

CANO NEGRO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Progress Report III
July 10 - September 30, 1977

With the first nine months of the Caño Negro Human Development Project now completed, a readily apparent change can be seen both in the community and in the residents themselves. A new style of day to day living has emerged as villagers carry on active roles of responsibility for the 13 Project programs: Basic Education, Physical Well-Being, Community Lifestyle, Expanded Agriculture and Small Industry.

I. PRACTICAL EDUCATION

1. Early Learning Center

The community was not daunted when a falling tree leveled the preschool, also destroying its equipment and materials, but instead rose to the challenge by constructing a new facility within one month, improving upon the previous preschool with a concrete floor and bamboo walls. A gala inauguration along with the first graduation ceremony for seven students was held in September. A total of 60 youngsters representing 100 per cent of Caño Negro's children from ages one to six are now enrolled in the preschool, totally operated by two community women. Donations to the preschool have included a gift of more than US \$1,000 from Causa Campesina, a private entity of women related to the National Agrarian Institute, and equipment and materials from the Miranda State Department of Education.

As a further expansion of the Early Learning program, infant and soon-to-be mothers met and decided to begin an infant day care center before year's end.

2. Basic Education

Ten children, all of whom were illiterate at the beginning of the year but participated in the supplemental education program, were graduated from the third grade. Now that another teacher has been appointed to teach in Caño Negro's public school, children will receive their schooling through sixth grade in the community instead of through third grade only.

In adult education, nineteen of the 21 persons enrolled in the literacy class can now sign their names and have attained minimum reading ability while eight students have advanced to basic mathematics studies. A new adult program with an enrollment of 20 is equipping its participants to earn their primary education certificate within two years.

3. Life Skills Academy

Leadership methods training has been heavily emphasized in community groups including the seven-person secretariat, the neighborhood sectors and the program guilds. Reflective conversations, world-awareness studies and action-planning methods compose the core of a newly developed training curriculum. All guild representatives are additionally participating in book-keeping training.

A community library under the supervision of two young ladies receiving library training has begun and is open on a regular basis.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

4. Inclusive Health Clinic

Now fully armed with the prerequisites of both an adequate water supply and sanitary installations for every housing unit, the village focused health activities this quarter on systematically attacking the rampant parasite infestation due to hook-, round-, and other intestinal worms affecting 97 per cent of the Caño Negro population from one year of age upward. Two community-wide treatment campaigns have been waged over the three month span utilizing drugs contributed by the State of Miranda Public Health Service and have reduced the infestation range by an average of 84 per cent per parasite type. Follow-up treatment campaigns to further reduce and control this type of parasitosis are projected for three to four month intervals regularly.

Before initiation of the third community-wide treatment campaign, specifically directed individual treatments will be administered to the 31 per cent of the community additionally affected by other parasite varieties. Preparations to launch these treatments have been completed and indicated drugs in the value of US \$1,250 for current and future needs have been developed from private laboratories.

General medical services have continued during regular dispensary hours three times weekly and, just as extensively, on an emergency basis. The basic nurse's aid tasks are increasingly assumed by a young community woman being trained as principal paramedic.

Additionally, four local women (one from each sector) have been engaged as health caretakers assisting the principal paramedic in administering health measures and generally seeing that needs are promptly and effectively met.

Together with the community's paramedic and under her direction, these health caretakers have also participated in repainting and functionally redesigning and renovating the medical dispensary in anticipation of an intensified health training program projected for the next quarter.

5. Preventative Health Program

Weight controls have shown 66 per cent of Caño Negro's children to be undernourished. But, thanks to regular snacks administered in the preschool, this picture has been ameliorated. Now only 3 per cent are moderately undernourished and the remainder only mildly while in February-March, 10 per cent were moderately undernourished, 4 per cent severely and the rest mildly.

On the basis of these findings, the National Institute of Nutrition has initiated four nutritional supplement programs for all children from infancy through grade six. Additionally, the Institute has contributed numerous useful cooking utensils to the community kitchen.

The community's education in and awareness of health has been amplified by a number of health films shown during the past weeks. An indication of the growing awareness is seen in the community's newly established housing regulations which require construction of adequate sanitary installations for every housing unit.

COMMUNITY LIFESTYLE

6. Community Identity

Beautifying and establishing maintenance systems for community space played an important role in Caño Negro life July-September. Community pride and spirit reached a new peak during a Festival of Symbols which culminated a week's preparation of determining names for both neighborhood sectors and individual homes and sign painting. During the Festival the signs including a new village entrance marker, were presented and posted in a moving ceremony. In addition, a village bulletin board was installed and 16 trash barrels brightly painted with the Caño Negro symbol, were distributed throughout the community. Four beautification caretakers, one from each sector, were selected to help maintain the improved local appearance through motivating residents.

Film showings have become a regular part of Caño Negro life. Many are sponsored by the Orchid and Machete youth to raise funds for their monthly excursions. Other films of a more educational nature, generously lent by various foreign embassies, fill out the weekly schedule.

Nearly a weekend passes in Caño Negro without several visitors stopping by to see the Project. Among the many groups hosted by the community was the internationally represented Worker's Seminar on Christian Thought and Action which chose Caño Negro as a laudable model of christianity in action. The visit, which included a tour, guild reports, luncheon and a symbolic flag presentation, drew national press attention.

7. Support Service Network

Transportation service has become a daily part of Caño Negro life with the hiring of a full time driver who makes regular and special trips to Caracas, Caucagua and nearby Tapipa. In addition, a donated dump truck was restored to running condition to transport construction materials into the community and to carry garbage to the regional dump.

A tool shed was constructed to house all common tools and equipment

8. Public Works Corps

Maintenance and improvement of existing public services included constructing new housing for the water well's electrical controls. Upon completion, government agencies installed and connected the electrical system to the pump.

Construction on the community center has advanced rapidly. Working with the Caño Negro Construction Company, villagers helped hand pour 200 square meters of concrete flooring and 18 support columns, then installed the steel beams. The exterior walls are now completed.

EXPANDED AGRICULTURE

9. Community Garden

Impetus for advancement in Caño Negro's community garden, which saw completion of the second planting and seed beds for future plantings begun, was given by a planting festival and numerous youth workdays. A rototiller, purchased with donated funds, makes the weeding and upkeep of the garden a realistic undertaking. Two persons hired by the community on a full time basis give continuity to the day to day operation of the garden.

In order to expand general awareness of agriculture and to supply families with more produce for personal consumption, a family garden program was initiated by a traveling team which helped families prepare plots in their yards, sold seeds and provided care instructions. Films have also been an important instructional aid and help to increase agricultural awareness. Even the preschoolers participated in agriculture by visiting the community garden for a demonstration, then planting seeds of their own.

10. Commercial Agriculture

Initial sales were made of small crops such as green peppers, eggplant, green beans and cucumbers while research continued on other possible commercial crops and markets. Five families have moved to Caño Negro expressly to intensify work on the commercial garden which will be tremendously facilitated by a 75 hp tractor donated by Intersan, S.A., and by several implements acquired for tropical farming.

NEW INDUSTRY

11. General Construction Company

The Caño Negro Construction Company has continued working on a regular basis and is now under the responsibility of one member. In addition to ongoing work on the community center, the company has also carried out other construction projects of community-wide benefit.

12. Local Commercial Enterprise

Free gifts, a raffle and hearty toasts marked the September inauguration of the Caño Negro General Store which serves the community from dawn to dusk all week long. The front room of a new home in the community was loaned for the store site and equipped with shelving made by the local carpenter and electrical outlets installed by other residents. A four-door glass commercial refrigerator and modern scale donated by Mercantil Federal, S.A. and a cash register donated by Swmet, C.A. plus several thousand bolivares of donated food products helped launch the store. The total retail sales for the first three weeks of operation were Bs. 6,704 (US \$1,577). The store-keeper, who helped establish the store from the beginning, has been training in cash register and scale use and is now able to prepare weekly purchase orders and handle daily store operation without supervision. Further local economic activity is generated through the General Store with sales of home-baked cakes, garden seeds and used clothing.

Responsibility for the community fund has been assumed by the secretariat, a group of seven persons selected by the community who meet weekly to plan and manage the Project operations. Each program guild has established its own simple bookkeeping system and submits weekly reports to the secretariat. A community checking account was opened and the first deposits and withdrawals were made.

13. Small Industry

The highlight of the past three months in Small Industry was the inauguration of the new sewing center. A former cacao storage building was loaned as the site, materials for a false ceiling and modern lighting were donated by the Singer Sewing Machine Company, and community residents painted the entire interior and exterior of the building and installed the electricity. The gift of six new sewing machines from Fundacomun plus a donation from Singer of two semi-industrial machines signaled a dramatic shift in the sewing industry's operation. Following the inauguration, eleven women participated in a two-week basic sewing course while continuing to produce sheets which are sold regularly in Caracas.

Having achieved major successes towards the smooth operational flow of all 13 programs and having seen the growing realization of many long held dreams, Caño Negro residents are unmistakably alive with a new sense of hope and promise. By now, through their own effort and determination, they have demonstrated to themselves that dramatically changing community life is possible. They now prepare to share their experience and methodologies with other Latin American communities which will soon begin similar human development projects of their own.

Cano Negro Education 9 month report Sept. 30

60 children enrolled 35-40 attend Preschool

Elementary: 10 illiterate children thru the supplemental education program graduated from the third grade.

Had one teacher for 6 hours a week to teach first three grades. Now have two classes five days a week on a regular basis.

Literacy: 19 students attained minimum reading ability of 800 words and 8 students received 3rd grade math. level. Another class of 20 is earning their primary educ. certificate within two years

Life Skills. Leadership methods, social awareness, bookkeeping, library training.

Specialized professional training ~~exists in~~ the community: agricultural, health

Seminars: ~~Workshops~~, Community Forum, Youth forum

Drivers education 4 people trained one obtained lisencc

Truck drivers 2 trained and obtained license

20 residents went to the HDTS

2 preschool teachers trained in classroom methods, curriculum writing,

First three months March 1977

literacy: 6 hours a week 27 adults

English classes- 8 students

18 children--tutoring class

Dec. 78

Literacy 12 persons