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SECTOR FILE
ARGENTINA - NUTRITION - General

The World Bank/IFC/MIGA
O F F I C E M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: April 26, 1993 06:34pm
TO: Jose Andreu (JOSE ANDREU)
FROM: Alan Berg, PHN (ALAN BERG)
EXT.: 33433
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: MCH & Nutrition

Pepe---

Following are a few comments on your yellow cover. Congratulations on getting the project this far. And congratulations to Patricio, Pancho and others on your team. Partly because I didn't have time to give it the attention it deserves and partly because I thought it fair to you to get an independent judgement -- given the controversy on the food ration and 'what constitutes malnutrition' issues earlier between Judy and Pancho -- I have taken the liberty of asking Jim Levinson to take a look. He has access to my earlier BTO and some of the cross memos on this, and said he would fax you something by tomorrow. As Xavier will tell you, Jim is as good as they come in this business--extremely practical in programmatic terms. So, whatever he sends in, it deserves your attention. (If you want to follow-up with him on any of his issues and this requires writing, or other, time on his part, I may be able to pick up the tab for the hours he puts in under a consultancy arrangement I have with him now. Just let me know. I want to try to be helpful to you on this landmark project. It has the potential for being one of the important models in the Bank, so it is especially important that it be as good as possible in all respects.

Let me thank you before going any further for including a few items that reflect our earlier discussions and my BTO -- namely, inclusion of the social communications component, the nutrition survey, the development of a nutrition policy, and the cost-effectiveness study of the school feeding program.

My remaining comments skirt the ration, the nature of targeting (except to say, do you really want to include kids up to age 6; most Bank projects now cover only 0-3 year olds and Bangladesh is going down to 0-2), and the milk issues. You have my BTO comments and those of Judy and perhaps something on this will be coming from Levinson.

Para 4.7(j)(i)--I think not. At least based on PCRs from elsewhere, the more health services are involved the more things get screwed up

Para 5.9 -- the breastfeeding promotion, under the child health care program, also should appear under the women's reproductive health program.

Para 5.10 How practical to monitor breastfeeding practices of women? Will they put up with it?

Para 5.11 -- Disappointing is the scant attention to health and nutrition education. Should't this be a centerpiece of your program? And remember we're not talking of education in the conventional health education sense but of changing behavior. This doesn't come through. (If you need help on this let me know. We have somebody here who could help you draft something.)

A main lesson from all our projects to date is that two things are key--Good supervision (and related low supervisory ratios) and good training. When we have them both we always have a good project; when we don't , we don't.

Please make sure that the nutrition survey is not the typical nutrition survey--collecting a lot of data and then seeing what use it has. Per our phone chat and discussions in BA, it is important to have as a starting point the the questions needing answers to form policy and the program. What is the information that must be collected to provide those answers? This is a totally different orientation.

The survey is very expensive, at \$7.5 million.

Why limit the survey to kids under 6? Since a purpose is to formulate a national nutrition policy and improve programs, coverage should be broader, yes? For instance a big investment goes now to school-age children. Should they not be included in the survey so resources can better be responsive to identified need? And when we get to broader policy issues related to the market and subsidies and fortification of staple foods, it also is necessary to have some sense of adult needs.

You may want to consider giving the nutrition survey an added social marketing tilt, i.e., learning of mothers' perceptions about different problems and services so that the project can be responsive to them.

We can probably help you line-up survey people who are state-of-the art on all this.

I have a few other thoughts but I have run out of time and have to rush to catch a flight and wanted to get this to you before your meeting. I'll be in touch with you with more on Thursday.

alan

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