FAMILY PLANNING IN ALGERIA

SUMMARY REPORT, IMPRESSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

March 1967

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Dr. Johan W. Eliot, Assistant Professor of Population Planning, University of Michigan School of Public Health, has made periodic visits to Algeria as American Friends Service Committee Consultant on Maternal and Child Health to follow up the interest in family planning that had been brought to the attention of the AFSC community development staff in Algeria. Working with the AFSC staff in Algeria, Dr. Eliot has laid the groundwork for several avenues of approach to family planning.

Dr. Eliot is a member of the Committee on Family Planning of the American Friends Service Committee, the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood-World Population, and of the American Public Health Association's Committee on Family Planning. He is a member of Green Pastures Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

This report of Dr. Eliot's recent visit to Algeria is CONFIDENTIAL AND FOR RESTRICTED CIRCULATION ONLY.
One year ago, after my visit to Algeria in March 1966, I reported that a change in government policy and the commencement of studies and services were likely to occur within the year. Field visits in July 1966, September-October 1966, and a more recent visit during the last two weeks of March 1967 reveal that progress is being made slowly but surely.

The impressions and recommendations based on my recent visit can be summarized as follows:

1. The path that Algeria will follow in developing family planning services is becoming clearer. This will be a cautious program, with no such sudden expansion of services as in Tunisia.

   Dr. Haddam, the Minister of Health, and other government officials with whom I talked feel that acceptance of the program in countries where national family planning policies have been developed rather suddenly has not been impressive. In fact, they feel that progress may actually have been impeded in Tunisia by public declarations about demographic and economic pressures.

   The emphasis in Algeria will be on family planning as a simple health measure needed by every family, necessary for the health of mothers and children. Although some public attention has been given to the problems of providing education for the increasing number of children and jobs for the unemployed, the focus of public discussion will probably be the personal welfare of the mother and family.

   The Minister of Health feels that all branches of the government need to reach their own understandings of the need for and the benefits to be derived from family planning and to enter into private and public discussion of the subject. In short, the subject will probably get a great deal of airing before services are made widely available. People will be exposed to the idea and permitted to voice interest, doubts and religious objections, and gradually arrive at an understanding and consensus.

2. The first family planning clinic is in the process of being established in the Maternity of Mustapha Hospital in Algiers, with official permission of the Health Ministry. Obviously, it also has the support of the Party and of the Council of the Revolution. This development comes two and one-half years after Quaker Service first approached the medical schools and hospitals in Algeria about the possibility of undertaking demonstration trials of contraceptive methods. (In order to give some perspective on this length of time, it is helpful to recall that it took 20 years to get such a clinic into the Cook County Hospital in Chicago.)

   This clinic has been established at the initiative of Dr. Laliam, gynecologist
assistant to Dr. Bonafos, who is the chief of obstetrics and gynecology. Dr. Laliam is president of the Women's Union, and has arranged to put the support of that organization behind the clinic. She has repeatedly spoken on family planning in public meetings before the Women's Union, the last time in March 1967 while I was in Algeria.

One very encouraging aspect of the opening of the family planning clinic in Mustapha Hospital is that the International Planned Parenthood Federation has established a connection with it.

I recommend that the AFSC make available through the International Planned Parenthood Federation the funds required for the payment of salaries for the two social workers which Dr. Laliam needs for this clinic. These social workers will work throughout the hospital, making contact with patients on all services and helping to improve patient follow-up. I also recommend that the AFSC provide certain gynecological instruments, contraceptive supplies and clinic materials which are needed in connection with this new service. I have discussed these proposed contributions with Dr. Isam Nazer, president of the Jordan Family Planning Association who was visiting Algeria on behalf of the IPPF at the time I was there, and I have also spoken about this matter by telephone with Mrs. Joan Rettie, IPPF Regional Secretary in London.

In making these contributions to the program at Mustapha Hospital, I want to emphasize that the effort of Quaker Service will be to support the relationship with the IPPF, since this will presumably be a long-term association, while Quaker Service support will be only for the initial phases.

3. The Health Minister places great emphasis on seeing that this clinic runs well. It is essential that this initial effort, subject as it will be to public scrutiny, should not have any adverse results, and particularly none due to professional ineptitude. According to both Dr. Haddam and Dr. Laliam, no other officially sanctioned clinics will be opened until this one is satisfactorily established.

Dr. Laliam envisions the opening of clinics at the other two medical schools in the future. Under the circumstances, it is necessary for concerned obstetricians, such as Dr. Dahhaoui in Oran and Dr. Victor in Constantine, and for socially conscious individuals, such as Mlle. Benhadji in Oran and Dr. Masseboeuf in Constantine, to wait a little while longer before they can expect to receive formal permission to go ahead with family planning clinics in those cities. Meanwhile, they should continue to prepare their plans, as in fact they have been doing, so that plans can be submitted within perhaps a couple of months to Dr. Haddam. It might be desirable for them to present a joint proposal involving both cities.

4. During the past year Quaker Service has developed closer relations with the National Institute of Public Health which has recruited to its staff an increasing number of very competent Algerians. A Quaker Service contribution of $1,000 to help build up the library of the Institute has been much appreciated.

5. The Health Ministry has conducted colloquia for the medical profession with steadily increasing effectiveness, with and through the facilities of the Institute. Recent ones concerned with maternal and child health and with tuberculosis have been attended by Quaker Service staff members. A colloquium on family planning is planned by the Ministry of Health for November 1967. It appears likely that this Institute will play an active part in family planning training in the future.
6. The training of Algerian physicians in maternal and child health and family planning in Tunisia, which we have been discussing with the Ministry of Health and with the National Institute of Public Health over the past months and which the AFSC is prepared to finance, has not yet begun. Dr. Allouache expects to discuss this matter with Tunisian authorities when he is in Tunis for the next regular scheduled conference between top health authorities of the two countries. He indicated that it would then be appropriate for Dr. Mokrane, who heads the section on maternal and child health of the National Institute of Public Health, to go to Tunis to work out the details of such a training program.

7. Contact with responsible Algerians over the past two years regarding family planning has revealed a relatively high order of understanding of population problems in government and professional circles. After attending medical meetings in Algiers and maintaining contacts with physicians in the major hospitals for two years, I now question whether there is need for a long-term appointment of a medical advisor in family planning in Algeria, either for the government or for the medical schools. The Algerians have their own expertise, not in large supply but of high quality. Expert lecturers for conferences are welcomed, and physician training in other countries is an accepted practice. Algerians seem increasingly conscious of a need to read English and to get training in British and American institutions, including public health training. We should remain ready to assist with this sort of training as it relates to family planning.

8. The brief questionnaire on family size preference and attitude toward family planning developed by Quaker Service has been administered to about 400 men and women, half in Skikda and environs and half in other parts of the country through cooperation of other agencies. Preliminary analyses of results have been furnished to Health Ministry officials and the National Institute of Public Health. These analyses have been carried out at the University of Michigan. Further analysis and a final report will be prepared after more questionnaires have been received, with possible publication in mind. Results show striking differences between urban and rural dwellers in attitudes toward family planning and in the number of children, especially sons, desired. The women of the Kabylie mountains appear determined to bear as many sons as possible. Similar results are appearing in the pretests of the much more extensive questionnaire study now being conducted, with Ford Foundation support, by the Algerian Association for Demographic, Economic and Social Research (A.A.R.D.E.S.) under the direction of Pierre Pradervand.

9. The study group which met last year at the apartment of the AFSC representative in Algiers and which issued the document, LES IMPÉRATIFS D'UNE PLANIFICATION FAMILIALE EN ALGERIE, has not continued to meet. With the departure of the AFSC representative in the summer of 1966, one of the members of the group arranged for future meetings to be held in the Palais du Peuple which contains offices of the main labor organization, the Union Général des Travailleurs Algériens. This union has recently been in some disfavor with the government, which put not only the meeting place but also certain members of the group associated with the U.G.T.A. in an unfavorable position.

10. There is a clear need to facilitate and increase communication among Algerians who are directly or indirectly interested in family planning and demographic matters. With careful regard for the very understandable sensitivity of Algerians to outside pressure, Quaker Service should maintain and quietly extend its contacts with those who are interested in these fields. It should make an effort to put such persons in touch with one another and, as may seem appropriate,
should bring them together in a neutral setting from time to time. Although the objective of Quaker Service is not the organization of a formal group or a voluntary association, it is reasonable to expect that in the course of time some of these individuals may be prepared to give leadership in the formation of an IPPF affiliate in Algeria, with guidance and encouragement from the IPPF. Dr. Nazer, IPPF representative, feels strongly that the establishment of a family planning association in Algeria is necessary, but he is aware that government officials seem not to understand the need for and the advantages of such an association, nor do they appreciate pressure from foreigners toward the formation of such an organization. There is no tradition of voluntary organizations and activities in Algeria.

11. I recommend that the AFSC appoint to the Quaker Service staff a person (preferably a couple) whose primary responsibility would be the furthering of family planning efforts in Algeria. Such a staff member, with his base in Algiers, would maintain close contact with the Quaker Service staff in Skikda. His work, together with the attention which the Skikda staff gives to this aspect of the program, would make possible a greatly expanded and more effective outreach by Quaker Service with respect to family planning and demographic interests.

Summary

After nearly three years of careful consideration and development of consensus, the Algerian government has given approval to development of a family planning clinic at Mustapha Hospital in Algiers, the main hospital serving the poor and teaching medical students. This pilot clinic will be connected with and assisted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Quaker Service will support this relationship, furnishing contraceptive materials and assisting in other ways with books, literature, instruments and financial aid during the initial phases of this program. Quaker Service continues ready to do the same for the Constantine and Oran medical schools when and as official permission is granted for clinics there.

Quaker Service has developed closer relationships with the National Institute of Public Health in Algiers, including support of its library. The Health Ministry is planning a colloquium on family planning in November, 1967 at this Institute.

The study of family size and family planning opinions conducted by Quaker Service and other cooperating agencies is progressing well, and preliminary reports have been presented to the Health Ministry and the National Institute of Health.
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This is a report regarding progress of family planning in Algeria for the period between March and November 1967.

A pilot family planning clinic was opened with top government and party approval in April 1967, with inaugural speeches by the Ministers of Health and Education. The clinic is located in the basement of Mustapha Hospital Maternity. It operates five days a week, admitting 30 to 40 new patients per day. It operates under the general direction of Dr. Bonafos, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and head of that department. Dr. Bonafos has delegated authority to Dr. Laliam, an Algerian woman gynecologist, but recently he has had to resume control over the clinic because Dr. Laliam has withdrawn from the clinic and hospital recently for personal reasons.

Fortunately, Dr. Richard Le Cannelier, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, joined the department this fall, after training and experience in Paris and six years of teaching in Dakar. He attended medical school in Algiers and knows the country well. He also speaks English well. It appears that he will be taking considerable personal responsibility for administration of the clinic, which will greatly facilitate communication, inventories, requests for contraceptive supplies, instruments and teaching materials, and preparation of statistics and reports. It is unclear whether Dr. Laliam will return to the hospital in the future, but it seems likely that this change in administrative responsibility will be permanent.

Quaker Service will continue to supply the above materials, and may possibly assist with statistics, though we are hoping that an arrangement can be made with Pierre Pradervand, director of the national fertility and family planning study, to give assistance with statistics. Mr. Pradervand has recently been ill with hepatitis, so his ability to help is contingent on recovery of his health.

We were disappointed to learn that the Mustapha Hospital Maternity has not yet hired the two social workers offered by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in the spring of 1967. Apparently Dr. Laliam had not accomplished this; and, due to a misunderstanding, Dr. Bonafos was under the impression that Quaker Service would recruit these personnel for social work. Dr. Bonafos and Dr. Le Cannelier agreed to recruit actively for these positions, with assistance of the two social workers now on duty who are paid by the government. The two additional social workers are seriously needed to provide follow-up of existing cases, further contacts in the hospital, and better handling of records. The present social workers are quite swamped, as women come in from as far away as Oran, Annaba and Ouargla.
In view of difficulties experienced by Dr. Bonafos and his staff in carrying on communications with IPPF and Quaker Service, and in reviewing records, preparing reports and inventories, and requesting supplies, Mrs. Rettie of IPPF, with whom Dr. Eliot had conferred in London, suggested that her organization would be willing to pay for a secretary for the family planning clinic. Dr. Eliot was asked to transmit this proposal, and it was greeted eagerly by Dr. Bonafos and his staff. Recruiting this person will not be easy, since highly qualified secretaries are rare in Algeria, and likely to be already engaged by government and business. It may prove necessary to recruit someone from France or elsewhere. Quaker Service will provide a good quality typewriter, since this also is lacking and has not been budgeted by the hospital. It is hoped that this sort of help will permit Dr. Bonafos, Dr. Le Cannelier, Dr. Bellkhodja and other devoted gynecologists who have given their time to this clinic in addition to their regular duties as staff members of the gynecology department, to make it the research and teaching function that it should be, in addition to the service function that it is.

Lectures on family planning were incorporated into the medical curriculum for the first time in May by Dr. Bonafos, but medical students are not at present being taught in the family planning clinic. Dr. Bonafos feels that instruction and experience for trained gynecologists should come first, along with opening of teaching centers at Oran and Constantine.

Quaker Service has furnished a small but comprehensive library of about 25 obstetric and gynecology books in French to the Mustapha Hospital Maternity, including works on contraception, to assist the department with its teaching. An identical set was given to the medical school libraries at Constantine, where Dr. Bendali, Dean of the Constantine University Center, is himself trained in obstetrics as well as in internal medicine. Another set was given to the medical library of Oran University Hospital, where we met the Director, Dr. Hamidou, and where Dr. Dahhaoui, a young Algerian gynecologist, has collaborated with Quaker Service in its study of fertility and attitudes toward family planning. All of these gifts have been much appreciated, and will be supplemented by titles in English, and some pediatric and public health works as well.

Quaker Service continues to maintain cordial contact with the medical schools at Oran and Constantine. We considerably expanded our range of contacts in both schools on this visit. The gynecologists at each center have inserted somewhat under a hundred Lippes loops for women with serious medical indications, following the unofficial verbal approval of this sort of medical care by the Health Ministry. At present, however, they are marking time, since it has proven too difficult to provide follow-up on an unofficial basis. It is hoped that both of these gynecology-obstetric departments can proceed with official approval and with Quaker Service support within a few months.

It is clear that paramedical (health education, nursing and midwife) personnel will need training in contraceptive techniques, and that the Algerian paramedical schools, of which there are 13, will need to take an active part in this training. Quaker Service is systematically beginning to contact these schools to survey their libraries and teaching materials, not only in family planning, but in general maternal and child health and public health. Our relations with the Constantine paramedical school have been close and cordial for more than two years. We have visited the Tizi Ouzou paramedical school and the
very large Parment school in Algiers. We will try to extend help first to those schools in the eastern region, near Quaker Service headquarters.

All of the paramedical school libraries visited are threadbare. Fortunately Richard Loewald has considerable interest in and knowledge of libraries and is undertaking to find assistance and training for the untrained librarians in both the medical and paramedical schools. Finding library training will not be easy, since we have been assured at both the University of Algiers and University of Rennes that there are no correspondence courses for librarians in French, and that the only courses offered for medical librarians in French are at the graduate level, in Paris and Switzerland. At Rennes it was suggested that an interested college graduate should be found in Algiers, sent to Paris for training, and brought back to establish undergraduate courses at the University of the National Institute of Public Health in Algiers. The Ford Foundation consultant to the University of Algiers Library, whom we were not able to contact on this trip, may be able to help in this matter.

Five Quaker Service personnel attended parts of the month-long course on health and social protection of maternity that was given in October and November at the National Institute of Public Health, with assistance of the International Children's Center of Paris. This center sent Professor J. Snoek of Belgium and Dr. Jean Goujou of the International Children's Center. Physicians and midwives from five other countries (Lebanon, Mauritania, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey) attended, but most attenders were midwives from Algeria. The principal problem in this excellent effort was the difficulty experienced by the lecturers, especially the Algerian physicians, in translating their technical knowledge into simple measures capable of being applied by the auxiliary midwives. Dr. Laliam gave an hour lecture on indications and rationale for family planning which was a tour de force of completeness and clarity, but she slipped away before we could ask her about her plans with regard to the family clinic. Dr. Snoek gave fine discussions of family planning methods, infertility, and consequences of multiparity. Dr. Le Cannelier discussed spontaneous abortion. Many other maternal and child health problems were discussed, providing a good initial orientation for the two Quaker Service nurse midwives newly arrived in Algeria. A particularly well received report was that given by Dr. Winnicka, head of Maternal and Child Health for the World Health Organization. Her experience and great good sense and good humor helped make clear the problems involved in establishing a good maternal and child health system.

The National Institute of Public Health plans a comprehensive colloquium on population and family planning early in 1968, encompassing not only medical aspects of family planning, but demographic and economic considerations as well. Quaker Service will furnish books in French and English on these subjects for the Institute library, and kits of relevant articles and pamphlets for the participants. We plan to include copies in French of the recent completed final report of the Algerian family planning study carried out by Quaker Service and collaborators in four other areas of the country.

Contacts were renewed in the Ministry of Public Health with the Minister, the Secretary General, the Director, the Assistant Director, the Director of Maternal and Child Health, the Director and Assistant Director of Population and Social Assistance, the Director of the National Institute of Public Health and his French technical consultant, the current and previous interim representatives of the World Health Organization in Algeria, and the Medical and
Nursing Consultants for Maternal and Child Health for the World Health Organization in Algeria. We also discussed Algeria with the Director of Maternal and Child Health of the World Health Organization from Geneva. All of these persons will receive copies of the final report of the Quaker Service family planning study.

The major national study of fertility, family planning, and many related subjects, now being conducted by the Algerian Association for Demographic, Economic and Social Research (AARDES) is going forward satisfactorily, despite some delays occasioned by automobile accidents, some problems related to governmentally controlled salary levels, and the previously mentioned hepatitis of Pierre Pradervand, the Swiss sociologist directing this study. Mr. Pradervand anticipates that interviews will be completed by March. Considerable data has already been coded and put on punch cards. Hopefully, a preliminary report covering the items most needed by the government will be ready by June 1968.

More extensive analyses will follow. Pierre Pradervand has received periodic consultation from Robert Lapham of the University of Michigan Population Studies Center, who has been working as an advisor to the Moroccan government family planning study.

Dr. Eliot spent considerable time with Quaker Service team members, many of whom had arrived recently, in individual and group discussion of family planning problems and progress to date. All are greatly interested in the problems, and would like to contribute to their solution. The next contribution of the Quaker Service team in the Skikda area will probably be in a broadened program of health education on the subject of family planning, integrated with the present programs of health education on nutrition, infant care and prenatal care. The exact form this may take will need to be worked out by both non-Algerian and Algerian team members, with as much preliminary discussion, reading, orientation, and practice sessions as necessary. Permission and encouragement to proceed with this sort of education has been reconfirmed with the Ministry of Public Health.

It continues to be clearly the policy of the government to set people talking about family planning in advance of the availability of government services, so that any complaints will be against the absence of services, not against services being thrust upon the people. Those who are anxious enough can go to a private doctor and get a prescription for oral contraceptives, which are now freely available in pharmacies, though not officially sold for contraceptive purposes. The price of one brand of pills is about $1.25 per month—expensive, but within the means of many families who have employment and whose level of education would make oral contraceptives a reasonable means of family planning.

Continued efforts are being made to find a capable couple to work as assistants to the Quaker Service director, giving special attention to the increasing number of details related to the encouragement of family planning. After recruitment, the couple will spend as much time as necessary being oriented and thoroughly integrated into the Quaker Service team, but will subsequently secure an apartment in Algiers. There, in very close liaison with the director and team, they will represent Quaker Service as assistants to the director, not only in regard to family planning, but in regard to many other facets of the Quaker Service program which need attention in Algiers. The provision of a friendly, politically neutral center of hospitality in the capital will be one of the most important contributions, as the characteristic Quaker
function of bringing people together for constructive interaction remains one of the most important tasks of Friends in Algeria.

Partly by choice, partly because American boat deliveries to Algeria have been cut off since the Mid-East war, Quaker Service is progressively cutting down on distribution of material aids such as clothing, cloth and medicines (other than contraceptive supplies). Emphasis is shifting progressively to educational programs, including three team members who are now teaching English in the local high school. The findings of the Quaker Service family planning study reconfirm findings of studies in other countries showing a strong correlation between lowered fertility and education of the mother. In this light, the educational projects of Quaker Service (the high school teaching, the kindergarten project, and some adult literacy work) are of importance because of their potential long term influence on family size desires.

On his return trip to the U.S., Dr. Eliot made a one-day visit to the new National School of Public Health at Rennes, France, where he was received with extraordinary cordiality. This institution has a beautiful, large, expanding physical plant, and an able and growing staff, most particularly in the fields of maternal and child health, health education, demography, statistics, public health, nursing, and hospital administration, with an admirable library and subsidiary reference collections. More than a dozen Algerian students are currently studying there, mostly in an undergraduate-level hospital administration course. Interest in family planning pervades this school. Basic demography is taught along with basic statistics, so that every student gets some. Dr. Aubrey has used family planning as a major illustrative topic in regular health education courses and in short term courses. Dr. Sénécal incorporates consideration of family planning in his maternal and child health teaching. This school works closely with the International Children's Center and the National Institute of Demographic Studies in Paris, and all three are giving steadily increasing attention and assistance to the National Institute of Public Health in Algiers.

Summary

Algeria has set its foot on the first step in regard to family planning, and, while there is a great deal to be done, perhaps the first step was the highest: government approval and commencement of a pilot family planning clinic.

Quaker Service in Algeria is working in cooperation with the International Planned Parenthood Federation to support this clinic with instruments, contraceptive supplies, books and literature, record forms, statistical assistance, and supplementary social work and secretarial personnel. Dr. Laliam, the Algerian gynecologist who has headed the clinic, has at least temporarily withdrawn for personal reasons, and Dr. Le Cannelier, a highly competent French gynecologist who attended the Algiers medical school and has taught in Dakar, has come on the staff and has personally interested himself in the administration of this clinic.

Quaker Service is increasing its contacts with the Oran and Constantine medical schools and is providing books on family planning, child health and related subjects to support their teaching programs, in preparation for the
expected establishment of family planning clinics in these schools during 1968. Attention is also being turned to the paramedical schools which train health educators, nurses and midwives. All of these schools have very meagre libraries and largely untrained librarians, who will need some sort of in-service training. They will all need strengthening in order to add family planning teaching for their students.

Quaker Service is continuing to maintain contact with government health officials at all levels. Several Quaker Service staff members attended a recent course at the National Institute of Public Health in Algiers on health and social protection of mothers which included material on family planning. The Institute plans a full conference on family planning and population problems in early 1968, for which Quaker Service will provide books and selected literature kits, including the report of its own Algerian family planning study.