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VOLUNTEERS IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER, 1982 - MARCH, 1983

Submitted To:

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Grant Officer
PDC/PVC
Agency for International Development
Room 246, SA-8
Washington, DC 20523

Cooperative Agreement
No. PDC-0237-A-00-2109-00
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Submitted By:

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A major focus of the Information Resources departments has been to establish the capability required to meet two goals. These are 1) the dissemination of VITA's technical information resources to LDC information centers and development workers much more widely than previously possible and 2) to achieve greater self-sufficiency through developing a commercial information service which could generate funds to help support VITA's services to LDCs.

To achieve the capability needed to meet these goals, we are computerizing the Documentation Center's bibliographic data base, microfilming much of the collection, bringing our computerized VITA Volunteer roster in-house, and developing plans for the commercialization of our services. Following is a report on our progress over the past six months.

Computerization

The entire document collection is now classified, fully catalogued and abstracted so that all data is ready for computer entry when the system and software are operational. Two Apple II Plus computers, donated to VITA by the Apple Corporation, are now in house and are currently being used for staff training and a variety of other tasks as we prepare for computerization of our data base.

Since embarking on this project, we have found that we are breaking new ground in using micro-computer technology for such a large data bank (26,000 entries with a projected annual increase of about 3,000). Consequently, our staff coordinator for computerization, Gary Garriott who has expertise and background in computer technology, has conducted with the assistance of VITA Volunteers extensive research into the system design and software required for our needs. We are confident that the software we have selected (CONDOR - a powerful data base manager) can be very successfully adapted. It appears that the total system will be in place with software development completed by the end of May. Data entry will then begin, and our computerized system should be operational by early July.

Meanwhile, we are working with a VITA Volunteer to transfer our Volunteer roster from the service bureau (BRS) to our own equipment. We are using the CONDOR software to implement the system, so working with this smaller project will accomplish training for us in the more complex software development needed for the card catalog system. Other computerization activities involve bringing in-house the VITA information on the CDC DEVELOP data base and the transfer of two computerized data bases from ATI to VITA which, we believe, will be a valuable addition to our resources.

We have located a computer literacy program produced by the Continuous Learning Corporation of Cambridge, Massachusetts which we have incorporated into our Information Resources Training Program for LDC documentalists. We also plan to teach future students some basic techniques in computerized data base searching, using our own system as well as commercial data bases.

Microfilming

More than 5,200 documents have been put on microfiche. At our current filming rate of 2,500 per month, we expect that this project should be completed by early July. A microfiche reader/printer and reader have been installed enabling us to make use of the microfiche immediately.

Commercialization

Presently we are in the most preliminary stages of planning for the commercialization of VITA's information services. We have been seeking information about the conduct of such commercial services, investigating the specific products they offer, how/what/where they advertise, the markets they approach, etc. Meanwhile, we are examining our current services to identify those where we have particular expertise, planning how to optimize utilization of the new resources we are creating through VITA's computerization, evaluating our current resources to identify those most likely to be in immediate demand, researching our potential clients, and identifying other questions such as legal requirements for conducting a commercial activity, pricing of services, marketing strategies etc.

Although the questions are many and we have much to learn in breaking this new ground for VITA, we expect to begin a commercial service on a modest basis by the Fall of 1983.

Ongoing Activities

VITA's Documentation Center acquired 3,253 new documents over the past six months, bringing VITA's total collection to 29,722 documents. Among these are 444 foreign language documents, 294 of which were acquired during the last quarter. All new acquisitions are fully classified, catalogued and abstracted upon receipt.

The spring session of the Information Resources Development Training Program began on April 4th and includes a librarian from USAID/Senegal and an employee responsible for the library of the Heifer Project International/Arkansas. As mentioned earlier, the computer literacy module has been incorporated into the training program and will be presented to the current trainees.

The Inquiry Service responded to a record number of requests for technical information. Responses have been sent to 1,690 queries over the past six months, bringing the total for the year to 2,840. This represents a 12% increase over the 2,545 answered during the same period a year ago. Part of this surge can be attributed to a series of broadcasts by Voice of America's Breakfast Show on VITA's expertise in various technologies. To date, VITA has presented information about its resources in charcoal production, biogas systems, solar energy, wind power, pedal power, grain storage, fish processing and the uses of bamboo. Such shows will continue to be regular features of VOA.

VITA's information services are sought by a wide range of organizations and businesses as well as individuals. For example, VITA is currently advising the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (Trinidad) on alcohol fuel production from agricultural wastes; providing information on implementing wind energy conversion systems to the Ministry of Planning and External Relations of the Seychelles; compiling information on U.S. manufacturers of photovoltaic cells for the Solar Utility Networks Ltd., Pakistan; and advising the Australian High Commission/Accra on the selection of solar refrigerators and cookers for donation to a local hospital.

VITA Volunteer involvement is diverse as can be noted in the activities our Volunteer Resources department reports. On-site consultancies numbered 24 during the past six months, and 75% were performed by Volunteers (VITA staff carried out the others). The volunteer consultants worked in Guyana, Haiti, Djibouti, Rwanda, Pakistan and Thailand. Their tasks ranged from studying the feasibility of arrowroot production in Barbados to marketing an improved traditional water-pumping windmill in Thailand to providing economist expertise in the Ivory Coast.

VITA Volunteers were referred to many organizations needing expert consultants. The World Bank, a businessman in Belize, the Heifer Project International and USAID are some of the requestors who received 38 referrals during the reporting period. Subjects included peanut butter manufacturing, evaluation of woodstove efficiency, tropical pasturage and many others.

Volunteers also assisted VITA through their participation in panels on food preservation and standardized testing of improved woodstoves. Still others are currently advising on various facets of our computerization projects, the planning for the commercialization of our information services, and on many other VITA initiatives.

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REQUESTS FOR TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Statistical Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: JAN. THRU MAR
(1st QUARTER)

<u>REQUEST CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>WORLD REGION</u>					
	<u>Africa</u>	<u>Latin America</u>	<u>Asia/Pacific</u>	<u>3rd World Total</u>	<u>Developed World</u>	<u>World Total</u>
<u>Technical Field</u>						
Agriculture	128	33	49	210	15	225
Crafts/Industry	46	8	41	95	5	100
Energy	131	68	123	322	56	378
Water Resources	5	5	9	19	7	26
Sanitation	2	4	1	7	0	7
Food/Nutrition	20	15	6	41	9	50
Housing/Constr.	21	9	17	47	9	56
Health/Medicine	22	0	2	24	3	27
Conserv./Nat. Res.	5	1	3	9	1	10
Educ/Commun.	7	2	1	10	1	11
Gen'l Devel.	9	2	1	12	3	15
Comm. Devel.	39	7	17	63	3	66
Infor. Systems	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	1	1	0	1
TOTAL	435	154	271	860	112	972
 <u>Source</u>						
Government	82	19	35	136	11	147
University	60	12	38	110	20	130
School	40	0	6	46	1	47
PVO	59	26	27	112	15	127
Business	38	20	45	103	8	111
Int'l Org.	11	1	1	13	6	19
Other/Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Individual	145	76	119	340	51	391
TOTAL	435	154	271	860	112	972
LDC Nat'l	385	133	250	768		
Expatriate	50	21	21	92		
TOTAL	435	154	271	860		
 <u>Classification*</u>						
Inquiry	13	12	36	61	2	63
Request for Documentation	415	139	231	785	109	894
Referral	7	3	4	14	1	15
TOTAL	435	154	271	860	112	972

* Inquiry = requests requiring assistance from VITA Volunteer Experts.
Request for Documentation = information available from library or through staff research
Referral = other sources of information suggested

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REQUESTS FOR TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Statistical Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: (4th QUARTER)
OCT. THRU DEC.
1982

<u>REQUEST CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>WORLD REGION</u>					
	<u>Africa</u>	<u>Latin America</u>	<u>Asia/Pacific</u>	<u>3rd World Total</u>	<u>Developed World</u>	<u>World Total</u>
Agriculture	122	33	30	185	9	194
Crafts/Industry	25	26	32	83	3	86
Energy	51	41	60	152	26	178
Water Resources	9	1	7	17	6	23
Sanitation	1	1	3	5	0	5
Food/Nutrition	15	18	9	42	3	45
Housing/Constr.	20	12	8	40	8	48
Health/Medicine	20	4	4	28	0	28
Conserv./Nat. Res.	5	0	0	5	1	6
Educ/Commun.	9	4	3	16	2	18
Gen'l Devel.	6	-	6	14	1	15
Comm. Devel.	40	13	15	68	1	69
Infor. Systems	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	2	3	0	3
TOTAL	323	156	179	658	60	718
 <u>Source</u>						
Government	68	14	15	97	4	101
University	38	11	28	77	5	82
School	35	0	5	40	0	40
PVO	76	47	58	181	15	196
Business	29	28	25	82	3	85
Int'l Org.	14	6	3	23	17	40
Other/Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Individual	63	50	45	158	16	174
TOTAL	323	156	179	658	60	718
LDC Nat'l	237	130	137	504		
Expatriate	86	26	42	154		
TOTAL	323	156	179	658		
 <u>Classification*</u>						
Inquiry Request for Documentation	14	22	20	56	2	58
Referral	301	129	150	580	56	636
	8	5	9	22	2	24
TOTAL	323	156	179	658	60	718

* Inquiry = requests requiring assistance from VITA Volunteer Experts.
Request for Documentation = information available from library or through staff research
Referral = other sources of information suggested

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REQUESTS FOR TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Statistical Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: JAN. THRU DEC.
1982

REQUEST CLASSIFICATION

WORLD REGION

<u>Technical Field</u>	<u>Africa</u>	<u>Latin America</u>	<u>Asia/Pacific</u>	<u>3rd World Total</u>	<u>Developed World</u>	<u>World Total</u>
Agriculture	340	109	98	547	25	572
Crafts/Industry	94	74	107	275	12	287
Energy	229	179	219	627	98	725
Water Resources	40	28	26	94	23	117
Sanitation	3	11	9	23	0	23
Food/Nutrition	55	61	31	147	10	157
Housing/Constr.	52	38	31	121	17	138
Health/Medicine	48	14	13	75	7	82
Conserv./Nat. Res.	16	6	?	25	6	31
Educ/Commun.	29	14	12	55	11	66
Gen'l Devel.	13	14	13	40	8	48
Comm. Devel.	124	51	49	224	12	236
Infor. Systems	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	6	7	11	24	1	25
TOTAL	1,049	606	622	2,277	320	2,507

Source

Government	226	73	53	352	17	369
University	116	51	102	269	25	294
School	64	3	14	81	0	81
PVO	258	189	169	616	62	678
Business	94	115	115	324	30	354
Int'l Org.	54	22	10	86	29	115
Other/Unknown	1	1	1	3	0	3
Individual	236	152	158	546	67	613
TOTAL	1,049	606	622	2,277	320	2,507

LDC Nat'l	754	494	513	1,761		
Expatriate	295	112	109	516		
TOTAL	1,049	606	622	2,277		

Classification*

Inquiry	49	63	74	186	13	199
Request for Documentation	969	520	506	1,995	182	2,177
Referral	31	23	42	96	35	131
TOTAL	1,049	606	622	2,277	320	2,507

* Inquiry = requests requiring assistance from VITA Volunteer Experts.
Request for Documentation = information available from library or through staff research
Referral = other sources of information suggested