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Case Study in the Design and Organization of a Learning Program: The Food Oils in Africa Network

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Case Study in the Design and Organization of a Learning Program:
The Food Oils in Africa Network

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Masters Project
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Prelude

It was early in 1983 that I took my first Africa consulting job from my farmstead in Vermont. After the Reagan administration’s domestic spending cuts had eliminated funding to the rural health promotion center where I worked as as director, I had been unemployed for over a year. Thoughts of Africa were never too far from my mind, so the invitation to try consulting seemed like a marvelous solution to my long-standing desire to combine living in Vermont with participation in African rural development. Over the next two years I slowly increased my consulting work, for which my major client was PACT, Private Agencies Collaborating Together.

In late spring 1985, in the course of an otherwise routine telephone conversation with a staff member of PACT, an idea was broached which immediately appealed to me. Appropriate Technology International (ATI) had recently contacted PACT to explore possibilities for the two agencies to work together on a West Africa workshop concerning oil seed processing. Would I be interested to sit in on a planning meeting and, if something of mutual interest developed, to work for PACT in such an endeavor?

Thus began what became for me the most engrossing Third World development activity since I returned from living in Africa 16 years ago. It has taken me into many African communities, required development of communications skills, led to expanded technical expertise, and in some measure has become a lens through which I view this often strange field of international development.
Purpose

The purpose of this study is to document and analyze the odyssey of professional learning and growth that I have taken in the course of developing and managing the Food Oils in Africa program. At the heart of the Food Oils network experiment in long distant learning is an exploration of this fundamental question: What is the optimal method for an external development agency to cooperate with a wide array of small private voluntary agencies that are grappling with similar problems across a vast and heterogeneous environment?

Concomitant with this question in the framework of the Food Oils experiment is a pair of institutional issues: How can such a networking program be effectively organized, and what is the optimal level of involvement for a consultant-cum-manager living far from either agency headquarters or the area of operation, i.e., Africa? Perhaps not surprisingly, a number of management and personnel issues became paramount during this experiment, issues which themselves have led to significant learning about the process of consulting for development organizations.

This study is conducted on two parallel tracks. One track is that of chronicling the development of a new kind of NGO support program by a leading US association of private voluntary organizations. The second track is my own experience of this process of research, design, and implementation: the personal and professional development.
The emphasis in this case study is on the process of design and organization much more than the actual activities or accomplishments. The field workers and rural producers, their efforts in improving oils production and my encounters with them: this was the engine for my involvement in the Food Oils program over five years. Here these elements are pulled back to reveal the organization of the program that sought to assist these people.

For several reasons it is particularly timely to reflect on this five year odyssey at this point in time. After an lengthy research and design phase followed by a shorter, intense phase of implementation, the program was radically changed in recent months. In early July 1990, management responsibility for the program was abruptly transferred from my Vermont home-based office to PACT's newly created Africa regional office in Senegal.

As of December 1990 it appears that PACT has reduced to program to a small fraction of the previous level of activity. And it also appears unlikely that I will have any future role in whatever of this program is continued. Thus, a written synthesis of the experiment's genesis and problems is important not only for me personally. This documentation will be germane for those who take over responsibility without benefit of direct knowledge of the program's history. If this is not done now the opportunity will be missed to everyone's loss.

Herein lies a conflict. Probit urges candor, while propriety constrains public presentation of internal institutional and inter-personal matters. I have given this hours of consideration. In the end the only viable option,
and it is not a completely satisfactory one, is to present two versions of the study. The version presented to the Center for International Education for fulfillment of the Master's Project requirement will be for very limited circulation. A second version, available to my successors in managing the Food Oils program and to other interested parties, will be tailored so as neither to asperse nor to offend colleagues past and present.

In disciplining myself to this review and analysis of an effort that seems to have ended in such an unsatisfactory manner, I am resisting the urge to go tilting after new windmills without having wrested all the lessons from this current joust. As this essay will show, these five years of effort have been marked by tensions, conflicts, indecision, and disappointment, as well as much excitement, learning, growing and hope. Regarding the negative aspects of these experiences, I want to identify and to understand better my own participation in difficulties, in order to deal more productively with such problem areas in the future.

1. Stakeholders

The main stakeholders in this process at the beginning were ATI and PACT. Secondary players included the UN Voluntary Fund for Women (now UNIFEM), the International Development Research Center, USAID, and me as a consultant to PACT.

**Appropriate Technology International**

ATI was created at congressional urging during the height of the appropriate technology movement in the 1970's, when small was beautiful
and technological solutions seemed to be the obvious missing link in development. As a private non-profit development assistance organization its mission is concerned with the identification, assessment and adoption of technology. ATI's approach in the mid-1980s was to tackle specific technical problems with an eye to commercial applications. Typical ATI projects included the development of the most appropriate ten-ton per day cement factory for rural India, or design and testing of village-level processing equipment for sunflower oil in Tanzania.

ATI's stake in the food oils meeting stemmed largely from a need to demonstrate to the sceptical USAID office, which was its sole source of funding, that the technologies it was developing were not just highly expensive solutions to site-specific problems with limited utility. ATI was putting new emphasis on replication and dissemination, and wanted to try out some new modes of information exchange and transfer. An Africa regional food oils meeting would be a step towards identifying new users for the oil processing technologies it had developed. Also significant in the ATI's motivation was a small amount of funding left over from an old grant, funding that could be applied to such a use.

**Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT)**

Like ATI, PACT is largely a creation of the US government, but in a significantly different way. In the early 1970's, under expanding congressional pressure to work with private and voluntary development organizations, USAID agreed to finance the start-up and core budget of an association of US PVOs. USAID's intent was to have an intermediary agency to deal with the newer, less inexperienced PVOs that were coming
to USAID for resources. PACT's tasks were to organize and up-grade such
agencies, and to handle the relatively low levels of funding they required,
while reducing the management burden of USAID. Coupled with PACT's
management of grants to PVOs and NGOs through its Development Fund was
institutional strengthening efforts aimed at US PVOs and their Third World
counterpart NGOs.¹

Over the next 15 years PACT made and monitored some $38,000,000 in
grants to PVOs and NGOs, co-financing over 550 development projects
around the Third World. The bulk of my early consulting career from 1983
through 1985 consisted of visiting applicant PVOs and NGOs in Africa to
assess their proposals, evaluate their projects and in general negotiate
the terms of their relationship with PACT.

By the mid-1980s however, needs, perceptions and political attitudes in
USAID-PVO/NGO relations were changing. The USAID office that had
funded PACT, the Food and Voluntary Activities/Private and Voluntary
Cooperation office (FVA/PVC), gave notice that in the future PACT's
long-standing core grant from FVA/PVC would no longer contain
substantial amounts of money for PACT to give out as grants. The
absorption capacity and development orientation of at least two dozen
major US PVOs had expanded by the 1980s to the point were multi-year,
multi-million dollar grants were routinely negotiated between FVA/PVC
and US PVOs. In a sense, a large part of PACT's original mandate had been
fulfilled, and the function was no longer required.

FVA/PVC's message was clear: PACT must find new ways to be useful to
the PVO/NGO community and to USAID other than as surrogate donor. in
summer 1985 VVA/PVC signed a final three-year Cooperative Agreement for FY 1986-1988 under the old grant-making relationship, and thus gave PACT a breathing space and an ultimatum. PACT had two years to rethink its institutional mandate and to revamp its entire approach in order to have a completely new program proposal in place for year-long negotiations on the next Cooperative Agreement beginning in autumn of 1987. Changing the basic methodology of a consortium of some 30 member agencies with varied needs and expectations was a daunting challenge.

Besides funding for their own projects, member agencies as well as non-members had always looked to PACT for information exchange and for a form for cooperation. For years PACT had been involved in various kinds of training, facilitating and convening activities on behalf of PVOs and NGOs. This was always a secondary activity, over-shadowed by its distribution and management of grant funds. Not surprisingly, learning activities was one of the first areas in which PACT sought to expand for development of a new three-year funding proposal to VVA/PVC.

A new division was created within PACT to spearhead this re-focus of the agency, the Learning and Linkage Office. Under this office PACT's stake in the Food Oils workshop was to investigate new modalities for providing services to PVOs and NGOs that would help build a new framework for its core funding. If the workshop led to some kind of on-going activity facilitated by PACT, this could be integrated into a new approach to VVA/PVC.
to three or four yearly Africa trips, I took on more and more stay-at-home
tasks such as drafting proposals, reports and position papers. In terms of
time this peaked in 1985 when I worked over 200 days for PACT. Most of
which was spent in Vermont, with a total of perhaps 60 days in Africa and
20 at PACT's New York headquarters.

Senior PACT staff made clear during the recruitment for the Director for
Africa that, had I been willing to relocate to New York, the job was mine.
Herein lies a major long term issue: I refused to consider leaving Vermont
for full time status with PACT, yet I continued to broaden my commitment
and involvement beyond those of any other PACT consultant.

Certain PACT staff felt that my role at PACT should move beyond the
episodic subgrant monitoring trip. I concurred. My first major program
assignment was to design and coordinate a program for a group of PACT
member agencies that were interested in jointly exploring new responses
to African areas affected by the 1983-1985 drought. What evolved was
the Mali Initiative, under which PACT sponsored a nine-agency program
identification mission to Mali. With the final cycles of its Development
Fund grant money in 1986 and 1987 PACT helped many of these US PVOS
and their Malian NGO partners establish innovative programs in post-relief
rehabilitation activities.

The Mali Initiative established my professional credentials and my
personal confidence as someone who could successfully facilitate a
complex inter-agency process both in the US and in Africa. As this
three-year process coincided with PACT's drive to define new roles in its
core FVA/PVC relationship, it also helped me realize that I did not have to
accept passively someone else's offer of consulting assignments. The Development Fund trips were coming to a sure end. Perhaps I could design a continuing program that would allow me to develop on-going relationships with African and US agencies in the field.

PACT was changing its stripes and if I was to be part of the new breed I would need to define a useful role for myself in the future. True, I could not have articulated all this in that initial phone conversation about a ATI-PACT food oils workshop in spring 1985; but I certainly was on the look out for something more challenging, more integrated and more secure than whirlwind junkets for the Development Fund. This was my stake in the development of the food oils workshop.

II. Origin of the concept for a networking program (1985-1986)

Although PACT and ATI had no formal links when the idea of a joint workshop was first mentioned in spring of 1985, there existed important personnel connections between the two agencies. John Rigby, who as Director of Planning and Policy was in charge of ATI's replication services, had served as Chairman of the Executive Committee of PACT's Board of Trustees. This position put him in regular and close contact with PACT staff, including the head of PACT's Learning and Linkage office, Carolyn Straumlau. What is more, Rigby had been my direct superior for four years in the 1970's when I was a program officer and then representative in Europe for a PACT member PVO, International Voluntary Service. In brief, we all knew each other and wanted to work together.
United States Agency for International Development.

USAID's stake has already been inferred. In terms of ATI there was a demand for evidence that its expenditures in developing specific solutions could be profitably used by others with similar problems or needs. If only a handful of villagers in one region of Tanzania were ever going to use the sunflower oil press, it was hard to justify the level of investment in its initial invention and testing.

USAID's interest in PACT's transformation from intermediary funding agency to PVO/NGO coordination and support agency has been noted. With increasing decentralization of resources and authority from USAID Washington to USAID field missions, FVA/PVC's central funds for PVOs were increasingly allocated for multi-country program support. Decentralization within USAID also meant that USAID country missions have become a much more important source of funding for US PVOs, particularly under a kind of block grant known as umbrella projects. 2

In this changed environment, PACT's management of a portfolio of small field level projects was no longer a prime interest for FVA/PVC. But there were new possibilities. USAID's global priorities had shifted into sectors in which many PVOs and NGOs were not explicitly proficient, such as small enterprise promotion, savings and credit schemes, and other areas of private sector activities. PVOs and NGOs would need some help developing capacities in these and other technical and program areas.

One other characteristic of the USAID-PACT relationship that deserves note here, and which will be germane later, is the relatively superficial
evaluations of PACT's activities. When PACT's principle function was the management of subgrants, quantified measures of success were easily produced and verified. Through annual site visits PACT monitored "X" million dollars for grants made to "Y" number of IVO/NGOs in "Z" key countries. Evaluation consultants for FVA/PVC occasionally monitored PACT's overall performance as a intermediary funding agency. However, since individual subgrants scattered around the world were small, typically ranging from $20,000 to $50,000 yearly, USAID's evaluations almost never reached field sites. The training and learning activities of PACT were even less carefully studied in such cursory evaluations. By the time PACT was putting major effort into training and other learning activities, measuring impact of dozens of diverse small-scale events was simply beyond USAID's evaluation budget. USAID largely evaluated material provided by PACT itself.

Jonathan Otto, consultant to PACT

I began consulting regularly for PACT in 1983. Initially this was limited to performing field visits to potential and current subgrantee agencies in Africa. During a year-long recruitment period when the post of Director for Africa was vacant I filled in from a distance, my role and relationships with PACT staff were consolidated. Even after PACT filled the position, I continued to cover much of PACT's francophone Africa portfolio, since the new Director for Africa did not speak French.

By 1985 I had established myself within the agency as a virtual in-house consultant to the point where I was included on annual retreats and consulted on most important decisions for the Africa region. In addition
ATI’s initial offer

Rigby’s first suggestion was that PACT help ATI organize a workshop for PVOs and NGOs based on the field work of several ATI projects in the sector of oil seed processing. Recognizing PACT’s familiarity with the PVO/NGO community and its experience in convening PVO/NGO events, Rigby’s idea was that ATI would handle the substantive technical presentations, while PACT would help select participants, facilitate the encounter and handle logistical support. PACT, looking for new ways to serve its PVO/NGO constituency, responded positively to this offer of collaboration.

The workshop was to be West Africa regional, including the two countries of ATI oils activity, Cameroon and Mali, plus perhaps a few others where interest had been expressed. Details were only discussed fully much later, but the general intent was that approximately 20-30 people with background and keen interest in this field would be assembled for a two-three day exchange of data and experiences. The funding costs would be shared between PACT and ATI, with cost kept to a minimum. The thought was to do it as soon as possible, sometime in 1986.

Other partners come in, briefly

Before concrete plans could be made, however, the situation within ATI began to shift. Two other agencies of interest to certain ATI staff members were injected into the scenario, the highly respected Canadian International Development Research Center and the rapidly emerging UN Voluntary Fund for Women which became UNIFEM. Working with these
prestigious international agencies would up-grade the workshop and have ramifications for future relationships.

In different ways both were interested in oil seed processing in Africa. IDRC had post-harvest technologies as one of its program foci in West Africa. The UN Fund was setting up a Women in Food Technology program that had oil processing as a major element. In the first written mention of the concept, an August 27, 1985 internal ATI memo refers to "a possible ATI-PACT-IDRC-UN Fund information workshop in West Africa." The possible involvement of these two international agencies, especially the rapidly expanding UN Fund, also opened the door to consideration of broader topics and different geographic focus. Perhaps we should consider other food technologies besides just oils, and perhaps the West African Sahel would make a good sub-regional focus.

The first official exchange between ATI and PACT's Executive Director on October 3, 1985 notes,

"We are now considering a workshop or seminar, in early 1986, concerning one or more food cycle technologies in the Sahel ... In general terms we would propose a workshop or seminar which would gather development organizations -- indigenous and expatriate -- with interest and practical experience in some of the productive and income-generating activities associated with food production at the small farm level. The meeting would be intended to generate detailed information on the "state-of-the-art" on one or more of the food cycle technologies, and encourage a process whereby the practicing agencies could learn from each other".

PACT's "Expert" on edible oil processing

The idea was expanding in various dimensions, and ATI was clearly taking
the lead role in assembling partners and considering options. PACT did not want to be the only potential partner ignorant of the technical area of this proposed joint conference, and so delegated me to do some crash studying of the oil seed processing scene in Africa.

Finding relevant documentation on small scale technologies proved very difficult, as I searched everywhere from appropriate technology literature to the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland. For several month intensively in the summer of 1985, and at a lower level ever since I embarked on a self-directed learning project in an area of food processing. From the chemistry of dietary fat to calculations of extraction rates, and from macro policy impact to the myth of gender-neutral technologies, I have learned a lot.

My first opportunity for field level reconnaissance came on a regular Development Fund subgrant monitoring tour in October and November 1985 to Senegal, Mali and Togo. That trip established a pattern that continues to the present. After the proximate reason for a meeting or an encounter with a PVO, NGO or local organization was addressed, I would find a way to turn the conversation to village technologies and oil processing in particular.

My marching orders for the trip, besides becoming PACT's technically knowledgeable person in this sector, were to consider what criteria we should use for A) selection of possible topics for a workshop seminar, B) selection of location, C) selection of participants. To all this I penciled in question of my own: what do the potential PVO and NGO participants want? I came back with pages of notes on all kinds of food technology
matters, and I came back with a nagging feeling that I expressed at the end of my trip report to PACT, copied to ATI:

A parting shot involves a certain uneasiness I feel about the way this event has evolved so far. Perhaps it is or has been unavoidable, but the whole thing has a distinctive top-down flavor: two US agencies get together and decide to throw a workshop for the practitioners of certain kinds of development projects. Of course it is hard to imagine how it could have been otherwise - I have the mental picture of 30 hard-working technicians and extension agents all over West Africa simultaneously lifting their heads as little solar-powered light bulbs snap on and saying: we need a regional Food-Tech Conference to explore in-depth the following issues of mutual concern: 

Maybe what I am trying to say is that I will be more comfortable once we round the corner and can stop posing the questions in terms of what we want, but rather begin eliciting from potential participants what they feel are their needs from a group exchange: how can we serve them. 5

PACT and ATI get organized

By early 1986 ATI and PACT concluded that the other potential partner agencies appeared unwilling or unable to move apace with us. The UN Fund for Women was not ready to consider active financial sponsorship. IDRC also was likely to take a long time to consider participating. ATI was under an absolute time constraint to spend and account for the funds it planned to use for this event by September 1986, or lose the money. Given that six-nine months were needed to pull together an Africa regional event, more grandiose schemes would have to wait. ATI and PACT had centered back on oil seed as the focus for the event with West Africa in general as the geographic focus.

Rigby took the lead in pulling ATI's staff into active involvement and in
research, project management, technical and financial resource agencies, to expand training opportunities, organize exchange of data and continue practical research in food oils processing.

- Increased financial and technical resources for carrying out oils processing activities.

Management

PACT, an international consortium of NGOs from both developed and developing parts of the world, will assure program management. Although perhaps best known for its Development Fund participation in co-financing small scale NGOs activities, an important element of the consortium's overall mandate is to plan and carry out collaborative learning activities which support the analysis and dissemination of grassroots project experiences of general interest to the larger development community. Food Oils in Africa is a prime example of PACT's Learning/Linkages Program: working collectively with other agencies to draw lessons from field activities and to look for ways to spread the benefits of these findings.

Program Resources

In addition to allocating some of its own limited resources for the preparation and management of this program, PACT is actively seeking additional funds for the core costs of Food Oils in Africa. Likewise, PACT plans to use its Learning/Linkage budget to make case study grants, while also soliciting more research funds. Thirdly, in its role as a co-funder of small innovative projects, PACT will tap its Development Fund to help launch certain projects, and to build support among other donor agencies for investment in farm and village food processing enterprises in Africa.

Clearly PACT's own resources will not suffice for the entire program outlined here. However, if a broad coalition of interested agencies and individuals willing to work together on Food Oils in Africa is identified, the necessary resources will be generated.

All interested parties are encouraged to contact Carolyn Stremlau or Jonathan Otto at PACT, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Telephone (212) 697-6222.
food processing activities, and to identify gaps that require specific additional research.

- Enlist network participants including NGOs, African and international scholars and research institutions, governmental units and funding agencies, among others, who are interested in working together to share data, to help set a research agenda, and to enlarge mutual learning and support.

- Case studies of indigenous methods and of efforts to improve oils processing: the constraints to and the consequences of adopting new methods. In essence these studies will help determine who is getting what results using what inputs under which conditions and how these experiences might relate to other situations. Concerns include the efficiency and dependability of hardware, organization of production, training and personnel requirements, the issue of equitable distribution of benefits (traditional processors usually being women), markets and marketing, oil quality, storage and by-products, among others. These interdisciplinary studies will be conducted by African researchers and by local project implementing agencies using participatory methods that directly involve the "subjects" in carrying out the research.

- An Africa regional planning session of selected network participants to design strategies for dissemination of information for improved communication, and for increased support of oilseed processing in rural productivity projects.

- Organize consultations based on national NGO consortia and other inter-agency structures to facilitate investment in human and technical resource development for wider adaption of oils processing systems that are economically viable, appropriately scaled, and that deal equitably with rural populations as raw material suppliers, food processors, and low income consumers.

Outcomes

Tangible achievements of this program will include:

- A thorough knowledge of the state-of-the-art and the commercial and social environment of oilseed processing, published as research reports.

- resource manuals for assisting project planners and implementers with tasks like assessing needs, resources and economic viability, setting criteria for choice of technology and scale of production, and planning for equitable participation.

- A participatory network anchored in African institutions spanning
data abound, several factors have led to a program focussed on human scale development:

- Stagnant or declining oils production in most African countries is not meeting the expanding internal demand which has led to rapidly increasing imports;

- Africa has an enormous and growing need for foods that will increase the energy density of people's diets, a caloric requirement that vegetable oils and certain by-products can help fill;

- More large scale industrial oils plants are being built, but capacity utilization rates remain low, despite subsidies and other preferential treatment;

- African artisanal producers of oils products, usually women using laborious and inefficient methods, are suffering a serious loss of income and family food security as they are displaced by imported large-scale processing plants;

- In recent years an array of promising small and medium scale technologies to increase the profitability of oil extraction has been developed and field tested across sub-Saharan Africa by development organizations, research agencies and commercial firms;

- Little of the knowledge gained in this work has been systematically assembled so as to be easily accessible: likewise, the actual results have not been adequately assessed and compared;

Due to geographic, linguistic, economic and institutional barriers, insufficient exchange has taken place among rather isolated practitioners in the oils field; accurate and timely data on new developments have not been readily available, and the extension of benefits from successful innovations has been quite limited despite the nutritional and economic importance of oils for rural households.

Approaches

This program proposes to conduct a practical examination and provide linkages in the field of **Food Oils in Africa** through a series of inter-related activities:

- Critical assessment of existing information, both published and unpublished documents (reports, evaluations, newletters, correspondance form project files, academic sources, etc.), to understand the cultural, economic, technical and policy issues of...
FOOD OILS IN AFRICA

Improving oilseed processing technologies and project designs for viable local enterprises and regional food security.

Summary

Because oils processing is a vital component of African food systems and has increasingly become the subject of development efforts, there now exists a need-- and an opportunity-- for systematic analysis and exchange of data, and for widespread support of participatory strategies to help rural communities reach their productive potential.

This program's purpose is to assist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other agencies involved in grassroots development in their efforts to design and implement small and medium scale activities in food oils production. Through a program of participatory research and network building among various elements of the development community, Food Oils in Africa aims to disseminate findings, increase available resources, and provide a framework for inter-agency/inter-country exchanges on technologies and productive systems that are both economically sound and equitable for rural populations.

This program further aims to develop a model for knowledge transfer and support of field level activities, with a particular concern for linking project implementing agencies such as NGOs and local structures like village development committees to the experiences and resources of others in the field including research, technical and financial support institutions.

PACT is an international grouping of NGOs charged with fostering innovative collaboration. Its leadership in proposing this program is intended to facilitate the practical cooperation of a variety of agencies working on similar problems in widely divergent local settings.

Background

In the sector of oils processing, where confusing and contradictory
5. For each of the grants made under budget line items 6, 7, 9, and 16 grant recipients will be required to make contributions in support of the activities proposed.

6. This budget does not represent the costs PACT incurred in the program preparation phase for needs analysis, consultation with food oils project personnel and other people, and program design. In staff time and travel these expenses exceeded $15,000 over two years.

**Requested of the Pew Charitable Trusts in Year One**

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<td>Translation services</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Reference materials</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sub-totals</td>
<td>10,750</td>
<td>11,250</td>
<td>15,750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>142,933</td>
<td>150,853</td>
<td>160,234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Overhead @ 15.2%</td>
<td>21,726</td>
<td>22,930</td>
<td>24,356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
<td>$164,659</td>
<td>$173,783</td>
<td>$184,590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

1. A annual inflation rate of 5% is calculated on Personnel and Travel line items 1, 2, 3, 18, 19, 20, and 21.

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3. During year one and year two program activities will be concentrated in the core countries of Senegal and Ghana, with less involvement of Mali, Gambia and possibly a fifth country. Grants made with the funding of Pew Charitable Trusts for case studies, policy papers, study tours, and field applications will be to organizations in Ghana or Senegal. It is anticipated that the first workshop will be held in Senegal or Ghana.

4. Additional funding above this budget may be sought for specific program activities according to the expressed needs of the participating agencies. Additional funds for field application grants is a likely possibility.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>YEAR ONE</th>
<th>YEAR TWO</th>
<th>YEAR THREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Program staff 70% @ $42,000</td>
<td>$29,400</td>
<td>$30,870</td>
<td>$32,414</td>
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<td>51,690</td>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>YEAR ONE</th>
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<th>YEAR THREE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>32,000</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
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<td>-0-</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Policy papers @ $1,500</td>
<td>3,000 (2)</td>
<td>3,000 (2)</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Study tours/exchange visits @ $1,500</td>
<td>3,000 (2)</td>
<td>9,000 (6)</td>
<td>9,000 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Workshops</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Food Oils Directory</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>-0-</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Review and editing of studies policy papers, manuals</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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</tr>
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<td>30,000 (3)</td>
<td>20,000 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Sub-totals</td>
<td>67,800</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>73,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program/Project Budget (Use additional sheet if necessary):

(See attached).

Sources of support and amounts received or pending toward the above budget:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>$ Received</th>
<th>$ Pending (if known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YEAR I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>55,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEW</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29,159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology: - To feed data on field results back into a network, and provide technical assistance to one another.

- To accomplish this by a series of small sub-grants for learning and application activity.
FUNDING REQUEST (Use brief statements)

Justification of need: - Africa's small scale food oils processing has been declining for years.

- NGOs and other agencies have come up with some successful innovations at the grassroots levels.

- Communicating links among project personnel in different countries is so poor that very little replication or adaptation takes place.

Goals/Objectives to be met: - To improve the performance of NGOs, church groups, and others as they work on food oils enterprises at the grassroots level.

- To develop a new type of inter-agency, inter-country mechanism for field learning and mutual support.

- To promote linkages among researchers, technologists, project managers, and policy makers in one sector of rural economic development.

Methodology: - To facilitate learning of technical and managerial field level personnel as they work together, compare results and build a network of mutual support.

- To apply learning to field situations through adapting and replicating innovations of colleagues in other areas. (continue on the back of this page)

Timetable: Over three years, three overlapping phases:

Phase One: Identify partner agencies and individuals, inventory their activities and needs, link them by directories and newsletters.

Phase Two: Fund agencies to carry out case studies, compile technical sources material, make exchange/study tours and meet in a workshop.

Phase Three: Apply lessons learned in field activities, expert consultations training materials and a final workshop.

Special characteristics of program/project (if applicable):

- Regional network in a specific sector of rural economic development.

- Exchanges and learning among practitioners across colonial and institutional boundaries.

- Collaboration among African agencies and with international agencies working with local groups.

- Cycle of study/learning, dissemination, application, more learning.
NOTE: Data for staff size and fund raising are to be filled out based on your current and past two fiscal years.

Staff size:

- **Number of full-time equivalent paid staff:**
  - 22 current year
  - 22 prior year
  - 18 prior year

- **Number of volunteers (if applicable):**
  - --- current year
  - --- prior year
  - --- prior year

Fund raising:

- **Estimated dollar amount allocated toward fund raising:**
  - $-----
  - $18,444
  - $127

List the names of foundations and corporations from whom you have received contributions over the past three fiscal years. Use additional sheet if necessary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DOLLAR AMOUNT RECEIVED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Electric Foundation</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFME</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple (in kind)</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>113,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

- $125,000
- $197,500
- $113,250

Special characteristics or noteworthy information about your organization:

PACT is an international consortium of non-governmental organizations based in the U.S. and developing countries. It combines participatory learning activities with resources for field applications.
**PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

Please summarize your grant request as follows:

**OVERALL ORGANIZATION**

**Name of Organization:** Private Agencies Collaborating Together, Inc.

**Founded:** 1972

**Geographic service area(s):**
- Africa
- Asia
- Latin America & Caribbean

**Primary constituency served (e.g., general population, adults, families, children and youth, women, elderly, etc.):**
- General population

**Number of unduplicated individuals served annually:** NA

**Ethnicity (if applicable)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average family income (if applicable)** $ NA

**Services/Programs offered (list):**

- Management of grants and sub-grants in developing countries
- Management training for PVOs in U.S.
- Technical assistance for development planning and project implementation
- Learning and networking among PVOs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Development Period</th>
<th>YEAR ONE</th>
<th>YEAR TWO</th>
<th>YEAR THREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study field projects' and agencies' needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify partner agencies (Questionnaire)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design program in consultation with partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile directory of partners; revised ed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies: screen, select, fund, monitor, edit, publish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compilation of technical information: design fund, monitor, publish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy papers: select issues &amp; authors, monitor, edit, publish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE III</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange visits, study tours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field application grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance/training grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare resource manuals, materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1977, PACT began making grants to groups in Latin America, Africa and Asia for the purpose of assisting them to initiate activities, or in the case of more established consortia, helping them to provide services for their members. Since 1977, 55 grants have been given to consortia.

D. Documentation Grants

The objective of the Documentation Fund is the sharing of lessons and the incorporation of those lessons into PVO programming. Grants from the Fund concentrate on the first stage of collecting and analyzing information for the identification of lessons. In the second stage, PACT will assist in the sharing of those lessons by (1) providing assistance to agencies to publish and distribute findings and to otherwise present findings to other organizations; and (2) serving as a forum for the discussion and review of PVO experiences.

An impact evaluation normally identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and relevance of a particular project and assesses its impact in its environment. Documentation Fund grants, by contrast, are designed to help agencies carry out a careful assessment of the most significant variables that may have contributed to outcomes. These variables will be found both within the management span of the project and within its social, political, economic, and cultural context. Frequently, they will have been unforeseen and unexpected at the beginning of an activity.

The need for resources to document PVO experience was emphasized at a meeting held in January 1984 that brought together PACT agencies and other PVOs to discuss ways to strengthen the PVO community’s collaborative efforts in learning. While there was strong interest in sharing lessons, it was evident that few agencies had been able to document their experiences in ways that could serve as the basis for discussion in the PVO community.

To date 28 documentation grants have been awarded to PVOs. The average grant has been approximately $10,000.
B. Supportive Activities

The Supportive Activities Fund promotes a broad range of activities designed to improve the institutional capabilities of private agencies. The Fund was established in 1977 in response to the needs of PACT members. Grants are intended to encourage and facilitate collaboration in a variety of activities through sharing of experience, skills and resources.

The types of activities funded include:

- project planning and proposal writing;
- staff training;
- project evaluations;
- study visits to other agencies and projects;
- agency sponsorship of conferences, seminars and workshops;
- attendance of agencies' staffs at conferences, seminars and workshops;
- publication and distribution of manuals or other project related documents;
- provision of technical assistance by the staff of one agency to another; and
- consultative services for specific tasks, such as assessing the feasibility of introducing a computer for financial operations.

Since 1977, almost 500 grants have been made. The average award has been approximately $3,000 and for the past three years, PACT had made 60-70 grants per year.

C. Consortia Grants

PACT has a particular interest in establishing relationships with other consortia. Three of PACT's members are consortia, and PACT has had close contact with other groupings in Europe, Canada and developing countries.

PACT believes that consortia in developing countries can play an important role in strengthening the institutional capabilities of the growing number of local agencies. In addition, relationships with consortia provide the means for PACT and its U.S.-based members to establish ties with a larger number of local non-governmental organizations than would otherwise be possible.
APPENDIX

PACT GRANT FUNDS

A. Development Fund

Development Fund grants are intended for field-level projects that 1) directly involve beneficiaries, and 2) anticipate observable changes at this level.

Grants from the Development Fund are made to both member and non-member agencies and to both U.S. and local agencies. The Development Fund guidelines include the criteria used for selecting projects and the steps in the review and funding process. The main elements of the selection criteria and review process have been in place since 1972, although they have been modified and improved on several occasions, reflecting PACT's experience and the needs of private agencies.

The six principal criteria used to determine funding eligibility state that the project should:

-- aim at improving the condition of life of beneficiaries who have limited access to resources;

-- address a locally-determined need;

-- contribute to the capacity of the beneficiaries to plan and manage the use of resources;

-- promote collective action among the beneficiaries so that they respond not individually, but together, to their common needs;

-- include contributions by the beneficiaries of ideas, time and materials; and

-- address a development problem in such a way that the results can have a demonstrable impact beyond the specific endeavor.

PACT has made approximately 450 project actions to PVO projects since 1972.
5. For each of the grants made under budget line items 6, 7, 9, and 16 grant recipients will be required to make contributions in support of the activities proposed.

6. This budget does not represent the costs PACT incurred in the program preparation phase for needs analysis, consultation with food oils project personnel and other people, and program design. In staff time and travel these expenses exceeded $15,000 over two years.

**Requested of the Pew Charitable Trusts in Year One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>3,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>69,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead</td>
<td>10,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year one</th>
<th>Year two</th>
<th>Year three</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEW</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>55,500</td>
<td>55,500</td>
<td>55,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29,159</td>
<td>58,283</td>
<td>89,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>$164,659</td>
<td>$173,783</td>
<td>$184,590</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Travel

18. NY-Africa airtickets
   4 @ $2,500  
   $10,000  10,500  11,025

19. Local travel in Africa  
   1,000  1,050  1,103

20. Per diems in Africa
   20 days @ $100, 60 @ $50  
   5,000  5,250  5,513

21. U.S. Travel  
   1,500  1,575  1,653

22. Sub-totals  
   17,500  18,375  19,294

### Support costs

23. Translation services  
   7,500  7,500  12,000

24. Postage  
   2,000  2,000  2,000

25. Telecommunications  
   750  750  750

26. Reference materials  
   500  1,000  1,000

27. Sub-totals  
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### Program

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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Sub-totals</td>
<td><strong>67,800</strong></td>
<td><strong>72,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>73,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The last line of the document is not included in the table.
she was involved with PACT's Development Fund and Supportive Activities Fund.

Before joining PACT, Dr. Stremlau worked for the Ford Foundation in Lagos, Nigeria. She holds a Ph.D. in International Development from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

Jonathan Otto, who is the Program Manager for Food Oils in Africa, has been the principle investigator during the design of this program. Since 1983 Mr. Otto has provided technical assistance and monitored field grants to NGOs in Africa under PACT's Development Fund. Recently he co-authored a management manual in French for African NGO leaders. Current responsibilities include designing and conducting a series of institutional and financial planning workshops for local organizations in Mali, jointly sponsored by PACT and the Malian NGO consortium, CAA-ONG. Among the organizations Mr. Otto has worked with in the 19 years since starting development as a Peace Corps well digger in Niger are Church World Service, the Experiment in International Living, and International Voluntary Services.

**Cash Flow Analysis and Financial Reporting**

PACT is requesting that funds be disbursed by Pew to PACT in equal payments of one-half the annual grant amount every six months. PACT will submit financial reports to Pew on a six-monthly basis.

For grants to other agencies under this program, such as case study grants and field application grants, PACT will use its established grant agreement procedures of disbursement, monitoring and financial reporting.
- field visits for staff of one organization to study the approach of another project;

Towards the end of phase three a second and larger workshop involving key program participants, certain policy makers and donor representatives will be held to review the program's impact and to consider development of a mechanism for the continued sharing of information and other resources. At this point the network participants will decide among themselves under what modality their collaboration begun during the Food Oils in Africa program will continue.

**Evaluation and Reporting**

PACT will prepare and submit six-monthly narrative reports to Pew on program activities. Special attention will be paid to problem areas and proposed ways of dealing with these issues. A mid-point program evaluation after 18 months and a final evaluation of the program are scheduled. For both a complete report will be submitted to Pew and other donors. In keeping with the nature of the program itself, these evaluations will directly involve the participating agencies in the field. Through evaluation sessions in the workshops, interviews with key network participants and other monitoring techniques PACT will keep a close watch on the progress and quality of the program.

Quality control in case study, policy papers, and other documents produced under program grants, will be carried out through a review process in which other researchers, specialists, and knowledgeable people will critique papers and suggest improvements. Program reporting on all sub-grants will be done according to PACT's monitoring and reporting systems.

**Management**

The program will be managed by PACT's Learning and Linkages Office, under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn Stremlau.

Carolyn Stremlau has been with PACT for thirteen years. Previous to her current assignment as Director of the Learning and Linkages Program,
one or more organizations involved with technologies of food oils
to compile and analyze information on the different 
technologies currently available for small and medium scale processing.
PACT will also commission a series of papers on policy or program issues 
relevant to the viability of oils processing activities. These papers will 
address issues that cut across individual projects. Likely initial topics 
include: the impact of national government trade and industrial policies 
on small-scale processors and the socio-economic impact on women as a 
result of the decline of traditional processing and the introduction of new 
technologies. These papers will have a pragmatic orientation and will 
include recommendations on resolving or improving the viability of private 
enterprise in rural development.

The second phase will culminate in a regional workshop for key 
participants. The objectives of the workshop will be to: 1) review and 
analyze the findings of the survey, the NGO case studies and the technology 
compilation; and 2) determine priorities for Phase III activities. The case 
studies and conclusions of the workshop will be published and 
disseminated to all participating organizations. One topic for the 
workshop will be devising steps to carry on learning and exchange after 
the program concludes, possibly anchoring activities in an African 
institution.

Phase III calls for direct application of lessons and for specific 
responses to identified needs. This is a vital link in the cycle of learning, 
dissemination, application, and more learning. It allows for field testing 
and replication. For the rural population it is the tangible results of the 
program. Activities may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- small grants to NGOs for field applications of new methods in food 
oils processing;

- provision by NGOs and other organizations of technical assistance 
and training;

- preparation of project manuals or training materials for use by 
NGOs;
agencies. Grants will be made and monitored for documenting interesting experiences, for peer evaluations, for reporting on policy issues, for compiling technical data, for participation in program workshops, for providing training and technical assistance, and for field applications. The program will utilize and reinforce local capacities by having African experts and institutions based in Africa provide services to others in Africa directly: capacities in data gathering and analysis, training, publishing,

Activities

Program activities are grouped into several overlapping phases. The first phase, which will continue throughout the program, is already underway: a study of oils activities and agencies' needs, design of the program in informal consultation with field personnel in key countries, and a survey of several hundred agencies and individuals to determine their current or planned involvement in oils processing and their particular needs/interests in a regional learning program. (Please find copies of the survey mailing attached.)

From this identification effort, PACT will publish and distribute a directory of respondents who can begin to communicate directly on matters of mutual interest. A second, up-dated directory will be published after the program has had time to reach a still wider audience. Occasional Food Oils in Africa newsletters will also serve to inform participants on issues of mutual interest.

The second phase which will begin in 1988 involves taking a closer look at some oils processing activities and then meeting to discuss strategies. Based on the survey results and on existing contacts in the field, a group of at least eight NGOs will be selected for case study grants to examine particularly interesting experiences that may be relevant to other agencies. The grant recipients' agencies will work with African researchers to study and write up their cases.

Support activities of a more general nature will also be carried out with specific reference to the problems and issues of improving the design and implementation of village level food oils processing activities. To complement the project case studies, PACT will provide grant funding to
identified areas of need in food oils programming will be produced. At least four policy papers on major concerns in the field of oils processing will be written and disseminated. A minimum of four field application projects designed and implemented by African organizations will be supported financially and technically.

A major outcome of the program will be a participatory network anchored in African institutions spanning research, project management, technical, and financial resource agencies. An analytical presentation of the process of building this model learning program and a commentary on its possible adaptation to other kinds of rural development education and exchange efforts will measure the degree to which that objective has been reached.

Those involved in program activities will design strategies for dissemination of information and for improved communications. Although Food Oils in Africa hopes to identify and link-up agencies and people across sub-Saharan Africa, the initial activities will focus on four or five countries in West Africa: Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Gambia, and possibly Nigeria and/or Cameroon.

Methodology

This program will use a cycle of learning, dissemination, and application as its methodology. Data gathering and analysis in several forms will be followed by dissemination of findings and then adaptive field applications. This leads to new data and shaping of results in a participatory network.

An approach used in the Food Oils in Africa program is to facilitate the learning of technical and managerial personnel at the field level by providing an opportunity for them to work together, to reflect carefully and document their own efforts, to study the experiences of colleagues, to advise and train others, and to participate in creating a new form of knowledge exchange in the development community.

The mechanism for much of this inter-active approach is a series of small sub-grants by which carefully targeted funding is made available to a fairly large number of technical assistance and local implementing
Intermediary organizations, such as NGO consortia, are willing and able to play a role in helping members in areas of communications, logistics, hosting meetings and training. It is also true that these intermediary groupings themselves are in need of institutional strengthening and tend to operate at some distance from rural realities.

Many people, especially in private development have welcomed the suggestion that we devise new ways to share our experiences and reinforce each other’s efforts.

Objectives

The overall goal of this program is to improve the performance of NGOs and other organizations working at the grassroots level as they work to improve local food processing systems and to encourage viable small enterprises. In particular, Food Oils in Africa seeks to enhance the capacities of such organizations in designing and implementing activities in the crucial field of oilseed processing. A concomitant objective is the elaboration of a new type of inter-agency, regional mechanism for field-level learning and mutual support. Promoting discussions on resource allocation and other policy issues among NGO leaders, government officials, and donor representatives is a secondary objective of the program.

The program’s success in reaching its objectives can be formulated into a series of outcome statements. By the end of the three year period this program will have increased the mutual awareness and interaction among at least 50 agencies and individuals working in food oils processing through a published directory of their activities and interests. Reports on applied research of at least eight case studies that document NGOs’ experiences in oils processing will be edited and published. A major compilation of Africa-specific technological data on small scale oils will be published and distributed.

A minimum of twelve field level exchanges will be arranged such as study visits among projects’ personnel, expert consultations, and technical training. Three technical resource and/or training manuals dealing with
• People in the field of food oils generally have little, if any, contact with each other and often are unaware of technical resources and innovative activities that are taking place in neighboring countries. They are frustrated with this isolation, but in most cases have no systematic way of finding out what others are doing or of sharing the results of their own work.

• African organizations, in particular, are at a disadvantage to learn of and gain access to technical and financial resources. Without inter-country contacts and funds for basic project design research, indigenous agencies at both grassroots and national levels have limited opportunities for: 1) hearing about new approaches or improved technologies; 2) obtaining training or technical assistance to learn skills in using such innovations; or 3) receiving funds for field applications in the rural communities with which they work.

• Research institutes and technology centers in Africa sometimes work on specific technical issues or problems without sufficient involvement of the eventual users of their work; when potentially interesting production concepts, tools or techniques result, connections for field application and extension are lacking. Prototype equipment remains untested, or if tested is not widely duplicated, and feasibility studies lead nowhere.

• Donor representatives are very interested in supporting projects in rural productivity such as oils processing, and are concerned about women's participation, equitable enterprises, and the adoption and replication of successful interventions. Yet they are frequently presented with funding requests that do not seem connected to other development efforts, which fail to consider adequately the complex issues involved in technical and enterprise viability, or which are submitted by agencies that the donor for various reasons cannot fund.

• Government officials recognize the vital contributions of NGOs, church groups and private development agencies, but point out with some consternation that these organizations do not communicate enough information about their activities, and so coordination between NGOs and government is often poor.
agency representatives, traditional processors, oil mill personnel, United Nations agribusiness specialists, and government officials.

A sampling of agencies and personnel involved in food oils that PACT contacted in Senegal, one of the core countries for this program, includes Senegalese government officials, Environment and Development in the Third World (ENDA), Catholic Relief Services, the NGO consortium CONGAD, Institut de Technologie Alimentaire, Centre Regional Africain de Technologie (CRAT), a Guinean free-lance oils technologist, UNIFEM, OXFAM, Ford Foundation, Senegalese palm oil transporters, wholesalers and retailers, Afotech, USAID, American missionaries working on neglected traditional technologies, and international oils experts.

Through extensive correspondence with project managers, a review of the literature on food oils processing, dozens of meetings across West Africa, and to a lesser extent in Europe and North America, a number of themes have emerged:

- The planning and implementing of activities in village level oils processing involves knowledge and skills within the reach of NGOs and other agencies working in rural economic development. While some organizations approach oils processing in the mindset of appropriate technology, others see it as part of agricultural production or income generation for women. Common to all is a need for managerial, technical and financial expertise as well as cultural understanding. This combination can be obtained, as witnessed in the Technoserve palm oil mill cooperative project which Pew and PACT are co-funding in Ghana.

- As a wide-spread agricultural transformation process, the production of food oils adds value to raw materials at or near the level of the farmer or gatherer, increases local food supplies, increases rural income, and provides materials for other economic activities such as soap making. Food oils processing is at the intersection of several key concerns in rural economic development such as knowledge and skills transfer, enterprise development, choice of technology, women's participation, rural employment, and applied nutrition, among others. Lessons learned in this food processing sector will be relevant to other areas of rural productivity.
and village enterprise. In oils processing this trend has led to the development of an array of small and medium scale technologies and production systems to increase the profitability of oils extraction. While this movement is still relatively young, it is leading to some very interesting approaches and technological innovations.

Unfortunately, little of the knowledge gained in this work has been systematically assembled; likewise, actual results have not been adequately assessed and compared. Due to geographic, economic, institutional, and language barriers, insufficient exchange has taken place among rather isolated practitioners and project managers in the oils processing sector. Furthermore, linkages among researchers, technical innovators, and the development organizations working directly with small farmers and entrepreneurs have been weak. Those who make and influence policies in national governments and in the donor community often lack awareness of these important efforts to increase rural productivity and have few direct opportunities to learn and interact with those who do.

Despite the enormous and growing investments on the part of international donors, governments and others in projects relating to the production and processing of oilseeds, accurate and timely data on new developments have not been readily available, and extension of benefits from successful innovations has been quite limited. In fact, there are very few models for practical research and creative initiatives that link-up the actual field level participants in rural economic development activities, and then actively involve policy-makers in reviewing the findings.

(Note: Data on the historic decline of Africa's oil production, its impact on rural households and on current efforts to increase productivity are found in the enclosed article from the January 1987 issue of Vita News entitled "Processing of Food Oils in Africa: A Question of Scale", written by Jonathan Otto, Program Manager of Food Oils in Africa.)

Needs Assessment

For two years PACT has been assessing the field level situation by talking with people involved in food oils production and issues: African and international project managers and technicians, food technology researchers, appropriate technology specialists, community leaders, donor
Latin America; Primary Health Care in Bolivia; Microenterprise in Latin America; Participatory Development in Bangladesh; and Training Methodologies in Sri Lanka.

Since its inception in 1972, PACT's principle support has been the United States Agency for International Development, which has provided approximately $38,000,000 in grants to the consortium.

In the last three years, PACT has moved to diversify its funding base in order to gain more flexibility in programming and independence in policy. New sources of funding have included the Apple Corporation, G-E Foundation, and United Nations Development Program.

Problems to be Addressed

The growing or gathering and processing of oil-bearing seeds into edible oils is a vital element in the food systems of Africa. Village-level production of oils is a ubiquitous post-harvest agricultural activity of crucial importance to food security, nutrition for rural households, and income for women. For a combination of economic and political reasons beyond the control of these processors, small scale oil production has suffered a serious erosion for several decades. The growing numbers of local and international agencies attempting to support village-level oils enterprise development are hampered by a lack of communications and exchange. As a result promising innovations often are not replicated or adapted to new settings.

Once the world's leading export region in edible oils, Africa now cannot even meet internal demands and so must import large quantities of edible oils. Stagnant or declining production of edible oils in most African countries has occurred in the face of widespread caloric malnutrition, a problem of energy density in diets that vegetable oils and certain oils by-products could help fill. Several decades of concentration on large scale commercial approaches to agriculture production and food processing have contributed to a decline in traditional processing which has especially disadvantaged rural women.

More recently, policy makers, researchers and development practitioners have been focussing more attention on peasant agriculture
A fuller description of the grant funds managed by PACT is included in the Appendix.

As growing complements to grant-related activities, including evaluation and assessment, PACT's multi-dimensional "Learning and Linkages Program" and "Technical and Management Assistance and Services Program" round out institutional services to the PVO community. To improve PVO programming and management capabilities, the Technical and Management Assistance and Services Program offers a broad range of workshops, training courses, information and technical services in the U.S. and overseas.

The objectives of the Learning and Linkages Program are to:

- provide a structured mechanism in the PVO community for issue analysis;

- identify lessons and provide practical recommendations for increasing PVO effectiveness;

- publish and disseminate lessons and recommendations to the PVO community and to other development assistance organizations; and

- provide a mechanism and resources to apply the lessons of learning and training and to implement new approaches.

To accomplish these objectives PACT has organized and supported learning groups of PVOs around specific topics. In the United States, PACT is currently managing a year-long program on Expansion of Benefits, in which PVOs are analyzing how PVO programs can be expanded or replicated to reach larger numbers of beneficiaries. PACT also provides administrative and financial management support to the Small Enterprise Education Project Network.

PACT is currently supporting six learning group programs in developing countries. These include: Food Oils in Africa; Institutional Development in
Introduction to PACT

PACT is a consortium of 26 private, voluntary organizations (PVOs) of the United States and developing countries. Its overall objective is to promote sustainable, extendable socio-economic development, specifically by supporting the initiatives of low-income men and women in developing countries to act on their own behalf and gain access to resources. PACT seeks to do this through the collaborative efforts of private development agencies throughout the world, and particularly by supporting and fostering the increased strengths and self-sufficiency of local organizations.

PACT pursues its objectives through a program of funding, learning promotion, and technical services to help PVOs enhance their program approaches and increase management capabilities. These functional dimensions reinforce one another: the consortium places priority on programs which feature creative and replicable approaches to meet urgent human needs, and which in the process, develop the capabilities of local organizations to solve local problems. Concurrently, PACT offers a structured environment for inter-agency learning and collaboration and provides opportunities for PVOs to connect with wider sources of funding and expertise for the sustainability of specific programs. Finally, PACT works to directly strengthen the programmatic and management capabilities not only of its membership but of the wider PVO community through relevant training and information services and on-site technical assistance.

PACT has successfully managed a Development Fund, which has channeled support through 450 project actions, to PVO field projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The consortium's Supportive Activities Fund has been a unique mechanism for almost 500 small and flexible matching grants. These grants have been most often utilized to help design and test more creative projects, promote PVO interchange, and upgrade management and field skills. These and other PACT grants have helped shape project plans, train staff, underwrite technical assistance, forge new relationships among national and international development organizations, underwrite technical assistance, develop learning materials and disseminate information to increase knowledge and capability.
Summary

Food Oils in Africa is a learning program to assist non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other agencies involved in grassroots development in Africa in their efforts to design, implement and assess activities in food oils processing at small and medium scales. Through a process of applied research, field level exchanges and network building among various elements of the development community, Food Oils in Africa aims to disseminate findings, increase available resources, and provide a framework for inter-agency/inter-country sharing on technologies and productive systems that are both economically sound and equitable for rural populations.

In meeting these objectives, this program aims to develop a model for knowledge transfer and support of field level activities, with a particular concern for linking project implementing agencies such as NGOs and local structures such as village development committees and church groups to the experiences and resources of others in the field including research, technical, and financial support institutions.

Drawing on its fourteen years of grant management and technical assistance in Africa and other areas of the developing world, PACT uses its unique position as an international consortium of NGOs to lead others in this collaborative approach. As a learning program, the emphasis in Food Oils in Africa is on the active involvement of the participants -- both African and international development agencies working with rural communities. The implementing strategies for PACT will be to optimize the mutual support of the NGOs and other agencies involved and to engage African expertise for outside assistance when ever appropriate.

The program is budgeted at $523,032 for a three year period. In addition to PACT's own budgetary contributions and to other donor requests, the sum of $180,000 for three years is requested from the International Human Services Program of the Pew Charitable Trusts.
FOOD OILS IN AFRICA

A Proposal to the Pew Charitable Trusts

from

Private Agencies Collaborating Together, Inc.
PROCESSING FOOD OILS

Continued from page 14

gy, dissemination, and management has been far less than it might be. Late last year an informal survey by PACT (Private Agencies Collaborating Together) of a cross-section of people working on village and town level oil processing in West Africa revealed widespread interest in finding ways to overcome the obstacles to working more closely together.

The needs and opportunities to support expansion of activities in small and medium-sized oil processing have led PACT, an international consortium of private development agencies, to propose a program of action research and network building. Termed Food Oils in Africa, PACT's proposal would establish a regional program to enlarge technical and financial resources for agencies working at the grassroots level to improve both processing techniques and project designs for self-sustaining local oils enterprises. Program activities will include compilation, assessment, and dissemination of information; grants for case study analysis of indigenous and newer oil production systems and allied topics; study tours, consultations, workshops, and other educational exchanges; and production of resource manuals.

Food Oils in Africa hopes to help construct a network of African and international field workers, managers, appropriate technologists, and others to share data, set a research agenda, evaluate findings, and design strategies to support the continued development and adoption of oil processing systems that are appropriately scaled, technically sound, and economically and socially viable.

The trend in Africa toward large oil processing factories needs to be complemented by a technological mix of smaller, decentralized facilities for processing and semi-processing of oils and oil products. Small and intermediate food processing units, like enterprises of any size, are more likely to succeed if the entire chain, from raw materials procurement to the choice of technologies, and from issues of management and ownership to questions of marketing, is considered as an integrated whole. In these design efforts a most valuable resource is found in the women and men who are the growers and gatherers, the processors and retailers, the tool makers and the local leaders. When these people participate in working out new approaches to adding value to oil-bearing fruits and seeds, then equitable and lasting progress is possible. We seem to be headed in the right direction.

Jonathan Otto, an independent consultant working with PACT and other agencies on rural development in Africa, tends a farmstead near Chester, Vermont, between assignments. He fondly remembers receiving technical assistance from VITA on small bore wells as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger 17 years ago. For further information on Food Oils in Africa, contact Carolyn Stremlau or Jonathan Otto at PACT, 777 UN Plaza, New York, New York 10017, USA.

'Food of the Gods'

Continued from page 19

ers access to facilities for improved postharvest processing. Over the long term, these units play a central role in APROCACAHO's strategy for cocoa development. Revenues collected through assessed fees for use of the facilities will be one of APROCACAHO's prime sources of income. Processed beans in turn provide leverage in selling and marketing since they can be stored indefinitely and until sufficient quantity for the best price is obtained.

A successful pilot cocoa marketing scheme, utilizing beans processed according to project recommendations, provided a pivotal incentive for farmers. In cooperation with Hershey Foods Corporation, farmers and extensionists were given additional training in cocoa classification and grading standards as well as additional processing techniques. The results were positive; in APROCACAHO's first marketing effort, 20 tons of Honduran cocoa met export quality standards and were exported to the United States as 'Cocoa Type A-1' at 25 percent above the local market price.

According to PADF adviser Pat Inkster, the successful effort in marketing was an important step for Honduran producers with improved methods of processing. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it demonstrated the potential power of APROCACAHO as a producer organization in protecting and advocating the best interests of its members. For the first time, cocoa producers were able to export their produce without intermediaries, breaking an unstated rule that small producers could not compete in the international market.

In a second marketing effort currently underway, 32 producers are receiving intensified training in fermentation and processing techniques as well as management and use of the Saoa drying units. Following this, other groups will be enrolled in subsequent training in alternative solar drying techniques as well as in the use of the conventional wood-burning Saoa units.

With the broad base of support for APROCACAHO, the cooperation from all sectors, and the enthusiasm of producers as well as extension agents, there is every indication that the association should be successful in promoting cocoa and developing the necessary infrastructure to support cocoa farmers. Yet at the same time, the future of APROCACAHO will depend on its ability to provide these services on a self-sufficient and autonomous basis.

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come obsolete and non-competitive. The situation is such that, while an individual processor can manage to extract enough for her own household use, she has little incentive to do more. The hard physical labor required by traditional methods coupled with such additional factors as her other chores and the availability at least occasionally of factory oil or even expensive foreign assistance oil, combine to discourage surplus artisanal production. Too much time and energy are required to make it worth her while in today's world, even if her income generating alternatives are few.

That a variety of agencies working on similar problems in widely divergent settings have made good progress.

Methodologies run the gamut from incremental improvements in existing methods to entirely new equipment and organization for production. A small sampling shows the range of approaches. In the Gambia, Catholic Relief Service has helped farmers dramatically increase sesame production despite sub-normal rainfall. In southern Senegal and neighboring areas of Guinea-Bissau, ENDA (Environement et Développment du Tiers Monde) has worked with local metal workers on the design and fabrication of a manual screw press for Dura palm fruit processing. With business advisory services from Technoserve, rural cooperatives in Ghana are purchasing and managing their own small oil mills—a village-scale processing unit designed by the Technology Consulting Centre in Kumasi and manufactured in Ghana.

An African agency, Afotech, is arranging for Malian blacksmiths to train blacksmiths from Burkina Faso to make shea nut processing equipment. In the Central African Republic, VITA's Postharvest Food Systems Project enlisted Peace Corps Volunteers to help investigate various oil processing methods among different ethnic groups in that country, with an eye to identifying and encouraging superior methods already in use. Supported in part by appropriate Technology International, Lutheran World Relief continues work in Arusha, Tanzania, on a manual sunflower oil press, while in Zambia the Oilseeds Section of the British Tropical Development and Research Institute has introduced a diesel powered expeller for sunflower oil.

Fascinating and valuable as such individual efforts are, there is little communication among the isolated practitioners in these and dozens of other projects. Geographic, economic, institutional, and language barriers have greatly limited accurate and timely exchange of data. As a result, the extension of benefits from successful innovations in technology...
sines. Other uses for oils and by-products range from fuels to fertilizers, and from lubricants to medicinal applications.

From a global perspective, oils production, like other sectors of African agriculture, has fallen on hard times. Once both self-sufficient and a major exporter, the continent imports an increasing percentage of its food oils. To cite one case, food oils are reportedly second only to petroleum among Kenya's imports.

Take palm oil, for example. Thirty-five years ago 70 percent of the world trade in palm oil came from Africa; now 97 percent originates in Asia and the Pacific, principally Malaysia and Indonesia, according to statistics presented at the First African Small Scale Palm Oil Processing Workshop in 1981. As late as 1970 Africa exported 883,000 tons of palm and palm kernel oils, but estimates are that by 1990 almost the same quantity, 800,000 tons, will be imported.

Zaire's palm oil exports dropped from 185,000 tons to 6,000 tons between 1959 and 1980. Nigeria, formerly the world's leading palm oil exporter, now imports huge quantities of oils. Even a relatively miniscule producer like Togo saw its palm oil exports drop from 264 tons to just 3 tons in the last half of the 1970s. Ivory Coast is an exception to this trend, due to state-supported expansion of plantation plantings beginning in the 1960s. There have been social and environmental costs for this style of growth, however, in the dual problems of displacing rural communities and contravening the Ivorian government's own forest conservation policy.

Somewhat independent of these world trade patterns, on a local level in equatorial Africa, palm oil continues to be a major element in diet and trade. In a broad band from Guinea and Sierra Leone along the coast to Cameroon, deep into the Congo basin and south to coastal Angola, palms of the Dura variety are indigenous, growing wild or semi-wild over some four million hectares. This compares with about 600,000 hectares of plantation-grown, improved Tenere varieties, which are processed industrially. Only a small fraction of Dura fruits are harvested, but it is clear that artisanal processors using comparatively low oil content native fruits continue to provide the bulk of domestic supplies, perhaps 80 percent in some countries.

While methods differ significantly among traditional palm oil processors, as do extraction rates, the steps are broadly similar. Bunches of thumb-sized fruits are stripped from the stalks, boiled, and "digested" or pounded, before pressing or skinning the oil, and final clarification. The palm kernels are salvaged to make another kind of oil. Yet what an enormous amount of time and energy are expended to accomplish that briefly outlined series of tasks! Unfortunately, a high percentage of the available oil is not recovered in most traditional processing.

At the opposite end of the scale of production, industrial mills have been established in virtually every country, often with disappointing results. For both oil importing and exporting nations in Africa, plant utilization rates are staggeringly low, as reported in a UNIDO document: 15 percent for Zaire, 21 percent for Tanzania, 18 percent for Nigeria, and so on. What is worse, industrial oilseed crushing capacity is actually decreasing: 9.8 percent decline in the five years ending 1982. Significant losses were noted for Senegal, Benin, Gabon, and Egypt, among others.

Many reasons have been advanced for the long-term decline in per capita oils production, not to mention exports, and for the poor showing of many large processing plants, although local and national conditions make each case unique. Factors adversely affecting production and harvesting of food oil raw materials are the same as for African agriculture generally—below average and irregular rainfall since the late 1960s, disadvantageous pricing policies, labor shortages. Other elements are low yielding varieties, inadequate physical infrastructure like transport and storage facilities, civil unrest, and competition among crops. Finally, a general lack of funding for applied research and extension services prevents the development and dissemination of information peasant farmers and processors need to improve yields.

Industrial-scale oil processing plants often experience inadequate or undependable supplies of such necessities as raw materials, energy, water, labor, and transportation. Managerial and entrepreneurial expertise, maintenance skills, spare parts, unsuitability of machinery, and financial support systems are cited in explaining poor performance. From the perspective of selecting the optimal scale for enterprise investment, low functioning or non-functioning plants represent inappropriate technological choices for the existing conditions.

Add to this disheartening picture the fact that traditional processors, by and large women, are suffering a serious loss of income and family food supply as they are displaced by large modern production factories that benefit from subsidies and other preferential treatment. The dynamics of exactly how artisanal processors are losing ground are not always clearly understood, though it is undeniably occurring. In an evolving economic environment static technologies can be...
A QUESTION OF SCALE

Every waking hour every day the year round, chances are somewhere in sub-Saharan Africa women are pounding groundnuts (peanuts) in wooden mortars while, nearby, girls squeeze the oily slurry by hand. In a dozen countries of west and central Africa, and in scattered locations as far as Zimbabwe and Madagascar, young men risk life and limb climbing oil palm trees up to 20 meters high to harvest the ripe bunches of orange-black fruit. Villagers, typically women, from eastern Senegal to southern Sudan, gather fallen fruits of shea nut trees, perhaps eat the soft green outer layer, and save the kernels for processing later.

Sunflowers in Tanzania, sesame in Chad, neugseed in Ethiopia, coconuts on the humid coastal plains, rapeseed in cooler elevated areas—all these are grown or gathered for one of the world's principal processed food products: oil. Along with grinding grains and drying sauce ingredients, processing oils is a ubiquitous postharvest agricultural activity for rural people. In Africa today it is crucial to food security, household nutrition, and rural income, especially for women.

Their caloric density and vitamin E make oils nutritionally vital for rural and poor urban populations. A joint FAO/WHO consultation recently concluded that, while 30 percent of malnourished children in developing countries suffer a lack of energy-producing and protein foods, the other 70 percent suffer a lack of energy foods alone, which they could get largely from fats and oils. Certain oils also have specific beneficial characteristics, particularly in inadequate diets. Red palm oil, for example, contains substantial amounts of carotenoids (pro-vitamin A), which may help prevent xerophthalmia, nutritional blindness, and reduce susceptibility to certain other diseases.

One of the ironies of our times is that, while developed countries' populations are experiencing health problems in which excessive intake of fats and oils is a contributing factor, African diets could benefit from increases in oils to ensure adequate supplies of essential fatty acids and to raise calorie intake. This is especially true for poor people, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. Per capita consumption in tropical Africa in this food category is roughly one fourth that of North America.

Oils, oil-bearing plants, and by-products of oil processing have many uses beyond food. Karité (shea) butter, for example, is rubbed on everything from ox cart axles to dry skin. Both traditional and industrial soap making are important uses for palm, coconut, and other oils. The cake remaining from groundnut processing is nutritious, protein-rich food for humans and animals alike. The latter also feed on groundnut hay stored for the dry season. Palm trees even serve after their useful life for oil production is over: first tapped for palm wine, the wood is either used for construction, or later the fallen decomposing trunks are host to palm grubs—a delicacy in some cul-
Focus on Food...
Street Foods
Processing & Storage
Oil Production
Food Security
Regenerative Agriculture
Cocoa Production
La Presse à Karité par Kora Gouré Bi, Baidi Diallo et Dramane Sogoba; mai 1988, publié par GTZ à Bamako, que l'on peut se procurer en s'adressant à: Projet Karité, B.P. 100, Bamako, République du Mali. Prix: 2.000 CFA

L'équipe du Projet Karité au Mali a rassemblé un manuel d'instructions bien illustré et détaillé expliquant leur activité de l'arbre commun du sous-sahel: le butyrospermum parkii. (Saviez-vous que l'on trouve cet arbre dans pas moins de 35 pays et qu'il pousse surtout dans une bande qui relie l'est du Sénégal au lac Victoria?) Les différentes méthodes traditionnelles utilisées au Mali pour la fabrication du beurre de karité sont également comparées et contrastées.

La plus grande partie du manuel est consacrée à la description et à l'explication de l'équipement utilisé par le Projet Karité qui comprend un four spécialement conçu pour griller les noix pilées, la presse elle-même et le démouleur qui sert à enlever le tourteau du cylindre perforé. Le fonctionnement de l'équipement, son entretien et une approche systématique pour sa réparation sont présentés en détail et renforcés de dessins au trait.

Ce manuel comprend également une comparaison entre la fabrication par les méthodes traditionnelles avec la presse à karité, des commentaires sur la rentabilité et les caractéristiques des pièces détachées. Parce que La Presse à Karité est rédigé par des praticiens de l'industrie, cet ouvrage est une addition d'autant plus précieuse aux œuvres techniques traitant déjà du sujet. Sans doute le lecteur a-t-il deviné qu'il est question d'un manuel disponible uniquement en langue française. Par-contre, le style en est très simple et les nombreux dessins au trait en assurent la compréhension par des lecteurs n'ayant qu'une faible connaissance du français. Question: Ressentez-vous le besoin d'une édition en langue anglaise de La Presse à Karité? Si vous voulez lire ce volume en anglais, veuillez nous faire parvenir votre demande en envoyant un mot sur la feuille intitulée «Commentaires et réactions» qui se trouve dans ce bulletin d'informations. Nous assurerons une traduction du manuel si nous recevons un nombre suffisant de demandes assez de demandes de votre part.

POURQUOI LES HUILES ALIMENTAIRES?

suite de Page 1

des progrès impressionnants. Par-contre, les contacts entre ces communautés sont faibles et les avantages des innovations n'atteignent pas leur plein potentiel.

Le nombre fait la force. Si nous démontrons effectivement la viabilité et l'importance socio-économique de l'expansion décentralisée des petites huileries villageoises, les hommes politiques tendront l'oreille. Les leçons apprises grâce à l'établissement d'un réseau dans le domaine du traitement des aliments aideront à la planification d'autres actions collaboratives dans le développement rural.

fin

La Presse des huiles alimentaires en Afrique Page 6
Reunion au Kenya 
suite de la Page 4

En consultation avec Carl Bielennberg, Martin Fisher d’Action AID/Kenya et Hugh Allen de CARE a Nairobi participent a des experiences avec la presse a piston plongeur. Lors de sa presentation a la reunion, Martin Fisher a expose les variables clés a la continuation du developpement technique de la presse a piston plonge. Les modifications de Martin Fisher et celles de Hugh Allen ont cherché a faire croître et a maintenir une pression maximale en rallongeant la poignée, en modifiant les tailles de la cage et du cône, et avec d’autres améliorations. Le docteur Fisher a aussi étudié les efforts subis par les différentes parties composantes, et il a renforcé les points critiques. Dans le développement technique de la presse, il a fallu faire un choix entre la force et la résistance, d’un côté, et les coûts de l’autre; entre la vitesse maximum d’extraction et la vitesse souhaitée de l’approvisionnement.

Quoi qu’on continue a mettre la presse a’ essai sur le terrain, et qu’on continue a l’améliorer, la presse est en opération dans pas moins de six pays et des constructeurs régionaux essaient de la reproduire. ATI compte rédiger un manuel de la technique d’une presse universelle qui aidera les ateliers de construction mécanique dans la fabrication de gabarits et des pièces constituantes pour la construction de presse a haute qualité mais a frais de fabrication moindres qu’auparavant.

De même, CARE compte bientôt mettre a disposition de tous les intéressées un manuel technique pour la version Allen de la presse.

Au cours de la réunion, John Mugeto a présenté un rapport sur un projet, parrainé par l’université Egerton et le CRDI (Conseil de recherches et de développement international), qui a pour but d’étudier le traitement d’huile au Kenya. Au cours de leurs enquêtes dans quatre provinces, le projet a trouvé que la plupart des expulseurs a vis motorisés n’étaient pas utilisés a cause du manque de grnaies, et que les fermiers laissaient pourrir le tourteau ne sachant pas qu’elle avait une valeur comme alimentation pour les animaux. Récemment, le projet a fait faire des experiences en laboratoire sur différentes versions de la presse a piston plongeur avec de différentes variétés de grnaies. Le Docteur Mugeto a présenté les résultats de ces essais qui ont entraîné de nouveaux changements techniques de la presse. Ce projet vise aussi le tourteau comme produit secondaire essentiel a la rentabilité d’une huilerie.


Quant a la production dans le secteur rural, Carlos Zulberti a souligné le problème de l’accueil par les cons­ommateurs de l’huile liquide qui est utilisée couramment dans bien des parties du Kenya, et l’utilisation du tourteau comme source importante de protéines pour le bétail. Selon le Docteur Zulberti, d’autres problèmes essentiels a garder en tête lors de la planification d’un projet qui introduirait la presse a piston plongeur sont:

La possession de la presse (par des groupes, des coopératives, ou par les fermiers eux-mêmes), les pratiques agronomiques et la vulgarisation, le marketing de l’huile en stock par les producteurs ruraux (en boîte, le gras Kimbo est relativement bon marché et disponible facilement), et la rentabilité économique globale.

En plus des agences mentionnées ci-dessus, on a compté parmi les participants a la conference des représentants d’Africare/Zambie, de Technology Development and Advisory Unit/Université de Zambie, de Craftsmen & Artisan Production Unit/Tanzanie, de l’Experiment in International Living/Ouganda, de trois ministéres gouvernementaux du Kenya, de Catholic Relief Services, de Compassion Canada, de Handclasp International, du Bureau international du travail, de la Société Undugu, du bureau régional du CRDI pour l’Arique de sud et de l’est et de Technoserve.

En conclusion, les participants ont proposé de continuer la coordination de l’echange de l’information. D’autres suggestions étaient: la publication d’un bulletin d’information sur la presse a piston plongeur, la distribution des copies des rapports, une deuxième conference dans moins d’un an et demi et la participation au réseu des huiles alimentaires en Afrique parrainé par PACT. (Note de la redaction: Il va sans dire que nous acqueillons avec plaisir toutes les agences interessées a nos activités et nous sommes heureux de diffuser l’information et les resolutions issues de cette conference dans notre bulletin d’information La Presse des huiles alimentaires.

Sous la direction de ATI et LWR les conferenciers continueront a developper la presse a piston plongeur Bielennberg et a encourager le traitement de l’huile de tournesol a petite échelle.

fin
REUNION AU KENYA SUR L'HUILE DE TOURNESOL


Lorsque Appropriate Technology International (ATI) et Lutheran World Relief (LWR) ont annoncé leur intention de convoquer une réunion de renseignements sur le traitement des graines de tournesol par la presse Bielenberg, ils s'attendaient à un faible nombre de participants. Mais, à leur grand plaisir, plus de 30 représentants d'à peu près 20 agences dans quatre pays se sont présentés à Nairobi le 20 février 1989 pour faire partie de la réunion. L'objet qui aurait suscité un si grand intérêt est la petite presse manuelle à piston plongeur inventée par Carl Bielenberg en 1985 pour le projet Village Oil de l'Église Evangélique Lutherienne en Tanzanie, parrainé par ATI, LWR et le gouvernement de la Tanzanie entre autres. Au cours de la réunion, qui a duré une journée, des chercheurs, des ingénieurs et l'équipe du programme ont discuté des problèmes et du potentiel de la plus bas rendement en huile (et vendues au gouvernement au poids), aux graines à coque moins dure.

La seconde: lorsque le projet a commencé à encourager l'acquisition de la presse par des individus plutôt qu'uniquement par des groupes, ils ont remarqué que les presses étaient utilisées plus fréquemment. En même temps, les propriétaires encouraient leurs voisins à planter plus de tournesols en leur offrant un meilleur prix pour leurs graines.

La Presse des huiles alimentaires en Afrique Page 4
Visite a Ntinanko

suite de la Page 2

La chaudière était une version industrielle en petit et donnait de mauvais résultats avec le fruit égargé. La capacité limitée des presses à vis causait des embouteillages lors de l’expansion des activités de l’huilierie. Pour résoudre ces problèmes, la chaudière a été coupée en deux pour en faire deux chaudrons alimentés par le résidu des fibres de palme et on a fait l’addition d’une presse hydraulique manuelle (extraction discontinue). Aujourd’hui, l’huilierie peut traiter environ 90 chaudrons soit 6 tonnes de fruit par jour. Une tonne de fruit donne environ un baril d’huile, soit 200 litres.

Mais les problèmes persistent pour la coopérative à Ntinanko, son huilierie et ceux qui s’en servent. Le transport du fruit à l’huilierie est difficile. Les noix de palmiste qui ont une valeur majeure pour une autre huile qu’elles donnent ne peuvent être ni concassées ni traitées avec l’équipement actuel. Les producteurs-transformation de Ntinanko aiment se protéger contre les fluctuations du prix de l’huile en se créant une réserve mais il leur manque les moyens pour son raffinement et son entreposage. Cependant, un bilan des progrès faits ces deux dernières années grâce au travail assidu de la Société Coopérative assure la communauté une bonne continuation et la résolution certaine de leurs problèmes ainsi que d’autres qui pourraient surgir.

Les expériences de Ntinanko ont suscité grand intérêt dans le traitement de l’huile de palme à petite échelle, surtout après les reportages sur l’ouverture officielle de l’huilierie à la télévision nationale et dans les grands journaux. Le gouvernement a fait l’éloge du projet, le signalant comme moyen de stimuler l’entreprise rurale et la création d’emplois, deux problèmes majeurs pour un pays qui doit travailler avec les conséquences d’un réajustement structural.

Post scriptum

Heureux d’avoir pu visiter cette huilierie rurale, il m’est venu à l’idée que l’organisation d’un voyage d’étude pourrait intéresser d’autres du domaine. Le réseau pourrait organiser un tel voyage, mais cela dépend du nombre de personnes intéressées et la disponibilité des subventions. Veuillez nous indiquer votre intérêt sur la feuille «Commentaires et réactions» si vous estimez qu’une telle visite serait utile pour vous ou votre agence. Nous vous prions de nous écrire si vous avez des commentaires sur ce rapport.

fin
VISITE A L'EMPLACEMENT DE L'HUILIERIE DE L'HUILE DE PALME COOPERATIVE A NTINANKO AU GHANA

par Jonathan Otto

Lors de ma première visite à ce village près de Kumasi en avril 1987, les participants de la nouvelle Société Coopérative m'ont fait visiter leur palmeraie: des plantations de jeunes arbres intercalés par des fèves et d'autres récoltes annuelles. Fièvement ils m'ont signalé l'emplacement futur de l'huijerie: un hectare de broussailles en bordure du village entre le puits communautaire et un petit ruisseau. Je dois avouer que les obstacles qui se dressaient devant eux sur le plan des finances, de l'organisation et de la technologie m'ont parus quasi impossibles à franchir.

J'ai été donc très impressionné lors de mon retour à Ntinanko cette année, par les progrès faits lors de mon absence de deux ans. Autour d'un grand défriché, d'énormes tas de régimes de fruits noirs et jaunes fraîchement cueillis attendaient l'égremnage de leurs branches. Au centre de cet éclaircir environ 25 femmes travaillaient au dessus d'énormes chaudières de fruit fumant en préparation pour le traitement. Des femmes agées et les enfants enlevaient les noix de palmiste de la pulpe exprimée.

Derrière elles se trouvait l'édifice même de l'huijerie, deux petites salles administratives et un grand hangar ouvert au plein air où se faisait le pulpage et le pressage. L'huijerie est munie d'un digesteur actionné par moteur diesel, une presse hydraulique et pour le second pressage plus tard, une presse à vis. La plus grande partie de l'huije raffinée est vendue directement par l'huijerie aux femmes grossistes de Kumasi qui ont des contrats avec ceux qui traiteront l'huije.

L'appui de Technoserve

Les dirigeants de la coopérative dynamique de Ntinanko sont aidés par une agence non-gouvernementale américaine, Technoserve (TNS) qui se spécialise dans le domaine de l'aide financière aux entreprises agricoles. En plus des services offerts par Technoserve qui comprenaient des études financières pré-investissement, des évaluations techniques et la structuration de la coopérative, l'agence TNS a offert un prêt relais à la Société Coopérative de Ntinanko en attendant l'agrement de la banque qui leur prétera les fonds. Grâce à l'agence TNS, la coopérative a engagé un gérant ghanéen pour l'huijerie qui s'occupe de la formation d'un gérant de la communauté qui entrera en fonction l'année prochaine.

En plus de l'aide portée au village de Ntinanko, Technoserve a aidé une coopérative dans le village de Prestea à lancer une huijerie pour l'huije de palme et est en pourparlers avec d'autres groupes producteurs au Ghana. Pour son travail dans le domaine de l'huije de palme l'agence TNS jouit de subventions de IBM, Pew Charitable Trusts, United Methodist Committee of Relief et PACT. L'évaluation par la TNS de leurs méthodes d'attaque aux problèmes des coopératives qui traitent l'huije de palme au Ghana fait partie de notre série d'études de cas. Les huiles alimentaires en Afrique. Vous pouvez avoir accès à la documentation volumineuse décrit leurs expériences en vous adressant à M. Paul Warmka, Technoserve, B.P. 135 Accra, Ghana ou à Technoserve Africa Division, 148 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851, E.U.

Méthodes d'attaque aux problèmes

Ester Adjety, qui travaille pour la TNS, et le Secrétaire Général de la Société Coopérative de Ntinanko, Joseph Victor Yarney, ont parlé ouvertement des problèmes et des contraintes suscitées lors de l'établissement de leur coopérative et de leur huijerie.

Le passé varié des coopératives au Ghana a découragé le recrutement de nouveaux membres dans la coopérative ainsi que l'investissement de fonds personnels dans l'huijerie par les membres. Après plus d'un an, la coopérative comptait 34 adhérents (dont huit étaient des femmes) qui avaient investi le capital minimum pour être membre en règle.

Après quelques mois d'ouverture il a fallu faire un ajustement majeur au mode opératoire. Au début, la coopérative achetait le fruit des fermiers, le préparait, le traitait avec une grande équipe de travailleurs salariés et trouvait des acheteurs pour son huije. A partir de mai 1988, l'huijerie fut mise à la disposition des producteurs-trafics qui, eux-mêmes, l'abrirent l'huije. Ces personnes se présentent avec leurs fruits, se servent des chaudières de la coopérative pour les préparer, aident les deux employés salariés de la coopérative à traiter le fruit et paient la coop pour chaque chaudière traitée. Grace à ce mode opératoire un plus grand nombre de gens peut profiter directement de l'huijerie: surtout les femmes qui achètent le fruit pour ensuite le traiter. Ce mode opératoire diminue le fardeau de la gérance et le paiement de fortes taxes imposées sur les entreprises qui font l'achat du matériel brut, son traitement et la vente du produit final.

Le projet a dû modifier l'équipement utilisé dans le traitement de l'huije pour répondre aux besoins de Nt...
UNE NOUVELLE COLLABORATION

Cette première édition de La Presse des huiles alimentaires a le plaisir de vous annoncer le lancement d'un programme de collaboration de tous ceux qui travaillent dans le domaine de la fabrication d'huile à l'échelle villageoise en Afrique. En bref, il s'agit ici d'un réseau comprenant agences et individus qui cherchent à améliorer la technologie du traitement d'huile et les projets relatifs à ce domaine. Le réseau s'accommode de l'échange d'informations et d'expériences sur le terrain, ce qui encouragera la continuation des entreprises locales qui ont du succès, et assurera l'auto-suffisance alimentaire locale. Le programme des huiles alimentaires en Afrique servira lui-même de ressource pour ses adhérents.

Que fera le réseau des huiles alimentaires?

En grande partie, le succès du réseau dépendra de ses membres. Pour commencer, pendant deux ans nous avons répertorié les projets et les individus dans ce domaine et leur avons porté conseil. De ces premiers contacts nous avons eu une meilleure idée des projets possibles.

Tout d'abord, nous continuerons nos recherches de qui fait quoi et ensuite nous rassemblerons et disperserons ces renseignements pour que tous puissent s'en servir. Le Répertoire des huiles alimentaires en Afrique qui vient de paraître et qui est décrit ci-bas est issu de nos recherches. Nous espérons que notre bulletin d'information La Presse des huiles alimentaires sera un moyen d'échange d'information et le point de contact entre les praticiens, les donateurs, les chercheurs et tous ceux qui travaillent dans le domaine du traitement des huiles alimentaires.

En second lieu, nous avons l'intention de disperser l'information technologique rassemblée de telle manière qu'elle soit utilisable par les travailleurs sur le terrain. Avec l'assistance des agences techniques du réseau une évaluation sera faite de l'apportabilité et de la disponibilité des documents publiés. Pour combler les lacunes le programme fera appel aux traductions, aux réimpressions ou même à la création de nouveau matériel tel que livres de ressources et manuels.

Une troisième activité sera la documentation d'expériences vécues sous forme d'études de cas. Nous espérons encourager l'auto-critique chez les agences établies afin qu'elles partagent leurs conclusions avec d'autres. Deux thèmes proposés pour la première série d'études de cas sont la participation populaire des villageois et l'expansion des avantages. Ces études de cas ainsi que d'autres activités pédagogiques du réseau mèneront à l'établissement d'ateliers régionaux traitant le sujet de la fabrication des huiles alimentaires au cours du développement du programme.

D'autres activités du réseau qui sont au niveau de la planification sont des voyages d'observation, des échanges au niveau du terrain et de la formation. Certaines agences y compris certains donateurs ont exprimé le désir d'établir des contacts pour subventionner les huileries à petite échelle. Nous voulons souligner que l'objectif du réseau de ces prises de contact pour subventionner les huileries à petite échelle. Nous voulons souligner que l'objectif du réseau de cette prise de contact est de fournir une assistance à l'auto-suffisance locale. La fabrication de l'huile est une source principale de revenus pour la femme dans les milieux ruraux et est une matière première pour l'industrie artisanale telle que l'industrie savonnière.

La fabrication de l'huile est une source principale de revenus pour la femme dans les milieux ruraux et est une matière première pour l'industrie artisanale telle que l'industrie savonnière.

Une densité calorique fait de l'huile une source très importante d'énergie; une augmentation de sa consommation pourrait aider à diminuer la sous-alimentation.

En 1970 l'Afrique a fait l'exportation de 883.000 tonnes des huiles de palme et de palmiste; vingt ans plus tard l'Afrique fait l'importation d'environ 800.000 tonnes d'huiles alimentaires par an. Les huileries industrielles sont inefficaces et sont vouées à l'échec dans bien de cas ce qui mène au gaspillage de ressources déjà rares, à un manque d'acheteurs pour les récoltes oléagineuses et à une baisse de la disponibilité d'huile à prix raisonnable pour les consommateurs.

Dans des milliers de petits villages en Afrique, les agences non-gouvernementales ainsi que d'autres agences aident les communautés à résoudre les problèmes communs au traitement de l'huile. Certains font...
In each newsletter we will feature technical resources for food oils processing, such as this review of a book on shea processing.

La Presse a Karite by Kora Goure Bi, Baidi Diallo and Dramane Sogoba; May 1988, published by GTZ in Bamako; available from Projet Karite, B.P. 100, Bamako, Republic du Mali. Price 2,000 F CFA.

The staff at Projet Karite in Mali have put together a thorough, well-illustrated manual on their program. It features the press that they have developed for the processing of sheanut, adapted from a KIT-designed hydraulic batch press. The 126 page volume begins with a botanical and geographic description of this common sub-Saharan tree, Butyrospermum parkii. (Did you know it grows in some 35 countries, most densely in a band from eastern Senegal to Lake Victoria?) Also, the different traditional processing methods used in Mali for making beurre de karite, or shea butter, are discussed and compared.

The bulk of the manual is dedicated to presenting the particulars of the equipment used by Projet Karite: a purpose-built oven for roasting the pounded nuts, the press itself, and a tool for removing the highly compressed oil cake from the press cage. The equipment's operation, maintenance and a trouble-shooting approach to repairs are detailed in step-by-step instructions complemented by line drawings.

The manual also includes a comparison of the traditional and press methods, notes on financial viability, and specifics on spare parts. All in all, La Presse a Karite is a welcome addition to the technical literature on shea butter processing, especially as it is drafted by the practitioners themselves.

As the reader may have guessed, this manual is available only in French. However, the style is straightforward, and the generous illustrations would help a reader with limited French. Question: Is there demand for an English edition of La Presse a Karite? If you want to read this manual in English, please indicate this on the "feedback" sheet of this newsletter and send it in to PACT. If sufficient interest is expressed, we will try to arrange a translation.

End

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

VITA, a resource for technical information, teams up with the FOIA network.

Progress report on the Food Oils case studies series.

What statistics reveal about food oils in world trade.


First reactions to Food Oils Press and the FOIA network from readers (including you?)

FOOD OILS PRESS

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The Food Oils Press is co-edited by Jonathan Otto and Ellen LeCompte.
In his conference presentation, Martin Fisher laid out the principle variables in the continuing design of the ram press. Martin Fisher's modifications, and those of Hugh Allen, have focussed on increasing and maintaining peak pressure by lengthening the handle and changing cage size and cone shape, among other improvements. Dr. Fisher has also studied the reinforced design at crucial points. Design trade-offs include strength and durability versus costs, and balancing maximum extraction rate with desired throughput rates.

Although field testing and design improvements on the press are still being made, the ram press is already used in at least six countries and local fabricators are attempting to make copies. ATI plans to produce a manual for a standardized press design that will aid machine shops in fabricating jigs and fittings for production of high quality presses at lower cost. Likewise, CARE will soon make available technical manuals for the Allen version of the press.

John Mugeto reported to the conference on a project to survey oil processing in Kenya that is sponsored by Egerton University and the International Development Research Council (IDRC). In surveying four provinces they found that most motorized screw expellers fell into disuse for lack of sufficient seed for processing and that seed cake was sometimes left to rot by farmers who are unaware of its value as an animal feed. This project recently has been running laboratory tests on several versions of the ram press using different seed varieties. Dr. Mugeto presented the findings of these tests, which themselves have led to new changes in the press design. This project will also pay attention to the seed cake as a by-product essential to the profitability of an oil processing enterprise.

Carlos Zulberti, who also is involved with an Egerton University/IDRC study, discussed a series of concerns in the areas of international trade in the oils and national marketing of oils in Kenya. These are salient issues, especially in light of IDRC's long term interest in promoting oilseed crops in East Africa and South Asia. Dr. Zulberti showed the impact that national policy has had on oilseed production and use in Kenya. For instance, removal of the 40% duty on imported oil was followed by a decline in crude oil imports and a sharp rise in importation of refined oil, i.e., less locally added value, but with an increase in consumer price for oil.

Turning to the rural production sector, Carlos Zulberti raised issues of public acceptance of liquid oil which is not commonly used in many areas of Kenya, and the use of seed cake as high protein fodder. According to Dr. Zulberti, other essential issues to consider when planning a project to introduce the ram press include: ownership of the machines (groups, co-ops, or individual farmers), agronomic practices and extension, marketing of surplus oil by rural producers (when tinned, Kimbo fat is relatively cheap and readily available), and overall economic feasibility.

In addition to agencies already noted, conference participants came from Africare/Zambia, Technology Development & Application Unit/University of Zambia, Craftsmen & Artisan Production Unit/Tanzania, Experiment in International Living Uganda, from three Kenyan government ministries, and from these other Kenya-based organizations: Catholic Relief Services, Compassion of Canada, Handclasp International, International Labour Organization, Undugu Society, IDRC's Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa, and Technoserve.

In concluding the conference, participants proposed to continue coordination of information exchange. Suggestions included publishing a newsletter about the ram press, sharing copies of reports, holding a second conference within 18 months, and getting involved with the PACT-sponsored Food Oils in Africa network. (Editorial note: Naturally the Food Oils network welcomes all interested agencies, and we are pleased to use Food Oils Press to publicize development in this ram press grouping.) Under the leadership of ATI and LWR, this grouping will continue to develop the Bielenberg ram press and to promote the small-scale processing of sunflower oil.

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A NEW COLLABORATION
Continued from Page 1

processing activities. Again, the emphasis is on learning from and assisting each other in practical ways.

Who makes up this network?

There is no formal membership — any organization, private business, governmental agency or individual can participate by letting us know of your interest. Please use the “Feedback” sheet in this newsletter. The network is sponsored by Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT), an international consortium of NGOs.

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Food Oils in Africa Newsletter Page 5
SUNFLOWER OILSEED MEETING IN KENYA

This abstract is distilled from the 45-page document "proceedings of the Meeting OILSEEDS AND THE BIELENBERG PRESS" which was compiled by Michael O'Donnell and other ATI staff members, and which is available from ATI, 1331 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005, USA. Site visit reports on the projects mentioned here will appear in the future issues of FOOD OILS PRESS, as personnel of the Food Oils in Africa network travel to East Africa this summer.

When Appropriate Technology International (ATI) and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) announced plans for an informational meeting on processing sunflower seeds using the Bielenberg press, they expected a handful of people would attend. Instead, over 30 representatives from some 20 agencies in four countries showed up in Nairobi on February 20, 1989. The focus of all this interest is a small, manually operated ram press designed by Carl Bielenberg in 1985 for use in the Village Oil Project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, whose sponsors include ATI, LWR, and the Government of Tanzania. Throughout the one-day meeting researchers, engineers and program personnel discussed the problems and potentials of the ram press.

Lynn Schlueter of the Village Oil Project talked about the early development of the ram press as the smallest of several design options. Key features of this machine are its low cost, relative ease of maintenance and repair, and the fact that no mechanical pre-processing of oilseed is required. The press works on the basis of continuous throughput of seed: the oil passes through the bars of the press cage and the seed residue (seed cake) is forced out of the press around an adjustable restriction cone. Despite engineering and fabrication problems, the ram press was gradually field tested by villagers looking for better processing technology than the flotation method of oilseed pounding, boiling, and skimming. Making the design rugged enough for hard-coated seed, and controlling quality in press fabrication have posed many challenges.

Mr. Schlueter noted two pleasant surprises in the expansion of their operation in recent years. The first was that once the potential for local oilseed processing was demonstrated, farmers readily changed over to growing a smaller softer seed variety in place of the heavier, lower oil content varieties of sunflower seed which they sold by weight to the government. Secondly, when the project switched from only promoting group ownership to selling presses to individuals, presses were more fully utilized and owners encouraged their neighbors to grow more oilseed by paying higher prices.

Martin Fisher of Action AID/Kenya as well as Hugh Allen of
Ntinanko Site Visit

Continued from page 2

co-op a fee for each batch processed. This way many more people benefit directly, especially women processors who buy other farmers' fruit in addition to their own families' FFB. In this service mode the co-op avoids a lot of managerial work, and it also avoids the liability of high sales taxes imposed on a buy-process-sell operation.

The program also needed to modify purchased processing equipment to fit Ntinanko's needs. The boiler, which was a scaled-down design of an industrial model, performed poorly with pre-stripped fruit. And as the mill's operation expanded, the limited capacity of small screw presses became a bottleneck. To solve these problems the boiler was cut in half to make flat open steamers (fueled with the residue palm fibers), and a locally manufactured manual hydraulic batch press was added. Now the mill can handle about 90 'batches' per day, or 6 tons of fruit. One ton of FFB yields about one drum of oil, 55 U.S. gallons or about 200 liters.

Problems remain for the Ntinanko co-op, its mill and its users. Transportation of FFB to the mill is a major constraint. Also, the palm kernels, valued for another kind of oil, cannot be crushed and processed with the mill's current equipment. Ntinanko processors would like to be able to cushion themselves against price fluctuations by storing oil, but they do not have the necessary refining and storage capacities. However, given the past two years' experience, the Cooperative Society can be counted on to work hard for its community in solving these and other issues of their new enterprise.

The Ntinanko experience has generated interest in small-scale palm oil processing, especially as national television and major newspapers gave extensive coverage to the mill's inaugural ceremony. Government has praised this project as a mode to stimulate rural enterprise and to generate employment, both of which are major issues in the country's attempt to deal with the effects of structural readjustment.

Post Script

I felt fortunate to visit this rural oil processing enterprise, and it occurred to me that perhaps a study visit to Ntinanko might provide valuable learning experiences for other people in this field. Depending on the level of interest and funding possibilities, Food Oils in Africa could help organize such a trip. Please indicate on the "feedback" sheet if this would be of use to your agency. Also let us know if you have comments and questions about this site visit report.

End

FOOD OILS IN AFRICA DIRECTORY


The Food Oils in Africa team is pleased to announce the first edition of the Food Oils in Africa Directory. The directory is compiled from questionnaires completed over the past two years by more than 60 organizations and individuals involved in food oil processing activities. In addition to addresses, entries outline program activities, problems encountered, information needs, and areas of expertise.

The directory, itself, is indexed by country, oil, level of technology, crop development, research, tool/equipment, manufacturer, cooperatives, publications, data banks, and soap making. One can easily find specific information where manual sunflower presses are being used, who in Cameroon is working on palm oil equipment, what attempts are underway to develop cooperative oil processing enterprises, etc.

Because this is the first edition of the directory, assembled in the early stages of the Food Oils in Africa network, there are gaps in what one might hope to find. However, even in this early stage, the directory illustrates how much NGOs and other agencies have to offer each other by way of experience and know-how. Facilitating such exchanges of information and bringing agencies and individuals together to find mutual solutions to mutual problems, is the purpose of the directory and, indeed, of the Food Oils in Africa network.

We plan to continue gathering data for the directory and will send out supplements as we receive new information. If you know of organizations or people we should contact, or if you would like to be included in the directory, please let us know by using the "feedback" sheet in this newsletter.

WHY FOOD OILS?

Continued from Page 1

nificant progress. Still, they have little contact with each other and the benefits of innovations do not reach full potential.

There is strength in numbers; if we can broadly demonstrate the viability and socio-economic importance of expanding small-scale decentralized processing, policy makers will listen.

The lessons we learn putting together a network in this food processing sector will help in planning collaborative action in other areas of rural development.

End
Commentaires et Réactions

Aidez-nous à faire de ce réseau un vrai carrefour d'échange d'informations en répondant à quelques questions. Nous voulons vos commentaires et vos réactions à nos idées. Veuillez nous adresser cette page à l'adresse suivante:

Food Oils in Africa a/s PACT, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA

Nom et prénom___________________________________________________________
Organisme ou agence_____________________________________________________
Adresse_______________________________________________________________
Numéro de téléphone__________________________________Date_______________

[ ] Je n'ai pas encore rempli de questionnaire mais j'aimerais devenir membre du Réseau des huiles alimentaires en Afrique. Veuillez m'adresser votre questionnaire.

[ ] Veuillez m'adresser le Répertoire des huiles alimentaires en Afrique.
  [ ] version en langue anglaise
  [ ] version en langue française (disponible à partir du mois de juillet '89)
  [ ] Je travaille en Afrique. Veuillez me faire parvenir un exemplaire sans frais.
  [ ] Je ne travaille pas en Afrique. Ci-inclus vous trouverez un chèque bancaire/mandat postal pour $US 12,50 ($US 10,00 plus $US2,50 frais d'envoi) pour chaque exemplaire commandé.
    __________________________ X $US 12,50 = __________________________
    (nombre d'exemplaires) (total envoyé)

[ ] Voici le nom et adresse d'autres personnes qui s'intéressent au traitement des aliments:__________________________________________________________

[ ] Oui, j'aimerais que vous traduisez le manuel La Presse à karité qui fait le point du traitement du karité parce que________________________________________________________

[ ] Je voudrais recevoir un exemplaire des principes généraux de la série d'études de cas sur les huiles alimentaires en Afrique. Il se peut que nous vous soumettions un projet, vous demandant de faire une étude de cas sur un aspect de nos activités dans la fabrication de l'huile.

[ ] J'aimerais faire partie d'une visite d'étude à une huilerie coopérative d'huile de palme au Ghana. Cette visite m'aiderait dans mon travail parce que________________________________________

[ ] Je voudrais que des bulletins futurs de La Presse des huiles alimentaires traitent les sujets suivants:
  [ ] problèmes techniques particuliers, tels que__________________________________
  [ ] reportages sur divers sites et activités en cours
  [ ] aspects financiers et marketing du traitement des huiles alimentaires;
  [ ] ressources qui me seraient utiles telles que_________________________________

[ ] J'aimerais écrire un article (ou je peux vous envoyer les données, et vous pouvez écrire l'article vous-mêmes) sur le sujet suivant:______________________________

[ ] Autres commentaires négatifs ou positifs, demandes spéciales, questions?________________________________________
FEEDBACK SHEET

Please help us make this a truly interactive network by answering a few questions and giving us your feedback.

- Send to: Food Oils in Africa c/o PACT, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA

Name ____________________________________________
Organization or Agency ____________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________
Date ____________________________ Telephone: ____________________________

[ ] I/we have not yet filled out a questionnaire, but would like to participate in the Food Oils in Africa network. Please send us the questionnaire.

[ ] I/we would like to order Food Oils in Africa: Directory
  [ ] English edition
  [ ] French edition (not available until July)
  [ ] I work in Africa, please send me a free copy to the address above
  [ ] I work outside of Africa; I am enclosing $12.50 ($10.00 plus $2.50 postage) for each copy: ________ X $12.50 = ________

[ ] Other people interested in food processing who would like to receive this newsletter:
  Names and Addresses ____________________________________________

[ ] Yes, I would like to have the shea processing book La Presse à Karité translated into English, because ____________________________________________

[ ] I am interested in receiving a copy of the guidelines for the Food Oils in Africa case study series, as we may want to submit a proposal to do a case study of some aspect of our oils activity.

[ ] I would be interested in joining a study tour to visit the cooperative palm oil mill in Ghana. This would benefit me in my work because ____________________________________________

[ ] I would like to see future issues of Food Oils Press treat these topics:
  [ ] Technical problems, such as ____________________________________________
  [ ] Site visit reports and news of actual project activities
  [ ] Financial and marketing aspects of oils processing
  [ ] Resources I can tap, such as ____________________________________________
  [ ] Other ____________________________________________

[ ] I would like to write an article (or I can give Food Oils Press the data so they can write) on ____________________________________________

[ ] Any other comments, requests, critiques? ____________________________________________
SITE VISIT TO COOPERATIVE PALM OIL MILL IN NTINANKO, GHANA

By Jonathan Otto

On my first visit to this village near Kumasi in April 1987, the members of the newly-started Cooperative Society of Ntinanko gave me a tour of their palm plantations, young trees intercropped with beans and other annual food crops. They proudly pointed to the future site of a planned oil mill: two acres of scrub brush at the edge of town, between the village water well and a small stream. I must admit that, to me, the organizational financial and technical problems they faced seemed daunting.

However, when I returned to Ntinanko earlier this year, I found the progress made in less than two years truly impressive. Tons of yellow-black fresh fruit bunches (FFB) were piled around the edges of the large clearing waiting to be stripped off their branches, while in the middle of the area about 25 women worked over huge vats of steaming fruit in preparation for processing. Older women and children picked kernels from the pressed pulp.

Behind them was the mill building, two small administrative rooms and a large open-air hangar where the actual tasks of pulping and pressing the fruit are accomplished. The equipment consists of a diesel-powered digester, one hydraulic press, and for a later second pressing, a spindle press. Most of the finished oil is sold directly at the mill to women wholesalers from Kumasi who contract with individual processors.

Support from Technoserve

Ntinanko's dynamic coop leadership is supported by a U.S. based NGO, Technoserve (TNS), which specializes in assisting agricultural business. In addition to Technoserve's help with pre-investment financial studies, technical assessments, and coop structuring, the Cooperative Society of Ntinanko received a TNS bridge loan until their bank funding is approved. The coop has also contracted with TNS for a Ghanian mill manager, who is currently training a coop member to take over as manager next year.

Besides Ntinanko, Technoserve has case study series, TNS is examining its approach to assisting palm oil cooperatives in Ghana. It already has considerable documentation on its experience which can be obtained from Mr. Paul Warmka, Technoserve, P.O. Box 135, Accra, Ghana or from Technoserve Africa Division, 148 East Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut, 06851, U.S.A.

Solving Problems

TNS staffer, Ester Adjeteey, and Cooperative Society General Secretary, Joseph Victor Yarney, talked openly of the problems and constraints of getting both the coop and its mill started.

The checkered history of coops in Ghana created a serious hurdle in the recruitment of coop members and the solicitation of members' personal financial investment in the mill. After more than a year of organizing, 34 members (eight of whom are women) were enrolled and together had invested the minimum equity to begin.

Some months after opening for business, a major adjustment was required in the mill's mode of operation. At first, the coop had purchased FFB from farmers, prepared and processed them with a large team of salaried workers, and then marketed the oil. Since May 1988 the mill functions on a service basis: processors come with their fruit, they use coop boilers to prepare it, they help the coop's two salaried workers process it, and they pay the...
A NEW COLLABORATION

This first issue of the Food Oils Press announces a collaborative program for everyone involved with small-scale oil processing in Africa. Briefly put, this is a network of agencies and individuals working to improve processing technologies and project designs. The aim of the network is to encourage the exchange of information and field level experience, thereby promoting viable local enterprises and regional food security. The Food Oils in Africa Program itself serves as a resource for members of the network.

What Will the Food Oils Network Do?

To a large extent, that is up to the network participants. For starters, nearly two years have been spent identifying projects and people in this field, and consulting them on their needs. From this preliminary assessment came a series of possible activities.

First on the agenda is the continuing process of finding out who is doing what, and then assembling and disseminating this data so everyone can use it. One result is the newly published Food Oils in Africa: Directory, described in this newsletter. Hopefully this Food Oils Press newsletter will also become a source for information exchange and contact among practitioners, donors, researchers and others working on oil processing.

Compiling and disseminating technical information in a form useful for field workers is a second activity. With the help of technical agencies in the network, published documents will be reviewed for appropriateness and availability. Where gaps exist, the program will try to fill in with translations, reprints or possibly new materials such as source books or manuals.

A third activity is the documentation of experiences in the form of a series of case studies. The idea is to encourage experienced agencies to look critically at their work and to share findings with others. Themes for the first round of case studies are 'popular participation' and 'expansion of benefits'. The case studies and other network learning activities will lead to regional workshops on food oils processing later in the program.

Other areas of network activities in the planning stage are study visits, field level exchanges, and training. Certain agencies, including some donors, are interested in developing contacts for funding small-scale oil production.

WHY FOOD OILS?

Why chose small-scale food oil processing as the focus for a network?

Extracting edible oils is one of the most widespread post-harvest transformation activities in Africa, a vital element in the food cycle.

Processing oil is a major source of income for rural women and a source of raw material for cottage industries such as soap making.

Oil is an important source of energy because of its caloric density; increased consumption could help relieve simple malnutrition.

In 1970 Africa exported 883,000 tons of palm and palm kernel oils; twenty years later Africa imports an estimated 800,000 tons of food oils annually. Large industrial processing operations are inefficient in many cases, wasting scarce resources, leaving farmers without markets for oil crops and leaving consumers without reasonably-priced supplies of oil.

In thousands of villages across Africa, NGOs and others agencies are working with communities on similar problems of improving oil processing. Some are making sig-
The idea for a meeting of key oil processing practitioners still strikes me as a valid point of departure for planning future action in this field. I have the names, addresses and relationships to pull it off, if I could find a sponsor. A good focal point might be the production of a "practitioner's handbook" that brings together the wisdom and experience of those who make a living squeezing farmers' nuts. I might just take this full circle and approach ATI to sponsor a workshop on food oils processing.
mix of skills and experience, much of it gained while carrying out Food Oils assignments, who would want a part time job? It occurred to me at several points that I could not leave Food Oils without pulling the program apart. Although I never used that to manipulate the situation, such dependency is not a positive force in the long run.

I do not regret my involvement in this learning program. On the contrary it has been a very growthful and exciting venture. I regret that it ended and the way it ended. I feel sad to think about the unanswered letters PACT must have received from people who I had come to know by correspondence, people who had reason to expect answers. In the end I could not protect the program or myself from the vagaries of institutional change.

Future visions

I have been asked about my availability for consulting in food oils activities, and I may do some project design or evaluation work in this area. One of the truly gifted appropriate technologies in this field lives in Vermont, Carl Bielenberg. Someone should make sure his genius is brought to bear on all the continuing problems of oils processing.

There are other areas of rural development that I have noticed from my travels are badly in need of networking, such as natural resource management in the Sahel. There is great inertia to the movement of ideas in Africa, too few conduits and too few agencies and individuals who make it their business.
personalities. I am now consulting regularly for a development assistance organization that allows me considerable authority in a year long assignment. My supervisors have confidence in my work and let me do it my way to a great extent. Probably because I sense their trust and willingness to give me enough room to operate I do not feel the need to push the limits.

Was it wise to fight over and over for better clarity, for a commitment from PACT as Rigby had urged in 1985? Would a signed agreement or a written management plan have made a difference in the face of budget cuts? Perhaps not, although it would have changed the tenor of the debate in June 1990 if I had need a staff person, albeit a temporary one.

Personal lessons

I now see that some of my wounds in the struggle for the Food Oils network were self-inflicted. I swung from having unrealistically high expectations from the program and from PACT, to neglecting this work through overcommitment to other tasks. I was at times impatient in a setting that could not react as fast as I thought necessary. I did not always chose my battles wisely.

In a strange way PACT's dependence on me was a great weakness for the network, especially without a well delineated job description and structure that might have adjusted responsibilities among a team of players. Although we tried not to design the program around me, it grew to be so, like a well worn pair of shoes. Beyond PACT's supervision it was essentially a one-person job. Where would they find someone else with my
components that relate to individual agencies in a way that significantly enhances their capacities. In this sense it's more a matter of connecting the dots on a series of discrete physical interventions, than a generalized and passive role for the sponsoring agency. This would be a more organic way to approach networking, rather than dropping the idea full-blown from the outside.

Consultants as program managers

Despite the repeated failure to structure a long term, i.e., three year, relationship as a program manager, I remain unconvinced that the problem is inherent in organizations. For the work I was doing there was no intrinsic value in being in New York City, or Washington, or for the most part any one specific place in Africa. With modam, fax, phone, Federal Express and the mails, Vermont is no farther from Africa than is Manhattan. The reason I could not manage or coordinate a long-distance communications based program like Food Oils from my home was simply the limitations of the mindset of PACT's staff.

Why was there so much resistance to having a stay-at-home coordinator? Part was tradition, even in the 1980's. The “electronic cottage” may have made the home office possible, but how do you know he is really working at home? Another point is that in Vermont I could not be part of the team, could not suffer through staff meetings and be available for crisis management. Never mind that the Food Oils program was quite separate, top management wants to have all hands available when they need them.

As in so many other areas of organizational life, it comes down to
various low points I plotted to anchor it in some other institution. Probably VITA would have been better with its technical orientation and publications capacities. Still, PACT was the main organization mandated to facilitate the work of many others, and they had the USAID grant to make that happen.

**Is a learning program unfundable?**

In the current crisis at CIE this question may have larger application, but I apply it to the particular situation of the Food Oils network. In a way we were very fortunate to have the flexibility afforded by the FVA/PVC funding. To start from scratch with an idea in the US, develop a group of interested agencies in Africa and feel our way towards something useful was certainly a luxury. It should have been the perfect base for future fund raising. If the program had continued I believe the RADI joint proposal would have been just the start of a series of well targeted, successful small projects.

There were so many funding approaches that were never made, such as the Science and Technology office of USAID, and the in-country donors that appreciated the need for information exchange and specific services to NGOs like Ford Foundation and IDRC. FICAH would have liked proposals for more subgrants, and Pew is reportedly back in West Africa. Individual USAID missions would be good targets for site-specific pieces, but this takes us back to the overall question of PACT's willingness to be present and active in Africa.

What would make a learning program fundable would be to have certain
perfectly normal that PACT would develop expertise in small scale enterprise or that it set up a profit-making media service. Somehow the technology of processing food oils seemed off limits. For whatever reason this made PACT staff forever outsiders to the very processes and problems that were at the heart of the network’s raison d'être. It may be worth noting that I was the only person at PACT who had ever seen oil being processed. For the others it remained a completely foreign concept.

The fact that PACT was in transition in 1986, 1987 and 1988, looking for new opportunities to be useful in a new mode that would please its donor was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it made the whole exploration of the Food Oils idea possible by funding the development phase and then the actual core costs. On the other hand, when PACT was re-established in a new identity in 1990, and still newer opportunities came along, it was all too willing to let the Food Oils program atrophy. In other words it was expendable.

One could go into hypothetical cases. If key personnel had stayed in place for the intended life of the network, maybe things would have turned out better. But the fact that no one stood up to halt its demise indicates how thin the institutional commitment was. The lessons of ATI at the very first stages of the program point out the instability of apparently stable agencies. The essentially undemocratic structure of PACT and ATI meant that in each case one person could reject a team’s plans, destroy an on-going program, and fire or hire people with virtually no functional accountability.

Was PACT a poor choice? At the time it seemed the only one, though at
Each of these visions carry with them consequences for PACT’s involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More restricted vision</th>
<th>More expansive vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not <em>promoting</em> NGOs in oils activities, it is not PACT’s role to do so</td>
<td>Oils in Africa is a major econ. and dev. activity regardless of PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Only grants from PACT to others, i.e., no field involvement by PACT</td>
<td>Grants plus consideration of other partnerships involving PACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minimize work by PACT’s staff and consultants, grantees do it themselves</td>
<td>Whatever personnel is needed: PACT field ‘stringers’ or agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PACT doesn’t build in-house expertise, rather hires it from VITA or others</td>
<td>Wide expertise at PACT vital to play leadership role, the more the better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Only inter-agency contacts important, PACT is just facilitator of these</td>
<td>PACT at this stage must be ‘hub’ of growing web of relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• FVA/PVC $ for US FVDs &amp; their African partners, little PACT effort to include</td>
<td>FVA/PVC $ core funds, raise more to fund African and third country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian, European, Japanese agencies</td>
<td>NGOs participation in network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, the more restrictive vision gave way to the more expansive one in only a few areas, while it continued to set the parameters of the program in most others. The restrictive view held sway in that there was little new fundraising, few grants to non-US agencies, very tight staffing pattern, program activities limited to small grants and information exchange, and little exploration of new partnerships. The other, more expansive vision found some expression in outreach to many kinds of agencies, build-up of PACT consultant’s expertise, and the RADJ-PACT joint proposal in early 1990.

**PACT: A poor choice to organize a network?**

Of course, nobody selected PACT from among other agencies to do this program, it selected itself. In at least one way PACT was not equipped to do this. PACT lacked the technical know-how and orientation, and by Carolyn’s perspective had no business developing them. It seemed
Before Carolyn and Ellen's departure in 1989 the program's objectives and activities, or more accurately the priorities among them, were continually debated by the management team. Partly this was due to the experimental nature of the network itself -- there are no blueprints for this kind of activity, and new opportunities each required rethinking of positions. Partly it reflects differences in attitude about PACT's proper role in such a network program, and its role in development in general.

One way of looking at this conflict of opinions is to consider two opposing visions of what the network should be and do. Neither of these views belong entirely to any one person at any given time, and neither is intrinsically right or wrong. Yet these alternative visions have competed in many areas and that competition slowed our concerted efforts. The dichotomy has never been explicitly acknowledged in discussions, but it clearly exists. This chart gives shorthand descriptions of the two contrasting visions across a range of program dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More restricted vision</th>
<th>More expansive vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-active, responding stance</td>
<td>Pro-active, initiating stance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small, limited size program</td>
<td>Expansive, open to growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-limited with 'sunset' clause</td>
<td>Open-ended, continue program as long as useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand-off or spin-off network control to African NGOs within three years</td>
<td>Long term aim of localizing best activities as/when appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep cost low to ease spin-off</td>
<td>Budget according to program needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus only on NGOs &amp; grassroots organizations</td>
<td>These plus govt. policy-makers donors, researchers, businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All learning and information exchange, and dissemination</td>
<td>That plus resources for applications as logical follow-on to learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the program components, I think the case studies were perhaps the least effective for the resources expended. The directory served a key role as a physical representation of the network early on, but its utility remains in question. From the readers' response forms we know the newsletter was carefully read by many. Study grants, limited as they were, were probably an excellent resource. The irony that the workshop was never held caps off the slightly absurd facet of this whole experience. I believe that would have been, and still might be, a very valuable exercise.

Management revisited

Issues in the management of the Food Oils program go back to the year before it was launched officially, as the program idea evolved from a minor interest of the Learning and Linkages Office. When this interest grew into the more formal Food Oils program, the loose and informal management of it was not carefully reconsidered, resulting in a lack of clarity and cohesion.

Why this happened is worth puzzling out. Carolyn Stremlau was struggling on many fronts for what she thought was important and right. Her seniority at PACT and her moral bearing meant that her male colleagues had to take her seriously. That did not keep them from undercutting her, however. I may have suffered by gender association with these men. She never seemed completely comfortable supervising me and seemed to find even mild forms of confrontation difficult. Keeping management plans and relationships vague may have been an subconscious strategy to avoid locking herself into a tight long term structure with me.
on successful projects did not want to answer quantities of letters full of questions. Fewer still wanted to host study tours unless they were self-contained, which in many situations is impossible. This means the PACT could not just say: you all should communicate directly with each other because we do not want to be the hub or the repository of information. The VITA contract began to solve this issue, but I suspect many people were disillusioned not to get answers from other participants.

- Information alone could help solve problems. The newsletter helped hundreds of people across the continent learn of the new ram press in East Africa, or of the cooperative milling operation in Ghana. Was that enough to help them improve their projects? Many African NGOs have no resources to spend on publications or other research and development efforts. For some the newsletter must have looked like a catalogue of goodies they could not have. Of course, the network intended to go further with training manuals and more direct services through VITA.

- Learning comes first, then application. Perhaps we were a little hung up on not knowing everything before we started to use what we did know. For three years we looked for publications appropriate to village level oils processing, and never found the perfect one. Case studies may eventually help a wider audience, but it took over a year to make the grants and some reports are still outstanding. In retrospect I wonder if we should have put so much emphasis on information exchange in lieu of going more quickly into a service mode. That links back to the issue of PACT’s roles, discussed below.
- The RADI and FICAH subprojects seem likely to do some good for the groups affected in Senegal and Kenya respectively.

- A prototype of the Bielenberg ram press was introduced into West Africa from Tanzania for comparative trials in The Gambia, and shows good promise.

All in all, the network was never allowed to show its potential, so it is unfortunately not possible to judge its effectiveness. The network's lack of attractiveness to donors may have been temporary and could have been remedied over time, if field activities had accelerated. This reinforces the notion of combining learning with application and then more learning and dissemination in a broad continuing cycle, rather than a linear model. We needed a few successful examples of introducing a new technology from another area, or of helping a project reach more people, or of designing innovative interventions. Then the network could have become a magnet for donor resources. All we can say is, it could have worked.

Assessing the network design

If we cannot say that the network itself worked well, what can we say of the design? Here we have to look at some of the assumptions which were never quite stated outright, but proved questionable.

- Agencies and individuals would be willing to cooperate to provide information and perhaps other services to each other. Even in the short time the network functioned we reached some limits. Many field workers
On a quantitative level we certainly could measure the number of participants and the number of requests made for available services from VITA and PACT. We could also measure the growth in the newsletter mailing list, and the increased number of entries in the revised directory, had a second one been compiled. Qualitative measures might include the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of the case studies, the comments solicited from the respondent forms in the newsletter, and the results of the subprojects.

None of these answer the more basic question of whether the network was really useful, whether it improved access to information in a way that lead to substantive improvements in project designs, and ultimately in people's lives. I think we could have devised some methods to get at this issues had the program run full term. Certainly the regional conference would have yielded some better idea of this and may well have kicked off a much more participatory phase for the program.

My personal evaluation is that the network was beginning to make an impact when it shut down, especially in specific cases. Samples include:

- Arranging for Technoserve in Ghana to help two local agencies carry out case studies that strengthened their own analytical capacities and got Technoserve involved with these groups.

- Some impact on the sunflower project of Tanzania in terms of asking difficult questions about gender equity in a technically successful project that has few women participants. The national extension of this effort is now focused largely on women's groups.
Europe. FVA/PVC clearly agreed to let PACT cut its Africa programs to co-finance Americans' entrance into East Europe, so I can hardly appeal to the funder over the loss of one small program.

I did save copies of all the essential files and all the computerized information. If PACT really fails to get things together in coming months, who knows? There have been some organizations kinks in this program in the last five years, and there may be more.

VI. Observations and conclusions

Observations have been scattered through the text. Here I will try to gather the main ones and then go further in the analysis. We start with the network itself as a development intervention, then discuss the institutional aspects of the program's organization. This lead to considerations of all this for my professional life, and to thoughts about what the future might hold.

Assessing the network as a whole

As this essay has not stressed the actual accomplishments of the network, the following comments do not all flow from the text. One preliminary remark is that we never got around to devising an evaluation plan for the program. Knowing the donor would not demand detailed evaluation was a disincentive for us to prepare for one. Nonetheless, I have given it some thought and come up with a few evaluation possibilities.
Later that month when he was in the US I had a phone conversation with Bert. He offered little explanation for his decision except that my memo had made things "political" within PACT. He seemed uncomprehending of my deep disappointment and expressions of concern for the future of the Food Oils program. I asked if I could have a few weeks to prepare the program files for transfer as they were organized rather ideosyncratically. Another brief fax answered the request in early July. No, just send them as they are. And I did, 60 pounds of paper that could not have meant much without detailed explanation. For the sake of our partners, I wrote letters to all subgrant holders and other regular participants explaining the change of management.

Six months have past. From what I can tell the program has effectively ended, except possibly for continued work on the FICAH and RADl grants. I was asked by Bert in the autumn to come out to Dakar to help his assistant set up the files, and also to do some fund raising for the network. He has a new vision for it, expanded to cover other food processing and agricultural technologies. PACT will take on operational roles in some new joint ventures. I said I would be interested in helping if it was part of a negotiated role for me in the network; I never heard back.

Bert and his new Senegalese assistant attended a workshop that I helped plan and facilitate in Quebec recently. They never mentioned the Food Oils program and neither did I.

In these past months I wanted to take my case to a higher court, but to whom? It was PACT's CEO who urged Bert to make the transfer and it was he who supervised the budget slashing to fund his pet projects in East
program during its third year. Instead, let's use this period to develop a longer term plan that is in keeping with our overall directions and specific strategies.

- There are only a small handful of functioning networks that link up NGOs and grassroots organizations in Africa, because it takes several years to build up a mailing list and data base on participants, find your optimum methodologies, and develop a reputation. PACT's Food Oils network is one of those few, and as such is a valuable resource.

- A final point in even the most cursory consideration of continuing the network is financing. I am convinced that we can attract a lot of outside funding for the network and its activities. The Fall 1990 conference, videos of successful projects, funding for new partnership projects with local NGOs: all these are immediately fundable ideas. However, for the time-being the network's core costs will have to be carried by the Coop Agreement. That is an excellent use of these funds -- to lever other funds for outreach activities and to improve PVO/NGO performance in Africa.

Conclusion

It is not unusual for someone who has worked hard and long on a program to consider it of special value. From my perspective, this is the most significant effort I have done for PACT in my eight years of consulting with the consortium. I am convinced that it is too important to be discontinued or drastically altered without due process. We owe our funder, our partners and each other a careful decision.” 11

The Response

The response to my plea came a week later in a two paragraph fax message from Bert in Dakar. He had decided to “transfer” the Food Oils program, not to an African organization in December, but to his own office in Dakar effective immediately. I was instructed to send all of the program files at once to New York for forwarding to him.
responsibilities to an Africa NGO. The problem as I see it with squeezing into the three year timeframe is that the network is still expanding towards its true potential; to begin now, just passed the half-way mark, to disassemble it would be to miss the opportunity to do something really important within PACT's unique combination of capacities, funding possibilities, membership resources, and consortium mandate. More on that in section III.

- The problem as I see it with the transfer to an African NGO, besides the opinion offered just above that this is premature, is that there are no known African organizations with the combination of mandate, resources and capacity to handle the technical and managerial complexity of the program. In order to develop a relationship to effectively hand over responsibilities would require a large investment on PACT's part in equipment, training, salaries and other support.

- There are also technical and logistical difficulties to be considered in running a a network from within Africa. Anyone familiar with the African continent, and with such NGO networking attempts as FAYDO, knows the physical, political, institutional, economic, language and infrastructural barriers.

- PACT has committed itself in recent years to emphasizing Africa in its programs. In reviewing the proposed budget allocations in the Coop Agreement for FY 91, one cannot escape the fact that Africa has been cut disproportionately.

- Food Oils is PACT's only substantive program in Africa funded under the Coop Agreement. Cutting the Food Oils budget by 60% in the middle of the program hardly demonstrates PACT's commitment to Africa.

- PACT and AID's FCA/PVC office have invested funds and staff time in the Food Oils network, and it is just now beginning to pay off. ... When such an investment begins to pay returns, is that the moment to 'give away the shop'? What will PACT and the FVA/PVC office have to show for their investments if our energies and resources are now turned toward handing over parts of the program?

Alternative Strategy

- Let us not waste time and energy planning the demise of this
money put back into the Food Oils budget and encouraged me to write out
the argument I had given him on why a rapid transfer to an African
organization was not feasible or in PACT's interest. He left for Senegal
without informing me of his success in restoring the budget. A week later
by way of his first strategy paper I discovered he had not got any funds
back into the Food Oils budget and was indeed planning for a "transfer" of
the Food Oils network to an unnamed African organization by December
1990.

One last try to save the program

I made one last attempt to save the program in a lengthy memorandum in
early June. I sent it to all PACT top staff. As it turned out, it was my
swan song. A few of the major points are quoted below.

"I learned over the last two weeks that the Food Oils line item in
the third year Coop Agreement budget has been cut from around
$100,000 to $40,000. According to Jake this was done on the
rationale that the Food Oils in Africa Program would be transferred to
an Africa NGO in the coming year, and so would need much less money.
Subsequently this transfer concept appeared in Bert's first draft of an
African strategy as if it were already decided and the only question
was how to accomplish this denouement to the program. The purpose
of this memo is to present an alternative strategy for the future of
this experimental program.

- The Food Oils program became part of the last Coop Agreement in
an era of PACT's relationship to the FVA/PVC office that required a
focus on learning and linkage roles. ... No one was clear where this
experiment would lead us, and so the concept of eventually handing
off responsibilities to some African NGO partner was rather
simplistically advanced as one possible way of continuing the more
successful and useful elements of the network.

- The three-year deadline for the network experiment has not been
far from my mind in all this, nor has the notion of somehow devolving
the part of the CEO that the network should spin-off to an African organization by the end of the third year, which was summer 1991.

I explained to Bert that this idea of spinning off certain responsibilities had been written in during the design phase as one of several possible ways for the program, but that we had not identified an African agency to take over a program of this scope. He said he understood this, but that he had his orders to "transfer" the network as soon as possible, perhaps by the end of 1990.

Another, more immediate issue came up during our meeting. It resulted from a close scrutiny of the budget printout. Under the new CEO PACT had managed to get important new funding to coordinate a Citizens for Democracy Corps in Eastern Europe. The problem was that PACT had been obliged to contribute matching funds from its FCA/FVC funds. In the months when this re-budgeting was done nobody at PACT to defend the Africa budget.

Pouring over the budget print-out Bert and I discovered that the Africa budget had been slashed almost in half for the rest of FY 89 and all of FY 90. The Food Oils budget was cut even deeper. Instead of $100,000 there was only $40,000 allocated for FY 90. The personnel budget which was to carry me at 50% of full time equivalent was just $5,000 for the year. A little quick checking revealed the supposed rationale for this cut: if the program was going to be handed off to an African organization, then PACT did not need to allocate much money to it.

Bert professed to be just as appalled at this as I was. He promised to get
The CEO asked a few questions, complemented me on holding things together, and gave his decision. Only full time staff personnel in New York could manage programs. While PACT depended on me to assist with this and other programs, I would be a consultant or associate or coordinator, not a manager. What is more to the point, he had decided to reopen the post of Director for Africa instead of filling Carolyn’s position. That person would be my supervisor. Surely, he said, this person would value my contributions in his/her decisions. I was not completely happy, but at least someone was in charge.

With encouragement from the new leadership I wrote another successful grant. This one was to the Partnership Initiative Fund for a joint feasibility study on sesame oil processing in southern Senegal with the NGO RADI. Again, it was for a specific activity in the field. I think it probably would have been over the line into field involvement for Carolyn, but that was no longer a problem. RADI wanted us to work with them, and so I let their request be my main criterion.

Another new boss, more decisions

By May 1989 a new Director for Africa, Bert Laurent, was on board at PACT, but with an unusual twist. Bert Laurent, who lived in Senegal, was moving the Africa regional office to Dakar.

We had our initial meetings at PACT in May and Bert made it clear he was counting on me to keep the Food Oils network going. He would have his hands full generating new activities. The only issue was an insistence on
The problem with the splendid isolation was that I could not make necessary decisions, and I could not get them made in New York either. For almost six months I was limited to routine activities, unable to do forward planning, to commit PACT to funding even small grants, and I was certainly not authorized to make changes in the program. I could not find out what budget allocations had been made from FVA/PVC money for this new year. I was not even authorized to work on new funding proposals for non-USAID funds. For all my responsibility I still had no authority.

The new boss makes some decisions

Finally in November 1989 PACT’s new CEO took his place and I was able to plead my case for some decisions. As program coordinator my suggestions were straightforward:

- The program coordinator should have authority commensurate with responsibility for overall coordination of the program. For example, the program coordinator should have clear relationships with others at PACT working on Food Oils activities and should be the contact point for any support services engaged for the network.

- Negotiation for grants relating to the network should be done by one person, preferably the program coordinator.

- Budget planning and use of Food Oils budget should be done with the program coordinator’s advice and consent. Likewise, s/he should be integrated into PACT’s strategic planning regarding the program and other Africa programs.
program that was not destined to have a chance to succeed or fail on its own.

And now there are one

In autumn 1989 I learned that Ellen too was abandoning the program for a full time position within PACT. She just would not have time for her Food Oils chores. This meant that there was going to be no support services for me from PACT in New York. Although one senior staff person was nominally in charge of the learning programs on an interim basis, he made it clear that I was not to expect much help from PACT until the new CEO arrived and sorted out the personnel situation.

Secretarial staff at PACT were in very short supply and many of them felt overworked. After Ellen and Carolyn moved on I was not even getting mail forwarded on a regular basis and secretaries did not want to provide me assistance retrieving files or finding phone numbers so I could fill the gaps of my departed colleagues. I negotiated with PACT to take more of the records of the network to my home office in Vermont, and to perform all the functions from here.

One of the chores I assumed was the mechanics of laying out the newsletter using desktop publishing software. For the second, and as it turned out, final issue of Food Oils Press I wrote the copy, edited it, proof read it, did the layout, got it printed, ran the mailing labels and hired resident teenagers to fold and stuff the envelopes. We did it far cheaper than the down-country costs PACT paid for the first one.
an excellent field trip to East Africa, got the one subgrant to FICAH and worked the second Food Oils Press. It was only when I tried to get some decisions about pending grants, and to make some firm plans for the second year that I realized what it meant to not have someone near the top at headquarters making things happen.

Summary of the first year (September 1988 - September 1989)

It went by in a rush, and by the time our little team was running smoothly, it began to pull apart. We had managed to get a lot done after our slow start, and had hit our stride six to nine months into the year.

There was some irony for me in discovering that I really needed a strong advocate in PACT, and that my departing supervisor had played that role under difficult circumstances. I often did not appreciate the time it took to get decisions or the reluctance to strike out in new directions. Carolyn did not include me in the budgeting for the program, or other decisions that directly affected me. And, though we had found an accommodation of sorts, PACT had never clarified the program management to my satisfaction. Yet, all that said, I found out in the second official year of the program how much worse things could be without a dedicated person running interference for me and the network.

V. The second and last year (September 1989 - July 1990)

The program ended prematurely a little more than halfway through its planned three year lifespan. What led to its demise, or more accurately the ending of my participation in it, is part of the continuing chronicle of a
on a format and style of communications. Under the influence of a fever I came up with a double entendre name for the newsletter that is a pun in both French and English: The *Food Oils Press/Le presse des huiles alimentaire*. I got my son to draw up a logo of women using a spindle press. By June some 400 copies of the newsletter were in circulation, as our mailing list had continued to expand. (See Annex D.)

**Management changes at PACT**

The earlier issues of my roles and responsibilities seemed to have receded into the background. Carolyn, Ellen and I made up an odd menage, but it was working. Ellen is compulsively organized for details and housekeeping, while Carolyn is happiest on the policy and conceptual level. I got to do everything in between. All of us gave this part time energy, but each leaned into it enough to keep the others in line.

About the time I was convinced that the network would actually get enough stability and longevity to test the utility of the basic approach, PACT's CEO announced in January that he would be leaving by summer 1989. This was followed in spring by a similar announce by Carolyn who was leaving PACT after more than ten years. In deference to his unnamed replacement, who might well want to shuffle personnel and responsibilities, the out-going CEO declined to recruit for Carolyn's replacement. Since the post of Director for Africa had been eliminated in summer 1987, this left no one to oversee the Food Oils network and no one at PACT headquarters who knew much about Africa.

By summer I was on my own, and for a while that was fine with me. I had
until a year later in autumn 1989. Even then a dispute between PACT and FICAH over conditions in the agreement dragged out until March 1990. I had to conclude that from a donor’s perspective, contributing to a network-type learning program was marginally attractive, and then only if they could feel responsible for discrete subparts with specific beneficiaries and tangible results.

**Things get rolling in 1989**

In the new year we picked up speed. I took fewer graduate courses and rejected all outside consultancies. PACT had settled into its new mode of operation. Case study requests and study tour proposals started to come in, and more small grants were made. The directory took shape, but it demanded far more work than any of us imagined. In the end, 65 projects and agencies were included in the ring-binder format, available in either French or English. We published 2000 copies of each.

In order to deal with the requests for technical assistance and to continue our investigation into food oils processing technologies, PACT negotiated a support contract with VITA, a PACT member PYO specializing in technological matters. Six months and hundreds of inquiries later they had identified a small handful of publications appropriate to the field of small scale oils processing in Africa. We eventually switched their role to providing specific responses to write-in requestors.

My major new task was to design and produce a newsletter for the network. I studied the genre of newsletters and discovered there is a lot more to the good ones than meets the casual eye. Eventually we settled
The mechanism for much of the participatory approach is a series of small subgrants by which carefully targeted funding is made available to a fairly large number of technical assistance and local implementing agencies.

The program is organized into three overlapping clusters of activities. The first cluster of information gathering/analysis/dissemination will continue through out the program. The second cluster to begin in 1989 includes small grants for case studies plus study tours, plus grant funding to technical support agencies to compile and publish findings on specific problems and to help other agencies. This cluster culminates in a regional workshop for key participants who will help set the agenda for the third cluster which involves grants for direct application in the field.

FICAH's grant was provisional. We got a preliminary approval for a $50,000 grant to make subgrants to African partners agencies to carry out their field level activities. The catch was that final approval would only come with submission to FICAH of particular subgrant proposals. Once again we were faced with a donor that wanted to fund only discrete activities on the ground. Eventually we negotiated a kind of hybrid combination of study and application grant. We first had to work with African agencies to develop such grant proposals and then resubmit them to FICAH.

On three field trips over the next year I worked up several proposals with network participants. In the end FICAH only approved one such grant, $20,000 for a women's group in Kenya, and that did not happen
Finally Carolyn and I admitted we needed help and engaged a part-time administrative assistance, Ellen le Compte, to take care of a lot of the record keeping chores. She was quick to learn, and we handed her one of the major first-year tasks: compiling all the completed questionnaires into a Food Oils in Africa directory.

Carolyn and I found time to draft up guidelines for the first round of case studies, and mailed them out to a small group of experienced agencies that might be interested in studying and documenting their work. In order that there be some focus to the series of studies, we suggested that the studies be centered on one or both of two proposed themes. One was popular participation, meaning the way in which the beneficiary groups took charge of the food oils activities, e.g., organizations aspects. The second was extension of benefits, how a pilot project or other small experiment is spread to a larger group of people. Eventually six case studies were funded.

**A small success in fund raising**

In autumn 1988 I managed to put together a successful funding proposal of the Food Oil's quest for non-USAID funds, to the Food Industry Crusade Against Hunger (FICAH). The FICAH proposal represents the last formal version of the Food Oils program, though certainly not the last change in the design. It remains true to the vision of a facilitating role for PACT and a learning program. Key phrases include:

- This program will use a cycles of learning, dissemination, and application as its methodology.
competing with PACT’s own members. The Learning and Linkages office was one place where PACT would continue to be only a facilitator, avoiding operational roles. I had come to accept this position, as long as there was something substantive for the facilitators to do. As it turned out, there would be plenty to keep me busy for the 50% time commitment we negotiated.

IV. First Year of Operation (September 1988 – September 1989)

In reality the program had slipped over some invisible line between program development and program implementation in late 1987 with the wide distribution of questionnaires. Officially it began with the new fiscal year in autumn 1988. Major decisions on program content and program management had been set, but so much was left to be worked out in practice. On top of this work load for PACT staff were the diverse other responsibilities for completing discontinued activities and a new grant start up at PACT. For me the biggest new constraint was not work but learning: I had become a graduate student.

Off to a slow start

An unanticipated response to the long awaited start of the program was that no one really leaned into it for several months. Carolyn had a number of other new learning activities to content with and left me to mind the Food Oils program. I was way overcommitted, starting with a full load of courses at CIE. I had foolishly accepted an offer to teach a course at the School for International Training in the autumn semester. On top of all that I took a two-week consulting assignment with UNDP in Guinea-Bissau.
network over three years, covering part time personnel, travel and some small grants. To make the program appear more solid the $935,000 Sasakawa proposal included a full time coordinator, an assistant and a rich array of subgrant categories. Food Oils was again pan-African, with a West African sub-theme.

In the end all of these requests were rejected. The common threat among the rejections was a sense among the donors that they preferred to pay for tangible results, not learning by study tours, or setting up a newsletter. Even the grants for direct field activities suffered because we could not tell them at the time of proposal submission what projects we would fund. We had to conclude that the network was not attractive to donors in advance of its existence. Since PACT's top management were convinced that the Food Oils concept had strengthened their proposal to FVA/PVC they were glad to provide start-up money. That really only covered personnel and support costs for the project. What little grant money there was was restricted to US PVOs, and not available to African or other agencies in the network.

Summary from January 1987 until autumn 1988

Half a loaf is still better than being bread-less. Carolyn and I were relieved to have actually made it to the starting point, which for USAID's purpose began with the new Cooperative Agreement in autumn 1988. It was exhausting and we both bordered on burn out for different reasons.

She had deep conceptual differences with those at PACT who were scrambling to set up field level operations, sometimes at the price of
Coordinator, and leave the specific roles and responsibilities vague for the
time being.

The Center for International Education

Feeling the approach of this experimental program, with all its distance
learning, research and documentation, made me reconsider the
long-dormant idea of returning to graduate school. Not only did I feel the
need for more and better skills in non-formal learning, it seemed the Food
Oils program with its issues of increasing NGO capacities, gender equity
and communication might make a good focus for studies. By early 1988 I
applied to the only international program within commuting distance,
which by good luck was focussed directly on non-formal education.

More proposals, more questionnaires

The middle six months of 1988 were spend cranking out five new funding
proposals, responding to people who sent in completed questionnaires and
expanding the mailing list. From family trusts to the Japanese giant
Sasakawa Foundation, we tried various angles to attract new contributors
to our network.

In the new funding requests the core concepts remained the same but
slowly the proposals evolved, reflecting PACT's own evolution. With
dozens of participant agencies responding, and with USAID's FVA/PVC
office generally accepting Food Oils as part of the new three-year
Cooperative Agreement, PACT was ready to expand the framework of the
Food Oils program. The FVA/PVC commited USAID to $238,000 for the
of "personal services contract", to use the vocabulary of USAID. Whatever is worked out, this person must be perceived by all concerned as an integral member of PACT's program staff, perhaps in the sense similar to country representatives.

**Solution accepted, partially**

PACT's response to my unsolicited proposal was a kind of begrudging acceptance. While professing not to understand why all the structuring was necessary, staff agreed that if and when funds were available, they would designate me as the person responsible for daily operation. Without being specific regarding the distribution of authority and decision making, the principle was accepted that I would have an on-going role as something more than just a consultant.

One sticking point to making this a staff appointment was the fact that I would not be in the New York office on a weekly basis. The conservative CEO of PACT, an ex-Ambassador about to retire, could not accept the concept of an employee, even a part time one, who did not report in person regularly. The most generous offer he could make was that if I came into work at PACT's headquarters at least four days every two week at my own expense, he would consider making a staff appointment.

While I wanted the position of Program Manager for the sake of running the network with less bureaucratic delays and interference in every detail, I could not promise to drive weekly to New York. Once again my desire to be a on-farm consultant clashed directly with my aspirations for off-farm work with PACT. The compromise was to call the manager's job Program
itself.

- Program management. One person will be in daily charge of the program. Authority will follow responsibility: this Program Manager (or whatever title is given) needs enough managerial decision-making flexibility to run the program on a day-to-day basis, while remaining accountable under clearly defined objectives, detailed activity schedules, and other tools of supervision. The manager will be communicating with donors and participating agencies, negotiating sub-grants, planning for the use of short-term consultants, and carrying out the other on-going tasks of general management.

- Supervision. As this program was developed under the Learning and Linkages office, this would seem to be the logical office to supervise the program. The person designated in our proposal to Pew and other donors to be the Program Supervisor will assist the Program Manager in developing systems and procedures, meet periodically with the Program Manager, review progress, give guidance, participate in policy decisions and other major matters of concern, and provide general program oversight in a regular and timely fashion.

- Governance. Above the levels of the Program Supervisor and the Executive Director governance of the program will be handled by PACT's existing structures, i.e., no special membership group or formal advisory committee will be set up for this program.

- Recruitment. The Program Manager could be engaged by PACT in several different ways; as a "direct hire" part-time employee, or under some form
grants will be made and the work done in Africa.

- The action is in the "field" but the field is a nexus of project sites and agency offices across the African continent.

- PACT members, non-PACT US PVOs, and a range of African development organizations, and some individuals are all likely to be participants and beneficiaries.

- Because so much of the actual work is being done by participants though various voluntary and grant-funded activities, and because we want to keep personnel costs to a minimum for fund-raising purposes, the program will not require a full time manager.

Solution: A management plan for the program

Using the leverage of the Pew proposal and other pending initiatives towards donors, I proposed the following elements for a simple, flexible management plan. It did not presume a job for me, but neither did the plan exclude a stay-at-home consultant working as the Program Manager. In reality, both PACT and I knew we were stuck with each other if this program was going to work.

- Structure. The program will have a discrete management structure: a staffing pattern with job descriptions, accounting procedures, and a reporting system. Even if, especially if, PACT staff and associates are handling it, the program will require its own separate budget and administrative identity. Donors will require this and so should PACT
Problem: A management structure for the program

With the questionnaires and announcement of the program sent out, and with proposals going out for funding, no one could pretend that the program was not starting, ready or not. In my view PACT was not ready in terms of management, especially concerning personnel. Up until now, my consultant status as the program investigator had been an appropriate way of developing an experimental program. As we shifted from the research and development phase of Food Oils to the implementation of the program it was the time to set up the program properly. The Pew proposal provided the incentive I needed to push for some essential decisions, which I did along the following lines.

What made the elaboration of a management plan for Food Oils a bit tricky is that none of the existing models at PACT match this situation. The uniqueness of the Food Oils program is that it combines a number of elements in a new way:

- Multiple donors, of which FVA/PVC is just one. All of these donors will have their own reporting requirements to be respected.

- A three year time frame, longer than other Learning and Linkage efforts, and about as long a commitment as most donors will make.

- Grant-making in terms of documentation grants, case study grants, study tour or other exchange grants, maybe application grants, and possibly other kinds of grants and contracts for services. Most of these
I proposed to PACT that we make a two-country proposal based on the concept that PACT’s food oils network could work with local organizations and provide them subgrants. The verbal opinion from Pew staff was very favorable, if we could get it too them by Thanksgiving. I based the proposal squarely on the four-phased approach agreed upon over summer 1987, with an emphasis on the “deliverables” that Pew wants. (This model proposal in Annex C)

PACT agreed on principle, and seemed excited enough by the prospect of new funds to waive its reticence to move quickly. I knocked the proposal out in record time, submitted it to PACT for final review, and left for the November–December Africa trip described above, confident that we had our first network funding assured.

The proposal did not go out from PACT to Pew by Thanksgiving, or by Christmas, or by Martin Luther King Day; it barely arrived for Valentines Day. It languished at PACT headquarters, ready to go but apparently waiting for an approval from the PACT Executive Committee chairperson, someone who is not routinely involved in such management decisions. As a result we missed the key PEW selection committee meeting in February. Shortly thereafter, PEW changed policies and stopped funding activities in their Africa program. The Food Oils proposal to Pew was dead, killed by bureaucracy.

Frustration at my lack of authority and status had to be dealt with somehow. If things were this chaotic during program development, what would happen during implementation when the complexity of decisions would be far greater?
processing methods among the semi-nomadic Fulani
• The French governmental agency IRHO, Institut de Recherche pour les Huile et Oléagineux, working in Bénin, Burundi and Madagascar
• A missionary on the Bijagos Islands of Guinea Bissau, working on palm oil extraction
• A Swiss engineer who invented his version of village level palm oil equipment
• A project in Malawi seeking to improve nutritional diets by adding more fat to the diet of rural people
• A biochemist in southern Morocco working on argan and olive oils
• A Polish researcher specializing in tropical oils in Warsaw

Fund raising amid the bureaucracy

Along with development of the questionnaire in autumn 1987 came renewed pressure to raise funds. A likely candidate seemed to be the Pew Memorial trust which had just announced a new program initiative in Senegal and Ghana. Food security and rural income were the program's foci, a good fit with the Food Oils program.

In conversations with staff I learned that Pew staff felt constrained by its by-laws which allowed only funding to US tax exempt organizations, and so prevented them from funding African local groups. Again, Food Oils and PACT could play an intermediary role. I also gathered that Pew staff were looking hard for proposals by November in order to fill up the docket for their first Africa project selection meeting in February, as they feared they would not be able to obligate funds space.
working on the network. Soon we had a dozen, then 20, and in a few months a stack of 50. A sampling includes:

- ATI, reorganized and looking to spread the work about its technologies in sheanut, palm and sunflower processing
- The Experiment in International Living, doing testing of equipment in Uganda
- A Canadian NGO working on sheanut in Mali
- Catholic Relief Services' nation-wide sesame project in The Gambia
- Intermediate Technology Development Group's work in Zambia on sunflower
- A small Ghanain NGO working with a women's sheanut processing cooperative
- University of Science and Technology's Technology Consulting Center in Kumasi, Ghana, with its interest in oils for soap manufacture and for cooking
- A University of Nairobi chemical professor's work on safflower and other oils
- A project to increase farmers income through sunflower cropping in Zimbabwe
- Soya bean oil processing pilot project in Nigeria
- Technoserve's Ghanian village palm oil cooperative project (co-funded by PACT)
- A primary school in Kenya that was growing macademia nuts
- A Lesotho NGO seeking to introduce oil crops
- A Togolese company importing palm processing equipment
- A US PVD testing sunflower equipment in Rwanda
- A missionary in northern Senegal seeking to revive traditional oil
uncovered lots of interest and activity in small scale processing, from the rapid expansion of sesame seed production in southern areas to governmental policy shifts on peanut oil processing which since independence had been a state monopoly. The mix of needs these agencies expressed mirrored what I had learned on a trip a year earlier: information on successful technologies, funds to visit other sites, training and technical assistance, and funds for project activities. There seems to be a potential grouping of about six organizations with whom we could work. Two point from my trip report appear salient even three years later:

"Everything depends on personal relations and face-to-face contacts: everything. Development workers in Africa are no more likely to bother with an in-depth response to a stranger's letter or request for cooperation than would be personnel of PACT at any other US-based agency. ... Timing is crucial. If field people do not hear from us for months and months after initial contact, or if PACT fails to arrange continuity in our budgeting/fund-raising and as a result does not respond to requests for assistance that are generated by our program announcement and questionnaire, the initial momentum will be slowed and probably lost." 9

In a typical nudge from me to get PACT moving faster the trip report concluded, "In the minds of people I talked to in Senegal, FOIA is already happening: no longer just a possible future activity. And we had best act with that conviction." 10 I wanted the start-up of the project to be an irreversible decision.

**Questionnaires start to trickle in**

Over the first-half of 1988 competed questionnaires trickled in. We began to gather specific information on what our potential partners wanted and, not incidentally, the proof we needed that others were interested in
I felt like I was getting mixed messages. One tension was between the message to get this questionnaire out right now, versus the message that so-and-so has read the draft before we finalize it and s/he is traveling for three weeks. Another was: you must raise new funds right away, versus we are not yet ready to commit PACT to specific actions because we are not sure this will really happen, or if this is the final design.

A third mixed message concerned my status. On the one hand I heard, we are counting on you to take the lead in this program as no one else has your knowledge base or the time to pursue this; on the other hand it was also clear that I could make no decision without getting approval. Now my enthusiasm was high and I was again fully engaged in the development of this program. I found the delays caused by my PACT colleagues’ organizational in-fighting and cautiousness just maddening.

Between the multiple drafts and the gathering of addresses it took several months to prepare for the launching of this trial balloon of questionnaires. The mailing list, which was to become a major on-going preoccupation with me for the rest of the program, was gleaned from numerous sources: membership lists, conference attendance lists, friends’ rolodexes, and a raid on VITA’s mailing list. At long last in November 1987 we sent out over 150 letters in French and English, and waited.

Testing field interest by field trip

While we waited, I took advantage of a Mali Initiative trip to West Africa and spent a concentrated week in Senegal for the Food Oils network. I
Although I participated fully in this new vision, I continued to have grave doubts. Without decisive leadership willing to involve itself completely and publicly, how could we expect others to invest time and energy in this scene? Since no one was playing the coordinating roles in this field, were we not being overly sensitive about the potential conflict with other agencies? The message from PACT's top management was that the Food Oils in Africa program was going to have to get most of its funds from non-USAID sources. While FVA/PVC might buy into this concept as part of a new PACT learning-focused proposal, what other donor would fund PACT to play an essentially passive role in an untried and intangible program?

On the positive side, this newest design did engage PACT to broker new resources for PVO/NGO field activities. Also, the design did put decision making into the hands of the network participants whom I believed would want a more straightforward involvement of the sponsoring agency, PACT. In my pessimism I was reminded that this thing that already gone through a number of changes and we still had not yet run the idea by the people it was intended to serve, the field level development workers in Africa.

**Testing field interest by questionnaire**

In autumn 1967 PACT felt confident enough in the future of the Food Oils network to authorize me to send out a mass mailing consisting of a cover letter explaining the network idea and a questionnaire gathering data and expressions of interest. It was a torturously slow process of repeated redrafts of the questionnaire, concern over nuances, fear of inferred promises and raised expectations.
By summer 1987 I had met with key US PVOs to determine that there was a level of interest and that no one would take offence to PACT starting up a network. I hammered out a new approach that reduced the scope and redefined PACT’s role. An advisory group would be established for counsel in time of need. Emphasis was put on the network and its role in assisting with program decisions. The program activities would be limited to West Africa.

Notes from a planning session facilitated by Medvitz indicate four program phases were identified. First was information gathering and disseminating. This would inform decision for the second phase, which focused on funding of learning experiences to be done by other agencies such as case studies, study tours and analytic reports. The third phase, after data from the first two phases is analyzed, concerned additional funding for a variety of activities: village level projects to be designed and carried out by field level agencies, more case studies, inter-project exchanges and technical materials. The final stage would be to institutionalize the network in an Africa-based organization. This last phase was more or less thrown in without careful thought, as a way to spin off the more useful aspects of the program. In the end it became a major bone of contention.

This program formulation had PACT playing facilitating and funding functions in keeping with Carolyn’s desire to keep PACT out of management or operational roles. PACT was to be an endowed force, urging others to cooperate while standing apart from the activities themselves. Even some of the information gathering, analysis and dissemination could be let out under contract.
Anything that smacked of an operational role was a red flag for Carolyn, even though others at PACT were aggressively staking out operational roles in the field as part of PACT's new funding strategies. A facilitating role was appropriate, but not direct management. The dropout of ATI had left PACT without technical depth, even if I had become knowledgable in the field. And, said John, if Carolyn says it is to big, it is.

Before I went back to the drawing board more advice and pointed questions came from Medvitz and two trusted friends living in Senegal. Is PACT the appropriate agency for this work? Might some PVO/NGOs rightfully resent PACT moving into a field operation, even in a facilitating role? Is PACT ready to give sustained leadership over the long haul? I had to admit PACT's Learning and Linkage office was not ready for my ideas, and that office was indeed my client.

One more version of the vision

Over the next few months I was totally taken by the Mali Initiative, including an intense in-country training program for Malian NGO leaders in organizational development and financial management, and a bold and ultimately unsuccessful attempt on my part to lever significant long term resources from USAID mission in Mali for a PACT-managed PVO/NGO Support Project. That possibility was so interesting that we began family discussions on relocating to Bamako so I could direct the proposed program. For months this tangible prospect of a concrete hands-on assignment completely distracted me from the dragging-on intellectual exercise of designing a network on edible oils.
USAID Senegal, and IDRC. Shamelessly, I made the case for a major new format combining learning activities with on-site research and support, and with a role for myself as a long-distance consultant.

**Vision rejected**

In what was the first direct, substantive clash between us, Carolyn Stremlau rejected each new elements of the design as well as the size and direction I was proposing. It was too much, too fast, and not in clear sequence. Her vision was of a learning program that helped other people get together and gain access to information or resources without an operational role for PACT. It must not be dependent on in-house expertise or management from PACT. She also rejected the notion that PACT would promote oil processing activities among PVO/NGOs, saying it was not our role to advocate for any form of intervention.

I was asked to redesign a simple, small-scale first phase of a program that would depend on PACT members and other PVOs to provide technical and other support. Also Carolyn asked that I not base this on an opportunistic sighting of new funding, but on a sequence of learning and application. In frustration she noted that PACT had already paid me $6000 on this effort (cumulatively since mid-1985), and things should be further along by now. The frustration was mutual.

I turned to my insightful colleague and mentor who never failed to lend advice and encouragement, John Rigby. He noted that my plan required linkages within PACT between the Learning and Linkage Office and the Development Fund that, due to personality clashes, could not be made.
Asked by PACT in January to produce a more detailed program blueprint, I attempted to incorporate the field-level needs for technical services and funding for oils projects with PACT’s concern for identifying new funding. It was a multi-faceted plan that included the existing elements of cases studies, information collection/dissemination and regional meetings, but went in new directions such as:

- identification of interesting NGO projects in oils processing to present for funding to PACT’s own Development Fund while it still existed (I already had arranged funding for one, a village cooperative palm oil mill in Ghana);

- joint design of a field level action research project with a PACT member PVO based on funding opportunities in Senegal;

- joint development of a proposal with one or more African organizations such as a national PVO/NGO consortium to provide technical support in food processing.

I envisioned a cluster of activities, possibly organized around a Senegal-Ghana axis, in which PACT would both assist others and would itself learn-by-doing in conjunction with partners based in the field. To facilitate these joint ventures PACT might engage a local resident consultant or correspondent working part time as liaison with our operational partners.

The ambitious plan was bolstered with specific ideas for funding sources among donors I had contacted, like Ford Foundation, Pew Memorial Trust,
concerned about securing new commitments from PACT.

The one person at PACT interested in development of the Food Oils program, Carolyn Stremlau, was preoccupied with other learning programs. For both of us the idea of the Food Oils network seemed always a tantalizing possibility, somehow just out of reach. The program had been identified but it needed lots of research and design work before it could go ahead. Something would have to get us moving forward or the momentum would be lost to more immediate priorities.

III. Long slow program design phase (January 1987 - September 1988)

In the twenty months from early 1987 until the start of PACT's new Cooperative Agreement in autumn 1988, the Food Oils program took its final shape in fits and starts. The difficulties in pulling together the final design were due in part to the newness of the concept, in part to the institutional changes within PACT, and in part to personality differences. Our saga deals first with some conflicts over the concept of the project.

My vision of the program

Enthused by all that I had seen and heard on my late 1986 trip around West Africa, I was ready to design a substantial program that addressed several opportunities and expressed needs. Many of my findings were pulled together for an article I wrote for *Vita News* in January 1987 entitled "Processing Food Oils in Africa: A Question of Scale." (see Annex B)
Summary through 1986

A year and one-half after the idea for a workshop was first presented, a program was emerging that was no longer based on the workshop which, in any case, had not been held. Not focussed primarily on disseminating technologies, the program instead was evolving towards a communications effort. The agency that suggested the idea was no longer involved. And the money that had been part of the original impetus was never made available for the program.

Despite continued enthusiasm among PACT staff for this experimental idea, several issues were looming. PACT, an agency without in-house technical capacities in food processing, found itself designing a program which sooner or later would require considerable technical knowledge in that area. Also, PACT, a consortium of development agencies without experience in managing complex projects itself, was headed towards coordinating a continental network. In an organization facing an uncertain financial future, great pressure would be put on all program managers to find new funding sources. However, an untried concept for a far-flung network seemed unlikely to attract funding from donors used to proposals with proven methodologies and tangible results.

On a personal level, despite Rigby's fatherly urging to get a commitment from PACT concerning their commitment to me, my level of involvement remained unclear. This was not surprising. The project had not taken final shape, had not really been accepted as part of PACT's overall program, and was at least a year away from firm funding. I was still quite busy with the Mali Initiative and Development Fund assignments, and not yet
participants to design strategies for dissemination of information for improved communication, and for increased support of oilseed processing. Besides the emphasis on a network, new elements of the design included focus on gender issues and recognition of the need to increase PVO/NGO access to technical and financial resources. Still the methodology was sketchy in terms of who was going to deliver what and how.

Reality check in the field

An October-November 1986 trip to Ghana, Mali and Senegal for the Development Fund provided the vehicle for renewed contact with people working in oils issues. From Senegalese government researchers testing low-cost to remove aflatoxin from peanut oil to Ghanian villagers planning a cooperative palm oil mill, to a Malian sheanut press repairman, my energy was revived and my confidence restored. People had real needs, but obvious as the needs are, the solution we posed was not immediately clear to them. As I wrote in my trip report,

"The initial observation is that many of our semi-intuitive assumptions concerning poor communications, inadequate existing documentation and limited dissemination strategies proved to be accurate. Secondly, the parallel assumptions that field workers want better contacts and access to each other's data is confirmed. Thirdly, our expectation that new (non-PVC) funding can be identified also seems to be supported by the findings of this trip.

Let's be clear on one point: few people expressed unbridled enthusiasm at the prospect of Food Oils in Africa [program]. Very few seemed to have a regional mentality, perhaps from years of isolation. Most could only relate to the idea in terms of what they might get from it -- a very reasonable criterion indeed."
PACT goes it alone

ATI's decision to opt out of the September workshop, especially in light of the disruptive personnel changes which included PACT's key colleague, John Rigby, actually came as a bit of a relief. It eliminated the money-driven deadline for the workshop's timing and it removed an increasingly difficult partner agency. Part of the inter- and intra-agency hassles was the fact that neither PACT nor ATI had a good handle on who should be invited to the workshop, nor on what field level PVO/NGOs consider to be the real issues. Now it was possible to reconsider the whole design totally from PACT's standpoint and objectives.

Freed from ATI's timetable and agenda, Carolyn and I, occasionally abetted by Medvitz and Rigby, worked diligently on a the development of a longer term design. Over the middle months of 1986 I distilled our ideas into a brief four-page prospectus under the title Food Oils in Africa. (See Annex A.) What emerged was no longer termed a research project, but rather a collaborative program.

"Through a program of participatory research and network building among various elements of the development community Food Oils in Africa aims to disseminate findings, increase available resources, and provide a framework for inter-agency/inter-country exchanges on technologies and productive systems that are both economically sound and equitable for rural populations. This program further aims to develop a model for knowledge transfer and support of field level activities ... " 7

The approach combined information collection and assessment with case studies, network building, consultations through national NGO consortia and, of course, a regional planning meeting of selected network
accommodation was to cast the September meeting as a preliminary step in a more thorough research effort that would lead to a second meeting and a comprehensive dissemination strategy. Somewhere in this discussion the concept for a long term study and exchange of information, as opposed to a one-time workshop, was born.

To prepare the framework for this PACT hired a consultant experienced in both scientific research and rural development, Albert Medvitz, to present an outline research design. Completed in June, the design called for a short information gathering phase centered around the September workshop, followed by a year-long second phase that include in-depth field studies of a few selected projects. A third stage would be the actual elaboration and implementation of plans based on the research findings.

Although ATI's leader eventually rejected this design, Al Medvitz's vision of an action research program helped form PACT's concept of how it might lead a new kind of learning program. Under mounting pressure from PACT's top management to attempt to raise funds for this barely-identified program, I reformulated Medvitz's outline into a premature and ultimately unsuccessful proposal to meet UNDP's five-year funding deadline in June 1986. We later learned that our $280,000 proposal was far too small to be taken seriously.

In August 1986 the other shoe fell. Key ATI personnel, including all those working on the workshop, were either fired or resigned in a massive internal reorganization. ATI unceremoniously withdrew its funding for the September meeting, barely bothering to inform PACT that it no longer intended to work in this area.
complementarity of PACT and ATI, and both agencies' commitment to the experiment led to a hybrid approach. It was more technically rigorous than PACT would have planned and perhaps more open to participation than ATI envisioned. ATI could pursue its keen interest in identifying dissemination opportunities and PACT pursue its interest in elaborating a continuing program.

Things fall apart

By March 1986 arrangements for the workshop got as far as the exchanging of financial commitments between PACT and ATI and the drafting of a joint announcement and registration form. Then, quite abruptly, things fell completely apart. Actually it happened in two stages. First, the rationale for the workshop was called into question. Then ATI suffered a major loss of key personnel that made the rationale issue a mute point.

In the first set-back ATI's CEO, who had earlier signed off on the funding commitment to the workshop, took a close look at the plans and decided they were not in the interest of his agency. One objection was the potential for ATI's co-sponsorship of the event to be misinterpreted to imply ATI's approval of technologies or ATI's acceptance of claims made by presenters, the validity of which ATI had no way of establishing in advance. A broader concern was skepticism about whether the workshop would actually result in the dissemination of ATI technologies.

This sudden and unwanted attention by their opinionated and directive CEO discouraged certain ATI staff, but PACT urged them to find a way to accommodate him and to press on with preparations. The suggested
writing up memoranda for group consideration. In a prescient comment to me in a January 22, 1986 memo that he copied to my supervisor at PACT, Carolyn Stremlau, Rigby noted, "It will be important to get some definition, as soon as possible, on PACT's commitment of and to you." That issue resurfaced repeatedly throughout the life of the program that was to follow.

The first formal organizing session between PACT and ATI in January 1986 exposed significant but not unbridgeable differences in approach to the food oils conference. ATI's concept was to put out a sort of call for papers and pay a sizeable honorarium to about six technical experts as core presenters in a seminar format. ATI's twin objectives were to establish contacts with other agencies in order to create opportunities for replication of ATI sponsored technologies, and to identify new technologies for future dissemination by ATI.

PACT's approach, much debated between Carolyn Stremlau and me, was much more process oriented and participatory, an exchange among equals. We wanted to offer just transportation, food and lodging to a dozen or more presenters including those conversant with the social implications of choice of technology, and to be ready on the spur of the moment to facilitate small group discussions on whatever the participants themselves decide are their priorities. PACT's objective for the workshop was to analyze the needs of PV0/NGOs in the field with an eye to developing an on-going program of some sort, if a need was articulated.

Inevitably the coupling of an orientation based on technological expertise with a process perspective caused some friction. Yet, the potential