

# The Rockefeller Foundation

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November 24, 1972.

Dr. John A. Pino  
Agricultural Sciences  
Rockefeller Foundation  
111 West 50th. Street  
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10020, U.S.A.

Dear John:

I have given a great deal of thought to your draft (10/31/72) on "Future Major Areas of Concentration in the Conquest of Hunger Program" since returning to Mexico.

It seems to me that the research infrastructure for the continued production of the materials and information needed in the further acceleration of food production in the less developed areas of the world is now well in hand -thanks to the Foundation and especially the foresight and tireless efforts of people like George, Sterling, yourself and others. This includes its financing through the consultative group -an ingenious breakthrough. The developing countries ought to erect a statue in commemoration of this feat in their capital cities around the world.

The big job ahead is in extending the use of modern scientific production techniques to a greater part of the cultivated land, and the benefits of research and modern technology in both agriculture and medicine to a greater portion of the people in the tropics and semitropics, especially in the rural areas where most of them live. This is urgent on two counts, (1) I doubt that we can meet the food demands of the future by limiting the use of modern technology to the more aggressive farmers in the more favorable areas and (2) perhaps most important, unless someone makes a special effort to bring "all things together" including birth control for improving the life of the forgotten people at the lower end of the social scale in the rural areas we are in for real trouble.

As you know from 60-80 per cent of the rural people, at least in Latin America, fall into this category. There are those that believe in "the filter down theory" thinking that the more prosperous life of the upper social crust will eventually filter down to the lower levels. This "jus aint a gonna happen" at least not in time to prevent social chaos in Latin America.

The problem needs to be attacked head on. Building the institutions and capacity for research has come a long way in the past two decades. Some one now needs to plow new ground and get on with the next step, the development of strategies and the catalization of a whole series of events that will result in a wider adoption of the scientific package and a more equitable distribution of its benefits to the lower end of the social scale. The research scientists aren't going to get this done. We need new strategies, a new school of thought and a new cadre of workers properly oriented in this job. This new ground is apt to be more stony than any plowed before but this is where the pay dirt in the next decade is going to be. Unless we find a way to plow this more stony ground, the national institutions built-up over the years and more recently the international centers aren't going to pay very big dividends.

We need to make the rural areas a better place in which to live and work. In this the Foundation because of its past accomplishments, is in an excellent position to show the way and provide the leadership. There is nothing, in my opinion, that will put the Foundation on a higher pedestal in the eyes of the world and pay bigger dividends in human benefit in the next ten years than success in this activity. Just as one example, we are not apt to get high lysine corn into the bellies of the people that need it without a strong effort in this direction in spite of the development of the harder more crystalline grain types. Neither are we going to go very far with the high lysine types in improving the nutritive level of the rural masses as long as dysentery and other health problems are rampant because of poor sanitation and unfit drinking water in the villages where rural people tend to congregate. This has to be a well rounded coordinated effort among several disciplines and will need the flexibility that only the Foundation can provide.

Obviously agriculture will have a major role in improving the income of the predominating subsistence and semi-commercial farmers and landless peasants through a substitution of new technology for age old traditional farming practices. This substitution must be in a labor intensive system to provide work for the landless. Also it should involve both the plant and animal aspects.

Getting more widespread adoption of research results has to be moved up to the front burner. Your items A I to VII are very important over a longer term, but my question is, isn't this something that the consultative group and new monies will and can cover. If the new international institutes stay on the ball this is exactly what they ought to be doing more and more of as the national institutions take over much of what the centers are now doing. I will be so bold as to say the Foundation ought to withdraw their support to the centers as soon as possible without jeopardizing the flow of funds by other agencies into research through the consultative group. If it should become known that the RF wants to use these monies to get at what I have tried to describe above I believe the CG might be very glad to take over the RF's quota and maybe the Ford Foundation's too. Your B I-III seems to me should receive major emphasis. They are most urgent and most exciting.



I had hoped to get my ideas on a Foundation program along these lines in Latin America in the mail today but the way things look now I am not going to make it. I am working on a proposal for putting four integrated rural development teams in the field, one based in Guatemala, another in Ecuador, a third in Paraguay and a fourth in Brazil. Why these countries I will try to explain in the document.

These teams would work out the strategies train the people needed and provide the leadership for the development of regional networks of country rural improvement programs and a fraternity of collaborating individuals for increasing the income and general welfare of the rural poor. In short they would aim at extending the benefits of modern agricultural and public health technology developed by national and international research institutes to the numerous subsistence farmers and landless peasants presently being bypassed. Without doubt this would involve a lot of adaptive location specific research which in many cases might best be done cooperatively between national and international institutions. They would, therefore, along with their specific aims, be instrumental in fomenting a more harmonious relationship between the national and international research centers.

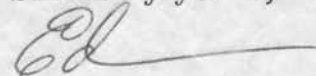
In this scheme I am proposing that the RF pay the salaries and perquisites of the members of the teams, roughly amounting to a cost of about 10 million dollars over a ten year period, and that the IADB provide the pilot operating costs within the above mentioned countries including costs of training and consulting services in the establishment of additional programs in neighboring countries adding up to another ten million or more over a ten year period. In my discussions with Clarence Pierce and Al Wolfe a week or so ago, the Bank would be favorable to this kind of support especially if the programs were carried out through national institutions. As I see it this is the only way to do it. In addition to the global project I am drawing up a country project specifically for Mexico to show how a country rural development program might operate.

In addition to their direct contribution to the operation of technical teams the IADB would also make loans to interested countries for rural development projects where desirable and feasible.

I will try to get this proposal off to you next week. If it makes any sense then the next step might be further discussion at the top levels in the RF and eventual discussion if so indicated with officials of the IADB. If the idea gets the green light no doubt a lot of adjusting will be needed.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

  
E. J. Wellhausen

EJW/ami