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FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
TECHNICAL AND TRAINING SUPPORT NEEDS OF FOOD ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS AND REFUGEES IN THE REGION

BY

PAUL THOMPSON, INTERTECT

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I. INTRODUCTION

In their studies of food assistance programs in Central America and Panama, INCAP has identified 5,665,000 people as recipients of food assistance programs. Of those 360,000 - 610,000 are identified as refugees, displaced persons or disaster victims. (An additional 240,000 received emergency food rations from the Comité Nacional de Emergencia of Guatemala in 1982.) An evaluation of the political climate suggests that the number of people in this category may actually increase. The food programs aimed at emergency conditions are often, by their nature, quickly conceived and administered unevenly. ROCAP and INCAP are justifiably concerned that any future emergency food assistance programs be administered and implemented with the same professionalism and humanitarianism as the normal food assistance programs.

(For the sake of simplicity and clarity, this report refers to emergency food programs as inclusive of all programs that provide assistance to refugees, displaced persons, and victims of natural disasters.)

The proposal prepared by INCAP, "Propuesta de un Proyecto Subregional de Apoyo Técnico y Administrativo a Los Programas de Ayuda Alimentaria Desarrollados en Centro América y Panamá," embodies an excellent concept in meeting the needs to improve the implementation of food programs in the subregion. The following comments are observations that I have made about the proposal that intend to raise questions, seek clarification, or suggest applications of the overall program to the specific cases of emergency food programs.

The following recommendations are based on my review of several documents of ROCAP, INCAP, and various project reports of food assistance agencies; interviews with several directors of agencies involved in food assistance in Guatemala and Salvador; site visits to 6 camps for displaced persons in Guatemala and El Salvador; and several meetings with ROCAP, AID, and INCAP personnel. The interviews and site visits were conducted with Lic. María Teresa Menchú of INCAP.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

The INCAP proposal isolates and identifies many elements or components that together will result in improvements in the delivery of food programs in Central America and Panama. The following recommendations, only slightly modifying the proposed project, suggests a methodology to integrate the parts of the program into a reinforced whole:

A. Identify one person at INCAP as the energy food program (EFP) specialist. This person shall:

1. be up-to-date on all technical information in this area;
2. be able to communicate the information either as technical assistance or in a teaching (classroom) situation;
3. supervise the communication of the EFP information to the local level;
4. be actively involved in on-going EF programs to validate and up-date his/her information.

B. Within the general categories of planning, training and technical assistance are several components. The subjects or content of these components reoccur in each of the categories. Many of the activities also reoccur in similar forms. This suggests that the first activity should be the development of primary resource materials to be used as:

1. reference for establishment of standards; national policies on food programs, planning coordination, etc.;
2. reference for the provision of technical assistance;
3. textbook for workshop training programs;
4. manual with a study guide for communicating this information to the intermediate and local level of food program implementation workers.

Item 4 is inserted as a concept beyond the scope of the INCAP proposal. The purpose and methods are discussed more thoroughly under "Self-study, distance education".

C. Relative to emergency food programs this report makes the following recommendations:

1. Prepare or adapt for Central America a manual for assessment of emergency food requirements applicable to refugees, displaced persons or victims of natural disasters.
2. Prepare or adapt a manual for assessment of food requirements for protracted crises or abnormal conditions such as those at established refugee camps, displaced persons camps or for displaced persons integrated into communities.
3. Prepare materials for courses in "Management of Emergency Food Programs for Refugees, Displaced Persons and Victims of Natural Disasters" and "Assessment of Food Requirements for Refugees, Displaced Persons and Victims of Natural Disasters." These courses shall be designed for use in the sub-regional training program and require no more than 2 weeks for implementation. (See Appendix I for a suggested outline for the above first course.)
4. A 1 day "executive summary" abbreviated course shall be derived from each of the above courses and be included as a module of other training courses covering normal food programs.
5. An additional 1 day module should be prepared for inclusion in the Workshop "Identificación y Formulación de Programas de Ayuda Alimentaria." This module should describe the specific concepts unique to EFP's regarding policy formulation and standards.
6. Courses should be developed for self-study distance education. These courses should include those identified in 3 as well as "Supplementary Feeding" (see draft of course of this topic under preparation for the Disaster Management Center).
7. In addition to the task forces identified in the INCAP proposal there should be a specific task force devoted to the special issues of EFP.
8. Included in the activities of "Investigaciones" should be (under A.1.) a process evaluation to implement EFP's in at least 2 countries of the sub-region.

9. Under B.1. "Investigaciones" the project should include an evaluation of the process of one emergency food program in El Salvador to determine effectiveness of procedures and implementation.

D. Involvement of representatives of the food programs participating in the refugee relief is important to the overall success of the program. Therefore, members of UNHCR and the PVO's working in food programs with UNHCR should be encouraged to participate in the INCAP project. If they resist on the grounds that they do not need additional training then they should be encouraged to participate as resources to the project. If they are still reluctant it is highly likely that the Bureau of Refugee Programs, U.S. State Department, could influence their willingness to participate. Staff members with an interest in Central American refugee affairs are Don Krumm and Tex Harris.

III. TRAINING INCAP PERSONNEL

There should be two levels of involvement of INCAP personnel in aspects relating to emergency food programs. The first is a person identified as the EFP specialist. The other will be all INCAP personnel working on projects (T.A., planning, training, research) that include an EFP component.

A. Training the INCAP EFP Specialist.

The specific training needs of the INCAP EFP specialist will depend on the skills and experience of the individual. It can be assumed, however, that the individual will not have skills or experience in all areas of EFP management, planning, operations, etc.

A training program should therefore be developed to meet the specific deficiencies of the person. The training can consist of a combination of the following:

1. INCAP contract with a consultant/EFP specialist. The consultant should a) provide all materials available on the topic; b) work with INCAP EFP specialist in a tutorial format; c) provide technical assistance in the preparation of the planned courses or modules on EFP; d) make recommendations on the training of this material to the other INCAP project staff and to the CA/P region.
2. INCAP EFP specialist work with consultant at consultants headquarters in tutorial format and

utilizing all resources of consultant's library and other technical backup.

3. INCAP EFP specialist meet with PAHO Emergency Unit director or assistant director for orientation/training. (The travel schedules of the PAHO personnel are extensive. It might be possible for such a training session to take place in either Washington or a site in CA/P.)
4. If the INCAP project develops a relationship with the Disaster Management Center at the University of Wisconsin it would be useful for the INCAP EFP specialist to have a 1 or 2 day orientation session there.
5. Additional "on-the-job" learning/training will take place as the EFP specialist participates in the survey as described in "Investigations".
6. See also items referred to under IV.D.

B. Training of Other INCAP staff in EFP issues.

A large proportion of the INCAP project will cover topics where EFP will be a component. The other INCAP staff who are not specialists in EFP will, nevertheless, need to include those issues in their technical assistance or training activities. These INCAP staff will need to participate in the training of EFP issues.

This training should be given by the INCAP EFP specialist. This training should focus on:

1. How EFP differs from normal food programs in terms of standards, procedures, program objectives, purpose and techniques of assessment, etc.
2. Introduction to special issues of food program management, logistics, and evaluation.

The total time required should be from 1 to 2 weeks.

The INCAP EFP specialist may benefit from the assistance in this training from an EFP specialist consultant and an INCAP staff person with skills in one of the sub-topics (e.g. warehouse management).

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS OF INCAP FOR EFP ISSUES

In the definition of and preparation of EFP skills and information for the project, INCAP may benefit from the following outside technical assistance.

A. Training of the INCAP EFP specialist (described under that topic).

B. Support and assistance to the INCAP EFP specialist in the training of other INCAP staff.

C. Assistance in the preparation of detailed outlines; identification of sources of information for each topic; preparation of drafts of materials which INCAP staff identifies as not having "in-house" capabilities for all new manuals, guidelines, and teaching materials produced for this project on EFP.

D. Preparation of recommendations for EFP issues on:

1. integration of EFP with long term development of affected populations;
2. standards (as distinct from normal food programs);
3. administrative procedures (as distinct from normal food programs);
4. purpose and techniques of EFP evaluation;
5. use of EFP to function as indicator of total affected community's health and nutrition status;
6. identification of materials/resources to include in the "Centro de Documentación";
7. criteria for analysis of institutional capability to execute EFP's;
8. criteria for technical evaluation of national systems on management, transportation, and distribution of EFP's;
9. criteria for evaluation of the management and effectiveness of EFP's at the level of the affected families' homes;
10. criteria for evaluating cost-effectiveness of EFP's;

11. evaluation on how to make a transition of a population dependent on EFP to become increasingly self-sufficient.

(Items 1 through 10 are simple extensions of the planned program of planning, training and research to include the unique aspects of EFP and are, for the most part, minor additions to the planned work. Item 11 is a recommendation for an additional research topic.) All of the activities of the outside technical assistant under D. should be developed jointly with the INCAP EFP specialist as one part of the process of training the INCAP specialist.

E. Assistance to INCAP on the design, development and administration of a program in self-study, distance education as a strategy to disseminate the information generated by this project.

F. Assistance in the preparation of the self-study guides for the specific courses or modules developed for distance education.

G. Accompany and assist the INCAP EFP specialist in the investigations identified above under Recommendations C.8. and 9.

V. SELF-STUDY, DISTANCE EDUCATION

The INCAP proposal includes a component for training. It outlines courses to be given at the sub-regional level for heads of departments, people involved in policy making and general administration. It is unrealistic, however, to expect these same people to become teachers and to transmit in the necessary detail this same information to their staff - at any level, from head office to field implementation. The knowledge and techniques of improved food program management, however, is needed at every level. The manuals, then, become the link to

1. the standards,
2. the information (theoretical as necessary and the practical), and
3. implementation procedures.

Classroom instruction of all of this materials for all people working in food programs in Central America and Panama is cost prohibitive and problematical. It is also unrealistic to try and get all workers into a classroom for an extended period of time, leaving their job responsibilities unattended. Furthermore, these people will sooner or later leave their job to be replaced with a new person in need of training.

One solution to a cost-effective technique accessible to virtually all literate workers and available at any time is a program of self-study, distance education. (For the sake of brevity this report will refer the reader to the University of Wisconsin - Extension Disaster Management Center materials in the appendix for a more complete explanation of the program.)

Two of the courses recommended for development under the section on Recommendations can be adopted from existing materials, i.e. the INTERTECT manual for refugee camp assessment and the Disaster Management Center course on Supplementary Feeding. The suggested outline for the third course is shown in Appendix I. The actual materials to be developed for self-study use can take several forms and be designed and written for a specific target audience. For example, courses for upper level management could be identical in format as the Disaster Management Center's standard courses. For middle level management or field workers whose job focuses on specific tasks the lessons from the courses covering those tasks might be excerpted and used separately. For field workers with less education and specific task assignments these excerpted lessons may be further simplified and developed with more graphic aids. An example of this last type would be the FAO publication, "Food Storage: Handbook on Good Storage Practice".

These courses recommended for EFP can serve as a model for development of similar courses for normal food programs as part of this project and be available for distance education.

The EFP related courses can become a part of the Disaster Management Center Diploma Program. That is, INCAP's target audience could also take these courses for certification by the University of Wisconsin - Extension. This may be of interest for persons wishing to pursue a diploma in disaster management. Another option is a letter of recognition of having completed a specialized subject area of nutrition, or the individual may simply receive a certificate of successfully completing any single course offered by the Disaster Management Center. Yet another option is for individuals to use the self-study materials but not seek certification. This last option should not be encouraged, however. It should be the goal of INCAP to support a higher level of professionalism by supporting a form of certification.

The Disaster Management Center would also be interested in discussions with INCAP for INCAP to function as a sister institution in administering, proctoring or otherwise collaborating in the implementation of training on topics of mutual interest. That is, INCAP may administer courses that might be certified by the University of Wisconsin - Extension or by INCAP or jointly.

VI. CRITIQUE OF INCAP PROPOSAL

The following are comments on the draft of the INCAP proposal that suggest revisions for the draft to agree with the EFP recommendations of this report.

1. The proposal leaves the impression that the process of its design was to list a series of problems, to describe an approach that deals with the problem, and to group these approaches under one of a handful of categories. There is clearly an interrelationship and interdependency among all of the components to achieve the programs objectives. However, it is not clear how the connections or linkages among them will be made.
2. Pages 43-47. Virtually all of the points under the discussion of objectives, results and goals will have (on implementation) a component regarding emergency food programs. A general statement that these objectives, results and goals do, in fact, include emergency food programs would be useful.
3. Page 48A, Cuadro 15, under A.2.a. and b., the development of manuals is shown scheduled for years 2 and 3. These manuals could very well be the prime source for the information and teaching tools for the talleres and for the technical assistance conducted during year 1 and the first part of year 2. They should be prepared as soon as possible so that they can not only be used as the base of information but also refined and improved as the experience of the courses and technical assistance provides feedback.
4. Page 48.B. and 48.C., under B., each of the workshops and courses should include content to cover the appropriate aspects of emergency food programs.
5. Page 48.C., it would be useful for clarity of the plan to note in this schedule that under item B.1.a. the content of the taller for the second year is intended to be devoted to emergency food programs (according to the text.)
6. Page 50, under H., in addition to those topics listed as subjectes of technical assistance the list should include emergency food program standards, procedures and management.
7. Page 55, under b., this commentary does not include guidelines for displaced persons and emergencies but the table on page 48.B. does (as it should).

8. Page 58-59, under a., the taller is described as oriented to upper level técnicos and jefes. These people (and perhaps all of the attendees of all talleres) should be invited to attend the talleres on the conditions (under contract) that they will become involved in the training of their colleagues and staff on the topics learned in the taller.
9. Page 64-66 under 4., 5., 6., and 8., each of the generic activities identified should include a component that specifically applies to emergency food programs.
10. Page 65 under 7., the logistical issues of food programs under normal circumstances and during emergencies are similar, however, some differences exist and they need to be identified and described.
11. Page 79., at the bottom of the page under evaluation of the training component; the effectiveness of the program has little to do with the number of workshops and courses given and the number of participants in them. Its effectiveness lies in the transfer of that information to the ultimate implementors and, of course, to the improvements in the quality of benefits received by the recipients, cost effectiveness of programs or conformance with humanitarian assistance. The evaluation of the program should be designed to enable the measurement of these results and to make clear at the outset that that is what is to be evaluated.
12. In general the quantified goals of this program are very unspecific and do not provide a clear target to measure success. There will no doubt be changes among the status and conditions of the beneficiaries of the food programs, but unless the goals are clear it may not be possible to measure what caused the changes which may be attributable to factors other than the food program.

VII. QUESTIONS/ISSUES/PROBLEMS

The following are additional comments about the proposal that need to be addressed in the final Project Plan or are embodied within the recommendations of this report.

A. Cost effective methods of communicating information to the lowest levels of project implementation is not addressed, but is critical to the success of the long term usefulness of the project.

B. Within the experience of emergency food program implementation there may be two distinct types of program administrators. One is the professional nutritionist or health worker who is in the field as a career. The other may be an administrator who is on rotation and will be replaced within 2 or 3 years. This may be the case with armed forces personnel in particular. Therefore, the training needs are distinct. The professional individual will need the training only once, but the position of emergency program chief will need to be trained each time that the person changes. A method of training these people who are new to the field needs to be in place and to survive the 5 year life of the INCAP project.

C. Presumably INCAP personnel will be the providers of technical assistance to the clients. Regarding those topics for which they currently need support, what is the process of identifying their training needs and how will they receive the training?

D. Cost benefit is often cited as a positive objective for food programs in general. However, with emergency food programs, cost benefit is of a second level of importance. The first level of importance is to achieve humanitarian objectives in the distribution of food.

E. In El Salvador there seems to be a desire to recategorize people who have been displaced for an extended period of times as "marginales". This may have the intended effect of being able to drop them from the special support programs aimed at displaced persons. However, if the structural problem which led to the creation of their DP status remains unchanged, and if they do not have access to jobs or other support, then these people may be unduly cut off from the only source of assistance accessible to them. The INCAP project might take an active role in identifying these, sometimes hidden, DP's and design creative ways of getting food assistance to them.

F. There are many references to guidelines and manuals in the proposal, however, the users of them are not clearly identified. Knowing who will be using them will affect how they are designed and what techniques of communication are used. If the user is not clearly identified the manuals may not serve anyone well.

(Example of Emergency Food Program Training Module)

PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR A TRAINING WORKSHOP ON
"PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT OF EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS OPERATIONS"

1. Introduction

Topic: Practical Management, basic management concepts

2. Parameters

- A. Civil War
- B. International Conflict
- C. Natural Disasters
- D. Economic Emergency
- E. Detecting Hidden Refugee and Displaced Persons
 - Through unemployment
 - Traditional social indicators
 - Refugees (or DPs) who leave home in anticipation of conflict
 - Refugees who leave home during conflict.

3. Prerequisites

A. Early Warning

- Develop sources of information at origin of refugees
- Determine where people are coming from.

B. Contingency Planning

- Constraints
- Targets
 - How many people are coming
 - who are they
 - what will they need
 - when will they arrive
 - where will they be put
- Concepts, how various circumstances will be dealt with e.g., what to do with wounded, what if there

is not enough food, what to do if not enough shelter.

C. Staff Training

- INCAP
- Counterparts

D. Coordination

- Regular contact
- Standard procedures

These form the basis of coordination.

4. Critical Components of Emergency Food Operations Management

A. Assessment

- B. Forecast, remote detection to be able to predict how many people are coming and what condition they will be in upon arrival at destination.

C. Forward Planning (Decisions)

Positioning supplies when it is known refugees or DPs are on the way, e.g., when fighting erupts in one country it may produce refugees across the border in a few days.

D. Logistics

E. Supplemental Feeding

F. Relations to Site Layout and Water Source

G. Surveillance and Monitoring

H. Systems Approach to Control

5. Practical Management Techniques

A. Bulk Ration Feeding Program

- Logistical issues
- Forward Planning Projection (Contingency, Estimating)
- Unity of Command

Central system of record keeping without shortcuts, procedures established and adhered to

- Combined operational procedures
- Manageable units of dispersements (e.g. 10 days rations)
- Way point controls
- Daily end-point audits

B. Supplemental Feeding

- "Nutrition Centered Health" concept
- What you can detect
- How to set it up

stressing outreach, going into community to detect people who need program, follow-up

- When to transition; requirements,
 - 1) constant supply of bulk rations
 - 2) good site where food can be prepared near users home

C. Relation to Other Health Programs

- Mother Child Health Program
- Expanded Program of Immunization
- Therapeutic Feeding Program

D. Related Site and Services Issues

- Water and sanitation issues (the hygiene loop)
- Water supply, transport and storage techniques and equipment necessity for adequate water storage in home so that there is enough for all water needs
- Site analysis for food program operations
- Relating food programs to community units and social services

E. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Standards
- Procedures

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