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REFLECTIONS ON THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ✓
COMPONENT OF THE NFE NETWORK PROJECT
1979-1983

Submitted by
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to
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INTRODUCTION

In 1979 Michigan State University (MSU) entered into a three-year contract with the United States Agency for International Development (AID), contract no. DSPE-C-0046. The overall objective of the NFE Network Project was to "further stimulate interest in, and knowledge of, non-formal education as a vital element in Less Developed Countries' (LDC) development." The project involved research/knowledge/information/technical assistance dimensions. As the contractor, the Non-Formal Education Information Center (NFEIC) at MSU was to provide two kinds of services: operating a clearing-house on user-oriented information related to non-formal education; and providing direct technical assistance to selected LDCs that wanted to establish their own national and/or regional information centers. A project amendment provided funds for additional attention to issues related to women in development (WID) in both types of services.

The technical assistance activities involved the selection of and collaboration with three counterpart information centers--one each in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Like the NFEIC at MSU, each Center was to provide information services related to non-formal education for development. Agreements of Cooperation were signed enabling three Centers (one each in Colombia, Ivory Coast, and the Philippines) to participate as counterparts to the MSU Center in the NFE Network Project. After each counterpart center

had been in operation for 18 months or more an assessment meeting, in which the primary participants were the Center Directors, was held.

This document reports on the meeting of Center Directors of the NFE Network Project held 24-30 March 1983 at Los Banos, The Philippines. The NFE Network Project is based at Michigan State University. Each of the other Centers participated in the Project through sub-contractual agreements with MSU.¹ The Centers participating in the Meeting were:

Fundacion para la Educacion Permanente en Colombia,
Bogota, Colombia (FEPEC), Dr. Rene Hauzer, Director

The NFE/WID Information Exchange Center for Asia, Los
Banos, The Philippines (NFE/WID-UPLB), Dr. Obdulia Sison,
Director

The Non-Formal Education Information Center, East Lansing,
Michigan, USA (NFEIC), Mary Joy Pigozzi, Director

Institut Africain Pour le Developpement Economique et Social-
Documentation, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, (INADES-Documentation),
Fr. Yves Morel, Director

The meeting was hosted by the NFE/WID Information Exchange Center for Asia (under the direction of Dr. Obdulia Sison) at the University of the Philippines at Los Banos.

The rationale of the March meeting was to provide a context in which the Directors of each of the Centers could meet together to assess their experiences and consider options for future collaboration. While there had been several meetings between MSU and the

¹The activities of these Centers are described in Appendix A.

other Centers throughout the three-year Project, there had not been an occasion where all four Center Directors met together. It was felt that such a joint meeting would provide a stimulating environment in which to assess the overall Project and to explore possibilities for the future and continued collaboration.

The purpose of the meeting was three-fold:

- 1) To share experiences and reflect on what has been learned from the collaborative relationship; the kinds of problems and constraints each Center had to deal with, and the advantages each saw in collaboration.
- 2) To focus specifically on collaboration: the various types of collaborative arrangements; the requirements of successful collaboration; ways of meeting the basic needs of such a relationship; possible designs for the continuation and maintenance of collaborative relationships.
- 3) To discuss goals and future directions of the NFE Network, with particular attention given to how the individual goals and programs of each of the Centers can benefit from continued collaboration and what forms this collaboration might take.

The meeting had a workshop format. During the first two days participants reviewed and assessed their activities during the Project and discussed what had been learned. Each Center had prepared a summary report and a set of manuals to serve as background

material for this part of the meeting. On the third day site visits were made to two NFE projects currently sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Government of the Philippines. The remainder of the workshop was spent addressing issues related to the future and to collaboration. During this time participants explored in more detail the needs and concerns that had been expressed in the earlier session, with particular reference to future activities.

While an agenda of general discussion topics was prepared in advance of the workshop, the overall design was to remain flexible enough to accommodate the particular interests that each of the Center Directors brought with them. As will become apparent throughout this Report, each of the Centers is unique in terms of overall programs and operational objectives, as well as in focus and substantive emphasis. Although all are involved in providing information assistance on non-formal education, each focuses on a range of sectors most relevant to its own local and regional context.

The following Report begins with a summary of the tasks each Center was contracted to do during the Project period. The next section provides a detailed description of the discussions which occurred during the Workshop. A summary of findings - what has been learned from the Project - is then presented. The final section highlights critical issues that emerged from the discussions

and recommendations for future collaborative activities, including ideas for pursuing several of the possibilities mentioned.

TASKS UNDER THE NFE NETWORK PROJECT

The purpose of the NFE Network Project was to strengthen the capacity of the participating resource centers in the areas of non-formal education and women in development so as to be particularly responsive to regional needs. In this section an outline is presented for each center which summarizes the range of tasks each agreed to accomplish during the Project period. These served as a base-line for initial discussions during the March 1983 assessment workshop.

AT MSU

- A. Operate a clearinghouse on NFE and WID information:
- 1) Maintain an NFE Resource Center.
 - 2) Respond to requests for information from network affiliates.
 - 3) Write, publish and distribute three issues annually of The NFE Exchange.
 - 4) Prepare and distribute at least two occasional papers and five selected annotated bibliographies annually.
 - 5) Conduct special and formative evaluation studies.
 - 6) Foster and develop an inter-regional NFE network through personal contacts, correspondence, and conferences.
 - 7) Make maximum feasible use of AID's DIU.
- B. Provide technical assistance to create or strengthen LDC national/regional information centers on non-formal education and women in development:
- 1) Advise AID on preliminary site selection in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Near East.
 - 2) Conduct field trips to preliminary sites.
 - 3) Develop criteria for establishing and operating these LDC NFE Centers, and implementation plans and an evaluation plan for each center.
 - 4) Provide in-service training for LDC center personnel, including manuals on Center's operations.

- 5) Provide a basic stock of print and non-print resources to LDC centers.
- 6) Conduct necessary follow-up visits.
- 7) Conduct a conference during the last year of the project.

C. Develop an implementation plan.

D. Submit:

- Annual reports on clearinghouse activities.
- Semi-annual reports on technical assistance activities.
- Final report.
- Conference report.

AT INADES

A. Under activity agreements:

- 1) Select and send two representatives of INADES-DOCUMENTATION to study the organization and activities of the NFEIC (AA #1).
- 2) Strengthen INADES' resource collection in NFE in English and French (AA #2).
- 3) Expand and strengthen INADES letter answering service (AA #3).
- 4) Develop an organization system to enable INADES to carry out its role as a regional NFE center (AA #4).
- 5) Prepare, publish, and distribute annotated bibliographies that correspond to topics covered by issues of Agripromo (AA #5).
- 6) Strengthen the service dimension of INADES-DOCUMENTATION by making its services better known throughout Francophone Africa (AA #6).
- 7) Enhance the ability of the national bureaus of INADES-FORMATION to respond to NFE-related requests through the provision of materials in microfiche form (AA #7).
- 8) Strengthen the NFE Network Project by preparing two "how-to" manuals and sending a representative to the March 1983 directors meeting (AA #8).

B. Submit:

- Final report on Agreement 1
- Six month reports on Agreement 2
- Six month reports on Agreement 3
- Six month reports on Agreement 4
- Final report documenting outcomes of Agreement 5

- Final report documenting outcomes of Agreement 6
- Final report documenting outcomes of Agreement 7
- Final financial report on Agreement 8

AT UPLB

A. Develop and maintain an NFE/WID information library:

- 1) Collect, catalogue, and circulate print and non-print materials on NFE and WID.
- 2) Respond to requests for NFE and WID information from individuals and agencies.
- 3) Maintain files and records of materials received or procured, type and source of correspondence and inquiries received, activities undertaken and services rendered.
- 4) Develop and maintain an intra-regional NFE network and cooperate with other regional information centers of the MSU NFE Network Project.
- 5) Prepare annotated bibliographies on various topical areas related to NFE and WID.
- 6) Write, publish, and distribute three issues annually of a newsletter on NFE and WID for Asia.
- 7) Prepare and distribute occasional papers on subject matters pertaining to agriculture and rural development.
- 8) Conduct an evaluation of work, involving an NFE/WID specialist from Asia, and report on these to MSU and AID.
- 9) Prepare three "how-to" manuals.
- 10) Host a meeting of directors of the NFE Network Project in March 1983.

B. Submit:

- Two semi-annual reports on the first agreement
- One final report on the first agreement
- One final report on the second agreement

AT FEPEC

A. Develop and operate a clearinghouse on NFE and WID information for Latin America:

- 1) Acquire documents and fugitive materials on NFE and WID.
- 2) Catalogue print and non-print materials on NFE and WID.
- 3) Respond to requests for NFE and WID information.

- 4) Prepare bibliographies of NFE and WID materials in the FEPEC-CEDEN Center and in other selected institutions in the FEPEC-CEDEN network.
- 5) Duplicate NFE and WID materials in the FEPEC-CEDEN Center for development planners and practitioners.
- 6) Strengthen linkages among those working in the fields of NFE and WID in Latin America.
- 7) Cooperate with the MSU NFE Center and with other regional centers of the network.
- 8) Maintain files and records of materials received or procured, type and source of correspondence and inquiries received, and services rendered in connection with this activity.
- 9) Prepare and distribute a periodical newsletter, in Spanish, on NFE and WID with a special focus on Latin America.
- 10) Conduct an evaluation of work, involving an NFE/WID specialist from Latin America, and report on this to MSU and AID.
- 11) Send a representative to the directors meeting in March 1983.

B. Submit:

- Two semi-annual reports on the first agreement
- One final report on the first agreement
- One final report on the second agreement

As can be seen, the tasks undertaken by each Center were varied and substantial. At the time of the March 1983 meeting most of these tasks had been completed. Appendix A lists each Center's products under the NFE Network Project after the description of its activities. Additional detail on task completion and products is available in the various reports on the NFE Network Project.

DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSIONS

The discussions began with each Center providing a summary report on their collaborative activities and how these activities related to their overall programs.

In reviewing their collaborative activities over the life of the NFE Network Project each Center identified specific benefits they derived from participating in the NFE Network Project.

Benefits.

NFEIC/MSU listed three major benefits: the NFE Network Project provided colleagues to share ideas with and learn from; it increased the base and range from which knowledge and information could be drawn; and it helped expand and increase the audience of those interested in what MSU and the other centers had to offer. As part of a university concerned with knowledge building, and with a land grant commitment to working people, the Project enabled NFEIC/MSU to look at knowledge building in a particular substantive area: alternative forms of education. NFEIC noted that gaining additional perspectives was a particularly important benefit and that along with reinforcing international linkages, collaboration helped develop a broader perspective based on a horizontal sharing of ideas.

INADES expressed agreement with the above comments and stated that participation in this Project allowed them to explore more

closely the value of benefits of non-formal education. Through its collaborative activities, INADES has become increasingly aware of the utility and potential of various kinds of organizations, particularly NGOs, and the value of network linkages. The MSU linkage also enabled INADES to strengthen and improve aspects of its administrative structure (particularly with regard to their record-keeping system and procedures for responding to inquiries), thus further enhancing their service capabilities.

FEPEC noted institutional, economic, and political benefits resulting from their participation in the NFE Network Project. Primary institutional benefits included overall growth in FEPEC's ability to respond to requests and provide services, as well as increased contact with other regional organizations. The economic benefits are more long range in that, from FEPEC's perspective, it is generally easier to obtain funding for international than for national programs. If the Network Project were to continue covering four regions, the chances for obtaining funds for joint activities may be greater. Finally, the political benefits cited rest on the potential that participation in such activities has to increase knowledge and awareness within Latin America and between Latin America and other regions of the world. It was noted that this potential is especially important to Latin America/United States relations, but from a general political standpoint

all of the Centers can contribute to the lessening of global tensions through improved mutual understandings.

For UPLB, participation in the NFE Network Project enabled them to identify priority areas of concern and to build a resource center addressing these concerns that would serve both university students and the non-university community. As women are a high priority area, a related benefit has been a significant increase in awareness of the role of women in the development process, both within the Philippines and throughout Asia. It was stated that the establishment of the NFE/WID Center for Asia has not only supported the efforts of practitioners working with women, but women themselves have benefitted through increased involvement and participation in development activities. In this regard, the NFE Project also provided a starting point for the operationalization of UPLB objectives for developing an international outreach program and enabled the strengthening of institutional ties between UPLB and other institutions throughout the world. Sharing knowledge with the West has brought about a heightened awareness of Asian experience and knowledge. This constitutes an important long range benefit. From a cross-cultural perspective, such activities can lead to better understandings, and a great deal can be learned from each other.

There was a general consensus among the Center Directors that a major benefit of the collaborative project was that, along with

strengthening regional capabilities and creating international linkages, the Project was designed to accommodate regional needs identified by each Center. In other words, each of the Centers had the flexibility to pursue activities that also fell within the framework of their own ongoing programs. In this regard, all the Centers agreed that the NFE Network Project strengthened and in some cases significantly expanded the range of their own programs, while at the same time providing an opportunity to share their expertise and draw on the expertise of others.

Problems and Constraints.

Along with the benefits resulting from collaboration, the participants also identified problems and constraints they had to deal with during the Project period. These were:

- limited financial resources, and a limited time framework to complete the scope of work
- steadily increasing demand for information assistance and training
- lack of time to adequately assess the impact of the Centers' services and publications on regional audiences, or to conduct research needed to identify new needs and appropriate ways of meeting them
- no reliable mechanism to ensure feedback from audiences
- lack of relevant practical materials ('how-to' manuals, and other teaching materials), trained staff, and support for increasing training activities related to information use and non-formal education

Collaboration.

A major portion of the discussions centered on the topic of collaboration. Participants responded to ideas presented on collaborative arrangements in general as well as with specific reference to their own operations. In creating and building successful collaboration consideration must be given to several factors. It was noted that such relationships should be based from the start upon explicit mutual benefits for all parties. In other words, those entering into a collaborative agreement must have a clear understanding of what they can expect to gain from these activities and what the other partners expect to gain. The formation of mutually beneficial collaborative activities is never an immediate event, rather, the necessary relationships must be allowed to evolve. Therefore time becomes a crucial factor, particularly in the success of long term collaborative arrangements. This notion of time also incorporates the notion of flexibility in that a successful collaborative must remain responsive to the individual partners' interests, goals, and needs, which are likely to change through time. Thus, the point was made that not only does such a relationship need to evolve over time, but it should be recognized from the outset that this evolution is likely to entail periodic adjustments in overall direction for the collaborative as a whole.

Another critical factor in the success of a collaborative such as the NFE Network Project is funding. Both collaboration itself

and collaborative activities cost something. The range of costs should be anticipated in the early stages and clearly delineated so that activities can be designed with a realistic understanding of the available financial resources. Finally, consideration must also be given to the various barriers that can negate collaborative linkages. If a severe difficulty exists in communication between participants, or if costs increase, barriers develop that can jeopardize collaborative arrangements. In addition, political changes can negate a positive set of linkages. The potential existence of such barriers must be anticipated in the very beginning and the means established to either avoid them if possible or effectively deal with them should they occur. Drawing from their experience in the NFE Network Project, workshop participants noted that the success of an international collaborative arrangement requires particular sensitivity to all of these factors given the likely cross-cultural composition of the membership, as well as the distance separating participants.

Continuation of the NFE Network.

Prior to discussing future directions, the question was raised as to whether continued collaboration was desirable and how it might fit with the various Centers' own agendas for the future. Each Center Director expressed the desire to continue their

participation in the NFE Network in some capacity, and an interest in exploring possibilities for future joint endeavors. The remainder of the discussions focused on identifying future directions for the collaborative to move.

In light of the general ideas presented on collaborative arrangements, and the specific constraints identified by participants in earlier discussions, a range of activities considered necessary to maintain the collaborative at a minimum functioning level were explored.

It was suggested that:

- one organizational meeting be held on an annual basis, attended by representatives of each Center
- each Center should prepare at least one substantive publication per year to contribute to the network
- each Center should produce an annual summary of activities to share with the other Centers
- an active communication process involving direct contact among all four Centers should be developed

These activities are considered the minimum needed to keep the members of the NFE Network Project intact as a collaborative while plans for future joint activities are explored. At this time a concerted effort needs to be made to locate funding to support collaborative activities at this basic level of operation. Center Directors agreed to let NFEIC/MSU take the lead in the search for such support, although each Center will continue in its own efforts to locate funding for specific joint activities.

Additional Activities for the Future

Along with exploring the minimum range of activities necessary to continue the network of NFE/WID Centers, several ideas were discussed with regard to future directions and new areas the Centers might consider expanding into jointly. These are summarized below and discussed in greater detail in the final section of this Report.

- Training

The demand for training in a wide variety of NFE and development-related areas is clearly on the increase. Each of the four Centers is experienced in conducting training. In discussing future joint activities, attention focused on possibilities for designing and conducting training programs which would draw upon and build existing Network expertise and resources available to meet this demand.

- Strengthening Existing Service Operations

The Center Directors agreed that both the individualized research and referral services and the publications program are critical to the ongoing effectiveness of the Centers' information assistance activities. In terms of the immediate future, it was recognized that priority must be given to locating support to maintain these basic services. For the long-term, however, participants identified several ways in which Center operations

could be significantly strengthened. Two areas received particular attention in the discussion. The first concerned the development of a mechanism that would allow for an ongoing evaluation or assessment of Center services and products vis-a-vis regional audience needs. The second focused on the potential advantages of computerizing the Centers' data bases.

- Expanding the NFE Network

Given the regional needs for information assistance and the response the Centers have received for their services, participants discussed the addition of one or two more regional NFE centers to the Network. Locations suggested for the additional center(s) included the Caribbean, the Middle East, and South Asia.

- Building a Professional Base for Non-Formal Education

Increasing requests for information on short-term training opportunities and advanced university study in the field of NFE indicate that more and more people are pursuing career paths which include an explicit specialization in non-formal education. Along with the absence of adequate university-oriented teaching materials on NFE (such as textbooks, case studies, and theoretical overviews), concern was also expressed over the current lack of a professional organization that could draw together those who share a common professional interest in non-formal education.

Given the range of expertise and resources that each of the Centers commands, participants noted that in combination, the Centers in the NFE Network Project are uniquely equipped to contribute to and strengthen the professional base of non-formal education.

In discussing how this might be done, consideration was given to the establishment of a professional association for non-formal education and the production of a professional journal, both of which would provide a forum for scholars, students, and practitioners to present new ideas and research and to comment on the work of their colleagues. Consideration was also given to the possibility of producing a joint publication addressing broader issues and trends in non-formal education. In both cases, MSU's periodical The NFE Exchange was cited as an excellent example of the kind of scholarly publication that should be continued in some form for these purposes. It was felt that with the widespread and growing interest in non-formal education, a publication designed to provide an overview and synthesis of the field would not only complement the practical-oriented publications the Centers currently produce, but would also provide students with substantive materials on NFE and further serve to inject the underpinnings of a professional base into non-formal education.

LESSONS LEARNED

As was noted throughout the workshop, much of the success of any long-term collaborative relationship rests upon explicit recognition of mutual benefits. In the previous section a summary was presented highlighting what each Center considered to be the benefits they derived from participation in the NFE Network Project. The Project provided a useful opportunity through which each Center was able to strengthen and expand its resource base on non-formal education and women in development. But while each cited benefits internal to their own operations, it was also clear that the international linkages established and strengthened through horizontal knowledge sharing were highly valued, and further enhanced the internal operations of the four Centers.

Noteworthy in this regard was the strong consensus among the Centers that the success of the Project (both overall and in terms of each Center's original objectives) was due to their joint participation as colleagues and partners, and that a continuation of this relationship and the forms such activities may take, depends upon this ambiance of collegiality. Rather than being satellite centers for NFEIC/MSU, each Center retained its distinctive character. It was felt that the differences between the Centers constitute an important asset and that future activities should be designed so as to maximize the unique qualities of each Center,

while at the same time to provide an outlet for shared common interests. In this section an attempt is made to identify and highlight some of the lessons learned from the NFE Network Project.

Several of the common difficulties experienced by the Centers during the Project period were accentuated by the long-distance nature of the Project itself. The logistics of maintaining collaborative linkages between different regions of the world present a unique set of constraints. Communication appears to be a critical key to the ongoing success of such an endeavor. Although each of the regional Centers have had fairly frequent contact with NFEIC/MSU, their contact with each other has been quite limited. Clearly, an effective communication process needs to be developed for the NFE Collaborative that would enable more interaction among the Centers. This is particularly important now, as each Center assesses their own objectives with regard to future collaborative activities.

An effective communication process that encourages the individual Centers to interact directly with each other will further strengthen the decentralized character of this collaborative venture and enhance the linkages between partners. However, such communication must entail more than simply contact between Centers, it should also include a forum in which Center Directors can meet together to discuss substantive issues and to exchange ideas for joint activities. While supplementing the ongoing contact between

individual Centers, a group meeting, held on an annual basis, would help offset the vagueries and limitations of conventional long-distance communication (via mails, telephone, and telex). But more importantly, it would provide a stimulating environment for sharing experiences and exploring new directions on a more personal, colleagial basis. The value of this kind of face to face interaction was markedly demonstrated throughout the workshop itself, and participants agreed that periodic meetings of Center Directors should be incorporated into any long range plans for continued collaboration.

Another viable means of enhancing communication and keeping each Center informed on a regular basis of the resources available from the others is through joint publications such as a newsletter, or through the periodic production of a listing of newly received documents published by each Center and distributed to network partners.

It appears that while several factors will play a key role in the continuation of joint/shared activities, one of the most critical of these is time. As was noted in the earlier discussions, time is crucial both in the immediate sense of accomplishing specific tasks and meeting contract deadlines, and in the sense of attaining the long range goals originally set.

The task schedule for the NFE Network Project involved a great deal of work for a three-year period (even with a one-year

extension), and the life of the regional Centers' association with each other and with NFEIC/MSU has been relatively short. While the Project enabled each Center to widen its audience and address new information needs within its respective region and worldwide, these activities were for the most part additional to their own daily operations. And although tasks connected with the Project were anticipated, what was not anticipated was the very striking response the Centers received in the form of increased demand for information assistance and training from persons involved in a varied range of non-formal education and development-related activities.

It is apparent that demand is growing for specialized information and training services, and it is likely that this demand will continue to grow. For each of the Centers this trend constitutes an increasing strain on their in-house operations in terms of time, money, and staffing, particularly in the context of uncertain financial resources to support these activities in the long term. Financial support provided through the NFE Network Project has enabled the Centers to build upon and strengthen their capacity to respond to regional and international requests for information assistance. Furthermore, the financial support provided for the production of publications (such as newsletters, bibliographies, and "how-to" manuals) also enabled each of the Centers to reach a large audience and to expand its range of services to suit the

diverse and changing audience needs. Yet, all of the participants expressed concern with regard to how they might continue to effectively meet this demand and at the same time remain responsive to new needs as they occur.

In light of these concerns it seems particularly important at this time for the Centers to examine the effectiveness of their services. Although the tasks each Center was contracted to do have been accomplished, and various products exist, the Centers have not had the opportunity to adequately assess their impact. Currently, indications of effectiveness are derived primarily from follow-up communications to the Centers which either comment directly on the usefulness of previous services, or request further assistance. It was recognized that both feedback and increased demand constitute a valuable gauge for assessing short-term effectiveness. But at the same time it was also recognized that a more formal evaluation is needed to assess the impact of the Centers with regard to long-term measurable change.

An evaluative study would not only provide a sound basis for assessing current impact of the Centers' activities, it would also provide data necessary for designating priority areas to focus on in the future. This is important because in order to stay responsive to the information needs of their audience, all of the Centers must not only identify, but to some degree anticipate these needs.

Obviously a secure funding base is needed if the counterpart Centers are to continue to collaborate. At this time the priority should be to locate support for a minimum range of activities necessary to maintain the collaborative functions. As was mentioned in the earlier sections, collaboration will always involve additional tasks (that is, additional to each Center's own operations) which will further intensify the already existing constraints of time, money, and staffing. In designing future activities, consideration must be given to the potential impact of these additional tasks on each participating Center, and effort should be made to establish a realistic schedule and budget that can accommodate the increased workload of each Center.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the recurring themes throughout the workshop had to do with access to information. The experiences of each of the collaborating Centers attest to an increasing demand for relevant information on non-formal education and women in development. At the same time there is an increasingly expansive body of knowledge on non-formal education being generated. The fact that demands placed on the Centers have risen significantly indicates that while useful and current information may be available, those who are most in need of such information are having difficulty locating it.

In discussing access to information, two related questions were addressed. First, how to improve the access of non-formal educators to pertinent, useful information? Second, how to best maintain and improve the Centers' service capabilities and ensure that such services are, in fact, meeting the needs of those requesting them? It was frequently noted that participation is an important component at all levels of the Centers' activities. This extends to the audience as well. And any considerations to improve audience access to information must do so in light of the audience's role as participants in a regional and international network. Therefore, close attention should be given to improving and expanding the Centers' capacities to assist practitioners and field personnel in identifying and tapping into available

resources. Six major recommendations emerged from the workshop.

These are described below:

1) Develop and emphasize training activities.

Training people in how to locate and use information resources was suggested as an important direction for the four counterpart Centers to concentrate their future efforts. Such training could focus on methods and procedures for identifying the kinds of resources needed (i.e. human, organizational, print, audio-visual, financial, technical); ways to access these resources; how to develop and manage a personal or organizational resource base; and how to expand access to a wider range of resources through the building of networks.

Related to this, another priority area for joint training is in methods of information gathering or data collection. Such training could be particularly useful to field personnel who are in a position to implement project activities at the local level. In order to identify the kinds of resources which may be useful, they must first establish the range of needs specific to the area in which they are working. In other words, they need to develop a local information base from which to work.

Additional areas that could also be addressed through joint training endeavors might include training in project management;

training in identifying potential funding sources and writing proposals; training village leaders; and training in designing gender-sensitive projects and incorporating women more directly into the different levels of NFE/development projects.

The types of training mentioned cover a range of areas identified by the four Centers in light of the types of requests directed to them as well as the responses they have received in regard to training programs they have conducted in their own regions. Clearly there is an increasing need for short-term training which could address a variety of context-specific needs experienced by persons confronting a diverse range of field situations. Taken as a whole, the four Centers of the NFE Network Project currently represent a unique combination of specialized skills and is particularly well-suited to match these skills to the diversity of NFE training needs.

Each Center expressed interest in exploring training possibilities with regard to particular needs within their respective regions. Further attention will be given to developing a plan for possible joint training activities which would draw on the individual expertise of the Centers. It should be noted that the basic framework for a collaborative training project already exists in that each of the Centers has substantial experience in

designing and conducting training, and each has produced a range of practical materials based on their experiences that could serve as useful training tools.

2) Continue to produce a substantive newsletter.

Newsletters and other publications which draw readers' attention to current resources in NFE play a key role in increasing the access people have to information, while at the same time enabling them to pursue direct contact with others who share similar interests. Each of the Centers produces a substantive newsletter which is well received and serves as an effective communication tool within each region. Given the regional strengths of the Centers, effort should now be directed toward building a stronger international base for sharing information on regional expertise and resources among those involved in NFE worldwide.

It was recognized that expanding the international distribution of each Center's newsletter would be costly and potentially redundant. However, a suggestion was made that all four Centers could contribute to a "collaborative" newsletter with production responsibilities shared by each Center according to a rotating schedule, and with costs shared by all. Another possibility suggested was that each Center could set aside space in their

own newsletter to highlight resources identified by the other Centers. Such an "international" section would also be a useful means of updating the Centers on each other's current activities.

3) Build a professional base for non-formal education.

The growing interest in non-formal education on the part of government agencies and non-governmental organizations is reflected in the increasing numbers of persons seeking professional training opportunities and academic degrees in the area of NFE. As several of the workshop participants noted, at this point in time the four Centers are in a unique position, individually and as experienced partners in the Network, to make a substantive analytical contribution to the field of non-formal education. While further discussion is needed to decide the form this contribution might take, several ideas were considered.

A joint publication addressing some of the broader issues in NFE was suggested as one possibility. With more universities beginning to offer courses and programs of study in NFE, there is a growing demand for appropriate teaching materials that combine a theoretical synthesis of the field with examples of current NFE projects undertaken throughout the world. Such a publication

could be based on regional surveys conducted by each of the Centers and compiled in the form of case studies.

Along similar lines, the suggestion was made that it might be the right time to publish a state-of-the-art overview of non-formal education which could incorporate a historical summary of the development of the field, a review of intellectual and methodological trends and contributions, an assessment of the impact of NFE in terms of global educational development, and indications of likely future directions.

Finally, consideration was also given to establishing a professional association for non-formal education which could sponsor annual meetings and perhaps produce a professional journal. This seems particularly important at this time as non-formal education becomes more explicitly incorporated into a diverse range of education and development programs, and as it comes to occupy a more prominent place within university degree programs. The sectoral diversity that has characterized non-formal education has also to some extent hampered the development of its professional identity. Currently there is no professional "umbrella" organization for persons involved in various facets of non-formal education to affiliate with. It was suggested that this kind of association could provide a context for

researchers and practitioners and students to present new ideas and to comment on the work of their colleagues.

4) Expand the NFE network.

Considerable interest was expressed in the possibility of expanding the NFE Network to include one or two more regional centers. The Caribbean, the Middle East, and South Asia were noted as regions for which there appears to be an increasing need for information resources on non-formal education and development, as well as being regions where currently there are no information assistance sources comparable to the four Network Centers. Given the high value that each of the Centers place on the benefits gained from sharing perspectives through their participation in the NFE Network Project, the inclusion of an additional center (or centers) was seen in a very positive light. However, it was also recognized that a realistic appraisal of the amount of planning and work this activity involves necessitates a long-range stable source of funding.

5) Strengthen and build existing service operations.

The letter-answering service provided by the Centers has proven to be extremely successful in addressing regional information needs. Through both the letter-answering and the production of practical publications the Centers have established a firm and

dynamic link with NFE field practitioners, project planners, and policy-makers. Center Directors agreed that both the individualized research and referral services and the publications program are critical to the ongoing effectiveness of the Centers' information assistance activities.

In terms of the immediate future, attention must be directed toward maintaining the Centers' basic services as they currently exist. This means that primary effort should be given to locating financial support for the letter-answering and the publication of Center newsletters. For the long-term, however, it is clear that each of the Centers must assess the operation of these basic services vis-a-vis the growing demand for assistance, available staff resources, and the other activities (such as training and research) which they may wish to place greater emphasis on in the future.

6) Locate funds for long-term support of collaborative activities.

The continuation of the NFE Network is contingent upon locating funds to support future activities. This was identified as the highest priority need for the four NFE Network Project Centers. The Center Directors agreed to allow NFEIC/MSU to take the lead in this while each of the Centers will continue to look for support for their own regional operations.

CONCLUSION

One of the outcomes of the NFE Network Project was the establishment of a network of NFE/WID information centers that provide assistance to development planners, practitioners, and researchers worldwide. The Project provided an opportunity and support for this to occur.

The March 1983 meeting of the Center Directors served as an excellent forum for an assessment of the NFE Network Project and as a mechanism for deliberations about future activities. Clearly, the NFE Network Project was viewed by participants as a resounding success. It provided much needed and expanded services to those involved in development activities and enabled the three counterpart centers to establish themselves in their respective regions and internationally. Equally as important, the Project drew attention to and promoted the important role that non-formal education can play in development.

The end of the NFE Network Project will not mean the end of networking activities between the four Centers. In fact, the Center Directors make it clear that they want to continue and expand upon the activities in which they have become involved under the Project. Specific recommendations for future activities were made in six areas and the Centers agreed to continue to seek financial support for these activities individually and jointly as a network.

Although not explicitly a part of the NFE Network Project, also of relevance were findings related to the nature of successful collaboration. The Centers recognized that even though they were members of the NFE Network Project they were very different, each with its own goals and objectives. Yet, the Centers had cooperated well and shared a single purpose. The discussions and reflections on this topic at the Directors' meeting identified some key principles that underlie successful collaboration.

APPENDIX A

SINENFAL (LATIN AMERICA)

SINENFAL (Servicio de Intercambio de Informacion para Programas de Educacion No Formal en America Latino) is the Information Exchange Service for NFE Programs in Latin America. It seeks to stimulate and support efforts on behalf of women in development and non-formal education in Colombia and throughout Latin America. Formerly the nucleus of an information exchange network (SINENF) linking over 300 individuals and organizations engaged in non-formal education in Colombia, SINENFAL is now extending its services to other Latin American nations.

SINENFAL's parent organization, the Foundation for Continuing Education in Colombia (Federacion para la Educacion Permanente en Colombia -- FEPEC), is a private, non-profit association of educators founded in 1972 to promote, plan, organize, and implement activities relating to lifelong education in both formal and non-formal settings. In 1973 FEPEC formed the Center for the Development of Non-Formal Education (Centro para el Desarrollo de la Educacion No-Formal -- CEDEN) to encourage the development of human resources through non-formal education and to learn about non-formal education in Colombia. A study by CEDEN of over 400 NFE programs for low-income people in Colombia documented the large number of existing programs and the great lack of communication among them. In response to this situation, FEPEC-CEDEN created

SINENF in 1975 to facilitate an interchange of ideas, experiences, resources, and materials.

To support the network, SINENFAL has developed numerous activities and services involving the collection, organization, and dissemination of information, as well as the design and production of materials according to network participants' needs. The documentation center consists of a library containing over 7,000 documents in the fields of non-formal education, women in development, health and nutrition, appropriate technology, rural development, ecology, non-conventional energy, community organization, and income generation. Much thought is being given to try to direct the library's acquisition of publications and resource materials so that SINENFAL can respond both to the immediate and the long-term needs of the users.

For network members unable to visit the library, the documentation service can furnish photocopies of requested materials, as well as providing referrals to other centers, institutions, programs, and individuals from whom related information can be obtained. In addition, SINENFAL is compiling a directory of funding institutions by geographical areas, to be made available to those involved in NFE and women in development projects in Latin America.

An expanding list of publications available from SINENFAL includes:

- A newsletter published three times a year that serves as a forum for NFE planners and practitioners to share ideas and experiences.

- Bibliographies on various subject areas.

- Eighteen audio-visual programs on early child development, health and nutrition.

- Various other publications on early child development, health and nutrition, NFE agents, and community development.

Products resulting from the NFE Network Project -- Fundacion para la Educacion Permanente en Colombia (FEPEC):

FEPEC has initiated and published a periodical, developed two extensive directories and published two "how-to" manuals. Titles of these are:

- Sinenfal, "Sinenfal: Un Apoyo a la Educacion No Formal en America Latina." No. 1, December 1981
- Sinenfal, "La Informacion: Una Necesidad Fundamental para los Paises en Desarrollo." No. 2, June 1982
- Sinenfal, No. 3, (forthcoming)
- Directory of Financial Sponsors
- Directory of Development Organizations in Latin America
- Manual de Funcionamiento de la Red de Intercambio de Informacion en Educacion No Formal y Mujer by Marcela Bucheli B.
- Manual de Funcionamiento del Centro de Documentacion by Luis Javier Ochoa and Marcela Bucheli B.

INADES-Documentation (Africa)

Founded in 1962 by Jesuit priests in Ivory Coast with ideas of democratic development and several cases of books. INADES-Documentation, the Documentation Service of the African Institute for Economic and Social Development (Institut Africain de Developpement Economique et Social), today shares information with over 300 organizations and individuals in 27 countries. In an effort to achieve its goal of helping African people take free and responsible initiative in transforming their societies, INADES-Documentation works closely with the training unit, INADES-Formation. Both institutes aim to share information and training in order to increase local participation in rural and urban economic development.

INADES-Documentation is housed in a library containing an expanding collection of approximately 35,000 documents which focus on social and economic development. Among the variety of topics covered are cooperatives, credit unions, literacy, agriculture, community development, African cultures, and appropriate technology. Within the library are reading, reference, and periodical rooms where interested persons may come to consult and borrow the documents. Because of the strong commitment to transforming information into a tool for as many individuals and organizations as possible, INADAES-Documentation has established several services designed to reach a wider, primarily African, audience of adult

educators, extension agents, trainers, teachers, students, professors, and development organizations. A brief description of each service follows.

- A bi-monthly bulletin, Fichier-Afrique (African Factsheets), reviews approximately 150 periodicals concerning African social and economic development. First published in 1973, Fichier-Afrique consists of about 50 "fact sheets," each summarizing an article chosen especially for its relevance to social structures: economic, political, religious, and educational. This service is used primarily by universities, research centers, and international organizations.

- Suggestions de Lectures (Suggested Readings), a semi-annual bulletin first published in 1977, is distributed in French-speaking Africa through the INADES' national offices in Cameroon, Burundi, and Zaire. In each bulletin, ten books chosen for their interest and importance are reviewed by various individuals collaborating with INADES. The national offices also serve as intermediaries, ordering and distributing (loaning) recommended books not available at book stores.

- Also inaugurated in 1977, "Le Service Permanent Questions-Responses" (SPQR) or Permanent Question/Answer Service responds by letter to all questions coming from persons in Africa related to topics for which the library has documentation. Committed to

answering every letter as thoroughly as possible (392 in 1979-80), the SPQR has established personalized dialogues of information-sharing with non-formal adult educators as well as those teaching and studying in formal educational systems. (Letters may be written in English, but responses are given only in French.)

- Established in the same year was "Malettes Circulantes," a book-lending service designed for use by community level workers. Currently, Malettes Circulantes reaches community development centers in rural Ivory Coast as well as national offices in Togo, Upper Volta, Burundi, and Cameroon.

- In October 1981, INADES-Documentation was equipped with a microfiche duplicator which will greatly facilitate information sharing with institutions and organizations having a microfiche reader at their disposal.

- Publications include a series of bibliographies on Africa covering such topics as planning and evaluating rural projects, cooperatives, problems of food and nutrition, traditional medicine, poultry raising, and population and rural development in West Africa. These are available for a fee to cover the cost of production.

- INADES-Edition publishes books and manuscripts, primarily on topics relevant to the diverse domains of anthropology. These are distributed, at cost, throughout French-speaking Africa.

Set up as an autonomous and independent organization in 1973 and legally recognized as a non-profit international association in 1977, INADES-Formation is a primary user of INADES-Documentation's library and services through its national offices in ten African countries (Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Rwanda, Togo, Upper Volta, and Zaire). Training is provided in agriculture, rural community development, and economic and social development through correspondence courses and on-site training sessions. INADES-Formation publishes a quarterly journal, Agripromo, for community organizers, trainers, social workers, extension agents, farmers, villagers, and all those interested in the problems of the rural world. They also publish a series of books and brochures for their correspondence courses. Many of these are practical agricultural manuals.

Products resulting from the NFE Network Project--Institut Africain Pour Le Developpement Economique et Social in Ivory Coast (INADES-Documentation):

INADES-Documentation published four annotated bibliographies and two "how-to" manuals. Their titles are:

- Alimentation et Nutrition en Afrique
- Technologies Appropriées 1: Amélioration des Techniques de Cuisson
- Technologies Appropriées 2: Amélioration des Techniques Traditionnelles de Construction

- Technologies Appropriées 3: Stockage, Conservation et Transformation des produits Alimentaires
- Organisation et Gestion D'Un Centre de Documentation
- Comment Organiser et Gerer Un Reseau de Documentation

NFE/WID CENTER FOR ASIA

The NFE/WID Information Exchange Center for Asia provides information assistance in the areas of non-formal education (NFE) and women in development (WID). The Center is housed in, and works closely with, the Department of Agricultural Education, University of the Philippines at Los Banos. Focusing on the role of formal and non-formal education in agricultural development, the Center is currently involved in building a body of knowledge in the rural social sciences that will help provide a basis for understanding the relationship between social phenomena and the rural development process throughout Asia.

Through its many activities, the Department of Agricultural Education has sought to encourage the application of knowledge and ideas to the immediate problems and needs of the disadvantaged segments of the population, particularly in the rural areas. To this end, the Department prepares and makes available materials in agricultural education, extension, and community development for the use of teachers, researchers, and fieldworkers. In addition, the Department provides technical training in these areas and supports effective agricultural and extension education work through seminars, workshops, and conferences.

In conjunction with the program of instruction and training, the Department conducts social and economic action-oriented

research in response to the agricultural needs of the Philippines as a developing nation. Complementing the instructional and research functions is an equally strong commitment to the practical application of knowledge in rural development.

The primary goal of the NFE/WID Information Exchange Center for Asia is to encourage the use of non-formal education information in educational strategies for rural development. To this end, the Center maintains a Non-Formal Education/Women in Development Information Library at the Department of Agricultural Education. This involves collecting, cataloguing, and circulating documents, books and other print and non-print materials.

Other activities of the Center include:

- Responding to requests for NFE/WID information from groups, organizations, and individuals throughout Asia.
- Preparation, publication, and distribution of four issues annually of the Center's newsletter, NFE/WID Exchange-Asia.
- Preparation and distribution of occasional papers based on research findings and field experience.
- Literature review and preparation of annotated bibliographies on various topics relevant to NFE and WID activities.
- Conducting training workshops on mobilizing rural women for group action and participation in rural development.

The Center is also actively involved in maintaining and broadening the Department's many national and international links

with other universities and development organizations. By facilitating interaction and an exchange of ideas among teachers, fieldworkers, and planners, the Center seeks to develop a continuing non-formal education network in Asia.

Products resulting from the NFE Network Project -- NFE/WID
Information Exchange Center for Asia:

The Center at UPLB has published a newsletter, Occasional Papers, workshop reports, an educational comic book and three "how-to" manuals. Their titles are:

- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 1 No. 1
"Non-Formal Education/Women in Development:
A Philippine Concern"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 1, No. 2
"The Social Laboratory in Pila"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 1, No. 3
"Woman's Role in Society-A Changing Concept"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 2, No. 4
"WID-Local Women Leaders in Rural Development"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 2, No. 5
"The Case of Non-Formal Education"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 2, No. 6
"Regional Women in Development (WID) and
Networking"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 2, No. 7
"WID and the Korean Connection"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 2, No. 8
"Focus on Thailand"

- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 3, No. 9
"The Status of Women in Bangladesh"
- The NFE/WID-Asia Exchange, Vol. 3, No. 10
"The Indonesian Woman-Today's Portrait"
- Occasional Paper #1, Profile of Out-Of-School Youths in Bukidnon by Leonardo A. Chua
- Occasional Paper #2, The Pansol Mini-Consumers' Association: A Lesson of Experience in Mobilizing Homemakers for Rural Development by Obdulia F. Sison
- Occasional Paper #4, The Filipino Women in Rice Farming by Rufina R. Ancheta
- Occasional Paper #5, A Non-Formal Education Strategy for Agricultural Development: The Case of the Bulacan Farmer's Training Center by Rogelio V. Cuyno, Zenaida Ubaldo, Emmanuel Genio, and Celia Correa
- Occasional Paper #6, Patubig Homemakers' Club Textile Scrap Sewing Project by Lilia Quizon Panganiban
- Occasional Paper #7, Linking Rural Women's Production Enterprises to Family Benefits and to Country Programmes in Korea by Han Gu Kim
- Occasional Paper #8, The Status of Thai Women in Two Rural Areas by the National Council of Women of Thailand and the Faculty of Social Administration
- Occasional Paper #9, Women Time Allocation and Adoption of Family Planning Practices in Farm Family by Abdul Halim and Md. Akmal Hossain
- Occasional Paper #10, Implications of Development for Women in Indonesia: Selected Research and Policy Issues by Hannah Papanek
- Workshop on Mobilizing and Motivating Village Women for Group Action in Rural Development
- Workshop on Intra-regional Networking in Non-Formal Education/Women in Development Information Exchange in Support of Agriculture and Rural Development

- Making Nutrition Work-Remy's Way
- How to Build and Manage an NFE/WID Resource Collection by
Lorna P. Domingo
- How to Prepare and Publish a Newsletter/Occasional Paper by
Priscilla A. Juliano
- How to Organize, Manage, Participate in Networking
Activities-Asia by Abdulia F. Sison