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Thirty Month Progress Report  
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FAMILY PLANNING OPERATIONS RESEARCH IN ASIA

Thirty Month Progress Report

(October 1, 1981 - March 31, 1984)

AID CONTRACT No. DPE-0632-00-1029-00

Background

Thirty months of project activity have been completed under the Family Planning Operations Research Project in Asia. Funded by AID and administered by the Population Council, the project is designed to improve the capabilities of Asian researchers to design, implement and disseminate research findings, and to foster operations research studies closely linked to national family planning concerns.

As of March 31, 1984, thirteen operations research studies have been implemented for a total obligation of \$421,167. Another seven studies developed with O.R. staff assistance have been funded by other agencies. One study proposal is under review. Six operations research review and development workshops have been conducted, three in Bangkok for international participants and one each in India, Nepal, and the Philippines. Three technical support workshops also have been held to assist researchers with on-going study implementation problems. In October 1983, the Population Council published the Handbook for Family Planning Operations Research Design. Over 2,200 copies have been distributed worldwide so far including approximately 1,500 in Asia. Project staff have provided technical assistance to individual researchers, institutions, USAID Mission, and national family planning organizations.

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Earlier reports should be consulted for detailed background information. This report concentrates on activities undertaken during the six months period from October 1, 1983, through March 31, 1984. Activities are discussed under the headings:

- I. Research Workshops
- II. Research Awards
- III. Technical Assistance
- IV. Information Dissemination
- V. Completed O.R. Studies

Attached to this report are the following Appendices which provide additional information on these areas:

- APPENDIX A -- Summary Information on Workshops Completed
- APPENDIX B -- List of Funded and Implemented Studies
- APPENDIX C -- Staff Travel

#### I. Research Workshops

During the first two years of the project, activities centered on assisting Asian researchers to identify important research topics and develop these into study proposals. Six proposal development workshops attended by 86 participants focussed on these objectives. Appendix A provides summary information on these workshops.

With the beginning of the third year, project activities shifted to assisting researchers with on-going study implementation problems. In November, Fisher and Stoeckel conducted two intensive technical support workshops, one for the research groups in Khon Kaen (northern Thailand) and the other for the groups in Hat Yai (southern Thailand). Again, at

the end of January, Stoeckel held a two day workshop in Hat Yai while Fisher spent a week in Sri Lanka working with the researchers there who are implementing the IUD O.R. study.

Since each of the research groups is at a different stage in the implementation of their studies, the O.R. staff has purposely kept their technical support workshops somewhat unstructured so that specific field and data analysis problems already encountered or expected can be addressed. Considerable time has been devoted to developing questionnaires, implementing and analyzing pretests, working on coding manuals, planning for data tabulation, and in general, discussing ways to handle unanticipated events such as a husband's insistence on providing responses to questions directed at his wife.

We have found that the technical support workshops provide an excellent opportunity to monitor study progress. At the same time, they provide an opportunity for the O.R. staff to assist the researchers with implementation problems specific to their particular study.

#### 11. Research Awards

In the past six months, two operations research proposals, both from the Philippines, have been approved for funding. A third proposal concerned with a cost effectiveness analysis of the Nepal family planning program is under review. In total, the O.R. project staff have reviewed 79 proposals over a thirty month period. The following table shows the general source of the proposal and the current status.

SOURCE AND CURRENT STATUS OF PROPOSALS  
RECEIVED UNDER THE O.R. IN ASIA PROJECT\*

<u>Source of Proposal</u>		<u>Current Status</u>				TOTAL
		O.R. Project Funded	Other Agency Funded	Under Review	Rejected/ Withdrawn/ Status Un- known	
1.	Developed at International Workshop (Bangkok)	4	3	0	11	18
2.	Developed at In- Country Workshops	0	1	1	26	28
3.	Solicited by O.R. Staff and Developed Through Individual Consultation	7	0	0	0	7
4.	Unsolicited Pro- posals Received and Followed-up by O.R. Staff	2	3	0	21	26
TOTAL		13	7	1	58	79

\* See Appendix B for a list of studies funded

From the standpoint of studies implemented, the Bangkok workshops and direct solicitation by O.R. staff have been the most fruitful. Direct solicitation has involved a process of contacting individuals and institutions known to the staff, explaining the nature of the O.R. project, reviewing possible research ideas, and then assisting individuals with developing a proposal that subsequently can be submitted for formal review. The Bangkok workshops also have involved a similar process of intense staff technical assistance before

the workshop to identify a suitable topic, during the workshop to assist with drafting a proposal, and after the workshop to help with needed revisions. In general, this type of preparatory effort was not possible with the in-country workshops. Participants were selected by host country organizations and the O.R. staff did not have the opportunity to work with them before hand on the selection of a suitable operations research topic. As a result, many participants came to the in-country workshops without having a clear research topic in mind and they left with proposals that usually required substantial further revisions. A somewhat similar problem has occurred with unsolicited proposals. Often the topic of the proposal submitted has not been suitable for funding under the O.R. project, or the researcher withdrew the proposal after an initial review by the O.R. staff suggested major revisions were required.

In our experience, there simply is no reasonable substitute for one-on-one technical assistance in order to move a good idea to a conceptually sound proposal to a funded and implemented study. Well-planned and well-conducted workshops can greatly assist this process, but are not sufficient in themselves to produce strong proposals.

### III. Technical Assistance

In the past six months, O.R. staff have worked closely with the various research groups implementing O.R. studies (See Appendix C for staff travel during the period). In the Philippines, Laing visited Cotabato, Tacloban, and Iloilo to monitor on-going O.R. studies and assist with implementation problems. In Thailand, Stoeckel and Fisher visited Hat Yai and Khon Kaen for the same purpose. They also spent considerable time working with the

research staff from the Population and Community Development Associates who are analyzing the data from the community incentives study. This particular study has a somewhat complex design that has generated a large volume of data from different sources. Before an adequate analysis could be undertaken, the various sources of data has to be matched and merged onto a single file. The consultant services of David Leon were engaged for this purpose. Leon also wrote a series of multiple regression computer programs. While computer hardware, particularly microprocessors, generally are available throughout the region and certainly in Thailand, the lack of suitable software often restricts the ability of researchers to make full use of data sets available to them. In part, this may account for the plethora of descriptive studies in the region and the paucity of more indepth analytic studies. Over the remaining period of the contract, we expect there will be a continuing need for computer programming assistance.

During the six months period, Fisher continued to assist the Family Health Division of the Ministry of Public Health in Thailand with various research issues. In March, he reviewed and commented on 19 proposals submitted to the Division for possible funding under the USAID bi-lateral research assistance program. In Sri Lanka, Fisher spent a week with government officials and researchers at the Family Planning Association who are working on the IUD study. This study has experienced several delays because of civil disturbances on the island. In late October, Stoeckel spent three days in Nepal helping Ram Rizal develop a proposal concerned with a cost effectiveness analysis of family planning service delivery efforts. Fisher made a follow-up visit to Nepal in February to complete the revisions on this proposal before submission to AID/W for review. Fisher also visited Bangladesh at the request of the Director General of

the National Institute for Population Research and Training (NIPORT) and USAID to discuss plans for conducting an in-country proposal development workshop in late 1984.

#### IV. Information Dissemination

In October 1983, the Population Council published 5,000 copies of the Handbook for Family Planning Operations Research Design. To date, 2,200 copies have been distributed worldwide including approximately 1,500 in Asia. The Handbook has been translated into French and also is being translated into Chinese by the State Family Planning Commission in Beijing and into Thai by the Family Health Division in Bangkok.

In November, Laing attended the Third International Congress of the International Federation for Family Life Promotion held in Hong Kong and presented a paper on natural family planning (NFP). The paper draws upon data from the Philippines where NFP is widely practiced and where the O.R. project has funded a large, national survey concerned with this topic.

O.R. staff have submitted four abstracts of papers to the American Public Health Association for presentation at the Association's next annual meeting, November 11-15 in Anaheim, California. Each of these papers deals with a different aspect of the operations research project. The titles and authors are:

1. "Research Designs for Family Planning Field Studies," by Fisher, Stoeckel, and Laing.
2. "Family Planning Operations Research in Asia," by Baron, Fisher, Laing and Stoeckel.

3. "User Oriented Family Planning Research: Training Managers to Design, Implement, and Utilize Research for Program Change," by Fisher, Laing, and Stoeckel.
4. "Increasing Family Planning Acceptance Through Development Programs," by Stoeckel, Fisher, Pattalung, and Srisorrachattr.

#### V. Completed O.R. Studies

The Operations Research project received in February the final report from the study "Collecting Village Level Data to Permit an Analysis of the Impact of Contraceptive Availability and Accessibility on Reproductive Change, 1969-1979" conducted by Napaporn Chayovan, John Knodel, Nibhon Debavalya, and Apichat Chamratrithirong. This study was designed to assess the impact of contraceptive accessibility on the contraceptive behavior of couples in rural Thailand. Data were drawn from a series of national demographic surveys conducted between 1969 and 1979, and supplemented by a new and independent community survey undertaken to provide detailed and comprehensive information on availability and accessibility to various sources of contraceptive services. The new survey incorporated several innovative features including extensive use of focus group discussion data collection techniques at the village level.

The researchers attempted to test the basic hypothesis that over a ten year period in Thailand, increased accessibility to contraceptive services has affected increased contraceptive use. While this hypothesis has been tested in other studies and indeed, has been accepted prima facie by many persons involved with family planning, the authors of the final report note that surprisingly little attention has been devoted to the basic

methodological issue of how to define operationally the key variable "accessibility." They point out, for example, that accessibility has many dimensions such as: distance to a specific service outlet, travel time, travel cost, travel convenience, type of services offered by the outlet, and quality of services provided. Using combinations of these dimensions, they constructed eleven different measures of accessibility and tested the effect these had on contraceptive use.

The results from the study were mixed. The effect of accessibility on contraceptive use varied depending upon the particular operational definition of accessibility used and upon the control variables introduced into the multivariate equation. The authors conclude by suggesting that further research designed to test the accessibility increases prevalence hypothesis must deal with a number of important methodological issues including operational definition of "accessibility", the development of explicit models for studying change when over-time data are available, the number of primary sampling units and the size of each cluster when designing surveys, and the problems of data reduction when a wide array of micro and macro level variables are available for analysis.

Summary Information on Operations Research Workshops

I. O.R. Review and Development Workshops

A. Six workshops conducted

1. Thailand -- 3
2. Philippines -- 1
3. India -- 1
4. Nepal -- 1

B. Total of 86 participants

1. Government Administrators -- 22
2. Government Physicians -- 13
3. Government Research Evaluators -- 23
4. University Teacher/Researchers -- 6
5. Private Organization Administrators -- 4
6. Private Organization Researchers -- 17
7. Private Organization Physicians -- 1

C. Countries Represented by the Participants

1. Indonesia -- 7 participants
2. Nepal -- 18 participants
3. Philippines -- 32 participants
4. Sri Lanka -- 8 participants
5. Thailand -- 10 participants
6. India -- 11 participants

II. Technical Support Workshops

A. Three Workshops Conducted

1. Hat Yai southern Thailand -- 2
2. Khon Kaen northern Thailand -- 1

B. Total of 25 participants, all university based teacher/researchers

APPENDIX B

STUDIES DEVELOPED UNDER THE OPERATIONS RESEARCH PROJECT

I. Studies Approved and Funded by O.R. Project

A. Thailand

1. "Increasing Family Planning Acceptance Through Development Programs in Northeast Thailand," Population and Community Development Association
2. "Collection of Village Level Data to Permit an Analysis of the Impact of Contraceptive Availability and Accessibility on Reproductive Change, 1969-1979," Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University.
3. "A Study of the Effectiveness of the Village Health Communicator and the Village Health Volunteer in Southern Thailand," Department of Management Sciences, Prince of Songkla University
4. "The Implementation of Contraceptive Counselling Services as a Strategy to Induce Contraceptive Use," Department of Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University.
5. "Reasons for Family Planning Method Switching in Northeast Thailand," Department of Public Health Nursing, Khon Kaen University.
6. "A Comparative Analysis of the Government and Private Family Planning Programs in the Southern Region of Thailand," Faculty of Management Sciences, Prince of Songkla University.

B. Philippines

1. "Evaluation of the Cebu Male-Specific Campaign", Center for Regional Development Operations.
2. "The Introduction of an IEC Package for the Rural Women of Maguindanao: A Pilot Study," Socio-Economic Research Center, Notre Dame University.
3. "The Introduction of a Promotional Package on the Use of Combinations of Methods to Improve Contraceptive Effectiveness," Socio-Economic Research Center, Norte Dame University.
4. "A Detailed Investigation of Natural Family Planning Use in the Philippines," Demographic Research and Development Foundation.
5. "Mobilizing Satisfied Users for Promoting Family Planning," U.P. College Tacloban.

6. "The Use of Social Network Analysis for Increasing and Improving Family Planning Practice," Central Philippine University.

C. Sri Lanka

1. "An Experimental Field Research Study to Increase IUD Acceptance in Sri Lanka," Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka.

II. Studies Developed with O.R. Staff Assistance but Funded by Other Agencies

A. Philippines

1. "Effectiveness and Ineffectiveness of Metro Manila Outreach Program," developed at Bangkok O.R. workshop, funded by POPCOM Philippines.
2. "An Evaluation of the Multi Purpose BSPO Project," developed at the Philippine in-country workshop, funded by POPCOM Philippines.

B. Thailand

1. "A Study to Determine the Effect on DMPA Acceptance of Different Pricing Levels," developed at Bangkok O.R. workshop, funded by World Bank through the Thai Family Health Division of the MOPH
2. "Focus Group Research on Factors Affecting the IUD Insertion Rate Among Successful and Unsuccessful Midwives," developed in consultation with Irving Seven, funded by the Thai Family Health Division of the MOPH.
3. "A Study to Determine the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate of Injectables and the IUD in Thailand," developed in consultation with Irv Siven, funded by the Thai Family Health Division of the MOPH.
4. "A Comparative Evaluation of the Multi Load 250 IUD," developed in consultation with Irv Siven and funded by the Thai Family Health Division of the MOPH.

C. Sri Lanka

1. "An Exploratory Study of the Use of Natural Family Planning Methods in Sri Lanka," developed at the Bangkok O.R. workshop, funding to be provided by Family Health International.

APPENDIX C

Project Staff Travel For Six Months Period

10/1/83 - 3/31/84

Travel

<u>Staff Member</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
J. Stoeckel	Bangkok	Nepal	10/31 - 11/2	O.R. Proposal Development
A. Fisher/J. Stoeckel	Bangkok	Hat Yai	11/15 - 11/16	Conduct O.R. Technical Support Workshop
J. Laing	Manila	Hong Kong	11/21 - 11/25	Present NFP Paper at IIIRD International Congress of The International Federation for Family Life Promotion
A. Fisher/ J. Stoeckel	Bangkok	Khon Kaen	11/30 - 11/30	Conduct O.R. Technical Support Workshop
J. Laing	Manila	Cotabatu	1/17 - 1/19	Monitor O.R. Study
A. Fisher	Bangkok	Sri Lanka	1/22 - 1/28	Work with FPA on IUD Study
J. Stoeckel	Bangkok	Hat Yai	1/27 - 1/28	Conduct O.R. Tech. Support Workshop
A. Fisher	Bangkok	Manila	2/5 - 2/9	Plan P.I. Tech. Support Workshop, write O.R. papers.
A. Fisher	Bangkok	Dhaka	2/26 - 2/28	Plan In-country O.R. Workshop
A. Fisher	Dhaka	Kathmandu	2/28 - 2/29	Finalize O.R. Proposal
J. Laing	Manila	Iloilo	3/15 - 3/16	Monitor O.R. Study

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