

# LET MY PEOPLE LEAD

RATIONALE AND OUTLINE OF A PEOPLE-CENTERED  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE BICOL RIVER BASIN.

Social-soundness analysis submitted to the  
U.S. Agency for International Development

Frank Lynch, S.J., Jeanne F. I. Illo,  
and Jose V. Barrameda, Jr.

Social Survey Research Unit  
Institute of Philippine Culture  
Ateneo de Manila University  
Loyola Heights, Quezon City  
August 1976

LET MY PEOPLE LEAD

LET MY PEOPLE LEAD: RATIONALE AND OUTLINE OF A  
PEOPLE-CENTERED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
FOR THE BICOL RIVER BASIN

Frank Lynch, S.J., Jeanne F. I. Illo,  
and Jose V. Barrameda, Jr.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. The purpose of this paper is threefold: to develop procedures for the construction of a socially acceptable aid program; to illustrate their use by designing such a program for the Bicol River Basin; and, with this program as the norm, to evaluate the Comprehensive development plan 1975-2000 (1976) of the Bicol River Basin Development Program, or BRBDP. After a discussion of social soundness, each of the three tasks is addressed in turn.

The Criteria of Social Soundness

At the beginning of the Second Development Decade (1970-80) a strategy was adopted by major international assistance agencies. Instead of added transnational capital infusions and continued hope that these measures might eventually benefit the aided nation's poor a decision was made for direct intervention in the problems of the disadvantaged. This was crystallized for the USAID in its so-called Congressional mandate, based on the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973. Henceforth, assistance was to be directed toward the poor majority above all, with special consideration for the role of women in the development process.

Criteria have subsequently been developed by which to judge the social soundness of programs in light of the mandate's requirements. In reference to the Bicol River Basin in particular, five norms appear relevant. A development program will be socially sound if it has the following characteristics.

1. It is intended to benefit the poor majority, male and female, of the River Basin population (it is, in other words, for the poor):
2. It responds to a need that is felt, and preferably expressed, by these men and women (the idea for the program comes, as it were, from the poor);
3. It will, in being implemented, enlist the participation of local men and women, delivering its benefits through the poor;
4. It is so designed that it is very likely, not only to "catch on," but also to affect favorably the disadvantaged for whom it was intended (it will in fact bring its benefits to the poor); and
5. Should it fail literally to fulfill criterion 2 or 3, it nonetheless offers a benefit which experts agree is an essential prerequisite for some basic felt need of the poor majority.

Given these criteria, how does one go about the design of an appropriate assistance program? The currently most common approach relies almost exclusively on professional opinion. A conceivable but most uncommon second strategy would let the people concerned decide for themselves what should be done. The third approach to aid-program design, which is recommended here, combines the people's needs and decision-making with competent technical advice: the people lead and the experts follow.

#### Design and Application of the Third Approach

The third approach assumes that the people's concerns and perceived problems come first. Working together, people and professionals first produce four categories of background information: (a) the main physical features of the target area; (b) the potentials, problems, and constraints which the experts see as conditioning the area's development; (c) relevant sociocultural characteristics of the area's population; and (d) the major problems of the area as the people see them.

With these findings as the focus of discussion, the people and their partners proceed to the fashioning of a program outline, assembling in the course of their discussions (a) a review of the problems they face; (b) the goals and projects that should solve them, each with its agreed-on indicators of accomplishment and designated function in the overall plan; (c) a justification, on economic and technical grounds, of the goals and projects that were selected; and (d) a justification, on social-soundness grounds, of the outlined program and its components. Finally, this people's council (with continued assistance as needed and desired) designs and implements a system for the monitoring and evaluating of program and project activities.

With certain necessary revisions (see pp. 94-95), these procedures are applied to the River Basin case and a program outline produced. The first element is a list of 15 concerns<sup>and 28 problems</sup>, the latter being a composite inventory derived from the people alone (3 items) the people and the experts in agreement (13 items), and the experts alone (12). For the second element, goals and projects suited to the problems are identified and arranged in hierarchical order. Briefly, the ultimate goal of a significant improvement in the quality of people's lives (perceived by the people, verified by the experts) will be attained through four intermediate goals: increased household income, more equal distribution of income, improved nutrition, and increased and more meaningful participation in community decision-making.

Assisting in various ways in the attainment of these four intermediate aims will be five immediate goals, namely, increased production, increased employment, increased productivity, higher wages, and population control. The power behind all these foreseen improvements is to be generated by a multitude of interconnected projects conveniently catalogued under one or another of five project groups, labeled water resources, transport services, agricultural development, industrial development, and social development.

An examination of this proposed program from a means-ends viewpoint (the third element) reveals no major shortcomings. From a social-soundness perspective (the final element of the outline) the individual goals and their related projects pass the test of intended effects (Were they designed to satisfy the needs of the poor majority, and of women as well as men?). A problem arises with the additional test for projects, that of intended means (Will the benefits really reach the poor and the women as intended, preferably with the participation and assistance of the beneficiaries themselves?). The second test cannot be properly applied, since the bulk of the projects have not as yet been implemented or even reduced to operational detail. Hence, instead of evaluating the projects, selected principles are offered to illustrate the kind of "cynical concern" which social soundness demands.

#### Social-Soundness Critique of the CDP

The present version of the Comprehensive development plan, or CDP, scores high on the test of intended effects. It addresses itself to 13 of the 16 problems which the people themselves recognize and seek answers to (criteria 1 and 2, above). Further, the added problems it schedules for solution are also socially sound selections in that they are prerequisites for the filling of various felt needs of the poor majority (criterion 5). To this extent the program proposed by the CDP is both for and from the poor.

For the reason given earlier, the test of intended means cannot easily be applied to the projects suggested by the CDP. Nonetheless, the evaluators feel that the CDP will be substantially improved if its authors will (a) give special attention to the role of River Basin women in development; (b) adjust the plan to take more conscious account of social problems that may seriously impede project performance; and (c) make the people's growth in self-determination a major goal of the River Basin program.

The first suggestion is made in view of there being as yet no adequate provision for the role of women in the River Basin development plan. The second recommendation springs from the evaluators' perception that the CDP fails to recognize and/or come to grips with several social and psychological realities that must be considered in the planning process, specifically, the grinding poverty of the area and the uneven performance of existing institutions and programs. The third recommendation results from the conviction that genuine grass-roots participation in development decisions, and in community affairs in general, is of the essence of the BRBDP and must therefore be given a preferred place in the overall plan. The CDP is seen, then, as an excellent first-version draft in search of a second.

LET MY PEOPLE LEAD: RATIONALE AND OUTLINE OF A  
PEOPLE-CENTERED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
FOR THE BICOL RIVER BASIN

Social-soundness analysis submitted to the  
U.S. Agency for International Development

Frank Lynch, S.J., Jeanne F. I. Illo,  
and Jose V. Barrameda, Jr.  
August 31, 1976

Particularly since 1970, increasing attention has been given to the social consequences of development and the moral aspects of international aid. This concern springs in part from a second look at what occurred during the 1960s. In those years, the UN's First Development Decade, international assistance agencies such as the USAID, the World Bank, the Alliance for Progress, and the UNDP pushed the "capitalization" strategy of development. And with notable success: the UN-targeted 5 percent annual increase in GNP was achieved as a Third World average. However--and here lay the cause of concern--by the end of the decade it was also clear that this significant increase in per capita GNP was not touching the lives of ordinary people. If anything, the poor were getting poorer. For despite the

---

This document was prepared at the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila, in response to a request from USAID/Philippines. Its purpose is to develop an approach to the design of a socially sound assistance program, and to apply this approach to the Bicol River Basin in particular. The final result is compared with an existing proposed development plan for that region. Frank Lynch is director of the IPC's Social Survey Research Unit, located at the Ateneo de Naga, Naga City, and serving the Program Office of the Bicol River Basin Council. Ms. Illo is the SSRU's chief of operations; Mr. Barrameda is one its research associates.

expectations of economists, international capital infusions brought little or no relief to the poverty-stricken majorities of the assisted nations. Not only was there "no automatic trickle-down of the benefits of development; on the contrary, the development process [led] typically to a trickle-up in favor of the middle classes and the rich."<sup>1</sup>

Disenchantment with this approach led to a new strategy for the UN's Second Development Decade (1970-80). Here the emphasis is rather on social goals and on direct intervention in the problems of the poor, particularly poverty, unemployment, and the unequal distribution of income. World Bank President Robert McNamara has returned to this theme again and again in his speeches, and the USAID has itself been mandated, under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973, to concentrate on assistance for agriculture, rural development, nutrition, health and population planning, education, and human resource development.<sup>2</sup> There is, moreover, a moral imperative to be observed. This aid is to be administered in such a way that it benefits the poor majority above all, with as little trickle-up as is humanly possible. Particular attention is to be given to those programs which tend to

---

<sup>1</sup>Irma Adelman, "Development economics: A reassessment of goals," The American Economic Review 65(1975): 302.

<sup>2</sup>See for example, Robert S. McNamara, "Address to the Board of Governors," Nairobi, Kenya, September 24, 1973, World Bank Report, pp. 10-11. Also see "New directions in development assistance: Implementation in four Latin American countries," Report to the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, August 31, 1975.

integrate women into the economies of their countries, "thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort."<sup>3</sup>

#### APPROACHES TO A SOCIALLY SOUND AID PROGRAM

To design an assistance program that will satisfy the requirements of "social soundness," we must first specify the meaning of this phrase. After that we must consider ways in which the content of such a program --its goals and projects--may be derived. We address ourselves to each of these agenda in turn.

#### The Criteria of Social Soundness

To facilitate a narrowing of the focus of assistance, the USAID provides guidelines for a so-called social soundness analysis.<sup>4</sup> The immediate purpose of this analysis is to determine the extent to which a proposed program or project meets, or is likely to meet, the demands of the new Congressional mandate. More generally, however, its aim is to assist planners in the task of designing programs which are socially feasible and morally commendable.

We believe that to accomplish this admittedly difficult purpose, four requirements must be met. More specifically, we take it that a program for the development of the Bicol River Basin will be socially sound if it fulfills the following criteria.

1. It is intended to benefit the poor majority, male and female, of the River Basin population (it is, in other words, for

---

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1973, Section 113.

<sup>4</sup>See AID Handbook 3, Part I, Appendix 5A (1975).

- the poor);
2. It responds to a need that is felt, and preferably expressed, by these men and women (the idea for the program comes, as it were, from the poor);
  3. It will, in being implemented, enlist the participation of local men and women, delivering its benefits through the poor;
  4. It is so designed that it is very likely, not only to "catch on," but also to favorably affect the disadvantaged for whom it was intended (it will in fact bring its benefits to the poor).<sup>5</sup>

It is understood, of course, that specific assistance programs will satisfy these four criteria to different degrees. Moreover, some programs, or program elements, will by their very nature score high or low on criterion 2 or 3. It is expected that a particular poor majority may not feel the need for some benefit, for example, or be unable to assist in its delivery to those who require it.

We must then provide as well for a situation not covered by the four criteria mentioned above--a contingency in which the need is dire but unfelt, or cannot be satisfied even in part by popular effort. For deprivation is often unconscious, and remedial action the prerogative of those who are specially trained for it.

---

<sup>5</sup>The social-soundness elements discussed in the AID Handbook (see note 4, above) are labeled sociocultural feasibility, spread effects, and social consequences and benefit incidence. They are implicit especially in our criterion 4.

Hence this fifth criterion may be added to the list. An assistance program or project may yet be counted socially sound:

5. If, failing literally to fulfill criterion 2 or 3, it nonetheless offers a benefit which experts agree is an essential prerequisite for some basic felt need of the poor majority.

#### Alternative Approaches to Program Design

These five criteria will be used, first, to modify and make our own an assistance plan proposed by the Bicol River Basin Development Program (BRBDP) and, second, to reflect on and explicitate the critique that this refashioning involved. But we begin with three ways in which aid programs of this kind may be produced.

The first approach starts with the people as object, as it were.<sup>6</sup> To begin with, up-to-date information is gathered on the generally accepted major aspects of the people's environment and lives. Findings regarding the current status of each of these aspects, or categories, are then compared with some agreed-on norm. Decisions follow regarding the sufficiency or insufficiency of the people's current performance under each aspect selected for study. Finally, an action program may be tested for social soundness and (in whole or in part, with or without some changes) proposed for implementation.

The second approach begins with the people, not as object, but

---

<sup>6</sup>See Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), who makes a similar distinction between people as object and as subject.

as subject. Moreover, its starting point is not the people in general, but above all the poor majority. The point of departure for this program-design procedure is those concerns which ordinary men and women consider important in life, and the extent to which they are happy or unhappy about them. Moreover, projects to solve the poor majority's consciously recognized problems will be prime candidates for inclusion in the assistance program that is being designed. For these projects will certainly fulfill criteria 1 and 2 for social soundness: they are destined for the poor on grounds of suggestions from the poor. When the degree to which they meet, or can be made to meet, criteria 3 and 4 has also been determined, the proposed assistance program will be ready for consideration. Here the social soundness of the program is not an afterthought, but a central concern from the beginning of the planning process.

Neither the first nor second approach to program design is fully satisfactory. Nonetheless, the first has wide currency in development circles. It is typically the approach of the technocrat, the professional consultant, the social engineer. Indeed, unless we are mistaken, it is the approach taken by the authors of the BRBDP's Comprehensive development plan 1975-2000.<sup>7</sup> In using this approach, experts start from outside the system, as it were, employing a check-list of

---

<sup>7</sup>This impressive 153-page volume, completed in June 1976, logically sets forth both program suggestions and the bases on which they are made. By means of the proposed Area Development Program (pp. 134-41), provision is made for the people's future participation in the planning and implementation of River Basin projects. However, we find no record of participation by nontechnical local people in the planning

measurements to be taken in a kind of trouble-shooting operation. The people's environment and performance are compared with ideals, averages, or minimum standards in basic matters, and relevant conclusions are drawn, often with great accuracy. Where the tentative assistance program that results from this approach is later modified to meet the criteria of social soundness, one would seem in fact to have a perfect formula for program design. Where then is the difficulty? In what way is the first approach insufficient?

Paradoxically, one of its weaknesses is traceable to its strength. What makes the outside approach so effective is that it employs a number of generally accepted indicators of well-being, mostly economic, which permit the investigators to probe for deficiencies in systematic fashion, analyzing societies of similar complexity in much the same manner. Unfortunately, however, following this set procedure will not reveal problems which are not on the check-list, nor will it tell the analysts how intensely the people feel about the various problems that are on the list. Further, even when they have subjected the tentative assistance program to a social soundness analysis, they will still know only which of the scheduled problems correspond to a felt need. They may remain quite ignorant of other needs that the people feel, needs which happen not to be evoked by the all-purpose list with which they started the examination. And

---

process that resulted in this volume, and it is for this reason that we take the BRBDP's Comprehensive development plan as an example of the widely employed first approach.

some of these undetected needs may, in fact, be felt more keenly than some of those included in the analysts' ready-made set.

For many modern critics of development programs, this is the less grievous deficiency of the first approach. More to be deplored, they say, is the fact that the intended beneficiaries, ordinary people, are denied the right to make their own proposals. Rather, the people are informed after the fact of decisions made for them, and their cooperation sought for the program's success. At most, they may be allowed to choose between several alternative prepared plans, every one of which sprang without their help from the heads and drawing boards of well-meaning experts. Yet social soundness demands that "participation of the poor in the development process" should mean "not only sharing the economic benefits and contribution of resources but also involvement in the process of problem identification and solution, subproject selection and design, implementation and evaluation."<sup>8</sup>

To summarize, the outside approach, despite its many positive features, has two deficiencies. First, it can easily result in a program which fails to address problems which are, for the people concerned, more important than others which the program includes. For just as the questions you ask will limit the answers you get, so the check-list approach to a people's needs will limit the needs that the people express. Second, the outside approach does not achieve an acceptable level of popular participation. In its

---

<sup>8</sup>AID Handbook 3, Part I, Appendix 5A (1975), p. 1.

crassest form it leads to manipulation; at best, it may achieve one of Arnstein's levels of "tokenism"--informing the people, consulting with them, or placating them.<sup>9</sup>

This does not mean that the second approach--the inside, or people's view--is the answer. It too has its problems, and more obvious ones at that. To begin with, while ordinary people commonly know what to do in the face of personal difficulties, they are often much less sure of themselves when it comes to community problems. They may know what seems wrong, but not why. Again, in development planning the very best that the average household head can contribute (unassisted and unguided, that is) is a candid report on what he feels is out of order, an insider's view of what the problems are from his particular place in the local system. He will not know the interconnections of the complaints he reports, will not know which ones among them are traceable to the same root cause and which ones lead off in a quite different direction. He may suggest specific solutions, home-grown remedies for particular ailments, but he will lack an overview of the situation. Like the planner, he has his limits.

Hence the third approach, which combines the strengths of the first two. The people's strong point is that they generally know where it hurts. They will not know every problem they have, nor even

---

<sup>9</sup>See Sherry R. Arnstein, "A ladder of citizen participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 35(1969): 216-24. See also Mary R. Hollnsteiner, "People power: Community participation in the planning and implementation of human settlements," Philippine Studies 24(1976): 5-36.

perhaps the most basic among them, but they will know the ones that are making them unhappy. And it is these problems which must be addressed if the people are to regain their sense of well-being.

The planner's unique strength is less in spotting problems than planning solutions. For while he will often recognize difficulties, real difficulties (such as malnutrition), where the people see none, his forte is the design of systematic answers to a whole range of interlinked deficiencies.

To anticipate, the third approach does not consist in the mere joining of the people's problems and the planner's solutions. For to do only this were to ignore the essential importance of the people's taking part in the planning and decision-making that go into a development program. Moreover, that this popular involvement is necessary is accepted by both the Social Survey Research Unit and the BRBDP's Program Office. They are agreed that the development process is "either the development of thinking human beings who have learned to participate in decisions that affect their destiny--or it is really nothing."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>The BRBDP's Program Office was reminded of the essentially human character of development, and accepted it in principle, some 30-plus months ago. But the idea was never really implemented. There are reasons for this breakdown, of course, one being the failure of the Social Survey Research Unit to play its people's-voice role as firmly and insistently as it should. And there are reasons why this occurred, too. For the statement of the "third approach" in which the Program Office concurred, see Frank Lynch, S.J., "What rice farmers of Camarines Sur say they want from the Philippine government" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 1; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, December 1973), pp. 1-3. The quotation in text is from this source.

In its ideal form, the strategy of the third approach is to let the people lead and the experts follow as their partners or helpers. Control is in the hands of those most affected by the decisions made--ordinary household heads and their representatives. In the historical situation in which we find ourselves at this writing, however, commenting on a development plan which was apparently constructed with a minimum of popular participation, the third approach must be applied in truncated form, with indications added in passing as to how the ideal might better be achieved in future. The remainder of the paper is addressed to this twofold task.

What we are attempting here, it should be remembered, is not the application of an existing technique for program construction, long since tested and widely accepted, to the Bicol River Basin case. To our knowledge no such tool is currently available--at least for the design of an assistance program from the third approach. Hence the pages that follow will present a set of procedures newly developed and applied for the first time. We suspect that some of the suggestions we make will not stand the tests of time and experience. Several of the concepts and procedures presented here seem indispensable, however, for any truly humane development plan.

#### LAYING THE FOUNDATION

To design a socially sound assistance program for the River Basin, the following minimum background information should be considered:

(a) the main physical features of the Basin; (b) the potentials, problems, and constraints which the experts see as conditioning the Basin's development; (c) relevant sociocultural characteristics of the Basin population; and (d) the major problems of the Basin as the ordinary people see them. With this fourfold knowledge in mind, together with the criteria for social soundness, the people-first approach can be attempted.

There are, as we said, four categories of information on which one must be informed. In this document we shall expand only on the third and fourth, since the first two (the Basin's physical features and the experts' view of its potentials and problems) are adequately treated elsewhere, most recently in the Comprehensive development plan cited earlier (see esp. pp. 1-66). Our contribution will be brief statements on items c and d, above, namely, relevant social and cultural characteristics of the River Basin residents and their view of the problems they face.

#### Sociocultural Characteristics of the People

Bicolanos are the fifth largest culture-language group of the Philippines, numbering about 2.5 million in 1970. Of this total, about 2.3 million, or 92 percent, were living in those areas of the six "Bicol" provinces where the Bikol language is spoken as a mother tongue; namely, all of Camarines Sur, Albay, and Catanduanes, the southern half of Camarines Norte and the northern half of Sorsogon,

and the north coast and foothills of Masbate. The Bikol language is so closely related to both Tagalog and several Visayan tongues that linguists conclude that the ancestors of these various peoples spoke a common language till about 500-600 years ago.

The Bicol River Basin of Camarines Sur and Albay is located entirely within the heartland of the Bikol-speaking area, and its native residents, numbering about 1.5 million, are all acknowledged as Bicolanos. In this they may be contrasted with people from northern Camarines Norte (who are mostly Tagalog mother-tongue speakers) and residents of southern Sorsogon (who speak a form of the Waray, or Samar-Leyte, language). The natives of some enclaves in the heartland, such as Buhi and Iriga, speak a version of Bikol which differs markedly from standard "Naga Bikol," it is true, but these differences are generally taken as signs of antiquity and "depth" rather than linguistic divergence. The speech of these places may be the butt of outsiders' jokes, but the speakers are accepted as "real Bicolanos."

So much for language and identity. There are in the Basin three major centers, the cities of Naga, Iriga, and Legazpi, and several municipal subcenters, such as Sipocot, Goa, Ligao, Guinobatan, and Tabaco. However, three-fifths of the people are engaged in farming and other rural pursuits, and all but 16 percent live in barrios, or villages. Especially in the lowlands (which include almost all the River Basin), people tend to live close together, either in the grid pattern characteristic of the larger settlements, or along

roads, rivers, or shores, or in the small sub-barrio clusters called sitios. Neighboring is important and people considered neighbors will generally (though not always) live close by.

The kinship system is in many ways like the American system in its structure, and is given the same label by anthropologists. There are no clans, except among the Chinese who live especially in Naga and Tabaco. Instead there are kindreds (partidaryo) on both the father's and the mother's sides. Characteristically, these bilateral kindreds, or kinfolk, are reckoned differently even by brothers and sisters born of the same parents. The reason behind this variation in viewpoint is this, we believe: one's kindred is seen less as a group to whom one owes allegiance, and more as a grouping of individual kinsmen on whom one feels he can count. This conjecture introduces the notion of sadiring tao (one's own people)--a concept and reality essential for an understanding of Bikol social relations.

The social alliance system. The nuclear family, composed of father, mother, and children, is (as elsewhere in the Philippines) the basic building block, the basic unit, of society. In about three-fourths of cases, it is also the household unit. Beyond the family, however, the most important social grouping is not (as some might expect) the kindred, but the family's or the individual's sadiring tao, or social allies.

One's sadiring tao are the people on whom he can rely. His parents, siblings, spouse, and children usually form the core of this group, but there will always be others. They are connected to the

individual by lines of obligation that radiate out from him (the system is ego-centered) and which owe their existence to one or more titles to loyalty or assistance to which he has somehow successfully appealed.

These titles are traditional reasons for claiming (or accepting) that one individual is more bound or entitled than some other to give or receive preferential treatment. The most commonly invoked of these titles to loyalty or assistance are friendship, kinship, neighborship, and a complementary social-class relationship. Help is most often solicited from and extended to a friend, a relative by blood, marriage, or ritual, a neighbor, or someone joined to another by a vertical bond of socioeconomic interdependence.

The social alliance system provides the Bicolano a network of peers, patrons, and clients with whom, and through whom, to achieve the major goals of life. Some of these helpers, such as kinsmen and neighbors, age equals and socioeconomic peers, are his at birth; others, such as godparents and godsiblings, will result from the conscious choices of his parents; others, such as tenants or landlords, may be his by succession, as it were; while still others he will gain for himself in the context of school, church, leisure groups and cliques, the farm, or the office. He will choose and be chosen, use and in turn be used, generally going along with the system despite the occasional abuses he may endure in its name. As time goes by, old allies will be replaced by new, sometimes because he or his parents have moved from one place to another, sometimes because

fortune has smiled or frowned on him and his social status moved up or down. But he will always have a network, large or small, if he is to get on with the business of life. In the barrios, towns, and even cities of the River Basin, human isolates are few and far between. Interdependence is the traditional key to survival, if not prosperity.

This alliance system is a social arrangement of long standing, certainly of pre-Spanish origin. Moreover, like the social-class and kinship subsystems which are integral parts of it, the alliance system regulates interpersonal and intergroup behavior as effectively today as it ever did. It is to this ancient but durable system, in fact, more than to any innovations of Spanish, American, or latter-day Filipino origin, that we trace the political and economic stability which, for better or worse, characterizes the Bikol region.

The system of social class. Especially pervasive in matters economic and political is the role of the social class system. We feel, in fact, that this aspect of Bikol social structure is involved, perhaps centrally, in at least two phenomena which plague the change agent; namely, widespread disinterest in active, long-term participation in formal community organizations; and an apparent practical disinterest among many of the poor in accumulating wealth or becoming landowners. As long as the traditional class system functions, and any change involves intolerable risk, who needs these innovations?

The two-class system of which we speak has its roots in pre-Spanish times. From early 17th century accounts and dictionaries one

can reconstruct a way of life which in its basic elements has changed very little in the intervening years. Then as now two kinds of people coreside in every Bikol community, the dakulang tao ('big people') and the sadit na tao ('little people').<sup>11</sup> And as in the past, so today, the big people are invariably well off economically (mayaman, or 'rich'), but seek manual help and mass support, while the little people (the poor) can rarely make ends meet, but have a wealth of willing hands and traditional skills. With their basic needs and surpluses so mutually attuned, each giving and receiving in turn what they can most afford and least provide, small wonder that the wealthy and the poor, the patrons and the clients of the River Basin, have lived in symbiotic union through the centuries. Big and little Bicolanos stay together because they need one another's help, and because they have judged, consciously or unconsciously, that they can afford the going price. Let the need decline, or the price exceed the current limit set on either side, and they will drift, more likely fly, apart.

What is the content of this mutual arrangement? What do the big and little people expect of one another? An illustrative answer, generally accepted as representative of most small towns and barrios of the River Basin today, is this account of life in the poblacion of

---

<sup>11</sup>Basinwide estimates made by the Social Survey Research Unit indicate that about 20 percent of households belong to the upper class, or Big people, category; the remaining 80 percent are lower-class little people. Among the upper class, however, only 5 percent are "really big people" (talagang dakulang tao), or elite; the other 15 percent enjoy marginal membership in the upper class.

of Canaman, Camarines Sur.<sup>12</sup>

I had not been living in the town very long before I noticed that the external differences marking off some people from others did not occur at random, but were associated with one another in predictable fashion. There were, in other words, clusters of differences. Men who wore white or good leather shoes were also the men who never wore blue denim trousers or patched khaki shorts, who smoked cigarettes or cigars but never chewed betel nut, and who did not hesitate--like the other kind of men--to invite me into their homes. And the homes of these well-shod, white-trousered citizens were very much like the one in which I lived, a structure of solid lumber roofed by galvanized iron in good repair.

When typhoons struck the Bicol region in December 1956, Canaman took its share of punishment. It was flooded and wind-blown, and before long the floors of many of the smaller bamboo and nipa homes were awash in the rising waters. And where were the people who owned these little houses? Safely bedded down in the salas and bedrooms of their relatively wealthy neighbors. In our own big house, for instance, we gave shelter to many of the men, women, children, and babies of our corner of town. Once it was clear that the typhoon was a bad one, they began showing up at the door in a matter-of-fact fashion that seemed to say, "We are in trouble again, and here we are." When they were taken in without hesitation, they accepted the welcome as no more than their due. No fawning, no great show of gratitude, just a simple encampment.

This mutual understanding of each one's place in the community showed itself in other ways. When people came to Canaman to ask contributions of rice or money, for themselves perhaps or for some other cause, the route they travelled was always the same. It was the same route, in fact, that the traditional Christmas Eve procession took and its way stations were the same: the homes of the relatively wealthy. I am sure that those who solicit<sup>ed</sup> funds in this manner would have been visibly shocked if they had not been received with courtesy and some

---

<sup>12</sup>Frank Lynch, S.J., "Big and little people: Social class in the rural Philippines," in Society, culture, and the Filipino, M. R. Hollnsteiner et al., eds. (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, 1975), pp. 184-87. See also Frank Lynch, S.J., Social class in a Bikol town (Research Series, No. 1; Chicago: Philippine Studies Program, University of Chicago, 1959).

generosity. Frequently our own home was visited by barrio relatives and less fortunate fellow-townsmen in search of some goods or service expected of my hosts or myself.

On the other hand, people who lived in the big houses were at ease in asking favors of a manual nature from the bakya-and-betel-nut set: to run an errand, slaughter and butcher an animal for a fiesta, take a newly acquired goat or pig to the farm and raise it there, carry a heavy package to or from the bus stop in the plaza, climb a coconut tree to cut down some young nuts, or make some minor repairs on the house. Canaman is a community, I thought to myself, where everyone knows just what and how much he can ask of the other fellow.

\* \* \* \*

In the socioreligious aspects of Canaman's yearly cycle, prominent townsmen prove they are worthy of their place by providing the wherewithal for traditional observances. Religious processions are a case in point. These processions, which are important in the people's mind not only for the protection and well-being of the community, but for its entertainment as well, feature colorful images and floats. The religious images are owned by upper-class families, but ordinarily carried or pulled by members of the lower class. At annual fiesta time the big people furnish the stipend for the novena of Masses said before the town feast day. On the day or days of the yearly fiesta, the homes of the upper class receive prominent visitors with the hospitality corresponding to the big people's personal pride, local loyalty, and sense of courteous obligation. In the kitchens and backyards of these homes, however, the same sense of values, channeled by a personal bond to a particular host--be he landlord or relative or both--brings together working teams of little people who have brought some gift from their barrio farms and are now busy in the slaughtering of chickens and pigs, the cleaning of fish, the preparation of rice and vegetables, and the cooking, finally, of a banquet designed to honor the guests, the hosts, and the little people alike.

Each district of Canaman town sponsors and conducts at least one novena during the month of May. The barrio lieutenant and his council annually draw up lists of those barrio residents who will be responsible for the sung prayers and procession, but especially for the repast that follows, on each of the nine successive nights of this so-called Santakrusan. Upper-class people are regularly posted for the last night, the climaxing katapusan, or finish, since they are expected

to treat the barrio to an evening worth remembering--a substantial selection of delicacies, and perhaps even a dance with orchestra or record player.

When evening celebrations such as the climax of the Santa-krusan ~~were~~<sup>are</sup> held, they take place somewhere near the home of a prominent townsman, within extension-cord reach of his electrical outlet. Of more than 300 houses in Canaman, only 29 have electric lights, and only 19 have more than a single outlet. By holding the barrio gathering near the residence of one of the big people, the organizers are assured of power to illuminate the scene and to operate the record player and public address system. It is unthinkable that one of the big people should refuse to furnish gratis the electricity that ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> needed.

This attitude, this conviction that the upper-class people are obliged to render certain services to less fortunate members of the community is manifested again and again in the life of Canaman. One of the more striking consequences of this expectation is the fact that the few big people who possess radios must on certain evenings (when favorite programs are on the air) keep them running full blast near an open window for the benefit of the neighbors and passersby. To play the radio softly would be selfish and would lower the esteem enjoyed by the household head and his wife.

As landlords, the big people of Canaman, like those of elsewhere, do more than own the land that is worked by their tenants. They give moral, medical, and economic assistance whenever they are called on. Their homes become for their tenants a law office, a way stop en route to Naga, a restaurant and party hall, and even a hospital on occasion. In return the tenant works the land and hands over an average of forty percent of the harvested rice to the landlord. He and his family are also on call as cooks or servers, carpenters or cargo handlers, oarsmen or goatherds--in a word, at the beck and call of the landowner for all manner of manual service.

The formal leaders of Canaman--the mayor and councilors, the parish priest and police chief--all rate as upper-class persons, as do the doctor and dentist, the teachers and other professionals, and most of the storeowners, rice brokers, rice millers, cottage industry and fishing middlemen, and others having some steady source of income such as a salaried job, a poultry business, or a public bus. In their economic security, manifested if not in great surplus, at least in solvency,

people such as these contrast with their lower-class fellow townsmen who depend on them in so many different ways. Some of the big people have surplus enough to merit community-wide responsibilities, and these are the elite of Canaman; others are called on only by those of their own kinship or alliance group. But both the elite and the marginally upper-class residents are recognized as being on the other side of a line from the lower class, and the two social classes are functionally related for their mutual benefit and the maintenance of community stability.

To conclude, then, in pre-Spanish times and at present, we find the same kind of enduring but conditional relationship among the big and little people of the River Basin. One side offers an assurance of subsistence, help in times of crisis, protection from danger, mediating influence with the powers that be, and occasional good times. The price for all this is labor on the farm or elsewhere and a multitude of varied services, rendered with proper deference and loyalty to the patron-partner. For centuries, untold multitudes of Bicolanos have found these terms of exchange both acceptable and desirable. And it is only when some other arrangement comes along which is provenly better, or thought to be such, that this preference will change. This clinging to the old class system, precisely because it is so pragmatically reasonable, is one of the greatest challenges the BRBDP must face.

Central values. The appeal of the traditional social-class system is to two basic Filipino values, namely, economic security and social acceptance.<sup>13</sup> For by playing their traditional roles as

---

<sup>13</sup>See Frank Lynch, S.J., "Social acceptance reconsidered," in Four readings on Philippine values, F. Lynch and A. de Guzman, eds.

expected, the little people are assured that their basic needs (food, shelter, and clothing) will be met, at least minimally; the big people in turn, though they may on occasion be gouged by the poor, will invariably derive their own long-run security and advancement from this give-and-take arrangement. Similarly, as each partner to the relationship does what society expects of him, his esteem will be increased and his social acceptance reinforced.

These two values, social acceptance and economic security, are emotionally charged conceptions of the desirable which have great influence in the choices made by Bicolanos. For values are standards used in the making of decisions. But they are not the only such aspirations discernible in the behavior and self-reports of Bicolanos. In fact, recent research on the Bicolano's perceived quality of life enables us, not only to add to the list of central values, but to break up both economic security and social acceptance into their components.<sup>14</sup> Hence what follows can be taken as superseding all earlier reports on the value systems of Bicolanos.

A pilot study of values was done in March 1974 in preparation for the Basinwide survey which followed soon after. In this

---

(IPC Papers, No. 2; Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1973), pp. 1-68.

<sup>14</sup>See Robert C. Salazar and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Happiness starts with a good job and a good home--so say the people of the Bicol River Basin" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 12; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974). This research has since been supplemented by factor analyses of the data, the results of which are used here for the first time.

preliminary study it was tentatively established that at least 10 life concerns were of more than ordinary interest and importance to adult Bicolanos, namely: their status or position in the community, food and drink, household possessions, job, income, wealth, state of health, education, family, and friends (primary groups). This list was then modified, partly on grounds of research done elsewhere, so that the final inventory included the following 15 domains.

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Job                             | 10. Own education                         |
| 2. Income                          | 11. Children's education                  |
| 3. Present housing                 | 12. Participation in formal organizations |
| 4. Food and drink                  | 13. Participation in informal groups      |
| 5. Travel                          | 14. Household possessions                 |
| 6. Position in life                | 15. Current prices                        |
| 7. Community conditions            |   |
| 8. Health of self and family       |   |
| 9. Availability of health services |   |

Questions were put to respondents on each of these domains. These questions were so framed that the replies enable us to state how satisfied the average Bicolano is with each of these areas of life and the relative value which he attaches to it. The latter information is derived from an analysis which tells us how much effect on overall life satisfaction is contributed by the respondents' feelings about each of the 15 individual life concerns. We summarize the findings briefly as possible.

Asked how happy or unhappy they were about these domains, some 3200 River Basin household heads agreed they were most unhappy about

prices.<sup>15</sup> Despite the dissatisfaction felt in this regard, however, it was found that there was little connection between respondents' attitude toward prices and toward life in general.

What of the other 14 items in the list? Their importance to Bicolanos can be derived from analysis of Table 1, in which all 15 items are shown. They are arranged in such a way as to indicate two things: how happy ordinary people are with each of these facets of their lives, and how much effect this particular feeling has on their overall happiness.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the happiness scores for individual concerns are bland, ranging from 3.24 to 4.25 on a seven-point scale where 4 is dead center, or neutral (the score for prices, 5.53, is an exception). Nonetheless, the placement of domains can be interpreted as follows: (1) the overall happiness or unhappiness of the average Bicolano is especially dependent on how he or she feels about job and income (the Good-provider factor, minus family health), housing, HH possessions, and diet (the House-and-home factor), and position in life and travel

---

<sup>15</sup>This is a perennial complaint voiced in surveys, especially by lower-class Filipinos, but it had a special meaning in this particular study, since in 1974 the Philippines experienced a record-breaking inflation rate of 40 percent.

<sup>16</sup>This arrangement is based on (a) the rating each domain received on a seven-point happiness-unhappiness scale, where 1 meant "very happy" and 7, "very unhappy"; (b) correlations; and (c) a regression analysis in which the score to be predicted (Y) was the respondent's happiness with life in general, also expressed in a rating on the seven-point scale. See Salazar and Lynch 1974 (footnote 14).

Table 1. Fifteen life concerns of Bicolano HH heads, by their feeling about each concern and by the effect this feeling has on their overall happiness with life (Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur, mid-April 1974)

Feeling about this domain <sup>a</sup>	Effect of this feeling on overall happiness		
	Strong	Medium	Weak
FAIRLY HAPPY (3.24-3.39)	Food and drink Position in life	Informal groups Community con- ditions	Formal or- ganiza- tions
NEUTRAL (3.40-3.62)	Job Travel	Health of self and family	Educ. of children Health serv.
FAIRLY UNHAPPY (3.64-5.53)	Present house Income HH possessions		Education of self Prices

<sup>a</sup>The categories "Fairly happy," "Neutral," and "Fairly unhappy" result from an interpretation of the average scores recorded. Respondents in studies such as this typically avoid replies indicating extreme displeasure or unhappiness. In this case, however, they also avoided the opposite extreme-- which also suggests they are fairly happy at best.

experience (the Status-esteem factor); (2) overall life satisfaction is also dependent, but less so, on how happy he is with the health of himself and his family (part of the Good-provider factor), and with participation in small groups and community life (the Social-participation factor, minus formal-organization participation); (3) overall happiness is little affected by the Bicolano's feelings about his participation in formal organizations (part of the Social-participation factor), the educational attainment of himself and his children (the Education factor), by the availability of health services, or how high prices are.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>We have little difficulty accepting the finding that satisfaction

Table 2. Major value factors of adult Bicolanos, with related desirable behavior (Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur, mid-April 1974)

Factor <sup>a</sup>	Desirable behavior
1. <u>Good provider</u>	To have a respectable job and an adequate income, and so keep myself and my family in good health
2. <u>House and home</u>	To have a sturdy home, adequately furnished, and sufficient food and drink on the table
3. <u>Status and esteem</u>	To achieve and enjoy relatively high status and favorable esteem among my fellows, and to be known as one who has reached many places--who has traveled
4. <u>Social participation</u>	To participate comfortably and enjoyably in small-group activities and community affairs--and perhaps even in formal organizations
5. <u>Education</u>	To have my children and myself get as much formal education as possible

<sup>a</sup>Factors 1 and 2 appear to be components of the value of economic security, mentioned earlier. Factors 3 and 4 relate to social acceptance, while Factors 3 and 5 (Education) may reflect the broader value of social mobility.

There are, then, it would seem, five major value factors behind the average Bicolano's feelings about life in general and in particular. We can express them as labels and as statements of desirable behavior (Table 2).

with formal organizations, health services available, and even prices (which are seen as out of one's control) have little relation to overall life satisfaction. But that education should fall here is, at this writing, quite frankly a puzzler. For most Bicolanos, more education for their children and even themselves is a frequently expressed desire.

With these five central values identified, each with its related areas of concern, we can move on to the question of how happy or unhappy people are about them--where they perceive problems to exist, in other words. But this examination is logically part of the next and final section under Background Information.

### The People's Perception of River Basin Problems

There are two main sources from which we can learn the people's ideas about problems in need of solution. One is the perceived-quality-of-life study from which we derived the five value factors listed above. The other is respondents' replies in several studies conducted by the SSRU in the past few years, notably Basinwide surveys completed in October 1973 and April 1974.<sup>18</sup>

Areas of unhappiness. From Table 1 (above), it can be concluded that, aside from high prices, about which most people feel miserable indeed, ordinary Bicolanos are especially concerned about the following domains, presented in decreasing order of dissatisfaction.

1. HH POSSESSIONS, furniture (from Factor 2)
2. Education of self (Factor 5)
3. INCOME (Factor 1)
4. PRESENT HOUSE (Factor 2)
5. Health services available

---

<sup>18</sup>See Frank Lynch, S.J., "What rice farmers of Camarines Sur say they want from the Philippine government" (SSRU Research Report Series, No 1; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1973). The Annual Panel survey conducted in April 1974 also had a section on perceived community problems, reported here for the first time. The findings of other recent studies of the Basin (mostly by the SSRU and the Institute of Philippine Culture) have also been used.

6. JOB (Factor 1)
7. Education of children (Factor 5)
8. TRAVEL (Factor 3)
9. Health of self and family (Factor 1)
10. Participation in formal organizations (Factor 4)
11. Community conditions (Factor 4)
12. FOOD AND DRINK (Factor 2)
13. POSITION IN LIFE (Factor 3)
14. Participation in informal groups (Factor 4)

If an area of concern is presented in capital letters, it is one which has a strong influence on the individual's overall perceived quality of life. If it is underlined, its effect is of medium strength. All others have only a weak influence on life satisfaction in general.

From this source we can conclude that areas deserving of first-priority attention from the BRBDP would be especially those strongly influential concerns about which people are neutral or unhappy. Here would fall the domains of JOB, INCOME, HOUSING, HH POSSESSIONS, and TRAVEL.

Second priority should be given to the area of the Health of self and family. Feelings about this domain are relatively neutral, but they do have a discernible effect on overall life satisfaction.

Third priority may be given to the remaining concerns, which are either only weakly related to general happiness, or are seen as being moderately well provided for, or both. Here we include the eight areas of FOOD AND DRINK, POSITION IN LIFE, Participation in informal groups, Community conditions, Participation in formal organizations,

Table 3. Rank order and proportion of positive choices expressed by rice-farmer respondents for selected development programs (Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur, mid-October 1973)

Development Program	Rank order	Proportion of positive choices <sup>a</sup>	Number of respondents
Build more irrigation and flood control projects	1	.79	600
Help more farmers become landowners	2	.66	600
More daily-wage jobs for farmers when they are not fully occupied with farm work	3	.61	600
More free high schools	4	.53	600
Credit for more farmers	5	.49	600
Form more Samahang Nayon	6	.47	300 <sup>b</sup>
Build more roads	8	.43	600
More regular bus service	8	.43	600
Form more compact farms	8	.43	263 <sup>b</sup>
Electricity for more towns and barrios	10	.33	600
More family-planning clinics	11	.28	600

<sup>a</sup>The proportion of positive choices is defined as the actual number of times a particular program was chosen over another, divided by the maximum possible number of times it could have been so chosen.

<sup>b</sup> Respondents who could not pass a test calling for basic understanding of the Samahang Nayon and a compact farm were not asked to compare these programs with the others.

Education of children, Availability of health services, and Education of self.

Problems which the people have identified as such. In answer to inquiries made of them in a number of studies conducted over the past three years, all of them involving personal interviews, River Basin

respondents have mentioned various problems on which they would like action taken. For our purposes, we shall consider just two of these studies, since we know that their findings are representative of those made in the other surveys.

In the first of the two studies (Quicklook Survey I, October 1973), 600 respondents--rice farmers from every municipality and city in the Basin--were presented with a list of 11 possible development projects.

Each project was briefly described on a flash card given to the respondent. He was then asked to compare each project in turn with every other one, considering the question, "Of these two programs, which should the government undertake first?"<sup>19</sup>

The rank order of preferences and proportion of positive choices expressed by the farmers are shown in Table 3, which is a reproduction of Table RS01.12 of the SSRU's report on this study. But the significance of these findings for our present purposes will be clear only if we reflect more carefully on who the respondents were and how the data were collected.

What we have in Table 3 is, in effect, a list of problems arranged in order of perceived urgency, from water management at the top to family planning at the bottom. We cannot say that these are the people's greatest needs, however, since the survey presented the

---

<sup>19</sup>Lynch, "What rice farmers of Camarines Sur say they want from the Philippine government," p. 12 (see footnote 18, above). Nine of the programs proposed to respondents were furnished by the Program Office of the BRBC (those subsequently ranked 1-2 and 5-11 in Table 3, herewith). The SSRU added two others, which farmers ranked 3 and 4 (see Table 3).

respondents with fixed alternatives from which to choose. The most we can say is that of the problems (or projects) they were asked to consider, water management ranked much higher than any other. In particular (this we say in view of items included in the second, free-reply survey to be discussed below), improved water management was voted a more pressing need than better roads or bus service, unemployment, land-tenure problems, or electrical power. The relative urgency of selected problems--this is what the first survey teaches us.

But who do the respondents represent? The survey was addressed to 600 randomly selected rice farmers of the River Basin. Hence, even though there is close interclass agreement on the rank order of problems shown Table 3, and complete interclass agreement on the relative importance of the six we named in the preceding paragraph, the replies are those of a particular occupation group.<sup>20</sup> We shall return to this limitation after discussing the findings of the second survey, the Annual Panel survey conducted in April 1974 (see footnote 18, above).

In this study there were over 3200 respondents, farmers and non-farmers, from all parts of the Basin. However, only a subsample of 1080 was asked to identify problems facing the communities in which

---

<sup>20</sup>Among the 600 rice farmers of the October 1973 survey, 73 percent were lower-class respondents. The remaining 27 percent were divided into an elite (6 percent) and a marginal (21 percent) grade. The coefficients of rank-order correlation (Spearman rho) are as follows: elite vs. marginal, .70; elite vs. lower, .79; and marginal vs. lower, .93. All correlations are significant, the first at 0.05, the others at 0.01.

they lived and to state, on reflection, which of these problems they considered a surely important one.<sup>21</sup> The tabulated replies of those who answered the second question are presented in Table 4. Inter-class agreement on the rank order of problems is significant for all three comparisons, the closest agreement again being that between the marginals and the lower class.<sup>22</sup> When the same comparisons are made among nonfarmers, rice farmers, and other farmers, however, a slightly different picture emerges. The two kinds of farmer, who together represent about 57 percent of household heads, are in close agreement (.76; 0.01), and rice farmers are in significant agreement with nonfarmers (.60; 0.01). The latter, however, diverge notably from farmers of crops other than rice (.32; n.s.). Rice farmers, in other words, occupy a middle position in their view of these problems, but they are somewhat closer to their fellow farmers than they are to nonfarmers.

More important for our purposes is the fact that, regardless of occupation or class (or mode of mentioning, for that matter<sup>23</sup>), respondents are in total agreement that the following problems belong among the first 10: peace and order, irrigation and flood control,

---

<sup>21</sup>The latter choice was, in effect the respondent's nomination for "most important problem." Hence the title of Table 4.

<sup>22</sup>See footnote 20. For the second survey, the coefficients of correlation are these: elite vs. marginal, .74 (0.01); elite vs. lower, .55 (0.05); and marginal vs. lower, .84 (0.01).

<sup>23</sup>When the problems are tabulated by frequency of mention (as first, second, or third), the resulting rank order is in close agreement (.82; 0.01) with that found in Table 4).

Table 4. Community problems freely mentioned by HH heads as most important, with each problem's rank order and percentage of respondents who identified it (Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur, April 1974).

Community problem	Rank order	Percentage who mentioned problem	
		n	Percent
Peace and order	1	104	16%
Irrigation and flood control	2	95	14
Roads	3	69	10
Unemployment (no jobs)	4	57	9
Drinking water	5	54	8
Lack of cooperation or leadership in the community	6	40	6
Transportation facilities	7	37	6
Electricity	8	34	6
Dirty surroundings	9	29	4
High prices	10	23	4
Flooding (outside rice fields)	11.5	21	3
No barrio chapel	11.5	21	3
Land-tenure problems	13	17	3
Housing for school, barrio hall	14	8	1
Medical services	15	7	1
Recreational facilities	16	2	1
Others	-	45	7
Total who gave answers		663	61% <sup>a</sup>
No answer		417	39

<sup>a</sup>The percentages of respondents who mentioned individual problems (that is, the figures from 16 down to 7) add up to 102 because of rounding.

roads, jobs, drinking water, community organization, transportation facilities, electricity, dirty or unsanitary surroundings, and high prices. Land-tenure problems, known to be important from the results of the first (rice-farmer) survey, emerges in the free-reply survey as apparently of greater relative concern to non-rice farmers (for whom it ranks seventh) than to rice farmers or nonfarmers (rank order in both cases, 11.5).<sup>24</sup>

This leads us to the next step in our search for the people's problems and priorities: to combine in reasonable fashion the findings of the first and second surveys. If this is properly done, we should have a solidly reliable list of situations that really bother the people of the River Basin, problems they would like to see remedied. In constructing this composite list (based on Tables 3 and 4 and the discussion in the paragraphs above), we give more weight to the findings of the second, free-reply, survey of all household heads than we do to the earlier inquiry made of rice farmers. For while rice farmers tend in matters of problem priorities to be representative of the majority of River Basin residents, a more serious drawback of the first survey (for our present purposes) is that it employed a fixed-alternative approach. Hence we shall interpret it in light of the second survey's findings.

---

<sup>24</sup>The rank order given this item in Table 4 is 13, a figure which seems slightly inconsistent with the 7, 11.5, and 11.5 derived from the crosstabulation by major occupation. The explanation lies in the difference in replies counted: 663 and 634, respectively.

As a matter of fact, what the first survey adds to the broader and weightier findings of the second is (1) the suggestion that secondary education may be a felt need ("More free high schools") and (2) a confirmation of the importance of water management, jobs, and the whole agrarian-reform complex, including land ownership and improved credit facilities, to be sure, but not necessarily the Samahang Nayon or compact farms.<sup>25</sup> To use the first survey in support of other problems may be unjustifiable or unnecessary or both. The felt needs for more family planning clinics is apparently very weak; the priorities given roads, transportation facilities, and electricity in this study are similarly unconvincing, but their standing is firmly established in the second survey.

From the two sources used here, then, we can legitimately conclude that River Basin residents would place the following among those problems to which top priority should be given: peace and order, irrigation and flood control, roads, transportation facilities, jobs, drinking water, lack of cooperation or leadership in the community, dirty or unsanitary surroundings, electricity, agrarian reform, high prices, and possibly educational opportunities (at the secondary level in particular).

The final list of concerns and problems from the people's viewpoint. Now we go a step further, constructing an inventory of concerns

---

<sup>25</sup>While the proportion of choices for more farmer credit was .49 and that for the Samahang Nayon a very close .47, it must be remembered that only one-half of the respondents even knew what the SN was. Moreover, only 44 percent qualified as respondents on the subject of compact farms.

and problems that summarizes both the areas of unhappiness revealed by the perceived-quality-of-life analyses and the more conscious needs we have just mentioned.

An area of unhappiness is defined as a life concern, or domain, which is both important to people and disappointing. It is an area, such as their present housing or the things they own, about which they feel unhappy or ambivalent; further, the neutral to negative feelings generated by their perceived failure in this domain color their satisfaction with life in general (see Table 1).

From the study we made in April 1974, there appear to be six major areas of unhappiness: present housing, income, household possessions and furniture, travel, job, and the state of health of self and family. The other domains listed in Table 1 (such as food and drink, position in life, and community conditions) are concerns of greater or less significance for overall happiness, but they do not emerge in that study as serious problems.<sup>26</sup> They are, however, important contributors to the people's sense of well-being.

In Table 5 we present what the evidence suggests are the major difficulties facing River Basin household heads insofar as they perceive them. This list is an answer to the request that the people tell us "where it hurts."

---

<sup>26</sup>Social and physical community conditions did show up as problems in another part of the April 1974 survey, however.

Table 5. Problems perceived as important by Bicol River Basin household heads (1973 and 1974)<sup>a</sup>

---

---

Peace and order	Community organization
Water management	Housing
Roads	Household possessions
Transportation facilities	Travel
Employment (jobs)	Income
Drinking water	Health of self and family
Electricity	Dirty surroundings
Agrarian reform	High prices
Educational opportunities (possibly)	

---

<sup>a</sup>For the origins of this list, see the section of the text entitled "The people's perception of River Basin problems."

#### CONSTRUCTING THE OUTLINE

The design of a socially sound aid program for the River Basin required, as we said earlier, four kinds of background information. Two of them (knowledge of the area and the experts' view of its problems) we could take as given, thanks to the authors of the Comprehensive development plan. The other two (sociocultural characteristics and the people's view of problems) we have now furnished. At this point, ideally, development experts of the Bicol River Basin Council would continue the dialogue they had long since joined with the people's representatives, working out with them the elements and time sequence of the action plan they would jointly follow. This will hopefully be standard procedure in the near future, but for the moment we must make-do with an interpretation of what the people's desires

would be at this point. However convincingly this second-best tactic may be carried off, let it not be forgotten that it is an improvisation, and that genuine grass-roots participation from start to finish is essential for a development program worthy of the name.

Our procedure will be this. First we shall clarify a number of concepts which must be understood if the outline is to make sense. Then we shall proceed to the outline itself, laying it out element by element, including a social-soundness testing of the goals and projects which it proposes. The closing section of the paper will feature a comparison of our outline with the program presented in the current version of the Comprehensive development plan.

#### Significant Concepts

There are several ideas we wish to make very clear, even at the risk of repetition. The first is the notion of concerns, about which we have spoken at various places in the text above. The meaning of goals and projects is also important, as is our understanding of what a program outline should be. Each is considered in turn.

Concerns. As we said much earlier (p. 6), the design of a people-centered assistance plan begins with an awareness of the people's concerns. Only if these interests are the focus of activity will the people see the program as theirs; only if their needs are addressed will they themselves become involved in it; and to the degree that their happiness--as they define it--is enhanced, to that degree will the program be considered a success.

This is so because the people's concerns are those matters that continually and dependably engage their attention and interest and can affect, or do in fact more or less notably affect, their sense of well-being and happiness. Concerns relate to the people's felt needs, the desirables they must have and the undesirables they must avoid if they are to be content with their lot in life. Where some event or state of affairs becomes an obstacle to their attaining, increasing, or recovering something they treasure--like good health, or satisfactory interpersonal relations--they have a problem. Problems, detected or expressed, can lead to an awareness of concerns. And concerns, of course, are traceable to values. But let us stay with the notion of concerns.

The very inexperienced change agent may assume that people, all people, will be concerned about and desire every good thing that he or she thinks they should have. After all, they are human aren't they, and everyone is basically pretty much alike. The more experienced innovator will likely reply, "Well, yes and no. At times people will surprise you." No matter how logically one may argue the case for landownership, to take an example, or how convinced the listeners are that--in the abstract--this is the best possible status for a farmer, many members of the poor majority will drag their feet on any action, preferring tenancy with a predictable, dependable landlord to ownership with the precarious assistance of a bureaucratic promise. Security, not independence or increased income, is the controlling concern for most of the poor.

Does this mean, then, that if a people shows no interest in better homes, for example, that improved housing should not be included in an assistance program? Not necessarily. For in the third approach one starts with the poor majority's concerns, but one does not stay there. The strategy is indeed to let the people lead--but the experts must follow. If the experts, especially local experts familiar with national levels and standards, declare that the housing situation certainly needs changing, then this project can rightly claim a place in the program. However, and this is important, it must be accepted that such a "nonconcern" will of itself lead to little participation on the people's part--at least until they have learned to think otherwise about their present homes.

Concerns, then, the people's view of what is important, are the point of departure for an aid program. The experts will be well-advised to understand these feelings early and well, for in the popular mind, as we said, program success will depend in large part on the extent to which these widely felt needs are filled.

Goals and projects. The next step is the establishing of program goals, the aims or achievements toward which effort will be directed. Some of these goals will be selected in response to the people's concerns; others may relate to needs that many of the poor majority do not feel, but nonetheless have. For there are, in fact, some things that people need, whether they know it or not, to fill their conscious needs. Unaware of the relation between drinking water supplies and infectious diseases, for instance, uninformed household heads may be

concerned about the health of their families, but initially express no dissatisfaction with the community's drinking water. Improved health (the felt need) and an improved water supply (the unfelt need) will both qualify, however, as interrelated program goals.

Goals are attained by means of projects, which are activities undertaken in orderly fashion to achieve some goal or purpose. Where a project is planned or undertaken principally to assist in the accomplishment of another project which is considered more basic, or more important, relative to some goal, the auxiliary activity is from this viewpoint a subproject. Goals may be similarly arranged, the resulting hierarchy of aims consisting of goals and subgoals.

Program outline. As we conceive it, the outline of an assistance program consists of just these four elements: (1) a list of the people's concerns and an inventory of problems identified by the people and/or the experts; (2) a list of hierarchically arranged goals and related projects to meet those needs; (3) a graphic means-ends framework showing how the projects are expected to achieve the chosen goals, thus filling the needs and responding to the manifest concerns of the people; and (4) an accompanying document in which projects and goals are briefly described and their inclusion justified, particularly in light of the criteria of social soundness.

What will not be found in the outline will be technical details and budgetary requirements.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, where a particular project

---

<sup>27</sup>For many matters such as these, the reader will be referred without comment to the BRBDP's Comprehensive development plan. It is

obviously requires subprojects for its success, they may merely be referred to without further elaboration, or a reference made to some source where the missing details may be found. An outline statement of this kind is, in other words, deliberately incomplete.

#### Outline of an Aid Program for the Bicol River Basin

The four elements that constitute the program outline are presented in the order in which they appear two paragraphs above. The presentation is made in summary form where possible, for reasons of conciseness and brevity.

#### Concerns and problems

Concerns. The people's concerns are found in Table 1 and discussed in the accompanying text. Grouped only according to the effect that their satisfaction has on the people's sense of well-being, they are presented anew in Table 6. Any program that seeks to improve the people's perceived quality of life must be addressed above all to the first 10 concerns in the list, the state of which is known to have a strong or moderate effect on overall happiness.

One of these items requires added comment. The concern labeled "community conditions" is an anxiety about both the social and physical state of the local settlement. It refers of course to "dirty surroundings" and "unsanitary conditions" (a concern particularly of the elite, though shared by others as well); but it refers even more to the state of social relationships within the community, and between the community not within our scope (nor competence in many cases) to do more than this. Ours is primarily a social soundness analysis.

Table 6. Concerns of Bicol River Basin household heads, by the effect each has on the people's satisfaction with life in general (see Table 1)

Effect on satisfaction with life in general	Concern
Strong	Present house Household possessions Job Income Position in life Food and drink
Moderate	Informal group participation Community conditions Health of self and family
Weak	Formal organizational participation Education (of self, children) High prices, Health services

and a potentially hostile outside world. Questions that recur are these: Do the people readily cooperate with one another? Are the community leaders considerate, effective, and skilled in uniting the people in common efforts? Is the community free of threats from outside? Is it, in other words, matuninong (Bikol), tahimik (Tagalog), a 'peaceful,' 'tranquil' place--or has it a "peace-and-order" problem?

This concern for tranquility is a deeply felt one, and the extent to which respondents refer to its absence (by reporting problems of this kind) seems to be correlated with variations in current social conditions. What the specific referent or referents are of a "peace-and-order" problem is not clear, however. One might hypothesize that the incidence of the complaint will reflect the level of "subversive"

activity, known or rumored, in the area. In April 1974, for example, when the Basinwide percentage of household heads reporting "peace and order" as their first-mentioned problem was 16, the figure was almost twice that (28 percent) in Iriga district. This district includes Buhi municipality, the foothills of which were then and are still spoken of as a hiding and resting place for members of the outlawed New People's Army, (NPA). On the other hand, the corresponding percentage for Naga district was at that time almost as high (26), while that for Goa district, reputedly another NPA base, was only 13 percent.

An alternative or additional hypothesis that suggests itself is that the traditional tranquility, so highly honored, is somehow threatened just by an area's centrality, density, or urbanity. The cities of Iriga and Naga dominate the two districts which report the highest percentage of peace-and-order complaints, while the district with the lowest percentage (5) is Sipocot, whose municipalities march off into the Basin's relatively isolated northwest highlands. Briefly, the conditions that prompt a complaint about peace and order are really not clear at this writing. Given the frequency of such complaints, however, an investigation of what those conditions are will be a prerequisite for improving the perceived life quality of the River Basin people.

In discussing respondents' concern for the state of their communities, we have devoted considerable thought to one of their most

Table 7. Problems identified by Bicol River Basin HH heads and/or experts, with page references to the BRBDP Comprehensive development plan 1975-2000 (1976)

Identifier	Problem	Page reference to the CDP
<b>A. <u>Household heads alone</u></b>		
1.	Peace and order	None
2.	Housing	None
3.	Household possessions	None
<b>B. <u>Household heads and experts</u></b>		
1.	Water management	59
2.	Income	57
3.	Employment (jobs)	58
4.	Travel	60-61 <sup>a</sup>
5.	Roads	61
6.	Transportation facilities (roads)	61, 122-23
7.	Drinking water	64
8.	Electricity	60
9.	Agrarian reform	62, 132-33
10.	Community organization	132-39
11.	Dirty or unsanitary surroundings	63
12.	Health of self and family	63-66 <sup>a</sup>
13.	High prices	59-62 <sup>a</sup>
<b>C. <u>Experts alone</u></b>		
1.	Notably unequal income distribution	57
2.	Low savings	58
3.	Inadequate/poor waterways and water transport/railway transport	60-61
4.	Low level of farm-input use	61
5.	Low agricultural productivity	61
6.	Inefficient operation or inadequacy of marketing facilities	62
7.	Weak agribusiness linkages	62
8.	Inadequate technical farm support services	62
9.	Typhoons and adverse weather conditions	62
10.	Breakdowns in coordination among line agencies	152

<sup>a</sup>The problem is mentioned implicitly in the CDP text.

Table 7 (cont'd)

Identifier	Problem	Page reference to the CDP
C. <u>Experts alone</u>		
11.	Little participation of the local and private sector in development efforts	71-72, 135-39
12.	Low wages	None <sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Not mentioned by CDP; reason for including this problem here is the finding that 63 percent of employed workers in the River Basin are absolutely poor (do not earn even the local food-threshold amount for one adult). See J. F. I. Illo, "Jobs, income, and poverty: Selected observations on the Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur," Social Science Information 4:1(1976): 11-17.

frequently mentioned problems, that of peace and order. Other problems expressed by the people are found in Table 7, sections A and B, and will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Problems. As in the case of peace and order, so for the other 15 problems listed in the first two sections of Table 7, Bicol River Basin residents have made it clear by one means or another that they are unhappy with the present state of affairs. This dissatisfaction is generally signaled by the people's mentioning the item precisely as a problem, but for almost all the entries we have other evidence, quite independent of the residents' opinions, that there is a need for a change.

The Basin's current deficiencies in five areas (namely, roads, transportation facilities, drinking water, community surroundings, and prices) are spelled out in greater detail in the Comprehensive

development plan, to which the reader is referred.<sup>28</sup> We shall here discuss in turn the remaining 10 problems listed in sections A and B of Table 7.

We can start with housing. In the River Basin, as elsewhere in the lowlands, gross distinctions in housing are traditionally based on the materials used for walls, on the one hand, and the roof, on the other. The most common combinations, in descending order of frequency of occurrence, are these (1) walls of bamboo and/or nipa with a nipa or cogon-grass roof ("light" construction); (2) walls of wood, with a nipa or cogon-grass roof ("mixed" construction); (3) walls of wood, with a galvanized-iron or aluminum roof ("strong" construction); and (4) walls of concrete, with a galvanized-iron or aluminum roof (also "strong").<sup>29</sup> To this house-materials criterion the IPC years ago added a second, namely the structure's current state of repair--good or poor. The importance of the addition is this, that the six categories generated by the double criterion show a much closer correlation with income and social status than do the three categories based on house materials alone. When it is applied to the 3240 sample residences observed in the River Basin, the results are as shown in Table 8, columns 1-3.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup>For the appropriate pages in the CDP, see the right-hand column of Table 7, opposite items 5-7, 11, and 13 in section B.

<sup>29</sup>These data are from the 1970 Census of Population and Housing, which followed the 1948 and 1960 censuses in employing the house-materials distinction of light, mixed, and strong.

<sup>30</sup>See Jeanne Frances I. Illo and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Who get the jobs--the old or the educated? Education and employment in the Bicol

In view of the contents of Table 8, small wonder perhaps that the overall average happiness score for housing is 3.64, a mean which is (relative to such scores for other items) far removed from the "very happy" score of 1.00.<sup>31</sup> For if one rearranges the categories, he will see that 59 percent of the people live in houses badly in need of repair, 56 percent reside in the traditional bahay kubo, or "little grass hut," while 30 percent live in huts of this kind which patently need new shingles, walling, flooring, or entrance ladders if they are to be minimally weatherproof and safe.

Ordinary people do not idealize the traditional native house of bamboo and nipa; among the poor, those who are least happy with their housing are those who have just such homes. They are notably unhappy (average score, 3.97) if they have this kind of hut and it needs patching (Table 8, column 4, last line). Similarly, among the marginal grade of the upper class, most of whom live either in "strong" homes in poor repair, or in "mixed" ones in good repair, the housing happiness score deteriorates with the descent from strong (3.11) to mixed (3.33) construction (Table 8, column 4, lines 2 and 3).

Another fact of some importance is that, regardless of the kind of home in which the Basin resident lives, or its state of repair, ownership of both house and lot is seen as the most desirable

---

River Basin" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 8; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974), pp. 8-9.

<sup>31</sup>See Robert C. Salazar and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Happiness starts with a good job and a good home--so say the people of the Bicol River Basin" (footnote 14, above), esp. paragraphs 28-29 and 37-41.

Table 8. Houses of Bicol River Basin household heads by materials and state of repair, with the average happiness score (1-7) reported for present housing (Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur, 1974)

House materials	State of repair	Percentage (n = 3240)	Happiness score <sup>a</sup> (average)
Strong	Good	5%	2.85
	Poor	7	3.11
Mixed	Good	10	3.33
	Poor	22	3.62
Light	Good	26	3.65
	Poor	30	3.97

<sup>a</sup>On this scale, 1 means "very happy" and 7 means "very unhappy." The overall average, or mean, is 3.64.

arrangement. This goal has been achieved by 70 percent of the elite, 54 percent of the marginals, and 35 percent of the poor. The happiness scores of these owners are in all three cases more favorable than those of their class-mates who have other housing arrangements. The least desirable arrangement, regardless of class, is to rent both house and lot.

Given this pattern, and given the known effect of housing on overall life satisfaction, discovered in an earlier SSRU study,<sup>32</sup> we can conclude that (1) the housing situation in the River Basin is not good; (2) most people are unhappy about it; but when, if, and as their disposable income increases, they can be counted on (3) to

---

<sup>32</sup>Reference is to the report of Salazar and Lynch, cited in footnote 31.

repair their homes or replace them with others of more substantial materials, and (4) to retain or seek ownership of those homes and the lots on which they stand.

A related felt need of River Basin respondents is adequate furniture and other household possessions. To find out what things they had in their homes, interviewers inquired about a standard list of items which the average Metro Manila resident would probably consider necessities. What could be more basic, for example, than water, electricity, and a toilet? or a bed, a table, an aparador, and a dresser? And shouldn't the dining room have a dining set and a china closet, and the sala its own matched set of furniture, with a little reading matter, such as a newspaper, magazine, or book? Even a radio and a sewing machine are not that extraordinary.<sup>33</sup>

As a matter of fact, seven out of the 14 items are so scarce in the Basin that they can be found in fewer than one-fourth of the Basin households. Reference is to a living room set, a dresser, a sewing machine, dining room set, china closet, table, and a piped or privately pumped water supply. Only two items (a toilet and a radio) are reported for as many as half of the households, while the other five (including electricity) adorn only 25-43 percent of River Basin homes (Table 9).

---

<sup>33</sup>The instrument featuring these 14 items is described in Castillo, Cordero, and Tanco, "A scale to measure family level of living in four barrios of Los Baños, Laguna," Philippine Sociological Review 15(1967): 67-87. It is used here in its modified form, after F. V. Magdalena and R. M. Zarco, "A comparison of the objective and the reputational approaches in the study of Philippine class structure," Philippine

Table 9. Household heads of the Bicol River Basin, by selected reported possessions, level-of-living and perceived-quality-of-life scores, and social class (Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur, April 1974)

Reported possession	Percentage reporting possession			
	Upper- elite	Upper- marginal	Lower	Total
Living room set	80%	50%	15%	24%
Radio	76	64	41	47
China closet	54	32	9	15
Bed	87	72	34	43
Electricity	65	42	20	26
Book (at least one)	90	65	28	39
Sewing machine	48	38	15	21
Newspaper/magazine	82	50	20	30
Clothes closet (aparador)	74	52	21	29
Dining room set	46	25	7	12
Dresser	52	32	10	16
Toilet	84	71	44	52
Study table	54	35	13	18
Water supply	26	18	10	13
Level-of-living score (mean)	8.28	5.62	2.36	3.20
PQL-furniture score (mean)	3.43	4.28	4.50	4.33

<sup>a</sup>The level-of-living score can range from 0 to 14, depending on how many of the 14 items (col. 1 of this table) the HH reports. The PQL-furniture score can range from 1 ("very happy with present furniture and other HH possessions") to 7 ("very unhappy").

Sociological Review 18(1970): 77-85. See also Nunilo B. Soler and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Levels of living in the Bicol River Basin" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 14; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1975).

The average household has 3.20 of these 14 possessions, though differences are significant by social class. The lower class averages 2.36; the upper-class marginals, 5.62; and the upper-class elite, 8.28. One out of four households scores a zero on the level-of-living scale, since the household head reports having not even one of these 14 items.

Reflecting on this deprivation, lower-class respondents express their discontent by an average score of 4.50 on the happiness scale for this domain. The marginals are somewhat less unhappy (4.28), and the elite even more removed from the poor (3.43), but none of the groups accepts things the way they are. Nor should they. There is something wrong when simple household possessions and facilities such as these are in short supply. And they are especially scarce among the poor majority.

The felt need for improved water management, that is, better and more widespread irrigation and flood control, is another very commonly expressed problem, regardless of the respondents' social class and, to some extent, occupation (see pp. 32-34). The advantages of irrigation are recognized by all Basin farmers, of course, but some of them might profitably be repeated here in order to quantify somewhat this general perception. In rice cultivation, for example, proper irrigation can have three major and interrelated benefits: (1) an increase in the percentage of area harvested relative to area planted; (2) an increase in cavans harvested per hectare; and (3) the allowing of one or more added croppings. In its Basinwide survey of April 1974 the SSRU found

that of farms planted to palay for the dry season, when rainfall is relatively scarce, only 86 percent were actually harvested. However, there was a significant difference by irrigation status: among fully irrigated farms, where irrigation can supply for failing rainwater, 93 percent were harvested; among nonirrigated, or rainfed farms, the figure was only 81 percent.<sup>34</sup> Differences in per-hectare harvests also characterize the irrigated-rainfed distinction. In the 1974 survey just mentioned, for example, the average yields of irrigated farms were more than one and one-half times larger than those of rainfed farms: in the wet season, 43 cavans of palay vs. 27; in the dry season, 42 vs. 26. Other studies suggest the same order of difference between irrigated and nonirrigated riceland in this regard.<sup>35</sup>

It seems clear, in fact, that of the various inputs suggested for palay production (irrigation, certified HYV seeds, modern planting and cultivation practices, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and tractor power) irrigation has the greatest effect on yields

---

<sup>34</sup>Variations on this theme will be found in the SSRU's socio-economic profile of the Bicol River Basin (1976).

<sup>35</sup>See, for example, Frank Lynch, S.J., "Rice-farm harvests and practices in Camarines Sur: Do compact farms, Masagana 99, and the Samahang Nayon make a difference?" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 2; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974); also see Robert C. Salazar and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Farmers of the River Basin's land-consolidation project area: Nowhere to go but up--and in no great hurry to get there" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 6; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974); and Jose V. Barrameda, Jr., and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Irrigation practices and rice production in three water-management pilot-project areas of Camarines Sur" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 7; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974).

--other inputs being equal.<sup>36</sup> It plays a similarly crucial role in the production of other crops. Yet of a possible 254,000 hectares (all kinds of farm), only 46,250 hectares are currently irrigated, less than one-fifth of the total irrigable area. Again, wet-season flooding and salt-water intrusion periodically devastate the crops on 65,000 and 10,000 hectares, respectively, of ricefields. The Basin's production losses from water, too little of it and too much, are a major contributor to the area's poverty.

On the average, River Basin household incomes, cash and noncash combined, are extremely low, while those of the poor majority (the lowest 80 percent) are quite simply pitiable, pathetic--no weaker words will suffice. We can start with the fact that as of April 1974 (when our data were collected) the annual household income required to feed, clothe, shelter, and otherwise minimally maintain an average household was estimated at ₱8440 for the poblacion and ₱7280 for the barrio.<sup>37</sup> That comes to about ₱700 and ₱600, respectively, per month.

---

<sup>36</sup>See the SSRU's socioeconomic profile of the River Basin.

<sup>37</sup>See Jeanne F. I. Illo and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Patterns of income distribution and household spending in the Bicol River Basin" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 13; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1975), esp. pp. 23-26 and Table RS13.11. These figures were arrived at in three steps. First, nutritionists figured out what the food requirements would be for an average family of parents and four children to have a balanced and adequate diet. Second, the cost of this diet was then determined for an average poblacion and barrio of the Bicol region. These costs (the so-called "food threshold") were then taken as 60 percent of total needed income (since for the average poor family food represents 60 percent of expenditures) and the "total threshold" was calculated. Thus for the poblacion the food threshold is ₱5304 and the total threshold, ₱8440 (5304 divided by .60); for the barrio the corresponding figures are ₱4575 and ₱7280. See Alcestis

For adequate food alone, the needed monthly income is estimated at about ₱440 for the poblacion and ₱380 for the barrio.

Now, as of April 1974, the average annual household income for the River Basin was ₱3800, or ₱317 per month. For the poblacion, the figure was ₱5174 (₱430 per month); for the barrio, ₱3379 (₱282 per month). Furthermore, only 32 percent of poblacion households and 19 percent of barrio households earned enough to reach even the food thresholds of ₱440 and ₱380, respectively. Moreover, to be more concrete, at a time when one cavan of rice alone, the monthly requirement for an average household, cost almost ₱100, the median income of the poor majority was only (₱130 per month), cash and noncash combined.

The need for more income is a paramount consideration for both the poor and the not-so-poor. This concern is reflected not only in the sensitivity of happiness scores to income, and in the high percentage of the fully employed who are looking for a second income-generating job (see below), but in the frequency with which insufficiency of income is named as the root cause for the respondent's not enjoying a higher position in life. These three kinds of behavior are characteristic of both the lower and upper classes of the River Basin.

Regardless of social class, for example, there is a consistent pattern in the PQL-income, or income-happiness, scores as one moves

---

Abrera, "Philippine thresholds," in Measuring Philippine welfare, Part II (Tagaytay City: Development Academy of the Philippines, 1975), pp. 5-1 to 5-77.

from the "under-₱1000" category to the progressively higher brackets. In general, of course, the higher the income, the happier the respondent claims to be. But this is not all: there is also a leap at the ₱5000-5999 category; that is, those whose annual incomes (personal or household) are over ₱5000 are notably happier, apparently, than those who earn less. The fact that the food thresholds for poblacion and barrio are ₱5304 and ₱4575, respectively, may play a part in this phenomenon.<sup>38</sup>

Problems of unemployment and underemployment are also critical. The unemployment rate stands at 7.7 percent; the underemployed, that is, those willing to take on an added job, represent 20.6 percent of the work force; and the partly employed (working less than 40 hours a week) are about one-third of the labor force.<sup>39</sup> The situation is further aggravated by the low wages received, even by the fully employed: 63 percent of these workers cannot cross the food threshold of absolute poverty for themselves alone, to say nothing of spouse or children.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup>In any event, it does suggest that the food threshold would be a doubly meaningful target for a campaign aimed at increasing Basin incomes. The food threshold would provide both an adequate diet and a perceived improvement in the quality of life. The current maldistribution of income (discussed below) must also be kept in mind in any such effort to raise the people's earnings.

<sup>39</sup>Data are as of April 1974. The formulas used are as follows: unemployment rate equals  $\frac{\text{Employed}}{\text{labor force}} \times 100$ ; underemployment rate equals  $\frac{\text{Employed willing to take on an added job}}{\text{labor force}} \times 100$ ; part-employment rate equals  $\frac{\text{Employed working less than 40 hours per week}}{\text{labor force}} \times 100$ . See Jeanne F. I. Illo and Frank Lynch, S.J., "The unemployed and underemployed in the Bicol River Basin" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 10; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974).

<sup>40</sup>See Jeanne F. I. Illo, "Jobs, income, and poverty: Selected

Happiness scores indicate that being unemployed makes the average household head most unhappy--but his unhappiness at having no job at all is only slightly greater than it would be if he were working as a fisherman, for example, or a farm laborer. Regardless of class, respondents are happiest working as professionals, administrators, clerks, or salespeople; they are relatively unhappy with manual occupations, including farming and fishing. Above all, however, the goal appears to be a steady and secure source of income, preferably a job with the government.<sup>41</sup>

From the people's viewpoint, travel is another problem--not precisely travel, but not being able to do enough of it. River Basin household heads like to go places. More than four out of five (83 percent) of them had visited one or more places outside their own municipality at least four times in the 12 months before they were interviewed for the SSRU's survey of April 1974). In the same period of time, four out of five had been to Naga City at least once, and more than one-third, to Iriga City. Overall, counting visits to all places, some 1.4 million trips had been taken by the 155,000 household heads represented by the SSRU sample.<sup>42</sup> Bicolanos may or may not be shakers, but they certainly are movers.

---

observations on the Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur," Social Science Information 4:1(1976): 11-17. This point will be discussed below.

<sup>41</sup>The average job-happiness scores of government employees are more favorable than those of the self-employed and the privately employed, regardless of respondent's social class.

<sup>42</sup>Sulpicio S. Roco, Jr., and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Where do they go? What do they do? Travel patterns in the Bicol River Basin"

One might think that all this traveling was undertaken merely to achieve some conscious objective--to go from here to there, do something there, and return. And indeed the reasons given by respondents for the trips they made do fall into four standard goal-related categories: economic (including marketing, business, and work-related travel), 60 percent; social (mostly visiting kinsmen or seeking recreation), 24 percent; religious, 3 percent; and medical, 3 percent.<sup>43</sup> However, subsequent analyses of the perceived-quality-of-life data on travel and other subjects indicate that this kind of moving about serves a latent function as well. As we showed much earlier in this paper (pp. 24-26) traveling is in the River Basin closely related to one's feelings of self-esteem, and is from this viewpoint a focus of special concern. This is reflected in the fact that respondents' happiness scores for this domain correlate closely (0.01) with their spatial mobility--the more they have traveled within the River Basin, especially in Camarines Sur and Albay, and the greater the number of Philippine cities they have visited, the more satisfied they are with themselves in this regard. And the happier they are in this area, the more likely they are to be happy with life in general.<sup>44</sup>

---

(SSRU Research Report Series, No. 9; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974), esp. pp. 5, 28. See also Agapito M. Tria II, "SSRU transportation inventory of the Bicol River Basin as of January 1974" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 16; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1975).

<sup>43</sup>Combinations (5 percent), Others (3 percent), and Don't know's (2 percent) complete the distribution. See Roco and Lynch (1974:19) cited in footnote 42.

<sup>44</sup>The Travel scores' correlation with the life-in-general scores

Concern about his own health and that of his family is characteristic of the Bicol River Basin household head. And well it might be. In late Spanish times many towns of the area were described as unhealthy places, particularly for those who were prone to pulmonary diseases.<sup>45</sup> And as recently as 1975 the Department of Health reported in effect that after 90 years the situation was still far from satisfactory in this regard. Among the leading causes of sickness in Camarines Sur now (as then, presumably) are influenza, bronchitis, pneumonia, and tuberculosis.<sup>46</sup> Pneumonia and tuberculosis are also among the Basin's leading killers, along with heart diseases and gastroenteritis.<sup>47</sup> Infant mortality, reportedly in the area of 40.0 per 1000 live births, is most commonly traced to pneumonia or gastroenteritis, complicated by malnourishment. In fact, the Department of Health states that about 40 percent of all deaths are of children below five years of age, and of these children half die of diseases aggravated by inadequate diets. Confirming this, a survey

---

is .35 (Pearson's  $r$ ). Moreover, they account for 3.6 percent of the variance in the latter. Only the Job and Present-house scores account for a greater amount of variance (18.6 and 7.9 percent, respectively).

<sup>45</sup>See Adolfo Puya Ruiz, Camarines Sur (Manila: Establecimiento tipografico de "La Oceania Española," 1887), passim.

<sup>46</sup>The Camarines Sur morbidity rates per 100,000 for these diseases are given as 529.9, 381.9, 291.7, and 218.8, respectively (Department of Health, Region V [Bicol]). Given the common failure to report sicknesses, births, and deaths, these and subsequent statistics are to be taken as approximate and provisional. It has been shown by several studies that both births and deaths may be underreported in the Philippines by as much as 30 percent.

<sup>47</sup>The Camarines Sur mortality rates per 100,000 are given by the Department of Health (Region V) as follows: pneumonia, 196.0;

of children six years of age and younger (0-72 months old) conducted in February 1976 discovered that only about one-fifth of preschool children were nutritionally normal; one third of the Basin's children are moderately to severely malnourished.

In a study of 1078 households conducted in April 1974, the SSRU discovered that the diets of River Basin residents in general were strikingly deficient. For each of the major food groups, the percentages of households not serving the recommended daily allowances were as follows: protein and vegetables, 65 percent; vegetables alone, 27 percent; protein alone, 6 percent. On the other hand, 95 percent of households reported serving the recommended three servings daily of carbohydrates (mostly rice). Hence, while the intake of high-energy foods is almost universal, the reverse is true of vegetables and protein, which are in short supply in 92 and 71 percent of households, respectively.<sup>48</sup> Because of a cultural bias against vegetables and in favor of fish and meat, Bicolanos tend to eat as much protein as they can, and as much vegetable as they must.

The average resident's concern about health does not extend to problems (such as the milder forms of malnutrition, or the first onset

---

tuberculosis, 111.6; heart diseases, 97.9; gastroenteritis, 25.9; and tetanus, 18.1.

<sup>48</sup>See Marion F. Samson and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Medical services and nutrition in the Bicol River Basin" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 11; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974), pp. 13-19. In protein and vegetable intake River Basin households compare unfavorably with landless sugarcane workers of Negros Occidental (*ibid.*).

of tuberculosis) which are not clearly manifested in easily recognized symptoms. For this reason, among others, adequate medical services and appropriate adult education are essential. The fact is, however, that physicians, for example, are too few in number and unevenly distributed within the River Basin. Naga district has 22 percent of the Basin population and 70 percent of its physicians (195 out of 282). Physician:household ratios vary so greatly that outside the Naga district (where the ratio is 1:174) patient loads are from four to 12 times heavier than they should be.<sup>49</sup>

To put it briefly, then, household heads need and want more adequate medical and other services essential for the health they would like themselves and their families to enjoy. They also need the increased income and education that will allow them to use these services and prompt them to serve the balanced diets that this state of health requires.<sup>50</sup>

The desire for added electric power, especially for household lighting and appliances, is widely expressed in the River Basin. Even

---

<sup>49</sup>To deliver regular family health care, a physician should be responsible for no more than about 275 households. Yet the ratios for the Basin districts are as follows: Naga, 1:174; Goa, 1:1029; Iriga, 1:1227; Sipocot, 1:2000; Magarao, 1:3070; and Milaor, 1:3400. See Samson and Lynch (1974:16), cited in footnote 48. For further information on health facilities and services currently available in the Basin, see Agapito M. Tria II, "SSRU municipal inventory of the Bicol River Basin as of January 1974" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 15; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1975), sections 11 and 18 under each city and municipality.

<sup>50</sup>From the study of Samson and Lynch (1974), cited in footnote 48, it is clear the people want the services of physicians and want an increasing amount of protein in their diets. But they will need help to overcome the widespread bias against the regular consumption of vegetables.

at present, except for two of the so-called railway towns, Ragay and Del Gallego, and several remote places like Balatan, electric service is available in every municipality of the Basin. Overall, 26 percent of households have electric lighting, for example.<sup>51</sup> But this service is often limited in both hours and area coverage, the most common arrangement being for the power plant to serve only the poblacion and only for several hours of the early morning and early evening. Notable exceptions to this trend are found in Naga City, Iriga City, Camaligan (adjoining Naga), Pili, Buhi, Goa, and Tigaon.<sup>52</sup>

There is no doubt that more powerful and more widespread electric service can bring with it many good things for households, business establishments, schools, clinics and hospitals, farms, and industry. But certain caveats must be observed, lest the innovation widen the already scandalous income gap between the poor majority and the relatively wealthy minority. We shall return to this question in the section on social soundness, below.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup>Percentages vary significantly by social class, however: elite, 65 percent; marginal, 42; lower class, 20.

<sup>52</sup>For data on electrical service, streetlights, and so on, see Agapito M. Tria II, "SSRU municipal inventory of the Bicol River Basin as of January 1974" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 15; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1975), section 8 ("Public utilities and facilities") under each city and municipality.

<sup>53</sup>In rural electrification programs, the poor may or may not represent a substantial percentage (say, one-half) of the users. But if they do not--that is, if the great majority of users are from the upper class (elite or marginal)--one result of the innovation will be to make the rich richer and the poor more keenly aware of their deprivation. To anticipate (see below, however, in the social soundness section), it is not clear to us, from the evidence we have seen at least, that the USAID-assisted Misamis Oriental Rural Electric Service Corporation (MORESCO)

Since about 55 percent of River Basin household heads are farmers (about 40 percent are primarily rice farmers), and since in April 1974, regardless of what their legal status was, almost half the rice farmers reported themselves as share tenants, and another 16 percent as lessees, we should expect to find agrarian reform among the people's problems. It is there indeed, but there is a problem within the problem. This is not the frequently mentioned resistance of landlords to the "liberation" of their tenants. It is rather the reluctance of poor tenants to give up (as they see it) the solid security of a dependable, though dependent, relationship for the dubious benefits of ownership.

River Basin share tenants and lessees would like to own their own land--but not at any cost, and certainly not at the cost of their own survival. In studies done at various times since October 1973, the SSRU has gathered evidence to the effect that the desire for landownership is conditional. Moreover, as in Nueva Ecija and other provinces, tenants separated from their landlords by a government-sanctioned "shotgun divorce" will likely find their way back to the old relationship (if they can) when the going gets rough. Nominally, they may be lessees or amortizing owners, but in reality they are share tenants once more.<sup>54</sup>

---

has successfully reached the relatively poor in substantial numbers.

<sup>54</sup>When certain government officials read in SSRU reports, for example, that 50 percent of River Basin rice farmers report themselves as share tenants, or that 35 percent of these tenants do not wish to be owners, they respond by stating that (1) 50 is not the official percentage of share tenants, and is therefore an incorrect figure, and (2) tenants must become owners. More enlightened officials wonder why so many

This then is the problem within the problem, and it is one not easily solved. Aware though we are of the vast expenditures of time, human energy, money, and materials made in the name of land reform since 1972, we are not convinced that a satisfactory answer has been found. What kind of action is likely to prove most appropriate, effective, and equitable remains (in our opinion) a fair question for study, discussion, and experimentation.

The people's concern about community organization springs from a conscious need for cooperation, leadership, and order. From the experts' view, however (less frequently from the people's), there is also need for greater participation of the poor in decisions made about their own communities (to say nothing of larger political units). In the words of the AID Handbook, cited earlier (p. 8, above), social soundness demands that "participation of the poor in the development process" should mean "not only sharing the economic benefits and contribution of resources but also involvement in the process of problem identification and solution, subproject selection and design, implementation and evaluation." The difficulty appears to be that, on the one hand, "modern" organizational behavior aimed at decision-making is often pro forma (lutong makaw) and dominated by the elite. On the other hand, traditional forms of group cooperation suppose that all the

---

farmers still consider themselves tenants (despite "land reform"), and why so many do not wish to be owners. For the Nueva Ecija data, see Romana P. de los Reyes and Frank Lynch, "Reluctant rebels: Leasehold converts in Nueva Ecija," Philippine Sociological Review 20:1-2(1972): 7-78, esp. 42-43.

major decisions have been made, and that the only task remaining is that of effective compliance with those decisions.

In its multipurpose baseline study of April 1974 the SSRU gathered information on organizational behavior which suggests some of the problems involved. To begin with, reported membership in formal organizations differs by social class: the percentages for elite, marginals, and lower-class people are 57, 50, and 46, respectively. More important, while lower-class people claim a better attendance record than the upper-class do (73 percent always in attendance, vs. 62), 58 percent of the elite, but only 24 percent of the poor, say they speak up at every meeting they attend. Again, more than a third of the poor report that they never say anything at meetings (only one-eighth of the elite report such total silence). In other words, the role of the lower class is apparently to listen.<sup>55</sup>

This weakness of the most common formal organizations is implied in other findings. Respondents were asked to name what they considered the most pressing problem facing their communities. Relative to the problem he had mentioned, each respondent was asked if any action was being taken to solve it. Of those who said that something was in fact being done, 51 percent replied that they themselves were involved in

---

<sup>55</sup>This same conclusion was reached in a recent study of the Barangay Association, another government organization, by researchers from the University of the Philippines. They write that "barangay meetings . . . serve more as a vehicle for the communication to the people and the implementation of national projects than as a vehicle for the discussion of local issues." See Proserpina Domingo-Tapales and Lirio Tumacder-Abuyuan, "The barangay in Bicol: A study of citizen

this remedial action. Among members of formal organizations, the figure was 59 percent; among those who belonged to no such organizations, 40. Given the significance of this difference, the question must nonetheless be asked: Is a formal community organization fulfilling its role when four out of ten of its members report that the problem which they consider the community's worst is no concern of theirs?

There are two clearly distinct traditional modes of cooperation in the River Basin. The first, pakikiiba ('giving in, going along, following the lead or suggestion of another'; Tagalog, pakikisama), is for official community or formal-organizational undertakings and is directed by a formal leader. The second, pakikidamay (from damay, 'condole'), is for activities in which an individual's social allies assist him in meeting some household or family need or crisis.<sup>56</sup> The modes differ in many ways, but are alike in this, that they presuppose that what should be done has already been decided. This decision will have come from a government official, or an elective or appointive head (for pakikiiba assistance) or from a household head or the situation itself (in pakikidamay activities). These ancient forms will not provide a model for participative democracy.

---

articulation and government response" (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Institute of Planning, University of the Philippines, 1974), p. 25.

<sup>56</sup>See Jose V. Barrameda, Jr., "Pakikiiba and pakikidamay: Two modes of group cooperation in Camarines Sur" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 5; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974). On social allies, see pp. 14-16, above.

To summarize: as currently conducted, the formal organizations with which most River Basin residents are familiar do not encourage (to the extent they might, at least) the involvement of their members in the detection and solution of local problems. The two traditional cooperative groups are executive in nature, not deliberative. For this reason, the community organization problem may require for its solution the development of new or altered social forms.

The remaining 12 problems listed in Table 7, section C (pp. 45-46, above), were proposed by experts associated with the Bicol River Basin Development Program.<sup>57</sup> For all but the low-wages item (see footnote 64, below), the grounds on which they determined that a problem existed, and that organized action was required to solve it, will be found in the Comprehensive development plan, at the pages indicated in the right-hand column of Table 7. SSRU publications offer added information on the following seven topics: unequal income distribution,<sup>58</sup> low savings,<sup>59</sup> inadequate transport facilities,<sup>60</sup> low-level of farm-

---

<sup>57</sup>The inclusion of these items in a people-centered assistance plan must of course be justified, as indeed it will in a subsequent section.

<sup>58</sup>See esp. Jeanne F. I. Illo and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Patterns of income distribution and household spending in the Bicol River Basin," cited in footnote 37, above. A major finding of relevance is that for River Basin incomes the Gini coefficient (a measure of inequality) is an extraordinarily high .73, while the national figure is about .48.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., esp. pp. 20-22. Positive savings are characteristic of only the very small percentage of households earning ₱9000 or more per year.

<sup>60</sup>See Agapito M. Tria II, "SSRU transportation inventory of the Bicol River Basin as of January 1974," cited in footnote 42. See also Sulpicio S. Roco, Jr., and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Levels of development in the Bicol River Basin" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 17; Naga

input use,<sup>61</sup> low agricultural productivity,<sup>62</sup> inadequate technical farm support services,<sup>63</sup> and low wages.<sup>64</sup>

This completes our review of the inventory of problems presented in Table 7. We now proceed to a discussion of the goals and related projects which we believe would be an appropriate response to these difficulties.

### Goals and projects

We turn now to the second element of a program outline, namely, a "list of hierarchically arranged goals and related projects to meet [the problems that constitute the outline's first element]" (p. 41, above). The interrelationships between goals and projects will be further discussed in the sections that follow this, on means-ends relationships and on goal-and-project justification.

---

City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1975).

<sup>61</sup>Frank Lynch, S.J., "Rice-farm harvests and practices in Camarines Sur: Do compact farms, Masagana 99, and the Samahang Nayon make a difference?"; Robert C. Salazar and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Farmers of the River Basin's land-consolidation project area: Nowhere to go but up--and in no great hurry to get there"; and Jose V. Barrameda, Jr., and Frank Lynch, S.J., "Irrigation practices and rice production in three water-management pilot-project areas of Camarines Sur." All are cited in footnote 35.

<sup>62</sup>See references in the previous footnote.

<sup>63</sup>For the inadequacy of assistance given farmers by production technicians, see Frank Lynch, S.J., and Jose V. Barrameda, Jr., "The M99 delivery system: How well does it work in Camarines Sur?" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 3; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974). Since there is only one such technician in the field for every 200 or more farmers, adequacy can hardly be expected.

<sup>64</sup>See Jeanne F. I. Illo, "Jobs, income, and poverty: Selected observations on the Bicol River Basin, Camarines Sur," cited in footnote 40. A striking finding is that 63 percent of the employed are not paid

The present task is merely to catalogue the major aims and projects of the program as we conceive it (following in most cases, but not all, the lead of the Comprehensive development plan). Where we feel we have something to contribute to the clarification of a goal or project, beyond what is provided by the CDP, we shall add this comment to the goal or project statement. Suggested behavioral indicators of goal attainment may be mentioned, for example, to supplement or modify those found in that document.<sup>65</sup>

Goals. The goals that we propose are 10 in number, but they occupy different positions in the hierarchy of program aims. Furthermore, given the twofold origin of the problems we have listed (people and experts), a number of these goals may not figure at all in the conscious desires of most River Basin household heads--at this time at least, prior to the onset of genuine people participation. We shall describe here the subordination of some program goals to others, and of all to the ultimate, or final, goal. But we shall not at this point justify their inclusion in the plan on technical or social-soundness grounds--a task deferred to the two succeeding sections.

---

enough to reach the total poverty threshold for themselves; 79 percent receive less than the amount required to support themselves and two dependents (ibid., p. 16).

<sup>65</sup>The CDP's "objectively verifiable," or behavioral, indicators of goal attainment and project success are inserted at appropriate places throughout the text. They are also conveniently summarized in an unnumbered chart entitled "Logical framework design" (after p. iv in our copy of the CDP).

The ultimate goal to be achieved by this development program is a significant improvement in the quality of people's lives. This aim is agreed on by both the ordinary residents of the Basin and by the BRBDP, but the meaning will not be the same for both. That is, the measures, or indicators, that each will use to determine whether or not, or the extent to which, this improvement has occurred will almost certainly differ. The planners will presumably measure this life-quality change in terms of the degree to which quantified intermediate goals were achieved, such as increased income or improved nutrition, or other subgoals like increased employment or increased agricultural production. Ordinary people, on the other hand (unless their thinking has meanwhile been altered by interaction with technical personnel), will probably follow a more intuitive route to their conclusions regarding an improvement in life quality over time. Reflecting at a future date on how they feel about life in general, or their satisfaction with it, they will place themselves at some level of happiness and then estimate whether this position is notably higher or lower than their earlier one.<sup>66</sup>

In the River Basin case, analysts can quantify this retrospective judgment somewhat by administering to the SSRU respondent panel at some

---

<sup>66</sup>It is the SSRU's experience (and that of the IPC) that even poorly educated respondents have unequivocal and verifiable perceptions about their present position relative to some time in the past. On the other hand, they tend invariably to be incurable optimists about the future. That they are not very realistic in the latter regard is suggested by the study of a longitudinal series of such popular forecasts, in which the people's predicted level of well-being was compared with the level at which they perceived themselves when that future time had arrived.

future date the same seven-point happiness scale as was used in April 1974 (in which 1 means "very happy" and 7, "very unhappy"). A comparison would then reveal if the later individual or mean score on that scale were in fact closer to or further from the "very happy" score of 1.00 than it earlier was. More concretely still, since the panel's 1974 overall happiness mean was 3.72, a future mean of, say, 3.00 would represent a significant change for the better (with less than one chance in a 1000 of this perceived improvement's being due to the particular respondent sample we selected).<sup>67</sup>

Besides the ultimate goal, we propose two sets of subgoals, four intermediate subgoals and five immediate. The four intermediate goals are these: increased income, more equal distribution of income, improved nutrition, and increased participation in decision-making. A few comments are called for on the income indicators and on the signs of increased participation in decision-making.

The income which the program is to enlarge might conceivably be defined in various ways--per capita, for example, mean or median, individual or household. The per capita definition leads to the same trap that ensnared international assistance efforts in the 1960s. For just as a significant increase in per capita GNP can occur without any positive change in the lives of the poor majority, so a surge in per capita income is compatible with a growth in the percentage of

---

<sup>67</sup>This would merely indicate that a significant change had occurred. Relating that change to development activities would be a far more difficult, but not impossible, task.

households without the basic necessities. There might be more income around, but the wealthy could be getting an even greater share of it, than they earlier did.

Of the two measures of central tendency, mean or median, the latter is preferable here, of course, since a relatively few very high incomes can pull the mean up and make matters look better than they are for the average Basin household or individual. An increased mean income could result, like increased per capita income, from the rich minority's simply getting richer. The median, on the other hand, is not responsive to extremes, high or low, since it is merely the middle income in a series that begins with the lowest, for example, and ends with the highest.

However, if the program starts with the assumption that for every time and place there is a definable lower limit of income below which no individual or household can exist in a humanly decent manner, the median diminishes in worth. It will be an adequate measure only if one chooses to ignore how many of the lower 50 percent of persons or families are below that minimum. For even if the median is well above the required minimum, this in itself is no assurance that, say, 20 percent of the population are not suffering intolerable poverty.

Hence we propose that the goal to be achieved be universal, and that the program be considered in this regard unsuccessful unless and until the minimum targeted income is being received by every individual or household in the Basin.

But what shall the unit be, the individual or the household? We suggest the household, not the individual, since River Basin data indicate, on analysis, that it is the total household income rather than his own earnings alone, which concern the average household head.<sup>68</sup> As for the amount of income to be attained by all households, we suggest the food threshold, whatever the absolute value of that might be for households of various sizes in the year and region when the evaluation is made.<sup>69</sup> This amount would seem to be the bare minimum which any development program worthy of the name could accept as its target.

Greater equality of income distribution, the second of the income measures, will also be a difficult but essential goal to achieve. We agree with the CDP's suggestion that the Gini coefficient of income inequality be used as the indicator of progress, and would hope that the minimum target would be a Basin coefficient no worse than that of the nation at large--and preferably lower.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup>The scores of lower-class household heads on the PQL-income scale correlate significantly (0.001) with their reported total household income, but not with their own income. For the elite and marginal minorities, however, the correlation is significant (also 0.001) with both kinds of income.

The tendency of the poor to peg their satisfaction to household income is probably widespread in the Philippines. The senior author first noticed it in 1969-71, among sugarcane workers of Negros Occidental. Complaints about low wages were heard least frequently from those workers whose wives and/or children had also been employed by the planter for similarly below-standard pay.

<sup>69</sup>It is important to note that the food threshold varies according to the size of the household. In this respect the threshold measure is somewhat like a per capita measure, but no averaging is made across households.

<sup>70</sup>See footnote 58, above.

Increased participation in decision-making should be thought of as the intermediate goal par excellence of genuinely human development. For without it even increased income and its more equal distribution will fall short of the mark. Unless ordinary people, the poor majority included, are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of at least regional and local efforts that affect their well-being, their new prosperity (should it eventuate) would do little to promote their growth as citizens and human beings. The people must be given a partner's share in the entire development process and eventually, control.

The indicators of this increasing participation will grow in number and perhaps sophistication as the quality of participation itself is enlarged. We have spoken above (pp. 64-67) of three relatively simple symptoms of involvement: membership in community organizations, speaking up at meetings of these groups, and reporting a sense of responsibility for the solution of recognized community problems. Other progress markers will be developed as time goes on, with the assistance of those specialists who should be called in, we believe, to direct this essential aspect of the program.

A digression seems necessary here. It is our opinion that professional nongovernment assistance is needed for this task. Professionals are required because of the delicacy and difficulty of the assignment: to develop in entire communities (not just the upper class, or the elected or appointed officials, or the adult males, but everyone) the habit of articulating needs, looking for solutions

(including the consulting of experts), and monitoring the action taken. It is also our opinion that government representatives, such as those of the Department of Local Government and Community Development, cannot achieve the flexibility, the listening stance, required for this undertaking. As we were recently reminded (footnote 55, above), government-sponsored community organizations tend to transmit information, not receive it--in large part perhaps because centuries of tradition have so defined the government agent's role.<sup>71</sup>

The five immediate goals are these: increased employment, increased productivity, increased production, higher wages, and population control. By higher wages is understood, be it noted, compensation in cash or in kind, and the goal is higher compensation which is actually received, not merely recorded for presentation to an agent of the Department of Labor or the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Projects. Thus far we have spoken of goals, and have included among the 10 that we proposed only two which do not appear as such in

---

<sup>71</sup>Among the professional nongovernment organizations which come to mind as possible cooperators in this crucial development task are the following: Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), Yutivo Building, Dasmariñas St., Manila (primarily a funding agency, with direct developmental work principally in a cluster of barrios in Laguna); Sariling Sikap, Inc., 2067 P. Gil, Santa Ana, Manila (doing rural community developmental work with farmers in some barrios of San Luis and Candaba, Pampanga; may expand to Zambales; SPES Institute, Inc., Eliazo Hall, Ateneo de Manila, Q.C. (developmental and organizational work with small farmers, fishermen, squatters, and laborers in Pampanga (three municipalities), Pangasinan (one), Rizal (three), Bulacan (two barrios) and Metro Manila (four community organizations); does related training and evaluative research; may expand to Bukidnon, Davao; the [Roman Catholic] Diocesan Social Action Centers (at Naga City and Legazpi City), both associated with the National Secretariate for Social Action (NASSA), which is a foundation, with address at 2655, F.B. Harrison, Pasay City.

the present version of the BRBDP plan: higher wages and increased participation in decision-making. Turning now to projects, we shall be similarly acceptant of the CDP's suggestions. Once more a catalogue will be made, with comments added only where we feel they are necessary: to modify the CDP's description of a project or subproject, for example, or to explain the one project we have added.

Five project groups may be distinguished, as follows: (1) the water resources development group; (2) the transport development group; (3) the agricultural development group; (4) the industrial development group; and (5) the social development group. Component projects of the water resources development group are these: (a) flood control; (b) irrigation and drainage; (c) drinking water supply; (d) salinity control; and (e) watershed management (see CDP, pp. 81-90). The transport development group includes the following: (a) roads (main trunkline and secondary/feeder roads); (b) railways; (c) ports; and (d) airports (CDP, pp. 91-95). Composing the agricultural development group are these projects: (a) research; (b) extension; (c) impact/pilot projects; and (d) policy studies (CDP, pp. 97-113). The industrial development set, concerned with the promotion of both rural and urban industry, lists these projects: (a) feasibility studies; (b) monitoring system, that is, a business information program; (c) manpower development program; (d) policy studies; and (e) urban-rural linkages study (CDP, pp. 117-20 and 149). Projects composing the social development group are these: (a) integrated health services, including nutrition, sanitation, family-planning, and

hospital and RHU improvement; (b) tenure improvement; (c) human resources development; (d) socioagricultural institutions, including clubs and cooperatives; (e) area development, including the critically important "Area Development Council" (a citizens' group to identify problems, select solutions, and monitor remedial action); and (f)--added by the SSRU--wage and equity improvement (for projects a-e, see CDP, pp. 122-44).

In almost all instances we agree with the CDP's authors that a special project is indicated for the area referred to in the project title. However, these are cases in which we question the content of a project as they describe it. Granted that we may have misunderstood the text, we have the impression nonetheless that the CDP rules out, a priori, the possibility of changes in institutional structure or goals as part of the development program. There appear to be two related tendencies, particularly obtrusive in the social development group. The first is to assume that existing institutions (such as the Samahang Nasyon or the Barangay) and programs (such as agrarian reform) should retain their present basic form. A consequence of this assumption is that the program's task becomes (a) to get existing associations to serve added functions, or to serve the old ones more effectively, and (b) to help existing programs to achieve their current goals more quickly and more consistently. But the evidence indicates, we suggest, that some institutions and programs now operating in the River Basin need basic restructuring and redefined goals, rather than a propping

up or a helping hand.

The second tendency is to assume that the most important participating roles in development should be played by the same people who run (or legitimize) most government-sponsored activities: the incumbent heads of political units and local associations, and the community elite. It is these people, apparently, who are scheduled to receive training as managers (CDP, p. 131) and to form the local "policy-making" groups in the otherwise laudable Area Development Program (CDP, pp. 136-37). Could there not be explicit provision in all these projects for the possible participation of the poor majority and women not as followers alone, but leaders as well?

We have added a project called "wage and equity improvement," the purpose being to highlight the necessity of an organized effort in support of the stated goals of higher wages and increased equality of income distribution. What the content of this project should be must be a matter of further study, planning, discussion, and experiment.

Project-and-goal justification: means-ends relationships

In a program such as the BRBDP, proposed goals and related projects may be evaluated from the economic and technical (means-ends) or social and moral (social-soundness) viewpoint.<sup>72</sup> In this, the third

---

<sup>72</sup>Social soundness is a blend of social and moral acceptability; it comprehends both social feasibility and conformity to the norms of social justice and social morality. Beyond the social-soundness and means-ends viewpoints other aspects, such as the political, might be examined. But not here.

element of the program outline, we focus on means-ends relationships, "showing how the projects are expected to achieve the chosen goals," and illustrating these interrelationships by means of a "graphic means-ends framework" (see p. 41, above). Social soundness will be discussed in the section that follows this one.

Lest we belabor the obvious, or repeat what the CDP has generally done so well, we shall merely sketch the means-ends connections that should obtain among projects, goals, and concerns. But before doing this, let us introduce Figure 1, the graphic means-ends framework (p. 81).<sup>73</sup>

The diagram features four kinds of enclosed figure, each representing a different category of means or end. From left to right in the figure, following in general a progression from project means to ultimate goal, they are as follows: rectangles (the five project groups); rhomboids (the five immediate and four intermediate goals); hexagons (the people's concerns); and a circle (the ultimate goal).

The lines that connect the enclosed figures with one another may indicate a cause-effect, antecedent-consequence, conditioning, heightening, or conveying relationship, the direction of the influence generally being from left to right. Where advisable for purposes of clarity (for example, when the line is vertical), the expected path may be more explicitly indicated by arrows added to the line.

---

<sup>73</sup>Figure 1 should be compared with Figure 10 in the Bicol River Basin Development Program's Comprehensive development plan 1975-2000 (1976).

The line connecting two figures is usually to be read as "should bring about, or contribute to, or assist." Thus a line originating at the Transport projects box (PG2) and terminating at the PG3, PG4, or PG5 boxes indicates that one or more of the transport development projects should contribute to one or more projects in the Agricultural development, Industrial development, or Social development project groups. The same is true, mutatis mutandis, for lines passing from projects to goals.

Where a line enters one of the 11 hexagons, however, all of which represent areas of concern (pp. 42-43), the understanding is different. These "concerns" are in reality the people's perceptions of various life domains, perceptions which the development program hopes to make more favorable. Hence any line entering a hexagon from the left should be interpreted as the conveyor of some change for the better which, when reflected on by the people, will make them happier about that particular aspect of their lives. When the goal of increased per capita income is achieved, for example, the corresponding concern will be allayed, or satisfied, at least somewhat, and the people's perception of the income domain brightened. Alternatively, increased income may make possible the means by which the people will satisfy other concerns, such as education, housing, or travel. In either instance, the important distinction between lines entering rectangles or rhomboids and lines entering hexagons is that the influence being channeled must in the latter case be perceived to have

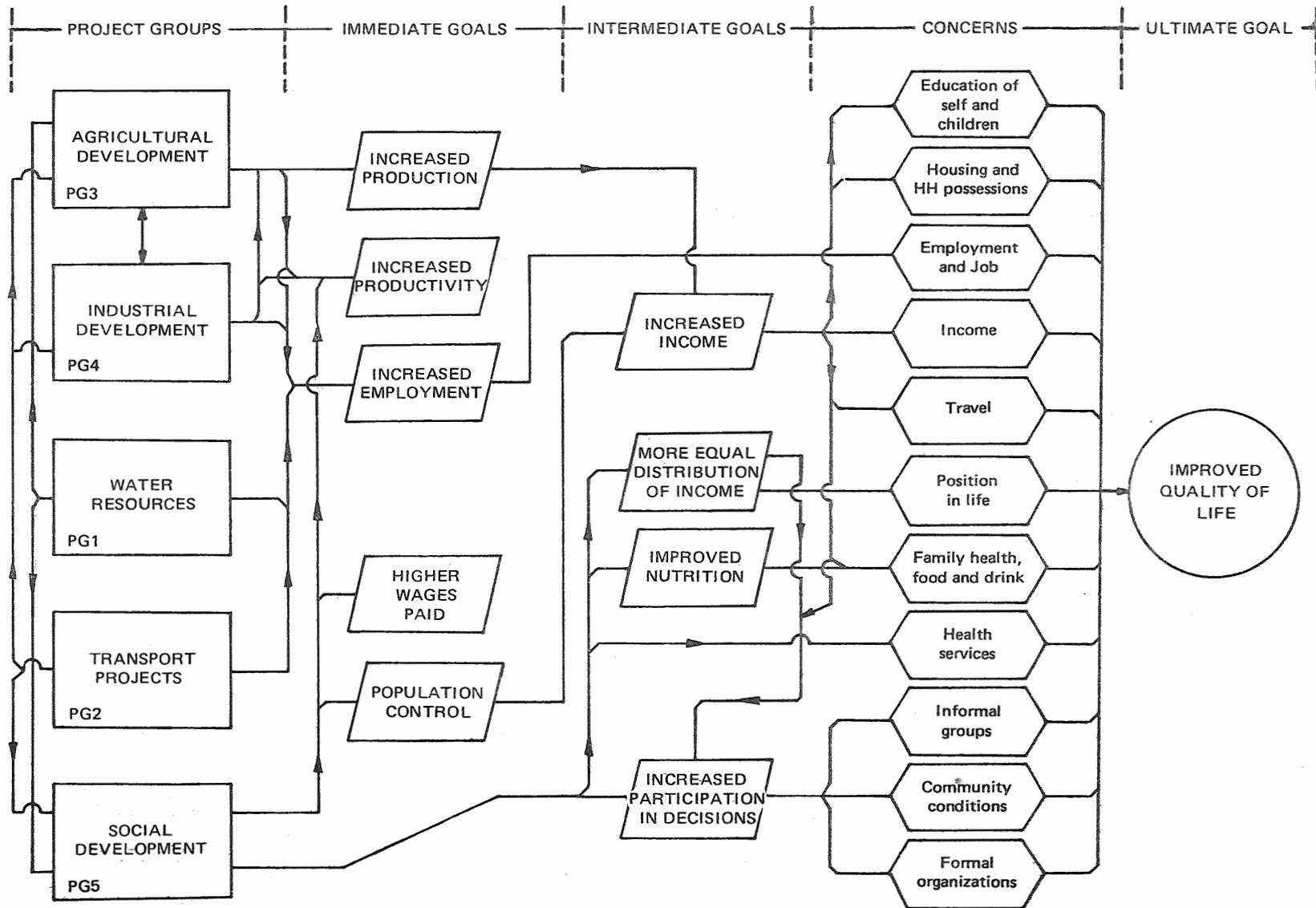


Figure 1. Means-ends framework of projects and goals suggested for a people-centered assistance program for the Bicol River Basin (compare Fig. 10 in the Bicol River Basin Development Program's *Comprehensive development plan 1975-2000* [1976]).

its effect. From the people's view at least, this is also true of lines entering the circle, since the ultimate goal for them is an improvement in the perceived quality of life in general.

Returning now to our illustrative comments on means-ends relationships (and that is all we offer here), we proceed from left to right in Figure 1. Projects in the water resources and transport project groups (PG1-2) will in various ways (not shown in the diagram) benefit the people directly, satisfying their felt needs for cleaner or more accessible drinking water, for example, or all-weather roads for their vehicles.

But the two infrastructure groups will also help indirectly, by facilitating projects in the agricultural, industrial, and social development sets (PG3-5). Since the water resources projects (PG1) will be concerned with the solution of major obstacles to increased agricultural production (PG3), such as inadequate irrigation, flood control, and salinity control, they will support the agricultural project set substantially; by making pure and abundant water available for both industrial, public, and household purposes, the water resources projects will also contribute to the development of industry (PG4) and the success of the integrated health services project of the social development project group (PG5).

The transport services group (PG2) will facilitate the delivery of production inputs for both the agricultural and industrial sectors, and the marketing of their outputs. By reducing transport costs and inconvenience, this set of projects will make increased travel

possible and give the people greater access to medical and other services found especially in the larger centers. In the short run, of course, the transport projects will generate employment and become a source of increased income.

The agricultural and industrial sets (PG3-4), interlinked and assisting each other, will contribute to the immediate goals of increased production, employment, and productivity. The social development group (PG5), on the other hand, will by its training programs and health services, as well as by its campaign for the payment of proper wages, lead to increased productivity and higher wages. Through its educational, medical, and family planning programs PG5 should also help reduce the Basin population over time and in this way--with increased production supposed--contribute to the intermediate goal of increased income (and perhaps to the immediate goal of increased employment). The intermediate goal of improved nutrition will be another responsibility of the social development group. As well, this group will promote more equal distribution of income, specifically by institutional measures such as agrarian reform and possibly a progressive tax structure. The habit of increased participation in decision-making is expected to come with increased income, more equal distribution of income, and the people's playing a regular part in the planning and implementing of BRBDP activities, among others (another project of the social development group).

As the five immediate and four intermediate goals are attained, the people's major problems, mentioned earlier, should be reduced or solved.

To the extent that they perceive this change, their overall happiness will be enhanced and the ultimate goal of the assistance program achieved from their viewpoint. Looking at other indicators, the experts will decide to what degree their judgment on the people's level of living must be altered as a result of the program's effects.<sup>74</sup>

Goal-and-project justification: social soundness

In this fourth element of the outline our aim is to justify on social soundness grounds the goals and projects we have proposed for the assistance program. When one is evaluating the plan of a program, the social soundness of both goals and projects is to be measured in terms of intended effects: Does the goal or project see the poor majority, male and female, as its principal beneficiaries? Is it for the poor, in other words? Again, does the goal or project aim to fill a need which the poor themselves feel, or which they must in any event satisfy if they are to attain other important ends they consciously desire? That is, is the goal or project from the poor? If the answers are affirmative, the goal or project will have met our criteria 1, 2, and 5 (pp. 3-5, above) and passed the test of intended effect.

For a project, however, acceptability of intended effect is not enough. Since a project must be implemented, reduced to external behavior and specified materials, there is always the possibility that

---

<sup>74</sup>This flippant commentary is admittedly a caricature of rigorous means-ends thinking. But since the major aims of this paper are to illustrate the third approach and make a social-soundness analysis, too much detail here would be an inappropriate distraction.

its laudable intentions may be obstructed, diverted, or dissipated because of an improvident plan of action. For this reason, projects must pass a second test, that of intended means (criteria 3 and 4; see p. 4, above). Is the project so designed that it is likely to reach its intended target and bring its benefits to the poor? And to what extent will the project involve the poor themselves in the delivery of those benefits? Depending on what answers are given to these questions a project may pass or not pass the test of intended means.

It is relatively easy to show, as we already have in passing, that our goals and project groups meet the requirements of criteria 1, 2, and 5 (intended effect). We shall review from this viewpoint each of the nine intermediate and immediate goals in turn, assuming that there is no need to prove that the ultimate goal--an improvement in the perceived quality of life in general--corresponds to a popular desire. We shall not review the projects in this manner, however. For if a project is designed to achieve a particular goal effectively (and we shall assume for our purposes that the CDP projects we have accepted are so designed), and if that goal passes the intended-effect test for social soundness (which ours will), then the project will also have fulfilled this initial requirement, and deserve approval as for and from the poor.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup>One seeming exception is the improvement of airport facilities (a project of the transport group), but even this may be justified on grounds of its assuring the delivery of essential cargo to the general Basin population, particularly when highway and railroad service from Manila has been interrupted.

Since about four-fifths of the River Basin population belong to the lower class, and one-half of them are women, it might be difficult to design a public development program which would not benefit this target group and thereby be a program at least partly for the poor (criteria 1). Many goals, however, are not directly from the poor (criteria 2). They are reconcilable with social soundness, nonetheless, under criterion 5, that is, as essential for the attainment of some other goal, or the solution of some problem, which is a felt need.

The four intermediate goals, for example, are increased income, more equal distribution of income, improved nutrition, and increased participation in decision-making, and they correspond to major concerns or felt needs of the people either directly (increased income) or indirectly (the other three).

Increased income is a problem about which the people speak in explicit terms. Moreover, to the degree to which this goal is achieved, household heads will have the wherewithal to solve other perceived problems, namely, the unsatisfactory housing they presently have, the too few household possessions they can call their own, the small amount of traveling they can afford, the way they must stint on food, the family's less than satisfactory health record, and the relatively few years of education they can give their children.<sup>76</sup> One important means for the meeting of all these needs and desires is the raising of income,

---

<sup>76</sup>Whether it is seen as a problem or not, increased education for their children is certainly a conscious desire of most River Basin household heads.

especially in cash.

As we saw earlier (pp. 60-61), improved nutrition in the technical sense (basically, a balanced and adequate diet) is not a concern of the average household head; satisfying, filling quantities of rice and a side-dish, preferably fish or meat--this is the felt need. Nonetheless, given the incidence of malnutrition in the Basin, and its effect on what is a popular concern, family health, the goal of improved nutrition certainly has a place in a people-centered assistance program.

Neither a more equal distribution of income nor increased participation in decision-making is an articulated felt need of the River Basin masses, but both are necessary prerequisites for the kind of communities they want. Moreover, the two factors are interlinked. As we saw earlier, the tendency to speak up at community or organization meetings varies directly with social status, which in turn depends mainly on relative wealth. Given this fact, an increasingly more equal distribution of income, by raising the relative status of the currently poor, should lead to their perceiving themselves--even by traditional norms--as more entitled than they presently are to participate in community deliberations. Moreover, by the institutionalization of discussion, selection, and evaluation of development activities, it is hoped that the traditional elitist norm will be modified, so that even the relatively poor will become accustomed to air their feelings and opinions regularly. These two measures should result in greater involvement in the detection and solution of community problems, among

them the widely perceived deficiencies in cooperation, peace, and order which bother so many residents.

Of the five immediate goals, only increased employment and perhaps higher wages are conscious needs of the people. The other four (increased productivity, increased production, and population control) are necessary means, however, for the filling of popular needs. Increased production and population control, for example, should in concert lead the way to increased income. If the labor surplus is minimized, moreover, increased productivity may encourage the payment of higher wages.

So much for the intended effects of goals, and indirectly, of projects.<sup>77</sup> For the latter, as we said (pp. 84-85), an additional test is required, that of intended means. There is a problem in the present case, however. So few of the projects proposed by the CDP, whether adopted by the SSRU or not, have been reduced to operational detail, that we have little concrete material toward which to direct a critique of this kind. Several projects are already underway, it is true (the Bicol Secondary and Feeder Roads Project is one), but even here we have not seen the final plans or relevant interim reports.<sup>78</sup>

In lieu of the application of social-soundness criteria 3 and 4 and of the women's-role norm to particular projects, we offer instead

---

<sup>77</sup>The inclusion in the program's scope of problems detected only by the experts (section C of Table 7, pp. 45-46) is justified by a process analogous to that used for goals (see p. 40, above).

<sup>78</sup>This is not through any fault of the BRBDP's Program Office.

several caveats which should be kept in mind when the concrete details of project implementation are being decided on.

But first, a general consideration. The fact that a project passes the intended-effect test is no guarantee that its means will also pass social-soundness muster. The road to inequity is paved with good intentions. To give an example, one can hardly disapprove a low-cost housing project on grounds of what it hopes to accomplish for the poor majority. But if the "low-cost" homes finally offered to the public cost ₱30,000 one can seriously doubt that the project will "allow housing loan resources to seep down to low income families."<sup>79</sup> The intention was good; the execution, from this viewpoint, inept.

Another example is a project that would bring electric power to rural communities. Unless special means were taken to prevent the otherwise inevitable consequence, the wealthier class would predictably benefit more than the poor from the innovation. To be more specific, a greater percentage of the upper class would use the new power source, and would use it in more ways and for more productive purposes. In fact, the social-soundness question would become, in the final analysis, to what extent (if at all) electricity was actually

---

<sup>79</sup>This was a goal of the Social Security System (SSS), expressed in a press release (Times Journal [4 June 1975]: 12). Yet because of self-imposed constraints, the SSS apparently ended up using the funds of its poor members, who could not afford the SSS homes (that is, the 88 percent who made less than ₱500 a month), to finance the homes of those members who could (the upper 12 percent). See William J. Keyes, S.J., and Maria C. Roldan-Burcroff, Housing the urban poor: Nonconventional approaches to a national problem (IPC Poverty Series, No. 4; Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila, 1976), p. 63.

reaching the poor.<sup>80</sup>

The same kind of gap-widening effect can result from any number of other projects, such as improved roads (which may make it easier for middle men to exploit the rural poor) or expanded irrigation and flood control facilities (which may, like electric power, be more available to the wealthy than the poor). There are usually answers to these problems, ways in which abuses of worthwhile projects can be prevented or minimized. But alertness and foresight are required. The price of social soundness is eternal vigilance--and a mind that imagines the worst.

With these general thoughts as background, we offer several suggestions which apply to practical aspects of project planning and implementation. They were selected for inclusion here because they are illustrative of the kind of "defensive thinking" required to assure social soundness.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup>The answer would depend on definitions, of course, and on representative (or complete) empirical data. If the poor were defined as those whose income did not reach, for example, the so-called total poverty threshold for the region; and if this threshold (defined by outside experts) were notably higher than the corresponding threshold as popularly perceived, then an embarrassing phenomenon might arise: many "poor" would be users of electricity, but a large percentage of them might be only technically so, but locally recognized as relatively wealthy. In the case of Misamis Oriental Rural Electric Service Cooperative (MORESCO) this may have occurred. In any event, as one of the principal investigators of MORESCO's social soundness said, relative to whether or not electricity was reaching the poor, "the data do not permit one to answer the question." See Alejandro Herrin, "Rural electrification: A study of social and economic impact in western Misamis Oriental" (paper read at the Annual Convention of the Philippine Sociological Society, January 23-25, 1976), p. 2.

<sup>81</sup>This defensive (or dirty!) thinking is only one aspect of project

1. No project shall by design or in effect be exclusively or mainly for the upper class or for males.

Exceptions are admissible in the latter case, when the nature of the project demands it. But exceptions should be just that--exceptions.

2. Where it is foreseen that the upper class will derive significantly greater benefit from a project than the poor, the project must be redesigned or the differential justified.

There are at least two ways in which a differential benefit might be justified: by the special contribution which the wealthy make to the project, furnishing leadership for example, or capital, providing security or incurring risk; or by reason of an existing tradition, honored by the poor, which allows this kind of larger share within limits. The tradition in turn may be based on the expectation that the wealthy will be liberal toward the poor in a great number of culturally defined circumstances (see pp. 16-21, above, on social class).

We are implying here that a certain amount of trickle-up may be economically and socially sound, as well as locally acceptable to the poor themselves.<sup>82</sup>

3. It is prudent (if impolitic) to start project planning with the reversible assumption that the people's "representatives" are unrepresentative.

Incumbents of appointive and even elective office, members of the elite--all should be presumed guilty of (conscious or unconscious) misrepresentation, until proven otherwise. This is an example of social soundness through defensive planning.

---

planning, needless to say, but it is essential for socially sound results.

<sup>82</sup>See the provocative article of Donald K. Emmerson, "Biting the helping hand: Modernization and violence in an Indonesian fishing community," Land Tenure Center Newsletter, No. 51 (January-March 1976), pp. 1-15.

4. It is also prudent to assume that no institution, association, or program works half as well as its official spokesmen say it does.

Again the defensive tactic, this time to avoid premature acceptance of an existing organization as the chosen instrument of project-benefit delivery.

In this connection, furnished lists of any kind are to be distrusted--till proven valid. Reference is to membership or attendance records, lists of contributors, subscribers, water users, voters, pupils, family-planning acceptors, customers, barangay members, communicants--you name it. Such lists should be checked before they are used for purposes of project planning.

5. The people's participation in a project will not be proportionate to the project's capacity to fill their needs, but to their perception of that capacity.

This is a restatement, for emphasis, of an earlier dictum: only if the people's needs are addressed will they themselves become involved in a project; and to the degree that their happiness--as they define it--is enhanced, to that degree will the project be considered a success (p. 38).

There is no such thing as a "good project" if the people don't accept it as such.

These five principles, with others implicit in earlier discussions of problems, goals, and projects, should serve to illustrate the combination of concern and cynicism which is required for the design and fielding of socially acceptable projects and programs. The proper mix is difficult to achieve, doubly difficult to maintain, because, frequently enough, one must be both concerned and cynical about the very same people. However, if those responsible for the program or any one of its many facets will give this task the priority attention it

deserves, they will assuredly strike the right balance most of the time. No one can ask more than that.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In an introductory note to this paper we stated that our purpose was "to develop an approach to the design of a socially sound assistance program, and to apply this approach to the Bicol River Basin in particular." We stated further that the product was to be "compared with an existing proposed development plan for that region." More concretely, the purpose was threefold: to work out procedures for the construction of an acceptable aid program; to illustrate their use by designing such a program for the River Basin; and, with this program as the norm, to reflect on the BRBDP's Comprehensive development plan, from the viewpoint especially of social soundness.

#### Design and Application of the Third Approach

The first and second purposes have been accomplished, we believe. We have developed and illustrated in outline form what we call the third approach to aid-program design, an approach which assumes that the people's concerns and perceived problems take precedence in planning. Working together, people and professionals first produce four categories of background information: (a) the main physical features of the target area; (b) the potentials, problems, and constraints which the experts see as conditioning the area's development; (c) relevant sociocultural characteristics of the area's population; and

(d) the major problems of the area as the people see them.<sup>83</sup>

With these findings as the focus of discussion, the people and their partners proceed to the fashioning of a program outline, assembling in the course of their discussions (a) a review of the problems they face; (b) the goals and projects that should solve them, each with its agreed-on indicators of accomplishment and designated function in the overall plan; (c) a justification, on economic and technical grounds, of the goals and projects that were selected; and (d) a justification, on social-soundness grounds, of the outline program and its components. Finally, this people's council (with continued assistance as needed and desired) designs and implements a system for the monitoring and evaluating of program and project activities.

We could not consistently follow this ideal sequence in designing the assistance program presented in the body of the paper. Nonetheless, the assembling of background information proceeded in large part

---

<sup>83</sup>To gather information on shared concerns and problems, the use of social-survey techniques is highly recommended. However, instead of the one-shot design which we had to settle for in this exercise, we recommend instead this sequence: first, a relatively large number of in-depth, open-ended interviews with men and women residents of the area; these people should be purposively selected as representative of various important segments or sectors of the population; their replies will help identify what the major concerns and problems of the area are; second, a standard social-survey inquiry of a random sample of residents, the questions on concerns and problems to be based on the findings of the first-phase interviews (above) and presented in fixed-alternative format (with the usual provision for "other" replies). From the second phase one will learn the incidence of the various concerns and problems and, by crosstabulation with the background characteristics of respondents, the kind of people who tend to express each of them.

as it should have: the CDP furnished the experts' contributions on (a) physical setting and (b) potentials and difficulties, and the SSRU added pertinent data on (c) the local society and culture and (d) the people's concerns and problems. After this, instead of an experts-people dialogue aimed at determining the contents of the program, we made-do with our interpretation of the people's desires, on the one hand, and our understanding of the CDP and SSRU findings and recommendations on the other.

From the interplay of the various contributions the program outline emerged. The first element was a list of 15 concerns (Table 1, above) and 28 problems (Table 7), the latter being a composite inventory derived from the people alone (3 items) the people and the experts in agreement (13 items), and the experts alone (12).

For the second element, goals and projects suited to the problems were identified and arranged in hierarchical order. Briefly, the ultimate goal of a significant improvement in the quality of people's lives (perceived by the people, verified by the experts) will be attained through four intermediate goals: increased household income, more equal distribution of income, improved nutrition, and increased and more meaningful participation in community decision-making. From the people's viewpoint, these positive changes will contribute to the ultimate goal only insofar as they have a perceived effect on their concerns and problems. Experts will use other measures as well to determine what improvements have occurred.

Assisting in various ways in the attainment of these four intermediate aims will be five immediate goals, namely, increased production, increased employment, increased productivity, higher wages, and population control. The power behind all these foreseen improvements will be generated in a multitude of interconnected projects conveniently catalogued under one or another of five project groups, labeled water resources, transport services, agricultural development, industrial development, and social development.

An examination of the proposed program from a means-ends viewpoint (the third element) revealed no shortcomings. From a social-soundness perspective (the final element of the outline) the individual goals and their related projects passed the test of intended effect (Were they designed to satisfy the needs of the poor majority, and of women as well as men?). A problem arose with the additional test for projects, that of intended means (Would the benefits really reach the poor and the women as intended, preferably with the participation and assistance of the beneficiaries themselves?). It could not be properly applied, since the bulk of the projects had not as yet been implemented or even reduced to operational detail. Hence, instead of evaluating the projects, selected principles were offered to illustrate the kind of "cynical concern" which social soundness demands.

One obvious fault with our program (and the CDP's as well) is the failure to provide an articulated plan for the further integration of ordinary women into the River Basin's economic, social, and political

life. The major reason for this gap is the scarcity of detailed and reliable information on the present status and activities of the various kinds of women in the Basin. One of us put together a summary of what could be learned from available writings and the secondary analysis of selected SSRU data, but the resulting essay was not sufficient for our purposes.<sup>84</sup> New field research, designed expressly to give us a better understanding of River Basin women, is currently underway.<sup>85</sup> When it is finished (probably by December 1976), we should have the information we need to fill the gap in our program (and the CDP's) in a manner that matches the importance of the problem-area.

#### Social-Soundness Critique of the CDP

The third purpose of this paper was to reflect on the Comprehensive development plan of the Bicol River Basin Development Program from the viewpoint of social soundness. We now turn to this task.

As a matter of fact, we have already made a start on the assignment. For when it was convenient and appropriate to do so we

---

<sup>84</sup>J. F. I. Illo, "The women of the Bicol River Basin: Selected findings" (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila, 1976).

<sup>85</sup>The project director is Ms. Illo. Other needed research, noted in passing in this paper, should investigate these topics: the people's understanding of "peace and order" (pp. 42-44); a people's plan for agrarian reform (pp. 63-64); new or altered forms of popular participation in community decision-making (pp. 64-67); class-linked differences (p. 73) in the correlation between perceptions (e.g., PQL-income) and behavior (e.g., individual/household income received); variations in the degrees of dependence considered an acceptable (and respectable) trade-off in exchange for economic security; and information on the Basin's landless laborers.

anticipated this section of the paper by commenting in passing on the CDP. We now summarize our social-soundness evaluation of that document, including in this resume the content of those earlier statements.

The present CDP scores high on the test of intended effects. As we noted earlier (Table 7, section B), it addresses itself to 13 of the 16 problems which the people themselves recognize and seek answers to (criteria 1 and 2). Further, the added problems it would solve (ibid., section C) are also socially sound selections in that they are prerequisites for the filling of various felt needs of the poor majority (criterion 5). To this extent the program proposed by the CDP is both for and from the poor.

We stated above (p. 88) that the test of intended means could not easily be applied to the CDP projects, since so few of them had been implemented, or reduced to practical detail. Only by examining the concrete circumstances of a project's operation (ongoing or realistically foreseen) can one judge how well it will meet the requirements of our criteria 3 and 4 (see p. 4). Nonetheless, we believe the CDP will be substantially improved if the authors will (a) give special attention to the role of River Basin women in development; (b) adjust the plan to take more conscious account of social problems that may seriously impede project performance; and (c) make the people's growth in self-determination a major goal of the River Basin program.

We are moved to the first suggestion by the fact that (understandably) no proper provision has been made as yet for the place of

women in the River Basin development plan. The second suggestion springs from our perception that the CDP fails to recognize and/or come to grips with several social and psychological realities that must be considered in the planning process; while the third results from our conviction that genuine grass-roots participation in development decisions, and in community affairs in general, is of the essence of this program and must therefore be given a preferred place in the overall plan.

We are sure that as the appropriate data become available (see above, p. 97 and footnotes 84 and 85) the CDP's authors will build into the next version of the plan adequate provision for the further integration of River Basin women into the economy and other aspects of the area, the region, and the nation. As the International Labour Office suggests, there are "two facets to a basic-needs strategy for women in developing countries."

One is to enable them to contribute more effectively to the satisfaction of their families' basic needs, within the framework of their traditional responsibilities. The other, which is a fundamental need of the women themselves, is to ease their work burden while furthering their economic independence and their more equitable integration into the community, beyond the narrow circle of the family.<sup>86</sup>

Women in the barrios (and even the poblaciones) of the River Basin are almost certainly overworked, rather than underemployed. To

---

<sup>86</sup>International Labor Office, Employment, growth and basic needs: A one-world problem (Geneva: ILO, 1976), p. 61. This document should be required reading for River Basin planners. Its core concept, that of the basic-needs strategy (minimum requirements for all families, essential services for every community) is compatible with the BRBDP's orientation.

relieve them of drudgery and improve the quality of their employment will be one obvious goal of any development program. But the BRBDP will consider this only a starting point in a comprehensive plan in favor of the area's women.

The principal social and psychological facts with which a River Basin assistance program must reckon are these: first, the grinding poverty of most Bicolanos, particularly the average farmer; and, second, the likely unevenness in both design and performance of existing organizations and programs. The CDP does not show sufficient practical awareness of these two realities.

Take the first point, poverty. The CDP mentions it, to be sure (e.g., CDP, pp. i, 57), and even makes increased income one of the program's major goals (CDP, pp. ii, 57, 68, 113).<sup>87</sup> But this widespread insolvency seems to be forgotten when development plans are discussed. For example, when projections are made of rice crop area, production, and value for the next quarter-century (1975-2000), seed, fertilizer, and chemicals costing an estimated ₱4.37 billion are included in the plan (CDP, p. 17). It is not clear who will pay the bill for these inputs. Certainly, unless socialized pricing is envisioned, or loans that are incredibly soft, not the average Bicolano farmer. His monthly income is only ₱133, or US\$18--he is hardly the person to take on added liabilities and risks except under the most

---

<sup>87</sup>The aim is defined as "increased per capita income" and "increased per capita value-added." See pp. 71-72, above, for an equity problem connected with this definition of the goal.

extraordinary circumstances.<sup>88</sup> The CDP might spell out the particulars of its agricultural development plan in this regard.

A second fact which planners must face is the likelihood of an existing program or institution needing an overhaul, not only in matters of performance, but even in objectives and structures. The CDP recognizes a need for the first kind of intervention (at least for the rabus and barangay organizations [CDP, p. 132] and for the agrarian reform program [CDP, p. 127]), but there appears to be no expectation that new organizations or social programs might replace the old, and no curiosity about possibly basic flaws in the existing ones.

Thus it is taken for granted, for example, that the agrarian reform program will remain fundamentally the same as it now is, and that the compact farm as we know it will be adopted and used. The same seems true of the Samahang Nayon, irrigation associations, 4-H clubs, and agricultural credit and cooperative associations (CDP, p. 133 and passim).

---

<sup>88</sup>An excellent illustration of how this security-first principle guides decision-making is the differential reaction of nipa farmers and fishermen to the proposal that their nipa tidelands be converted into a fishpond estate. Both accepted the likelihood of increased income if they became fishpond operators, but while most fishermen were for the project, most farmers were not. The reason behind the split response was this: the fishermen could go right on fishing in the nearby river and bay during the construction of the ponds, but the farmers would for that period of time be without their major source of income, the sale of nipa shingles. Those who studied the episode concluded that poor but relatively secure Bicolanos will not readily exchange a modest but sure source of support, provided they are "getting by," for some innovation which is supposedly more lucrative, unless the change-over costs little or nothing, and involves no interruption, however temporary, of their earning activities. They are absolutely

Indeed, it comes as a surprise to be told that the "Rabus and barangay shall serve as the sociopolitical units (at the barrio level) that are designed to bring the people into the mainstream of the New Society ideals and make them responsible partners of the government in its national endeavors" (ibid.). From what we know of these organizations it is not clear that they are likely instruments to make the people "responsible partners of the government" (see, for example, pp. 74-75, above).

Speaking more generally, however, the a priori acceptance and anointing of organizations seems a hasty tactic, given the possibility of doing better (see principle 4, p. 92, above). The CDP's authors might consider including in their plan a search for improved new or basically altered organizations and programs, somewhat on the order of their scheduled research into more appropriate farming systems and crops (CDP, pp. 97-98).

The question of the people's participation in the development program is one to which the CDP devotes less attention, and much less funding than it should. The Social Development Program section starts out in a promising manner: "The real mission of the development exercise is the development of human beings" (CDP, p. 122, cf. p. 10 and

---

bereft of any risk-capital or even emergency funds, beyond the surplus of some social ally who is economically more secure. For further details see Jose V. Barrameda, Jr., Sulpicio S. Roco, Jr., and Frank Lynch, S.J., "The proposed Balongay fishpond estate: How do the taga-Balongay feel about it?" (SSRU Research Report Series, No. 4; Naga City: Social Survey Research Unit, Ateneo de Naga, 1974).

footnote 10, above). But in the course of the section it becomes clear (to us at least) that the foreseen participation of the people in development is not what it could and should be. This is so, we believe, because the CDP's notion of participation is in effect elitist, and in practice will result in a form of tokenism (p. 9, above).

The principal vehicle for the people's participation in the program is the Area Development Council (CDP, pp. 136-41). This ADC is designed as an intermunicipality institution that will "maximize and facilitate popular participation in development planning and in evaluation of project implementation" (CDP, p. 135; emphasis added). Yet as we read on we discover that "popular" refers directly to the incumbent heads of local political units and current leaders of local organizations (CDP, pp. 136-38, passim); through them the development projects will be made "meaningful to the people who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the BRBDP" (CDP, p. 7; also p. 137 and elsewhere). On closer reading, the "planning" to be done by this elite group (the ADC) turns out to be policy-making and evaluation. Planning is placed in the hands of technicians, both local, provincial, and Basinwide (CDP, pp. 137-39).

The situation is further confounded by the CDP's explicitly assuring the reader that the [predictably upper-class] membership of the ADC will know the general public's needs and interests because they are drawn from various "callings" (CDP, p. 137). This assumption

is exactly the opposite of a principle we expressed earlier, namely, that "It is prudent (if impolitic) to start project planning with the reversible assumption that the people's 'representatives' are unrepresentative" (p. 91; emphasis added).

May we recommend, most strongly, that the CDP's authors consider redefining the ADC's membership and functions so as to achieve greater genuinely popular participation. Further, they might reflect once more on the practical consequences of their statement that the "real mission of the development exercise is the development of human beings" (p. 122). For if human development is the primary purpose of the BRBDP, and if participation in decisions that affect one's destiny is one of the hallmarks of being genuinely human, then the River Basin residents deserve much greater encouragement and assistance in this regard than the present CDP affords them. Increased participation in community affairs in general should be, we believe, a major intermediate goal of the program (see pp. 64-67 and 74-75, above). And the importance of the projects that support this participation training should be reflected in the care with which they are designed, and the adequacy with which they are funded.<sup>89</sup>

To summarize, the present Comprehensive development plan is a first-version draft in search of a second. In general, its goals are

---

<sup>89</sup>According to the present budget estimate (CDP, p. iv), the entire Social Development Program over the next 25 years is allotted about ₦26 million, or about ₦1 million per year. The total CDP budget is in the area of ₦3.5 billion, which means that this program, which addresses the "real mission" of development, is scheduled to receive ₦700 for every ₦100,000 going to other CDP programs.

socially sound, if in need of expansion: we recommend at least one added intermediate goal (increased participation in community decision-making), one immediate goal (the actual payment of higher wages), and a subproject on the improvement of women's status in the River Basin.

Beyond this we suggest that the CDP's authors reflect on the abject poverty of most River Basin residents, and consider what implications this fact has for project implementation. The same kind of exercise might focus on the actual state of ongoing programs and existing institutions, asking if mere remedial action will be sufficient, or if more creative measures are called for. On the other hand, let the concept of the Agricultural Development Council (a step clearly in the right direction) be examined to see how it might be further improved, perhaps along the lines that we have suggested. We cannot overemphasize the central role that increased participation in decision-making--genuine participation by all levels of society--will play in the future of the River Basin.

#### A Final Note

The SSRU's mandate from the Bicol River Basin Council was, among other things, to evaluate the activities of the BRBDP, including the latter's production of the Comprehensive development plan. Unfortunately, the mandate carried no assurance of infallibility; it was more a license to err in good conscience, than an exemption from error itself. And needless to say, we have probably made a fair share of

mistakes.<sup>90</sup> We are ready to correct those errors, whatever they may be, and to rethink our conclusions. In this way we may make of this paper a more effective instrument for the attainment of the common goal sought by the Bicol River Basin Council, the United States Agency for International Development, and ourselves alike--a significant improvement in the life quality of those for whom the Bicol River Basin, despite its present problems, is now and will in future be home.

---

<sup>90</sup>Among those who tried to prevent some of these errors were Lawrence A. Marinelli, Don F. Wadley, and C. Stuart Callison (all of USAID/Naga). We profited as well from the expertise of William S. Pooler (USAID Consultant from Syracuse University). Production and research assistance came mainly from Emmanuela F. Abainza and Edith S. Casillan (IPC/SSRU) and Eduardo G. Balaba, Jr., and Austriberto S. Arguel (Ateneo University Press). We are grateful for the help we received.

Addendum: LIST OF CORRECTIONS TO BE MADE IN THE TEXT

Page	Para.	Line	Correction <sup>a</sup>
iii	1	8	<u>For</u> <del>señected</del> <u>read</u> selected.
iii	2	3	* <u>After</u> concerns <u>insert</u> and 28 problems.
12	0	4	<u>For</u> problmes <u>read</u> problems.
18	3	8	<u>For</u> solicit <u>read</u> solicited.
20	1	2	<u>For</u> were <u>read</u> are.
20	1	11	<u>For</u> was <u>read</u> is.
23	1	7	<u>Insert</u> as <u>after</u> finding.
44	0	7	<u>Delete</u> . <u>after</u> Army.
48	2	4	<u>For</u> pat- <u>read</u> patch-.
48	n. 30	3	<u>Insert</u> ( <u>before</u> SSRU.
57	2	6	<u>Delete</u> ) <u>after</u> 1974.
68	2	6	* <u>For</u> goal-and-project justification <u>read</u> social soundness.
71	0	8	<u>Delete</u> a.
72	1	4	* <u>For</u> average <u>read</u> usual.
73	n. 68	10	<u>For</u> be <u>read</u> been.
77	1	3	<u>For</u> these <u>read</u> there.
78	1	4	* <u>For</u> heads or political <u>read</u> heads of political.
80	2	9	* <u>For</u> per capita income <u>read</u> house- hold income.
85	0	8	<u>For</u> question <u>read</u> questions.
88	1	2	<u>For</u> four <u>read</u> three.
90	n. 80	9	<u>Insert</u> the <u>before</u> Misamis.
98	2	1	<u>Underline</u> intended means.
105	1	7	* <u>For</u> Agricultural <u>read</u> Area.

<sup>a</sup>Asterisked corrections change the meaning of the text.

