

AGR-1

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Through:

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Comments on the Agriculture University Review Team Report

The report sheds light on what the team deems to be the necessary preconditions and inputs for attaining various project objectives such as improving quality of resident teaching, research coupled to extension or service oriented activities. Although all four of the university contracts have the same general objectives and each in its own way "can point to major accomplishments and a genuine strengthening of the host institutions in both the quality and scope of the agricultural education program", the nature and extent of impact or influence has varied considerably among the contracts.

Some observations are superficial and in certain cases incorrect because of inadequate query at the local institutions visited or incorrect interpretation of information received. For example, at the Purdue-Vigosa Project, comments on relative effectiveness of University Programs, although acceptable as general factors for consideration in improving project planning and operation, do not reflect an accurate evaluation of the existing situation (comments seem to imply that the condition described has existed throughout the life of the project, when in reality it has not. It is more likely that it represents a temporary situation brought about by a changing staff at the Vigosa Project in which one of the technicians was acting as temporary Chief of Party.) Inaccurate evaluations are also made at other institutions, probably due to lack of time to make more thorough inquiries.

The AID problems listed in the report, which apply to a large degree to the Mission, are appropriate and outline problem areas which should be given more attention in management of the contracts.

The review team's flagging of areas requiring improvement is most helpful but I do not believe their bold new approach will (intensely) assist AID in attaining impeccancy in these areas of weakness. Their listing (pages 65-71) merits consideration, especially the second paragraph on page 70. "There is great need for a new approach which can raise the level of university concern and performance while at the same time simplifying

AID's task of program evaluation and monitoring and making the process far more relevant to the essential features of higher education institutional development. There is a need for a strategy which can review the current patterns of administrative responsibility. The reversal would place a greater burden of contract performance on the shoulders of U.S. universities but would at the same time create a better mechanism for assuring performance." (underscoring added).

This may be achieved by applying certain modifications to this proposal to establish an "Institute for Development of Agriculture Education in Brazil" (IDEAB).

The present structure, lines of authority and management responsibilities permit IDEAB to operate within Brazil as an independent entity with AID funding. The Executive Director in Rio would, in essence, be on equal footing with the USAID Director. This proposal (as I see it at this juncture) will not permit cross-fertilization of this program to other AID development programs. This factor does not bother me as the fact that I do not sense a feel of mutuality. That is, where does the Brazilian university fit into the planning, administration and management of resources flowing to the IDEAB?

Although the Institute for Development of Agricultural Education in Brazil (IDEAB) appears to be a good means for providing coordination for the Agr. Education Program as well as providing an opportunity for shifting more responsibilities to the shoulders of the U.S. Contractor Universities, the board of Brazilian and American directors, and especially the idea of American and Brazilian Co-Directors resembles the "Servicio" type organization which AID has considered improper (or illegal) since operational functions are empowered to a mixed Brazilian-American governing body.

It is improbable that this mixed organization could legally negotiate Project Agreements on behalf of the U.S. Mission or negotiate sub-contracts with U.S. Universities, as suggested in the report.

IDEAB represents an organization that would assume duties now being carried on within AID's organizational structure (participant training for example) and could therefore be considered duplicative in function.

OFFICIAL

AGR-1

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It is doubtful that MEC, the Ministry through which such an organization as IDEAB would have to be cleared in Brazil, would accept such an arrangement unless it had controlling power, which it will obviously not have.

I would opt for a modification of Review Team's proposal combined with the loan proposal ARDO circulated for consideration last April.

The solution to this problem for the moment lies in not creating another bureaucratic layer for we would have no assurance that this would work any better than the present system. The solution it seems to me would be for the Mission to assure that it has the best qualified individual to take the position of contract representative for the University contracts; this man would be the project director for the agricultural education program, within ARDO, and have close personal monitoring and supervision responsibilities over the contracts.

Another point to be made from the report is that AID still lacks the will and or the power (?) to terminate contracts or technicians that don't measure up. Example: based on this report and others, including Mission audits, the Arizona contract should be terminated and I feel should be replaced by another.

WLR.

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