

PLAN GUAYMI  
A NONFORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN PANAMA

MONTHLY REPORT  
November, 1976

Submitted by the staff of  
Inter-American Development Institute

Inter-American Development Institute  
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Baseline Survey

The tabulation of the baseline survey questionnaire applied last August is moving along slowly, due in part to MOE reluctance to accept IALF technical advice on how to codify the data. The way the MOE is going about it, it is unlikely tabulated results will be available for analysis before six months, which means the project will probably have to develop the curriculum without this information. However, it is unlikely that extremely relevant or useful information for a curriculum will come from its analysis, due to the largely statistical nature of the information gathered. IALF staff has attempted to convince the MOE that a new, but brief, survey of knowledge, attitudes and practices should be applied. If we are successful in convincing them, this survey will probably be applied early next year. It should be noted however, that IALF staff has conducted periodic interviews with Guaymi encountered on field trips and seminars and has a good basis for assessing what a sound curriculum should consist of at this point.

Guaymi Training Center

Since the town of Tolé has need of the high school facilities which the training center currently occupies, alternate locations for the center have been under consideration by the MOE. Initial consideration was given to the construction of a Guaymi center in Tolé, however, it now appears unlikely that any GOP funds will be made available for this purpose, due in large part to a recent MOE survey which has determined that there are enough school facilities to adequately house current and expected national enrollment.

IALF and MOE are in agreement that a location within the Indian area would be ideal, but a road is essential to avoid serious logistics problems. Under specific consideration as possible sites are Chichica and Soley. Both would require the construction of some additional facilities to house the center, but Chichica has the drawback that the road only goes as far as Alto Caballero. There are plans to finish the road all the way to Chichica but probably not until 1978. The strongest possibility, therefore, at this point is Soley. A joint IALF/MOE team will visit the site soon to determine the feasibility of the move.

Materials Development

The appointment of the MOE materials development team (artist and writers) to work with IALF Audiovisual Expert is still pending. It is expected that the team will be on board in January to begin work.

Evaluation

A working paper containing guidelines for the evaluation of the project has been prepared by the IALF Evaluation Advisor and will be presented to the MOE for discussion in December.

Relations with the MOE

Space for the IALF team in Panama has been allocated by the MOE and construction of the necessary divisions has started. IALF expects to move sometime in mid-December.

Meetings have been held with MOE staff members during which IALF has stressed the need for solid scientific documentation of project activities. While MOE is receptive to IALF's point of view, there appears to be some reluctance on the part of MOE staff members at the working level to allow IALF staff members free access to project documents. It appears that there is an underlying fear on the part of some MOE staff members that IALF free access may facilitate the publication of information or materials unfavorable to the GOP.

It is hoped that once IALF moves into the MOE building, close daily contact may help to alleviate these fears and facilitate necessary IALF access to project documents.

Relations with the Guaymi

IALF staff members were invited to a meeting of jefes inmediatos of Chiriqui, called by the Cacique. At this meeting it was apparent that there is a heavy commitment on the part of the traditional Guaymi leaders to the development of the Guaymi people as well as to the project. The Cacique pledged his continued support and urged all those present to cooperate to the fullest extent. IALF staff members in turn offered their continued support of Guaymi community development activities.

Several Guaymi who attended the first training course were present and gave progress reports of their activities in their respective communities. These reports indicate that construction of latrines and fresh water wells has begun in some communities. Site visits to the communities are being scheduled jointly by IALF and the MOE.

Summary

During the month of November progress on project activities has not proceeded at as rapid a pace as IALF staff members deem desirable. This was due in part to the absence of key IALF staff members from Panama during the first part of November. It is also due in part to the pace set by the MOE, which can be politely described as slow. It is hoped that the pace will pick up during the coming months.