

REPORT OF A CONSULTATION VISIT TO PANAMA

BY

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OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Assess administrative and programmatic functions of the Regional Assistant Director and provide necessary orientation and improvements where needed.
- 2) Explore mechanisms for improved implementation of Project activities in Panama with the Country Coordinator and Regional Assistant Director.
- 3) Review plans of work for Latin American/Caribbean countries and provide support and training to further facilitate strategies and communications with the Regional Assistant Director and Headquarters in order to promote more active involvement from the region.

I. ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 - Entrance interview with Mr. John Coury, AID Population Officer, and Mrs. Clelia Gilbert, Regional Assistant Director. We discussed population activities in Panama which are sponsored by AID and contractors. A preliminary report on the contraceptive prevalence survey (see attached copy) was discussed and was helpful in identifying some of the concerns and priorities in relation to the availability and use of contraceptives. Also present during part of the interview were consultants working on logistics plans for a better distribution system within the country. Brief discussion focused on the plans for the evaluation team's visit for the next week. The status of family planning programs in the country was reviewed; 1) APLAFA has some good programs, 2) some problems of coordination between the agencies and ministries are being examined, 3) DINFA agency is taking on many of the family planning programs, and lastly 4) the priorities of the Mission's program. The AID priorities include: 1) family planning -- training (IEC and family planning), clinic equipment, contraceptive supplies, logistics support, studies and evaluation; 2) family life/sex education -- training (currently focussing on the "train the trainer" stage), audio visual's, and technical assistance. Mr. Coury suggested that for the continuation of the AHEA Project and how it best fits into the Mission's programs is: continuation of the efforts in Samaria - (a marginal urban settlement), and programs in rural areas and for teens.

Activity 2 - Discussions with the RAD in relation to the functions and operations of the Regional Office.

- A) Clelia described the types of activities she has been involved in since beginning her job last May. Of special note were her efforts in helping a student with a thesis, consulting with a new home economist in the Maternal/Infant Care program of the Social Security Program, and reviewing University records to identify and locate home economics graduates.
- B) The status of the Regional Office was reviewed in that it is important to have the office registered with the Panamanian government. The AID official strongly recommended this procedure. A written, notarized letter from the Project Director which explained the status of the IFPP and identified the RAD and her functions was reviewed by a lawyer. Following his acceptance of the letter, Clelia will proceed with the process of registering the office. Likewise, the office of Social Security was contacted regarding the tax status of the Project in paying taxes for the secretary and RAD. Although the office is recognized as a private, non-profit educational organization, it is still required that a portion of the employees' salaries go to Social Security. It was suggested that this amount be deducted from the checks sent from AHEA Headquarters.
- C) The secretarial situation was reviewed. The half-time, bi-lingual secretary is needed at no additional pay; currently there is dissatisfaction with the quality of work produced by the typist who works full-time and is not bi-lingual. It was suggested that the RAD begin looking for a more qualified secretary and that the amounts for social security tax and 13 month bonus as required by Panamanian law be deducted from the paychecks sent from AHEA.
- D) The reimbursement of monthly expenses for operating the office has become a serious problem in that the RAD at this time, has \$1,547 which she has personally advanced to pay bills because of extended delays in receiving reimbursement from AHEA. In that it seems not feasible to set up an advance system of petty cash, the regular monthly expenses were reviewed, options for reducing the expenses were discussed and it was agreed that she should proceed to request a monthly advance for regular, monthly expenses incurred for office operations.
- E) Orientation on procedures included a review of process and examples of the monthly information sheets, the six month report, and proposal forms.
- F) The RAD will proceed to seek bids for the translation and typing of the Report of the Regional Workshop on Research and Evaluation after reviewing recommended changes and deletions. The report will be photocopied at the Headquarters office.
- G) After clarification on the proposal for a regional newsletter, the RAD will proceed to get bids for the translation and printing of a Spanish version of the LINK newsletter in which "regional coming events" and new resources may be inserted in a separate page. It was requested that all articles and pictures about activities in the Region be forwarded to the LINK editor at AHEA Headquarters.

- H) The files, procedures and draft form of the inventory for the Resource Centre were reviewed.
- I) Because of the completion of one year as RAD, the functions of the RAD were reviewed and an evaluation of job performance was completed.

Activity 3 - Observation and discussion of the Panama Program with Maria Villarreal, Country Coordinator, and Clelia Gilbert, Regional Assistant Director. An assessment form which had been distributed the day before was used as a structured guide for examining the status, difficulties and areas for improvement of the Project-related activities in the country. Major findings are grouped under each topic:

- Field management of Project resources: There have been communications between four (4) key home economists; there was some misinterpretation of the process required to submit both an annual work plan in October as well as detailed proposals for each activity included in the plan. Therefore, proposals should be developed and submitted for the Samaria project and future activities which are to occur in the Panama program.
- B) Degree Project resources utilized in rural outreach program: Personnel and programs in MIDA (Ministry of Agricultural Development) have changed; Isolda Jaen, key home economist, is out of the country for several months; new contacts have been made with two supervisors of home economics field workers; FAO has initiated an agreement for a special program with the home economics program in MIDA, and there is a possibility that Project materials can be introduced in their project also. The integrated sewing project of a student in a rural area which was initiated in 1978 has not progressed due to the job transfer of the student and inability to complete her studies.
- C) Degree of Project resources utilized in urban outreach program: Progress on the report of the Samaria project and the thesis of the student, Aida Iglesias, was discussed. The report of this activity which was completed in December is near completion including a good selection of pictures.
- D) Follow-up of seminar classes and training materials: It was reported that many home economics graduates have returned and requested materials and consultation with Maria and Clelia. During these consultations, they receive copies of new materials - especially the Resource Handbooks. Some teachers have requested additional curriculum materials; the recommended plans are for writing a series of "hojitas" (teaching guides) that have family planning integrated with home economics which will be used to reinforce curriculum materials which are seriously needed since the recent implementation of the national educational reform. These would take the place of any meetings needed with the teachers.
- E) Extent of outreach of training to target populations: A definite strength in the Panama program is the involvement of students and grassroots outreach in the Samaria project. This point was emphasized as a good example for the evaluation team. Training activities were questioned in that a very limited amount has occurred within the country except for the activities of individual students.

- F) **Achievement of Project objectives:** 1) strong country program--it was assessed that there was good knowledge about the project although most contacts/network involvement are informal; 2) curriculum revision - because of the educational reform, all previous work in integrated curriculum has been displaced and there is a need to renew efforts to develop integrated curriculum; 3) educational materials - the development and use has been only informal and on an individual basis; 4) training programs have been limited to contacts with students in the University program; 5) publications - no action; 6) collaboration - no action; 7) research and evaluation - two of the funded proposals are being developed; a survey has already been done by Isabel Zavalá.
- G) **Use of outreach methods and activities using other communication media:** a preliminary interview was held several months ago and Maria and Clelia hope that some radio and TV interview programs will be developed in the near future.
- H) **Timeliness in the development and use of Spanish language version of curriculum and training materials:** about 200 of the 300 copies of the Resource Handbook in Spanish have been distributed and a list has been made of all recipients; the Working with Villagers in Spanish has not been used extensively.
- I) **Type of Reporting to Headquarters/AID:** discussed the need to have some written evidence of what is happening in Panama; although a report is short it is preferable to none at all; documentation is needed for all activities and efforts should be made to comply with this requirement.
- J) **Quality of content, use of five (5) year plans and future planning:** the one year plan was reviewed: a) activities 1 & 2 are underway; b) activity 3 will not be possible; c) activity 4 is underway; d) activity 5 is not likely to occur this year; e) activity 6 - the workshop for development of teaching and visual aids materials will be postponed until 1981; f) activity 7 - gardening project with students will likely develop - a detailed proposal is needed; g) activity 8 has had some delays and difficulties but will eventually be reported.

Additional points for discussion included Project funds and the printing of materials. The country coordinator reports a balance of \$676 for country activities following the necessary funds which will be needed for completion of the Samaria project report. Also, an additional \$891 was received for three research/evaluation projects. Maria also pointed out that the University has incurred the expenses for postage in the distribution of the Resource Handbooks. It was agreed that 2,000 copies of the Resource Handbook would be printed in Washington and the original copy was loaned for this purpose.

Activity 4 - Review of the Panama Program with the RAD. Key points of this review included the following:

- Infrastructure is needed in order to continue the Panama program. The Project is not one or two persons, but rather a group of involved, committed home economists who should be grouped in some type of association, etc. Clelia indicated there are two associations which are

registered with the government and that some home economists have expressed interest in reactivating these associations; she will assist through the establishment of a task force of interested home economists who will work with Clelia and Maria and carry major responsibilities for coordination and planning.

- Participation in Project-sponsored country activities needs to be extended to more home economists who are working within various institutions rather than just the University students; before other home economists can become active they must be informed and receive orientation about the Project. Through Clelia's work and informal individual contacts and participation in a regional orientation workshop, a core of interested home economists can become "motivators" and "trainers" to orient and train other home economists in the country to develop proposals and participate in activities. Maria can serve as a valuable resource for the implementation of these activities through her contacts with students and graduates, and with her experience with the Project.
- Institutionalization can happen best when home economists are working within agencies and organizations that reach a larger audience. Activities with students are very limited in their potential to lead to institutionalization and realization of the objectives of the Project. A review of the Project Evaluation Report was used to reassess this focus.
- In order for harmony and cooperation, it is important that the functions of the country coordinator and the regional assistant director be communicated to each other to avoid possible misunderstandings. Likewise, the function of the resource center should not be a duplicate of any reference center at the University.

Activity 5 - Visit to Samaria. Observations of the living conditions and the sites where Aida Iglesia conducted her series of classes were made. The location for future proposed gardening projects was also pointed out. Dr. Juan Correa, Special Psychologist in Sex Education for the Archdiocese of Panama accompanied the group to Samaria and explained more details about their program efforts in Samaria. It is obvious that his contact with community leaders, positive support, and invitations to home economists provide a crucial support for the efforts of the students in this integrated activity. Although he has worked with home economists for many months his exposure and knowledge of the Project and its goals was very limited.

Activity 6 - Discussion of the Latin America/Caribbean Regional Program.

- A) The proposed consultation visit was discussed with the RAD. There was considerable concern that there had been no response to the proposal. Procedures were reviewed and priorities established regarding which countries could best be motivated through a consultation visit, which countries could first be motivated through other contact persons and which countries could be reached through a regional workshop. The RAD indicated she had already sent many letters to the different countries

trying to establish contacts but is still waiting for responses. It seems important that the RAD keep updated on contacts with Latin American home economists who are within the region in order to establish two-way communications and coordinate plans.

- B) Discussed the participation of Latin Americans and Caribbean home economists in the Philippines activities. Due to the English-speaking requirement it was concluded that participation will be minimal. Bonnie will follow-up with contacts in Guatemala and Brazil. Clelia will follow-up with Costa Rica and Panama. Colombia and Mexico have indicated they will send participants.
- C) Future plans of the Guatemala program were discussed. Pending Bonnie's contacts, the RAD will anticipate a consultation to Guatemala during the summer in order to determine the feasibility for expanding the Project's activities beyond those of Community Development. Also, a detailed proposal needs to be written for the training workshop with community development that is included in this year's plans.
- D) The prospects for initiating Project activities in Brazil were discussed especially since letters of invitation have now been received from AID and home economics leaders. There is a need to continue written communications and consider a possible consultation visit in September.
- E) Because there have been limited contacts and responses to the proposed consultation visits by the RAD and in that few home economists will be attending the Philippines activities, a Regional Orientation Workshop will be proposed. A rough draft was developed which the RAD will complete and submit to Headquarters.
- F) It was agreed that the RAD will proceed on the bids for translation and printing of the LINK which should also expedite communications within the region and stimulate more activities.

Activity 7 - Exit interview with John Coury, AID Population Officer included a detailed briefing of activities and recommendations. Coury reaffirmed his support of the AHEA Project and the conscientious desires of the RAD to perform her job well. Key points in the discussion included plans for proceeding with the legal registration of the office, the recommendation to change secretaries which possibly may lead to limiting the hours of the Regional Office, and plans to "re-direct" the leadership of the Panama program with the reactivation of the home economics association and orientation to involve more home economists. Plans for strengthening activities in the other Latin American countries were reviewed and Coury again expressed his concern that in order for the RAD to perform as coordinator of Regional programs she needs to have approval to make consultation visits. He expressed his support and assistance in any efforts which would facilitate her work within Panama and within the Region and likewise of the AHEA International Family Planning Project. Plans were reviewed for the upcoming visit of the AID Evaluation Team and thanks were expressed on behalf of the Project for his interest and support of our efforts.

I. OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP

1) Regarding the assessment of the functions of the Regional Office and Regional Assistant Director:

(A) The Latin America/Caribbean Regional office needs to have a bi-lingual secretary who can work within the allowed budget. It will be important to employ someone part-time who is well qualified. All taxes and benefits are to be deducted out of the checks sent from AHEA Headquarters. If a secretary is available only half-time, the RAD may need to maintain the office hours the rest of the time.

(B) Because of the high costs of office operations, an amount for regular, monthly expenses should be advanced.

(C) A more extensive review of Project documents (reports and Staff Handbook) will help the RAD know more about proposals, Project philosophy on infrastructure, etc.

(D) The Resource Centre should include materials for home economists which relate to family planning/population education/educational and development subjects and should not duplicate references at the University.

(E) The RAD with better bi-lingual support and more active leaders in Panama should expand activities in the Latin America/Caribbean region in whatever ways possible and should assume more of a facilitating role working with a group of active, committed home economists in Panama.

(F) AHEA-IFPP should continue to orient and support the LA/Caribbean RAD with financial advances, administrative support and communications so that activities can be initiated and strengthened. This will be a slow process due to the lack of orientation and experience of the RAD and the lack of trained home economists and support systems/institutions; but the potential is great and the interest of AID Mission Officer is high as indicated in letters of response to the RAD.

2) Regarding the mechanisms for improved implementation of Project activities: (The following observations and recommendations are suggested pending the results of the Report of the AID Evaluation Team)

(A) Redirection of the Project activities in planning and implementing and reporting so that more responsibilities are shared among more people; formation of a task force which can coordinate and implement more activities with the RAD serving as a facilitator and the head of the University as a valuable adviser.

(B) Identify the home economists and home economics workers and other related professions in the country and proceed to reactivate their organization so that an infrastructure can be established.

(C) Begin to develop orientation/training for administrators and home economists throughout the country so that all government institutions might benefit from the resources of the Project.

(D) Intensify contacts with MIDA in order to introduce Project materials in their programs in the new FAO Project while they are still in the developmental stages. Perhaps it is important to expand the contacts and exposure among other personnel rather than depending solely on the key contact person, Isolda Jaen.

(E) Continue to respond to opportunities and needs for other areas of programming--especially in media programs and those which reach the youth.

(F) Develop proposals and reports and other supportive documents so that resources and participation can be increased in the country program.

(G) Continue the cooperative efforts with the Archdiocese of Panama in activities in Samaria where students can do "integrated programs" in outreach work in the marginal urban areas.

(H) The initial efforts in research and evaluation should be continued and further developed as a way to assess needs and progress of family planning integration in activities in Panama as well as to involve more persons in Project activities.

(I) Upon the final printing of the Resource Handbooks in Spanish, an orientation workshop and training activities should be developed to introduce the materials to a group of home economists who can then train additional home economists and other professionals in their use for a multiplier effect. These training programs should be especially directed to rural programs and youth projects.

(J) AHEA-IFPP should continue to critically assess the continuation of Project activities pending the recommendations that a re-direction of leadership be made and pending the AID Evaluation Team Report.

3) Regarding future plans for other Latin America/Caribbean country programs:

(A) Initiate immediately a Spanish version of the LINK as a form of informing and providing a two-way communication between home economists in the region.

(B) Develop a variety of activities through correspondence and personal contacts so that the Project will have more exposure and the RAD more experience with new countries to find ways to involve them more. Suggestions include consultation visits to Haiti, Colombia and Brazil; special contacts and possible request for consultation to Mimi Smith in Dominican Republic; develop regional workshop to invite at least twenty (20) new home economists or related workers.

(C) Become more acquainted with on-going activities in Guatemala and assist in expanding Project activities to other institutions/programs where home economists are employed.

(D) Proceed to develop materials in Spanish and orientation in Latin America so programs have a base and the resources in which integrated home economics programs can take place.

(E) Proceed immediately with the printing of 2000 copies of the Resource Handbooks in Spanish in order to provide a visible, tangible evidence of what family planning and home economics has to offer. This tool can be used well for publicity, professional image and development as well as a tool for educational efforts in home economics in over 16 countries of Latin America.

(F) Develop a Resource Directory and country profiles in the Regional Office so that home economists are identified and communications and support can be offered to new leaders as they emerge.

III. PERSONS CONTACTED DURING CONSULTATIVE VISIT

- 1) Mrs. Clelia Gilbert
Regional Assistant Director
Edificio Ford #14
Panama, PANAMA

- 2) Prof. Maria Villarreal
Country Coordinator
Dept. of Home Economics
University of Panama - Facultad de Agronomia
Panama, PANAMA

- 3) Mr. John Coury
AID Population Officer
USAID/PANAMA

- 4) Dr. Juan Correa
Psychologist - Specialist in Sexual Education
Archdiocese of Panama, Santa Teresita
Apdo. 6386
Panama, 5, PANAMA

- 5) Mrs. Virginia Lattes de Casares
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- 6) Ms. Nena Bustrillos
Senior Office, Home Economics
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CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE SURVEY

Preliminary Information as of March 1980

Preliminary, unpublished information from the recently conducted Contraceptive Prevalence Survey indicates the following:

- (1) Of the total 2,301 women interviewed (15 to 44 years of age), 1,061 (or 44.9%) are presently contracepting.
- (2) Of the total women interviewed, 357 women (or 15.1%) are presently on oral contraceptives; whereas only 24 (or 1%) are on condoms.
- (3) Of the women presently contracepting, the distribution by method is as follows:

Female sterilization	45 %
Orals	33.6%
IUD	6.1%
Rhythm / Abstinence	4.8%
Injectables	2.6%
Foams / Tablets / Jellies	2.4%
Condoms	2.3%
Withdrawal	1.9%
Diaphragm	1.0%

- (4) The private/commercial sector, (including pharmacies, private physicians and the private FPA) provides orals to 118 women (33% of all women using orals). On the other hand, the private/commercial sector provides condoms to over 79% of women using that method.
- (5) Some 477 women claimed to have been sterilized. This represents 45% of all women presently contracepting, or 20.2% of all women interviewed. Of those women sterilized, 54.3% are living in urban areas, and 45.7% in rural areas; which would indicate that rural women in Panama do have access to sterilization facilities.

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·MUJERES CASADAS O UNIDAS QUE ACTUALMENTE USAN ALCUN METODO
ANTICONCEPTIVO, SEGUN AREA, METODO Y LUGAR DONDE OBTUVO EL
METODO; ENCUESTA SOBRE PREVALENCIA Y USO DE ANTICONCEPTIVO
AGOSTO DE 1979 A ENERO DE 1980

AREA Y METODO	LUGAR *							
	Total	Hosp. M/S	C. de Salud	Consult. Privado	Farma- cia	Caja S.S.	Otro Lugar	No a- plicable
TOTAL	1061	389	246	108	117	103	16	82
URBANA	641	185	114	85	100	97	12	47
Píldora, Pastilla, Gestágenos	232	17	72	32	67	36	8	0
DIU	49	7	23	12	0	6	1	0
Esterilización Femenina	259	160	13	32	0	53	1	0
Esterilización Masculina	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Condón, Preservativo	14	1	0	0	12	0	1	0
Inyecciones (Depoprovera, etc.)	14	0	2	8	3	1	0	0
Espuma, Jalea, Tabletas	19	1	0	0	18	0	0	0
Diafragma, Capuchón vaginal	5	0	3	1	0	0	1	0
Ritmo, Abstinencia	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	34
Retiro	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lavado, Ducha vaginal	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
RURAL	420	203	132	23	17	6	4	35
Píldora, Pastilla, Gestágenos	125	25	89	2	9	0	0	0
DIU	16	2	12	2	0	0	0	0
Esterilización Femenina	218	172	19	17	0	6	4	0
Condón, Preservativo	10	0	4	2	4	0	0	0
Inyecciones (Depoprovera, etc.)	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Espuma, Jalea, Tabletas	6	0	2	0	4	0	0	0
Diafragma, Capuchón vaginal	6	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
Ritmo, Abstinencia	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
Retiro	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	18