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1977 ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:
MASTER'S TRAINING PROGRAM IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
FOR STUDENTS FROM THE SAHEL

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Department of Agricultural Economics
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

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Michigan State University
Department of Agricultural Economics

Master's Training Program in Agricultural Economics for Students from the Sahel 1977 Annual Report

During 1977 the first three students were admitted into the program: Mr. Ismael Ouedraogo from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in Upper Volta, Mr. Ibrahima Sene from the Ministry of Rural Development in Senegal and Mr. Amadou Niane from the Ministry of Plan and Cooperation in Senegal. Mr. Ouedraogo began English language studies in June at the Economics Institute at Boulder, Colorado and Messrs. Sene and Ouedraogo enrolled in the American Language Institute at Georgetown University in Washington, D. C. in July. Mr. Ouedraogo was required to take only one English writing class at Boulder and began a full-time program of graduate studies at MSU in September. Both Mr. Niane and Mr. Sene had much lower levels of English language proficiency, though each had seven years of lycee and university level course work in English. Both of them studied English at Georgetown until mid-December and began coursework at MSU during winter term, 1978. Based on their ALIGU test scores, both were expected to be required to take one English language course during their first term at MSU.

Recruiting for the 1978 program began in November with visits to Senegal, Cape Verde, Mali and Niger. These were followed with a visit to Gambia in December. A planned trip to Mauritania aborted due to missing a scheduled departure from Praia that necessitated an additional five day lay-over in Cape Verde.

Initial impressions of available candidates from these countries were quite good. Senegal put forward three, Mali promised three, Cape Verde indicated one nominee might be forthcoming and we expect one-two from Niger as participant-trainees under the INRAN applied research project. Subsequent events, however, revealed these initial impressions to be too optimistic. Two of the nominees from Senegal were submitted for AFGRAD II financing. Because the Department already has 35 percent of the total University tuition waiver money assigned to its AFGRAD students, we were unable to provide tuition waivers and we lost these two candidates. Delays and revisions in the INRAN project promise to make it virtually impossible to identify any Nigerians for the 1978 program. In addition, correspondence with our contact in Cape Verde has not beer answered, leading us to suspect that we will probably not have any nominees from there for the 1978-79 academic year.

Officials in Gambia, visited for the first time in 1977, were enthusiastic about the program, but were not optimistic about being able to nominate candidates in the near future. The relatively high standards of admission required for the program (upper seconds) pose a problem given the very small number of available university graduates in Gambia. One independent applicant from Gambia was rejected because of very low grades in an American undergraduate school.

The CDO from Chad indicated that it was probably not worth our while to visit Chad this year since the situation had not really changed from that described in the initial trip reports for 1976. He indicated that a visit in 1978 might be more fruitful so we are planning to visit there for another survey of agricultural economics training needs in the spring. We must begin obtaining nominees from Chad and similar countries if we are to even come close to maintaining a geographical balance in candidates admitted into the program as we had hoped to do.

In the other Sahelian countries reaction to our program has been very positive and many officials are now aware of the program. The Senegalese, as was expected, have been the quickest to seize the opportunity provided by the program. They have responded by putting forth generally quite well qualified applicants. The Malians have also responded well, but have been less willing to nominate their better candidates, preferring to keep them in service and send less qualified people for training. This issue was addressed on my last trip to Mali with both the mission director and with the Malians. As a result, we expect that future nominees will be better qualified academically.

It is obvious that we have to get an earlier start in lining up nominees than we have been able to do so far. April-May is probably an adequate lead time, so we are planning the next recruiting trip for this period in 1978. But part of the problem is that we are out of step with other USAID training programs that aim for a September arrival in the States. USAID missions usually treat all candidates for training alike with the result that the special timing required for our program adds to their work load. Though this is necessary if we are to program our students for a summer of studies at the Economics Institute at Boulder, we may be forced to forego this excellent preparation in order to avoid the constant problems posed by going against the rest of the system. We are planning one last try in 1978 and hope to solve these problems by beginning our recruiting drive much earlier. If not, we will have to drop Boulder from the program and have students begin language study in September instead of March which affects their course sequencing on arrival at Michigan State.

The training program itself had scarcely gotten underway by the end of 1977. Only Mr. Ouedraogo was on campus during fall term so we delayed the new course entitled Terms, Concepts, and Fields of Agricultural Economics until winter term so the two Senegalese also could enroll. Mr. Ouedraogo enrolled in regular departmental courses and did very well academically. His English language proficiency was quite good upon arrival at MSU so it was less urgent that he take this course during his first term as was originally intended. In general, however, we want all students to take the new course during their first term here since it provides useful technical terminology, English composition and discipline familiarization background material against a backdrop of tutorial support. It also assures regular and direct contact between the student and a faculty member in the program. We now plan to program for 18 months of academic study with an additional term allowed if the student requires an unusual number of credits to make up at the undergraduate level. Coupled with what will probably be a fairly standard six months of language study, the average student will finish the program in two years from the date of departure to the date of return. We believe that students will be able to plan and accomplish quite strong programs in this period of time and should be a credit to the department, USAID and their own countries when they complete their programs. This shortening of the time period expected to be required for the program should help in our recruiting efforts as well since most administrators seem unwilling to let their best people go away for long periods of time.

Continuing problems are being experienced in the formal admission process as the University is enforcing admission formalities. Hopefully we can better inform applicants and missions of these policies so that dossiers are prepared in such a way that delays can be minimized.

Securing financing through AMDP funding has proven to be a continuing source of frustration for us. Initially the missions did not understand how AMDP was to operate and continued to prepare dossiers in the same way they had for the old AFGRAD program. This tendency proved to be so ingrained that AMDP developed an AFGRAD II component that differs from the original program only in terms of the kinds of training which the agency will finance. Students for the MSU program must be financed under a bilaterally funded training component of AMDP. The missions have not understood this nor did we until after the recruiting trip was over and current policies could be clarified with Washington. Now each mission is given a fixed sum of money for all AMDP training, including AFGRAD II, to allocate as it sees fit. This has made some of them reluctant to send students to MSU, since here they will probably pay tuition while other institutions with fewer foreign graduate students and lacking in faculty expertise will waive tuition in order to maintain enrollment. Most AID directors appreciate the benefit of the MSU program, however, and are willing to provide for the extra cost. We honestly believe that the problems we have been having have been due more to our collective (including AMDP itself) failure to understand how AMDP was working at a given point of time rather than reluctance to send students to MSU. We are guardedly optimistic that recent clarifications will reduce this problem, though the timing of our recruiting drive will continue for the time being to be out of sync with AFGRAD II.

All in all the program is progressing somewhat more slowly than was expected with recruiting and financing students posing the most formidable obstacles. We would have little difficulty meeting our annual quota of six enrollees from Mali and Senegal alone if financing problems did not exist, but this would not provide the geographical balance required. Alternatively we may need to consider candidates who have less than four years university preparation and who, therefore, will be required to get a B.S. before they will be admitted to an M.S. program. In such cases we would then be talking of three-year (plus language) programs rather than two-year programs of study -- a factor which poses other problems, especially for administrators who stand to lose their best people for such a long period of time. For Chad, Maurtania, Niger and Gambia, we may have little choice. For the other countries, prospects are brighter but a sustained recruiting effort will be required. Hopefully this will become less and less true as the program becomes more widely known and accepted and funding difficulties are overcome.

Lester V. Manderscheid, Director

Tom Zalla, Coordinator

BUDGET REPORT

African Development Program:
Master's Training Program in Agricultural Economics
for Students from the Sahel

Total Budget

	'76-'77	'77-'78	'78-'79	'79-'80	'80-'81	'81-'82	'82-'83	Total
Salaries	$ 3,290	$ 9,600	$20,370	$27,650	$29,310	$31,060	$ 20,070	$141,350
Overhead	2,073	6,048	12,833	17,420	18,465	19,568	12,644	89,051
Fringe Benefits	756	1,268	2,469	3,882	4,116	4,098	2,925	19,514
Travel	3,070	3,250	3,450	7,300	7,730	4,100	4,350	33,250
Other Direct Costs	235	1,270	1,350	1,430	1,510	1,610	1,700	9,105
Total	$ 9,424	$21,436	$40,472	$57,682	$61,131	$60,436	$41,689	$292,270

Total Expenditures
Period 1 October 1976 - 30 September 1977

Salaries	$ 6,081.34
Overhead	4,035.46
Fringe Benefits	963.52
Travel	3,950.27
Other Direct Costs	292.34
Total	$15,322.93