REVIEW OF PROJECT PAPER:
IN-COUNTRY INFO KEY TARGET POPULATIONS

A Report Prepared By:
GERALD HURSH-CESAR, Ph.D.

During the Period:
JULY 9 - 13, 1979

Under the Auspices of the:
AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Supported By the:
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF POPULATION, AID/pha/c-1203

AUTHORIZATION:
Ltr. POP/FPS: 1-26-79
Assign, No.: 1100-126

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		ii
I.	Background	1
II.	Project Planning	1
III.	Project Purpose	2
IV.	IEC Audiences	3
V.	Allocation of Funds	5
VI.	Cost-Effectiveness	6
VII.	Barriers to Communication	6
VIII.	End of Project Status	7
IX.	Economic Feasibility	8
X.	Social Analysis/Beneficiaries	9
XI.	Technical Feasibility	9
XII.	Administrative Feasibility	10
XIII.	FY 1979-83 Budget	11
XIV.	Evaluation Plan	12
XV.	Management and Evaluation	13
XVI.	Related Points	14
	A. VLW	15
	B. Sampling	15
	C. Training	16
XVII.	Summary: Recommendations for the RFP	16
XVIII.	Follow-On	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This is a review of the 26 June 1979 Project Paper: "In-Country Info Key Target Populations," including relevant sections of the 30 March 1979 memo: "Strengthening Goal V (IEC) Strategy."

2. The rationale of the project is excellent. There are many elements of superior project design in developing country-specific IEC projects based on in-country research, local capabilities, and cross-national experiences.

3. USAID Population Officers are likely to want clarification of the project's purpose. End of Project Status (EOPS) indicators restrict the project to the production of outputs -- creating and disseminating IEC materials. However, the PP and the Memo imply that audience outcomes are the objective changes in people's information, attitudes, behavior.

4. The target IEC audience of reproducers is likely to be about 60% of couples. In such a large, diverse population, important subgroup differences may require different IEC channels and appeals.

5. Population Officers are likely to have difficulty using the rules of thumb that (a) one-half of IEC funds be spent on reaching reproducers; and (b) integrated programming should be funded to the level of FP content.

6. The present definition of cost-effectiveness is a measure of efficiency, not effectiveness.

7. Distinction of communication barriers might be more clear if related to the programming process -- e.g., governance, delivery, adoption.

8. Many Population Officers may want to rewrite the End of Project Status indicators to include outcome measures of changes in individuals, institutions, sites, communities, programs, sponsors.

9. The ratio of audience-to-dollars may not be convincing justification of the project's economic feasibility.

10. The social analysis/beneficiaries justication rests on implied cause-and-effect measurement which does not appear to be a part of the project's purpose.

11. Examining each country's overall communication system is invaluable technical and informational assistance to Population Officers, in-country officials, and contractors.

12. The plan to provide different services through different contractors is well-conceived. AID needs a tight management/monitoring system to coordinate services, to ensure technology transfer, and to capture information for cross-cultural adaptation.

13. Budget allocations should be shifted to reflect greater proportions of project activities in the earlier and middle years of the project.

14. Routine/intensive evaluations should be dynamic -- done at comparable times in the life of each country's project. Project monitoring/administrative reporting can achieve the objectives of static evaluation done at the midpoint and end of the overall project.

15. A project management team should be formed. It should include an independent evaluation/monitoring contractor, selected by a separate RFP. The contractor should contribute to the RFP for selecting implementation contractors

16. Related points: Population Officers may reject rules of thumb in the "Goal V" Memo for sampling and for training.

17. Summary: Criteria used in judging technical responses to the implementation RFP should include contractors' views of in-country and cross-national communication systems, evaluation, monitoring, project phasing, management, decision criteria, institutional capabilities, quality control, and adaptation processes.

18. Follow-on: An evaluation plan should be designed now in advance of and as a basis for letting RFPs for evaluation and for implementation; and as a basis for AID to design its cross-national management and information system.

I. Background

This is a review of the 26 June 1979 (DS/POP) Project Paper: "In-Country Info Key Target Populations," proposed for undertaking as a centrally funded project during FY 1979-84. The review includes comments on relevant sections of the 30 March 1979 memo: "Strengthening Goal V (IEC) Strategy."

This review, under the contract auspices of APHA (AID/pha/c-1100), is a follow-on to the recent APHA evaluation of the "Population Field Information Services Project," (PIP-2). Although the present project is not a continuation of PIP-2 their similarities are many.

Comments in the following pages are shown by the document to which they refer. The Project Paper is abbreviated "PP" and the Goal V memo is designated "MEMO". Thus "PP-page 6" refers to page 6 of the Project Paper.

II. Project Planning

As reflected in the 30 March 1979 memo and the Project Paper (PP), the rationale of the project is excellent:

- culture-specific IEC campaigns as opposed to global prototypes.
- method-specific information as opposed to generalized exhortation.
- indigenous design and production of materials, and supplemental use of "in" and "out" consultants as needed.
- strengthening local institutional capability.
- use of existing research/experience and information exchange as a basis for project planning and adaptation.
- emphasis on new baseline research and pretesting as a basis for culture-specific adaptation.
- focus on village-level worker (VLW) and users as principal IEC targets.
- recognition of different and reinforcing media functions and intentions to exploit them in the best media mix per situation.
- plans to focus on different audiences and to provide different types of technical assistance as dictated by the maturity and needs of each country's FP program.
- plans to identify the needs and communication barriers peculiar to each audience and to each cultural situation as a first step to planning communication strategies.
- intention to integrate FP with other developmental activities where and as the situation warrants.

III. Project Purpose (PP-pages 1-2, 5-6, 11)

It's interesting to note on PP-page 5 the incomplete communication paradigm that ends with "etc.": "a communication plan of action (is) what to say, to whom to say it, through which changes, when and how often, etc." The complete paradigm replaces "etc." with "and with what effects."

Has this project swung away from effects measurement? Various allusions are made to "routine" and "intensive" evaluation, but End Of Project Status (EOPS) indicators and project descriptions clearly restrict the project to production of outputs.

Limiting the project purpose to creating and disseminating IEC materials is a disappointment after reading the MEMO's more ambitious descriptions of intended IEC effects on audience information, attitudes, and behavior. The project's rationale is behavioral change; but its execution is material production.

I don't think a five-year project has to be so modest (or so safe) as to remain at the level of producing outputs. Five years should be in many settings a sufficient time for producing and measuring real changes (outcomes) in audience behavior.

Restricting and IEC project to outputs is legitimate, but short-sighted. Projects don't have to have behavioral audience changes as their objectives, but the PP implies that audience changes are the objective here. Throughout the text references are made to outcomes that are to be attributable to project outputs. For example:

- page 2 -- "to reach and inform such target audiences as fertile couples..." (informational change).
- page 2 -- "to counter remaining communication barriers" (attitudinal change).
- page 2 -- "so that (couples) know where the services are available,... and also what methods of contraception are available..." (informational change).
- page 3 -- "dispel whatever fears or misgivings (people have) about the use of these methods" (attitudinal change).
- page 6 -- "The project would endeavor to strengthen the societal legitimization of family planning..." (attitudinal and behavior change).
- page 6 -- "in the most cost-effective manner possible" (effectiveness measurement).

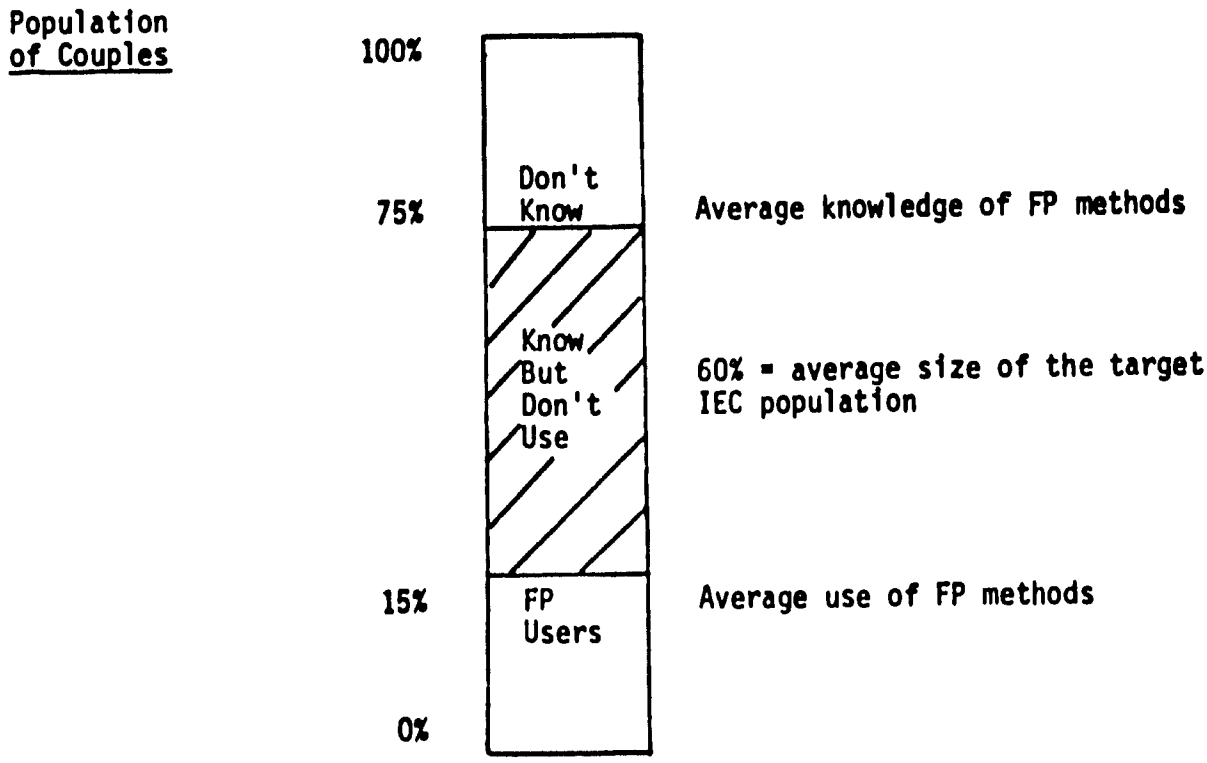
Other references scattered throughout the pages mention "promoting acceptance," getting "quick results at reasonable costs," "overcoming the most serious communication barriers," and so on.

USAID population officers are likely to be concerned about the ambiguity of the project's purpose. Either the "logical framework" of the project has to be rewritten to make behavioral change the purpose of the project or the project has to drop allusions to increased audience understanding and acceptance, elimination of IEC barriers, and improved cost-effectiveness.

If, as stated on PP-page 7, the "Project Purpose" is to create materials "for promoting understanding of the benefits of small families and of the local availability and effectiveness of contraception. ..." the End Of Project Status has to include indicators of increased knowledge, more favorable attitudes, and improved practices among the target audience.

IV. IEC Audiences (PP-pages 1-2, 7; MEMO-page 4, 10-11, 13-14)

The project makes good distinctions of IEC audiences. It plans to focus on those who know but who don't practice family planning. This is neither a numerically small nor culturally homogeneous group. According to the World Fertility Survey (PP-page 13), couples' knowledge of FP methods ranges from about 60% to 90% (average = 75%) in different countries; and use ranges from 10% to 20% (average = 15%). In a "typical" country, this is a sizable population of fertile couples -- perhaps 60% of such couples:



Even ignoring "on-coming reproducers," the IEC target audience is enormous and diverse. The specification of subgroups within this audience should be an important objective of the research undertaken before/during/after USAID assistance to the project.

Subgroup distinctions should be laid out early in project thinking as a specific objective to be met. Some people are never going to use FP methods regardless of readily available information and services; and others will expend great energy to get access to FP information and services. There are groups in between who are marginally disposed in one direction or another. As noted in Memo-page 14, there are important differences among these subgroups. These differences should be identified through research. Exploitation of the differences should become a deliberate, formal part of IEC strategy planning, because different types and channels of communication may be required for each subgroup. Suppose there are five subgroups in the 60% population of couples who know but don't use FP methods:

PEOPLE WHO KNOW BUT DON'T USE FP METHODS

Core Negative	Marginally Negative	Unstructured/ Indeterminable	Marginally Positive	Core Positive

If such subgroups could be identified, within the "60-percent" target audience, different IEC strategies might be needed. For example:

Subgroup	IEC Strategy
1. Core positive	• Information only and reasonable opportunity to act; mass and other impersonal media
2. Marginally positive	• Information, mild exhortation, visible/available services; VLW contact
3. Unstructured/neutral	• Basic education, motivation, and demonstration to convince; local contact essential
4. Marginally negative	• Exhortation; informal channels, peer groups and local leaders essential
5. Core negative	• No direct effort except to counter rumors which this group would feed.

The above are only suggestive. The obvious point is that informational/behavioral characteristics are not the only important audience distinctions. Attitudinal/cultural/experiential characteristics are important as well. In this case, subgroups may be different in terms of the degree to which their FP attitudes are structured, intense, directly experienced.

The Project Paper (pages 1-2) makes the point that FP information has to be "culturally acceptable". The above are quite possibly the kinds of "target groups" that have to be profiled by the project and within which different kinds of barriers to FP communication may exist. Cultural acceptability may vary locally by subgroups, not just by major tribal groupings or geographic regions.

V. Allocation of Funds (PP-page 7; MEMO-pages 9, 11)

It may be difficult for Mission Population Officers to implement two funding rules of thumb given in the present papers.

The first rule is that more than one-half of all IEC project funds should be spent in reaching the primary target group of sexually active couples of reproductive ages. While it's easy enough to allocate 50% of funds as directed, what's the logic? It can't be numbers of people involved. It can't be according to some formula of the type of decision involved (e.g., we can't "compare" the decisions of policy makers vs. reproducers).

Fixing a budget ceiling (or floor) in advance of detailing the problem in each country contradicts the logic of the PP and MEMO which make an excellent case for country-specific/culture-specific programming. Won't Population Officers resist a fixed allocation in advance of knowing the dimensions of the problem (e.g., the size of each target population, the costs of reaching each, the most effective media for each, the kinds of messages required to motivate each, their geographic dispersion, availability and cost of local production resources, etc.)?

A fixed ceiling in advance of studying the problem says, in effect, that we already know its dimensions -- its size, the significant number and types of variables, their relationships, and even likely solutions.

AID policy-makers can quite reasonably designate funding categories as they see fit. But, however measured, what if reaching reproducers is not "more than one-half" of the IEC problem in a given country according to the judgments of the USAID mission?

The second rule relates to FP allocations (MEMO-page 9) to integrated programming. Here, the Population Officer needs guidelines for determining the "amount of population content the program contains." By what formula (and according to which international donor or government ministry) is this determination made? In a non-formal education program involving nutrition and maternal-child care how does the Population Officer measure whether there is a "20 percent family planning component" either administratively, financially, or effectively? Who, in advance of the IEC program, can really answer the question about whether the "population program gets a proportionate return" from integrated programming? I don't have specific recommendations here because I'm not familiar with the funding rationale.

VI. Cost-Effectiveness (PP-page 8; MEMO-page 12)

Without evaluation of outcomes (behavioral changes), the project is limited to knowing cost-effectiveness as a ratio of outputs-to-inputs -- i.e., some measure of delivery efficiency not effectiveness, in term of impact.

The specific definition of cost effectiveness here is the "cost of promoting acceptance by one couple." The IEC cost of promotion is an efficiency measure; the IEC cost of acceptance is an effectiveness measure. The measure is not useful (at least not as direct measurement) for audiences other than couples.

The PP should clarify whether the project intends or not to evaluate effects and effectiveness. The "Project Purpose" (PP-page 6) states: "The purpose ... is to create and disseminate information ... for promoting understanding ..." This may be interpreted as different from accepting the burden of achieving understanding.

VII. Barriers to Communication (PP-pages 9-10; MEMO-pages 16-17)

Frequent mention is made of reducing or eliminating barriers to IEC. Five types of barriers are noted. One barrier is a problem of leadership. The others are all interrelated obstacles directly related to use of FP methods. Unless defined substantively, it is difficult to see the difference between "barriers to use" of methods vs. "barriers that motivate against the adoption" of methods vs. "cultural taboos/practices that impede adoption" of methods.

Distinctions of barriers might be clearer if made relevant to the programming process; for example:

Barriers of governance

- policy -- problems of unclear objectives, unrealistic schedules, imprecise targets, weak mandates
- leadership -- anti-FP positions, lack of policymakers' information, inability to marshall support or formulate policy
- institutions -- problems of jurisdictions, unclear relationships, poor communication, duplicative programming
- resources -- inadequate funding, inability to get loans, lack of trained administrators

Barriers of delivery

- staff -- problems of training, motivation, competence, numbers, activity of staff
- facilities -- problems of suitability, maintenance, access, adequacy of physical plant/facilities

- services -- problems of inapplicability, availability, supplies and equipment, logistical distribution and coverage, inequity, transportation, resupply

- support -- problems of inadequate information, media coverage, frequency, timing and coordination with programming

Barriers involving adoption

- knowledge -- informational adequacy, accuracy, cultural suitability, comprehension, style, message content

- traditions -- problems of cultural taboos, values, beliefs, traditions, customs, religious practices

- experience -- problems involving previous use, bad experiences, personal problems, previous programs

- leaders -- presence/absence of strong leadership, local leaders involvement, use of power and sanction, promotion of FP goals, provision of role models

- structure -- presence/absence of conflict, factions, conducive institutional forces, community groups, other peer pressure

The above are only top-of-mind and suggestive. As noted on PP-page 10, and inventory of barriers is necessary for each FP program. But barriers should be clarified both for the purpose of planning programs and for evaluation of the effectiveness of IEC efforts to overcome obstacles to communication.

VIII. End of Project Status (PP-page 11)

As noted above, many Population Officers may want to rewrite the project's "logical framework" to include outcomes as the project purpose. The End of Project Status (EOPS) should be restated by quantity, quality, time, and cost indicators of changes in people, communities, institutions, and programs. For example:

- Individual changes: These are improvements in people's (1) knowledge, awareness, information; (2) attitudes, feelings, beliefs, motivations; (3) actions, behaviors, practices; (4) socio-economic conditions and standards; and (5) such physical states as health, mortality, fertility. The individual or the family is the usual unit of study.

- Institutional changes: These are changes in such social and political organizations as local self-help groups, women's clubs, village councils, cooperatives and other formal organizations. There may be changes as well from informal peer groups -- e.g., applying pressure on couples to adopt. Institutional changes may range from the creation of new groups to the adoption of new FP philosophy or techniques by existing groups. Changes are measured as changes in organizational policy, operations, resources, management, and technology.

- Site changes: When the site is the unit of analysis, there might be physical changes in the community as the result of FP programming that are of particular interest as indicators of project effectiveness -- for example, the construction of a new FP clinic, the clearing of an outdoor area for viewing movies. If FP is integrated with other programs, there are likely to be significant changes during the programming period that are due to different aspects of production, delivery, and installation e.g., new structures, cleared land, approach roads, toilets, portable water, power, sewers, new crops, gardens.

- Community changes: In addition to physical-site changes, there may be important longer-term socio-economic changes occuring throughout the community as an indirect result of FP programming -- community-wide improvements in mortality/morbidity, quality of life, crime rates, employment, educational opportunities, nutritional status, crop yields per acre, and so on.

- Program changes: Important changes are required in the various administrative and implementing tiers of government to assure successful FP programming. For example, government-wide changes may occur in policy objectives, budgets and allocations of resources, policy makers' utterances, program designs, project replications, long-term financing policies, target populations, and other changes reflecting a government's shift to increasing programs for providing FP education, motivation, and service to urban and rural populations.

- Donor agency changes: In addition to changes produced in Host Country governments, it is important as well to measure changes in donor agencies as a result of involvement in FP (and other developmental) programming. As a result of new experiences in cross-cultural programming, AID and other agencies often experience improvements in policies, programming objectives, resource allocations, evaluation methodologies, and the like.

These are only examples of the kinds of outcome measures that may be important to consider in further designing of the present project.

IX. Economic Feasibility (PP-pages 13-16)

The summary point that project cost is "minimal" probably will require additional justification. The large size of the population and problem to be addressed does not make project costs minimal, unless we are implying some per-capita calculation -- e g., cost per potential target audience member. But, if the ratio of audience-to-dollars is the justification, critics might argue that project funding is such a mere drop in the bucket that efforts spread over 30 to 50 countries will invariably be wasted. In the absolute sense, then, the cost may be considered maximal.

Size of potential audience to be addressed per dollar expended is not an argument for feasibility -- particulary in light of the comment on page 14 that earlier FP efforts have found "vast numbers of well-informed, favorably inclined persons who were failing to use the methods available to them." Rather, it's an argument for urgency: the need to do something about an awesome problem.

A second, related point is that since the project's purpose (page 6) is not concerned with program outcomes (only outputs), many of the arguements used for economic feasibility don't apply, unless we are willing to assume without measurement a direct relationship between the IEC outputs of this project and reduction in fertility rates.

X. Social Analysis/Beneficiaries (PP-page 17)

As this project is described, its justification is an assumed correlation between combining FP service and information and reducing fertility rates. However, the project is not designed to measure cause-and-effect relationships between IEC technical assistance and reductions in fertility rates, nor is it designed to measure IEC effectiveness in eliminating barriers to FP programming.

Either the Logical Framework must be rewritten as suggested above or justifications for the project have to changed to avoid implying potential audience impact unless actually measured.

XI. Technical Feasibility (PP-pages 17-18)

This is an excellent point about examining the entire communication complex. It can help Population Officers considerably if the project assists them in detailing the communication system particular to any culture. This is important because it can help Mission officers and in-country FP officials to share understanding and agreements on the important components of the IEC System they are assisting, and help them to agree on the criteria for evaluating project performance.

Detailing the specific IEC parts and their relationships within each country's family planning system should be a mandatory first step in providing technical assistance under this project. The plan should be carried out in a standardized (comparable) format across all countries. In the process of providing technical assistance, these advantages accrue:

- Identifying the parts and relationships of each system ensures that no important features are overlooked -- all relevant ingredients are included in IEC planning.
- Mission officers and FP officials agree and understand on the important components of the FP and IEC system. These components can be compared across countries.
- It provides a systematic and comparable inventory of system needs; supplies, training, vehicles; as well as of system capabilities: indigenous creative talent, advertising agencies, film production.

- Identifying the parts and relationships of each system sets up the evaluation plan with a comparable structure and country-specific indicators, audiences, intended effects, IEC strategies.

- Collecting detail on all countries IEC peculiarities is the basis for creating a fund of cross-cultural programming information that will now and in the future be important for cultural adaptations of technical assistance.

- Detailing the elements of each country's IEC system according to a standardized format of comparable categories will improve the usefulness of information exchanged and adapted among country projects.

It would be regretful if the project loses the "memory" of the cross-cultural information it intends to collect. With a little more time, expense, and activity than already planned for the project, a cross-cultural IEC information system could be one of the most significant products of the project. Most important is the start-up time required early in the project to design, test, redesign, and adapt the cross-country system to use in the field. The contractors' plans for retrieving and using information for adaptive programming should be an important criterion for judging the technical proposals in response to the RFP.

XII. Administrative Feasibility (PP-pages 19-20)

The plan for different contractors to provide different kinds of services and area expertise is well-conceived. However, with different contractors, different countries, and different IEC assistance modes, it will be difficult to control the project -- to ensure that each activity contributes to specific, known objectives. The special needs and circumstances of each country as they dictate the kinds of technical assistance provided cannot be lost. It is imperative that an information system captures these important facts. Such facts will become a significant basis for future programming.

But beyond the need for an information system, AID needs a tight management/monitoring system to coordinate the provision of IEC services to each country. While any individual contractor will have special expertise in a given area (e.g., surveys, pretesting, design, film production), only DS/POP has the full perspective of an overall management plan and objectives. Without constraining the contractors' ingenuity and flexibility, AID cannot afford to let the program slip out of hand. Contractors must not unilaterally make in-field decisions about which services to provide. Such decisions must be reviewed by a management team. The review does not have to be lengthy or complicated, but it should be done. Moreover, AID cannot afford to let contractors develop individually stylized IEC services and retain those services as uniquely theirs. More than just becoming part of the public domain, such services must become part of the repertoire of AID/USAID technical assistance. At least through availability, the services are a U.S. government capability, not an individual contractor's. As such, the capabilities are technologies that systematically and emphatically must become part

of the in-country institutional capability of each affected. Rather than "should be", this project must engage in "must be" institution-building. Contractors' specific, concrete plans for technology transfer should be an important criterion for judging RFP responses.

XIII. FY 1979-83 Budget (PP-pages 22-26)

The "Implementation Plan" on page 26 shows the activities of each year. Three-year programming for the first group of 12 countries spans years 1-3; the second group spans 2-4; the third group spans 3-5. For each group, no activities are shown after the three-year period of implementation. The fourth year onward is the post-project period of minimum USAID involvement in program maintenance and evaluation. Commitments shift now to host-country governments.

The budgets on pages 23 and 24 show the largest allocation of funds in the final year of the project. Funds build steadily from year one -- $1.4 million to $1.5 - $2.3 - $2.3 to $3.8 million. But only the third group of 12 countries are active USAID concerns in the final year, in addition to evaluation activities.

If my interpretation of implementation activities is correct, the budget should be recast putting more resources into preparatory and start-up implementation phases and less into maintenance in the later years.

Specific recommendations are:

Total Budget:

- Most money should be committed in the project's third year because all 36 countries (projects) are active in this year and intensive evaluation is supposed to be carried out in the first half of year three.

Staffing/Direct Costs:

- More money for consultants is needed in the earlier than later years particularly for needs assessment, inventory of advertising/production capabilities, design and materials production, program and evaluation planning.

- Similarly, the need for core personnel should be greater in the middle years (when the three sets of 12 countries overlap) than in the final year.

- The budgets for travel communication, duplication, rentals etc. should reflect the shift in funds to earlier years.

Sub-Contracts:

- Marketing and opinion surveys (#1) are more important in the earlier than later phases of the project for needs assessment, identification of barriers, and other baseline data.

- Message design/production (#2) is an earlier not later activity, and is partially the basis for implementing later campaigns for small-family norms (#3) and community-based distribution. (#4)

- Material exchange and cultural adaptation (#5) is a partial basis for message design/production (#2). This should be an immediate investment of contractor activity in the first year of the project -- once the first set of countries is known.

- Material pretesting/adaptation should be separated from evaluation (#6). Based in part on material exchange (#5), pretesting/adaption is partial basis for message design/production (#2). Intensive evaluations are scheduled for years three and five, by which time most pretesting activities should be finished.

XIV. Evaluation Plan (PP-pages 26-27)

Intensive evaluations scheduled for the third and fifth years of the projec will be useful for administrative review, but not for comparisions across the three groups of 12 countries (36 projects). Each of the three groups is at a noncomparable stage of implementation in years three and five of the overall project, except in the broadest terms. As such, the same kinds of evaluation measurements will not apply to all. Instead, findings will be comparable only for the 12 countries in each group - presuming the 12 have similar projects.

The schematic on page 26 shows that in the third year the first set of 12 countries is concluding USAID-assisted implementation; the second group is halfway; and the third is just beginning. Comparable data cannot be aggregated across groups. Similarly, the final evaluation occurs during third-group implementation, six months after the second group; and 18 months after the first group has concluded USAID-assisted activities.

If done as planned, any set of specific measures will strictly apply to 12 countries, not 24 (two groups) or 36 (three groups). But it's not necessary to lose comparability. Data can be made comparable and more useful if, because of the staggered schedule of implementation, intensive evaluations are scheduled to be coincidental with comparable points in the implementation of each of the thre groups of countries, not coincidental with the midpoint and termination of the overall project.

The purpose of the first intensive evaluation is to indicate midcourse corrections. The purpose of the second evaluation is to indicate whether and how to continue the project. For either purpose, the only conclusive data is going to be from the first group of 12 countries and from on-going monitoring. This weakens the case for static-time evaluations for the overall project and suggests that the purpose of the evaluations be reconsidered.

As for static-time evaluation: the type of decisions needed for the overall (36 country) project can be adequately served by thorough, systematic monitoring and administrative reporting. Think analogously of an automobile assembly line. A point-in-time evaluation throughout the plant tells how well the assembly line (overall project) is working but cannot tell whether each automobile (individual projects) planned to be assembled will in fact work. Some autos are already on the road, some are half-complete, and some are not yet started.

As for the purpose of evaluation: the purpose should be dynamic. Evaluations should be done at comparable times in the life of each project. Early data-gathering should establish baselines prior to implementation; an interim sampling can provide mid-point corrections for each project; and an after-project evaluation can indicate project impact and whether and how to continue in that particular culture and situation.

XV. Management and Evaluation (PP-page 27)

Evaluation and monitoring should be built into project planning right now. AID requirements from on-going project monitoring and from two forms of routine and intensive evaluation should become an active part of project development.

Two decisions must be made now, in advance of writing the RFP. First, a management team should be written into the project. It would comprise representatives of DS/POP, USAID missions, implementation contractor(s), and evaluation/monitoring contractor. That is, a separate contractor independent of the implementation contractor(s) should be selected to take prime responsibility for all aspects of project monitoring and evaluation in the field. The contractor will complement USAID-AID monitoring, not replace it.

Second, it should be decided to let an RFP for the evaluation contractor before the RFP for implementation. The evaluation contractor should participate in the writing of the implementation RFP. This recommendation may not be easy of popular. But so much evaluation is done so poorly, so much is wasteful, that the time and expense required now to devise a good evaluation plan prior to and during the start-up phases of implementation can be recouped twice and thrice again over the course of the project.

The sequence of activities would be something like this:

- Hire a consultant(s) now to draft a full evaluation plan -- all indicators, modes of collection, verification, cost estimates, statistics, foreseen problems. The output of this activity is the basis for an Evaluation/Monitoring RFP.

- Let the RFP and select an evaluation contractor on the basis of the contractor's:

  a. response to the requirements of the Evaluation/Monitoring RFP Plan -- and
  b. response to the description of the Implementation Plan --

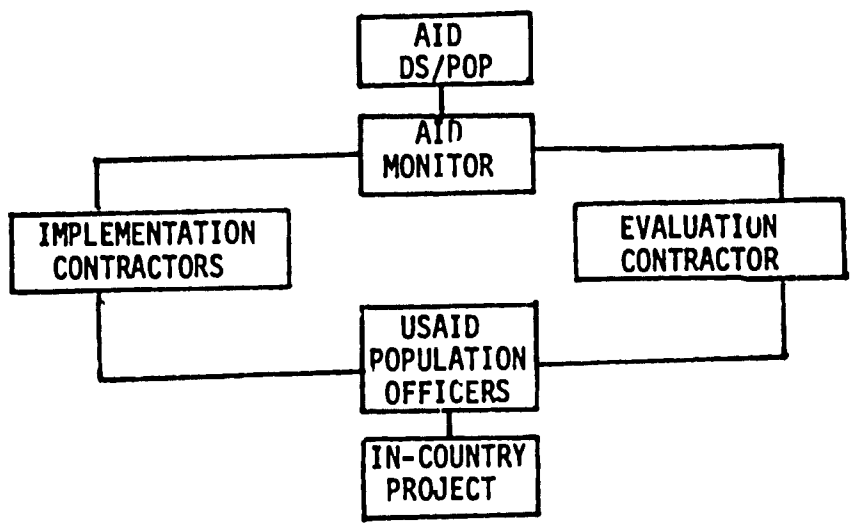
- Involve the Evaluation Contractor in detailing specifications of the Implementation Plan, building into the plan all foreseen requirements for evaluation, as the requirements may vary by country and for the overall project.

- Let the Implementation RFP; select the contractor(s).

- Constitute a project management team with formal and understood lines of communication and command that require Implementation Contractor(s) to build comparable evaluation indicators into each phase of each project and to report project status in comparable terms.

- Require the Evaluation/Monitoring contractor to maintain the integrity and comparability of the on-going information system.

Project management and information-sharing would include these groups:



If DS/POP intends to improve evaluation and knowledge of IEC effects and effectiveness, this project is a superb opportunity for building improvements into the planning of implementation. In construction, the project's "logical framework" is, afterall, the cause-effect logic of evaluation: one set of activities is hypothesized to be a necessary and sufficient precondition to another set. The project should be planned now so that its inputs/outputs/outcomes keep the shape of that logic.

XVI. Related Points

There are a number of points in the MEMO for which Population Officers may require clarification <u>if they bear on the present project</u>. For example:

A. VLW (MEMO-pages 13-41)

The description of "almost wholly ineffective and wasteful" village-level worker (VLW) programs is severe. It sounds like the whole VLW strategy is weak, but in fact what is being said is that information without service/supplies is pretty ineffectual.

Talking about phasing out USAID support to VLW activities except group work and point-of-service counselling may be an easily misunderstood distinction for some LDC administrators. Certainly, we are not advocating elimination of registration/roster efforts as part of FP programming -- combined, of course, with IEC, services, supplies. This distinction should be made more clearly.

The VLW is reality. He/she is the deliberate choice of many governments to act -- effectually or not -- as the communication-and-service intermediary between reproducers and governments. Arguing that VLW activities are wasteful or overly expensive is often not convincing. First, it has obvious labor-intensive appeal to governments concerned with unemployment and underemployment. Second, there is an a priori logic and goodness to the concept of training multipurpose workers to fulfill paramedical/FP functions integrated into, say, nutrition education programs.

Thus, rather than talking about eliminating VLW activities, we should be talking about ways to improve this vehicle to the villages and supporting it with other IEC activities.

B. Sampling (MEMO-pages 17-18)

Population officers and contract researchers are likely to reject the rule of thumb for sampling.

Sample size depends on many variables -- not the least of which is the type of decision to be made. In developing countries, population heterogeneity is often so extreme even within fairly small geographic areas that separate samples of subgroups are required. It is misleading in such cases to suggest that "As few as 300 cases (150 men and 150 women) ... are sufficient to provide data of sufficient reliability ... if the sample is representative of the intended audience of potential childbearers."

Instead, the project should decide sample sizes after having determined how much risk can be tolerated for decisions, significant population strata, available funds, type of measurements required, number of breakdowns needed for analysis, geographic dispersion, and so on.

Another idea that may be misleading is that an interview schedule exists that can inventory obstacles to reducing fertility rates in "any culture with only minor modifications and translation." Cultural differences may be much more significant than implied here. Careful adoption is in keeping with the project's own logic of situation-specific programming.

C. Training (MEMO-pages 19-20)

Population officers will probably reject a rule of thumb that IEC training should be "not less than one full day (preferably three)."

The time required for training is the amount needed for the individual to master the intended skill. Training IEC personnel in communication skills may require one day to master the huckstering techniques of assembling large crowds; and one month to master the skills required to improvise with local materials in order to fabricate on-the-spot, low-cost communication media.

Since staff motivation and competence are significant barriers to effective FP programs, allocations for IEC training should be restipulated in terms of the training objective: the amount of time required for training should be encouraged to vary as required by the type of skills to be performed.

XVII. Summary: Recommendations for the RFP

As noted, the thinking behind much of this country-specific IEC project is excellent. Some specific needs for clarifications have been found, but the basic design is sound. The two major problems are (1) the need to stipulate the design and indicators of outcome evaluation, and (2) the need to improve project management, comparability, and quality control through the creation of a management team that includes representatives of AID, USAID missions, Implementation Contractor(s), and an additional Evaluation/Monitoring Contractor.

A final concern here is for the criteria to be used in judging contractors' technical implementation proposals in response to the RFP. Some of the elements that should be considered for inclusion in writing the RFP are:

- The contractors' ideas for modeling and detailing the parts and relationships of the overall communication system in each country: it will be important to know how contractors view the practical uses of the model (e.g., for identifying training needs, for specifying message content) in each country's program, and how it is viewed as a means of promoting comparability and adaptation of information across countries.

- The specific evaluation measures and indicators that contractors associate with each phase and activity of the project's implementation: in particular, the quantities, qualities, time, and resources associated with outcome indicators are of great interest -- if outcome evaluation is approved

- The design of the on-going project monitoring system: both administrative reporting in each country and the relationship of individual project monitoring to the overall cross-nation monitoring/evaluation system.

- Project design and phasing: of course, this includes schedules, resource loadings, and the like; but equally important, contractors should be compared for their specifications of the kinds of go/no-go criteria used at each stage of project development as well as for their ideas on the timing and type of government commitments that will be required as criteria for continuing or altering projects.

- Contractors' views of the management team: its functions, responsibilities, lines of communication and command, interrelationships, jurisdictions. In particular it would be useful to compare contractor's ideas for streamlining the review-and-revision process of acting on in-country decisions and recommendations for project activities.

- Contractor's decision criteria: definitions should be required for establishing criteria for decisions about countries in which to work, target audience differentiation, media, messages, communication objectives, distribution channels, diffusion strategies.

- Contractors' vision of the practical problems of assessing and strengthening local institutional capability: in particular, how do they propose to justify and balance the use of "in and out" consultants? How will they measure performance? What experience and ideas do they have in training in IEC techniques as well as in project management and evaluation? What are their specific plans for systematically transferring technologies and capabilities to local institutions?

- Plans for exercising cross-national quality controls of the various activities that are predominantly in the hands of local authorities: assessing institutional capabilities, local IEC competence, local media availabilities and costs, other related resources.

- The adaptation process: how well -- practically and theoretically -- do contractors understand the problems involved in adaptation of information, technologies, and materials from one culture to another; from one cultural sub-grouping to another. There should be no room in this project for participants who view adaptation as mainly a problem of language translation.

XVIII. Follow-On

As noted on pages 20-21 above, an evaluation/monitoring plan should be designed now in advance of and as a basis for other project activities. The plan can be devised without delaying certain in-country features of the project - e.g., Population Officers activities in preserting general project planning and objectives to in-country officials and in initiating local inventories of institutions and production.

A fully detailed evaluation plan is essential to build into project plans in each country, of course. But the immediate, practical gains of devising the plan are to (a) provide the basis for writing separate RFPs for selecting evaluation and implementation contractors; and (b) to give AID and USAID officials a basis for improving their definitions of project management and responsibilities, information requirements for decision making, the nature of the monitoring and reporting system.