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AN EVALUATION OF
LEADERSHIP CENTER OF THE AMERICAS, INC. (LCI)
1990 MID-WINTER SEMINAR

Prepared for AID/LAC/DR/EHR

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The principal finding of the evaluation of the LCI mid-winter program at Baton Rouge is that it appeared to meet its stated objectives. It created an environment where participants were exposed to, and learned the mechanics of the democratic process, and through gaming, participants exercised and learned various leadership techniques and strategies.

The evaluation took the form of both a process evaluation and a qualitative evaluation using focus group methodology. The process evaluation was employed separately at the request of LCI, because it was testing a new training exercise (the San Simon Game) and sought the views of an outside observer. Considering that this was, in effect, a dress rehearsal, the game was very successful in engaging and sustaining the involvement of the Trainees. As would be expected with any new, multi-day simulation, the process revealed areas that could be improved before the next application. These are noted in this evaluation.

The subsequent focus group interviews offered the participants in the seminar the opportunity to offer their views regarding their training experience in the U.S., in the mid-winter seminar and, specifically, regarding the San Simon exercise as a learning experience. The Trainees were asked to role play in the focus groups as if they were the LCI Board of Directors planning the next winter seminar, and focussing on how they would draw on the lessons they had learned from their participation. The Trainees appeared to welcome the opportunity to critique both the San Simon game and atmospherics of the seminar. Their observations, outlined below, should be read in the context of constructive criticism, not as negative appraisal of their experience. As described in this evaluation, the majority of the participants considered the three weeks spent in Baton Rouge to be a worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

The sample of Trainees who participated in the focus groups surfaced the following issues as those most in need of corrective action:

- The overall seminar needed greater clarity of program objectives.
- The game was too long; it needed tighter controls and structure.
- Indifference, and cultural insensitivity of some staff members detracted from the program.
- Staff and mentors were seen as needing greater professional training to better fulfill their roles.

The background atmospherics which the Trainees brought to the seminar ranged from a negative, open suspicion as to the ulterior motives of LCI and the U.S. Government, to an appreciation for the U.S. Government's interest in their countries and a personal

appreciation for the scholastic and cultural experiences they were gaining in the U.S. These diverse attitudes reflect the diversity of the backgrounds of the participants, with the Caribbean and Latin American Scholarship Program (CLASP) Trainees generally having the most positive attitudes.

Specific suggestions from the participants were for:

- recruiting seminar staff to achieve a better trained cadre of mentors and staff for dealing with diverse ethnic groups and needs.
- more representation on the staff from the Trainees' respective regions and cultural perspectives.
- greater in-depth presentation by presenters, with a more accurate analysis regarding the region.
- a more congruent representation, including knowledgeable speakers from the Trainees' respective countries or regions.
- a shorter overall length for the seminar as well as the simulation game.
- incorporation of more specific leadership skills training into the seminar.

The methodology employed in the evaluation of the program for the twelve-day process evaluation is set forth in Section II. The independent test of participant attitudes provided from the four focus groups conducted over a two-day period is described in Section III. This latter activity was conducted by two professional evaluators working under the CLASP monitoring and evaluation contract with AID/Washington.

In Section IV, based upon the evaluators' perspective of the LCI seminar, we offer some suggestions regarding areas that merit further attention. Once again it must be reiterated that the objective is not to detract from LCI's accomplishments, but, rather, with a view to suggesting to LCI where to look for removing irritants or dissonant aspects of the program that appear to be detracting from its otherwise positive impact. These suggestions are offered because we conclude that, overall, the LCI winter seminar structure, including the new San Simon training exercise, make a worthwhile contribution to leadership training for the Latin American and Caribbean participants. The recommendations follow below:

EVALUATORS SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS:**Start-up**

- A staggered start-up schedule should be adopted to accommodate late arrivals.
- LCI, from the outset, should orient the Trainees regarding seminar objectives.
- Start-up activities should include leadership skills training related to the game.
- The San Simon game ran too long. It should be at least a couple of days shorter.

Trainee Composition

- Trainee educational background should be narrowed so that presentations can be better targeted.
- The CLASP/Non-CLASP mix should be more homogeneous.
- Doctoral students are too far from the Trainee norm to be easily included in the same training format.

LCI Staff

- The LCI staff could benefit from further training in interpersonal/cross-cultural relations.
- More smiling and personal contact is needed to diminish the impression that LCI staff members are cold and detached.
- LCI staff is stretched too thinly.
- Staff size and composition should more closely reflect the Trainee population.

Presenters

- Presenters should be advised that the Trainees are more knowledgeable on Southern Hemisphere issues than their U.S. counterparts.
- Presenters should be encouraged to be candid in discussing corruption, faulty infrastructure, incompetence, etc. in their analyses of the region.

Mentors

- Mentor selection should focus more on interpersonal style to avoid unintended cultural friction.

I. BACKGROUND

In December, 1990, Aguirre International and Calvillo and Associates, its subcontractor for the Caribbean and Latin American Scholarship Program (CLASP) monitoring and evaluation contract with AID, agreed to conduct an evaluation of the Leadership Center of the Americas, Inc. winter seminar developed and implemented by LCI. This seminar is a periodical leadership training event for Latin American and Caribbean scholars studying in the United States. This winter, the seminar took place at the Louisiana State University campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana under the directorship of Dr. James Thornton. Training content included lectures from prominent speakers and the playing of a game, a simulation encounter, where participants role played as agents engaged in imaginative sociopolitical transactions taking place in a fictitious Latin American country, San Simon.

The evaluation consisted of two different but complementary activities. The first activity was an on-site assessment of the program using a process evaluation technique which stresses unobtrusive observation, a series of one-on-one interviews with key informants and informal interaction with LCI staff and administrators. The second component of the evaluation consisted of a series of four focus groups with subsegments of the training participants. Three groups were conducted on Thursday, January 3, and one group was conducted on Friday, January 4th. Dr. Alfredo Calvillo moderated groups 2 and 3 while Enrique Herrera moderated groups 1 and 4. Dr. Calvillo and Mr. Herrera alternated in the observer's function.

What follows, is the final report of the evaluation. It is organized in three sections containing the Results of the On-site Assessment (Section II), Results of the Focus Groups (Section III), and the Evaluators' Comments and Recommendations (Section IV).

II. RESULTS OF THE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

A. PROCESS EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

The objective of the site visit to the mid-winter seminar conducted by the Leadership Center of the Americas Inc. (LCI) was to conduct a delimited Process Evaluation of the San Simon simulation embedded in the mid-winter seminar. The term "delimited" is specified inasmuch as the process was to be observed only from the 26th of December forward to its conclusion on the 5th of January. The process was joined after the seminar was launched. The original scene-setting for the seminar, as well as the first week of the game's operation, were not observed. The evaluation, therefore, was limited to an observation and overview of the fluidity and the smooth continuity of the sequential events surrounding the development of the San Simon game, as well as the overall program operation during the period of the observation.

B. METHODOLOGY

The methodology chosen was a modification of unobtrusive observation. The evaluator involved himself in the environment and activities only as an observer but did not speak or take material part in any process. When asked, the evaluator identified himself as an A.I.D. contractor with responsibility for evaluating the LCI activities.

C. ONE-ON-ONE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

1. **Mentors** - These LCI staff-support members were young people brought on board specifically for the seminar. Many of them were students who had participated in previous seminars as attendees. The evaluator interviewed all the U.S. mentors as well as mentors from Argentina, Mexico, Panama, Jamaica, Bolivia, and Brazil.

2. **LCI Staff** - Interviews were conducted with Dr. James Thornton, the Director of LCI, Program Director Deborah Pomeroy, and Ridge Satterwaite, a program consultant.

3. **Participants** - Less formal but no less intense interviews were conducted with many of the student participants. These interviews took place while standing in lines awaiting one activity or another, in the dining hall, in the conference hall corridors, and outside the hall itself.

4. **Presenters** - Outside experts were brought into the seminar to speak to the Trainees on issues in their area of expertise. Two presenters were also interviewed.

D. METHODOLOGY LIMITATIONS

1. **Access** - Both the amount of time available to conduct the evaluation as well as the number of activities taking place at diverse locations represented limitations. Some material, which would not have been missed had this not been a large, multi-faceted activity, or had more personnel been available, was, of necessity, missed by the evaluator.

2. **Background** - Events and processes often were being observed without knowing the context within which they should be placed as well as the history which shaped them. Seeing someone argue or act out anger or frustration without being familiar with the antecedents, and, at the same time, without affecting the process was a major limitation. Simply put, asking questions places additional stress on unfolding events, but not asking leaves the observer wondering how or why they occurred.

3. **Selection Processes** - Selecting which events or processes to observe, as well as interpreting those events, are interactive. Often the observer unconsciously chooses to focus on that which is dramatic or out of the ordinary; this quite human response tends to slight the otherwise smooth, non-conflictive processes which are occurring concurrently.

4. **Testing** - The perceptions of the evaluator, gained during the observation of the San Simon game-playing process, could be tested against those of the participants which were elicited in the subsequent focus group interviews. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted to flesh out the observations.

5. **Staffing** - The staff of LCI is exclusively European/Anglo in appearance. The Director and a Board Member participating in the program are Anglo males, the Executive Director is an Anglo female, the staff person directing the mentors is an Anglo male, the secretary is a Cuban-descent female, who is the only Spanish-speaking person on full time staff, and finally there is a consultant, who is an Anglo male, but speaks Spanish quite well. The LCI staff has limited cultural experience out of the U.S., with only the consultant having spent any extended period in Latin America or the Caribbean.

From the beginning the LCI staff appeared to be stretched too thin; their day started early in the morning and finished late at night with no breaks evident. They never seemed to lose composure or patience with the participants, but the fatigue of the long hours they were experiencing was evidenced by their limited responses to demands. They simply had to husband their strength and emotional resources for the long haul. Their attention to administrative details and to the coordination efforts often limited their availability for interpersonal dialogue.

Despite the demands, LCI staff appeared to be very attuned to student participants' needs, but had to balance multiple demands. In practicing the necessary triage, they appeared consciously to emphasize maintaining the smooth flow of the schedule and attending to housekeeping functions over socializing.

E. STAFF - PARTICIPANT INTERACTION

1. **Interaction Styles** - Given the pace of the conference as well as the diverse demands, the most noted interactions between staff and participants were those which were logistic or problem oriented in nature. Another factor was that, by the time the observation began, the conference had been running for over a week, and fatigue was noticeable upon all, staff as well as participants. Given those factors, the staff were observed to be curt, precise, directive, and non-personal in most of their interactions with participants with few smiles being evidenced by them. The participants reported that they tended to perceive the staff as overly cold and rejecting. Participants said they felt they were perceived only as burdens or problems. They reported little warmth or positive regard coming from staff. Some participants stated that they were either ignored or brushed aside by staff as they rushed to attend to administrative duties.

2. **Participants** - The Trainees tended to separate themselves by language preference. This pattern was most evident when all were eating in the large common dining area with little intermingling being evidenced. Some sensitivity and anger to the overuse of Spanish by Hispanics was expressed by participants from the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean countries.

Trainees ranged widely in English language fluency, with a noticeable number from the Albuquerque program being almost monolingual in Spanish. This severely limited their participation in the various program activities, inasmuch as they needed translators for everything they involved themselves in, even to the extent that they could not order a soft drink in English. On the other extreme, there were many

bilingual participants who could bridge the language barrier between the language groups, and the participants from Caribbean countries who spoke only English. The Haitians represented a fourth group, some with limited English and no Spanish proficiency. This language issue tended to create divisions between the Spanish and non-Spanish speaking groups.

3. Intervenors - The presenters and corporate visitors also tended to separate themselves in the dining hall, creating pockets of isolation and distance between themselves and the student Trainees. While unintentional, it made them appear standoffish to the program participants.

The presenters appeared to be generally sensitive to the concerns of Latin American and Caribbean perspectives, but seemed to offer simplistic or shallow assessments of complex situations. Their presentations were generally of at least two hours duration, which seemed overly long given the content of the material. All presenters seemed to be cut from the same North American mold, and student participants felt that Caribbean or Hispanic presenters would have given more culturally syntonic presentations. Presenters evidenced naivete about some subjects and issues. Although they were "experts" with supposedly extensive experience with Latin America, they still seemed to suffer from a culturally chauvinistic bias in describing processes in Latin America and the Caribbean. This was especially an issue with regard to the large number of graduate students, for whom a more in-depth analysis of social phenomena affecting the region would have been appreciated, rather than a global descriptions of events or processes.

4. Mentors - The mentors included participants in prior LCI conferences, some having attended as many as three previous conferences. Others were ex-Peace Corps Volunteers. As a group, they had no notable or distinguishing attributes to recommend them for the position, other than varying degrees of personal linguistic competency and/or personal characteristics. Acceptance of the mentors by the student participants varied in relation to their ability to gain acceptance; a task which was not uniformly accomplished. As a matter of fact, many participants vocally stated that they resented and rejected some of the mentors.

The mentors appeared to the evaluator to work very hard at their assigned tasks, and they appeared to be very dedicated and conscientious. Out of a group of twenty, there were, no doubt, one or two who may have been maladapted to the task, but no dramatic evidence was observed which would support the strong emotional rejection by some of the more vocal participants, with only one important caveat; some of the mentors saw themselves in the pecking order or hierarchy in a position above the

Trainees, and this distanced them from the participants somewhat. At times the tasks of the mentor were to maintain order or to ensure compliance with the conference regimen. In helping to facilitate, if not enforce compliance, schism may have arisen from the interpersonal styles of the individual mentors.

5. **Information Dissemination** - Both the formal and informal systems of communication were very rapid and generally accurate. The staff handed out modified schedules every time a change occurred, and extra copies were always available in the main hall. Mentors were also disseminating the latest changes, and they could always be counted upon to know what was happening.

6. **Role Clarity** - Roles were not well defined, especially those of the mentors. Many student participants and mentors seemed to be unsure as to what their roles were, and the idiosyncratic styles of the mentors resulted in some of them acting autocratic and threatening at times towards their groups. Others tended to feel above the rules of decorum, and mentors were often noted having self-important talks in the back or at the sides of the lecture hall, which often tended to be disruptive to the formal presentations taking place concurrently.

F. MISCELLANEOUS

1. **Communication Styles** - A wide range of styles were evident. Some were affected by language; many of the staff and participants only had one language, and this limited both their versatility as well as their self-confidence.

2. **Heterogeneity** - Many of the younger students felt intimidated by the graduate students and the material presented. Consequently, they were more appreciative of the material presented, but they felt less sure of themselves in expressing their own views.

Many of the graduate students also tended to be overbearing and competitive, not willing to allow the diversity of interactions necessary for all to benefit from the lectures and the various processes. Graduate students, as might have been expected, were often pushing the pace and limits beyond the capacities of the younger and less-schooled participants.

3. **Gatekeeping** - Screening and traffic direction was very well done with generally two or more overlays of personnel responsible for ensuring that problem areas needing attention by the project management were covered. There was a dual front

desk system with mentors back-stopping the Pleasant Hall front desk. In addition, the management had an office down the hall with generally one or more people in attendance there. Also freely available was the list of room numbers of key staff available for any emergencies.

4. Crisis Intervention - Crisis management, as evidenced by an actual crisis, appeared to be extremely well prepared for. When a crisis situation arose, as occurred with the death of one student's father, the program person responsible called the contractor in charge of the student placement. Although information received after the fact suggests that the information given to the student regarding options for returning home may not have been entirely correct, this was not the fault of LCI. The case might also have been referred to AID/Washington for clarification of the options open to the student.

5. Emotional Support Structure - A support structure was not immediately evident. As regards the death issue, staff were tied up with the logistics of the case and the emotional needs of the student were initially left unanswered. However, a referral was subsequently made to a psychologist, who in turn enlisted support from the group. In another instance a student with an ulcer had difficulty with both spicy food and appropriate sleeping facilities. LCI staff tended to be reactive to his complaints rather than problem solving or supportive. It also escaped the staff's attention that some students felt an acute isolation due to language. In reviewing the criteria for selection to the seminar, it specifically states that students should be English language proficient. Some obviously were not, and others were marginally qualified. The mentors were obviously the logical persons with whom to lodge responsibility for language support; some excelled in this regard, others were less adept.

6. Social Activities - There were both formal and informal activities. The student Trainees organized many late night parties spontaneously to fill in the gaps when staff did not otherwise have them programmed. Many students made nightly runs to New Orleans, while others partied in nearby establishments or their rooms. In addition to these, the LCI staff had prepared a number of social events such as a New Years' Eve party, a crawfish boil, and a culminating event, i.e., a talent show, in which each country's representatives could showcase themselves. This event was a tremendous success. It was the culmination of the seminar and had almost unanimous participation of all the student participants and mentors.

7. Attendance - At any conference, there are a number of participants who come solely for the trip to the locale, but who do not participate in the conference. This

was evident here also. But, for the great majority, participation was both evident and intense. Staff were aware and attempted to include everyone through a variety of techniques. By a simple counting of heads, it was noted that attendance at the various lectures was never less than fifty percent at the beginning of lecture, with people drifting in to ultimately reach about 200 participants at most lectures. The early morning lectures seemed, as always, the most difficult to achieve sizeable attendance, with full participation not possible until after 10:30 or 11:00 in the morning.

8. Small Group Participation - Participation was noted in all the small groups. Whether dealing with regional issues or working on the San Simon game, participation was always evident and very concentrated. Perhaps this small group participation, more than in the large groups, was a better barometer of the involvement of the participants in the activities at the seminar.

9. Presence - For the most part, those who were in the body of the audience exhibited interest and respect for the speakers. Less polite were many of the mentors, who tended to sit at the back of the hall and engage each other and participants in side comments or dialogue during many of the presentations. Their attempts to control overly enthusiastic discussions would have been better served had they tried to bring the outlying participants into the body of the audience, where peer pressure would have molded a more decorous presence.

G. THE SAN SIMON GAME

The human component of the game was the LCI staff which ran the game and coordinated the environmental support system, the mentors who helped staff to facilitate the scenario, the speakers and presenters, and finally the participants themselves. The non-physical components were the living quarters, the facilities used to conduct the seminar, the eating facilities, the campus environment, and the geographical and cultural location.

The game was in full swing when the observation of the process was begun. The participation and excitement was evident in the intensity of the events and conversations. Many of the participants were swept up in the game. Simulated newspaper articles, news from television spots, posters, and various meetings all contributed to a sense of excitement and purpose. There were animated conversations going on everywhere one looked, the hallways, meeting rooms, cafeteria, and even the rooms of the participants. During the one-on-one interviews, many reported long working sessions lasting, at times,

until the early morning hours. This was particularly true of those working on media or the development of policy papers.

1. **Setting** - Literally the entire facility became part of the San Simon game. A large map in the conference hall depicted the fictitious country, but in actuality the setting occurred in the minds of the participants.

2. **Players** - Originally there were specific political parties to which the participants were assigned. These parties comprised part of the personae of the game in addition to the participants who divided themselves into various roles of leaders, organizers, and supporters. Even those who did not actively participate, became part of the game as they acted out their cynicism and distanced themselves through aloof contemplation of the proceedings. Some of the LCI staff were also instrumental in the game, as they attempted to facilitate the flow of it, but which soon left them elbowed aside in the position of bemused onlookers.

3. **Rules of the Game** - Almost all the rules of the game had been established prior to the observer's arrival. It soon became apparent from observation and dialogue with the students that the overt rules were to employ the practice of a parliamentary form of government to elect a president from the assemblage. Inasmuch as the five parties were evenly divided at the outset in terms of numbers, no one party could initially control the election. Wooing of electors through coalitions of parties as well as the wooing of individual electors then became part of the process. According to the rules, the successful party was to receive a monetary prize.

4. **Active Participation** - The involvement of the participants in the game took many forms, as has been stated. It is important to note that active participation was so intense at times that some participants in the game became so involved that they had difficulty establishing personal limits. This took the form of over-identification with their respective parties. Some participants had difficulty associating or dealing with participants from opposing parties. Personal conflicts soon were evidenced in heated discussions. Extreme overwork of the participants became the norm, as leaders and others got caught up in the mechanics of drafting policy papers and putting out press releases. Some soon lost their perspective and sense of humor as roles were played out.

5. **Game Demands** - The game demands were not so onerous or compelling as the participants made them out to be. The immersion of the participants in the game scenario outstripped the expectations of the staff, who marvelled at the intensity of

the participants. Had the time been more collapsed, i.e., being played out over fewer days, the game might not have been so demanding. Given the opportunity with the extensive time frame, the participants themselves created internal demands for winning, which exceeded the actual requirements of the game.

6. **Outcomes** - Mid-point through the game three parties coalesced into one. This strategy became another element that participants responded to with its own dynamic. The strategy, while within the rules, was seen by many participants as having implications of its own. Feelings of betrayal, of disenfranchisement, etc. were soon surfaced by members of the parties which had coalesced. Both leaders and followers soon were voicing fatigue and frustration. Participants from the other two parties used the tactic to ridicule the leaders who had entered the coalition. Many members of the coalition felt used and abused. A tremendous amount of emotion was evidenced, with many heated discussions taking place with anyone who would listen, the observers included.

However, rather than being an event which demoralized the participants or creating apathy, the event created another mobilizing force for the next stage of the game. Ultimately, one of the smaller parties was able to gather the disenchanted and disaffected electors into a winning team.

One of the most interesting points not foreseen was the troublesome nature of the monetary prize. A good deal of resentment was voiced by the participants at the use of this tactic, and the elected leader was in a quandary as to how to dispose of the money. The hardship case of the Trainee whose father had died gave them a way out. The leader, like a true politician, polled the participants and they unanimously voted to give the prize money to pay for her return to her father's funeral. That one action, by itself, probably helped many to reaffirm their unity and, at the same time, to put behind them the issue of the prize money which was always seen as somehow denigrating their efforts. The event also marked a departure from the game for many, as they dealt with the reality of their individuality and human needs.

III. RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

This chapter presents independent topline reports resulting from each individual focus group. All focus group sessions were videotaped. At the beginning of each session participants were assured confidentiality. Likewise, they were asked to keep the information derived from the group experience confidential.

A. METHODOLOGY

1. **Focus Groups as a Qualitative Evaluation Methodology** - A focus group is basically a group discussion conducted to obtain participants' perceptions of a common experience. A focus group is typically composed of seven to ten participants who share some common characteristics that relate to the topic of importance to a client. Through the use of a moderator's guide, the moderator focuses the group on the different topics to be examined. The moderator attempts to create a relaxed atmosphere in the group to allow for the discussion of candid opinions with regard of the product or service being evaluated. The moderator solicits perceptions from the individuals and probes for those contrary to the majority opinion as well as for the underlying structures that give rise to such perceptions. Usually, more than one group is conducted per target segment to identify trends or patterns in perceptions. Careful and systematic analysis of the discussions provide clues and insights as to how a product or service is perceived.

There are several benefits to the use of this methodology. The discussion offers more stimulation to the participants than an interview. Synergy created through the group discussion allows for collecting information more quickly and efficiently than through the development of tailor-made quantitative methods. Data collected over the course of a week is available to a client in matter of days. This is particularly advantageous in the private sector, where the availability of information may mean the gain or loss of an advantageous competitive situation. In this instance, Aguirre International opted for and offered the use of this technique to gain first-hand knowledge about the perceptions of trainees regarding the leadership training provided by LCI.

There are a number of limitations to the method. The sample is in no way representative of the population. While a number of criteria are established to ensure a meaningful sample, there is no random selection of participants for the groups. Also, the use of a small number of groups to examine a concern provide information that is impressionistic. The information cannot be subjected to any type of statistical analysis. Another factor affecting representativeness is that the participants themselves by the mere fact of being selected for a group discussion may be distinct from other users of the service. Also, the focus group interview has less control over the nature of the data obtained that provided through an individual interview. Finally, without a skilled moderator-observer team, the discussion may prove fruitless.

2. **Recruitment Criteria and Sample** - The recruitment criteria and the sample were the first two issues discussed at the inception of the evaluation. As such, the groups were identified and recruited based on a CLASP affiliation, the participants' gender and their leadership displayed during the training. Additionally, the intention was to screen and

select a balanced number of participants from the Caribbean and continental Latin America. To this end, a short screening questionnaire was developed and administered to all potential participants prior the beginning of each group. Some potential group respondents were terminated during the screening process. (To review the screening questionnaire, please turn to Appendix A).

3. **Instrumentation** - To allow the comparing and contrasting of information, a Moderator's Guide was developed prior the conduction of the groups (Appendix B). In the course of the evaluation, this instrument, however, was changed just prior the conducting of group 4. The change responded to a methodological strategy to be addressed below. For the content included in the Moderator's Guide for Group 4, the reader may want to see Appendix C.

B. GROUP 1 (A CLASP, MALE/FEMALE GROUP)

1. **Group Characteristics** - Eleven respondents participated in this group. Seven were female and four male. They came, one each, from Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic and El Salvador. Two were from Guatemala, two from Costa Rica and two from Bolivia. Their ages ranged between 19 and 33 years old. Eight respondents were single and three married. Back in their countries, participants' households were as small as two and as large as eleven members. Two respondents had participated in a focus group in the past; the other nine had not. All respondents in the group were CLASP sponsored. This group discussion was conducted in Spanish. (Moderator's note: The participant from Mexico declared CLASP affiliation at the point of screening; however, to date Mexico has not participated in the CLASP training initiative).

2. **Group Dynamics** - After a statement by the moderator about the focus group objectives, participants introduced themselves. They described themselves in terms of their country of origin, and their field of study. Some were pursuing an academic degree at major U.S. universities, while others were enrolled in community colleges trying to obtain a technical-level degree. Some in the group enjoyed sports and music as free-time activities; others were more into reading and theater and/or acting. All but one were very talkative. Most were eager to share with the group their experiences in the United States and at LCI's 1990-91 winter seminar. Throughout the session, the moderator tried to incorporate the quiet participant into the discussion to no avail.

3. **Experience in the United States** - According to group respondents, life in the U.S. is different from life in their places of origin. They mentioned culture and life style as two of the major differences. They felt that the U.S. life style stresses work. Some in the group thought that life in the U.S. is fabulous: a land of opportunity, where

entertainment is readily available, with many places to go and with ample credit availability. Others, however, stated that life in the U.S. is difficult, mainly, because of how expensive it is and because of the discrimination experienced by minority groups, such as Hispanics. This particular issue was countered by one respondent who stated, "It depends how you present yourself."

Additional comments regarding life in the United States included the concepts of freedom and democracy. According to respondents, in the U.S., the free participation of the individual in society is protected. Some in the group stated that life in the U.S. is comfortable but expensive. One has access to goods and services, but everything, including clothing, is very expensive. The group also characterized life in the U.S. as being "*fria*", cold. Upon probing this issue, participants pointed to individualism as a source from which such coldness emerges.

Aside from their perceptions of life in the U.S., some respondents have had the opportunity to experience life in the U.S. as guests and/or boarders in American homes. A male respondent had spent some time in the home of a Mennonite family. He spoke very highly of his experience. Others, however, feel isolated where they live, especially those living in remote rural areas. For example, one respondent stated that in West Virginia, where he lives, he is struck by the apparent general population's ignorance about other countries and cultures. Above all, respondents appreciate "the opportunity of being here (in the United States)." They also acknowledged and appreciated the U.S. higher standard of living.

Again, the adjectives that respondents associated with life in the U.S. were...

diferente (different)
fabulosa (fabulous)
libre (free)
dificil (difficult)
comoda (comfortable)
cara (expensive)
democratica (democratic) and
fria (cold)

...in that order.

Some respondents have written letters back home. One of them said that she writes letters every day. The messages contained in such communications include sharing the knowledge being acquired in the U.S., describing people they have had the opportunity

to meet and, in general, "*vivencias*", the wealth of knowledge learned from experiencing. Other themes addressed in their communications have included their experiences at LCI. Of these, the experience of how political transactions take place and their personal satisfaction with meeting new friends from other countries were emphasized.

4. The Experience at LCI: Training Objectives - The group, as a whole, was unable to articulate, with any degree of consensus, what the objectives of the LCI's training were. While some stated that the main objective was to get them together so they could meet other people from other countries, others maintained that the objective was to learn about Latin America's politics and other socio-economic issues. A few of them perceived as the main objective to learn more about P.A.N., i.e., LCI's Pan American Network component.

Other perceived objectives were:

- to analyze the status of Latin America's leadership
- to learn how AID contributes to different countries
- to discuss future opportunities for Latin America
- to learn how different people react to different issues.

5. Fiction and Reality of Leadership Training Through Gaming - In general, respondents answered questions regarding the San Simon game from two different points of view, the game as fiction and the reality of gaming. Most of those who tried to play the game for the game's sake soon found out that others were taking it very seriously. So seriously that, according to one report, two game opponents entered into a physical confrontation outside the game. Upon hearing this, one respondent commented "*por eso estamos como estamos*", that is why we find ourselves in this situation. "The game is nothing but the struggle for power", added another respondent. It represents an ideal forum for some individuals with a strong desire to be visible--so they said.

According to the group, some individuals play the game with great intensity, because they believe that, by their actions and activism, they fare a better chance of being recruited for an internship. Others, according to respondents, have their eyes set on coming back to LCI as paid mentors next year; and that is determined, according to them, by how they handle themselves in San Simon. The group stated that up to 60 percent of the motivation to play the game rests upon the possibilities of getting an "*internado*", internship. Above all, respondents said that the name of the game is to win--at whatever cost.

Two adverse reactions toward the game were detected in this group, the offering of money as a prize and the screening and selection criteria that the game imposes on participants. As far as offering \$400.00 dollars to the game's winning party, some considered that to be an insult. They also reacted unfavorably to the fact that throughout the game, the interaction takes place in English and that players were from different levels of schooling, i.e, from community college level to post-graduate work. The group did not clearly differentiate between the San Simon game and the totality of LCI's winter seminar. To them, the game was it.

Other training/environmental aspects that the group criticized were the lecturing and the perceived attitude that some staff members maintained toward interacting with them. Lecturers and lectures were, in general, perceived as inappropriate. For some in the group, some speakers did not know what they were talking about. And in their delivery, according to participants, the lecturers approach was as if they were talking down to children. Moreover, one said, "We are tired of Americans telling us what's wrong with our countries when they don't even know our reality." At this point, the moderator asked, "How about the rest of you? What...?" Silence prevailed.

6. Gaming on the Game - Toward the end of the focus group, the moderator asked group participants to game-play again. This time, however, the group was tasked to plan the activities for next year's LCI's winter seminar. They all pretended, as a group, to be sitting on the LCI's board of directors' planning meeting. Upon deliberation, respondents, playing their new role, decided to...

- plan according to time availability
- limit training content to fifteen activity-days maximum, not three weeks
- provide training on how to organize people
- make the program shorter
- teach about specific leadership and interest groups formation techniques
- adopt a seminar format
- provide real and current information for the game
- train mentors (general)
- train mentors as facilitators (particular)

At this point, the moderator asked participants to come out of character. He, then, asked them "Would you recommend the LCI training to your fellow students?" All answered "*si, pero con reformas*", yes but with (needed) reforms. The game, again, appeared not only as one component of the training, but as the training itself. It was LCI's winter seminar.

7. Evaluating the Evaluation - Just before closing, respondents were asked to react to the focus groups as an evaluation model. They reacted favorably saying that it provided them the opportunity to further express their opinions regarding the LCI experience. In turn, they asked whether their opinions were going to be taken into consideration to improve the program further. In response, the moderator restated the evaluator's position as a third-party independent entity charged with the responsibility to gather data and report it to its clients; in this instance, AID/Washington and LCI.

C. GROUP 2 (A CLASP/NON-CLASP, MALE GROUP)

1. Group Characteristics - Ten respondents participated in this group. Together, they represented ten different countries: Jamaica, Colombia, Panama, Haiti, Guatemala, Peru, Dominican Republic, St. Kitts, Costa Rica and Bolivia. Their ages ranged from 22 to 32 years. Seven were single, one checked "other" and two did not declare their marital status. Back home, the respondents' household size varied from two to eight members. The participants' length of stay in the U.S. also varied; some have been here for no more than eighteen months, while others were long-time residents in the States with up to a nine-years stay. The participants' household incomes were as low as two thousand a year and as high as thirty thousand. Five participants were CLASP sponsored, and five were not. Five preferred to communicate in English, two preferred Spanish and three stated feeling equally comfortable communicating in English and Spanish.

2. Group Dynamics - The group perceptions of life in the United States varied. For some, the U.S. has provided them with an opportunity to widen their horizons and to profit from schooling and other experiences. For others, life in the United States is a dichotomy between the wealth of the society, as evidenced by free enterprise and the commercialization of products and services on one hand, and the wide-spread existence of poverty experienced by some groups in major cities.

This group was initially very closed and minimally responsive. There was suspicion voiced as to what we, the moderators, were really after. This lack of trust was never fully overcome, but the group ultimately became less truculent in its responses. Of the four groups, this group also expressed more paranoia regarding LCI and the U.S. Government's motives in bringing them to the seminar.

3. Experience in the United States - This group's experiences in the U.S. was reflective of the fact that many of the group had extensive prior experience with the country and the culture. For those members who did not have the same prior

experiences, their comments were, nevertheless, voiced as being marginally negative. They did not expect the ignorance and poverty they encountered.

4. Experiences at LCI - The experiences of the seminar were viewed as mixed, with many citing the demands of the San Simon game as pervading all aspects of the seminar, even the interpersonal relations of the participants. In the group were individuals who had invested a lot of time and personal energy into the gaming. Some polarity and antagonism was noted among group members, as they responded guardedly to questions. Many comments were made that were defensive of their involvement in the game and the role individual members took. An intermingling of justification and description of the process evoked a series of descriptions of the game as very demanding but worthwhile. Participants said "I played it as I do life", "People tended to lose perspective and personalize the game", "People's feelings got hurt", "I learned a lot from the game", etc.

When probed as to why they thought the game was so stressful, several responded that they thought the game was set up to test them. The responses from the participants reflected the generalized feeling from the group that they were under scrutiny to see how they performed. When probed further, some said that their future was related to their performance in the game. Echoes from others suggested that many felt or operated as though internships, returning to future seminars, and even personal evaluations were all contingent on good showing in the game. This interaction between the game and the other aspects of the seminar was seen as the major reason for the intense competition and conflict in the game. The real rewards were seen as outside the game, although the game was the arena.

When probed as to why they felt they were selected to participate in the seminar, the responses ranged from "They want to know how we think", "They know we are the future leaders of Latin America", "They are building a skills bank".

D. GROUP 3 (A CLASP/NON-CLASP, MALE/FEMALE, LEADERS GROUP)

1. Group Characteristics - Nine respondents participated in this group. They were one each from Bolivia, Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay and Jamaica. Two were from the Dominican Republic and two from Belize. Their ages fluctuated between 22 and 33 years. Five were male and four female. Six were single, two married and one divorced. Their household sizes consisted of two to four members with annual household incomes between ten and fifteen thousand a year. They all have been in the United States between one and three years. One respondent had previously participated in a focus

group. As far as language of preference, three respondents stated English, two Spanish and three declared having no preference. Those who preferred English were from English-speaking nations. They did not understand Spanish. Only two out of the nine respondents were CLASP scholars.

2. **Group Dynamics** - This, perhaps, was the best schooled and most active focus group. Almost all were pursuing a higher degree at a major U.S. university including Masters and Ph.D's. The successful presidential candidate in the seminar game was present in this group. All respondents participated vividly in all discussions, bringing about and defending--when necessary--their own perspective. They provided the moderator and observer with an in-depth analysis of their stay and participation in all LCI activities. Because of the nature of the group, i.e., a concert of Caribbean and continental Latin Americans, some regional distinctions were addressed rather intensely. The group was conducted in English.

3. **Experience the United States** - Some respondents characterized life in the United States as being impersonal and materialistic. Others stated that they have been adversely affected by the bureaucracy and, as one put it, "When I first came, I felt as if everyone was out to get me." Still others felt the existence of discrimination and lack of *calor*, warmth. One said, "In Panama you can feel *calor* but here, like in New York, nothing comes from the heart."

4. **The Experience at LCI** - Despite their effort to be responsive to the moderator's questions about LCI's goals and objectives for the winter seminar, group participants had a hard time reporting what, in their view, were such objectives. Instead, many opted for reporting their own objectives when coming to the Seminar. Some came driven by the mere desire to interact with other people. Others came for knowledge and the development of natural skills. One stated, "I came to relax, to have fun." Also, some came to LCI because no alternative seemed as interesting. As one put it, "The alternative was to be cold and lonely in Texas." Other motives were "for vacation," "to be in contact with Latin American people" and "as a transition to go back to my country." One just came with the idea of networking. And one, knowing, somewhat, that one of the objective was to learn about leadership emphatically stated, "There is nothing they can teach me about leadership!"

At one point, the moderator asked the group to characterized the United States. The adjectives used were...

- poor
- ignorant

- workaholic
- opportunity
- fast
- advanced technology
- bureaucratic
- organized, and
- friendly

...in that order.

Respondents contrasted the expectations they held of the LCI experience with what they actually got. Most stated that it was not nearly what they expected. They criticized, strongly, the eleven-hour work days. Those who had written home had sent messages such as, "I'm exhausted."

Other complaints included the different type of accommodations granted to men and women. A male participant said, "I feel I've been discriminated against because I am a man." According to them, the women got the suites and the men got the barracks. Some in the group complained, also, about being so involved as to not knowing what day of the week it was. According to the group, campaigning for a political party and/or developing a platform, which was part of the game played for training purposes, absorbed the individual to the extent that he or she felt removed from the outside world.

Above all, however, most expressed their satisfaction with the opportunity that LCI had provided them to interact with others and, for those coming from the Caribbean, getting to know continental Latin America through its people was a rewarding experience. As one put it, it was rewarding to extend oneself into areas not previously experienced. Many in the group expressed their satisfaction with their perceived increased ability to patiently listen to other people and other points of view, the exercising of democratic transactions and the pursuit of objectivity. Others in the group saw, in the game, an opportunity to put into play their advertising and marketing abilities. Still others were fond of the group dynamics experienced during the game exercise.

Practical learning experiences included the ability to work under pressure and the ability to explore and exploit individual skills--they said. Some in the group were touched by experiencing, first-hand, the acquisition of power and its consequences. Under this general theme, some learned how to set political goals and how and when to compromise.

Again, the question was posed by the moderator: What are the goals and objectives of the Seminar? The immediate response given was, "They want to know who we are, how we think and what are we going to do." No one contradicted the respondent. Instead one added, "We are the future leaders of our countries."

E. GROUP 4 (A FEMALE, CLASP/NON-CLASP GROUP)

The moderator explained to participants the purpose of the group, and stressed the importance of speaking their opinions freely. He assured them individual confidentiality and explained to them that, in contrast to groups 1, 2 and 3, for this group discussion the group would have to volunteer the topics. He, further, explained the rationale behind the strategy; stating that since some of the topics for discussion had been covered during the previous activity--the LCI-run Town Hall Meeting--now participants would have to enunciate the topics they would like to discuss. As a recommendation to them, the moderator suggested that they incorporate in the agenda only issues not previously addressed in the Town Hall Meeting and those issues which they considered needed to be explored further.

1. Group Characteristics - Ten female respondents participated in this group. Two were from Peru and two from Panama. The others came from Trinidad and Tobago, Bolivia, St. Lucia, Chile, Costa Rica and Ecuador. Their ages ranged from 21 to 47. Six were single, three married, and one did not declare her marital status. Back home, their household sizes varied from two to eight members, and their combined family income ranged from eight thousand to twenty thousand dollars a year. Some respondents have been in the United States for only one year, while others have been here for up to five years. All but one of them had never participated in a focus group discussion before. Five of them were CLASP-sponsored, and five were not. As far as language preference, three respondents stated English, three checked Spanish, and four felt completely comfortable in either language.

One respondent in the group affirmed her position as a leader, in word as well as in deed. She tried to lead the group into her thinking mode. This woman was the older, perhaps more experienced, respondent in the group. She had just delivered what can be considered an advocacy speech favoring LCI's leadership training at the LCI-run Town Hall Meeting. Objectivity, however, prevailed; other group respondents countered some of the advocacy messages she had brought into the room.

2. Building a Group Discussion - After a brief self introduction of group members, the moderator told the group that defining the agenda was their first activity. He asked

them what they wanted to do and what kind of issues they wanted to address. He turned to the flip chart ready to write in the suggested topics or themes for discussion. The following topics were suggested by the participants:

- time
- allocation of resources
- organization
- participation
- staff
- purpose
- information
- age, and
- guests/lectures.

After probing for the most significant/relevant topics, respondents identified...

- purpose
- organization
- information, and
- participation

...as the four most important topics for discussion--in that order.

3. Purpose - As a group, respondents were quite intrigued as to what the purpose of LCI's training program was. They asked each other about it without arriving to a consensus. Some said, "I'm not sure." Others, however, seemed to have an understanding of the purpose of the training and/or their own objectives during the training. Expressions such as "to experience leadership" and "to learn to deal with other people" were heard.

Other assessments about the purpose of LCI's training included "to promote the relationship between North and South," "to make an impact on Latin America's future leaders," "because of democracy," "because of the private sector" and "because of President Bush's initiative." But, again, no consensus was reached. It must be noted that, as stated, these perceived objectives were more in the tone of guessing what the purposes of the program were and not a list of assertions. One respondent stated, "I got what I wanted." Others felt that the interaction with people was the most important aspect of the training.

In inquiring whether or not the purposes had been accomplished, one respondent said, "How would we know if the objectives had been accomplished, if we don't even know what the objectives were in the first place?"

4. Organization - Many organizational aspects of the training fared very well according to group respondents. Accommodations and food were highly regarded. Other aspects, however, were criticized; among them, what was perceived as the wrong mentors' attitude toward participants. One respondent reacted adversely to the mentors' lack of knowledge in general and their lack of understanding of their role as facilitators. This assessment was, in no way, generalized. According to some respondents, some mentors were very capable, knowledgeable and personable individuals. Still others in the group thought that "some mentors didn't know what their roles were."

As far as the LCI staff was concerned, respondents had various views. While some praised the staff for their effort and dedication, others were critical of the staff's attitude in relating with training participants. In grading the staff performance on a scale of 10 (high) to one (low), responses varied from nine to three. Other scores were one 7, two 6, three 5, and a 4.5.

5. Information - Even though respondents identified "information" as a major issue for discussion, not much data was collected from their deliberation on this theme, except that information to potential participants should be sent in a complete and timely manner.

6. Participation - In discussing this issue, respondents stressed the Trainees' age differences and their disparate levels of schooling as two of the major factors affecting the equal participation of all. But, despite the fact that these two differences were seen as impediments toward learning by some, others considered their association with more schooled individuals to be a challenge from which to profit.

Another issue explored was the participation of Trainees from the Caribbean and continental Latin America in the same training. The Caribbean contingent pointed out that some clashes had emerged from language differences; others, from the same region, stated that becoming aware of continental Latin America's problems was enlightening. One respondent from St. Lucia said, "Listening to all what is going on in places like Guatemala is frightening; I don't want anything like that to happen in my peaceful island."

7. Assessment of the San Simon Game - The respondents' strongest reaction toward the game was the amount of time it took to be played. Most said it was too long.

Another adverse reaction from participants regarded the use of money as an incentive. One respondent said that by doing so, a (reward) system was being reaffirmed. Another concurred saying "whomever gets the power gets the money." On the same issue, one respondent said "if you have to give money, issue San Simonean currency." Another respondent favored the payment of an initiation fee, but suggested that the money collected should be kept as an emergency fund. Above all, they stated that learning should take priority over winning. Apparently, they felt this was not the case.

Pretending that the group was LCI's board of directors planning for the next winter seminar, the respondents stated that on the first day of activities they would have an orientation. At this time, participants will receive a full explanation of what is the purpose of the program and, at the same time, the tone of the seminar will be set. Respondents stressed the importance of indicating what would be the objectives of the seminar and what the seminar would try to achieve. Additionally, respondents identified as one of the major challenges they would face the need to integrate the broad spectrum of the participants' national origin and level of schooling.

On a more practical level, respondents suggested giving what they would consider proper time to the portion of the training dedicated to preparation and writing of resumes. The respondents who appeared to be more experienced stated that resume writing was not very important to them, since they carry a well prepared resume with them all the time. Respondents felt that other important activity was the small group participation. They also suggested that an evaluation should take place after each activity.

Additional comments addressed the perceived need for adjustment on the lectures so as to make them more relevant. Some in the group also wanted to know more of "how America thinks."

Respondents were asked to score the training program in total on a 1 to 10 scale, where 10 represented the top score. The average score was 7.77.

IV. EVALUATORS' COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section are offered the evaluators' comments and recommendations based upon our observation of the LCI seminar. These views regarding areas that merit further attention are offered with a view to addressing irritants or dissonant aspects of the program that appear to be detracting from its positive impact. These suggestions are offered by the evaluators, because their conclusion is that, in balance, the LCI winter seminar structure and

inputs, including the new San Simon training exercise, make a worthwhile contribution to leadership training for the Latin American and Caribbean participants.

The observations in this section are focussed first on the San Simon training exercise, and then on the overall winter seminar context.

A. COMMENT ON THE SAN SIMON GAME

- **The game ran too long. It should be at least a couple of days shorter.**

Everyone, staff and participants, agreed that the game had run too long. This should be understood in the context that this was both a dress rehearsal as well as its debut.

- **The game achieved its objectives.**

Virtually every element of an actual electoral process was evident, i.e., the negotiations, the vying for power, the conflicts and cross purposes of the participants in playing out the game. As many participants and staff noted, the game captured the real life feeling of an election.

- **It captured all the elements of the democratic process.**

Towards the end of the seminar, Dr. Thornton convened the Trainees and staff as a plenary body to explore views on the exercise. Recommendations for the game's refinement as well as its utility for teaching democratic processes, along the lines outlined above, were made and accepted.

B. OVERALL VIEWS ON THE LCI WINTER SEMINAR

Aside from the San Simon game dealt with above, which was at the heart of the entire seminar, the following observations are offered with a view to focussing attention on areas that might be handled differently for the next iteration of the effort.

1. **Start-up** - The Trainees appeared to voice a valid concern that they were rushed to leave their campuses early with some finals not taken to attend the seminar. This would allow idiosyncratic finals schedules at the various schools to be accommodated.

Another time issue is the immediate immersion that the participants had into the San Simon game and its attendant demands. Perhaps this part of the seminar could be held off for two or three days. LCI staff noted in the exit debriefing that, in past seminars, this transitional period had been tried, and it had resulted in criticism from the participants about the seminar being too long in getting underway. A possible accommodation might be to schedule lectures or light activity to get the program going while still not jumping into the game or the more critical aspects of the seminar.

- **A staggered start-up schedule should be adopted to accommodate late arrivals.**
- **Start-up activities should include leadership skills training related to the game.**

The most consistent comment by the Trainees about the seminar was that they did not understand exactly what it was they were supposed to achieve during the training experience. This naturally left the Trainees to auto-define their involvement; a result which was successful for some, but not for others.

- **LCI, from the outset, should orient the Trainees regarding the seminar objectives.**

2. Trainee Composition - The wide spectrum of academic backgrounds of the seminar participants created problems not only in stratification of the participants, but also in terms of the interest in, and ability to internalize, the contributions of the outside experts. The presenters appeared to be under guidance to target their presentations to the least politically and academically prepared of the participants. However, the level of preparation of the participants appears to have been misjudged on the low side. Even if the presentations of the outside experts had been targeted higher, it probably would not have escaped the critical commentary of the most highly prepared of the Trainees.

- **Trainee educational background should be less broad so that presentations can be better targeted.**

Secondly, the CLASP Trainees, whose involvement in this seminar has been a major reason for its existence, are not proportionally represented at the highest levels of academic preparation, because of the nature of CLASP selection criteria. Fifty-five of the 58 participants who were studying at less than a B.A. level were in CLASP. At the other end of the spectrum, only 1 of the PhDs was CLASP versus 13 who were non-CLASP. The Masters and B.A. level participants were roughly equal. Because of this, the targeting of much of the seminar activities at the most prepared students necessarily meant that it was not targeted optimally to reach many of the CLASP Trainees.

- **The CLASP/Non-CLASP mix should be more homogeneous.**

The question that lingers is whether doctoral students are an appropriate recruitment target for this leadership seminar format. If they were not included, the removal of this fairly small number of participants would help reduce stratification as well as making the more relevant the contribution of the intervenors. A further contribution of a more narrow recruitment would be a strengthening of the role of the mentors.

- **Doctoral students are too far from the Trainee norm to be easily included in the same training format.**

3. **LCI Staff** - The critical concern is to make the seminar run smoothly, but the staff needs to balance that with a recognition that they do themselves a disservice by not putting more emphasis on public relations. Telling a student that you don't speak Spanish, without an accompanying self-deprecating apology, is viewed as rejection. Apart from the straightforward communication, the meta message is that you do not want to communicate with the person, especially if you then rush off to attend to a housekeeping detail. When this type of situation arises, staff should be advised to take the time to politely disengage from the person in order to alleviate any feeling of rejection that might otherwise be inadvertently engendered.

- **LCI Staff could benefit from further training in interpersonal/cross-cultural relations.**

The Trainees' expressed feeling of rejection by the LCI staff seemed to also reflect an interactive style issue. More attention might be given to interpersonal processes. The internal bias the participants brought to the seminar of Americans being cold and system-oriented was then reinforced and validated by staff's interactive styles.

- **More smiling and personal contacts is needed to diminish the impression that LCI staff members are cold and detached.**

The point has been made before that the LCI staff is stretched too thin. An accommodation to the lack of depth has been the use and involvement of the mentors to bridge the gap. Unfortunately there is an over-reliance on this tactic. Nevertheless, having an adequate number of staff would still not eliminate the overall responsibility of the staff to practice good P.R.

- **LCI staff is stretched to thinly.**
- **Staff size and composition should more closely reflect the Trainee population.**

4. Intervenors - LCI should make clear to intervenors that the seminar participants represent a knowledgeable, politically sophisticated audience, whether CLASP or non-CLASP and regardless whether the highest academic stratum is not present in the future. They should understand that they are expected to treat their assigned themes with not just expert knowledge, but also candor.

- **Presenters should be advised that the trainees are more knowledgeable on Southern Hemisphere issues than their U.S. counterparts.**
- **Presenters Should be encouraged to be candid in discussing corruption, faulty infrastructure, incompetence, etc. in their analyses of the region.**

5. Mentors - The contribution of the mentors to the success of the seminar varied widely depending upon whether they were former LCI Trainees or of the former Peace Corps Volunteer variety. The former tended to adopt hierarchical and authoritarian attitudes toward the participants. The latter were more inclined to relate to the participants as co-equals.

Greater emphasis in the selection of the mentors should be based on their interpersonal style. More emphasis has to be placed upon the mentors facilitating and coordinating functions and less on their policeman functions. LCI should consider drawing entirely on U.S. mentors with the necessary language skills and experience in Latin America and the Caribbean, if they are available.

- **Mentor selection should focus more on interpersonal style to avoid unintended cultural friction.**

The staff assigned to supervise the mentors should consider advising them to handle all non-critical discussions outside the presentation areas. Whenever mentors are present for lectures, they should be seated as part of the audience rather than standing in the back or sides of the hall. They should be as unobtrusive as possible, as side dialogue tends to distract the presenters and their audience.

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Screening Questionnaire

Dear participant: As you know, Aguirre International is conducting an evaluation of the LCI program. One of the evaluation events is a series of four focus groups. Would you please answer the following questions to determine your participation in one of the groups?

1. Name: _____
2. Country of origin: _____
3. Current place of residence: _____
4. Age: _____
5. Sex: M ___ F ___
6. Marital Status: single ___ married ___ divorced ___ other ___
7. Household size: _____
8. Annual combined family income: _____
9. Occupation: _____
10. Length of stay in the U.S.: _____
11. Have you participated in a focus group before? Yes ___ No ___
12. Training Program: CLASP ___ NON-CLASP ___
13. Preferred language of communication: English ___ Spanish ___

APPENDIX B**Focus Groups Moderator's Guide**

INTRODUCTION: Give a brief explanation of Aguirre International's evaluation of LCI's winter seminar and the use of focus group methodology. Establish that Aguirre International is an AID contractor, and it is not linked to or associated with LCI.

1. Moderator and observer introductions
2. Respondents' introductions: Name, marital status, field of study and free-time activities

ESTABLISHING RAPPORT

3. What do you think of the U.S.? (Convey the importance and the need for all to participate and probe: the U.S. as a country, its people, its government and institutions.)
 - 3.1. Is the U.S. the country you thought it was before you came? (Probe all answers.)
4. How would you characterize the U.S.? (After the respondents make their characterizations, ask: How would you complete this sentence: "Life in the U.S. is...."

EXPANDING THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE U.S.

- 4.1. What are the most important characteristics of the U.S.? (Probe: Democracy, liberty, and any other characteristics brought up by the group.)
- 4.2. During your stay in the U.S., how many of you have had the opportunity to write home? (Please raise your hand.)
- 4.3. Who would like to share, briefly, the content of his/her letters? (Identify and write in flip chart all themes resulting from the discussion.)
- 4.4. With reference to life in the U.S., what themes do you write about most often?
- 4.5. Group discussion of all themes brought up by respondents. (Probe: sources of information; i.e., own experiences, reports of others, television, print media, etc.)

TRANSITION: Indicate change of subject by saying, for example, "Now, let's talk about your experiences at the LCI's Winter seminar."

FOCUS ON LCI TRAINING

5. What kind of training are you receiving in the LCI Winter seminar? (Probe: program content and utilization and "most rewarding" seminar experience.)
 - 5.1. What would you say are the main objectives of the LCI seminar?
 - 5.2. Are the objectives being achieved? What leads you to say that?
 - 5.3. Is this what you expected when you signed up for the LCI seminar? (Probe all responses.) How about the rest of you, what do you think?
 - 5.4. What part of the seminar are you enjoying the most? Why?
 - 5.5. What part of the seminar are you enjoying the least? Why?
 - 5.6. Would you recommend the seminar to other scholarship students? Why? Why not?
 - 5.7. If you graded the seminar on a zero to ten scale, with ten being high, what grade would you give it?

ROLE PLAYING: Suppose you are the LCI Board of Directors planning next year's seminar activities. Draw upon your current experiences, and suggest a seminar plan that includes: curriculum, dates of activity and any other aspect of the seminar that you consider important. (Probe: logistics and level of satisfaction with accommodations, transportation, quantity and quality of free time, social environment, travel arrangements and per diem.)

6. What sort of themes would you like to see included/excluded in the seminar? Why?
7. What other type of training--if any--would you like to include in the seminar? Why?
8. What other type of trainees--if any--would you like to include in the seminar? Why?
9. Are there any other aspects of the seminar that you would consider or reconsider in next year's program? What are they?

(Moderator: Try to establish degree of consensus--or lack of it--for questions 6, to 9)

CLOSING REMARKS: Thank respondents for their participation.

APPENDIX C

Discussion Guide Used in Focus Group Four

INTRODUCTION

Explain to participants the purpose of the evaluation. Stress the importance of speaking freely. Assure them individual confidentiality. Explain, also, that in contrast to earlier groups, this group's format would be to have the group volunteer the topics for discussion. Explain the rationale behind the strategy; i.e., some of the topics for discussion have been covered during the previous activity -- the Town Hall Meeting. Therefore, participants would have to enunciate the topics they would like to discuss. As a recommendation to them, suggest that they incorporate in the agenda those issues not previously addressed in the Town Hall Meeting and those issues which they consider need to be explored further.

BUILDING A GROUP DISCUSSION

1. This is your activity, what do you want to do, what kind of issues do you want to address. Why?
2. Please suggest the topics. [Moderator: write on the flip chart all topics suggested.]
3. Discuss each topic suggested.
4. What else is important?

NOTE: The following topics were suggested by the participants for discussion:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| - Time | - Allocation of Resources |
| - Organization | - Participation |
| - Staff | - Purpose |
| - Information | - Age |
| - Guests/Lectures | |

After probing for most significant/relevant topics, respondents identified...

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| - Purpose | - Organization |
| - Information and | - Participation |

...as the four most important topics for discussion.