viewpoint, are:

- The scope of work provided to the Mission/PVO group, and related pre-arrival communications should clearly define the self-assessment approach, and the roles, responsibilities, and expectations which this implies for all parties.
- The consultants must constantly monitor their mixed role as facilitators and investigators, in order to aim for the clearest focus, consensus, and specificity of program managers' action plans during the final sessions.
- The action planning phase should include sessions aimed specifically at key decision-makers, others for technical or other mid-level staff, and draw in outside technical resource people.
- Some kind and degree of followup activity should be pre-planned, to assure that the intense interactions and good intentions do not fade away, but in fact produce change. This could take a number of forms, not to create dependency, but to assure that the most important items are attended to.
- Reporting requirements should be greatly reduced to focus on what happened and major outcomes and followup, allowing the consultants to provide client service on key issues, rather than preparing extensive descriptive or analytical reports.
- The team's supportive role was symbolized by our choice of working language, work sites, and emphasis on seeking "success" projects to visit in the field. These actions contributed to the trust which developed and thus to our productivity.

D. Replication

Recommendations for improving the conduct of future such "process evaluations" have been provided to FVA/PPE in the form of a revised scope of work. Key points drawn from the experience in the Dominican Republic and included in the scope are:

- a) emphasis on the joint, collaborative nature of the evaluation;
- b) specific steps to organize the consultants and other participants relative to shared goals for the evaluation;
- c) suggested rather than required topics for coverage by the evaluators, (unless the agency is seeking certain standard information from all evaluations as part of a specific study ongoing monitoring, or decision-making process);
- d) members of the client group (USAID, PVO, host government) are to participate in identifying key issues, preparing case examples of programming activities, and otherwise help to get ready for the action planning phase of the consultancy;

- e) reporting requirements are reduced to focus on major findings and followup steps;
- f) team members' skills to include evaluation, group process/consultation, and substantive experience or knowledge of nutrition, community/rural development, as appropriate; and
- g) USAID Mission role is defined as (i) to be actively involved as part of the evaluator group, and (ii) to support the workshop activities of the consultants.