

**FEASIBILITY AND STRUCTURE
OF ASSOCIATIONS
OF FORMER
USAID/BRAZIL PARTICIPANTS**

Prepared for USAID/Brazil
November 1995

by

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Prepared under Contract Number FAO-0071-I-00-3070-00
Human and Educational Resources Network Support (HERNS) Activity
USAID/G/HCD/FSTA

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I. INTRODUCTION

The research presented in this report was conducted for USAID/Brazil under an IQC buy-in to the HERNS Activity. The delivery order comprises two phases to be implemented at separate times. The first phase focuses on determining the viability and potential structure of an alumni association of former participants whose training was wholly or partially financed by the Brazil mission; the second phase calls for design of additional kinds of follow-on. The in-country research, including the writing of this report, took place from November 13-24, 1995.

Both HERNS personnel and the Team Leader for the consultancy held several discussions with USAID/Brazil to refine the objective for this first phase. All parties recognized the potential difficulties in establishing a conventional alumni association in Brazil, and this recognition mandated that the first phase be primarily a research exercise. The objective of the research was to assess the viability of establishing associations of former participants in Brazil and to present options of association structure and functions to the mission.

The report which follows, brief and practical as requested by the mission, commences with the methodology employed and is followed by the findings of the research. Annexes contain relevant tables, the questionnaire, a list of individuals contacted, and commentary on the focus groups.

II. METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the present research were (i) to evaluate the viability of creating one or more associations of former USAID/Brazil participants and, if data supported viability, (ii) to propose an approach and structures for such an association or associations.

The universe of the research theoretically comprised former participants since 1990 whose training was wholly or partially financed by the mission under two contracts with Partners for the Americas and the State University of New York's Office of International Programs (SUNY). The actual sample embraced 60 returned participants, and the sample was chosen by USAID.

In order to realize the objective of the exercise, the HERNS consultants elected two methods of research: a formal questionnaire to be analyzed through a database/statistical program, and carefully guided focus groups.

The Team Leader prepared a survey instrument prior to arrival in Brazil. The mission reviewed and edited the questionnaire, which was then sent out by the Research Assistant from Brasilia to 132 former participants. The questionnaire, presented in the Annexes, sought to quantify principally qualitative information regarding auto-perception of impact, understanding of the

objectives of training provided, interest in future training, and disposition towards follow-on activities, including associations.

The mission excluded random sampling from this study, preferring to select a sample of participants known to have completed their training successfully and known to be positively disposed to responding to requests for information. Given the expressed desire of the mission to establish an association, the consultants agree that this form of selection provided a valid and useful sample for the study.

The questionnaire was administered in three ways: by fax; through direct, face-to-face interviews; and through guided group interviews preceding focus group discussions. Subsequent analysis of the data revealed no significant variation of responses that corresponded specifically to the method of administration. The high level of response by fax (over 50%) in a very short time period (from 11/7/95-11/22/95) is certainly owing in part to the selective nature of the sample.

Because the data disclosed no special relationships between variables, nearly all analysis is based upon frequency tables, which the consultants examined separately for two groups: participants from the public sector (Federal Government of Brazil) and those from non-governmental organizations.

The research also included focus groups in four highly dispersed cities gathering a total of 26 participants: Belem (7 participants), Rio (10), São Paulo (4), and Brasilia (5). The focus groups were led by the consultants according to contemporary practice of group dynamics, encouraging guided, open discussion on topics directly related to the research objectives. Thus, the information recorded during these four sessions greatly enriched the data from the questionnaires.

The consultants met twice with the responsible technical officer, Ricardo Falcao, from the mission, once at the beginning of the consultancy and a second time for a debriefing following completion of all focus group work and preliminary analysis of the data.

The final conclusions and recommendations of this report are the direct result of data analysis from the survey instrument, examination of notes and impressions from the focus groups, and extensive reflection of the consultants upon global USAID and local mission experience. Unless otherwise noted, all conclusions and recommendations are consensual and representative of the points of view of the consultants alone, however substantiated.

III. UNIVERSE and SAMPLE

This report presents analysis of 60 questionnaires that constitute our sample. USAID was not able, during the short duration of this study, to provide the numbers of total returned participants that make up the actual survey universe, though SUNY reported 231 participants trained or in progress as of April 1, 1995. Of the 60 respondents, 37 were male (62%) and 23 female (38%). One half of these returned participants work in NGOs and nearly one half in government. Their training was distributed among the following areas of strategic interest to USAID/Brazil:

Areas of Respondents' Training

<i>Environment</i>	<i>Democratic Initiative</i>	<i>AIDS</i>	<i>Youth at Risk</i>	<i>Other</i>
47%	35%	10%	5%	3%

Respondents work in the following geographical regions of Brazil:

Region	Frequency	%
Rio	15	25%
Brasilia	14	23%
Belem	9	15%
Sao Paulo	8	13%
Other cities/regions	13	22%

The rationale for the emphasis on environment and democratic initiatives was provided by the mission, which felt that these two areas would continue to receive programmatic emphasis in the coming years. The balance between government and NGOs also reflects the two focuses of training in USAID/Brazil in recent years.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

A. Perception of Training

Respondents generally exhibited good awareness of the objectives of USAID for financing their training (80%) and of the specific objectives of the training itself (78%). Given that these respondents were selected by the mission for their responsiveness, however, room remains to question why even 20% of the participants would ignore either the specific objectives of their training or the motives of USAID for financing it. Of those that responded affirmatively to knowing the specific objective of their training, all felt that the training had fulfilled the objective. Participants' perception of benefits accrued to their organizations was highly positive: only three respondents felt that their training had no impact on their organizations, confirming conclusions reached in earlier evaluations.¹ The areas in which organizational impact was perceived to have occurred were: Technical; Quality Service; Productivity; Management; and Financial Security.

On the whole, the data reveal a positive attitude towards the quality of USAID-funded training. This attitude is reflected in participants' satisfaction with the clarity of objectives for their training and in their perception of value-added to their organizations. This analysis was confirmed in the focus groups.²

B. Follow-Up

Fifty of the respondents (80%) recalled having been formally contacted by either USAID or the implementing organization (SUNY or Partners) after their return to Brazil. This is the first indication that USAID and its collaborators are monitoring their training programs. While the existence of such follow-up does not alone validate the possibility of alumni associations, its absence would have constituted a negative signal.

Discussions with the mission indicated that there had been some historical resistance to USAID, particularly on the part of NGOs. The responses of the present sample suggest that the mission may have overcome any lingering negative image, since nearly 90 percent of the NGO participants are actively interested in future training sponsored by USAID. There is a far greater preference for short-term training over long-term (54/12), and four out of five respondents would prefer their future training to be in a similar technical area to that of their most recent experience (49/12). These data suggest good selection of participants, sound programming, and potential for follow-on activities, including enhanced training.

Responses to selection of kinds of training show significant group differentiation only in fundraising and organizational development. These two areas were of low interest to participants from the public sector and of high interest to representatives of NGOs. (More than one choice was permitted.)

Future Training	Frequency	%
Training of trainers	31	52%
Technical training	30	50%
Organizational development	24	40%
Fund-raising	14	23%
Accounting	0	0

The high degree of interest in technical training is not surprising, especially in view of the percentage of respondents that cited technical know-how as the primary area of organizational impact. The interest in *training of trainers*, on the other hand, deserves comment. USAID has not offered training in this area, and nonetheless 52% of respondents noted their interest in this specialization. The focus group discussions revealed that participants were generally aware that their efforts to provide follow-on (*multiplicação*) to their own constituencies were to some degree hampered by lack of training in training itself. It is a common misconception that mere participation in training programs arms an individual with the tools to deliver training himself.

Summarizing, we suggest that our participant sample manifested a high participant interest in follow-on generally, including additional training, and our focus groups showed a demonstrated thoughtfulness on the subject. That respondents desire further short-term training; that 75% prepared to share in the costs; that they provide evidence of impact and of their own efforts to disseminate acquired skills; all suggest that the foundation exists for working in follow-up activities with such a group.

C. Interest in Alumni Associations

Interest in joining an association of former participants is high: 54 of the 60 interviewees responded positively (90%), 3 responded negatively, and 3 did not answer the question. All but one of the 30 representatives of NGOs responded positively. Of those that responded positively, all indicated a willingness to dedicate some time each week to an association. The average of all times is 3.8 hours/week; the median of 2 hours/week is probably more realistic in practice.

Other questions in this part of the survey instrument inquired into access to relevant newsletters, regular correspondence, access to e-mail, and interest in participating in electronic networks. The responses are listed below:

Networking	Frequency	%
Existence of newsletter	33	55%
Regular correspondence	50	83%
Access to e-mail	39	65%
Interest in electronic networking	43	72%

Because USAID had indicated an interest in potentially supporting electronic networking capabilities for returned participants, and given that 72% indicated an interest in it, we asked respondents to prioritize their preferences for electronic networking partners, allowing up to three choices. The following graph depicts the aggregate responses:

Priorities for Electronic Correspondence
(# of respondents)

<i>U.S. Universities</i>	<i>U.S. NGO's</i>	<i>Brazilian NGO's</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Other</i>
38	32	27	20	5

NGO respondents demonstrated greater interest in networking with both U.S. and Brazilian NGOs than their government counterparts (45/18); public sector respondents demonstrated greater interest in networking with U.S. universities than the NGOs (21/13). Both groups, however, indicated a relatively low interest in networking with former participants. The focus group discussions explain this relatively low interest: given the diversity of technical and professional specializations, as well as the tremendous geographic dispersion of participants, the simple fact of having been trained in the U.S. with USAID funding is insufficient to create groups of common interest. It will be technical, programmatic, and regional affinities, in addition to their common USAID training experience, which will give the cohesion required for effective former participant groups.

D. Conditions for Success

USAID as an agency enjoys considerable experience with alumni associations. The Human Resources Development Assistance (HRDA) Project has provided technical assistance to many such entities in Africa as well as CLASP in Latin America, while the HERNS Activity has observed and been asked to support alumni associations in various regions. A recent HERNS report characterizes an alumni association as "a technique, a method, or a tool which is used to

achieve an objective.¹³ **USAID/Brazil desires to create an alumni association to enhance follow-on of training, i.e., to further the broad distribution of impact.** The conclusions and recommendations of this report are based upon the characterization of alumni associations as a tool or method and the mission's desire to generate greater dissemination of training via such a tool. Furthermore, the conclusions and recommendations derive from analysis of the information provided by the sample consulted.

Survey data and focus group dialogue suggest that seven elements must be considered by USAID/Brazil as essential to the successful establishment and continuous existence of a participant association. They are described below.

1. STIMULUS

Only rarely do associations arise through the spontaneous actions of former participants. It is very unlikely that an association directed towards assisting USAID in enhancing the impact of training and in organizing follow-up activities will arise spontaneously. The initiative will have to come clearly from USAID. The common expression for this initiative among focus group participants was *catalisação*. USAID will therefore need to keep its expectations clear and in check, as it develops objectives and works out the implementation of its plan for such groups.

2. OBJECTIVES

Every focus group, as well as several respondents interviewed individually, emphasized the necessity of having one or more clearly stated objectives for an association. Since the desire for an association has originated from USAID, USAID should take the first initiative in proposing objectives. The difference and/or similarities in objectives stated by USAID and respondents will need to be fully discussed and negotiated, in order to avoid any push/pull which would jeopardize the group's effectiveness and lead to frustration.

Focus group members elaborated on the notion of objectives. An objective is not the same as a global vision for an organization. Some felt that a particular problem or challenge to address provides the most favorable motivation for an association, or working group.

Another expression of need for a guiding objective was proposed as a working agenda. An agenda would be the on-going programming of the association towards realization of one or more objectives. "To improve follow-on" would be an inadequately stated objective, as would be such ideals as exchange of ideas, cross-fertilization, group dynamics, and so forth. The consultants suggest that objectives for associations or working groups be expressed either in terms of specific activities, i.e., organize workshops, or in terms of the results framework for the training program.

3. ADMINISTRATION

Every focus group raised the subject of coordination, leadership, and administration for the association. Good will among constituents rarely translates into a practical role of day-to-day management. From the pedestrian duties of sending letters and faxes to more demanding tasks such as preparing agendas for seminars, viable working groups need leadership and administration.

The focus groups advanced two suggestions. One is that an association have paid staff. Depending upon the *requirements of the group*, this staff might consist of one part-time professional for several hours a week, or it might demand a competent office manager for a day or two per week. An alternative would be to locate the leadership, management, and administration for the association in USAID (apparently such a structure is already producing results with a participant group in Rio led by USAID's training officer). The point is that one cannot make individual tasks the responsibility of a part-time group.

4. MATERIAL SUPPORT

The subject of material support to a participant association arose spontaneously in two of the focus groups and was strongly supported in the others when raised by the consultants. No indication was given of interest in exceptional advantages through material support. Rather, support would go to pay such overhead items as rental of minimal office space, part-time salaries, telephone and fax usage, photocopying, mailing, and reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses when travel is required for meetings.

Subsidization of alumni associations is consistent with USAID experience in many countries.⁴ It need not be great, but its absence can suggest a lack of commitment on the part of USAID and discourage active participation. It can consist of funds, contributions in-kind, USAID staff time, or any combination of these three. Although in the past it has not always been easy to earmark funds for an association, in the new context of the results package, budgets are far more flexible. An alumni association is, in fact, a working group of USAID's ultimate customers. This dynamic of customers and results frameworks compels any future discussion of follow-on to be located in the context of the mission's strategic objectives.

5. LOCAL GROUPS

In most of the USAID countries of sub-Saharan Africa, however, the vast majority of returned participants can be found in the capital city. The Brazilian situation could hardly be more different. Highly qualified and interested participants are separated by thousands of miles in at least ten cities. Even between São Paulo and Rio ground travel from center to center can easily take 8 hours and air fares are expensive.

The first concrete suggestion the consultants heard in a focus group—one which would be repeated time and again—was that alumni groups should be local, not national. The elevated access to e-mail among participants would seem to offer promise of a virtual association.

The problem is that a virtual association will not accomplish the tasks and goals required to amplify the effect of training. The Internet is a tool of an association, not—for the time being—a medium for its existence. Electronic mail may provide for highly useful forms of networking, but it will not likely constitute the basis of a dynamic working group.

6. COMMON INTERESTS

Another condition found in many countries of Africa is that, to some extent, the *fact of being a returned USAID participant* suffices to unite individuals. This situation does not apply in Brazil. What unites former participants in this country is professional affinities. This does not mean that individuals must have the same academic background or technical expertise. As the commentary on the Belem focus group shows (see Annex), people with very divergent technical backgrounds can be closely united through shared goals. Cross-fertilization of ideas in groups almost certainly grows in proportion to common interests, regardless of individual backgrounds. Cohesiveness is sought above all in common intellectual or political interests.

7. PARTNERSHIP

In different ways, focus group participants responded with enthusiasm to working with USAID through participant associations. Many participants felt that they had a commitment to do so. Only once, however, was the expression partnership (*parceria*) used (São Paulo), and in that case it was meant literally: working together with USAID to assure the best use of training monies through improved programming. In other cases, individuals spoke of the importance of providing continual evaluation of training through working groups. Some groups liked the notion of assisting in recruitment and selection—an activity already in process on an ad hoc basis—, while others expressed hesitation about that role, indicating a need for USAID to provide clarity and seek consensus should it ask returned participants to help in this area.

In the reengineered Agency, the notion of partnership with NGOs lies at the heart of many results packages. As partners in strategic planning, NGOs, associations, and working groups provide the kind of teamwork that assures customer focus. These are the core values of today's USAID. The fact that returned participants envision by themselves a constructive and pro-active role in determining future program directions with USAID should be encouraged.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The responsiveness of the sample population to the survey, its constructive and critical spirit, appear to argue well for the establishment of alumni groups. USAID should make a **determination in the near future to pursue or to abandon the idea to foment establishment of these groups.**
2. While one USAID Technical Officer will have primary responsibility for implementing activities with alumni groups, **the S.O. Team members, having ultimate responsibility for results within each Strategic Objective, must be involved in the decision** to support alumni groups. This is not solely a Training Office responsibility.
3. If it decides to go forward with participant associations, **USAID will have to invest in their formation.** There is no apparent alternative to this investment, which will be one of time and funds. We recommend this because the alumni group activity so far described by USAID speaks to the assistance which groups can furnish to USAID. In this sense, support for services rendered must be considered as important as the ultimate benefit to USAID's NGO customer.
4. USAID must clearly establish its objectives for the formation of alumni groups, given that the mission is providing the stimulus. These objectives are likely to be different from, and be weighted differently from group or individual alumni objectives. It is USAID management's responsibility to nurture these partnerships, including maintaining clear communication about each party expectation. **The objectives for each group should be clearly established in dialogue with a prototype of that group.** The objectives should further achievement of intermediate results within USAID's results framework.
5. **USAID should probably not attempt to establish a national association.** It should work with regional groups in which a critical number of participants is found in the same city.
6. The consultants suggest that USAID initiate the establishment of one or, at the most, two returned participant groups initially. **The mission should not attempt to promote more than two groups in the beginning.** While these groups should not be viewed as experimental, they will offer the lessons needed for success in future associations.

The consultants do not offer in this report suggestions regarding the objectives and operational structure of associations, since these are matters to be worked out between Strategic Objective Team members and group constituents. We do believe that the information gathered in this survey supports the viability of regional working groups of returned participants and delineates the actions that must be taken to ensure their successful establishment.

ENDNOTES:

1. Ethel Brooks, "USAID Brazil, Intercountry Technology Transfer Program: Evaluation Report" (USAID/G/HCD/FSTA, April, 1995) and "USAID Brazil: Evaluation of the ADC Training Project" (USAID/G/HCD/FSTA, n.d.)
2. Although this survey included questions on training impact, it should not be read as an impact assessment. No true impact assessment has been done for training funded by USAID/Brazil during the last five years. One locally conducted survey, however, does demonstrate cogently that participants are bringing their acquired knowledge and skills to the workplace, and that they are also, in the aggregate, sharing this knowledge and skills formally with their colleagues. See Donald Sawyer, "Reaching Institutions Through Individuals: Results of the SUNY ADC Training Program in Global Climate Change" (USAID/Brazil, 1995).
3. Barbara Howald & Ron Springwater, *Final Impact Evaluation: Sector Support Training Project*, (USAID/Morocco), Aguirre International - The HERNS Activity, December 1994, p.51.
4. See "Guidance for Setting up Alumni Associations" in the annexes to the HRDA Project Report *USAID/Zambia: Recommendations for Improving Training Management*, by S. Votaw and R. Wollmering, September 1994.

USAID/Brazil - Selected Tables

The following few tables have been selected to illustrate responses to some of the questions most pertinent to discussions in the text. The tables do not repeat tables or graphs included in the narrative of the report. Note that percentages given are based on total responses to the questions, not on the entire sample. Where more than one response was allowed, this option is indicated.

Question 7: *Do you know what was the objective of USAID in financing your training?*

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	49	86%
No	8	14%

Question 9: *Did your training reach its objective?*

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	48	94%
No	3	6%

Question 13: *Would you want future training to be in the same [technical] area or different area?*

Response	Frequency	%
Same area	49	80%
Different area	13	20%

Question 14: *Would you prefer that this training occur in the USA or in Brazil? (some multiple choices given.)*

Response	Frequency	%
USA	54	92%
Brazil	29	49%

Question 15: *Would you prefer long or short-term training? (some multiple responses given.)*

Response	Frequency	%
Short-term	55	95%
Long-term	12	21%

Question 16: *What would be your willingness to co-finance?*

Response	Frequency	%
No co-financing	18	33%
20 percent of costs	5	9%
50 percent of costs	0	
Cost of travel	31	57%

Question 21: *Would you be interested in joining an association of returned USAID participants?*

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	55	95%
No	3	5%

USAID/Brazil - Returned Participants Survey

QUESTIONNAIRE

Data on Organization

- Name and address of organization [1.]
- Number of full-time employees [2.]
- In which sector are your activities focused:
- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------|
| AIDS () | Environment () | |
| Abandoned children () | Democratic reform () | [3.] |
- Specify the mission of your organization [4.]

Data on Training Received and Knowledge of USAID

- Number of employees who received training in the U.S. during the past 4 years:
- | | | | |
|-------|---------|---------------|------|
| 1 () | 2-4 () | 5 or more () | [5.] |
|-------|---------|---------------|------|
- How many person/months of training in the U.S. during the past year?
- | | | | | |
|-------|---------|----------|---------|------|
| 1 () | 2-6 () | 6-12 () | >12 () | [6.] |
|-------|---------|----------|---------|------|
- Was this training financed by:
- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------------|------|
| USAID () | SUNY () | Partners () | [7.] |
|-----------|----------|--------------|------|
- If yes, do you know what strategic objective of USAID the training supported?
- | | | |
|---------|--------|------|
| YES () | NO () | [8.] |
|---------|--------|------|

How many person months of training in Brazil during the past year?

1 () 2-6 () 6-12 () >12 () [9.]

Did your organization specify or accept a very specific objective for training received?

YES () NO () [10.]

Give a concrete example:

Did the training achieve this objective:

YES () NO () [11.]

Did the training referred to have a positive and measurable impact on:

your administration () financial well-being ()
productivity () quality of services () [12.]

Give examples:

Did the training have a measurable effect on the sector in which you operate? [13.]

YES () NO ()

Explain:

Data on Follow-on

Was your training monitored either during or after by:

USAID () SUNY () Partners () [14.]

Would you be interested in receiving further training financed by USAID:

in same area as before () another area ()
not interested () [15.]

If yes, would you prefer this training to be held in

the U.S. () in Brazil () [16.]

Should the training be

short-term () long-term () [17.]

What would be your commitment to co-financing:

0 () 20% () 50% () cost of air fare () [18.]

Kind of training that most interests you:

organizational development () training of trainers ()
bookkeeping () fundraising () technical () [19.]

Specify your organization's objective for this training:

[20.]

Would you be interested in workshops in Brazil?

YES () NO () [21.]

16

Data on Associations

Is there a Brazilian association to which your organization belongs or could belong?

YES () NO () [22.]

Would your organization be interested in joining an association of returned participants from USAID?

YES () NO () [23.]

How many hours per week would you personally commit to helping establish and run such an association:

Number hours: [24.]

Is there any Brazilian newsletter that carries regular news of the areas of interest to your organization?

YES () NO () [25.]

Do you correspond regularly with other organizations in your area of interest?

YES () NO () [26.]

Does your organization have e-mail capacity?

YES () NO () [27.]

If yes, would you be interested in forming a virtual association?

YES () NO () [28.]

For networking, which one of the following would constitute your priority interest:

USAID alumni () Brazilian NGOs () U.S. NGOs ()
U.S. universities () other () [29.]

USAID/Brazil - Returned Participants Survey

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Brasilia

Mr. Ricardo Falcão, USAID
Mr. Ronaldo Carneiro
Mr. Marcio Verdi
Dr. Donald Sawyer
Mr. Juan Carlos Carrasco Rueda
Mr. Bruno Pagnoccheschi
Ms. Suzana M. Padua
Ms. Ana Lúcia da Cruz
Ms. Lourdes M. Ferreira

Belém

Mr. Raimundo Moraes
Ms. Maria da Graça Azevedo da Silva
Ms. Lilian Marques Silva
Ms. Maria Margarida Figueiredo Azevedo
Mr. Carlos Moreira de souza Junior
Ms. Marília de Nazaré de Oliveira
Ms. Ana Carla dos Santos Bruno

Rio de Janeiro:

Ms. Samyra Crespo
Mr. Paulo Henrique Rodrigues
Mr. Renato dos Santos Quenel Costa
Ms. Katia Maria Guimarães de Andrade
Mr. Paulo Timm
Ms. Sonia Maria da Silva
Ms. Albina Cusmanich Ayala
Ms. Vera Caetano
Ms. Tereza Cristina Baratta
Mr. Alexandre Valle Viegas

São Paulo:

Mr. René Steuer
Mr. Paulo Spina
Ms. Lúcia Casali
Mr. Antonio Carlos Alves de Oliveira

USAID/Brazil - Returned Participants Survey

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

Belém:

Participants for the Focus Group in Belém were all trained under the Global Climate Change Program (environment). For a total of 7 participants, two focus on Indigenous languages, two were Public Prosecutors working in the environmental area, two others in environmental impact assessment and one in Geographical Information System.

Although some of these persons knew one another, the majority did not and this was the first time they met as ex participants. The group unanimously praised the opportunity. Highlights for this group were:

- Suggestion for a working group instead of a formal association.
- The Working Group should have a very clear objective and should work for a specific cause, as for example: public policies toward sustainable development.
- The group suggested a meeting with USAID Environmental Officers to discuss the priorities for the Amazon.
- The Working Group should be constituted at the state level in order to avoid travel expenses.
- The diversity of background was seen by the group as an excellent instrument for the "Working Group".
- The Belém group sees the possibility of helping USAID in the selection process as an important reason to work together.

Rio de Janeiro:

The Focus Group in Rio de Janeiro had a total of 10 participants. Five were trained under a program called PVO Leadership. Three were ex participants in Aids Prevention, and two were trained under Democratic Initiatives Programs (budget and reinventing

government).

Highlights for this group were:

- The participants at the PVO Leadership Program are already working together with Mr. Falcão (USAID, Training Officer), to develop specific topics that will be shared with other NGO's in Brazil, under a multiplication effort that is being done to strengthen management of NGO's in Brazil. Because of this large number of participants that had so much in common, the PVO group more or less dominated the meeting.
- Some people discussed the lack of institutional support to implement new practices and ideas and also a lack of institutional support for the training itself. That was not true for the PVO Leadership group, as most of them are key persons in their organizations and hold the decision process.
- Because of the lack of institutional support felt by some the participants, it was suggested that a compromise between the grantee, the institution, and USAID should be emphasized.
- The group sees very little chances for a multi-disciplinary association. They feel there is a need for similarity of interests.

São Paulo:

A small but highly motivated group. Only four(4) ex participants were able to attend our meeting. The group was divided into two participants for Democratic Initiatives and two for PVO Leadership. Highlights for this group were:

- A highly positive attitude toward USAID. They felt they have a moral commitment to work with the mission.
- Some people felt that when USAID invited training, it should also create an Agenda for the return, and that this agenda should be clear to the future grantee.
- Even this highly motivated and conscientious group feels a need for directions or some administrative person to bring and guide them together.

- Two people in this group are participating with a Rio group in the PVO effort guided by Mr. Falcão.
- The Public Prosecutors think that the contact between different organizations (NGO's in its various areas of interest and the Ministerio Publico) will be very important for the cause of human rights.
- Some people in this group thought that a regional association between Rio and São Paulo may work well.

Brasília:

The Focus Group in Brasilia had five participants. Although all were trained under Global Climate Change, two were trained in Public Policy, one had been a long-term (Masters) student in Public Policy, another participated as a long-term student in Ecology and the last one is an Environmental Education Specialist.

The highlights in Brasilia were as follow:

- The group felt that selection of participants is inappropriate work for the association. Of course, they would enjoy working with USAID, developing some additional criteria, but if USAID is supporting the training USAID should have free choice on whom to send.
- The group suggested that USAID continue to work in Public Policy for environment. A suggestion presented by some of the people in the group was to have the US program preceded by one week in Brasilia, in order for the participants to see how the public policy process happens in Brazil. By doing so, the participants will benefit more from a comparative approach. Some people in the Focus Group volunteer to prepare this part of the program.