

**DESARROLLO JUVENIL COMUNITARIO
EL SALVADOR**

**OPERATIONAL PROGRAM GRANT
No. 519-0364-G-00-9422-00 (ORG III)**

MID-TERM EVALUATION

February 24 - April 25, 1992

FINAL COPY

Prepared for:

DESARROLLO JUVENIL COMUNITARIO/EL SALVADOR

Prepared by:

**Development Economics Group/
Louis Berger International
Washington, D.C.**

July 1992

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Prepared by:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
DJC	Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario
SCF	Save the Children Federation
MSP	Ministerio de Salud Publico
OPG	Operational Program Grant
CENET	Centro de Educacion en Nutricion y Estimulacion Temprana
CDTA	Centro de Desarrollo de Tecnologia Apropiada
CET	Centro de Estimulacion Temprana
CEN	Centro de Educacion en Nutricion
CDC	Community Development Committee
FY	Fiscal Year
GJPA	Grupo Juvenil de Proteccion Ambiental
FIS	Fondo de Inversion Social (Social Investment Fund)
FINCA	Foundation for International Community Assistance, Inc.
ACCOOPACO	Asociacion de Produccion Agropecuario, de Ahorro, Credito y Consumo "La Oriental", R.L.
ARCESAD	Asociacion Regional Comunal El Carpintero-El Sauce, de Aguas y Desarrollo
ACPA	Asociacion Comunal de Produccion Agropecuario
CBIRD	Community Based Integrated Rural Development
GOES	Government of El Salvador

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction: The terms of Operational Program Grant III (OPG III) between USAID/El Salvador and Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario (Save the Children Federation) signed in 1989 required a midterm evaluation of progress towards program goals. Under contract to Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario (DJC), the Development Economics Group Division of Louis Berger International carried out an evaluation of the program during the period February 24 to April 25, 1992.

Save the Children Federation (SCF) has been active in El Salvador since 1979, with the current OPG third in a series of five-year grants. The basic objective of the SCF program has been to better the condition of children in poor, rural communities in El Salvador. SCF holds that the conditions leading to child poverty and ill health are complex and need to be addressed in an comprehensive manner. SCF describes its program as community based integrated rural development (CBIRD).

SCF has generally selected communities among the most poor and isolated in El Salvador with which to work. Under the terms of OPG I, starting in 1979, SCF began its program in two impact areas, one in Eastern La Union Department and one more centrally located in San Salvador & Cuscatlan Departments, but which had received an influx of war refugees. Under OPG II, beginning in 1984, SCF added two more impact areas, one in south-central La Union and the other in Cabanas Department. Under the current OPG III, SCF established two more impact areas, both in La Union, and was expected to phase out its programs in three of the already established impact areas. Many of the communities with which SCF has worked were outside the effective scope of central government social services owing to the internal Salvadoran military conflict which took place between 1979 and early 1992.

SCF's basic program objective has been to assist communities to organize themselves in a way which enables them to identify and prioritize their needs and to participate in the planning, implementation and maintenance of projects designed to better community living conditions. SCF's menu of community projects includes activities in health and nutrition, education and organization, natural resource and economic development. Some projects have involved infrastructure such as roads, dams, wells and latrines. Most involve training, education and community motivation.

As proposed by SCF and approved by USAID, OPG III established ambitious targets for achievement by June 1994. The project was expected to: benefit directly an additional 50,000 poor families; reduce infant morbidity/mortality through a comprehensive health care program serving 1,500 village families; enhance community access to educational opportunities; and, increase significantly real income of targeted families through small enterprise development and technical assistance to at least 3,500 small farmers.

Purpose of Evaluation and Methodology: The evaluation terms of reference included determining project progress towards the above goals, undertaking a cost benefit

analysis, evaluating the current status of SCF organizations in Impact Area One from which SCF had departed in December 1990 and recommending changes in the program if appropriate.

On site, the evaluation team realized that many of these tasks could not be done owing to the near total absence of base data and ongoing data collection systems. Accordingly, the team set out through a program of document review, extensive field work - visits to 48 communities and well over 200 interviews, and analysis to evaluate SCF programmatically in terms of organizational structure, quality and efficiency of effort and the sustainability of the program. In addition, evaluation was made in greater depth of each of the four program sectors and a separate evaluation carried out of Impact Area One. Evaluation methodology concentrated on personal interviews with key SCF executives, executives of other institutions, a large sample of the SCF field staff and numerous community members. A variety of questionnaires were designed and used and the information analyzed.

Findings - Progress towards EOP Goals: As of early 1992, SCF's activities had reached 7,954 families of which about half lived in the north and east of El Salvador. The evaluators were unable to determine infant morbidity/mortality rates for SCF communities either before project startup or at present. As of early 1992 SCF had undertaken to change a full range of health practices for over 380 families and had undertaken to change one or two specific health practices in an additional 1,200 families. Among the health activities have been numerous infrastructure projects involving access to clean water, latrine construction and environmental sanitation.

In education, SCF had established by 1991 "new schools" in ten districts and had trained over 50 teachers in this methodology when it became clear that the Ministry of Education would not accept this concept. Alternatively, SCF has provided scholarships for over 5,000 students at the pre-school and early primary levels as well as trained a number of teachers. Through SCF a number of existing schools have added grades and new schools have been opened where before there were none or the Ministry of Education had abandoned the community. Also, several hundred adults have been provided training in literacy.

SCF has provided technical assistance to rural farmers with regard to soil conservation, crop diversification, and animal husbandry. The number of farmers actively involved would appear to be fewer than 500 and there was no data from which to measure program impact on family income. Economic development activities were also expected to improve family incomes and were to have included expanded village bank systems and microenterprise development. SCF has recently added vocational training to this program. SCF's village bank program has not functioned very well, but a joint venture with FINCA/CAM in Impact Area 2 has shown some promise. In general, this sector has not had a significant measurable impact on rural family incomes.

Very approximate financial figures would indicate that SCF spends on the average about US\$9,000 per community per year. For a program with more than 100 active communities this would represent expenditures in the \$900,000 annual range. This further breaks down to about \$175 per year per family benefited. The value of benefits received could not be determined owing to the absence of indicators measuring status, or change of status, rather than activities. SCF's data collection system counts activities and the number of people trained, but does not measure changes in knowledge or condition, thus making program impact measurement and cost benefit analyses infeasible.

Conclusions: There would appear to be two aspects of the SCF program which separate it from most if not all of the other social service providers in the field: its choice of very remote and very poor areas to serve; and its emphasis on organizational development within the communities.

Judging that child poverty and poor health reflect complex conditions of education, income and culture, SCF's activities are wide ranging. In attempting to cover such a broad range of activities, SCF risks spreading its resources too thinly to have a significant impact in any one area. This has been recognized by SCF's management which consolidated the program in early 1991: the evaluation team recommends further consolidation.

Health: The program sector which appears most directly related to the problem of child welfare is that of health and nutrition. The evaluation team rated SCF's performance in this sector as good: there are problems in implementation, particularly with respect to the quality and tenure of the volunteers, but the program design appears basically sound. Quantifying the results in terms of behavioural change has not been possible, but recommendations on selection of a health indicator system could lead to improving data collection and analysis.

Education and Organization: The educational sector, which also includes community organizational development, is basically sound but with a number of unanswered questions. There has been no definitive decision as to the appropriate role for SCF in the educational field. The apparent current role of interim provider of educational services pending the ability of the Ministry of Education to expand its services would appear to be of good value, but not one foreseen in OPG III nor yet subject to formal agreement between SCF, USAID or the GOES as to how long and what precisely is involved. Literacy and vocational training, the latter now part of the Economic Development Sector, are activities separate from pre-school and basic primary education. Vocational training may not be the most appropriate activity for a community development program, but literacy training certainly is complementary to overall goals of improving community capacity to respond to the need for social and economic betterment.

If education programs are temporary in nature, devolving in the near term to the Ministry of Education, then it follows logically that the more important element for this sector is community development. This assumes even greater weight in view that SCF's stated major objective is community organizational development, not social services, per se.

A strong SCF programmatic emphasis on organizational development within the communities not only implies a shift in emphasis for sectoral promoters from schools to committees, but also in the overall attitude of SCF. If the goal is self-sufficient communities, then programs should be tailored more to what the communities perceive as their needs and less to the "menu" of available SCF activities. It also implies that communities must develop a willingness to contribute financially to community projects or "self-sustainability" becomes merely a phrase connoting change of dependency from one donor to another.

Natural Resources: The need to improve agricultural productivity in a manner which favors the environment is unquestionably of prime importance to El Salvador in general and to the SCF impact areas in particular. The team's basic impression is that this sectoral program is well intended but with too few resources, either human or material, to have more than a marginal impact.

The problems presented by a poor physical environment, established behaviour patterns and very limited economic resources are not likely to be modified by interventions short of full blown agricultural extension programs. SCF would appear to have neither the background nor the resources for a program of this magnitude directed solely at farmers. The present natural resource sector activities all have value as adjuncts to community betterment. At their current scale, they will not, in themselves, result in increased real incomes for large numbers of people. The better approach, then, may well be to scale down the objectives to match the intervention, rather than vice versa.

Economic Development: Economic development activities such as village banks, microenterprise development and vocational training are intended to improve beneficiary incomes. Keys to microenterprise development are markets and credit. Many of SCF's communities lack sufficient market potential. SCF's village bank programs have had limited impact in their respective communities and are at present have virtually no lendable funds. Any impact in term of increased incomes among beneficiaries to date was not measurable.

A new activity, vocational training, benefits individuals who in turn, may or may not remain involved in their communities. The efficacy of the program could not be established owing to its recent start-up, but within the SCF context it is a relatively expensive program with yet unproven community benefits.

In the evaluation team's judgement, the impact of this sector is sufficiently marginal to warrant redirecting the SCF resources involved into other sectors.

General Program Conclusions: The two aspects unique to the SCF program mentioned above raise questions with respect to the appropriate future of the program.

1. The selection of very poor and isolated communities as targets for the SCF program appears to be an integral part of the SCF approach. The evaluation team recognizes the emotional appeal of helping the "poorest of the poor", but believes that both USAID and SCF should clearly recognize that there is cost involved. By definition, the more limited the resource base, the greater the inputs required to reach a given level of development.

2. Save the Children's stated key program emphasis is the organization of self-sustaining communities: that is, the development of communities capable of defining their needs, seeking technical and other assistance and carrying out programs is more important than the specific social or economic services provided. This is the theory behind CBIRD. The record in Impact Area 1, in which SCF was active for eleven years, does not clearly substantiate SCF's ability to translate theory into reality. As of March 1992, one could just as rationally project that all of the SCF-sponsored organizations in the area will disappear or, alternatively, that three or four Community Development Committees will survive and provide useful services to their communities indefinitely.

It is quite possible that selection of communities for development with little or no economic resources makes virtually impossible the development of full self-sufficiency. It was notable during the field work how few financial resources had been committed by SCF-assisted communities to community projects. CDC's without access to funds are not likely to survive long beyond SCF's departure. The evaluation team estimated that a third of the communities in the three earlier impact areas (2, 3 and 4) were probably ready for "phase-over", but expressed strong concern over the lack of community financial resources.

Community-wide development implies programs of wide community interest. Section 5.2 lists in priority what the communities consider their needs. Roads, access to water, school buildings and other infrastructure requirements are at the top of the list. Projects of this nature benefit most if not all of the community and easily capture the community's attention. Interventions aimed at individuals, e.g. vocational training, or selected segments, like pregnant mothers or farmers, encounter greater difficulty in attracting broadly based community interest.

SCF has deemphasized infrastructure projects under its exclusive aegis in favor of working in the community as a catalyst to secure support for infrastructure projects

from other institutions. SCF activities will be limited to interventions basically involving human resources in terms both of beneficiaries and of service providers. The danger to this approach is that SCF may limit its appeal to the community as a whole to a degree that jeopardizes its avowed aim of developing strong community-wide organizations.

OPG III: The second half: The mid-term evaluation indicates that SCF has had a positive impact on the living conditions of those communities in which it has been active. The amount of impact cannot be measured, but it does not appear likely that SCF will meet the quantitative goals established in OPG III.

Program shortcomings stem partly from philosophy, partly from the nature of Salvadoran society, but mostly from problems of implementation. In terms of program, SCF's 1989 proposal oversold its capabilities. What would now appear appropriate would be a regrouping on the part of USAID and SCF to determine what can and should be done for the remaining LOP.

That self-sustaining communities can be developed within a limited time frame has not been clearly established. That community organizations if properly developed contribute to the overall effectiveness of the program and to the development of democratic processes is, however, sufficiently clear to warrant continued emphasis on community organizational development. The process does not succeed in all communities nor has SCF really exhibited much urgency in preparing communities for phase-over. An inventory of communities in impact areas 2,3, and 4 is recommended to determine which communities have the potential to be self-sustaining so that SCF can then program their phase-over. For those communities which lack this potential, SCF should consider terminating its activities.

As outlined in the recommendations which appear in the body of the text, there are a number of things SCF can do to improve its operational effectiveness. The main point, however, is that SCF has an ongoing, accepted program in being which does deliver services to Salvadoran beneficiaries, most of whom are both poor and rural.

If these services are considered worthwhile in terms of the USAID country strategy, then continuing to work with SCF would appear more efficient than dismantling its program and starting with one or more new institutions. It should be recognized by USAID and SCF that significant behavioural modification and income enhancement are difficult and lengthy processes and that program objectives should be geared more closely to reality. A realistic assessment of likely results does carry the risk that the level of projected benefits will not justify the program's cost.

The major deficiency in this evaluation and in any assessment of future program changes is the lack of quantifiable data on which even to attempt a cost to benefit analysis. Outside technical assistance to SCF/EI Salvador could be useful to perform

two tasks: a detailed cost benefit analysis, including substantial primary data collection, limited to no more than two communities to allow at least a model from which to project overall results more realistically; and, assistance in putting into place a data collection and analysis system suitable to quantitative evaluation.

Recommendations: In summary form, the principal recommendations of the evaluation include:

1. That SCF and USAID undertake a thorough review of the OPG III program to define and modify program objectives in keeping with project experience to date. Aspects to be considered include the relative weight to be assigned to community organizational development as opposed to specific social service interventions. In view of the lack of quantifiable data, thought is required as to the program's quantifiable objectives. The ones set forth in OPG III will not be met: what should be used in their place.

Is SCF's role as interim provider of education services in preparation for the government's assumption of responsibility appropriate? How long should SCF stay involved in a community?

2. That SCF improve its operational efficiency through: further consolidation of its activities, eliminating the economic development sector; improvement of personnel management and recruitment practices to reduce turnover; and, greater decentralization of decision-making with especial attention to giving greater weight to community preferences and conditions as opposed to centralized programming with its emphasis on numbers of activities.

3. That SCF define its role in relation to other institutions and agencies, e.g. Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture and Public Works in a consistent and programmatic fashion.

4. That SCF develop and implement a coherent phase-over policy utilizing effective criteria of community character, size and state of development before undertaking further geographic expansion.

5. That SCF overhaul its management information and planning systems to match data collection and analysis with agreed program goals. If the goals include increased income, for example, then the data system must be geared to measuring changes of income.

Lessons Learned:

1. USAID should have ascertained more closely the relationship between SCF's then current activities and those outlined in the operational program grant proposal with particular attention to the attainability of the goals set forth and SCF's capabilities as measured by the two previous evaluations.
2. Given the lack of quantifiable data noted by both previous evaluations together with the quantitative objectives set forth in OPG III, continued grant support should have been made conditional to SCF's putting in place a satisfactory data collection and analysis system.
3. Projects which propose in relatively short periods of time to effect substantial changes in social and economic behaviour need to be viewed with considerable skepticism. Such changes are difficult and require large amounts of time and effort.
4. Community development is a process of behavioural change and motivation and as such is both difficult to measure and to achieve. SCF's experience does not establish that an integrated, community-oriented approach is as cost-effective in delivering services as a narrowly focused approach, e.g. agricultural practices, health services, education. The consideration is whether furthering democratic processes through development of grass roots organizations warrants the loss of efficiency in social service delivery.
5. In purely economic terms, programs directed at relatively small numbers of people with limited resources in isolated areas are not cost effective in comparison with similar programs directed at large population groups.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 El Salvador - Background 1989 - 1992.

Save the Children Federation began work in El Salvador in 1979 in a very difficult environment. Its activities had to be carried out under circumstances of open conflict, instability, fear and destruction.

This background brought with it serious negative consequences to the very people Save the Children sought to help: children and their immediate families. Among the consequences:

Displacement: A UNICEF study in 1987 calculated that as many as 500,000 Salvadorans had been displaced from their homes as a result of the conflict with net migration in the affected areas averaging 11 percent. In areas where SCF operated, the absence of people between the ages of 20 and 39 was notable.

Education: At the same time, school enrollment and central government budgetary support for education measured in real terms fell to the levels of the 1950's. The number of public schools dropped from 4,374 in 1979 to 2,998 in 1985 according to a study from FUSADES which also calculated that 1.3 million children of school age were not in school that year. In the Department of La Union, in which SCF was particularly active, about half of the public schools closed and those that remained open rarely offered more than one or two grades.

Health: Health conditions in rural El Salvador, historically not very good, were made worse by the war. A large majority of rural children have limited access to health facilities and the incidence of malnutrition, severe respiratory infections and diarrhea contributed to an infant mortality rate believed to exceed 55 per thousand live births. Chronic malnutrition was estimated to afflict 30 % of rural children under the age of five.

Psychological Impact: Of the 75,000 deaths attributed to the war, the number of children and youth fatalities is unknown. But it is certain, given the involvement of young people on both sides of the conflict, that many of Salvador's youth suffered both physical and psychic damage from the war. Children subjected to this kind of upbringing make even more difficult the task of social development.

The withdrawal of government social services in much of rural El Salvador left a vacuum which a number of private voluntary agencies attempted to fill. Save the Children was noteworthy in its willingness to provide educational and health services in poor areas, difficult of access, and which for several years lay outside the effective reach of the central government.

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Since the effective date of the current Operational Project Grant (1989) El Salvador has experienced a number of significant events. The election of Lic. Adolfo Cristiani and the ARENA party in 1989 led to a changed approach to economic policy. The so-called "offensive" of 1989 shocked much of Salvador's society, but led to the eventual signing of a peace agreement in 1991. While confronting serious social, political and economic problems, El Salvador in 1992 has entered an era of considerable optimism, a time of reconstruction and an excellent time for institutions such as Save the Children to review and adapt their programs to the changing situation.

2.2 Save the Children - Program Overview.

Save the Children Federation of Westport, CT., established an office in El Salvador (Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario) in July 1979 and undertook its first program of integrated community development that same year, financed by an Operational Program Grant from USAID. The first impact area was in the northeast of La Union Department near the town of El Sauce, followed later by a program in an area (San Martin) nearer San Salvador but impacted by the arrival of substantial number of people displaced from other areas.

Activities in San Martin were financed to a considerable degree from private donations.

A second OPG approved in 1984 led to the expansion of SCF's program to Impact Areas 3 and 4, San Alejo in south-central La Union Department and Ilobasco in the Department of Cabanas. OPG III approved in 1989, added Impact Areas 6 and 7, Anamoros and San Jose de la Fuente, respectively, both in La Union Department, but called for the phase out of SCF activities in Impact Area 1 (El Sauce) in 1990, followed by phase out of A.I. 3 (San Alejo) in 1991. It should be noted in passing that a number of communities in which SCF worked were beyond the range of control of the central government but that SCF staff and volunteers experienced little difficulty owing to their well established reputation as politically impartial and religiously non-sectarian.

Save the Children focuses on the welfare of the child. The precarious conditions under which many children live in the developing world, however, are not merely a matter of health practices, but reflect widespread poverty and lack of education. The causes of this poverty and ignorance are many and interrelated. To attack these problems requires an integrated approach combining health, nutrition, access to potable water, better sanitation, basic education and increased family incomes. To assure long lasting changes in behaviour and continued development, Save the Children believes essential the development within the community of the capability to identify and prioritize its needs, to plan its responses, to assist in the implementation of specific activities, to manage the local aspects of the program and to coordinate

with the external agencies involved. Thus, SCF favors a Community Based Integrated Rural Development program (CBIRD).

Accordingly, the single most important aspect of the SCF program is the development of community-based organizations.

The focus of activities around which Salvadoran communities have been organized fall into a number of categories. An important category is that of health and nutrition, including improved access to potable water, improved sanitation and kitchen gardens as well as programs of vaccination, health education and better diets. In education, besides pre-school and early primary education, there have been programs for adult literacy. Numerous other activities were carried out involving infrastructure projects, agricultural and economic development. The total SCF program numbered over 30 "activities".

To concentrate its resources better on fewer activities but better executed, SCF in El Salvador consolidated its program in 1991 into 15 activities, "projects" as defined by SCF, divided into four sectors: Health and Nutrition; Basic Education; Natural Resources; and, Economic Development. Projects range from mother and child health programs, to potable water supply, latrines, trash control, soil conservation, crop diversification, kindergartens, basic education, literacy classes, vocational training, empresarial training and village banks.

SCF has deliberately deemphasized infrastructure projects believing that it can play a more effective role working with the individual communities so that they may qualify for assistance programs from Salvadoran government agencies or other institutions.

2.3 Scope of Work

This mid-term evaluation has taken place some two years nine months from the start of OPG III with the objective of measuring the degree of progress achieved in reaching the goals set forth in the grant which were to be achieved by June 1994.

The original terms of reference included four major points:

- a) Evaluate the increase in real incomes among target families.
- b) Evaluate the impact on infant mortality and morbidity rates.
- c) Evaluate the increased community access to education and training and participation in the democratic process.



d) Evaluate the role of the community organizations in the identification and resolution of community problems.

Further requirements included an assessment of relevant conditions in Impact Area 1 (El Sauce) in which SCF was no longer active, a review of the village bank program and an assessment of the impact on the use of agricultural chemicals.

During the first week, the evaluation team realized that owing to the absence of base data and an effective monitoring system, it would not be possible to meet the terms of reference as originally envisaged. Therefore the team developed a modified work plan and methodology which was presented and accepted by SCF and USAID/El Salvador during the second week.

The evaluation, while making recommendations for systems which will allow the program's future impact measurement, focuses primarily on the programmatic aspects of the development program. Based on an in depth assessment of the Project's four primary sectors (Health, Education, Natural Resources and Economic Development), the evaluation explores specifically the appropriateness of the programmatic structure, the quality and efficiency of the development effort and programmatic integration and sustainability. Finally, a study of Impact Area 001 (El Sauce) is presented 14 months after phaseover to determine long term programming effects.

The evaluation was divided into four phases and carried out over eight weeks. The phases were:

1. Data Collection. (San Salvador)

Between February 24 and March 7, this consisted of interviews with key personnel in institutions involved in the program, meetings and review of available documentation.

2. Field Work. (El Salvador)

From March 9 through March 28, the team visited and carried out structured interviews in 48 communities in the Areas of El Sauce, Anamoros, San Jose de la Fuente, San Alejo, Ilobasco and San Martin.

3. Analysis of Findings and Development of Draft Report. (San Salvador)

From March 30 to April 10 this involved compilation of data, development of findings and recommendations, interviews with additional key people and the initial drafting of the report.

4. Presentation of the Draft Evaluation to USAID & SCF. (San Salvador)

This was done during the week of April 20 - 25.

Revision and preparation of the final evaluation report, incorporating comments from USAID and SCF, is programmed for May and will take place in Washington, D.C.

2.4 Methodology

Due to limitations in assessing impact indicators as a result of inadequate baseline data in most active project communities, the evaluation team employed diverse methods of measuring progress toward stated project goals. These methods addressed both the qualitative, and to the extent possible, the quantitative results of project interventions.

The methodology included the following elements:

- 1) A comprehensive review of key project documents including the evaluations of the OPG I and OPG II; the proposal for the OPG III; annual plans and program reports;
- 2) Interviews with key Save the Children staff members including the Director, Assistant Directors for Program and Administration, Planning Manager, four Sector Coordinators and six Impact Area Coordinators;
- 3) Interviews with key collaborating partners, including the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Education; FINCA/CAM (at national and regional levels) and TECHNOSERVE;
- 4) Interviews with 40 active Save the Children promoters in the following sectors: Health, Economic Development, Education and Natural Resources;
- 5) Interviews with a significant number of community volunteers in each sector;
- 6) Structured group surveys with 48 community groups, selected independently by the evaluation team using a modified stratified sample, with a view to representativeness for size, number of beneficiaries, diversity of project activities, accessibility, financial activity, geographical diversity, longevity of project involvement and the presence of specific programmatic components. This sample, totalling 37.2% of communities active during the OPG III, exceeded the number necessary to determine representative project impact;

7) Team visits to the following 70 collaborating or direct project institutions in participating project areas:

- 19 primary schools and 7 kindergartens;
- 10 CENETS (Centros de Estimulacion Temprano);
- 15 Village Banks;
- 3 Associations/Cooperatives supported by the project;
- 11 Ministry of Health subregional units, posts and promoters;
- 4 Ministry of Agriculture sub-regional offices;
- 2 Ministry of Education regional Supervisors;
- 3 Literacy classes;
- 4 Dams;
- 8 Community Nurseries;
- 8 Vocational training courses;
- 3 Youth groups (GJPAs).

8) 255 structured participant surveys with:

- 48 Community leaders;
- 10 mothers (and fathers) participating in primary health care activities, including currently pregnant mothers;*
- 19 Health sector volunteers;
- 13 traditional birth attendants trained by project*
- 8 "madres lideres"*
- 53 farmers, including some members of ACPA's
- 26 primary school and nursery school teachers
- 25 members of community banks*
- 4 owners of microenterprises*
- 19 members of associations and cooperatives
- 15 participants in literacy classes
- 24 participants in vocational training;

(NOTE: * numbers significantly lower than planned owing to absence of functioning intervention in community selected.)

- 9) Tabulation of data on SPSS and Lotus software; incorporation of secondary data as indicated; cost-benefit analysis where feasible;
- 10) Review of preliminary findings and recommendations with Save the Children staff and USAID - El Salvador;
- 11) Specific recommendations on the implementation of project information systems and related discussions with Save the Children staff.

The following instruments were used to support the evaluation process:

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Staff | 1. Staff Interview Guide |
| B. Regional Institutions | 1. Secondary Institution Interview Guide
2. Health Unit/Post Survey |
| C. Community Facilities and Project Activities | 1. Inventory of Community Services,
2. CDC Interview Guide and Process Index
3. Economic Activities Survey |
| D. Participants | 1. Health Survey
2. TBA Survey
3. Agriculture Survey
4. Case Studies/Profitability |

Additionally, a modified inventory of community services, facilities and project activities was used to assess the current status and long term impact of the activities sponsored under OPG I and II in the area of El Sauce.

2.5 Limitations of the Evaluation

The evaluation team acknowledges that the following evaluation study and its related fieldwork were limited substantially by the following qualitative and quantitative elements:

1. The national demographic information base in El Salvador is extremely limited due to the last national census having been carried out in 1970. Information available from the public sector is also incomplete owing to the reduction of operations during the 12 year conflict. Such simple information as village maps, population numbers, number of children under five, school attendance data, out of school populations etc. is generally unavailable at the community level, in turn making it much more difficult to place Save the Children's interventions in a comparative context.

2. Lack of reliable baseline data and current information systems throughout Save the Children's programming sectors and geographical areas rendered measurements of accurate beneficiary levels, programmatic outputs and impact difficult to assess or verify. The team further found the PEMS monitoring and reporting system used by SCF to be of limited reliability with respect to the actual field situation.

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3. The qualitative data-gathering technique employed by the team, in response to the foregoing factors, does not generate quantitative data that provides valid general estimates; it rather, approximates or illustrates the general situation. Its uses as a further "baseline" are not encouraged; it provides, rather, a very general point of reference for future evaluations.

4. Due to time and organizational constraints, the team employed a structured interview approach and gathered information from such "key informants" as presidents and treasurers of community groups, midwives, health volunteers and key farmers. The use of such key informers can create an informant bias (as opposed to a random sample from the general beneficiary or village population).

5. Similarly, two of the five evaluation team members were selected partly on the basis of their previous employment with Save the Children and related knowledge of their programming methodologies; two other team members from the public sector were also employed; we acknowledge that our vision and values in development were undoubtedly influenced by these formative experiences.

6. The number of communities selected (48), many of them with difficult access by road or by foot, were programmed at the rate of two daily for each 2 member team, with an average of 3 hours per community. A reduction in the number of communities to permit a more indepth presence in each was proposed by the team unsuccessfully during the evaluation design. While time was, in fact, adequate in newer, less developed program communities, it did not permit an indepth examination of all programmatic aspects in more fully developed communities, where time limitations resulted in a cursory examination of some of the interventions.

7. The manner in which Save the Children aggregates both beneficiary and cost data on an institutional basis, with geographical reports presenting only crude totals and summarized costs per sector, does not lend itself to cost-benefit analysis as clear unit costs cannot be assembled on an aggregated, multi-location basis. See Section 3.5 for details.

2.6 Members of the Evaluation Team.

Wesley Boles, Chief of Party, specializes in financial, administrative and economic analysis. He has headed several teams evaluating USAID projects, including one of credits to small and microenterprises in Honduras and another of technical assistance to industries in El Salvador. He holds an MBA in International Business from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Brenda Langdon specializes in economic analysis of basic education and primary health care projects. After having worked for several years with Save the Children in

Connecticut, she relocated to Guatemala where she has carried out several consultancies for CARE in Central America in the fields of primary health, community development, women in development and income enhancement. She holds a MA in International Education from Framington University in Massachusetts.

Amilcar Ordonez is an anthropologist specialized en education and community development. He worked for several years in various capacities for Save the Children, including as Country Director in Costa Rica. Recently he has undertaken consultancies for UNICEF in literacy, primary and environmental education. He undertook graduate studies and holds a BA in Anthropology from Oregon State University.

Mario Gaitan is an agronomist specialized in agricultural production, pesticide management, phitosanitary standards and ecology. He has been a faculty member of the Southeast Regional University Center in Jalapa, Guatemala and has served as Vice Minister of Agriculture for agriculture and foodstuffs. He holds a degree in agronomy from the San Carlos University in Guatemala.

Daisy Guardiola is a medical doctor specialized in hospital administration and public health. She has served in the Honduran Ministry of Health in the fields of rural hospital administration and assessment of living conditions, health conditions and accessibility of health care. She received her M.D. degree from the National Autonomous University of Honduras and holds a Masters of Public Administration from the Central American Institute for Public Administration in Costa Rica.

3.0 GENERAL FINDINGS

The following section comprises the team's findings with respect to the overall goals and activities of the Save the Children program in El Salvador.

It should be noted that SCF's program activities were adversely affected for a period in excess of six months as a result of the so-called offensive in October 1989 which resulted in suspension of program activities which had just been started in Impact Areas 6 and 7 as well as a reduction in management attention for the other impact areas in the program at that time. SCF activities in Areas 6 and 7 really have been underway for about 1 1/2 years rather than the more than 2 1/2 years since the OPG III agreement was signed.

As mentioned above in Sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5, the evaluation team was unable to quantify in an acceptable fashion Save the Children's progress towards the goals set out in the OPG III grant agreement. These goals are defined in terms of changes in beneficiary status or behaviour. Essentially the SCF management information system measures activities and not changes in status or behaviour. For example, DCF tracks the number of individuals who receive training in small business management, but not of these same individuals' income status before or after the training.

Initially there would appear to be little fit between the program established in the Grant Agreement and the actual array of activities carried out by SCF. This reflects the high priority assigned within the grant agreement to the increase of real income of poor farmers. The agreement, however, does not specify the mechanisms to be used in reaching this goal and SCF points out quite rightly that its activities in Natural Resource and Economic Development should result in enhanced income for beneficiary families. SCF, however, has failed to develop any means of measuring its impact on beneficiary income.

The fit between OPG III goals and SCF activities is much closer in the areas of health, education and community organizational development.

The team's assessment of SCF progress towards each of the assigned goals follows in summary form. More detailed findings for each of the four SCF program sectors and of the team's programmatic findings relative to SCF follow as later sections of this document.

In the course of the evaluation, attempts were made to quantify the results of the SCF program. Some of these numbers appear below: they are at best estimates based on field observations. In some instances they are at variance with figures maintained by SCF. For reasons discussed in greater detail in the programmatic sections of the evaluation, the team was unable to place great confidence in the SCF figures. The team admits that its figures are subject to valid challenges in terms of sample size and

methodology. In sum, there is no quantitative database of any source in which one can place total confidence. The comments below then are good faith efforts to assess SCF progress towards these goals within a reasonable quantitative range.

3.1 Direct Beneficiaries.

The OPG III proposal estimates that the SCF project would directly benefit an additional 50,000 of El Salvador's poorest families, principally in the north and eastern sections of the country. Based on SCF figures, in FY 92 the number of families reached is 7,954, of whom about half live in the north and east of El Salvador. Other than to note that this is a possible example of the "lack of fit" between the OPG III proposal and SCF's actual program, we have no explanation for this discrepancy. The number would appear to be an unrealistically high figure given the actual geographic reach of the SCF program.

3.2 Health Sector: Goals vs. Results

Goal: To decrease infant and child morbidity and mortality significantly through a comprehensive primary health care program.

End of Project Status: (June 1994)

A comprehensive primary health care program based on a system that encourages community acceptance of 10 behaviors will serve 1,500 village families. The program will include the following elements: potable water systems, growth monitoring, oral rehydration therapy, training, village health workers, referral services, environmental sanitation and promotion of child development behaviors.

Midterm Status: (April 1992)

1. The impact on child morbidity and mortality could not be measured. It is thought to be positive, but modest as Save the Children's major health strategy (CENET) is just beginning to evolve at the community level, especially in new Impact Areas 6 and 7, with 17 centers currently being organized, but only 4 in actual operation.

2. In the current organizational phase, the CENET program of comprehensive health care, including 5 or more of the behaviors listed, is estimated at 382 families, or 25 % of the goal.

3. Additionally, approximately 1,200 families have benefitted from one or more SCF health interventions. These include:

- * 809 families with latrines.
- * 65 midwives now in training, 68 midwives trained previously.
- * 240 families with access to clean water.
- * a majority of participating communities involved in trash collection and cleanup campaigns.
- * many communities purifying their drinking water through the use of chlorine.

Comment: In the health field, it appears that SCF has already reached at least in some fashion as many as 1,500 families. That as many as 1,500 families will be educated in the full array of defined health behaviours by June 1994 is much less certain. A fuller description of the health program follows in Section 4.0.

3.3. Education Sector: Goals vs. Results.

Goal: To increase community's opportunities to achieve full physical and intellectual potential through improved access to education, training and recreation services.

End of Project Status: (June 1994)

Increase community access to educational opportunities through programs that introduce the "New School" (escuela activa) methodology to 5 school districts and one education circle or parents' committee per community. In addition, the program will train 100 teachers to produce innovative and appropriate packages of educational materials, and to increase school attendance.

Midterm Status: (June 1994)

1. SCF made a major modification of its strategy in the education sector when the Ministry of Education rejected the "New School" methodology for public schools in the second year of grant implementation. Approximately 53 teachers were trained prior to this point and the methodology introduced in 10 school districts.

2. Substitute activities include the operation of scholarships for kinder and primary school students, and the operation of literacy classes. Approximate results include:

- **4,105 children attending primary school in 1992 (principally if not exclusively in areas where schools had been closed as a result of the war), 631 were also in school in 1991 and 770 in 1990;**
- **1,506 children attending kindergarten;**
- **362 adults, predominantly female, attending literacy classes in 1992, 960 of which 62% were women in 1990-1991.**
- **Save the Children has provided school furniture and materials to approximately 55 schools.**

Comment: SCF was clearly on track to achieve the OPG III educational goals when confronted with the rejection by the Salvadoran educational bureaucracy of the "new school" concept. Its current educational program at the primary school level serves as a bridge to provide needed schooling for communities until the Ministry of Education can resume support of these schools. Further comment on the education program and SCF's community organizational efforts follow in Section 5.0.

3.4 Economic Sector: Goals vs. Results

Goal: To increase significantly the real income of targeted households through small enterprise development, improved agricultural yields, introduction of more efficient management and marketing practices and promotion of new technologies.

End of Project Status: (June 1994)

Provide technical assistance and/or credit to at least 3,500 small scale farmers (holders of less than 17 acres) to assist them increase their production or real income. Improvement is expected in one or more of the following areas: basic grain production, animal husbandry, credit administration, crop storage and marketing, resource conservation, irrigation, crop diversification and development of new enterprises.

Midterm Status: (April 1992)

1. Save the Children has narrowed this list of 12 - 14 interventions down to 5: soil conservation, crop diversification, veterinary medicines, village

banks and small enterprise development. Two additional interventions have been added: dams and vocational training.

2. The impact of these interventions on household income cannot be determined owing to lack of reliable baseline data, feasibility and profitability studies, lack of production costs (agriculture) and absence of related management information systems. That these interventions will result in significant increases in real income for as many as 3,500 poor, small scale farmers by June 1994 is viewed as very unlikely.

3. Save the Children's data suggest the following participant levels during FY 92 (most of these are thought to represent multi-year participants):

a. Natural Resources Sector

- * 200 farmers participating in soil conservation and crop diversification practices;
- * four dams built to augment water resources in four communities;
- * 46 animal vaccination and veterinary services established in 46 communities, however, many of these are no longer in operation.
- * 54 community nurseries in operation with annual plantings of 62,000 saplings;
- * 114 kitchen gardens established.

Despite these programs, yields among farmers in the SCF program range some 23-63% below national averages owing principally to the poor quality of the land planted and related soil erosion. Further details appear in Section 6.0.

b. Economic Development Sector

- * 10 village banks established for 149 members, 91 % of whom are women.
- * 25 prospective microentrepreneurs provided training.
- * 107 youth trained or in training in selected vocational skills. Information available suggests that the ability of those

trained to apply their skills in the job market has been limited for those 45 trained before January 1992.

- * 4 cooperatives with a total of approximately 200 active members helped through training programs.

Comment: A number of these activities date from before OPG III, others are new. Total participation is difficult to measure since beneficiaries active in previous years may or may not be active now. It does seem clear that the scale of intervention both in terms of numbers of participants and impact on production and income is probably positive but very modest. Details on economic development appear in Section 7.0.

3.5 Assessment of Impact Area 1.

With the exception of the 26-km aquaduct which requires rebuilding, SCF phased out its overall program activities in Impact Area 1 (El Sauce - Concepcion de Oriente) at the end of 1990. Eight of the communities which had participated in the DCF program were visited. A summary of the data collected can be found in Annex 4. Basic findings include the following:

Organizations: Community Development Committees (CDC) remain active in most of the communities visited as well as one Solidarity Group. Other types of organizations, however, such as educational circles or farmers groups have ceased to function.

The active CDC's have shown ability to maintain existing projects in education, transport, production, etc. Other types of organizations such as literacy circles, student clubs, etc. went out of existence even before SCF's departure.

Projects: In the communities visited 47 of the 77 projects initiated during the SCF program were still functioning. On the other hand, more than half of the project are in poor or bad condition which reduces their benefits to the communities. The key to project survival is whether the respective communities have been equipped with simple, practical and economic systems for project maintenance.

Participation in Area-wide Organizations: the Centro para el Desarrollo de Tecnologia Apropiada (CDTA) experiences little participation from the communities and is marginal. The future existence of ARCESSAD, the community organization formed to manage the aquaduct, is understandably dependent upon the rebuilding and placing into operation of this highly visible project. Participation in ACOOPACQ, the farm cooperative established for the area, is reduced in scope and provides limited services.

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Comment: The overall impact of the SCF program was positive in terms of the quality of life in the area. Community opinion towards SCF remains positive with the exception of the failure of the water aquaduct. Leading needs for these communities at present include physical infrastructure projects and better educational facilities. The Government of El Salvador is viewed as a likely source for assistance in both areas and little need is perceived for the services of a developmental PVO.

3.6 Cost-Benefit Analysis: The terms of reference for this evaluation called for a cost-benefit analysis of the social development interventions of SCF. Once in country, the team discovered several factors with respect to the necessary information which prevented a true cost-benefit analysis of the SCF program. Lack of baseline data and information collection systems permitting the measurement of benefits and "changes" has already been discussed. In addition, SCF compiles data on costs and benefits by sector and by impact area. In other words there is information on the amount spent for natural resource development in impact area 3, but no breakdown by "project", community or beneficiary. For an analysis of crop diversification, for example, there exists neither cost nor benefit data in readily accessible form. The team was informed that detailed cost data exists but at the local impact area office level. The team had neither the time nor resources to build up a cost data base from these primary sources.

In addition, through March 1992, funds expended on "projects" and community training represented only 26% of grant funds expended (\$892,583 of \$3,433,199). There is no real method, aside from crude division, to attribute the 74% of grant funds spent on personnel, operations and other indirect costs to individual "projects", even though a realistic cost system would include these indirect costs as part of the total costs of services provided.

It may also be that some of the "indirect" costs would be better classified as "direct" in the sense that the time of promoters, for example, is a major element in the services provided by SCF to the communities and as much a part of "project" costs as bricks, cement or vaccines.

Using simple averages and attributing indirect costs, the current basic costs by participating community in FY 92, excluding costs for training in the communities, approaches \$8,900 annually. These costs include personnel, administration, transport and capital assets both in San Salvador and in the impact areas. Not counting the projected costs for the repair of the water system at El Sauce, actual costs per year for "project" and community training average \$4,000 for each community active in the SCF program.

Very roughly calculated, the average cost per target family is about \$175 a year.

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Some related observations:

1. SCF under its current programming is carrying out several activities which require significant investment in individual beneficiaries. Examples include (project costs only, excluding all indirect costs):

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. Composting latrines | \$185 per family. |
| b. Vocational training sponsorship | \$225-300 per individual. |
| c. Primary school or kindergarten | \$50 annually per student. |

These examples do not include the cost of training materials, furniture, supplies or tools.

2. Given the tendency of SCF to emphasize those interventions which use much more human than material resources, the fact that expenditures of funds for "projects" is running well below budgeted levels while those for "administration" are running above may be logical. Based on the established budget classifications, however, administrative costs are already at about 60% of the amount programmed for the entire five years. Project costs are running at 27% of that programmed while personnel and other indirect costs for impact areas are running 20% ahead of budget.

4.0 EVALUATION OF THE HEALTH AND NUTRITION SECTOR

As mentioned in Section 3.2, a major goal for this sector under OPG III is to improve the health and nutrition of as many as 1,500 rural families through their education in and acceptance of ten basic behavioral practices. These ten practices are: oral rehydration, family registers, family planning, breastfeeding, access to clean water, monitoring infant physical development, vaccination, basic health care, environmental sanitation and the construction of latrines. These practices if carried out result in reductions in the rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity.

OPG III called for strengthening of health and nutrition programs in impact areas 2, 3, and 4 and the extension of these programs to two new areas, 6 and 7.

4.1 Health Sector Activities

During FY 90, the first year under OPG III, SCF had programs underway in Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 and was beginning its baseline survey of Area 6. SCF's health program emphasized training and education of volunteers, mothers, teachers and beneficiary families in general with the main training topics those of oral rehydration therapy, family health - especially reproductive health, prevention of child diarrheas and sex education. Nutrition and child development programs were carried out in Centros de Educacion de Nutricion (CEN) and Centros de Estimulacion Temprana (CET), both of which were staffed by volunteers. In the CEN, activities were directed at improved nutrition based on available foods as well as the use of soy beans. In the CET, children between the ages of 3 and 6 were gathered for activities not unlike those of the "Headstart" program in the U.S. and participants also were provided lunches. Campaigns were also carried out to weigh infants, rid them of parasites and, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, vaccinate them. Trash and stagnant water removal campaigns were also organized in efforts to improve general sanitation.

While substantial efforts were directed at training and education dedicated to improving child survival, the separate program activities were not particularly coordinated nor were they combined into an integrated program directed at gaining beneficiary acceptance of these behavioral changes which lead to improved child survival.

In FY 91, SCF began its program in Areas 6 and 7, expanding on its base of education and training with infrastructure projects, especially the construction of latrines. CEN and CET activities were restructured as part of combined Centers for both nutrition and early education, CENET, and training of volunteers for the new centers was undertaken. Training was oriented towards family health education and environmental sanitation, this latter activity emphasizing youth participation and encouragement of "model" homes. Emphasis on access to clean water was also included in the health

sector with projects to drill wells or build water distribution systems begun along with training in system use and maintenance.

By FY 92, SCF's health projects improved organizationally and appeared more sharply focused on the program's goals. While SCF had phased out of Area 1, activities in Areas 6 and 7 were well underway. The CENET not only subsumed the previous activities of the CEN and CET but promoted activities more closely directed at improving the health of children of less than 5 years of age as well as maintaining family registers of pertinent health data. Reproductive health programs were directed at converting midwives from reactive participants to questions of childbirth only into active collaborators in the promotion of women's health. Programs directed at improving the environment moved away from just trash disposal to restoration of the ecology through such actions as reforestation. Access to potable water was expanded through training in the purification of water through chlorination or boiling.

4.2 Status of Health Indicators

Attempting to determine the status of health indicators in the various areas before SCF began its activities is impossible owing to the lack of baseline data. In Areas 6 and 7, baseline surveys were carried out in 1990, but some questions as to methodology and differences between the two surveys make quantification of such indicators as number of children vaccinated, morbidity rates, malnutrition, number of pregnant women, access to clean water and prevalence of latrines very difficult.

In area 6, of over 1,000 children surveyed, 45% were reported "completely" vaccinated but the definition of "complete" was not given. In area 7 there were no figures on coverage. Figures on the incidence of diarrheas and acute respiratory infections are hard to judge: figures given for area 6 were 20% and 37% respectively, while for Area 7 the respective figures were 45% and 87%. It is not known whether the same questions were used in both areas: a difference could arise between numbers of infants suffering infirmities at the time of the interview as compared to those who had been afflicted within 15 days previous to the interview. In any event, the demographic and environmental differences between these two adjacent areas of La Union Department are not great enough to justify such wide discrepancies in findings. Similar disparities in indicators between the two areas were recorded in the incidence of child malnutrition, pregnancies and access to clean water. No figures for latrines was given for Area 6, while in Area 7, 29% of the houses were reported to have adequate latrines.

In the measurement of impact, there were current figures for basic health indicators for a sufficiently wide number of cantons in Area 6 to make possible a rough comparison with the baseline data. While the figures should be taken with considerable caution, they indicate that the incidence of child diarrheas dropped from

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20% to 9% and that of acute respiratory infections from 37% to 20%. There were insufficient current figures for Area 7 and no baseline figures for the other areas.

Improvements in sanitation and access to clean water as well as health education programs directed at children under 5 will result in lessened morbidity and mortality rates. The team accepts that SCF program activities have had positive impact in this regard, but it is unable to measure the extent of these changes.

4.3 Child Health/Nutrition

The CENET program is just getting underway. Seventeen have been planned, but only four were in full operation at the time of the evaluation, three in Area 4 and one in Area 2. Four others, two in Area 6 and two in Area 7, were in a start up phase. Two in Area 3 were to have begun operation at the end of April when their volunteers will have completed training. This level of observed activity is at variance with the reported FY 91 training of 146 volunteers for CENET.

The effectiveness of the CENET depends heavily upon the presence and activity of volunteers together with selected mothers ("madres lideres"). The CENET visited had from one to seven active volunteers and from 0 to 7 "madres lideres". The typical CENET had three volunteers. Personnel turnover already is a problem: one CENET was reduced to one volunteer and no "madres lideres". SCF should look very carefully at its volunteer selection and follow-up procedures to assure the effectiveness of its CENET program.

In interviews, volunteers indicated involvement in as many as ten different activities, of which the most frequent were attending training sessions, giving talks to groups in the community, weighing children and maintaining family registers. There would appear to be a tendency to overload the volunteers while on the other hand the appropriate role for a "madre lider" does not appear clearly understood either by the volunteers or the mothers.

In time of service, one in eight have as many as three years involvement, about half between one and two years and the remaining more than one-third less than one year. Literacy rates for volunteers and "madres lideres" interviewed exceeded 80%.

In eight of the ten CENET visited, registers of participating mothers were kept together with charts for each child in which general information was noted as well as the child's place with respect to generalized tables of weight/age. This is an important tool in determining child malnutrition. The number of children covered under this program appeared to be limited, owing to limited participation in the program by mothers in the community. There did not appear to be much follow up in this activity on the part of SCF health promoters.

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Interviews with volunteers and community members indicated a high degree of knowledge of means to control diarrheas, including the value of purifying water. An equally high number were aware of the value of monitoring a child's weight to determine if the child were sufficiently well nourished. Two-thirds were aware of the appropriate age at which children should be vaccinated, but less than half could identify all four vaccinations recommended.

Less than half, however, were aware of the need to manage waste and excretory disposal and only about a quarter indicated knowledge of the treatment of acute respiratory infections, with few having clear ideas as to how to distinguish acute from less severe respiratory infections.

4.4 Reproductive Health

SCF's major approach in this area is the training of midwives. In FY 90, SCF reported the training of 68 midwives. In FY 92 it 75 were reported in training. Of the communities visited by the team, three in five had a trained midwife available. The training of the midwives provided by SCF itself, or in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, appears sound. It covers among other things effective and sanitary birth techniques, evaluation of obstetric risk factors which allows the midwife to judge when to advise the prospective mother to seek hospital care and the spacing of pregnancies.

The midwives interviewed were active in attendance on pregnant women and in attending further training sessions. Less than a quarter maintained any kind of register of expecting mothers or of the number of births attended. Only three in five were literate, which may explain the lack of emphasis on record keeping. There was also little indication that midwives reported their ongoing activities to SCF.

While most women interviewed appeared aware of the importance of early bonding with the child and breastfeeding, most still believed in introducing solid food to the child at 3 to 4 months of age rather than the recommended 4 to 6 months. More than 80% of the women interviewed were aware of the availability of oral contraceptives and about 30% practiced some sort of family planning. Of those who did engage in family planning, nearly half had had tubal ligation.

4.5 Sanitation.

SCF efforts directed at improved community sanitation have comprised two activities: a major effort to encourage the use of adequate latrines; and, encouraging community youth to improve the physical environment through proper trash disposal and reforestation.

Through FY 91, DJC efforts were directed at training people in the proper construction and use of latrines. More than four hundred were built or improved with the assistance of SCF, of which 90% were simple pit latrines and 10% of the composting type. Nearly 80% of the communities visited had participated in this program. In impact areas 2 (San Martin) and 4 (Ilobasco) the number of houses with access to latrines now ranges between 70 and 80%. In areas 3 (San Alejo) and 6 (Anamoros) the range is between 20 and 30%. In some areas, the poor porosity of the soil and in others a relatively high water table have rendered unusable the simple latrines constructed. Accordingly, SCF is now concentrating on the construction of composting latrines. A number are under construction, but in the communities visited by the team only a very few had been completed.

For proper disposition of trash and environmental improvement through techniques such as reforestation, SCF has organized youth groups, Grupos Juvenil para la Proteccion del Ambiente, (GJPA), to carry out campaigns to clean up trash, remove stagnant water and to establish nurseries for the saplings to be planted in the reforestation program. Nearly half of the communities visited had active GJPA's with the most intensive coverage in impact area 4 (Ilobasco). Clean up campaigns were expected to carry over into household behaviour and in some cases this appears to have happened. However, other communities visited show no signs of any organized trash disposal. Reforestation is just getting under way with varying degrees of success. In some communities a large number of the saplings have died in the first year: in other communities plantings have survived two to three years and show signs of taking hold. Further comments appear in Section 6.0, the Natural Resources Sector.

4.6 Potable Water

SCF has carried out a major educational campaign on the value of water purification through chlorination and/or boiling. From what the team was able to observe, while most people in the target communities have heard of the benefits, in actual practice only a minority of households purify their drinking water. In impact area 6 (Anamoros) some 30% of the households contacted were doing so, but in impact area 7 (San Jose de la Fuente) only 9% of the families interviewed followed this practice.

Access to clean water remains a problem. Few houses have access to water piped to the house. Some two-thirds of those surveyed have access to reasonably clean water within 300 meters. Water systems are most often deep wells and/or water piped from a spring or stream to a hydrant. SCF has continued its program to improve access to clean water through the drilling of deep wells, improved distribution systems using storage tanks and in some cases the construction of dams which can store water for household use as well as for agriculture. Technical problems involving water

infrastructure projects have led SCF recently to contract with an outside engineering firm to provide the quality of technical support needed.

A serious problem in some communities has been the maintenance of the deep well hand pumps in use which require that gaskets be replaced every three to four months. In a number of communities this either has not been done, or low quality replacement gaskets have been used, with the effect that a number of the wells were not functioning at the time of the team's visit.

4.7 Conclusions

In general terms the range of interventions in health and nutrition carried out by SCF fall within the framework of OPG III and are appropriate to the health conditions encountered in the respective impact areas.

In the development of the CENET, SCF has a very useful vehicle for carrying out an integrated and more dynamic health and nutrition program.

The bulk of SCF's effort in this sector has been directed to health education and to training volunteers. In the view of the evaluation team, SCF has lost some of the potential multiplier effect because of compartmentalization into the four activities has tended to leave individual volunteers, midwives, etc., focused only on their particular activity. Turnover in volunteers and the rather heavy demands made on their time further limit their ability to train beneficiaries in sufficient depth to spread the health education ever further.

Coordination with the Ministry of Health's rural health program is good in some impact areas and nearly non-existent in others. There seems to be no definitive policy as to the appropriate degree of coordination.

SCF has yet to develop either the techniques or the mechanisms to record data on health conditions. A first step, of course, is to determine just which impacts or developments should be measured.

4.8 Recommendations.

A) SCF should develop a strategy to strengthen the organizational capacity of the CENET with the aim of expanding the number of volunteers and community participants as well as providing the focal point for a more integrated approach to health and nutrition interventions through inclusion of all those involved in this sector.

B) Related to the above, health education and training efforts should be broader than at present. For example, instruction in water purification could be expanded to include other beneficial health practices so as to enhance program reach and the multiplier effect.

C) SCF should define a policy of coordination of its activities with those of the Ministry of Public Health so as to maximize the benefits to the communities. Of particular use could be the basic health data being compiled by the Ministry which could serve as a data baseline for program impact measurement.

D) SCF should define the necessary indicators with which to measure progress and impact in line with the requirements of OPG III and undertake to develop the information collection techniques necessary.

5.0 EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATION/ORGANIZATION SECTOR

As established in Section 3.3 FINDINGS, the goals established for this sector included promotion of "new schools" in five school districts, training of 100 teachers in this methodology and the development of community organizations with the capacity to improve economic and social conditions through democratic processes.

Impact indicators for education included percentage of school age children in attendance, absenteeism and dropout rates, literacy rates for people 15 years of age and over, and numbers of teachers trained and schools supported by SCF.

Indicators for organizational activities included the degree of community participation in planning and carrying out projects, numbers and quality of volunteers trained by SCF, rate of participation by women, youth and children in community organizations and the degree of self-sustainability attained by community organizations.

The methodology was as listed in Section 2.4 with visits to schools and interviews with teachers, participants, SCF staff and personnel of the Ministry of Education.

5.1 Evaluation of the Educational Program.

The key finding in for this segment of SCF's program is that the present activities directed at educational promotion are unrelated to the goals set forth in OPG III. As brought out in Section 3.3, SCF was well on its way to achieving the goals set forth in OPG III in terms of teachers trained (53) and new school methodology introduced into school districts (10) when it was formally notified by the Ministry of Education that the new school methodology was not acceptable.

SCF's activities in support of the new school methodology, which stresses interaction between teachers and pupils (the name in Spanish is "escuela activa") rather than rote learning, ran into conflict within the individual schools owing to the fact that in most instances SCF-trained teachers taught in schools in which teachers provided by the Ministry of Education also taught and it was these teachers who proved resistant to the change and, presumably, prevailed upon the Ministry to reject the program.

Current SCF activities in the field of education include:

1. Basic Education: for a number of target communities, SCF organizes the training of one or more teachers for grades one to three, supplies school furniture and supplies, and pays the teachers' salaries. The selection of teachers is done through the CDC in each community and, in addition, a parents' committee is formed. This committee is expected to undertake fund-raising activities within the community, to

monitor teachers attendance and, together with SCF, authorizes teachers' absences, etc.

2. Pre-school Education: for a number of target communities, SCF supports the formation of kindergartens ("escuelas parvularias") through a "scholarship" program in which the teacher is reimbursed with 40 colones monthly per child in attendance within a minimum of 30 and maximum of 40. In other words the teacher is assured of an minimum income of 1,200 colones monthly with a maximum cut-off at 1,600. In a number of communities, the number of children in attendance may be as many as 60 and the classes are divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The curriculum is uniform with no allowance for the fact that the children range between 4 and 6 years of age. The parents committee is also involved at this level.

3. Literacy Classes: SCF supports community adult literacy classes through an "incentive" payment of 400 colones monthly to volunteers who lead the sessions. The primary objective of this effort is to train community leaders to read and write.

SCF through this program has provided teachers and supporting materials which has brought first and second grade education to communities where the public schools had been closed for some years and to expand education in other communities from one and two grades to three and four. In FY 92 more than 4,000 children are enrolled in SCF supported classes and some 1,500 in pre-school. Community support of these activities is enthusiastic and positive, although little of this has translated into material support from the communities.

Activities in adult literacy training appear less positive. Field interviews left the impression that there are fewer participants now than two years ago and that the drop out rate is very high. Part of this may reflect a community reluctance to accept members of the community - who may have only 6 to 9 years of primary education - as genuinely qualified trainers, but more likely it reflects a lack of strong motivation for those who live in remote rural communities in which written materials and contact with urban El Salvador is very limited and who discover that to become literate requires sustained effort over an extended period of time.

The basic educational role assumed by SCF at present would appear to be that of interim provider of services until such time as the Ministry of Education is able to expand its services. Now that the teaching methodology of SCF more nearly approaches that of the Ministry, negotiations between SCF and the Ministry to phase over SCF programs to the Ministry's EDUCO program have gone well and an agreement is expected shortly. The basic objective of the agreement will be to permit the Ministry to assume the financial obligations now met by SCF over a determined period of time in phases. Over time, projected results of the agreement would include transfer of over 3,000 elementary students, 1,200 pre-school attendees, some

100 teachers and most of the literacy students now enrolled in SCF-supported programs.

5.2 Evaluation of Community Organizational Development.

The evaluation team met with representatives of 36 Community Development Committees (CDC). Development of the individual CDC's was found to be varied owing the length of time they had been organized. Over a third, those in impact areas 6 and 7, had been in actual existence only between twelve and eighteen months. Another 20 percent had been existence less than four years with the result that more than half of the CDC's visited were still in varying stages of early development.

Of those visited, about two-thirds had full membership complements, that is, a full set of officers and two or more "vocales" or other members, which permit the CDC to assign separate tasks to individual members and to participate more fully in the planning, organization and implementation of community activities. The remainder lacked a full complement of members which left committee responsibilities in the hands of the few members available.

Over 80% of the CDC's visited had been chosen in open community assemblies, the remaining few had been selected by a group within the community or by the previous CDC board and only one appears to have been selected by SCF promoters. CDC activity levels varied from well-established, mature groups, nearly half of those contacted, which had actively participated in more than six SCF projects with most of the rest reasonably active, having participated in between four and six community projects. About 20% of the CDC's contacted, principally in the newly opened impact areas, have been involved in only between one and three projects.

The role of women in the CDC's is limited, but in the context of rural Salvadoran society, shows progress. Three-fourths of the CDC's have one or more women members and one-fifth have women officers, usually the secretary or treasurer. One CDC we found had a woman president.

In the projects carried out under the sponsorship of the CDC's, outside material, technical and financial support came solely from SCF in 75% of the cases and from SCF and one or more other institutions 25% of the time. In terms of community support, in nearly half of the projects carried out, the community contribution was limited to labor, while in two-fifths of the projects the contribution included locally available materials as well as labor. Contributions in terms of money, equipment or food as well as labor were uncommon.

Participation of the full community was experienced in nearly half of the projects carried out, while most of the others had the support of that portion of the community

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most directly affected. Only one project was found to have been carried out solely by the CDC. Over half the projects were found to have benefited a majority of the community, but a third were found to have benefitted individual members of the community. Examples would include a dam involving most of the community or vocational training benefiting individual youth.

For projects requiring continued maintenance, e.g. a water supply system, about a third of the communities involved had available a responsible person or group and some funding to assure long term maintenance. The other two thirds responded to maintenance problems in an ad hoc fashion: if the problem were simple it was usually resolved, but if it required technical assistance or funds, resolution was delayed or not obtained.

An important aspect of community organizational self-sustainability is the sourcing and management of funds. Thirty-one of the committees contacted had no community funds, merely serving as conduits for payments from SCF to vendors for services and materials supplied to projects. Two had funds of less than 400 colones, two had between 2,500 and 3,000 colones and one had a community fund of 6,600 colones. The general attitude in the communities was one favoring the contribution of labor to community projects but contending that the communities were "too poor" to provide money. Administration of the funds in nearly half of the CDC's was through accounting books and related records (receipts, etc.) while another quarter used simple notebooks supported by records. The remaining minority were split between systems which used only the records or no system at all.

SCF does provide training to CDC committee members in management, organizational development and motivation. Nearly three-fourths of CDC committee members interviewed had attended two or three training seminars and most of the rest had attended at least one.

A survey of CDC's of community needs believed most worthy of SCF support ranked by importance resulted in the following order:

1. Potable water.
2. Construction of roads.
3. Electric power.
4. Rural health posts or units.
5. School construction.
6. Latrine construction.
7. Training in accounting.
8. Training in organizational development.
9. Training materials.
10. Vocational schools.
11. Jobs.

12. Completion of a dam.
13. Repair of a dam.
14. Agricultural improvement.
15. Organization of a CENET.
16. Supplemental feeding for children.

It is notable that half of the above involve infrastructure and four involve training. In terms of frequency of mention, infrastructure was listed as a prime need in 85% of the responses with potable water and roads alone appearing in 45% of them.

When asked from which institutions assistance would be sought if and when SCF was no longer involved in the community, fourteen different agencies or institutions were mentioned, but half the responses identified three, CONARA, FIS and the Ministry of Public Health.

5.3 Conclusions

The original goals set for education within the OPG have been overtaken by events. The new program undertaken by SCF is important and has filled perceived community needs but there has been no mutual agreement between USAID and SCF with respect to modification of the original targets. The effort on the part of SCF to seek formal Ministry of Education acceptance of the phased transfer of its education programs is a positive step to assure the continuation of these programs in their respective communities.

Each community visited had in place a Community Development Committee generally representative of the community and actively involved in the SCF program. Over half of the CDC's contacted were still in the process of development, which leaves them still adaptable to further guidance from SCF. The CDC's for the most part have been selected through democratic processes and participate well in the SCF program to better their communities. Nearly all have been trained in aspects of management and organization and there is a growing participation by women.

In terms of project selection and securing outside resources there would appear to be as yet heavy dependence on SCF. To the extent that SCF plays the major role in project selection the CDC's are weakened and the sense of community "ownership" of specific projects is reduced.

The absence of well defined maintenance programs for more than half of the infrastructure projects, especially water systems, is of concern since these projects are highly visible examples of the SCF program and of prime importance to their communities.

The team is concerned that the lack of financial project support from the communities and their continued dependence on SCF or other external institutions for any such projects makes questionable the true self-sustainability of these community organizations.

With respect to community opinion as to their future needs, most of these lie in the realm of infrastructure projects. The team's perception is that community organizations view SCF principally as a resource to satisfy needs of physical infrastructure and only secondarily as a source of training or support in other areas.

5.4 Recommendations

- A)** That in view of the changed circumstances, SCF should seek with USAID a mutually acceptable modification of the project goals in the educational field.
- B)** Should SCF wish to expand its educational program, for example through training additional teachers, it should assure itself beforehand that the Ministry of Education is willing and able to absorb these people over an agreed period of time, enabling SCF to plan its area phase out in a rational manner.
- C)** To assure greater community participation and sense of "ownership", SCF should give each community a greater role than present in the development of an Action Plan which will serve to define the framework in which the program is to evolve. This action plan should reflect the real needs and interests of the community, arrived at through a democratic consensus-building, rather than the institutional exigencies of SCF.
- D)** SCF should undertake an urgent program to assure that each community with an existing infrastructure project has an adequate maintenance capability: such capability should be built in at the planning stages for all future projects.
- E)** In order to ease SCF's eventual phase out from each impact area, SCF should put together a program in which available sources of external aid are identified and the communities educated as to their requirements and resources.
- F)** SCF should promote a greater role of women in community organizations with the goal of achieving female representation in such bodies as the CDC commensurate with their role as heads of household, which in a number of communities reaches 70% of the resident families.
- G)** In an effort to improve its cost to benefit ratio, SCF should phase out interventions which benefit individuals in favor of those which benefit larger numbers of community residents.

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6.0 EVALUATION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES SECTOR

6.1 Sector strategy.

The natural resources sector was established in its present form only in FY 92 and is directed at fulfillment of a portion of the goals established in OPG III in terms of increased real incomes for 3,500 poor rural farmers. The grant document established that this improvement in production and real incomes would be achieved through such mechanisms as creation of small enterprises, improved crop yields, better marketing, better farm management, improved access to credit and the promotion of new technology.

SCF was to extend this program to two new impact areas (Anamoros and San Jose) and continue existing development programs in the four impact areas in which it was already active (El Sauce, San Alejo, Ilobasco and San Martin).

Sector strategy in FY 90 was directed at assisting the poor or marginal farmer, in a manner consonant with the natural resource base and protection of the environment, to expand and diversify production. Nine goals for behavioral change were set forth to be accomplished through programs to:

- protect and restore natural resources and promote their rational use.
- conserve surface water.
- diversify agricultural and animal husbandry activities.
- apply appropriate technology.
- protect and improve soil fertility.
- organize solidarity groups to qualify for credit.
- promote use of agricultural chemicals of low toxicity.

To carry out the above, five priority projects were defined:

- Reforestation.
- Production projects including raising hogs, rabbits, fish, chickens and planting and planting crops such as sesame, sorghum, soya, cashew, pineapple, papaya, banana and coffee.
- Conservation of soil and water.
- Animal disease control.
- Demonstration plots using improved species of plants and animals.

These five projects involved 14 distinct activities.

In FY 91, the Agricultural Production Sector disappeared to be replaced by an Economic Development Sector which had as its projects:

- Soil conservation.
- Crop diversification.
- Kitchen and school gardens.
- Dams
- Ecological education.
- Animal disease control.
- Production credit.
- Village banks.
- Rural vocational workshops.
- Training for prospective small entrepreneurs.

Agricultural activities concentrated on community nurseries, training, soil conservation through construction of plant or physical barriers, reforestation campaigns, development of agriforestry projects, demonstration plots and kitchen gardens.

In FY 92 in yet another reorganization the Natural Resources Sector was established to engage in four programs: soil conservation; crop diversification; dams; and animal disease control.

6.2 Findings

In evaluating activities in this sector 19 communities in which SCF was actively pursuing more than one agricultural activity were selected. Interviews were held with 14 of the 15 natural resource sector promoters then employed by SCF as well as with 53 farmers dispersed in 18 communities in four impact areas. Local officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry were also consulted.

Basically it would appear that SCF is carrying out a substantial number of activities but with limited results. The reasons are varied.

A major factor is land quality which varies widely between impact areas. Impact area 4 (Ilobasco) is a fertile area in which a wide variety of crops may be grown. Impact area 2 (San Martin) offers reasonable opportunities as well, but Impact areas 3, 6 and 7, all in La Union Department, have very poor quality soils and frequently severe shortages of water. Despite these conditions, most of the farmers depend upon dry farming of native varieties of corn as their principal means of income or subsistence. Little adaptation of the SCF natural resources program to accord with regional differences was noted.

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A second factor is the nature of the farmers and their ingrained habits. Thirty-one of the 53 farmers interviewed did not read or write. Thirteen owned no land, but rented what they cultivated, while another 7 rented land in addition to what they owned. Farmers working rented land are reluctant to invest in improvements since they convey to the landowner, not to them. Of the fifty-three, forty-three utilized less than ten manzanas (17 acres). The typical member of the group owned 2 manzanas (3.4 acres).

Half of the group only farmed while the other half ran livestock in addition to farming. As to crops, 30 of the 53 planted only basic grains (corn, sorghum and beans). Every farmer interviewed planted corn, 23 of them planting corn only. Each farmer typically planted about 3 acres to corn and obtained a yield of roughly 120 pounds per acre, about 60% of the Salvadoran national average. Thirty of the group also planted sorghum, eighteen planted beans, six planted rice and five had planted sesame. As to crop diversification aside from grains, other crops included bananas (9 farmers), cashews (6), pineapples and papaya (3 each) and citrus and tomatoes (2 each).

Regarding soil conservation practices, 37 of those interviewed had taken no steps towards soil conservation, 12 had put in some individual terraces and stone barriers, three had put in "live" barriers, planting pineapple or pigeon peas supplied by SCF, and one had contoured his field.

Twenty-two of the farmers interviewed were participating in reforestation, but only four had planted trees in conjunction with basic grains, the so-called "agriforestry" concept. It should be noted that most of SCF's reforestation efforts are carried out by the GJPA youth groups which are considered part of the health sector. Of the nineteen communities visited in the agricultural survey, seven had such youth groups.

Thirty-two farmers had received training, all but one from SCF, but only 12 said they had received technical assistance. While all of the group planted corn, only 13 used hybrid seed. Of the thirty who planted sorghum, two used improved seed. Also noted was a lack of consistency or knowledge of proper planting techniques with the amount of seed used per land unit varying widely between individual farmers.

Twenty-two of the 53 had received credit, usually less than 1,000 colones, but only 7 had received credit through SCF, in sums ranging between 300 and 600 colones.

Of the group, only three indicated that they composted organic materials to lessen dependence on chemical fertilizers. The other fifty applied chemical fertilizers to their corn fields twice during each crop cycle. Forty-seven used chemicals for control of both insects and weeds (16), insects only (10) or weeds only (21).

Parallel to the above is the evaluation's finding with respect to management of agricultural chemicals. SCF promoters clearly have received training in the proper use

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of only approved pesticides and have attempted to pass this knowledge on to farmers in their impact areas. Of the 53 farmers interviewed, 14 indicated that they had received training in which chemical products were appropriate for which applications. Only 7, however, indicated that they had received training as to the safe handling of these chemicals. Thirty-nine of the 53 indicated that they took no precautions while applying chemicals (8 tried to avoid letting the chemicals touch their skin, 6 covered their noses with handkerchiefs) and 22 said they did nothing to clean themselves or their implements after using chemicals. Of those that did do something, 16 said they changed clothes and bathed, 6 said they bathed but didn't change clothes, 2 changed clothes but didn't bathe and 7 just washed their hands.

Twenty-five reported ill effects when applying the chemicals ranging from headaches to nausea, cloudy vision and skin burns. Almost all stored the chemicals in their houses and about half washed out the equipment in their houses, many of the rest did so in the local rivers or streams, with a few doing so in the field where they applied the chemicals. Over half reported washing out and reusing the chemical containers for transporting water, etc. A comment of interest from one of the farmers who knew better but who didn't do more than place a handkerchief over his face was that he didn't have the money to buy the recommended protective gear.

A substantial number of farmers interviewed also have livestock: 17 had one to five heads of cattle, 26 had from one to five hogs and 33 had from one to fifteen chickens. Twenty-nine of these indicated that they vaccinated their animals, of whom 13 had been helped by SCF. The veterinary dispensary program of SCF did not appear to be functioning well. In only 8 of the communities visited had they been in existence and only 3 were functioning as intended. One had shut down and the other four were short of supplies or lacking in clientele.

6.3 Conclusions

In the absence of baseline data and of indicators developed to measure quantitative results, rather than activities carried out, there has been no quantitative evaluation of impact. The field interviews strongly suggest that while the efforts of SCF to improve agricultural practices and the lives of poor farmers has had a positive impact, the level of accomplishment has been modest and that actual improvements in crop production and income levels are not likely to have been significant. While there are no firmly established numbers as to the program's outreach, the number of farmer recipients of training, for example, can not exceed a few hundred at most. For the program not only to reach 3,500 poor farmers but to have a positive impact on production and income for so many would appear far from achievable during the life of the Project.

The natural resources sector suffers programmatic deficiencies. The menu of activities and performance indicators are not closely related to the proposed objectives of OPG III, nor have they changed as much in practice as could be assumed from the changes made in program direction at headquarters. Implementation is limited through: the lack of experienced promoters (the typical natural resources promoter interviewed had been with SCF from three to six months); the fact that each promoter is expected to cover seven communities scattered over a rather wide area and that the specific "projects" are not particularly integrated with each other or adapted to the characteristics of the beneficiaries or their region. A major conclusion is that the SCF level of effort badly underestimates the resources needed to effect fundamental changes in attitudes and practices of large numbers of traditional farmers who are poor, poorly educated and, for the most part, possessed of land only marginally apt for agriculture.

The "projects" in the SCF natural resources menu are activities-specific rather than comprehensive. Since most SCF beneficiary farmers concentrate on basic grains production, increased production is not solely a function of contouring fields or blocking water run-off but of access to timely credit, better management of fertilizer, pesticides and planting techniques as well as use of better seedstock. Crop diversification is an excellent goal, but shifting to new crops also requires selection of plants suitable to the particular area and developing concurrent processing and marketing channels as well as means to sustain income while the new crop, particularly if its fruit trees, matures. Improved animal husbandry is not merely vaccination programs but also better feeding and housekeeping practices and the use of improved breeding stock. The benefits of successful reforestation are manifest, but meanwhile enhanced use of fuel-efficient stoves could reduce current consumption of wood for fuel which appears even now to exceed the replacement rate through new plantings or natural growth.

Despite SCF's educational efforts, the evaluation sample suggests that most rural Salvadoran farmers handle and apply agricultural chemicals in a manner which threatens the health of themselves and their families as well as the environment.

6.4 Recommendations

- A) SCF should tie in its natural resource activities more closely to the objectives of OPG III through defining its objectives in terms of changes in behaviour or quantitative results supported by development of indicators which will allow the measurement of impact, rather than simply activities or numbers of attendees at training sessions.**
- B) SCF should improve the effectiveness of the natural resources sector through consolidation of effort into one or two activities, e.g. integrated pest management,**

fruit cultivation and marketing, with each carried out in a comprehensive manner in sufficient depth to have an impact.

C) Whatever the choice in natural resources activities, the program needs to be adjusted to the specific characteristics of each impact area.

7.0 EVALUATION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

SCF modified the reach of this sector in 1991. It now comprises three activities: community banks, rural vocational schools and development of microenterprises. Although operating under a somewhat different framework before 1991, the activities encompassed have been part of the program for some years. This sector has the largest single role within the SCF program with respect to the goal set out in OPG III to increase family incomes for 3,500 poor rural farmers.

7.1 Village Banks

The village banks concept represents an evolution in Save the Children's community credit and economic development programming. Under the OPG I, for example, in El Sauce and La Union (Impact Area 001), credit programs based on the formation of small solidarity groups were implemented, usually for small-scale farmers. Actual credit was channeled from the "Banco de Fomento Agropecuario" and was linked to agricultural inputs, productivity cycles and harvesting periods.

Begin with the OPG II, in the 1987-88 period, Save the Children established village banks in Impact Areas 002, 003, and 004. Approximately 100 banks were eventually formed. The purpose of these banks was to organize members of poor communities in the formation of a local bank which would issue credit (generally of amounts less than 500 colones (US \$100 at the time)). Each member was responsible for repaying his or her loan within a specified time period (generally 6-12 months), repaying principal, interest (3% per month) and a mandatory savings quota. The relatively short time period generally excluded longer productivity cycle agricultural interventions. The purpose of the loans was generally to provide capital for small-scale economic diversification, including microenterprise projects. To establish the project, SCF provided initial seed money to each community of colones 8,000 to 12,000, with a planned minimum borrower level of 20. The continuation of each bank was dependent upon timely repayment, and its capital formation contingent upon the payment of borrower savings and interest (retained within the community).

In 1991, cognizant of a history of implementation problems with these banks, including a low repayment rate, SCF entered into a collaborative agreement with FINCA to administer new banks. A concurrent shift in methodology occurred, as FINCA requires weekly repayment of capital (25 colones first cycle) over a 16 week loan period. Other weekly payments include a mandatory savings payment of 5 colones and an interest payment of 3, for a total of 33 colones. The group repays the whole loan to FINCA at the end of the cycle.

Under the OPG III, 10 "new" village banks have been introduced and a significant number of the 55 banks still operating from the OPG II restructured. The 10 new

banks have 149 active participants. Eight of these banks have been initiated in collaboration with FINCA in the San Martin area, while two in the Ilobasco area have been started independently by Save the Children.

Fifteen village banks were visited by the evaluation team and 25 bank officials and key participants interviewed.

Observations

1. A positive gender balance has been achieved in the "new" banks, with a 91% female participation rate.
2. SCF's practice of loan forgiveness in banks initiated prior to 1991 may have created an unfortunate precedent and have resulted in a low repayment rate. Defaults in banks initiated prior to 1991 are estimated at 60% and incidents of misuse of funds within communities prevalent. The expectation may persist within restructured banks that SCF will be "understanding" should loan default problems arise.
3. The FINCA model, while apparently functioning smoothly in some communities in the San Martin area, appears to be largely unacceptable to villagers in more rural areas, including new Impact Areas 6 and 7. The primary objection to the model seems to be the weekly repayment of capital, and may be related to a general lack of accessibility to markets.

FINCA and SCF in impact area 7 seem to have made some attempts to "forge" solidarity groups of both men and women from multiple communities to attain the minimum borrower level and have held repeated community meetings to generate interest. Despite these pressures on the communities and the SCF promoters, formation of new banks on the FINCA model proved impossible and, recently, a decision was made not to establish new banks of this type in the area.
4. Participant levels in existing groups, even in San Martin, fall well below the threshold necessary to achieve efficient use of staff resources, with an average group size of 15. The evaluation team was concerned to observe some promoters investing significant amounts of training and orientation efforts for groups of 10 or less.
5. While SCF's Economic Development promoters have recently been trained in feasibility studies, the project carries out no routine economic analysis of the activities themselves either before, during or after loan disbursement. Therefore, the financial performance of the activities and their related impact on family income is unknown.

A small number of profitability studies conducted by the team members on 11 village bank participants, suggests that these members are attaining average returns of 4 to 8 colones per hour of labor for activities ranging from small stores to buying and

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selling seafood to making chocolate. However, the survey data base was too small to be anything but illustrative and lacks a fixed initial reference point (due to lack of baseline data).

6. Data from the majority of village banks surveyed indicate that the banks are generally not establishing strong reserves of capital and have a relatively low potential for sustainability. Reasons for eroding capital include: (1) corruption problems within the villages; (2) devaluation of local currency and (3) a diminishing participant base in the older banks. Interest used to maintain the capital value of the funds has often been used to pay for defaulting borrowers.

7.2 Microenterprise Development

A relatively new intervention for Save the Children is its "microenterprise development" assistance project. Geared to provide individualized technical advice and business support to small scale rural entrepreneurs, the project works most frequently with small scale village bank participants who have "graduated" to slightly larger enterprises. Four enterprises were visited by the team.

Observations

1. The scale of this intervention is very limited. To date, 24 entrepreneurs have been trained, often in a single half-day session.
2. No credit component is involved, and to date, only one participant has achieved access to a commercial bank loans.
3. Some of the activities financed under preceding OPG II interventions, including the establishment of a 6-member bakery in San Alejo and ceramics projects in Ilobasco, are financially marginal and have been largely discontinued over time, without effecting repayment of their initial working capital.
4. This component, in general, lacks sufficient scale and complexity to justify the related level of staff inputs and time.

7.3 Vocational Training

Although not anticipated in the OPG III proposal, Save the Children has instituted a series of vocational training courses, primarily for rural adolescents, beginning in 1991. The courses offered include: sewing, electricity, carpentry, weaving, masonry and tailoring (men's pants). Generally, groups ranging from 12-24 youth (1-2 per village) who attend intensive vocational training courses for a period of 3-6 months

in regional towns. In addition to paying for a master teacher, supplies and equipment, SCF provides a meal stipend to each participant. The per participant investment in each activity ranges from \$ 225-300. To date, 107 youth have attended or are currently attending these courses. Twenty-four of these youth were interviewed during the evaluation and eight workshops observed for brief periods.

Observations

1. The intervention itself is "unorthodox" for a community development program due to its individualized focus, limited potential for community participation or cost-sharing and indirect relationship to the goal of economic development.
2. Illustrative data gathered from the 24 youth interviewed and anecdotal evidence about 1991's 45 participants suggest that the generation of jobs from this training will be limited. (Only one of the youth trained in the Tularcillo carpentry workshop is currently employed; 2 of 6 young women trained as seamstresses in Terrero Blanco are currently employed; none of the weavers trained in Llano Grande in February 1992 were working in that occupation one month after the training.)
3. Some participants, especially those in masonry and electricity workshops, exhibited a high level of enthusiasm and direction in their planned application of the skill. Among this group, expectations were dominant that incomes of 1500-2500 colones per month, well above village averages, would be attained. Many predicted that they would have to leave their villages to seek employment, however. The real job prospects for a trained 16-18 year old were not evident to the team. Among other groups, especially the young women involved in sewing, the formation of a future business concept was often much weaker and potential wage estimates much more modest (400-500 colones per month).
4. The selection of practicing artisans and teachers to give the courses has been effectively implemented and the teaching methodology employed practical and results-oriented.
5. No pre-feasibility or cost study had been carried out prior to any of the vocational training interventions and in the case of "tule" (weaving of straw mats), no marketing analysis performed. A rapid feasibility study of this activity suggests that, in fact, the tule activity is marginal in terms of potential returns to labor (due to its labor intensity) unless a very strong marketing outlet can be identified.
6. A lack of adequate equipment (sewing machines, carpentry tools, electrician's and mason's tools, etc.) presents a serious obstacle to the majority of course graduates in adopting these professions.

Training interventions, especially in the electricity area, may be too limited to assure mastery of the skill at safe levels.

7. While a few participants had crossed "gender lines", participation patterns tend to follow a traditional stereotype in activity-participant matching.

7.4 Recommendations

A) SCF should program a phaseout of its involvement in village banks during FY 92. Banks which are currently functioning well and wish to continue, should be phased over to FINCA/CAM for direct management.

B) Discontinuation of the microenterprise development component should be effected before the end of FY 92.

C) SCF should reexamine its basic premises and goals for the vocational training activity to determine the program's compatibility with the rest of the community development portfolio. If continued, specific indicators related to the changes this intervention is trying to effect should be delineated and monitored. The intervention would be more appropriately classified in the education sector.

D) Design of future vocational workshops should include a careful cost analysis and pre-feasibility study to ensure that investments of time and resources are likely to generate positive long term results.

E) The problem of training recipients obtaining needed equipment needs to be resolved as part of the strategy related to this intervention.

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8.0 PROGRAMMATIC EVALUATION OF SCF ACTIVITIES

8.1 Program Impact Measurement

In the OPG III proposal, SCF set forth its final goals in terms of sustainable improvements in the social and economic conditions of low income rural families. Specifically, increases in the real income of 3,500 small sharehold farmers were sought, along with the adoption of 10 critical child survival behaviors by 1,500 at risk families. Additionally, greater analytical, organizational and operative capability of grassroot community structures was planned in order to increase their potential for sustainability and continued self-development.

In order to assess a "quantifiably" valid measure of the program's social and economic impact, indicators must be established and a related information system developed that incorporates baseline data and periodic measurement of progress on a routine basis. In a diverse, multi-sectoral program such as this one, separate information systems tailored to the requirements of each sector are generally necessary, due to variances both in the target group and sector-specific information requirements.

Both previous OPG evaluations (1985 and 1990) cited lack of baseline and quantifiable impact data as major constraints to determining program impact. Unfortunately, in 1992, despite SCF's efforts to undertake major baseline surveys to redress the situation, there is still an information vacuum at the level of program impact. This, in turn, made impossible a valid evaluation of the impact.

Failure to date to develop an adequate information system seems related to three factors: poor definition of impact indicators; baseline surveys that did not produce reliable data bases; and an impasse between field and regional technical staff regarding the adoption of a health monitoring system.

8.1.1 Definition of Impact Indicators

Starting with the OPG III proposal (logframe, pp. 20) and its related program design, an institutional confusion is apparent between the definition of impact indicators (OVI's) and project activities (outputs). Impact indicators should, if correctly defined, express the attainment of the project purpose in terms of desired and measurable changes in the project population. For example, targeted increases in income, (as expressed in terms of returns to investment or returns to labor), savings levels, and reinvestment levels are all valid indicators of a microenterprise program that aims to increase participants' household income, whereas number of microentrepreneurs trained, feasibility studies conducted, and loans disbursed are all activities or outputs. SCF's information and reporting system is centered on these activities among its four primary programming sectors. The activities tend, in turn,

to drive program implementation targets and the development process itself. Among other repercussions, this does not permit SCF to measure the efficiency or efficacy of its various interventions nor to know where it stands with respect to the attainment of its overriding program objectives.

In selecting its indicators, SCF should seek to define specific measures of the changes it is trying to influence directly, rather than trying to grapple with indicators of a more "macro" environment over which it has a lesser degree of potential influence. Rather than measure, for example, the diverse sources of a family's changing economic status, it should focus on the financial performance of a microenterprise promoted by SCF. Rather than allow the overall impact of its health program to be gauged by mortality and morbidity rates, which are difficult to measure reliably in the short term and subject to many influences, SCF should select indicators directly related to the adoption of its ten child survival behaviors which are generally recognized as reducing mortality and morbidity.

Specific examples of possible indicators are given in Annex 1, Impact Measurement.

8.1.2. Baseline Surveys

In response to concerns about the need for a quantitative data base to measure program impact, SCF undertook two ambitious baseline surveys in impact Areas 6 and 7 in 1990 and 1991, respectively, prior to initiating programs in these areas. The Area 6 survey involved a team of 22 investigators and 1,379 households during a period of 3 months, whereas the Area 7 survey involved 433 households and was conducted by a team of 10 interviewers over a period of two months.

Although the survey design incorporated an essentially correct application of framing, mapping and random sampling techniques, the exercise fell seriously short of its potential because:

1. A management decision was reached to sample all potential rural project villages in the district prior to the initiation of the program for the purpose of determining overall socio-economic indicators and selecting project sites. Beyond being an expensive and time-consuming manner of site selection, the challenge of collecting data on family health and income reliably, particularly within a conflict zone, is formidable when the interviewers are unknown to village families. The conclusions of the survey in Area 7 underline the problems of the surveys' reliability: it found, for example, not a single case of infant mortality among 433 households in the previous 12 months, and that 15.8% of the children were "obese".
2. The sampling formula generally used for this type of survey would have established a sample size of 172 households (ten percent of the total) in place of the 433 actually sampled (25% of the total) in Area 7 and still given a margin of error (5 %) acceptable

to SCF. The sample size was important inasmuch as the larger sample required more resources and took longer to complete.

3. As with most surveys, the size (and related "statistical validity") of this particular sample was secondary to the adequacy of the design and actual research method (and, in turn, its "reliability"). The quality of the surveys' findings and conclusions led the evaluation team to consider both the test-retest stability and the internal consistency of the findings probably to be low. The surveys appear to be characterized by a high level of non-sampling, response errors (memory failure, uncertainties about units and dates, respondent reticence and misunderstanding of questions). While not uncommon in development surveys, these problems are likely to proliferate in "new" areas and in politically unstable zones.

4. Finally, and most fundamentally, there is limited correlation between some of the sectoral programming areas selected by SCF and the relatively general baseline data and subsequent specific program interventions. This, in turn, diminishes the utility and value of the baseline surveys as program impact monitoring devices and leads to a less-than-optimal return on the rather large staff effort invested.

For example, the baseline surveys measured style of housing as one of the leading indicators of a family's economic status. In the actual development context, housing is much more likely to be affected by remittances from abroad than from a family member's participation in a small scale village bank project.

8.1.3 Health Monitoring System

SCF's health programming strategy encompasses the adoption of 10 primary family "behaviors" designed to reduce child and maternal mortality and morbidity. This international approach was developed at Save the Children in the mid-1980's, and has now been implemented in a significant number of country programs. A related information system consists of six primary manual components, to be managed by promoters and health volunteers, and is accompanied by "PROMIS", a customized software program. However, despite concerted efforts by both regional technical advisors and program managers to make the program operational in El Salvador, field staff resistance to implement the system appears to be significant and the goal of getting an operational system in place is largely unmet.

Implementation appears to have been impeded by: the complexity of the system and its (related) potential for sustainability; volunteer and staff rotation; and the presence of greater incentives for volunteers in other institutions and SCF projects.

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A) Complexity

While clear efforts have been made to design the system both in terms of language and physical characteristics for volunteers with modest educational levels, the volume of information required is so expansive and detailed as to make implementation on a long term basis unlikely absent a highly dedicated and stable fore of volunteers. While SCF could provide some interim support with tabulation through the placement of computers and computer personnel in each impact area, data processing on a community level would be difficult to sustain beyond the period of SCF's presence, i.e. after institutional phaseout.

B) Volunteer Turnover

The implementation of the health program at the community level is dependent upon volunteers. With some exceptions, these tend to be young, unmarried women with basic education, a desire to perform community service and an interest in building their own skills before assuming other roles in life. Predictably, as their life circumstances change, these women leave volunteer work. This turnover presents particular problems to SCF in carrying out activities which depend on well-trained volunteers, forcing a cycle of repeated and lengthy training efforts. The team evaluates the current base of SCF health volunteers as too unstable to support the implementation of the proposed information system. Although to a lesser extent, personnel turnover is also a problem at the level of the health sector promoter with attendant implications for the implementation of the information system.

C) Incentives

Over the past two years, as the level of private and public institutional support to El Salvador's rural communities has increased, "incentive" payments to semi-volunteer staff have become much more common. The Ministry of Health has selected and trained community residents, generally with six years of primary school, as rural health promoters and pays them approximately 1,200 colones per month (\$150) to manage the village's health prevention, information and referral program. Agencies like ADS and CAM pay local promoters from 400 to 1,600 colones per month to manage their interventions, while SCF itself has recently initiated the practice of "rewarding" literacy teachers monetarily (in so doing "converting" more than one trained health volunteer into a literacy promoter.)

Given these shifts in the development climate, the expectation that a large and time consuming information system will be implemented in a stable and reliable manner by volunteers is unrealistic.

In El Salvador, however, unlike many other developing countries, there exists a viable alternative health information system which could assist SCF overcome the problem

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of implementing a workable data monitoring system within existing institutional constraints. Two years ago, the Ministry of Health introduced a family register system for use by rural health promoters. The system, while considerably more streamlined than SCF's, offers impact indicators in 9 of the 10 behavioral areas.

Advantages of using this system are:

- (1) higher potential for institutional sustainability in the Salvadoran context, particularly if an agreement is reached with the Ministry of Health;
- (2) strong basis for comparison with other regions and communities in El Salvador;
- (3) shorter, more efficient start-up, training period;
- (4) easier tabulation of indicators at the community level;
- (5) avoids duplication of services and information systems.

8.2 Program Structure and Development

SCF's institutional presence in El Salvador spans five diverse geographical areas and is targeted at low income communities. Offices in San Salvador, Santa Rosa de Lima and each impact area support 122 staff, 82 % of them field-based. Community Development Committees (CDCs) elected by villagers in each participating project community guide the development process, but sectorial-focused project committees implement selected project activities within the village setting. Common project committees include: mother's groups focused around a CENET, agriculture groups, (ACPA) youth groups working on forestation and sanitation, (GJPA) and village banking groups. At the present time, SCF undertakes no less than 1,034 project interventions (over 200 per impact area)(PEMS 1992) and works with 333 groups. The average budget of an individual project in FY 92 was 7,230 colones, or \$887.

The findings of the evaluation team regarding the program's structure and development can be grouped into 4 major themes: the quality of the development product, efficiency of the effort, integration, and potential for sustainability.

8.2.1. Quality of the Development Product

SCF's goals are basically twofold: to develop the capacity of the community for self-determination in the development process, and to achieve quantitative and qualitative improvements in living conditions among the rural poor. In its stay in El Salvador, SCF has attempted to balance these two, not necessarily complementary,

goals: how does an agency promote self-determination and a major community role in the planning process and consistently deliver a technically solid and viable development project in response to the diverse needs of the community? SCF's response to this programming dilemma in earlier years was a seemingly organic array of small-scale experiments, spanning all sectors and geographical areas of El Salvador. Predictably, this resulted in a relatively high rate of project deficiencies, many the result of inadequate technical expertise. Recognizing the problem, last year SCF's new director organized a laudable effort to consolidate its interventions (from 32 to 15) and to contract technical support where appropriate from outside specialized service providers.

There are still several issues which affect program quality. These include: inconsistent project definition, and related poor activity/objective "fit", continued engineering problems in infrastructure projects, and a weak economic development sector.

The current 15 "projects" were selected with a view to distribution of staff workload among four sectors, successful project precedents and compatibility with SCF's overall mission. The evaluation team believes that two aspects deserve further attention.

At the institutional level, there appears insufficient distinction between a "project" and a program "activity". While some of the "projects" (CENETS, village banks, dams and water systems) are indeed sufficient in their scope, budgetary resources and operational complexity to merit "project" status, other "projects" are merely activities (chlorinating water, reproductive health, latrine construction). Further consolidation of projects would serve to reduce paperwork in both finance and planning areas.

There is no evident explicit interrelationship between many of SCF's current "menu" of 15 project activities and the goals set forth in the OPG III. For example, in the current fiscal year, 35% of SCF's project funds (excluding the El Sauce water systems repair) are devoted to the educational sector for the operation of kindergartens, primary school subsidies, vocational training courses and literacy classes, none of which were anticipated in the OPG III.

While some of these activities, not generally the focus of a community development agency, may be understood in the context of closure of public institutions in a situation of civil conflict, SCF's role as an interim service provider needs to be made explicit and limited in time. Further, adjustments must be made to the overall programming strategy to accommodate the shift in programming direction at the level of both objectives and activities, with agreement from the donor. Finally, SCF should be aware that a role as an interim service provider may run counter to its goal of community development given that these activities generally involve minimal community participation in financing or implementation.

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In its current annual operational plan, SCF has programmed the construction of 4 deep tube wells and one dam. While the scope of this evaluation did not extend to the engineering problems associated with the El Sauce water system, the dimensions of that problem have created a feeling of institutional wariness about other infrastructure construction programs. Indeed, the evaluation team visited two of four dams in the San Alejo region, built in 1991, that were not functioning but which had been reviewed by an engineer and were thought to have only minor, repairable defects. The team also found only about 60% of the deep tube wells drilled from 1987-1990 actually operating. DJC has instituted a new maintenance and repair program, with parts to be supplied by ANDA, which should enable community residents to keep their water systems operable.

Despite this institutional wariness, potable water remains one of the most critical and expressed needs of the communities, particularly (but not exclusively) in the eastern part of the country, and it is clear that well carried out water projects would be met with eager local collaboration and appreciation.

That the Economic Development Sector has problems in terms of program fit and quality was covered in Section 7.0.

8.2.2 Efficiency of Effort

DJC selects its target populations on the basis of poverty, vulnerability and level of unmet needs. Factors such as family income, property ownership, mortality and nutritional levels, literacy levels and access to potable water are taken into account during the site selection process. Priority is also assigned generally to communities with little access to other institutional and technical resources. As a result, DJC works in some of the most difficult and inaccessible areas of El Salvador and is challenged to support effectively a largely decentralized corps of technicians and administrative systems within this environment.

Despite the laudable goal of working with "the poorest of the poor", the evaluation team became concerned over the overall efficiency of DJC's field operations. Concerns included site dispersion, staff transportation, scale of project interventions, participation and staff turnover rates.

a. Site Selection

DJC, in seeking to work in communities with the greatest need, often selects distant sites with very difficult access from its impact area offices. Some sites, especially in the Anamorós area, require walking or riding muleback for 2-3 hours to reach target groups. Since DJC's current sectoral structure requires four sector technicians to reach these sites at least twice monthly, the level of staff effort

required to service these sites is considerable and expensive both in terms of time and opportunity cost.

b. Transportation

An exacerbating factor, and the most frequently mentioned limitation to their accomplishment, is the lack of adequate transportation for field staff. Each Impact Area, with its attendant 8-16 promoters, is assigned four motorbikes and 1 vehicle. Promoters (especially women, none of whom has access to a motorbike) often need to rely on rides with other staff members and experience considerable loss of productive time and flexibility in the process. In A.I. #002 (San Martín), where public transportation is used, buses visit some communities only once a day, again leading to time management problems and staff frustration.

c. Scale of Project Interventions and Participation Rates

Project interventions, discussed previously in this report, are often very modest in size and scope. On repeated occasions, the evaluation team encountered promoters investing significant time in small scale activities, for example, devoting an afternoon: to teach 2 or 3 youths to grow radishes; to select a participant for vocational training; or to facilitate a fourth or fifth meeting of a handful of interested participants in a community bank.

Observed participant numbers for many of DJC's interventions were too small to justify the promotor's level of effort. In the educational and health sectors, DJC has generally been successful in generating significant group sizes (albeit often as "recipients" of services), but in a majority of agricultural and youth projects, participant numbers are quite low. In the 40 communities visited by the team in active impact areas, average group sizes in agricultural, youth and community bank interventions ranged from 2-25, with a significant number under 10 members. Also, the individualized focus of the vocational training, latrine and enterprise development projects has direct cost implications.

d. Staff Turnover

As noted in previous evaluations, significant rates of staff turnover continue to impact DJC's operations adversely. Viewed in terms of the overall staff, DJC's annual personnel turnover rate over the past five years has been consistently in the 25 to 30 percent range. Examined in detail, however, the turnover rate appears disproportionately high in two sectors, Health and Economic Development, and in Impact Areas #003, #004 and #007.

In Health and Economic Development, one in three promoters has been replaced in the past six months. See Section 8.3 for a fuller discussion. Obviously, programmatic

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efficiency is diminished by dependence on staff still in their training and orientation phase.

8.2.3 Organizational and Programmatic Integration

As brought out more fully in Section 5.2, DJC's community development methodology involves creating and strengthening of grassroots organizations with the capacity to carry out integrated, multi-sectoral development activities. These include the CDC's as well as activity-specific committees, e.g. Parents' Committees.

As should be expected, there are rather wide variations in the effectiveness of the community organizations developed so far. The strongest community organizations do, in fact, embody natural leaders engaged in a dynamic planning and coordination role. These leaders, generally well informed and often having lived in the United States, tend to view DJC as a "preferred service provider" and show sophistication in lobbying on behalf of their communities. At the other end of the spectrum, however, there are a significant number of communities in which the leaders are passive, disengaged in the planning process and depend heavily on DJC staff.

Problems of weak community organizations are exacerbated by the pressure on DJC promoters to achieve predetermined goals and a related weakness in the needs analysis process.

With respect to the Promoter's role, DJC staff exhibit awareness of the need for community "ownership" of projects and the development of strong community structures. However, in the pursuit of individual sectoral goals, the promoter may work independently of the CDC, going instead directly to a project committee or individual to be trained. In these instances, the CDC is circumvented in the planning and implementation process and reduced to a role of mechanically supporting the activity through cashing checks and buying materials. In some circumstances, CDCs seem not to be fully aware of the level of project activities in the community. Both the sectoral role of the promoters, in which they may be inadvertently subsuming the CDC's organizational role, and lack of continuity of institutional presence (due to staff turnover) are reducing the CDCs' potential to become strong, grassroots structures.

A related constraint to strong grassroots development may flow from the needs analysis process in which the pressing needs of the community have a limited correspondence to the current pared-down "menu" offered by DJC. Community disinterest is reflected in low participation rates and small group sizes in these instances.

Further, new communities in the Anamorós and San José de la Fuente areas frequently identified the promoter as the party selecting the project intervention, further weakening the prospects for community "ownership" and maintenance.

While in some recently organized communities, project committees are well-represented within the CDC's membership, it is still common to find separate, unrelated project groups and CDC's in the same community, thus making community-wide coordination less likely. Also, in the communities initiated prior to 1988, the level of significant women's participation in leadership roles lags.

With regard to program, integration problems predictably follow those of institutional integration, owing usually to "parallel" project implementation structures. An example at this moment of integration difficulties is the composting latrines (letrinas aboneras). While the health sector promoters have been assigned goals for construction of these latrines, the natural resources promoters have not been assigned goals as to the use of the compost. The evaluation team saw no example of this expensive composting technology in use. The recommendations from the foregoing section also pertain to this section.

8.2.4. Sustainability

SCF describes its organizational goals over the five year implementation period of the OPG III as fostering development through conscious behavioral change and through creation of a strong organizational model capable of assuring the sustainability of the development process within participating project communities. Emphasizing that its presence in communities is transient in nature, SCF employs a phase-over strategy of reduced staff presence and gradual withdrawal of material and financial support. (OPG III proposal, pp 18 and 33).

Further, Save the Children stated that it would initiate this phase-over process from Impact Area 3 (San Alejo) in December, 1990 with followup support to the Pavana New School program and the community banks until a complete withdrawal by December 1991. Similarly, the OPG III proposal contained a plan to phase-over the Ilobasoco Impact Area 4 by December 1992, though this date was not incorporated in the final OPG III Agreement. (OPG III proposal, pages 16 and 17).

In fact, SCF has made no particular move to withdraw from Areas 3 or 4 as of April 1992, and as an institution seems unable to come to terms with the phase-over process. While some of targeted communities in San Alejo and Ilobasco, do, in fact, exhibit signs of readiness for phase-over and continued self-development, others, despite a lengthy institutional involvement, show little potential for sustainability. Finally, many of SCF's most recent interventions, including its "CENET" health strategy, vocational schools, kinder, and primary school support, imply an extended ongoing program involvement and limited potential for sustainability without explicit agreements from the public sector.

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In reviewing sustainability strategies for community development program of this nature, three interlocking components should be kept in mind: institutional sustainability, behavioral change/self-development, and organizational sustainability.

Institutional sustainability refers to a clear agreement for another institution or service provider to continue to implement an intervention developed by an NGO on an ongoing basis. For example, in communities where SCF has funded public school teachers, a clear agreement with the Ministry of Education to continue those services would constitute a plan for institutional sustainability.

Sustained behavioral change or self-development refers to the concept that some changes are internalized within the individual and do not require an ongoing maintenance function. A literacy class participant, for example, once taught to read proficiently, will not necessarily require further reinforcement to put her new skills into practice, particularly if she has access to simple reading materials; a farmer, convinced that crop diversification is in his best economic interests, may not require ongoing extension support once he has mastered the technical information and practices related to the new crops.

Organizational sustainability refers to the ability of community organizational structures to continue to act collectively in the best interests of their community, either through self-directed community efforts or through brokering contacts with other institutions, following the withdrawal of the implementing agency. SCF in its OPG III proposal set forth this concept as its sustainability strategy.

Fuller discussion of the requirements for organizational stability appears in Annex 2.

SCF's current project communities range the project life cycle: formation and organization; active implementation; transfer of responsibility; and, self-sufficiency.

It should also be recognized that some communities, for one reason or another, do not progress within the project life cycle and remain in a passive or inactive state. These communities should be periodically weeded out after SCF verifies that the problems are indeed community related (presence of factions, unstable population base, welfare mentality, etc.) rather than institutionally-related (staff turnover, infrequent contact, communications difficulties, and so forth).

While determining the sustainability status of each community went well beyond the scope of work of the evaluation team, the following observations together with the evaluation of Impact Area 1 (Section 9) may be pertinent.

1. Communities in the Anamoros and San Jose (impact areas 6 and 7), initiated as part of the current OPG III grant appear to be in the community organization and early active implementation phases of programming. While some of the

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communities in these areas appear to have high potential for development, the main SCF interventions (CENET, village banks, ACPAS, etc.) are still in early development. In these areas, a five year implementation timeframe will like prove insufficient to meet program goals and to put the organizational strategy in place;

2. Communities in the San Alejo, Ilobasco and San Martin (impact areas 3, 4, and 2 impact areas) initiated largely in the 1985-1987 period) show a diverse mixture of sustainability potential and status. An estimated 30-40% of the communities visited by the team in these areas were in a stage of their development where phase-over to the community should be instituted. In these areas, SCF has achieved good results with organizational and leadership development with some linkages with other institutions now in existence. As mentioned above in Section 5, however, community financial resources remain very limited.
3. The evaluation team is concerned, however, that certain SCF practices, especially in the areas of financial management and cost-sharing, but also in planning and needs assessment, inhibit development of community "ownership" and self-reliance. Lack of community participation in cost-sharing span all sectors. Examples range from youth groups using sale proceeds from community nurseries for parties instead of reinvestment to overly subsidized training courses to lack of cost-sharing for kinders, primary schools and latrine construction. These examples suggest a tendency on the part of SCF staff towards a classic social welfare agency approach with overtones of paternalism in place of a total focus on community organizational development.

8.3 Personnel

SCF operates five impact area offices in El Salvador, in addition to its regional office in Santa Rosa de Lima and its headquarters in San Salvador. Each impact "area office" is the institutional base for an Impact Area Coordinator, an accountant, a driver, a secretary, and 8-16 promoters, divided among the four primary programming sectors. Each promoter is responsible for implementing projects in 8 communities in his or her area of specialty in accordance with the goals established in the annual planning process.

As part of the evaluation, the team interviewed in confidence 40 promoters, representative of all impact areas. Additionally, team members were accompanied largely by SCF staff on visits to the field, and generally found that staff interaction with community members was characterized by good human relation skills, respect and dedication. This general dedication to community development was not paralleled by the level of staff morale. In the field staff there exists a strong, generalized sense

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of excessive pressure, lack of voice in program direction and a feeling of job insecurity.

The interviews also indicated that:

1. The promoters in our sample had, on the whole, a relatively limited level of experience with SCF, with 43% of the promoters having less than six full months' job tenure. (3% of the sample had 6-12 mos., 40% 1-3 years and 14% more than 3 years).
2. Forty-six percent of the promoters had completed were college graduates or had at least two or more years of college-level training.
3. Training ranks high in SCF's priorities and most of the recently hired promoters had completed a 15-day orientation session and had attended 2 or more technical workshops.
4. Most believed their work impeded by significant existing limitations. On an institutional level, lack of adequate transport and excessive administrative requirements were the most commonly cited obstacles. Staff turnover was widely associated with: job pressure related to the planning system and to activity targets; and, a perceived lack of employee recognition. While distances from family were occasionally mentioned, hardship conditions per se were rarely cited as turnover factors.

The limitations at the community level most frequently cited were accessibility problems, community wariness, and low participation levels/disinterestedness.

5. Field staff were, on the whole, positive about SCF's training and resource management functions. The management of resources, while strict, was perceived to reduce the misuse of funds while promoting community leaders' familiarity with suppliers and other institutions. Work conditions and the planning system, on the other hand, prompted negative responses by over 80% of the promoters, who felt that the centralized, imposed targets on which the planning system is based, correspond poorly to field reality. Although central staff described significant efforts to decentralize decision-making, field staff complaints about a slow, centralized decision-making process persist.

8.4 Recommendations

A) Impact Measurement

- 1. An internal review of SCF's major objectives and related programmatic indicators should be undertaken to define them in clearer, operational terms so as to establish the groundwork for the development of an information system in which the indicators correspond directly to the changes sought.**
- 2. SCF should use its established site selection procedures, utilizing community meetings and focus groups, rather than repeat the baseline survey mechanism for any new program areas.**
- 3. Collection of base data from which to measure impact should be integrated into a registration and information monitoring system at the startup of a specific intervention. For example, a family health register could incorporate initial indicators on the 10 health behaviors so that later information forms a base against which to measure change.**
- 4. SCF should explore the advisability of incentives for health volunteers, possibly through inclusion of SCF health volunteers into the Ministry of Health's rural health program or through monetary incentives tied to time periods successfully completed.**

B) Program Structure and Organization

- 1. The operational definition of a "project" should be recast using the following criteria: minimum budget threshold, complexity and longevity of intervention, homogeneity of target groups (e.g. children under five, farmers, etc.) and information system needs. Projects should be consolidated geographically throughout impact areas so that one primary health care project is working in San Jose, for example, albeit at multiple project sites.**

Possible consolidation of exiting projects is listed in Annex 3.

- 2. SCF should consider, in conjunction with USAID, a project redesign to conform its program more closely to the goals established in OPG III as well as to take into account changing developments over the past three years, especially with regard to El Salvador's national reconstruction program startup.**

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Considerations with respect to project redesign appear in Annex 3.

3. SCF should consider going beyond its use of outside engineering for potable water projects to collaboration with other agencies specialized in this field. SCF's role would be as the catalyst for community organization and pre-project development.
4. Site selection criteria should rely more on pragmatic considerations such as the cost of access and operation (and in turn, its cost-benefit ratio), recognizing clearly that emphasis on serving the poorest and most remote communities is inherently inefficient, resulting in correspondingly high cost to benefit ratios.
5. Time management practices need to be improved to accord greater appreciation of staff time as a critical and limited resource. With increasing emphasis on service interventions, staff costs become by far the largest financial program inputs and merit careful management.
6. SCF should seek to improve program efficiency by expanding transportation availability; by limiting project interventions only to those which meet "critical mass" criteria for size and beneficiary levels; and, by substantially reducing the administrative and reporting burden for the staff through simplification and consolidation of financial and planning reporting requirements.
7. The organizational structure in program communities needs to be redefined in light of the current project portfolio and target groups. Serious consideration is needed as to whether CDC's actually serve current programming needs or whether interventions in women-focused health, social development and credit programs could be better managed through different community structures.
8. An alternative staffing structure should be considered so as to assure greater stability of staff contact with the community. To give each CDC one staff contact on whom it can rely, a system in which a geographically-based promoter concentrates on organizational and educational activities in only 4 communities is recommended. More specialized health and agricultural promoters could handle a larger number (8) of communities on the current bi-weekly basis and provide technical support to the geographically-based promoter.
9. During the remaining LOP, primary attention should be directed to development of impact areas 6 and 7, with no new impact areas open before these areas reach acceptable levels of development. In addition to completely new areas, consideration of working with different communities in current SCF impact areas may be useful.
10. SCF should inventory program communities in Areas 2, 3, and 4 to determine their sustainability status. During this process, mature communities should be

earmarked for phase-over. Adequate staffing levels will be required for communities in phase-over status to assure a smooth transition.

11. SCF should avoid initiating projects with a multi-year life cycle (CENETS, bancos comunales, etc.) and their related information systems in older programming areas targeted for phase-over. These interventions should, rather, be developed in new areas (006 and 007) where the programming future is more assured.

12. Agreements should be negotiated with all due speed with the Ministries of Education and Health to continue to finance SCF's interventions in education and health in communities targeted for phase-over.

13. SCF staff, at all levels, must place greater emphasis on community ownership, cost-sharing and autonomy. A "reinvestment" and "cost-sharing" value needs to be instituted throughout the institution to encourage community participation in financing as proof of the importance communities place in the development intervention.

C) Personnel Recommendations

1. SCF's efforts to decentralize staff selection, starting its staffing searches within the impact area and related department, should be accelerated.
2. As a top priority, SCF needs to assemble a package of incentives and institutional values that create a climate for the recognition and longevity of its workers. The performance appraisal system should be revised to assure that the multiple facets of an employee's contributions are recognized. Housing conditions, especially for women, should be reviewed in order to assure that basic needs for privacy and hygiene are met. Current planning targets should be replaced by an employee-generated quarterly work plan with more ample parameters for innovation. Finally, the rather humiliating practice of publishing quarterly "results" and identifying personnel associated with low target achievement should be discontinued and replaced with a traditional supervisor-employee relationship.
3. SCF's overall staffing and supervisory structure needs to be reviewed to ensure that adequate supervisor-staff ratios exist. Efforts should be made to create a 1:6 or 1:8 ratio, rather than the 1:15 or 1:25 ratio currently in place in most impact area offices.
4. More effort should be directed at increasing the representation of professional women in management and decision-making roles, offering positive role models to junior staff and communities.

9.0 EVALUATION OF IMPACT AREA #001

SCF first began its Salvadoran program in 1979 in this impact area, the region between El Sauce and Concepcion de Oriente along El Salvador's eastern border with Honduras. SCF ended its active participation, except for an incomplete potable water pipeline, in December 1990. The evaluation was to determine general living conditions and the state of SCF-sponsored organizations and projects. Eight communities in this impact area were visited, documentation reviewed and interviews carried out with a number of people associated with the SCF program during its active phase.

9.1 Current Living Conditions.

In the absence of baseline data as to area living conditions, the evaluation was limited to a survey of current conditions as observed and as reported by local offices of GOES agencies. In terms of schooling, reduction in real terms of the Ministry of Education's budget led to failure to replace public school teachers and a sharp decline in public school attendance. Starting in 1990 and gathering speed in 1991, the Ministry has been able to reopen a number of schools so that basic elementary school attendance, which had been about 1,000 in 1987-89, increased to over 2,600 in school year 1992.

Adult literacy is estimated at 66% in El Sauce but only 42% in Concepcion de Oriente, which would give the area an average literacy rate somewhat lower than the national average, but in accord with general conditions in rural El Salvador.

Access to clean water and use of adequate latrines is very limited in the area. The Ministry of Health's local rural health unit developed a "Community Synthesis" in 1989 which indicated that of the 2,308 households in the municipalities of El Sauce and Concepcion de Oriente only 7% had access to clean water (from covered wells with pumps) and 29% had access to "regular" water (open wells without particular hygienic measures). Of the more than two thousand households, only 12 were reported to have latrines in good condition with 81% of the households without latrines in any condition.

That the 26-kilometer aquaduct engendered as much community interest as it did is understandable given the severity of the water access problem.

9.2 Organizational Sustainability

Of the eight communities visited, seven reported having established Community Development Committees through the assistance of SCF. Five of these CDC's

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remained in operation. Three of the committees still have a full complement of officers and members, while two have lost a portion of the membership. Four of the five active CDC's had at least one woman member, but none in a position of authority.

In recent years (1989-1992), these CDC's have not been very active, with most confining their activities to maintaining projects started earlier under SCF auspices. Only one committee had initiated a new project since the withdrawal of SCF staff.

The CDC's were organized originally democratically through open community meetings. Since formation, however, there has been little change in membership with three of the five boards of directors having been in office between eight and twelve years and the other two for more than four years. There is no indication that this situation is not acceptable to the communities concerned, but does indicate a certain lack of dynamism.

Activities promoted by SCF in Area 1 involved to a large extent physical infrastructure. As a result, community-wide participation and benefit were the rule. Three of the CDC's have maintained modest revolving funds, ranging from 300 to 2,600 colones, and have established capacity to meet their project maintenance needs. The others have no funds and meet maintenance problems in an ad hoc fashion.

The evaluation found that few of the CDC's (only 2 of the 5 remaining) had taken any initiative to contact other potential sources of community assistance and this in very limited fashion, suggesting that SCF did not prepare them adequately to compensate for SCF's departure.

The evaluation uncovered six types of organization established by SCF among the eight communities visited: 7 had CDC's, 4 had solidarity groups, three had housewives' clubs, while student clubs, youth clubs and literacy circles had each been organized in two communities. In March 1992, only five of the CDC's and one solidarity group were active. It is interesting to note that the fourteen groups no longer active ceased to function before the SCF program ended, not after. Reasons given varied, but in general they reflected a loss of momentum and esprit as the support which earlier had been supplied by SCF staff declined.

9.3 Project Sustainability.

Within the eight communities visited, SCF had sponsored 77 projects: 28 in health/nutrition, 25 in production and infrastructure and 24 in education. These projects, however, divided into 33 different types. Forty-seven of these projects remain in existence, with a reduction of about 50% in active projects involving health

and nutrition and of about one-third for the other two program sectors. Some two-thirds of the projects benefitted less than 100 persons each. An interesting note is that those interviewed were unanimous in stating that the war had no impact on their carrying out these projects.

Impact Area 1 involved three larger organizations/projects: CDTA; ARCESAD; and ACOOPACO.

The Appropriate Technology Development Center (CDTA) had been established as a pilot farm project and center for agricultural training. At the end of the SCF program, the CDTA was given in trust to ACOOPACO, but at present the center is scarcely used as an agricultural training facility and only intermittently as a meeting site for ACOOPACO.

The Asociacion de Produccion Agropecuario, de Ahorro, Credito y Consumo "La Oriental", R.L (ACOOPACO) was formed in 1987 with its offices at the CDTA as a cooperative to secure credit with SCF support for its members from the Agricultural Development Bank and to lower the cost of needed materials through joint purchasing and redistribution. At present, cooperative members were found in six of the eight communities visited, but ACOOPACO activities are limited to credit and distribution of agricultural inputs. It is reported to be in arrears with the Agricultural Development Bank and to be dominated by its president and a small group of his supporters. It would not appear at present to be a major factor in the agricultural life of the area.

The Asociacion Regional Comunal El Carpintero-El Sauce, de Aguas y Desarrollo (ARCESAD) was established within those area communities which were to participate in and benefit from the construction of a 26 kilometer aquaduct, for the purpose of managing and maintaining the water line. Community participation in ARCESAD remains high. Since the water line has been out of operation since 1988, benefits from membership in ARCESAD are none at present, with strong community feelings of resentment over the amount of time, money and effort expended to date with no results. The framework exists for an effective community organization given a completed water project and additional technical support.

In general, however, community members interviewed have an overall positive view of SCF and report that its impact on their communities was positive and that its projects met real community needs.

9.4 Recommendations

A) In view of the tension between the communities affected and the SCF over the failure to complete the aquaduct, SCF should make every effort to complete the reconstruction no later than the end of 1993.

B) While the evaluation team sees no reason for SCF to renew its program in impact area 1, it is recommended that ARCESAD be brought fully into the process of disseminating information about the status of the aquaduct and that it be assisted in organizational consolidation and training to administer to the water line.

10. PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

The present evaluation team reviewed two previous evaluations: the final evaluation for Operations Program Grant I, completed in January 1985; and the final evaluation for OPG II, completed in January 1990. The major impression left from this review was that of certain elements which appeared consistently in both of the previous evaluations and which appear in this evaluation.

One of these elements is that of employee turnover. The serious problem which this presents to SCF in terms of its organization and efficiency formed warranted a important comment in both previous evaluations as well as the current one. It would not appear that during the 12 years that SCF has been active in El Salvador that the problem has been resolved nor even diminished.

Another element was the absence of quantitative data. Not in 1985 nor in 1990 nor at present has there existed a data base adequate to permit credible cost-benefit analyses, to measure changes in program indicators or to measure program results quantitatively.

Previous evaluation findings also included difficulty in increasing family real incomes through microenterprise development and a tendency of SCF promoters to assume the lead in stimulating community activities rather than the communities themselves. Findings similar to those of the current evaluation.

On the other hand, the previous evaluations commented positively on the qualitative impact towards the improvement of living conditions in the isolated and impoverished communities in which Save the Children had chosen to work. Under difficult conditions, SCF has improved conditions of health, access to clean water, better sanitation and access to education, technical assistance and had served to organize many of the communities in a manner suited to their working to resolve the many problems confronting them.

11. SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND LIST OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Save the Children Federation has been involved in a broad-ranging series of activities intended to improve the conditions of the children found in some of the poorest and most isolated rural communities in El Salvador. There are two aspects of the SCF program which separate it from most if not all of the other social service providers in the field: its choice of very remote and very poor areas to serve; and its emphasis on organizational development within the communities.

Judging that child poverty and poor health reflect complex conditions of education, income and culture, SCF's activities are wide ranging. In attempting to cover such a broad range of activities, SCF risks spreading its resources too thinly to have a significant impact in any one area. This has been recognized by SCF's management which consolidated the program in early 1991: the evaluation team recommends further consolidation.

Health: The program sector which appears most directly related to the problem of child welfare is that of health and nutrition. The evaluation team rated SCF's performance in this sector as good: there are problems in implementation, particularly with respect to the quality and tenure of the volunteers, but the program design appears basically sound. Quantifying the results in terms of behavioural change has not been possible, but recommendations on selection of a health indicator system could lead to improving data collection and analysis.

Education and Organization: The educational sector, which also includes community organizational development, is basically sound but with a number of unanswered questions. There has been no definitive decision as to the appropriate role for SCF in the educational field. The "escuela activa" concept, a major objective of OPG III, has encountered strong resistance from the Salvadoran public school system. The apparent current role of interim provider of educational services pending the ability of the Ministry of Education to expand its services would appear to be of good value, but not one foreseen in the OPGIII nor yet subject to formal agreement between SCF, USAID or the GOES as to how long and what precisely is involved. Literacy and vocational training, the latter now part of the Economic Development Sector, are activities separate from pre-school and basic primary education. Vocational training may not be the most appropriate activity for a community development program, but literacy training certainly is complementary to overall goals of improving community capacity to respond to the need for social and economic betterment. The evaluation team has the impression that there has been a loss of momentum in literacy programs in the past year or so and that this activity warrants careful review.

If education programs are temporary in nature, devolving in the near term to the Ministry of Education, then it follows logically that the more important element for this sector is community development. This assumes even greater weight in view that

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SCF's stated major objective is community organizational development, not social services, per se.

A strong SCF programmatic emphasis on organizational development within the communities not only implies a shift in emphasis for sectoral promoters from schools to committees, but also in the overall attitude of SCF. If the goal is self-sufficient communities, then programs should be tailored more to what the communities perceive as their needs and less to the "menu" of available SCF activities. It also implies that communities must develop a willingness to contribute financially to community projects or "self-sustainability" becomes merely a phrase connoting change of dependency from one donor to another.

Natural Resources: The need to improve agricultural productivity in a manner which favors the environment is unquestionably of prime importance to El Salvador in general and to the SCF impact areas in particular. The evaluation team has been unable to quantify any impact on real incomes of rural farmers in SCF-assisted communities. The chances of meeting the OPGIII target of increased income for 3,500 farmers is not considered likely. The team's basic impression is that this sectoral program is well intended but with too few resources, either human or material, to have more than a marginal impact.

The problems presented by a poor physical environment, established behaviour patterns and very limited economic resources are not likely to be modified by interventions short of full blown agricultural extension programs. SCF would appear to have neither the background nor the resources for a program of this magnitude directed solely at farmers. The present natural resource sector activities all have value as adjuncts to community betterment. At their current scale, they will not, in themselves, result in increased real incomes for large numbers of people. The better approach, then, may well be to scale down the objectives to match the intervention, rather than vice versa. Fresh vegetables grown in kitchen gardens, planting fruit trees in terraces, planting saplings where feasible and improving the care of livestock will all contribute to improved community living conditions, but modestly, and the sector's activities should be improved and carried on within this context.

Economic Development: Economic development activities such as village banks, microenterprise development and vocational training are intended to improve beneficiary incomes. Keys to microenterprise development are markets and credit. Many of SCF's communities lack sufficient market potential. SCF's village bank programs have had limited impact in their respective communities and are at present have virtually no lendable funds. Any impact in term of increased incomes among beneficiaries to date was not measurable.

A new activity, vocational training, benefits individuals who in turn, may or may not remain involved in their communities. The efficacy of the program could not be

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established owing to its recent start-up, but within the SCF context it is a relatively expensive program with yet unproven community benefits.

In the evaluation team's judgement, the impact of this sector is sufficiently marginal to warrant redirecting the SCF resources involved into other sectors.

General Program Conclusions: The two aspects unique to the SCF program mentioned above raise questions with respect to the appropriate future of the program.

1. The selection of very poor and isolated communities as targets for the SCF program appears to be an integral part of the SCF approach. The evaluation team recognizes the emotional appeal of helping the "poorest of the poor", but believes that both USAID and SCF should clearly recognize that there is cost involved. By definition, the more limited the resource base, the greater the inputs required to reach a given level of development. Crop diversification where it doesn't rain, training in sewing for people from where there is no electricity and microenterprise development for people in areas without markets are not cost effective. This is apart from the cost associated with travel time and difficulty in the delivery of services and material.

On a longer term basis, there would also appear to be an element of futility in working with the most remote and impoverished areas. USAID assistance to export development and industrial reconversion supports the idea that El Salvador's future economic development lies in industrialization. Industrialization implies increasing urbanization which, in turn, implies the abandonment of the impoverished rural periphery. Salvadoran history further supports the likelihood that much of the youth of the communities in which SCF now works will not remain. This is not bad: healthier and better educated children are of value to the society wherever they choose to live. But it does cast doubt on the benefit of money spent on community development, per se.

2. Save the Children's stated key program emphasis is the organization of self-sustaining communities: that is, the development of communities capable of defining their needs, seeking technical and other assistance and carrying out programs is more important than the specific social or economic services provided. This is the theory behind CBIRD. The record in Impact Area 1, in which SCF was active for eleven years, does not clearly substantiate SCF's ability to translate theory into reality. As of March 1992, one could just as rationally project that all of the SCF-sponsored organizations in the area will disappear or, alternatively, that three or four Community Development Committees will survive and provide useful services to their communities indefinitely.

It is quite possible that selection of communities for development with little or no economic resources makes virtually impossible the development of full self-sufficiency. It was notable during the field work how few financial resources had

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been committed by SCF-assisted communities to community projects. CDC's without access to funds are not likely to survive long beyond SCF's departure. The evaluation team estimated that a third of the communities in the three earlier impact areas (2, 3 and 4) were probably ready for "phase-over", but expressed strong concern over the lack of community financial resources.

Community-wide development implies programs of wide community interest. Section 5.2 listed in priority what the communities consider their needs. Roads, access to water, school buildings and other infrastructure requirements were at the top of the list. Projects of this nature benefit most if not all of the community and easily capture the community's attention. Interventions aimed at individuals, e.g. vocational training, or selected segments, like pregnant mothers or farmers, encounter greater difficulty in attracting broadly based community interest.

SCF has deemphasized infrastructure projects under its exclusive aegis in favor of working in the community as a catalyst to secure support for infrastructure projects from other institutions. SCF activities will be limited to interventions basically involving human resources in terms both of beneficiaries and of service providers. The danger to this approach is that SCF may limit its appeal to the community as a whole to a degree that jeopardizes its avowed aim of developing strong community-wide organizations. Working with members of the community to have a government agency build a road is unlikely to generate the same degree of credit to SCF and, by extension, to SCF-sponsored organizations that would accrue if the project were done under SCF auspices. Without these "big ticket" items in its portfolio, SCF may find the task of community organization even more difficult and its differentiation from other PVO's less pronounced.

OPG III: The second half: The mid-term evaluation indicates that SCF has had a positive impact on the living conditions of those communities in which it has been active. The amount of impact cannot be measured, but it does not appear likely that SCF will meet the quantitative goals established in OPG III.

Program shortcomings stem partly from philosophy, partly from the nature of Salvadoran society, but mostly from problems of implementation. In terms of program, SCF's 1989 proposal oversold its capabilities. What would now appear appropriate would be a regrouping on the part of USAID and SCF to determine what can and should be done for the remaining LOP.

That self-sustaining communities can be developed within a limited time frame has not been clearly established. That community organizations if properly developed contribute to the overall effectiveness of the program and to the development of democratic processes is, however, sufficiently clear to warrant continued emphasis on community organizational development. The process does not succeed in all communities nor has SCF really exhibited much urgency in preparing communities for

phase-over, partly because phase-over results in institutional problems for SCF inherent in terminating or transferring programs and people. An inventory of communities in impact areas 2,3,and 4 is recommended to determine which communities have the potential to be self-sustaining so that SCF can then program their phase-over. For those communities which lack this potential, SCF should consider terminating its activities.

The evaluation team would favor SCF selecting new communities within existing impact areas prior to moving to new areas, reserving new areas for when programs in areas 6 and 7 have been consolidated and appear on the right track.

Based on current data, the cost per community served by SCF appears to be about \$9,000 annually. The evaluation team believes that the present SCF program, with some further consolidation, but absent its economic development sector, offers the potential for sufficient benefits to justify the rather modest annual investment per community. These benefits can not be quantified until and unless SCF develops a system of data collection and analysis which measures change of behaviour and of circumstance rather than a body count of how many people were contacted.

As outlined below in the recommendations, there are a number of things SCF can do to improve its operational effectiveness. The main point, however, is that SCF has an ongoing, accepted program in being which does deliver services to Salvadoran beneficiaries, most of whom are both poor and rural.

If these services are considered worthwhile in terms of the USAID country strategy, then continuing to work with SCF would appear more efficient than dismantling its program and starting with one or more new institutions. It should be recognized by USAID and SCF that significant behaviour modification and income enhancement are difficult and lengthy processes and that program objectives should be geared more closely to reality. A realistic assessment of likely results does carry the risk that the level of projected benefits will not justify the program's cost.

The major deficiency in this evaluation and in any assessment of future program changes is the lack of quantifiable data on which to attempt even a cost to benefit analysis. Outside technical assistance to SCF/EI Salvador could be useful to perform two tasks: a detailed cost benefit analysis limited to no more than two communities to allow at least a model from which to project overall results more realistically; and, assistance in putting into place a data collection and analysis system suitable to quantitative evaluation.

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11.1 List of Recommendations

Section 4.0 Health and Nutrition

- A)** SCF should develop a strategy to strengthen the organizational capacity of the CENET with the aim of expanding the number of volunteers and community participants as well as providing the focal point for a more integrated approach to health and nutrition interventions through inclusion of all those involved in this sector.
- B)** Related to the above, health education and training efforts should be broader than at present. For example, instruction in water purification could be expanded to include other beneficial health practices so as to enhance program reach and the multiplier effect.
- C)** SCF should define a policy of coordination of its activities with those of the Ministry of Public Health so as to maximize the benefits to the communities. Of particular use could be the basic health data being compiled by the Ministry which could serve as a data baseline for program impact measurement.
- D)** SCF should define the necessary indicators with which to measure progress and impact in line with the requirements of OPG III and undertake to develop the information collection techniques necessary.

Section 5.0 Education and Organization

- A)** That in view of the changed circumstances, SCF should seek with USAID a mutually acceptable modification of the project goals in the educational field.
- B)** Should SCF wish to expand its educational program, for example through training additional teachers, it should assure itself beforehand that the Ministry of Education is willing and able to absorb these people over an agreed period of time, enabling SCF to plan its area phase out in a rational manner.
- C)** To assure greater community participation and sense of "ownership", SCF should give each community a greater role than present in the development of an Action Plan which will serve to define the framework in which the program is to evolve. This action plan should reflect the real needs and interests of the community, arrived at through a democratic consensus-building, rather than the institutional exigencies of SCF.
- D)** SCF should undertake an urgent program to assure that each community with an existing infrastructure project has an adequate maintenance capability: such capability should be built in at the planning stages for all future projects.

E) In order to ease SCF's eventual phase out from each impact area, SCF should put together a program in which available sources of external aid are identified and the communities educated as to their requirements and resources.

F) SCF should promote a greater role of women in community organizations with the goal of achieving female representation in such bodies as the CDC commensurate with their role as heads of household, which in a number of communities reaches 70% of the resident families.

G) In an effort to improve its cost to benefit ratio, SCF should phase out interventions which benefit individuals in favor of those which benefit larger numbers of community residents.

Section 6.0 Natural Resources

A) SCF should tie in its natural resource activities more closely to the objectives of OPG III through defining its objectives in terms of changes in behaviour or quantitative results supported by development of indicators which will allow the measurement of impact, rather than simply activities or numbers of attendees at training sessions.

B) SCF should improve the effectiveness of the natural resources sector through consolidation of effort into one or two activities, e.g. integrated pest management, fruit cultivation and marketing, with each carried out in a comprehensive manner in sufficient depth to have an impact.

C) Whatever the choice in natural resources activities, the program needs to be adjusted to the specific characteristics of each impact area.

Section 7.0 Economic Development

A) SCF should program a phaseout of its involvement in village banks during FY 92. Banks which are currently functioning well and wish to continue, should be phased over to FINCA/CAM for direct management.

B) Discontinuation of the microenterprise development component should be effected before the end of FY 92.

C) SCF should reexamine its basic premises and goals for the vocational training activity to determine the program's compatibility with the rest of the community development portfolio. If continued, specific indicators related to the changes this intervention is trying to effect should be delineated and monitored. The intervention would be more appropriately classified in the education sector.

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D) Design of future vocational workshops should include a careful cost analysis and pre-feasibility study to ensure that investments of time and resources are likely to generate positive long term results.

E) The problem of training recipients obtaining needed equipment needs to be resolved as part of the strategy related to this intervention.

Section 8.0 Programmatic Evaluation

A) Impact Measurement

1. An internal review of SCF's major objectives and related programmatic indicators should be undertaken to define them in clearer, operational terms so as to establish the groundwork for the development of an information system in which the indicators correspond directly to the changes sought.

2. SCF should use its established site selection procedures, utilizing community meetings and focus groups, rather than repeat the baseline survey mechanism for any new program areas.

3. Collection of base data from which to measure impact should be integrated into a registration and information monitoring system at the startup of a specific intervention. For example, a family health register could incorporate initial indicators on the 10 health behaviors so that later information forms a base against which to measure change.

4. SCF should explore the advisability of incentives for health volunteers, possibly through inclusion of SCF health volunteers into the Ministry of Health's rural health program or through monetary incentives tied to time periods successfully completed.

B) Program Structure and Organization

1. The operational definition of a "project" should be recast using the following criteria: minimum budget threshold, complexity and longevity of intervention, homogeneity of target groups (e.g. children under five, farmers, etc.) and information system needs. Projects should be consolidated geographically throughout impact areas so that one primary health care project is working in San Jose, for example, albeit at multiple project sites.

Possible consolidation of exiting projects is listed in Annex 3.

2. SCF should consider, in conjunction with USAID, a project redesign to conform its program more closely to the goals established in OPG III as well as to take into

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account changing developments over the past three years, especially with regard to El Salvador's national reconstruction program startup.

Considerations with respect to project redesign appear in Annex 3.

3. SCF should consider going beyond its use of outside engineering for potable water projects to collaboration with other agencies specialized in this field. SCF's role would be as the catalyst for community organization and pre-project development.
4. Site selection criteria should rely more on pragmatic considerations such as the cost of access and operation (and in turn, its cost-benefit ratio), recognizing clearly that emphasis on serving the poorest and most remote communities is inherently inefficient, resulting in correspondingly high cost to benefit ratios.
5. Time management practices need to be improved to accord greater appreciation of staff time as a critical and limited resource. With increasing emphasis on service interventions, staff costs become by far the largest financial program inputs and merit careful management.
6. SCF should seek to improve program efficiency by expanding transportation availability; by limiting project interventions only to those which meet "critical mass" criteria for size and beneficiary levels; and, by substantially reducing the administrative and reporting burden for the staff through simplification and consolidation of financial and planning reporting requirements.
7. The organizational structure in program communities needs to be redefined in light of the current project portfolio and target groups. Serious consideration is needed as to whether CDC's actually serve current programming needs or whether interventions in women-focused health, social development and credit programs could be better managed through different community structures.
8. An alternative staffing structure should be considered so as to assure greater stability of staff contact with the community. To give each CDC one staff contact on whom it can rely, a system in which a geographically-based promoter concentrates on organizational and educational activities in only 4 communities is recommended. More specialized health and agricultural promoters could handle a larger number (8) of communities on the current bi-weekly basis and provide technical support to the geographically-based promoter.
9. During the remaining LOP, primary attention should be directed to development of impact areas 6 and 7, with no new impact areas open before these areas reach acceptable levels of development. In addition to completely new areas, consideration of working with different communities in current SCF impact areas may be useful.

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10. SCF should inventory program communities in Areas 2, 3, and 4 to determine their sustainability status. During this process, mature communities should be earmarked for phase-over. Adequate staffing levels will be required for communities in phase-over status to assure a smooth transition.

11. SCF should avoid initiating projects with a multi-year life cycle (CENETS, bancos comunales, etc.) and their related information systems in older programming areas targeted for phase-over. These interventions should, rather, be developed in new areas (006 and 007) where the programming future is more assured.

12. Agreements should be negotiated with all due speed with the Ministries of Education and Health to continue to finance SCF's interventions in education and health in communities targeted for phase-over.

13. SCF staff, at all levels, must place greater emphasis on community ownership, cost-sharing and autonomy. A "reinvestment" and "cost-sharing" value needs to be instituted throughout the institution to encourage community participation in financing as proof of the importance communities place in the development intervention.

C) Personnel Recommendations

1. SCF's efforts to decentralize staff selection, starting its staffing searches within the impact area and related department, should be accelerated.

2. As a top priority, SCF needs to assemble a package of incentives and institutional values that create a climate for the recognition and longevity of its workers. The performance appraisal system should be revised to assure that the multiple facets of an employee's contributions are recognized. Housing conditions, especially for women, should be reviewed in order to assure that basic needs for privacy and hygiene are met. Current planning targets should be replaced by an employee-generated quarterly work plan with more ample parameters for innovation. Finally, the rather humiliating practice of publishing quarterly "results" and identifying personnel associated with low target achievement should be discontinued and replaced with a traditional supervisor-employee relationship.

3. SCF's overall staffing and supervisory structure needs to be reviewed to ensure that adequate supervisor-staff ratios exist. Efforts should be made to create a 1:6 or 1:8 ratio, rather than the 1:15 or 1:25 ratio currently in place in most impact area offices.

4. More effort should be directed at increasing the representation of professional women in management and decision-making roles, offering positive role models to junior staff and communities.

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Section 9.0 Evaluation of Impact Area One

A) In view of the tension between the communities affected and the SCF over the failure to complete the aquaduct, SCF should make every effort to complete the reconstruction no later than the end of 1993.

B) While the evaluation team sees no reason for SCF to renew its program in impact area 1, it is recommended that ARCESAD be brought fully into the process of disseminating information about the status of the aquaduct and that it be assisted in organizational consolidation and training to administer to the water line.

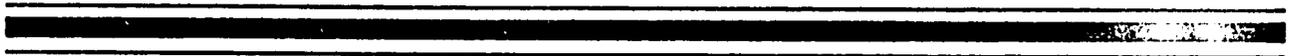
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12. LESSONS LEARNED.

- 1. USAID should have ascertained more closely the relationship between SCF's then current activities and those outlined in the operational program grant proposal with particular attention to the attainability of the goals set forth and SCF's capabilities as measured by the two previous evaluations.**
- 2. Given the lack of quantifiable data noted by both previous evaluations together with the quantitative objectives set forth in OPG III, continued grant support should have been made conditional to SCF's putting in place a satisfactory data collection and analysis system.**
- 3. Projects which propose in relatively short periods of time to effect substantial changes in social and economic behaviour need to be viewed with considerable skepticism. Such changes are difficult and require large amounts of time and effort.**
- 4. Community development is a process of behavioural change and motivation and as such is both difficult to measure and to achieve. SCF's experience does not establish that an integrated, community-oriented approach is as cost-effective in delivering services as a narrowly focused approach, e.g. agricultural practices, health services, education. The consideration is whether furthering democratic processes through development of grass roots organizations warrants the loss of efficiency in social service delivery.**
- 5. In purely economic terms, programs directed at relatively small numbers of people with limited resources in isolated areas are not cost effective in comparison with similar programs directed at large population groups.**

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ANNEXES



ANNEX 1

Program Impact Indicators

Recommendations on types of indicators.

Based on its knowledge of Save the Children's field operations and goals, the evaluation team suggests that the following types of indicators are appropriate as a starting place for staff discussions:

Health/Nutrition Sector

- * % of families using potable water
- * % of families using latrines
- * % of mother breastfeeding exclusively until 6 mos.
- * % of children 1-4 in normal growth curve
- * % of mothers using ORT correctly to treat diarrhea
- * % of children completely vaccinated by 1st birthday
- * % of fertile women using family planning methods
- * % of families disposing garbage adequately

Economic Sector

- * % increase in returns on labor or returns on investment per participant within promoted activity
- * % increase in savings levels per participant
- * % participant capital reinvestment levels
- * % of participants who perceive their income has increased

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- * % increase in yields
- * % reduction in participants using dangerous pesticides
- * % increases in manzanas of land reclaimed

Education

- * # of children graduating per school year
- * # of youth employed following vocational training
- * # of literacy participants performing at grade level following literacy training

Once SCF has reached a clearer institutional understanding of the changes it is trying to achieve and their corresponding indicators, it will be ready to develop information

systems. Until that point, it is likely to continue to experience a relatively poor "fit", in the sense of program design, between its objectives and activities, and to be unable to substantiate the actual magnitude of economic and social impact the program has achieved on targeted beneficiaries.

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ANNEX 2

Program Sustainability

Requirements for Institutional Sustainability.

For an intervention to succeed in achieving organizational sustainability it should be accompanied by the following basic characteristics at the community level:

1. Organization and Management Capability.

- * The presence of a routine, participative election process;
- * The presence of a book of simple acts which reflect the internal agreements and financial regulations of the community;
- * A demonstrated solid leadership structure with problem-solving and decision-making capabilities;
- * A demonstrated capability to organize community efforts, supervise the implementation of projects, and provide followup;
- * The presence of a routinized needs assessment and planning process that combines diverse segments and needs of the community population;
- * The attainment of a recognized legal status is also a desirable element of preparing a community for organizational sustainability as it broadens future opportunities for funding and institutional linkages.

2. Financial Management.

- * The presence of a formal accounting system, including registers, receipts, monthly conciliations and a simple internal auditing process;
- * The presence of at least 2 (and preferably 3) people in the community trained to manage its basic financial operations;
- * The presence of a community revolving fund with sufficient capital, at a minimum, to cover ongoing maintenance and administrative costs;
- * The presence of a community self-financed, income generating mechanism to replenish the revolving fund.

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3. Technical Capability.

- * The presence of a stable, qualified community resource to maintain each ongoing project intervention technically (wells, banks, health outreach program, etc.);
- * Presence of community financing systems (water use fees, etc.) to maintain specific project interventions.

4. Linkages.

- * Demonstrated familiarity with other institutions, including public service providers. Actual experience with these institutions is highly desirable during the phase-over period, if not before;
- * Demonstrated familiarity with supplies for ongoing maintenance and implementation needs.

5. Participation.

- * A significant breadth and diversity of community participation, with particular emphasis on Save the Children's primary focus groups (women and children; see project goals);
- * A significant representation of women in leadership and decision-making roles. (Given that women head over 70% of the households in some areas, a minimum of 50% representation on committee structures would be "significant" and appropriate, with attention to the presence of women in the senior positions of President, Vice President and Treasurer.)

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ANNEX 3

Recommendations

Suggestions for Program Consolidation

Among the existing projects, the evaluation team identified the following possible clusters for further program consolidation:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Primary Health Care | (1) Broaden definition of CENET to "Programa de Salud Integral para el Niño y la Mujer". Consolidate reproductive health, water treatment, latrines and garbage as integrated activity components. |
| 2. Education | (2) Basic Education - Combine kindergartens and primary school, distinguishing grade levels in reporting only.
(3) Literacy
(4) Vocational Schools |
| 3. Agriculture | (5) Combine soil conservation and crop diversification into integrated Agricultural Project.
(6) Combine youth activities in forestation, animal husbandry and sanitation into "youth club" (4H-type) approach. |
| 4. Water Systems and Dams | Treat as specific projects at point of implementation due to costs and needs for specialized technical assistance. |
| 5. Economic Development | See discussion in Section 8.2.1.d. |

Through geographical and programmatic consolidation, Save the Children should attempt to bring its total number of projects down to 50 (from the 1034 listed in this year's PEMs) and make concurrent major adjustments in its finance and planning systems.

Save the Children should take advantage of the redesign opportunity to design any new project interventions in a more systematic and professional manner, to ensure their long term quality and effectiveness. The following steps should be observed:

1. **Needs Analysis of the specific target group, taking into account perceived needs, motivation , environmental, marketing and cultural factors;**
2. **Preliminary Design of Intervention, with careful cost study, exploration of alternatives and development of technologies;**
3. **Pilot Testing and Product Refinement;**
4. **Development of Related Information System;**
5. **Registration of Participants and Implementation.**

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