

CANO NEGRO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
Progress Report II
March 20-July 9

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Highly-important advancements continue to occur in the Venezuelan village of Caño Negro where the Project of Human Development is now concluding its first six months. This report serves as an update of the previous implementation summary covering the five program areas of practical education, physical well-being, community style, expanded agriculture and new industry.

I. PRACTICAL EDUCATION

1. Early Learning Center

The number of children attending the daily preschool, initiated in January, has grown from 48 to 55 students, representing 100 per cent participation of the one to six year old village population. Three local women who wear attractive uniforms the same blue as the students' serve as teachers and receive a symbolic payment for their work.

Thanks to many donations, the preschool is outfitted with tables and benches, toys, playground equipment and books to begin a library.

With additional students in the preschool, it became necessary to increase its size and to fence it in, work which was accomplished rapidly by local residents when both the students and teachers conducted a march through town to dramatize the need.

The first fruits of training are now visible in the preschool with ten students six years old and well-prepared to begin their primary education. The teachers have continued their training with daily classes in methodology and imaginal education taught by an auxiliary member.

2. Basic Education Institute

Speech therapy classes have been initiated for children, especially from four to six years, who have difficulty with phonetics.

One hundred per cent of the persons enrolled in the literacy program are able to sign their names, and 40 per cent have learned to read and write, a skill used weekly during meetings where leaders previously illiterate now read their reports.

3. Life Skills Academy

Home skills are increasing as sewing classes continue with students now able to construct their own patterns, and three women have learned the art of cooking for a crowd under the direction of an auxiliary member.

All of the sector leaders as well as the guild leaders are receiving training in order to effectively carry out their responsibilities and are actually in charge of regular weekly meetings. The International Training Institute held recently in Caño Negro provided several enriching educational opportunities for villagers including courses in imaginal education, community forum methods and global cultural heritages plus an urban excursion to Caracas.

II. PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

4. Inclusive Health Clinic

The Inclusive Health Clinic has continued providing medical services to members of the community as well as to occasional patients from neighboring towns, not only within the framework of the regular tri-weekly consultation hours, but also on an extensive "on-call" basis. While primary treatments have been given on site, cases such as patients with cuts requiring stitches or women on the verge of delivery have called for engagement of the nearby Tapipa Rural Medical Dispensary and the regional hospital in Caucagua, the needed ambulance service being provided by the auxiliary.

Since receiving donations of basic medicines, microscope and rudimentary laboratory equipment to open the one-room dispensary, we have additionally been given an examination table, further supplies of medicines and a hospital bed which await the future opening of an expanded dispensary complex.

The infant and youth population of Caño Negro has been fully evaluated through a general health survey, and screenings to determine the specific range of parasite infection, the primary health problem, have been completed on the entire community.

All housing units now equipped with adequate toilet facilities, a community-wide antiparasitic treatment campaign has been launched under the auspices of the Public Health Service of the State of Miranda which has provided medicine and also delegated a doctor to supervise the campaign.

A Dental Treatment Day for primary evaluation and attendance to urgent cases was held by a visiting dentist from the United States.

In addition to attending the evening health classes held weekly and assisting at consultation hours in the dispensary, the two young women being trained as paramedics have also begun learning parasitology by preparing and examining microscope samples.

5. Preventive Medicine Program

The Preventive Medicine Program has concentrated on preparing to effectively launch the antiparasitic treatment.

7. Supportive Service Network

Outside support for the Project has been demonstrated in numerous ways. The Council of Caucagua, the district capital, has designated funds for sidewalks in Caño Negro, the Maryknoll Fathers have donated \$10,000 to construct a long-dreamed of chapel and Fiveca, S.A.I., a Caracas corporation of various business enterprises, has donated a four-wheel drive truck which provides transportation for cacao crops as well as for residents. A steady stream of visitors to Caño Negro from both private and public sectors continues building wide awareness and enthusiasm for the Project.

8. Public Works Corps

Progress in public building has been highly visible with the completion of two cement and asbestos board general utility buildings, now used as staff housing, and major work accomplished on the community center.

Vivienda Rural, the rural housing agency of the national government, has made plans to construct additional modern housing units in the village before the end of this year.

Caño Negro's communal lands for future village expansion have been surveyed and mapped by a topographer.

IV. EXPANDED AGRICULTURE

9. Agricultural Export Corporation

Five rabbits and two guinea pigs were given to Caño Negro to begin a small animal breeding program which will serve both as a commercial enterprise and as a protein supplement to the local diet. Community men have constructed rabbit hutches from donated wire and wood. The Agricultural Guild leader obtained a donation of rice millings, rich in Vitamin B, as feed for the rabbits and guinea pigs.

Mango jelly was processed and experimentation with cacao jelly was conducted.

In preparation for the commercial garden, an irrigation well was drilled nearby the Engineering Training School of the Venezuelan Army. This well will provide a year-round supply for commercial cropping. Cucumbers have already been harvested from the garden and a market secured for them in Caucagua.

Finally, a transportation service, greatly reducing the cost of getting large cacao crops to market, was initiated with the newly donated truck.

10. Community Garden

With one community man in charge, the seedbed, including tomatoes, peppers and several other seeds, was planted for the Community Garden.

Seven truckloads of chicken manure fertilizer, made available free in an unlimited quantity to the Project from a local chicken farm, was spread over the three-acre garden

In line with this, water piping donated by private individuals was installed from the water well to the community kitchen as was a filter system providing safe drinking water for the community and auxiliary staff. In addition, 90 meters of hose supplied by the Fire Department of the Sucre District, State of Miranda, is serving the community's water distribution system at the well and will also provide irrigation for the Community Garden during the dry season. An additional small storage tank was procured supplying water from the well to shower facilities, and the area around the well was graveled for sanitation and beautification.

Through efforts of the community collaborating in work teams, sixteen 5'7" latrine holes were dug, installed with modern cement pipes and facilities specially designed and produced by a sanitation engineer as a contribution to the Project, then housed in galvanized sheeting supplied by the Ministry of Health. Four additional latrine installations are being held in reserve for anticipated new housing.

All prerequisites for an adequate parasite control program having thus been fulfilled, an audio-visual slide show imaginatively explaining various aspects of parasite diseases and their control was presented, and the community-wide treatment was launched.

The services of the Community Kitchen have expanded, serving not only preschool children daily snacks, but also community members working in task forces.

III. COMMUNITY STYLE

6. Caño Negro Identity Project

An all-time-first global event occurred in Caño Negro June 5-26 when the village played host to an International Training Institute (ITI) which drew representatives from 12 Latinamerican countries to study and participate in Project methodologies. The opening session for participants and community representatives was addressed by Bishop Bernal of the Los Teques Diocese, a representative of the governor of Miranda State and other local dignitaries.

The village's world-view was also expanded when a local leader and an auxiliary member carried news of Caño Negro to a world fair in Korea and returned to tell of other human development projects underway the world over.

For the first time in ten years, at the instigation of community leaders, the village celebrated the feast of its patron, Saint Joseph, the Worker. The five-day fiesta attracted hundreds of visitors from the surrounding area and featured the traditional mass and procession plus slide shows of village improvements, selling of baked goods and handcrafts from the Small Industry Program, not to mention the non-stop salsa music for which the Barlovento region is known.

Youth from ages nine to sixteen have been organized in two groups, the "Machete" boys and the "Orchid" girls, and are eager and willing participants in nearly all community projects.

A corporate tool shed, where tools are stored and available for all to use, has been established.

Community and auxiliary persons have presented the Consult Document and letters of solicitation to numerous leaders in government and private industry with significant results. For example, the Department of Rural Health and the Central Venezuelan University School of Medicine have selected Caño Negro as a pilot project site for parasite control.

8. Public Works Corps

A new dimension has been added to community time patterns by daily task forces working at the stake level in the community garden, community center construction or in other activities of community-wide benefit. One such activity was preparing space for the new well, which when drilled proved a most joyful and dramatic occasion with children and youngsters wildly splashing and dancing in the water spouting forth from 65 meters below.

Three government agencies and two local construction companies helped advance construction on the community center by donating 32 truckloads of dirt and loaning a bulldozer to level the ground.

Three Saturday miracle mornings have seen a general village clean-up campaign.

IV. EXPANDED AGRICULTURE

9. Agricultural Export Corporation

Ten acres of jungle have been cleared for orchards and crop farming by a bulldozer lent by the Ministry of Public Works. Five of the ten acres have been burned to clear the area of fallen trees and jungle foliage. Penetration roads were also cut into the jungle by the bulldozer, defining another 20 to 40 acres for clearance.

A special variety of one hundred orange trees, suitable to receive graftings from other citrus trees, has been planted and fenced in. Further planting will take place at the beginning of the rain season in April.

The animal industry was temporarily delayed when an abandoned old home, cleared, cleaned and prepared for the rabbit farm, burned to the ground. However, since then, enough wire and nails to build both rabbit hutches and chicken coops have been donated to the project. As an additional encouragement to chicken raising, the Ministry of Agriculture has offered ten community persons each a loan of 3,000 bolivares (approximately \$700) to raise chickens.

Contacts have been made with experts in ginger and onoto, a seed from which pigment is extracted, in regard to the processed condiments program which a local resident is interested in developing. Experimentation is in progress on making cacao jelly from a substance normally thrown away during cacao processing.

10. Village Garden Association

The major activity in the Village Garden Association has been corporately creating the garden. In eight days

community workers equipped with machetes cleared three acres of jungle vegetation which was later burned, stacked and reburned. The community then began to remove the stumps by hand-work that was greatly simplified and speeded along by the bulldozer. Plowing and harrowing of the field is now completed thanks to a local hacienda owner who continues to loan his agricultural tractor with both driver and implements two days weekly. Special implements for banking and digging irrigation ditches are on loan from a nearby Ministry of Agriculture experimental station.

A seedbed and nursery have been designated, fertilized and partially fenced with the first planting scheduled to coincide with the rain season's arrival. All the chicken fertilizer needed for the garden plus a truck to haul it in has been promised by a local chicken farmer. A compost pile has been started, though its growth is somewhat hampered by a hoard of hungry village dogs.

Weekly on-site consultation on both the village garden and the export marketing program is provided by a Ministry of Agriculture agent who has given soil analysis services, help in planning and laying out the garden and free seeds.

At the Caño Negro Experimental site in the garden, fruit and vegetable seeds never before grown in this area are being tested.

Future food preservation will be partially enabled by two refrigerators now on hand which have been donated for one year by the Pepsi Company.

V. NEW INDUSTRY

11. General Construction Company

A demand for 120 new homes, several community buildings and extensive housing repairs coupled with a rich local supply of clay led to the establishment of a general construction program in Caño Negro.

Government agencies were contacted for assistance in training and INCE, a national agency for education, donated construction manuals for the training program which was initiated under the direction of an auxiliary member March 8. Two young men participate all day in the program while others attend in the afternoon hours. The construction work completed thus far includes the leveling and staking out of the community center and building of two staff houses, now in progress.

Assistance from outside the community in developing the construction industry has been great. All materials needed for the community buildings such as bricks, asbestos siding, roofing, cement, etc. have been donated. A concrete block factory in a neighboring city has donated the use of equipment for Caño Negro workers to make cement blocks for new houses. Funding of the homes will be made possible by a new foundation now being established. All of the new building projected for Caño Negro plus its existing structures have been brought together in an overall community space design, an in-kind service from a Caracas architect.

Experimentation with local clay for block making has been favorably conducted.

12. Local Commercial Enterprise

Legal sources are now being consulted for assistance in creating the local legal body which will represent the community in financial matters and eventually offer such services as a credit union.

Extensive research through trips to Caucagua and Caracas has opened up marketing outlets for future manufactured products of the community, and credit arrangements have been established with local merchants.

13. Small Industry

Two industries with potentials for full-time employment were launched in the first eight weeks of implementation, a sewing industry and a tropical plant industry.

An investigation into the Caracas market for sheets, pillow cases and uniforms guaranteed a buyer for such goods made in Caño Negro. A semi-industrial sewing machine was then donated by the Singer Company while two domestic machines were obtained from other sources. One hundred-fifty meters of sheeting fabric was contributed by a Caracas cloth company and 20 spools of industrial thread was given by another company in order to open the industry. A 12-week sewing class was started in collaboration with an instructor from the Ministry of Agriculture on March 7. Ten ladies attend the classes which are held three times weekly from 3-5:50 p.m.

Markets have also been secured in Caracas for tropical plants from Caño Negro's vast resources. An open air structure in the community has been donated and cleared for the new industry where several members of the community pot and care for their collected plants. One family has decided to assume responsibility for the industry. In conjunction with green plants, dried weeds, flowers, pods and seeds are being collected for sale to florist shops.

A secondary focus for small industry development has been to explore and encourage supplementary or support industries. Extensive experimentation has been conducted with native resources in making such products as bamboo vases, carved gords, dried weed arrangements and pottery. Markets have also been sought for handcrafted products already made in Caño Negro such as palm fans and wooden rings.

With the many major accomplishments of Caño Negro's Human Development Project during its first eight weeks, perhaps of most significance is the enthusiastic community-wide participation in and commitment to the Project. In addition to experiencing many long-held dreams becoming realities or drawing nearer to their grasp, Caño Negro residents are also realizing more with each advancement their potential to set a new trend for similiar villages throughout Latin America.