

**The San Francisco Foundation's Bank of America
Consumer Education Fund (BACEF)**

Executive Summaries

**An Overview of the Evaluation
Phase I: Initial Interview
Phase II: Staff Interview
Non-Grant-Recipients Interview
Phase III: Clients (End-Users)**

Fereshteh Hejri & Jamal Abedi

Advance Research & Data Analyses Center

May, 1998

The San Francisco Foundation's Bank of America Consumer Education Fund (BACEF)

An Overview of the Evaluation

The BACEF foundation has given several grants each year to different organizations “to promote and assist California consumers in effective methods of using financial services and institutions” (*Bank of America Consumer Education Fund, 1997*). These grants have been used to help different groups of people (youth, elderly, non-English speaking, disabled, and others) to understand and use financial services. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the performance of the grant-recipient organizations in relation to the grant and to examine the level of impact of the BACEF grants on the end-users.

The original plan of this study was to conduct the evaluation in three phases: (a) instrument development, (b) staff evaluation (in-dept interview with five major grant-recipients), and (c) the impact on the end-users. Major changes/ modifications were made on the evaluation plan during the implementation phase of this study due to feasibility issues and also based on the feedback and advice we received.

The instruments development phase was completed as was originally planned with the addition of several new instruments. The instruments were created and were validated by administering them on a small group of subjects. Estimates of validity and reliability of the instruments were obtained. Table 1 presents the title of the instruments that were developed for this study.

Table 1. Survey Instruments developed and used in this study

Title of the Instrument	Where it was used
Interview-schedule/questionnaire for the initial staff interview	Phase I, Initial Interview
Interview-schedule/questionnaire for the in-dept staff interview (face-to-face/site visit, and telephone interviews)	Phase II, Staff Interview
Interview-schedule/questionnaire for the non-grant recipient organizations	Non-Grant Recipients
Material development form	Staff Interviews (BACEF/Non-BACEF)
Material evaluation form	Staff Interviews (BACEF/Non-BACEF)
A checklist of existing BACEF materials (printed materials and videos)	Staff Interviews (BACEF/Non-BACEF)

Initial Interview with the Grant-Recipient Organizations

We started the evaluation process by contacting all the grant-recipient organizations for a short interview. The purpose of this contact was to obtain some basic information which was needed for the next phases of the study.

We started with a list of 53 grant-recipient organizations. Interviews were obtained on 48 of these organizations. The results of these interviews were summarized and were reported in the Phase I Executive Summary and Report. Below is a brief summary of the results.

These organizations were relatively small in size and had a small number of staff members. A majority of the respondents indicated that the BACEF materials were “very useful” and “very applicable” for their clients. They also indicated that some of their clients contacted them after the end of the grant period and expressed interest in learning more of the concepts which were covered in the BACEF materials.

The respondents gave very high ratings (on a scale of 1 to 10) to the performance (8.61) and to the level of usefulness of the BACEF materials (9.13). They also indicated that they delivered the concepts which were covered in the BACEF materials to a large group of audience (ranging from 1 to over 2500 people/end-users).

The majority of the organizations (72.5%) indicated that they do not currently have a BACEF grant. However, a larger number of the organizations (85%) indicated that they still use the BACEF materials. This finding is interesting because in spite of the official termination of the BACEF grant, many organizations keep using the BACEF materials because they find these materials to be very useful for their clients.

Non-grant Recipient Organizations

A group of non-profit organizations that ordered the BACEF materials but were not among the grant-recipients was selected to serve as a control or comparison group in our staff evaluation phase. These organizations were contacted and were asked to provide information

about the BACEF materials that they ordered. Sixteen of the 32 organizations that were contacted agreed to be interviewed. Two interviews had some missing data, therefore, 14 completed interviews were processed.

We divided the non-grant recipient organizations into two groups (large or small) based on the size of their order. The two types of organization, on the average, had 33 staff members but very few of their staff members (14%) were familiar with the BACEF materials and even a smaller number of their staff members (10%) indicated that they actually used the BACEF materials. The staff members indicated that they have reached a relatively large number of audience (an average of 802 people/end-users). They also indicated that the BACEF Catalogue was their source of information. Only about a third of them were familiar with the BACEF grant, but all of them indicated that they were familiar with the Consumer Action activities.

A majority of these organizations (over 78%) indicated that they were currently using the BACEF materials. In 45% of the cases, the Chair or Executive Director of the organization was responsible for the orders, in 27.3% , the supervisor (middle management staff) was responsible, and in 30%, the staff members were responsible for ordering the materials.

Most of the non-BACEF organizations used the Materials in English (85.7%) and Spanish (85.7%). Other languages were also reported. Cambodian 7.6%, Chinese 23.1%, Korean 15.4%, Russian 7.6%, and Vietnamese 15.4%. (Note, response categories for this question were not mutually exclusive, i.e., multiple categories were selected.)

Most of the non grant-recipient organizations indicated that the BACEF materials were useful and applicable in their clients' life situation. They also indicated that their clients contacted their organizations for more BACEF materials. They rated the applicability, usefulness, and effectiveness of the BACEF materials at a very high level (above 7.5 on a 10-point scale). They also indicated that all of their clients (100%) find out about the BACEF materials from sources other than the BACEF's Catalogue. They distributed the BACEF materials mainly to individual people (76.9%) rather than to groups or organizations.

We also asked them which of the BACEF materials they like the best, which they like the least, and which their clients like the most. Responses to these questions are summarized and discussed in the Phase III Report.

The non-BACEF organizations that we contacted preferred a combination of printed materials and videos (42.9%), and printed materials only (42.9%), and other forms such as internet site (15%).

Phase II: Staff interview

The staff interviews were conducted in three different forms: (a) face-to-face interview or site visit, (b) telephone interview, and (3) mail interview. The main difference between the face-to-face interview and telephone interview from the mail interview was the quality of the comments we received. In the face-to-face interview (and to some extent the telephone interview), we had the opportunity to ask questions and communicate with the key persons of the organizations. However, this was not possible with the mail interview.

Originally, we planned to conduct only the face-to-face interview. Indeed the face-to-face interviews provided very useful information, however, the number of interviews was not large enough to permit any meaningful statistical analyses. Therefore, we decided to obtain data on a larger number of the grant-recipient organizations and collect the same information that was obtained in the face-to-face interviews. A total of 24 completed interviews (face-to-face, telephone, and mail interviews) were obtained from the staff members of the grant-recipient organizations (a response rate of 58 percent).

A profile of the background characteristics of the staff members of the grant-recipient organization is given in the Phase II Report. As this profile indicates, the staff members who were responsible for the administration of BACEF grants are a group of mainly well educated women with a strong background in law, business and education.

The majority of the staff members who were in charge of BACEF activities (77.2%) indicated that they have been working with the current organization for over 5 years and on the

BACEF-related activities for over one year (66.6%). Over 70% of the respondents indicated that they were currently using BACEF materials and 81% said that they were familiar with the BACEF Information Catalogue.

Over 52% of the staff members said that they developed some of the materials and 19% said that they modified some of the materials. A list of the developed/modified BACEF materials reported by the staff members is provided in the Phase II Report.

Almost every staff member who was in charge of BACEF grant found the materials to be applicable in their clients' life situation; over 82% found the materials to be interesting and relevant to their clients' needs and age level, and over 75% believed that the language of BACEF materials is easy and understandable for their clients. However, some of the respondents indicated that the language of the materials may not be relevant (may be linguistically complex) for some of their clients, particularly for the older clients.

The staff members rated the level of usefulness, effectiveness, and the comprehensives of the BACEF materials at a very high level (over 7.5 on a scale of 1-10).

Phase III: Clients (End-Users)

We asked all the grant-recipient organizations (both in Phase I, the initial interviews and in Phase II, the staff interview) to help us to get in touch with their clients who benefited from the BACEF grants (the end-users). Most of the organizations did not provide us with any information that could help us to reach to their clients. Some of these organization indicated that they did not have any specific data on the BACEF end-users since their contact with their clients was via radio/TV or newspapers. Only two of the 48 organizations provided specific information concerning their clients. One of these two organizations gave us a list of 5 individual clients.

The most useful information for the client/end-users phase was received from only one organization.¹ One hundred and fifty clients from five different cultural backgrounds from the Union of Pan Asian Community (UPAC) participated in this study. Most of the clients were Asian immigrants with education at the level of high school or less. A majority of them reported a good level of English proficiency. However, to assist the clients to better understand the survey questions and to solicit unbiased responses from them, we hired a group of interviewers who were fluent in the client's native languages.

The clients who were interviewed did not have much working experience in financial fields, however, they expressed interest in working in financial areas. They believed that the BACEF materials were interesting, useful, and the content was applicable to their life situations. The data suggest that the clients background characteristics have a significant impact on their life style, their level of interest in the materials, and their choice of materials and consequently on their responses to the questions in this interview. Some group of clients, for example, believed that legal issues are more important concepts and they would prefer to spend time in learning those concepts, another group thought that banking or real estate concepts are more relevant for their cases, yet another group preferred other topics.

With a very minimal amount of experience in financial fields, most of the clients express interest in these areas. This high level of interest may be due in part to the positive learning experience that they had from the BACEF materials. The results suggest that the BACEF materials may be more effective if they are presented in a format that the clients prefer (video) and if the language of the materials is simplified so that everyone can use and understand the materials.

¹ As a result of the recent attempt by the BACEF authorities to get more cooperation from the grant-recipient organization, two other major grant-recipient organizations contacted us recently and offered their assistance. We are now in the process of working with these two grant-recipient organization to contact their clients.

Problems/Limitations

As in many other complex surveys with human subjects, there were some limitations and problems in this survey. One of the major limitation of this study was the lack of sufficient information on the end-users. Also, a major concern in this survey was the inconsistencies that we found between the results of the different phases of this study. We will try to address some of these problems/issues in this section.

Inconsistencies

The highest level of inconsistency was observed in relation to the end-users. To address this problem, we first compare the results obtained from Phase I (the initial interviews), Phase II (the staff interviews), and the non-BACEF interviews. We then compare and contrast these findings with those obtained from the end-user phase.

At the initial interview, several questions were asked about the end-users. Question 13 asked the staff members how many people (clients/end-users) benefited (learned) from the BACEF grants. The answer to this question ranged from a few individuals to several hundred thousand people. Some of these organizations responded that they reached several thousand clients through the media (radio, TV, or newspapers). Around 50% of the organizations indicated that they reached a group of audience between 1 to 800 people. About 33% of the organizations reported an audience greater than 2500 in size.

Question 14 of the initial interview asked the staff members about the degree of usefulness of the BACEF materials for their end-users. The respondents indicated that the BACEF materials were very useful for their clients (end-users). Over 87% of the staff members in our initial interview responded that the materials have been “very useful” for the clients. We asked the same question in Phase II interview (the staff interview). Table 2 summarizes the responses to the question of degree of “usefulness” of the BACEF materials judged by the staff members of the grant-recipient organization in the two independent surveys. The staff responses to this question are mainly at the highest categories, that is, most of the staff members believe that the materials have been very useful for their clients. However, there is a relatively large

difference between the frequencies obtained from the two surveys. In Phase II of the interviews, the respondents were not as positive as in Phase I. For example, in Phase I, 87.5% indicated that the materials were “very useful” for the clients, whereas, in Phase II, only 55.6% selected the “very useful” category, a difference of 31.9%. This discrepancy may be explained in part by the difference in the number of staff who were interviewed in the different surveys. In Phase I, there were 42 interviews, but in Phase II only 24 interviews were conducted. However, a larger part of this discrepancy may be due to reliability problems, i.e., the staff members were not quite consistent in their responses at the two different occasions.

Table 2. Degree of usefulness of BACEF materials judged by the grant-recipient’s staff

Response Categories	Phase I: Initial		Phase II: Staff	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very useful	35	87.5	10	55.6
Useful	4	10.0	6	33.3
Somewhat useful	0	0	2	11.1
Not useful	0	0		

Question 15 asked "how applicable" were the BACEF materials for the end-users. The same question was asked in Phase II survey. Table 3 summarizes the frequencies of responses to this question from the two phases. As Table 3 indicates, over 92% of the staff members in the initial interviews (Phase I) indicated that the materials are “very applicable”. In Phase II, the respondents were also positive about the degree of applicability, however, only 47.6% of the staff members selected the “very applicable” category, a difference of 44.9%. Again, this large difference between the results of the two phases of staff survey may be partly due to difference in the number of interviews, but it can also be explained by the reliability/consistency factor.

Table 3. Degree of applicability of BACEF materials judged by the grant-recipient’s staff

Response Categories	Phase I: Initial		Phase II: Staff	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very applicable	37	92.5	10	47.6
Applicable	2	5.0	9	42.9
Somewhat applicable	0	0.0		
Not applicable	0	0.0	2	9.5

In the initial interview (Phase I) we asked the staff members to tell us how much interest they think their clients (end-users) had on the BACEF materials (Question 16). In Phase II also the evaluators asked the grant recipients about the degree of clients' interest in learning BACEF materials. Table 4 presents the frequencies (and percentages) to the different response options of this question for both phases.

Table 4. Level of interest of clients to BACEF activities judged by the grant-recipient's staff

Response Categories	Phase I: Initial		Phase II: Staff	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very interested	32	80.0	7	36.8
interested	5	12.5	9	47.4
Somewhat interested	2	5.0	3	15.8
Not interested	0	0.0		9.5

As the data in Table 4 indicate, most of the staff members in both phases were very positive about the clients' level of interest in BACEF materials. However, similar to the previous findings, the Phase II data provided less supporting evidence of the "degree of usefulness" of the BACEF materials. In Phase I, 80% of the respondents selected the "very interested" category as compared with a 36.8% of the respondents in the Phase II survey, a difference of 43.2%. This large difference again points to the reliability problem with the data. We will focus more on this issue later in this summary report.

Table 5. Clients contacted for more learning

Response Categories	Phase I: Initial		Phase II: Staff	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No one	5	12.5	3	14.3
A few clients	4	10.0	7	33.3

Some clients	11	27.5	5	23.8
Many clients	19	47.5	4	19.0

In response to the question asking about the number of clients (end-users) contacting the organization for more materials/learning opportunities, 75% of the staff members in Phase I interview indicated that “some” or “many” of their clients contacted them for more materials/learning opportunities (see Table 5). In Phase II, however, 42.8% of the respondents gave similar response to this question, i.e., 42.8% of the Phase II respondents claimed that “some” or “many” of their end-users contacted them and requested more of the BACEF materials.

These findings from the two staff surveys suggest that the grant-recipient organizations have had active relationships with their clients, particularly with many of those who were considered as the “BACEF end-users” and that the grants have a significant impact on those individuals. However, in Phase II, the staff members were less optimistic about their end-users.

In the Phase III report, we discussed the problem of lack of data on the end-users. We indicated that the grant-recipient organizations did not provide enough information to help us to contact their end-users. We thought that a possible explanation for this was that either the organizations did not reach to any group of individuals as end-users or that they lost their contact with the end-users. The results of the staff interview that we presented above, however, suggest that the organizations claimed that they reached a relatively large group of end-users. Staff members of the grant-recipient organizations in both phases spoke very positively about the end-user in the area of "applicability" and "usefulness" of the BACEF materials to their end-users, the end-users' level of interest, and even more directly about the end-users' frequent contact with the organizations asking for more BACEF materials. When the organizations talk about a high level of involvement of their clients in the BACEF activities and claim that a sizable group of end-users contact their organization requesting more materials, it seems unlikely that they have no information on the BACEF end-users. Thus, the question about the lack of information on the end-users remains unanswered.

Comparing the grant-recipient and non-grant recipient organization

A comparison between the response pattern of the grant-recipient and non-grant recipient organizations may help us understand the similarities and differences between these two groups of organizations. We will compare the grant-recipients with the non-grant recipient organizations on a few questions regarding the end-users. Responses of the two group of organizations will be compared on the degree of "usefulness" and "applicability" of the BACEF materials for the clients. We will also compare the responses provided by the two group of organizations on the number of end-users.

Table 6 compares the frequencies and percentages of the responses of the grant-recipients and non-recipients on the degree of "usefulness" of BACEF materials for their end-users. The staff members of both the grant-recipient and non-recipient organizations indicated the BACEF materials were useful for their clients with the grant-recipient organizations having slightly higher positive responses. Over 41% of the non-grant recipient staff indicated that the BACEF materials were "very useful" for their clients. For the grant-recipient organizations the percent of "very useful" response was 55.6%, a 13.9% difference between the responses of the two groups of organizations.

Table 6. Degree of usefulness of BACEF materials to end-users judged by the staff members

Response Categories	Staff, Non-grant-Recipients		Staff, Grant Recipients	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very useful	5	41.7	10	55.6
Useful	6	50.0	6	33.3
Somewhat useful	1	8.3	2	11.1
Not useful	0	0		

Similarly, Table 7 compares the responses of the grant-recipients and non-recipients on the degree of "applicability" of the BACEF materials for their end-users. Again, the two group of organizations responded positively to this question and believed that the BACEF materials were

"applicable" to their clients' life situations. However, the grant-recipients again had slightly higher level of positive responses. For example, according to the data in Table 7, 38.5% of the non-grant recipients found the BACEF materials to be "very applicable" in their clients' life situations. The grant-recipient organization had slightly higher frequency in this response category (47.6%). However, adding the frequencies for the "very applicable" and "applicable" categories together, bring the two organizations closer in their responses to this question (90.5% for the grant-recipients and 84.7% for the non-recipients).

Table 7. Degree of applicability of the BACEF materials judged by the staff members

Response Categories	Staff, Non-grant-Recipients		Staff, Grant Recipients	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very applicable	5	38.5	10	47.6
Applicable	6	46.2	9	42.9
Somewhat applicable	1	7.7		
Not applicable	1	7.7	2	9.5

Table 8 presents frequencies and percentages for the question asking about the clients' level of interest in the BACEF materials. As the data in Table 8 show, the percentages to the different response categories are very similar across the two groups of organizations. Overall, the two groups of organizations reacted very positively to this questions and a majority of them indicated that their clients were interested in the BACEF materials. In the "very interested" category, the percentages are 36.8% and 30.0% for the grant-recipients and the non-grant-recipients organizations respectively. In the "interested" category, the percentages are 47.4% for the grant-recipients and 50.0% for the non-grant recipients.

Table 8. Level of interest of clients to BACEF materials judged by the staff members

Response Categories	Staff, Non-grant-Recipients		Staff, Grant Recipients	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very interested	3	30.0	7	36.8
interested	5	50.0	9	47.4
Somewhat interested	2	20.0	3	15.8

Not interested	0	0.0		9.5
----------------	---	-----	--	-----

An interesting comparison between the grant-recipients and non-recipients would be in the area of the number of end-users contacting the organization for more BACEF materials.

Table 9 summarizes the data for both grant-recipients and non-recipient organizations for this question. As the data in Table 9 indicate, both groups of organizations reported some activities in this area. However, the grant-recipient organization had lower percentage in the “no one” category (14.3%) than the non-grant recipients (40%). That is, the grant-recipient organizations claimed that more of their clients (end-users) contacted them and requested either more materials or more learning opportunities.

Table 9. Clients contacted for more learning BACEF materials

Response Categories	Non-grant-Recipients		Phase II: Staff	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No one	5	40.0	3	14.3
A few clients	3	30.0	7	33.3
Some clients	1	10.0	5	23.8
Many clients	2	20.0	4	19.0

Comparing data from the three different phases of this study

First, we will compare some of the background characteristics of the staff members of the grant-recipient organizations with the end-users. Table 10 reports level of education for the two groups. As the data in Table 10 indicate, the education level of the staff members are higher than the clients. A majority of the clients (36.3) indicated that they have “less than high school” education, whereas, the majority of the staff members reported a baccalaureate degree (36.4%). No one in the client group reported anything higher than a baccalaureate degree, however, over 31% of the staff members indicated that they a doctoral degree.

Table 10. Level of education

Response Categories	Phase II: Staff		Phase III: Clients	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Less than High School			53	36.3
High School			44	30.1
College	2	9.1	42	28.8

B.A./B.S	8	36.4	7	4.8
MA./ MS	5	22.7		
Doctorate	7	31.8		
No Response			4	

Since attitude toward and interest in financial fields/services may positively impact administration of BACEF grant and learning of the BACEF materials, we asked both the staff members and the clients to report their level of interest in this area.

Table 11 summarizes the responses to this question for both staff members and clients. As the data in Table 11 suggest, both groups indicated some level of interest in financial fields/services, however, the staff members showed more interests in this area. For example, 33.3% of the staff members indicated that they are “very interested” in financial fields/services, but only 18.2% of the clients selected this response category. For the “interested” category, this situation is reverse. More clients (23.0%) selected this category than the staff members (4.8%).

Table 11. How interested are you in working in financial fields/services?

Response Categories	Phase II: Staff		Phase III: Clients	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very interested	7	33.3	27	18.2
interested	1	4.8	34	23.0
Somewhat interested	6	28.6	29	19.6
Not much interested	3	14.3	34	23.0
Not at all interested	4	19.0	24	16.2
No Response	22		2	

We now compare the results obtained from the interviews of the different groups on some of the main questions such as degree of “usefulness”, “applicability” of the BACEF materials and his materials.

Table 12 shows the frequencies and percentages for the “degree of usefulness of BACEF materials”. As the data in Table 12 suggest, the staff members (both grant-recipients and non-recipients) responded more positively to this question than the clients. Over 41% of the non-grant recipient staff and over 55% of the grant-recipient staff believed that the materials were “very

useful” for the clients. However, the clients did not agree with the staff on the level of "usefulness" of the materials and only 16% of them selected this category. A majority of the clients, however, rated the BACEF materials as “useful”. These results suggest, that every one we contacted (staff from grant-recipient, non-recipients, and clients) believe that the BACEF materials are useful but they did not quite agree on the level of usefulness.

Table 12. Degree of usefulness of BACEF materials for the clients

Response Categories	Staff Non-grant Recip		Staff Grant-Recip		Clients	
	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct
Very useful	5	41.7	10	55.6	25	16.7
Useful	6	50.0	6	33.3	71	47.3
Somewhat useful	1	8.3	2	11.1	51	34.0
Not useful	0	0			3	2.0

Similarly, we asked both the staff members and the clients about the “degree of applicability” of the BACEF materials on the clients life situations. Table 13 presents the frequencies and percentages of the responses to this question. The trend of data in Table 13 is interesting. Staff members from both grant-recipient and non-grant-recipients consistently believe that the materials have application in their clients’ life situations, but the clients themselves are not that optimistic. For example 38.5% of the non-grant recipients and 47.6% of the grant-recipient organizations indicated that the BACEF materials were “very applicable” i situations but only 12% of the clients believed that the materials were “very applicable” in their life situations. That is, the staff members of the organizations were over optimistic about the level of “applicability” of the materials.

Table 13. Degree of applicability of the BACEF Grant for clients

Response Categories	Staff Non-grant Recip		Staff Grant-Recip		Clients	
	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct

Very applicable	5	38.5	10	47.6	18	12.0
Applicable	6	46.2	9	42.9	82	54.7
Somewhat applicable	1	7.7			44	29.3
Not applicable	1	7.7	2	9.5	6	4.0

Finally, we compared responses of the staff and clients on the question of “level of interest” of clients to the BACEF materials. Table 14 compares the responses of the three groups. As the data in this table suggest, the staff members from both groups (grant-recipients and non-recipients) responded more positively to this question than the clients. Thirty percent of the non-grant recipients and 36.8% of the grant-recipients indicated that their clients were “very interested” in the BACEF materials as compared with only 16.1% of the clients indicated that they were “very interested” in the BACEF materials. This trend of discrepancy is similar with what was reported earlier. Staff members chose to be over optimistic.

Table 14. Frequency of the level of interest of clients to BACEF materials

Response Categories	Non-BACEF		Staff		Clients	
	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct
Very interested	3	30.0	7	36.8	24	16.1
interested	5	50.0	9	47.4	72	48.3
Somewhat interested	2	20.0	3	15.8	48	32.2
Not interested	0	0.0		9.5	5	3.4

Conclusions/Suggestions

Findings: (Staff Members of the Grant-recipient Organization)

The results of the interviews with the staff of the grant-recipient organizations (the initial interviews, the face-to-face interviews, the telephone and mail interviews) suggest the following:

- The grant-recipient organizations used and/or produced some materials, however, there was a great deal of variation among the organizations in their level of production and use of the BACEF materials and in the quality of the materials they produced.
- Our efforts to work with the multiple-grant recipients and their clients (end-users) was not as productive as we originally expected. Our expectation was to have at least a short list of the end-users from each of the large grant-recipient organizations. Among the five organizations that received multiple and highest amount of grants, only one organization showed the highest level of interest in this evaluation and cooperated at the maximum level. This organization had excellent records of communication with the end-users. Two other organizations showed a modest level of interest and shared with us a few samples of the grant outcomes (publications or some evidence of activities). The remaining two organizations did not cooperate at all in spite of our repeated requests for a site visit or even for an in-dept telephone interview.
- Most of the grant-recipient organizations that we contacted were very cooperative in answering our survey questions. In spite of our clear statement at the beginning of the interviews that we are an independent evaluator and have no authority in the grant process, we suspect (as was evident from the interviews) that this relatively high level of cooperation was partly motivated by the hope of receiving future BACEF grant.
- All of the BACEF grant recipients were hoping to receive more grants in the future.
- Most of the BACEF grant recipients were very pleased with the grant. However, in 6 (out of 48) cases, the reactions were not so positive. Four of these cases had the grant a while ago and they did not remember much about the performance of BACEF. The remaining two organizations were not happy with the BACEF for personal reasons.
- We found the grant-recipient organizations to differ greatly in terms of identifying and contacting the end-users. Most of the grant-recipient organizations that we contacted either

did not want (were hesitant) or were not able to provide us with any information regarding their clients (the end-users) and did not have a clear record of contacting anyone. For some of the organizations this lack of clear record of end-users can be explained by the nature of their organizational structure and objectives. For example, some of these organizations reach to their audience via newspapers (which was mainly non-subscriber) or radio, thus, it was not possible for these organizations to have a record of their audience.

Findings: (Staff of Non-Grant-Recipients Receiving BACEF materials)

The non-grant recipients did not appear to be as motivated as the grant-recipients in their interviews. As indicated earlier, in all of our interviews with the BACEF grant recipients, we tried to make this point clear that the evaluators have nothing to do with the grant process. In spite of this clarification, some of the grant-recipient organizations felt that cooperating with this evaluation would increase their chance of receiving future BACEF grants. However, this was not the case for the non-grant recipients since they were not expecting any grants. Because of the lack of incentive, a larger group of the non-grant recipients did not respond to our request for an interview.

- The non-grant-recipient organization who were interviewed, however, were all very pleased with the BACEF materials that they ordered. They spoke very highly of the quality of the materials and they presented evidence of communication with the end-users.
- Our experience from the interviews with both the grant-recipient and the non-grant-recipient organizations suggests that the non-grant recipients had a more clearly defined group of end-users than the grant-recipients and that they had more evidence of reaching to a specific group of individuals, the end-users. This may be due to the fact that the non-grant recipients have a pre-existing list of the individuals who were interested in the BACEF materials and who asked for specific BACEF materials.
- The non-grant-recipient organizations were not as active as the grant-recipient organizations in developing or modifying materials since they are mainly users of the materials. However, they were more active and more efficient in sharing the existing BACEF materials with the end-users because they were more focused on the end-users by using pre-existing lists of the individuals who were interested in the materials.

Findings: (Clients/End-Users)

We examined the clients' responses and cross validated them to make sure that the responses were reliable and valid. Consistency between the clients' responses to different questions which were intended to measure the same concepts confirms the high level of accuracy of the responses to our questions. Thus, with a high level of confidence we can suggest the following:

- The clients believed that the materials were interesting, useful, and applicable to their life situations.
- The data suggest that the clients background characteristics have a significant impact on their life style, their level of interest in the BACEF materials, their choice of materials, and consequently on their responses to the questions in this interview.
- With a very minimal amount of experience in financial fields, most of the clients expressed interest in these areas. This high level of interest may be due in part to their positive learning experience from the BACEF materials. It may be indicated that based on the positive feedback that the staff received from the end-users, they ordered more materials.
- Most of the clients said that they would recommend the BACEF materials to their family, friends, colleagues, and others.
- Most of the clients expressed interest in participating in the possible future BACEF opportunities.
- The BACEF materials may be more effective if they are presented in a format that the clients prefer (video for example) and if the language of the materials is simplified so that everyone can use and understand the materials.

Recommendations:

- As a model for selecting future grant-recipients use the few organizations that successfully implemented the grant and used the grant money more effectively and efficiently. The successful organizations were larger in size, had larger BACEF grants, more oriented toward community services, and more in touch with individuals or families at the lower socioeconomic status. The community service activities were very evident in their daily works. The most salient characteristic of the successful organization, however, is their success in interacting with their clients. This characteristic may not necessarily be related to the size of the organization. Sometimes, smaller organizations may have a better interaction with their clients.
- The evidence from the different phases of this evaluation suggests that larger grants with more accountability would produce more successful outcomes. The accountability can be achieved by stronger message in the application. Clearly defining expectations and objectives of the grants and asking the grant-recipients to submit progress report could be among the necessary conditions of receiving the grant.
- Disbursing the grant money over a period of time would help. It would also be very helpful to make the progress report (along with samples of work and possibly specific information about the end-users) a necessary condition in receiving the remaining grant money. BACEF's level of expectations may be narrower with the smaller grants. Grant-recipient organizations should be asked to send regular progress or performance report (monthly, or at least quarterly) along with samples of the documents/evidence of activity. The grant applicants should specifically address their plans for working with the end-users and should report their progress in reaching that group.
- The effective use of the BACEF materials by the non-grant-recipient organizations suggests that BACEF should partly support and reward developing and producing materials that could serve the public (end-users).

The San Francisco Foundation's Bank of America Consumer Education Fund (BACEF)

Phase I: Initial Interview

Executive Summary

A short interview was conducted as an initial contact with all the organizations listed on the BACEF summary sheet and on *The San Francisco Foundation's Bank of America Consumer Education Fund (1990-1996 summary)*. A list of the new (1997) grant recipients was also obtained from BACEF. The new grant-recipient organizations were also contacted and were interviewed. The purpose of this contact was: (a) to discuss the evaluation objectives with the key staff persons and (b) to obtain the necessary information (address, size of the organization, and name of a contact person) for the follow-up studies.

A total of 53 organizations were contacted. Five of these organizations indicated that they have received the grant very recently and they do not have much BACEF-related activities to report. Of the remaining 48 organizations, 75% reported between 1 to 5 members (full and part time) and only 25% of them had over 30 members. Of these organizations, over 62% indicated that they assigned a maximum of 3 staff members to BACEF-related activities. A comparison of this figure with the total number of staff members suggests that the grant-recipient organizations assign a relatively small number of their staff

members to BACEF activities. These data suggest that the grant-recipient organizations are relatively small in size and that the grant money may be a significant monetary award for them.

Over 87% of the respondents indicated that the BACEF materials were very useful for their clients. The majority of respondents (92.5%) believed the concepts covered in the BACEF materials were "very applicable" in the people's real life situation. Most of the respondents (80%) also indicated that clients were interested in the BACEF materials. A majority of the organizations also indicated that "many" (47.5%) or "some" (27.5%) of their clients contacted them after the end of the grant period and indicated that they would like to learn more of the concepts which were covered in the BACEF materials.

Finally, the head (or the key person) of the organizations were asked to make overall judgments (using a scale from 1 to 10) about the performance and the level of usefulness of the BACEF materials. A majority of the organizations rated the BACEF's performance very high (mean = 8.61). Similarly, almost all of the organizations which were contacted believed that the BACEF materials were very useful (mean = 9.13 from a perfect 10). Fifty percent of the organizations that were contacted indicated that they reached a group of audience between 1 to 800 people. Over 17% said that they had a group of audience between 800 to 2500 in size and over 32% claimed that they reached

over 2500 people. These are mainly the organizations that used media as a form of communication.

The majority of the organizations (72.5%) indicated that they do not currently have a BACEF grant. However, a large number of the organizations (85%) indicated that they still use the BACEF materials. This finding is interesting because in spite of the official termination of the BACEF grant, many organizations keep using the BACEF materials because they find these materials to be very useful for their clients.

The data for the initial interview suggest that the organizations which were interviewed ranked the performance, usefulness, and applicability of the BACEF materials at a very high level. They believed that the BACEF grant helped them to reach individuals who actually were very interested in the concepts which were discussed in the BACEF materials and who actually benefited from learning the concepts which were discussed in the BACEF materials. Most of the organizations that we contacted spoke of BACEF very highly. A few organizations, however, did not react favorably. Some of them had the grant a long time ago and they did not remember much about the performance of BACEF. A few others were not happy with BACEF for some personal reasons.

The data reported in this paper, however, must be interpreted with caution because they are mainly based on self-reported data and the validity and reliability of self-reported data are questionable. We validate the results of

this part of evaluation with the in-dept interviews which were performed on some of the organizations. The results of this phase will also be validated by comparing them to those that were obtained from the clients/end-users-- those who were supposed to benefit from this effort.

The San Francisco Foundation's Bank of America Consumer Education Fund (BACEF)

Phase II: Staff interview

Executive Summary

In the first phase of the evaluation, we obtained some general information from all of the BACEF grant-recipient organizations. The information from the initial interview included the name, address, phone number, and name of the contact person. We also obtained some information about the BACEF grants, how the grants were used, what was the outcome of the grants, and how the end-users benefited from the grants. We had to keep the initial interview session at the minimum to encourage future participation and cooperation.

Based on the data from the initial interviews and the BACEF grant statistics for the last 6 years, a subgroup of the grant-recipient organizations was selected for the second phase of the evaluation, the staff evaluation phase. The criteria used for selecting organizations for this phase were the following: (a) they received the largest sum of money during this period, (b) they received at least three grants during this period, and (c) they were among the most recent grant recipients.

From the 48 grant-recipient organizations, five met all the above requirements. The selected organizations were: (1) *Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles*, (2) *Legal Aid of San Diego*, (3) *Northern Valley Catholic Social Services*, (4) *Union of Pan Asian Communities*, and (5) *Youth News Services*. We contacted these organization for a face-to-face interview and evaluation of the BACEF-grant activities that were done by their organizations. Some of the selected organizations were supportive but some others were not

quite cooperative. Therefore, we had to replace some of the selected organizations with others which did not meet some the selection criteria. A list of the organizations that were interviewed is provided in the Phase II Report.

The face-to-face interview provided very useful information, however, the number of interviews was not large enough to permit any meaningful statistical analyses. Therefore, we decided to reach out to a larger number of the grant-recipient organizations and collect the same information that was obtained in the face-to-face phase. As indicated earlier, there were 48 organizations that were contacted in our initial phase. Six of these organizations were either non-existence, moved from the area with no trace, or did not want to cooperate at all. A package including: (1) Staff Questionnaire, (2) Check-list of the BACEF materials for the staff review, (3) Materials Evaluation form, and (4) Material Development form was mailed to the remaining 42 organizations along with a self-stamped envelope for returning the forms.

After one week we began to follow-up the staff evaluation phase by contacting the organizations that had not yet returned their forms. Some of the organizations were contacted several times. In our telephone follow-up, some of the organizations expressed interest in a telephone interview and preferred to be interviewed by telephone instead of mailing the questionnaire back to us. We obtained 24 complete interviews/ questionnaires (a response rate of 58 percent). This number included the 5 face-to-face interview packages. Thus, the staff interviews were conducted in three different forms: (a) face-to-face interview or site visit, (b) telephone interview, and (3) mail interview. The main difference between the face-to-face and telephone interview with the mail interview was the quality of the comments we received. In the face-to-face interview (and to some extent the telephone interview), we had the opportunity to ask questions and communicate with the key persons of the organizations. However, this was

not the case with the mail interviews. We now discuss some of the statistical results briefly. First, we try to present a brief picture of the key staff members of the organizations who were the source of the information for this phase of evaluation. A profile of these key members help us to better know the grant-recipient organizations and to understand the nature and type of information they have provided us.

Of the key staff members (the contact persons) of the organizations responding, 75% were female, 66% were Caucasian, 36% had a baccalaureate degree, 22.7% had a Master's degree, and 31.8% had a doctoral degree. Over 58% of them studied Law, Political Science, or Business. Over 63% of them indicated that they have less than one year experience in teaching financial concepts/services. About 65% indicated that they have less than 1 year experience in working in financial-related jobs. Over 63% expressed some interest in teaching financial concepts/services and over 72% indicated that they have some interest in working in financial fields. From this short profile, it is clear that a group of mainly well educated women with a strong background in law and business were responsible for the administration of the BACEF grants.

A majority of the staff members in charge of BACEF activities (77.2%) indicated that they have been working with the current organization for over 5 years. Similarly, a majority of the staff members (66.6%) indicated that they have been working on the BACEF-related activities for over one year. Over 70% of the respondents indicated that they are currently using BACEF materials and 81% said that they are familiar with the BACEF Information Catalogue.

The staff members were asked if they or other members of the organization have been involved in development or modification of any of the BACEF materials. Over 52% said that they developed some of the materials and 19% said they modified some of the materials. Those

organizations who indicated that they developed or modified materials were then asked to list the materials that they have developed and/or modified. A list of the developed/modified materials is provided in the body of the report.

The staff members were then asked to rate the level of applicability, clients' interest, relevance of the materials to the clients' need and age, and the language of the materials. Over 95% of the respondents found the materials to be applicable in their clients' life situation; over 82% found the materials to be interesting for their clients; all respondents (100%) indicated that the materials are relevant to their clients' needs and age level, and over 75% believed that the language of BACEF materials is easy (understandable) for their clients. However, some of the respondents indicated that the language of the materials may not be relevant (may be difficult) for some of their clients particularly for the older clients.

The staff members involved with BACEF activities were also asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 10, the general performance, the level of usefulness and effectiveness, the level of their clients' interest and attention, and the comprehensives of the BACEF materials. The results indicate that the respondents rated BACEF activities in all areas very highly (7.56 to 8.67) except the overall BACEF performance (4.02 of 10).

In general, the respondents were very positive about the BACEF materials, however, some organizations did not react favorably because they were not recently involved with the BACEF materials. The main limitation of this evaluation with the BACEF grant-recipient organizations was that they were not very cooperative in helping the researchers to contact the end-users. Both in the face-to-face interviews and in the telephone interviews, the organization tried to skip this question or not provide any information which could have helped us contacting the end-users. A possible explanation for this resistance may be the fact that many of these

organization did not target individual people as the end-users. Some of the organizations that we interviewed reached their audience through news paper or radio/television. A few others may not have targeted any end-users.

The San Francisco Foundation's Bank of America Consumer Education Fund (BACEF)

Non-grant Recipient Organizations

Executive Summary

A group of non-profit organizations that ordered the BACEF materials but were not among the grant-recipients were contacted and were asked to provide information about the BACEF materials that they ordered. They were asked specifically how they used the materials, who used the materials, how the users (end-users) think about the content and applicability of the materials in their life situation, how interested they were in the materials and how the end-users benefited from the BACEF publications. The name and address of the organizations were obtained from the BACEF Quarterly Reports and from the individual organization's Consumer-Action Packing Lists. The Packing Lists contained the organization's name, address and ID number. They also included detailed information about the materials that were ordered (the title of the material and the number of copies ordered).

The organizations that ordered the BACEF materials differ greatly on the type and size of their orders. To see if this ordering pattern has any impact on the organizations' use of the BACEF materials, it was decided to group the organizations by the size and type of their order. To do this grouping, the Packing Lists were rank-ordered by the number of copies requested. Few organizations were then selected from the top (large order organizations) and few from the bottom (small order organizations). A list of the selected organizations was then sent to Consumer Action to inform them about our plan for contacting those organizations and to obtain more information about the selected organizations such as the organizations' phone number and

contact person. This process was repeated several time to obtain enough data for this phase of evaluation. A total of 32 organizations were contacted, but only 16 of them agreed to be interviewed. For two of these organizations, the interviews were not complete, therefore, 14 complete interviews were processed. The results of our statistical analyses of the completed interviews are summarized below.

The organizations interviewed had an average of 33 staff members with a minimum of 2 and maximum of 109. The average number of staff members familiar with the BACEF materials was 4, that is, 14% of the staff members indicated that they were familiar with the BACEF materials. About 10% of the members indicated that they actually used the BACEF materials. The staff members that were interviewed indicated that on the average, 802 people (clients) learned from the BACEF materials. When they asked of how they found out about a particular BACEF material, a majority of them (69.2%) responded that the BACEF Catalogue was the source for this information. Of the organizations that responded to our survey, only 35.7% indicated that they were familiar with the BACEF grant, but all of them (100%) indicated that they were familiar with the Consumer Action activities. Over 78% of the organization were currently using the BACEF materials. Some of the organizations listed the specific BACEF materials they are currently using. This list was consistent (to some extent) with what they have ordered. Over 45% of the organizations indicated that the Chair or Executive Director of the organization was responsible for the orders, 27.3% indicated that the supervisor (middle management staff) was responsible, and 30% said that staff members were responsible for ordering the materials.

A majority of the organizations used the Materials in English (85.7%) and Spanish (85.7%). Other languages were also reported. Cambodian 7.6%, Chinese 23.1%, Korean

15.4%, Russian 7.6%, and Vietnamese 15.4%. Most of the organizations indicated that they did not produce or modify any of the materials (84.6%), however, a few organizations that we contacted (15.4%) said that they have either developed or modified some of the BACEF materials. These materials are listed in the report.

A majority of the organizations (91.7%), indicated that the BACEF materials were “very useful” or “useful” for their clients. Most of them (84.7%) also indicated that the BACEF materials were “very applicable” or “applicable” in their clients' life situation. When they were asked whether or not their clients were “very interested” or “interested” in learning BACEF materials, a majority (80%) responded that their clients were “very interested” or “interested” in the materials. Over 60% also indicated that at least “a few” clients contacted their organizations for more materials.

The organizations were also asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the applicability and the usefulness and effectiveness of the BACEF materials. Our results indicate that these organizations believe that the materials are applicable, useful, and effective. For the applicability, an average rating of 7.54 (from a maximum of 10) and for usefulness and effectiveness, an average of 7.92 was obtained.

In the next section of the interview, we focused on the distribution of BACEF materials. We first asked them how they distribute the BACEF materials. About 15% indicated that they mail the materials to their clients, 31% said that they give copies of the materials to their clients when their clients visit their sites, and about 46% reported other methods of distributing the materials (i.e., multiple methods, through libraries, etc.). They also indicated that all of their clients (100%) find out about the BACEF materials from sources other than the BACEF's

Catalogue. They distribute the BACEF materials mainly to individual people (76.9%) rather than groups or organizations.

In our interview, we asked the organization to report what specific BACEF materials they used. In three open-ended questions, we asked them which of the BACEF materials they like the best, which they like the least, and which their students like the most. Some of the organizations were not able to provide us with any specific information in this regard, however, some others gave us information on the three categories we asked. Titles and frequencies of the BACEF materials for each of the three categories are given in the report.

We also asked the organizations about their preferred format for the BACEF materials. A large number of the respondents (42.9%) preferred a combination of the printed materials and videos, and the printed materials (42.9%), and only 15% of the respondents suggested other formats such as internet site.

The San Francisco Foundation's Bank of America Consumer Education Fund (BACEF)

Phase III: Clients (End-Users)

Executive Summary

One hundred and fifty clients with five different cultural backgrounds participated in this study. All the clients were from the Union of Pan Asian Community (UPAC). Most of them were Asian immigrants with education at the level of high school or less. A majority of them reported a good level of English proficiency. However, we hired a group of interviewers who were fluent in the client's native languages to solicit unbiased responses from the clients. The clients who were interviewed did not have much working experience in financial fields, however, they expressed interest in working in financial areas.

Most of the clients who were interviewed indicated that they learned the BACEF materials by studying the materials at home and some of them told the interviewers that they learned the materials by participating in classes which were sponsored by the grant-recipient organization. The clients were involved in the BACEF learning activities for a short period of time, spending between 1 to 5 hours in such activities. A larger group of the clients indicated that they were not currently participating in any BACEF learning activities under the grant-recipient organization. However, when they were asked if they currently study the BACEF materials, a large number of the clients indicated that they do currently study the BACEF materials.

A large group of the clients who were interviewed responded with a high level of certainty that they would recommend the BACEF materials to their family, friends, and colleagues. They also indicated that they would participate in future BACEF educational opportunities if BACEF offers such opportunities. These results are encouraging because they suggest that since the clients were pleased with the education/learning opportunities, they would like to have more of these opportunities in the future.

Clients provided us with some ideas/suggestions for improving the BACEF materials. A smaller group of the clients indicated that there must be some changes/ improvement in the content of the materials, others believed that the quality of printing and videos must be improved. A larger group of the clients indicated that the materials must be translated into more languages and that the language of the materials must be simplified. In a very few cases clients indicated that they have developed and/or modified the materials. Clients who actually developed or modified some of the BACEF materials gave us the title for those materials that they have developed or modified.

A majority of the respondents indicated that they were interest in the materials and that the materials were very applicable in their life situations. Most of the clients also believed that the materials were relevant to their needs and that the language of the materials was easy and understandable. These results again seem to be encouraging since they suggest that the end-users are satisfied with the materials that they have received.

For the producers of the BACEF materials it would be very helpful to know that a smaller group of clients who were interviewed in this study preferred the printed materials and materials in computer format such as internet, but a majority of the clients believed that video would be the best format for presenting the BACEF materials.

The clients who were interviewed in this study did not feel that they have enough knowledge about the concepts that are important in managing their daily activities (such as banking, real estate, immigration, insurance, and legal issues). Clients rated their level of knowledge (on a scale from 1-10) on all 12 areas at or slightly below the average of 5.0. A simple comparison between the results of the 12 areas (which were discussed with the clients in our interviews and are presented in the report for this phase) indicates that the clients had slightly more knowledge in some areas than others. For example, they felt more comfortable with insurance concepts than legal matters.

To examine the impact of clients' cultural and personal background characteristics on their responses to the interview questions, we used the clients' cultural background as an independent variable and their responses to some of the questions (with ordered-categories and ratings of 1-10) as dependent variables in a set of analysis of variance models. The results of analysis of variance indicated that the five groups differ significantly in their responses to many of the interview questions. For example the mean scores were significantly different across the subgroups on the self-reported English proficiency. The mean scores for the level of knowledge of the 12 categories of financial and other issues were significantly different across the subgroups.

Briefly, the results of our interview with a group of clients (end-users) suggest that they believe that the BACEF materials were useful. We examined their views regarding the materials that they used by asking them different questions and cross validated the responses to make sure that the responses are reliable and valid. Consistency between the responses to the different questions which were intended to measure the same concept confirms the high level of

accuracy of the responses to our questions and indicate that with a high level of confidence we can suggest the following:

The clients believed that the materials were interesting, useful, and the content was applicable to their life situations. The data suggest that the clients background characteristics have a significant impact on their life style, their level of interest in the materials, and their choice of materials and consequently on their responses to the questions in this interview. Some group of clients, for example, believed that legal issues are more important concepts and they would prefer to spend time in learning those concepts, another group thought that banking or real estate concepts are more relevant for their cases, yet another group preferred other topics.

With a very minimal amount of experience in financial fields, most of the clients express interest in these areas. This high level of interest may be due in part to the positive learning experience that they have from the BACEF materials. The BACEF materials may be more effective if they are presented in a format that the clients prefer (video) and if the language of the materials is simplified so that everyone can use and understand the materials.