

CAÑO NEGRO  
PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION REPORT  
January 24 - March 20, 1977

Dramatic advancements have occurred in the village of Caño Negro as the Human Development Project launched January 24 concludes its first eight weeks of program implementation. These changes have been brought about by community members and auxiliary staff working closely together along with several outside resource persons in the areas of practical education, physical well-being, community style, expanded agriculture and new industry. The Consult Document has been the primary guide for action in initiating the 13 programs called for in the Consult itself which was held January 9-15 with more than 125 persons in attendance. Following is a progress summary from each major project area focusing upon its respective programs.

I. PRACTICAL EDUCATION

1. Early Learning Center

Ninety-eight per cent of Caño Negro's children aged one through six (48) are enrolled in the daily pre-school, held in an open air, palm roof structure built by the community. Two local teachers, assisted by a different community mother each day, teach the students using imaginal curriculum, rituals and songs. Students receive a glass of milk and a snack daily, and families pay a weekly fee for school materials. The presentation of navy blue shorts and shirts as uniforms for the pre-schoolers was a major event for the entire community.

2. Basic Education Institute

A literacy program, taught with the help of a local man, is held three nights per week with 27 adults participating. English classes are offered regularly to a small group, and 18 elementary age youngsters attend a daily tutoring club, also taught with assistance from a local person. A teacher who lives in Caño Negro and is paid by the Ministry of Education was secured for the public school which serves grades one through three. When he began only three students were literate in a class of 34. These 34 students represent 95 per cent of Caño Negro's grade one through three population.

3. Life Skills Academy

The community's symbolic leaders are two men who have assumed responsibility for both the project and the community as a whole. In addition, all 13 programs have leaders who have

taken responsibility for their particular program and for community work. Each stake, a neighborhood organizational structure, has one appointed leader in charge of his group's common life and work. Materials have been made available and informative talks have been given on nutrition and infant feeding. A regular sewing class is now being held with ten women students.

## II. PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

### 4. Inclusive Health Clinic

The Inclusive Health Clinic has concentrated on immediately providing basic medical services and creating structures which will engage outside resources and enable their accessibility to the community.

The medical dispensary was created by community women in an intensive one-day work project. Situated in a room of a community elder's home, the dispensary was cleaned and painted, provided with its own entrance way and furnished with storage shelves and work tables built by a local carpenter. Essential basic medicines donated by private laboratories in Caracas were already in hand, and a microscope donated by the Catholic Medical Mission Board of New York City arrived two weeks later. Regular consultation hours began Feb. 7 and have continued since then three days weekly.

A general health survey including laboratory studies to determine specific health needs and particular ranges of parasite infection, Caño Negro's primary health problem, was started Feb. 12 and continued on following Saturdays. With the assistance of lab technicians from the regional hospital in Caucagua, 11 kilometers away, and from a private hospital in Caracas plus staff members from the National Institute of Nutrition, 126 community members have now been fully screened. The results indicate an extensive need for nutritional supplementation and antiparasitic therapy as there is an average of three (and a maximum of six) distinct parasite types per person. Specific medicines are being sought from both private laboratories and from the State of Miranda Health Department so that individualized treatments can be started in a community-wide campaign immediately upon completion of the survey and concurrent finalization of latrine installations.

Relations have been established with the Caucagua hospital and the rural medical dispensary in Tapipa, three kilometers from Caño Negro. The local doctor from the Ministry of Health has promised to assume responsibility for medical consultations currently provided by our resident missionary doctor.

In order to facilitate the provision of medical services and coordinate activities with local resources at a later time, two young community women have started paramedic training. Additionally, health classes open to all are being offered regularly three evenings a week.

### 5. Preventive Medicine Program

Although the Preventive Medicine Program is based on three fundamental aspects, immunization, nutrition and parasite control, major focus thus far has been on meeting prerequisites for adequate parasite control.

A well delivering a long-awaited water supply has been drilled and a pump obtained. Efforts are now being made to secure a storage tank which will serve the entire community. Latrine holes 5'7" deep were begun Feb. 26 for each mud house without toilet facilities. Installation of modern cement latrines, specially designed and produced as a contribution to the project by a private sanitation engineer, was demonstrated three weeks later. Galvanized sheets for latrine housing have been provided by the local Ministry of Health Department.

As part of the immunization program, a special crew from Tapipa recently vaccinated children under one year old for D.T.P. and polio. A community-wide class on basic nutrition, including instruction on the basic food groups, has been given, and a film on infant feeding has been shown. As a precursor to anticipated services of the community kitchen, milk and a snack are being served regularly in the pre-school.

## III. COMMUNITY STYLE

### 6. Caño Negro Identity Project

Special events held in Caño Negro over the past eight weeks have marked a unity and self-consciousness of the village as part of global social demonstration. During the second week of actuation all but two families were present at a celebrative ceremony, complete with colorful sprays of tropical fruits and flowers and high-spirited singing, to receive their copy of the Consult Document. Other signal occasions included hanging a "Caño Negro" sign at the village entrance and posting six signs designating program areas. Two families have given space in their homes for such areas--the Health Clinic and the Small Industry Complex.

Stakes and guilds, organized respectively for neighborhood care and program implementation, meet weekly to facilitate communication and give direction to planning. Presently 75-80 per cent of the villagers are participating in these gatherings, and new leadership emerges regularly as they assume new roles. Four stake units meet outside of community homes and all age groups attend. Guilds gather in the elementary school as a community to give weekly progress reports and to meet separately for discussing and planning the next week's activities. At both stake and guild meetings one component of the Consult Document is imaginably emphasized with stories and pictures.

### 7. Support Service Network

Emergency ambulance service to the hospital in neighboring Caucagua has been provided on several occasions. A multi-purpose truck, donated by a group of private businessmen, will provide for such community needs as well as for other transportation requirements.

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 committment 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.