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Women and Infant Nutrition Field Support Project (WINS)

**WINS Reconnaissance Visit:
Assessment of Opportunities
in Nigeria**

August 5 - August 3, 1991

SUBMITTED BY:

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Finally, my brief stay in Lagos would not have been productive without the excellent administrative and logistical support provided by Ms. Gail Umeham.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the request of the A.I.D.'s Affairs Office (AAO) in Lagos, Bibi Essama, Director of the Women and Infant Nutrition Support (WINS) project, Education Development Center, Inc., visited Nigeria during the period August 5-8, 1991.

The objectives of the visit were to:

1. review with the AAO representative nutrition areas and activities which were identified by Ms. Hope Sukin (Head of the Nutrition Unit in A.I.D.'s Africa Bureau) during the joint World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID mission to Nigeria, as domains where A.I.D. has special expertise and which can be addressed through A.I.D.'s central resources; and
2. examine WINS' potential role in implementing some of these activities, in order to support A.I.D.'s program in Nigeria and facilitate program preparation activities for the National Nigerian Food and Nutrition program, to be funded by the World Bank.

Ms. Essama was assisted in my mission by Dr. Marian Zeitlin from Tufts University School of Nutrition (WINS subcontractor). Dr. Zeitlin remained in Nigeria following Ms. Essama's departure to complete certain actions that were identified and agreed upon during their discussions with the AAO.

Ms. Essama and Dr. Zeitlin met essentially with the technical and program staff of the AAO and the CCCD project. In view of the fact that the AAO is already planning a health/nutrition sector assessment and examining ways of incorporating Ms. Sukin's recommendations into its overall assistance strategy, it was recommended that formal discussions between the WINS project Director and Nigerian government officials be held at a later date.

This report summarizes the principal findings of this mission and the agreements reached with the AAO in Lagos on key issues.

II. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

During the joint World Bank, UNICEF and A.I.D. mission to Nigeria on Nutrition and Food Security (May 5 - 28, 1991), Hope Sukin identified several activities that could be undertaken by A.I.D. to strengthen the U.S.A.I.D. child survival program and support policy and program preparation activities for a comprehensive Food and Nutrition Program Proposal to be funded by the World Bank. These activities include:

1. analysis of the nutrition and child feeding components of the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey;

2. Support for the design and conduct of three studies that would provide the baseline data for the development of the nutrition component of the five year (1991-1994) national diarrheal disease control program. The following studies were identified:
 - a. assessment of hospital and maternity practices related to breastfeeding;
 - b. study of mothers' knowledge, attitudes and practices related to breastfeeding and weaning with a particular emphasis on an assessment of the constraints to appropriate infant and young child feeding at the community level;
 - c. study of the nutritional impact of a low cost commercial weaning food and assessment of the economic viability of such a scheme in Nigeria;
 - d. Vitamin A deficiency prevalence survey;
 - e. Analysis of food and other household expenditures and use of the data in the development of a national nutrition policy; and
 - f. design and testing of strategies to address the nutritional problems of Nigerian women (ref: Sukin/Chiavaroli's memo dated 5/24/91).

Agreement was reached with the AAO on the following points:

1. Given the limited resources available to the AAO and its focus on child survival, the AAO emphasized that potential WINS interventions must be done in the context of its child survival program, using the current CCCD project as the focal point for these activities. On the basis of the technical resources available under WINS, the Mission noted that WINS could play an appropriate role in supporting the National Food and Nutrition Council's efforts to address constraints to infant and young child feeding, through the development and marketing of improved weaning foods.
2. Although much work has been done in Nigeria on the development of nutritionally appropriate weaning foods (e.g. soy ogi), utilization constraints persist at the community level and the linkage with the private sector has not yet been adequately established. It was agreed that a preliminary task for WINS is to conduct an in depth review of the work that has been done in Nigeria in the area of weaning foods. The AAO stressed that it would be critical to involve the Nigerian private sector, appropriate government entities and the University community in this exercise from the beginning, and to coordinate with The World Bank, to ensure that WINS input is integrated within the ongoing Food and Nutrition Program (NFNP) planning effort. Such a preliminary review could be

conducted primarily by local consultants and funded through the WINS project. The need for WINS to coordinate with the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan in planning and implementing this review and future assessment of weaning foods was also discussed. IITA has a lot of institutional expertise in agronomic and food research in the subSaharan African Region and WINS could draw on its expertise to establish effective linkages with local research institutions.

3. Following this preliminary review and depending on the interest of the Nigerian community and of the National Food and Nutrition Council (NFNC), WINS will work with Nigerian counterparts to develop terms of reference for a feasibility study for the design and/or marketing of a low-cost commercial weaning food. The proposal will be submitted to the AAO in Lagos for review and possible funding.
4. Although the linkage between nutrition and diarrhea is understood by health practitioners and policy makers in Nigeria, strategies to effect this linkage remain to be developed and implemented. In light of the scope of work of the Mothercare proposal, the WINS team advised the AAO that WINS could also support the promotion of infant feeding (including breast feeding) as well as growth monitoring activities at the community level, to complement efforts undertaken at other levels through other A.I.D. centrally funded projects.
5. To end, the AAO Representative reiterated that his office is in the process of undertaking a health and nutrition sector assessment. He noted that additional WINS activities may be defined after this assessment.

III. NEXT STEPS/ FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

The following actions were agreed to:

1. Dr. Zeitlin will, during the remainder of her stay in Nigeria, informally gauge the interest of Nigerians from the public and private sector in participating in the preliminary review and to the extent practicable, identify local consultants for the review.
2. Depending on the local interest, and Dr. Zeitlin's availability, Dr. Zeitlin and some Nigerian counterparts will develop preliminary terms of reference for a feasibility study for the design and/or marketing of a low-cost commercial weaning food. Dr. Zeitlin will keep the WINS Project Director and the AAO abreast of her discussion, with the Nigerian community and of any plans regarding the proposed study.

3. The WINS Project Director will return to Nigeria o/a September 4, 1991 (en route to Togo) to participate in a formal debriefing session with the AAO. The objectives of this session are to:
 - a. discuss Dr. Zeitlin's preliminary findings regarding the level of interest and the potential in Nigeria for the development and marketing of weaning foods;
 - b. review the draft scope of work(s) for the required study (ies), prepared by Dr. Zeitlin and her colleagues;
 - c. discuss the major steps or actions required (and their timing) to get the feasibility study (ies) off the ground; and
 - d. discuss the type (s) of input and total level of effort expected from WINS (and other parties to this effort) to complete the study (ies) and
 - e. discuss the specifics regarding funding for the study (ies) i.e. funding sources and mechanisms.

4. Following her return to Washington, WINS Project Director will meet with Ms. Hope Sukin and Dr. Mary Ann Anderson (A.I.D. S&T/Health Technical Officer for the Mothercare Project) to discuss ways in which the technical resources available through the WINS and Mothercare projects could be combined or coordinated to support breastfeeding promotion efforts in Nigeria.