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55 CHAPEL STREET, NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02160 U.S.A.

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AFRICAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Telephone 617 — 969-7100
Cable Address: ESINC, Newton, U. S. A.
698-0356

Dr. Clifford H. Block
1061 New State Department Building
21st and C Streets
Washington, D. C. 20523

Dear Cliff:

Herewith, as requested, are some immediate comments on the evaluation report of the EDC African Mathematics Program which was prepared, at AID's request, by the NSF Committee on International Co-operation in Mathematics Education. The thoughts which follow are the outcome of only forty-eight hours with the report. In justice to the Program and the evaluation team, it deserves and will receive a much longer period for examination of its conclusions and recommendations.

We are, of course, very happy that the evaluation team was able to report so favourably on items one through seven listed on pages two and three. We are also in general agreement with the suggestions, one through eight, for the next phase of the program, which are summarized on pages nineteen and twenty. We are not certain, however, that the means proposed, are the best methods of operating.

There are three items on which specific comment may be helpful:

- (a) Book Distribution
- (b) The Termination of Research Funding for the Program
- (c) EDC/AID view of the program and the involvement of Africans in the curriculum development process.

(a) Book Distribution: 426,000 volumes have been despatched to Africa in the eight years. During this period there have been three major dock strikes in the United States and one in the United Kingdom; minor dock strikes in Africa and a composers strike in Chicago. Only one country, Tanzania, has complained to the Program about delays in the receipt of texts. There have been a few complaints from individual headmasters.

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Some of the countries have expressed appreciation of the speed of despatch of texts. However, it is understandable that headmasters have become concerned as they see a new term approaching and the new text has not arrived. Usually it did arrive in time for class use, but not in time to prevent this concern. .

A decision of 1962 was mainly responsible for book distribution worries. Responding to a very strong African demand at the 1962 workshop, the organizers promised to have the Standard One and Form One texts written at the workshop, in the schools four months later. Each year thereafter, there was tremendous pressure to meet the needs of these first classes as they passed through the schools. Usually the books had to be sent by air freight, but sometimes they did not arrive until a few days before the beginning of term. Sometimes Xeroxed copies of manuscripts were sent to tide things over.

Unfortunately, but again under tremendous pressure, a similar decision was made with the C One Secondary texts. The Tanzanians and one school in Uganda insisted on starting the use of the series immediately. Later, problems arose from the surrender to these demands.

There has been no difficulty in Kenya. Book distribution has not been a problem there or in Uganda - except for the one school mentioned.

(b) The Termination of Research Funding: The AMP has no feeling that the partnership in the participating countries has broken down - nor have contacts in 1968 or 1969 suggested that the countries consider the relationship changed. This difference in view may arise from the fact that the people talked to by the evaluation team were not always the people with whom AMP has had most contact concerning the overall strategy of the program. In 1965 through 1969 the officers of the African Ministries have sat down with people from the program and discussed long term plans beyond the experimental stage of the program. In 1968 and in 1969, on a partnership basis, the Program helped the African ministries to draft proposals requesting continuing assistance. Discussions have never been based on a cessation of funding, but rather on approaches to obtain funds from a different USAID source.

It was at this stage frustration crept in. In the first place, the Ministries appeared to be unaccustomed to preparing proposals of this type. Secondly, in some countries such proposals had to pass through non-education channels before they could be presented. Lastly, in some cases, the USAID local officials were unable to respond positively to tentative inquiries for assistance.

A timetable of events may be of help:

- (1) In 1967 the decision to end funding through the Research Division of USAID/Washington.
- (2) In 1967/68 the preparation and despatch of USAID/Washington airgram XA2889 dated 4/10/68 to all local missions asking the missions to look favourably on Ministry requests for assistance in countries with mathematics curricula development.
- (3) In 1968/69, the uncertainty within USAID - local missions and Washington - concerning the operation of regional programs.
- (4) In 1968/69, because of this uncertainty the inability of local missions to respond to or encourage requests for bilateral help.

The Program itself has not known how to deal with the new funding situation. It is not surprising if some of the countries felt that USAID had cast them adrift.

On the other hand, it is extraordinary that the country which has been most vocal in this situation, Tanzania, has not, as far as we know, made any direct request for assistance to its local mission. We understand that the mission is in a position to give help.

(c) The EDC/AID view of the Program and the involvement of African Curriculum Development: As the Program developed its mode of operation in 1962 and 1963 it became more aware of the importance to Africa of its mission. By 1964 there was not only a conviction about the need for the Program, but also a confidence that the purpose of the Program could be achieved. These purposes were very similar to the desirable purposes outlined by the evaluation team. It is possible that EDC's view of the program was not the same as that of USAID. It is certainly true that as the program developed the African views of the purposes of the Program were not only different from that of EDC and USAID but sometimes were different from country to country and, even within a country, the purpose of the primary programs could be different from that of the secondary or teacher education situations.

The evaluation team's comment about confusion in EDC and probably USAID, concerning the ultimate objective of the program was probably occasioned by observation of some of AMP's attempts to reconcile these different views with its own ultimate objective.

This objective was to help Africans to acquire experience in curriculum development in school mathematics. The objective was to be achieved by working with Africans to develop a curriculum and materials in modern mathematics which could be tried out under African supervision

with African teachers, with African children in African schools. This curriculum and the materials would be under immediate scrutiny to decide on suitability, and long term scrutiny to decide on the overall value of the curriculum. As part of the program, testing and evaluative instruments would be created to assist in the comparative and objective evaluation of the materials. Africans would be involved in the creation and application of these instruments.

Initially, therefore, evaluation was based on subjective reports of teachers using the materials and reports of supervisors who worked with the teachers. This evaluation gave the Program immediate feedback on the teachability of the materials. As a result of this feedback three major revisions were undertaken: Primary One text; Basic Concepts Texts One and Two; and the new approach for the Secondary C program rather than a simple adaptation of the Five Year Program.

On the longer term, as testing instruments became available through the Testing Writing Group, it was intended to acquire a knowledge of the depth of understanding acquired in the concepts being dealt with and of the comparative strength of the Program against traditional and other new texts.

At a later date it was felt desirable that an interviewing type of feedback should supplement the testing information. Thus, it was the intention of the Program working with its African participants to try to make available hard data on which decisions for revisions and adaptations could be made. In the projection of the program made in 1965 it was planned to collect data and in 1970/71 to make overall suggestions for revisions. The plan to obtain interviewing feedback was contained in the Dilworth Plan discussed in 1966. This came to naught as special funds were needed and at that time USAID was considering engaging AIR (Pittsburgh) to undertake a rather different but associated evaluation of the Program.

The long term plans for evaluation had to be abandoned with the decision to cut off research funding in December 1968.

In keeping with the above ultimate objective, the Program has consistently worked to give the African participants experience in writing and in test construction and application. This has been a long term training process. However, from 1965 onwards Africans have been chairmen of the Secondary Writing Group and of sub-groups of the Primary Writing Group. Africans have always participated in the work of the Testing Group. An African was chairman for four years and Mr. Kazembe, Mrs. Tagoe and Mr. Modu have all been involved in applying the tests developed by the group.

The success in training African participants in the writing of texts is partially attested by the following list:

Mr. Dyak Harding	Joint Author Sierra Leone Arithmetic Series (traditional)
Mrs. Lucy Tagoe	Adapted Ghana Primary Series (modern)
Mr. T. Armar	Joint Author Ghana Primary Series (traditional) Publisher's representative
Dr. O. Ukeje	Author Primary Text Nigeria (modern)
Mr. J. Oyalese	Author Primary Text Nigeria (modern)
Ato Y. Mankir	Supervisor Ethiopian Secondary Text
Mrs. Maina	Joint Author Kenya Primary Series (modern)
Mr. Okello	Author Primary Series Uganda (modern)
Mr. Mwajambe	Supervisor Swahili Mathematics Text Tanzania (modern)
Mr. Mizambwe	Publisher's representative East Africa
Mr. Kazembe	Nominated Joint Author Malawi Primary Series (Not yet Published)
Dr. Setidisho	Author Zambian Mathematics Series (modern)

I should add that some of the participants of the AMP feel that these adaptations should not have been undertaken so soon as the evaluation material to indicate areas for revision have not yet been fully developed. Moreover, in most cases, the adaptations have needed the supervision of a mathematician. This has not been given. The African teachers, however, and the African Ministries are impatient for the new texts and seem to be unwilling to await the research findings of the Program.

I trust the foregoing will add to the report and help to put it in perspective. At some later date, after more thorough consideration, I should like to have a further opportunity to comment on the details,

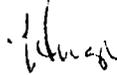
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suggestions and proposals contained in the report. Perhaps a meeting can be planned where these matters can be discussed.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh P. Bradley
Director
African Mathematics Program

HPB:ss

cc: Dr. Faulhaber