

INTRODUCTION

The Rural Development Symposium gave a sense of the currents and flow of the movements, the thinking and action at this particular time in Mexico's history of rural development and presented the design of effective models of organization and action which are having the most effect in meeting the needs of the rural poor. It was a struggle through particular and national development issues, grounded in practical experiences as well as a proposal for combining strengths toward new directions. Seven organizations, agencies and movements gathered to inform each other of their work, to interchange their common understandings and to enable the National Steering Committee to select representative projects in Mexico which will participate in the India Exposition in February, 1984.

I. FORMAT AND SETTING

The first Rural Development Symposium in Mexico was held at the Rancho de Los Angeles in the State of Hidalgo on the 1-3 September, 1983. Twenty-nine participants representing local projects and agencies from nine states gathered at the private residence. The Symposium began the first evening with a late supper and introductions. The following day was spent presenting different types of rural projects in Mexico. All four sectors were present: public (government); private (business and finance); voluntary and local. The format for the presentations generally followed this pattern: first, a thorough contextual statement was made as to why this project was begun and what social contradiction the group sensed the project was addressing. Secondly, a statement was made as to how the project was organized; and then, the successes each had realized were presented. In all, seven presentations were made plus two informal reports on the Banrural program for directors of economic production units and a second on the Banpesca cooperative assistance program. The final session was held the next morning. After all nine presentations had been received, the following questions were asked of the group: What are some new ideas you heard in these presentations? What are some new methods used? What are possibilities for replication? What are the perspectives of rural development in Mexico? What methods need to be utilized in rural development in the future?

The Symposium was chaired by Lic. Jose Trueba, who closed the gathering with a statement concerning the next steps for the National Steering Committee, of which he is the Chairperson. He expressed a deep hope that the Committee's work on the selection of projects to be represented in India would be enhanced by the presentations given at the Symposium.

II. Synopsis of Projects

PROGRAM OF RURAL EMPLOYMENT
Victor Blanco
State of Coahuila

Public Sector
(Government)

The Program of Rural Employment is the pilot program of the Secretary of Agricultural Reform. A staff works in nine regions providing employment opportunities for people who live in the rural. The staff of 40 people includes agronomists, economists and accountants. The project spends about 60% of its money on employment of the rural sector and about 40% on investment in rural projects themselves. Principal contradictions faced by this program are: 1) how to distribute the resources where they are most needed; 2) an adequate training vehicle including help in appropriate technology; and 3) motivational methods for working in the rural. Their annual budget is about \$3 million USD.

MEXICAN FOUNDATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT, A.C.
Program of Campesino Services
Rafael San Martin, Training Director

Private Sector
(Business)

The Foundation consists of 32 locally autonomous project locations, working in economic and social development, involving 1,500 different projects. A central office in Mexico City provides technical and financial assistance to the local units. The Foundation uses problem-solving methods to determine economic viability in such areas as cattle-raising, irrigation, dairy cattle, sheep raising, desert agriculture, and artisan cooperatives. A team of businessmen consult with local groups and do an analysis of project feasibility. This team then forms a local legal entity to promote the project and advise the local management.

COPIDER (Committee of Promoters for Research in Rural Development)
Rodrigo Medellin E.

Private Sector
(Business)

COPIDER is a network of professionals who have formed a committee designed to work with campesino organizations to finance projects.

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The contradiction COPIDER addresses is the bureaucratic unresponsiveness of institutions (whether government or private sector) to lend money for needed projects. COPIDER is one of ten or more loosely-formed networks of economists, technical assistance people, etc. designed to serve the rural poor, at the request of assistance from the local organizations. SICA is the marketing component which exists as a corporation but is not-for-profit in that they never issue dividends. SICA searches for markets in Mexico and export markets as well. Another division under the broad umbrella called ANADEGES (Analysis, Development and Management) is a goods purchasing entity which buys supplies in bulk and offers these to local organizations at 20-30% discount. Each of these three components are designed to be serviced by a small staff in Mexico City and are alternatives to traditional sources of support for the rural sector. The entire organization provides a service to farmers with a 10% cost for overhead. In this way, farmers are enabled to maintain greater percentages of their profits which are usually siphoned off by middle buyers.

CETAMEX

Voluntary Sector

Center for Studies in Appropriate Technology for Mexico

Jose Trueba Davalos

CETAMEX consists of a network of professionals who work in fulltime employment in their respective fields but use their available time to work in research in particular areas of appropriate technology. The problems this group addresses are the restrictive technologies (generally high cost and under the control of large companies) which leave few alternatives for local farmers, particularly farming on a very small scale. The question is how not to displace the rural poor from being able to produce their own livelihood. In Mexico there are eight federations of projects working in such areas as soil conservation, reforestation, integrated farming and other interdependent research. They work as consultants with locally-initiated projects. Many times their work complements or augments government programs or private projects and is usually promoted by groups or organizations which have benefited from the services. The eight people meet once a month to share research and planning.

INIREB

Public Sector

National Institute for Research in Biotic Resources

Gonzalo Pineda

INIREB is a program funded by the government which does practical research and applies ecological technologies. Their major program

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is training, research and promotion of integrated farms. Integrated farms consist of an ecologically-balanced system which provides low-cost, nutritional food and additional community income. The components of the farm include a fish tank, a vegetable cultivation project and an animal (pigs, chickens, turkeys) component. The waste from animals and possibly human waste are processed through a "digester" to produce organic fertilizers for the vegetable project and fish tank as well as biogas for fuel.

SEDEPAC
Service, Development and Peace
Rogelio Cova

Private Sector

SEDEPAC works in three arenas: among women who work for 400 industries along the northern border of Mexico (health and labor issues); among refugees along the Mexican-Guatemalan border (providing practical emergency measures for Guatemalan refugees--jobs, transport, clothing, medicines); and, thirdly, providing grass-roots training in local organizations within rural communities like Vicente Guerrero). Subjects covered in training include how to improve agricultural production through the use of fertilizers, insecticides, etc. A key factor has been the interchange of campesinos with other villages.

VALLE DE MEZQUITAL
Salvador Garcia

Private Sector

This is an educational program which has two pilot projects, one with Otomí Indians in the Valle de Mezquital (an area near Mexico City) and another in Oaxaca. The projects deal with unemployment within these two areas; the program was formed by an independent group of promoters in adult education. The education offered includes practical training in topics such as health care, accounting and literacy. It includes components which affirm the cultural background of indigenous people. It is linked with similar programs in Colombia and Nicaragua.

III. FINDINGS

On Saturday, a reflective conversation took place. The following are lists of responses.

PERSPECTIVE: What is the most useful approach in rural development ~~(for Mexico)?~~

1. Assistance from the central Government in Mexico City at the same time the freedom to do what is necessary at the Regional level.
2. There has been a consciousness explosion in the urban sector resulting in systems and networks, but this has not happened in the rural; therefore, the necessary perspective is to form independent movements of campesinos.
3. There are three "actors" on the scene, all of whom are an integral part: international agencies, national agencies and the campesinos. The perspective is all three sectors working together, each one autonomous and on behalf of the rural sector.
4. The perspective is to strengthen economic units of production in the rural. This will strengthen the local sector.
5. The perspective is to combine auto-sufficiency on the part of the campesinos with the State, which has and is giving enormous assistance. A system of interchange must be created between autonomous groups of organized campesinos who have control of the agricultural production together with government programs of assistance.
6. Participation of campesino groups at the regional level; in addition, the government role, which is not participatory.
7. Groups doing technical assistance, working culturally with the campesinos for the betterment of the community.
8. The perspective is to organize campesinos through the cooperatives which work in the spirit of cooperation.
9. The perspective of government with a double role: assistance and motivation of the rural sector.
10. In an international context, the State is confronted with the perspective of both the local and the private. There will be no rural development without the local sector; the struggle in perspective is between the public and local sectors.

III. FINDINGS (continued).

METHODS WHICH ARE SUCCESSFUL AND NEED TO BE USED IN THE FUTURE:

1. Integrated activities
2. Practical programs of education
3. Campesino methodologies--campesino--campesino, transfer of ideas and technology
4. Participatory research involving the campesinos
5. Specific research of actual rural necessities
6. Pilot project experimentation
7. Informal coordination of and collaboration with the networks
8. Communication mechanisms--successes communicated for the purpose of replicability.
9. Internal communication system to rehearse common objectives and events
10. Methods which promote responsibility for organization or project
11. Methods of commitment.

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1 OCTOBER 1983

EXPOSICION INTERNACIONAL DE DESARROLLO RURAL



1 Diciembre 83

Los siguientes proyectos han sido invitados a participar en la E.I.D.R.

COPATROCINADO POR

Programa de las Naciones Unidas
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2. INIREB - Biotecnicas - granjas integradas--Vera Cruz
3. PER - Programa de Empleo Rural--Cohuila
4. PRCA - Reforestación y Control--Michoacan
5. COPIDER - Servicios técnicos y financieros--Mexico
6. FMDR - proyectos de desarrollo rural--Mexico
7. Valle del Mezquital - Programa de Educación--Hidalgo
8. UNICEF - proyectos de salud y educación--Chiapas
9. CETAMEX - Tecnologías Apropriadas--Mexico
10. SEDEPAZ - programas de desarrollo rural--Tlaxcala
11. PIAXTLA - Proyectos de Salud y Capacitación--Sinaloa
12. FUNDACION para el Desarrollo de la Comunidad Rural y Ayuda Infantil (Save the Children)--Mexico
13. Proyecto de Nutricion y Salud Primarias COPLADE/INN--Chiapas

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