

PD - AAQ - 591

37898

please  
file

17

LETTER 13085  
RECEIVED BY  
13 DEC 1982

A Consolidation of the  
Evaluation of the North Cameroon Pilot Community  
Development Project - Kar Hay Subdivision  
Northern Province, Republic of Cameroon

(631-0010)

Save the Children/USAID/GURC  
22 September 1977 - 30 June 1981

## **I. Introduction**

The following report is submitted from the Africa Region of Save the Children as a synthesis of separate evaluation reports presented by two consultants evaluating the North Cameroon Pilot Community Development Project in Kar Hay Subdivision of the Northern Province. While establishing general agreement that the project had achieved successfully the original goals and purposes, the two evaluators had differences of opinion regarding the interpretation of the facts being collected and the extent of the project's achievement. For this reason their reports were submitted under separate cover. The Africa Region has prepared this report to objectively reflect the observations, criticisms and recommendations of the two consultants.

The Doukoula evaluation team was headed by Daniel Lantum, M.D., Deputy Director of the University Center for Health Services in Yaounde. Rasalind Eyben, Ph.D., an experienced planner and evaluator with the UN served as the second independent evaluator. Other members of the evaluation team were:

- Mr. Nkwomyo Ashu - Chief of Section, Community Development for Mayo Donay Division
- Mr. Don Kurtz - Africa Program Coordinator in Save the Children Headquarters
- Mr. Toby Chamberlain - SCF Program Associate in Yaounde.

Resource persons assisting the team were:

- Mr. Rick Embry - former SCF Project Manager - Doukoula
- Mr. Onana Mbita - Community Development Department Project Manager/ Doukoula
- Mr. Jean Waleke - Director of the Community Education Action Center (CEAC) for Mayo Donay Division
- Mr. Jon Werz - Dutch Volunteer Construction Advisor - Doukoula

Preliminary planning meetings between the consultants and SCF staff were held in Yaounde prior to the the actual field study which took place from 1-8 March 1982. The meetings focused in the establishment of terms of reference for the evaluation (see the appendice) and discussions of project documentation reviewed by the consultants.

The evaluation approach adopted by the team consisted of community meetings of two hours duration in all the nine pilot villages; preliminary and summarizing meetings with local government officials (Sous-Prefet, sector chiefs representing ministries in Kar Hay); interviews with divisional government officials (acting Prefet, the Agriculture, Health, and Community Development officers supervising the project); and inspections of the projects' physical achievements such as wells, school buildings, the training center and community gardens.

## II. Project Objectives

The project's primary objective was to introduce, on a pilot basis, in a specific section of francophone Northern Province, the community development (CD) approach that had been practiced in anglophone Cameroon for over twenty years. Defined by CDF as a Community-Based Integrated Rural Development (CBIRD) project, the underlying goals may be summarized as follows:

- Creation of ongoing, self-sustaining community action for local development;
- Vertical and horizontal integration of development activities;
- Institutionalization of the CBIRD approach with the framework of the Ministry of Agriculture;
- Replicability of the methods and techniques of the CBIRD approach in other parts of the country.

Self-sustainability implies those conditions which stimulate people's participation and their capabilities to take charge of the development of their community. One essential condition is the acquisition of the following skills by community residents:

- Identification of problems and their causes;
- Development of appropriate strategies for tackling these problems;
- Organization of resources (cash, material and labor) from both within the community and outside to meet specific needs;
- Management of project implementation.

A major goal of a CBIRD project thus, is to teach these skills to a community.

Integration is achieved when:

- The various government and nongovernmental development services work closely together to achieve a particular development target;
- The target community and these development agencies plan and implement projects together;
- The community and development agencies recognize that underdevelopment is the result of multiple causes, all of which must be taken into account when planning and implementing a development strategy.

The intention of GURC and CDF was that the goals and functions of the Doukoula integrated project would gradually be institutionalized within the Community Development Department and that this organization would then develop the appropriate strategy for replicating the methods and techniques of CBIRD projects in other parts of the country.

An ambitious set of specific sectoral goals (as stated in the September 1977 OPG agreement) may be summarized as follows:

- Effective application of improved agricultural techniques by participating farm families;
- Development of cost-effective, appropriately scaled programs in animal production, health services, education, etc.;
- Development of financial and investment networks for recycling of resources into the local economy, with particular emphasis on the establishment of credit facilities and;
- Water resource development with a minimum of 5 litres per day per person and 75% reduction in the number of people required to walk more than one kilometer to fetch water.

### III. Project Design

The project was originally conceived in 1975 when the Community Development Department was mandated to extend its services beyond the Northwest and Southwest Provinces. A senior representative from CDF made a one week visit with Community Development officials to Northern Province, one of Cameroon's least-developed regions. On the basis of his findings and follow-up discussions with the Government, Kar Hay was selected as the target area. At that time some consultation took place with the local authorities of the Kar Hay Subdivision but no feasibility study was undertaken.

A proposal was submitted to USAID in late 1975 which responded to trends in the development strategies of Government and the AID Mission. The Government of Cameroon was interested to see a "bottom-up" rural development approach implemented as it recognized that the "top-down" methods tried so far in francophone Cameroon had been unsuccessful. A philosophy of "developpement auto-centre" or self-reliant development became the key underlying philosophical premise of rural development policy. USAID was also at that time very interested in supporting community development projects as part of its basic needs strategy and was already discussing with the Government the funding of a National Planning for Community Development project. It saw the Kar Hay project as a potential model to be used by the Community Development Department to expand its program throughout the country. In September 1977 AID approved a grant for the project and recruitment of personnel by CDF began at the end of the year.

#### IV. Project Implementation

##### A. Project Start-up

The SCF Project Manager arrived in Cameroon in March 1978. SCF had planned to appoint a Field Office Director at the same time, but recruitment delays resulted in the appointment of the latter in December. As a result, the Project Manager spent most of his first six months in Yaounde negotiating a protocol agreement with the Cameroon Government. This prevented him from spending time in the project area and in anglophone Cameroon studying the work of the CDD, as had originally been planned.

Two visits were made to the North in April and June 1978 by the Project Manager but his installation in Doukoula did not come until December after completing a staff training seminar in Maroua. Largely because the local authorities and the local party officials had not been consulted at the time of project preparation, there was little knowledge about Save the Children and the project in Mayo Danay Division. Moreover the central Government had not yet signed the protocol agreement, making the Project Manager's presence largely unofficial. This made the establishment of an institutional framework difficult and slowed discussions with the Government concerning the appointment of a national Project Director. Mr. Guidikaya, the CD Divisional Chief at Yagoua was sympathetic but could not be involved on a daily basis.

In September 1979 the project began to be accepted by the local authorities. In that month the Central Government signed the Protocol Agreement and the Project Manager submitted the first Management Implementation Plan for approval by the local government. Eighteen months had passed since the arrival of the Project Manager and the time when the actual implementation of discrete project activities began.

##### B. The Target Villages

The project addressed the needs of approximately 20,000 direct beneficiaries located in nine villages. In early 1979, five target villages in the Doukoula region were selected in consultation with local government; another four were added in 1980. The Project Manager and locally recruited Community Development Department staff organized a baseline survey questionnaire and then used it to assess village needs. While the survey was not detailed enough to furnish adequate baseline indicators for evaluation, it did serve as a good tool for needs assessment and provided villagers and the Community Development Department staff with an opportunity to become acquainted.

By the middle of 1979, each of the villages had establish Village Development Comittces. The aim of Save the Children was to build upon the existing community structures while at the same time

making the VDCs as representative as possible. In each case, the President of the VDC was the village chief, the Vice President the Chief's main advisor and the Secretary a literate villager often selected by the Chief. In theory, committee members represented the various neighborhoods within the village and women were to be represented as part of the committee or in a women's subcommittee. The evaluation team was not in the villages long enough to confirm in every case the extent to which the VDCs were representing the various interest groups within the community.

### C. Project Activities

#### Water Resource Development

As in many communities, the populations of Kar Hay identified inadequate access to water as their greatest problem. The wells construction project initiated by Save the Children was very successful both in terms of level of active village participation and degree of collaboration between Save the Children and Genie Rurale, the Government's rural hydraulics service. SCF and villagers worked together to dig wells, and once the water table had been reached, Genie Rurale came in to deepen the wells. In general SCF wells were found to be much cleaner than the village wells already in place. The evaluation team believes that successful community participation was the result of a well organized project which had clear and immediate benefits for local residents. In addition, only those who would directly benefit from the wells were asked to contribute their labor.

#### School Construction

The construction of school buildings has not proceeded with the smoothness and steady momentum observed in the wells program. Only one of the seven villages has a school block of two classrooms completed. There are a number of explanations. First, a school serves a much wider community than a well and requires the collaboration and contributed labor of residents from several neighborhoods. Prior to the arrival of CDF, most of these neighborhoods had not participated in projects which involved such collaboration. As a result, it has taken time to nurture active village-wide participation. Second, by providing materials and skilled labor, SCF and the CDD were obliged to assist the communities in the construction of schools which met Ministry of Education minimum standards. Such construction was far beyond anything villagers had undertaken previously, resulting in repeated delays. Finally, construction timetables were based on year-round village participation when, in reality, villages could only work on the schools when agricultural duties permitted. Schedules and deadlines based on villagers actual time availability rather than outsider's goals would have been more realistic.

2  
-5-

While it is clear that completion of school buildings will require continuing encouragement and guidance from CDD staff, the processes of community organization necessary for viable CD work are in place and evident. Work does continue at a slow, steady rate. The experience the villagers are gaining in tackling this relatively sophisticated project will be invaluable in terms of their ability to conceptualize needs and implement their own future community development projects.

#### Health/Nutrition

Establishing any kind of community health program was clearly difficult given the relatively short amount of time available. Delays in the Ministry of Health's approval of the creation of village health posts has retarded the construction of village health posts and fully operationalizing the primary health activities. In spite of health education sessions with the community development assistants Village Development Committees and health subcommittees have been discouraged from tackling community health problems from a strictly preventive approach. They had participated in the planning of a project to have curative (first aid) and preventive functions. Village health agents and midwives, trained by the divisional health services and the SCF public health specialist have made some impact on their communities although their work has been handicapped by delays in the follow up training.

#### Income Generating Activities

These were initiated in several villages on an experimental basis to try to enlarge the potential community resource base. A fruit tree nursery, designed to be managed eventually by the VDCs of all the Doukoula target villages with proceeds divided among the respective treasuries functioned for one year. In the second year seedling production faltered when mango seeds could not be obtained and cooperative leadership stagnated. The nursery is now run on a private basis until staff and the committee can resolve the production constraint. Another village attempted to set up a village workshop to make oxen yokes but the scheme failed when they did not resolve a disagreement with the local blacksmith about the fee for his services and because there was insufficient demand stimulated. Two groups of village women living near SCF-constructed wells organized themselves into communal vegetable gardening groups. Although the harvests are somewhat small to divide, the women are satisfied to have increased the availability of vegetables for sale and for family consumption. They have agreed to participate in establishing a network of women's gardens in the Doukoula impact area.

#### V. Project Management

The project could have had a more efficient start-up phase had more groundwork been done by SCF prior to the Project Manager's arrival.

Save the Children has been responsible for establishing the necessary relations with the Government of Cameroon and ensuring that the Community Development Department was responsible for the project from the very start (not, as happened, when SCF involvement was winding down).

During the lifetime of the project the Community Development Department became much more actively involved, as did the local government. In contrast to the First Management Implementation Plan, the Second Plan (1980) was drawn up by SCF, with the active collaboration of local authorities. In that same year, the Government provided the project with CFA 1,800,000 and in 1981 initiated the smooth transition of project management from SCF to the CDD. The Government's Project Manager was installed in October 1981 and Mr. Embry stayed on for two months to assist during the transition period. During the start-up phase of CDD project management some project activities were delayed due to slow initial disbursement of government funds but the situation has improved.

At the beginning of the project, routine monitoring took time to develop. Problems of follow-up in some of the villages could have been dealt with if the field coordinators had been required to maintain systematic records of their visits. In the last year there has been a serious attempt to remedy this situation. While the evaluation team's short stay in Doukoula prevented a detailed study of the monitoring process currently in place, it was agreed that the reporting format still needs to be standardized with a system of review and follow-up activities by the Project Manager built into the system.

Field Coordinators, recruited from local villages and speakers of the local Toupourri language, have proven to be key to an ongoing community development program. The evaluation team agreed that, in the past, the program could have taken fuller advantage of the field coordinators' skills. In the future Field Coordinators should be assigned to specific villages rather than given responsibility, and expected to work intermittently, for all nine. In addition, Field Coordinators should live for periods of up to one month in the villages rather than commuting to and from Doukoula.

#### VI. Project Achievements vs. Original Objectives

When the project was first conceived, agricultural development was the primary sectoral objective. This, along with the establishment of credit facilities, was abandoned early in the life of the project as reflected in the annual management plans. The reasons given for not addressing agricultural problems were that the target population's most pressing felt needs were not related to the agricultural sector, probably due to rather efficient extension services of SODECOTON and the Government. Agriculture was simply not perceived as a priority problem.

The remaining objectives of water, education and health were tackled to the extent already discussed in the previous section. More focused sectoral programs may have resulted if the construction of physical facilities had not been so time consuming.

Budgetary design apparently led to the decision to increase the number of villages from five to nine. In terms of quantitative outputs extended to a broad population, this decision resulted in a more "successful project". However, in terms of the fundamental goals of CBIRD, the advantages of expansion are less clear. Project staff could not work in each village, devoting intensive attention to community skills acquisition, organization and animation.

An unanticipated positive outcome was the creation of a second Community Education and Action Center (CEAC) for Northern Province in Doukoula. Delays in the building of the house and offices for the project staff resulted in their completion just prior to SCF's departure. As a result, SCF and the Community Development Department agreed to convert the facilities into a training center for Community Development workers and village leaders not only from Kar Hay Sub-division but all the divisions of Mayo Danay.

#### CBIRD Objectives

While specific goals and strategies were adapted to local conditions as described above, the project did not deviate from its original fundamental objectives. At this stage a few, provisional observations may be appropriate. Even a long-term assessment of effectiveness will have to wait for more time to elapse after SCF's phase-out.

Ongoing, self-sustaining community action existed in various forms prior to SCF intervention. While communal herding of cows and well digging are "traditional", the more recent introduction of building and maintaining of schools of local materials is an indicator of a community's capacity for local initiative. Based on this observation, it would appear that the conditions were appropriate for the introduction of a CBIRD program in Doukoula. As a result of the SCF project, a partnership has developed between the villages and CDD, both in the undertaking of new activities such as the building of health posts and the establishment of the fruit tree nursery, as well as the undertaking of old activities (schools, wells) using more sophisticated materials and technology. The training of village well diggers, health workers and bookkeepers permitted community members to acquire skills that promote greater community self-reliance. This partnership between the villages and an outside agency is new; previously the villages either undertook projects entirely on their own or the authorities undertook projects in the community without any input from the community.

It is not entirely clear that all the target communities have fully understood the nature of the partnership, and particularly the CBIRD concept that initiative should come from within the community, not from the Government. For example, project staff have had difficulty in persuading village leaders to make contact with them when problems are encountered. The infusion of material inputs and skilled labor from the outside may have led the villagers to view themselves as the junior partners. If support from the Community Development Department were to stop now, it is unlikely that all the target communities would continue

with the work of building schools with the more sophisticated technology and materials introduced by the project. More time is required to ensure that the communities' increasing capacity for self-sustaining development has been thoroughly reinforced.

Regarding the objective of integration, the project has been successful in establishing close links with and between various related government agencies. Most of the local officials encountered during the evaluation had a clear understanding of the goals and methodology of the CBIRD program in Doukoula. It was noted however, that the project had failed to establish effective working relationships with non-governmental agencies operating in the area, particularly SODECOTON and the church missions.

Horizontal integration of the project's various sectoral objectives and activities was evidenced in several cases, such as the health education and sanitation associated with wells construction and the training of the village well diggers and health agents. Also, the establishment of women's communal gardens next to the SCF/Genie Rurale constructed wells in Sirlawe and Kokoro demonstrated sectoral association in problem solving.

The project has been most successful with reference to institutionalization. Its approach and methods have been embraced by the Government authorities, who now regard the CBIRD strategy as a model for Northern Province community development programs. This achievement is particularly significant considering the government's initial lack of clarity concerning the CBIRD approach.

The integration of the SCF project into CDD has been successful, although the delay in approval of Government funding (for capital, operational and salary expenses) has slowed the project somewhat during the transition period. While the funding problem may affect short-term replicability, in the long-term CBIRD methods and techniques promise to be highly replicable in Northern Province and other provinces of Cameroon.

## VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

### A. Conclusions

The team was struck by the impact of outside criteria imposed on the project, and by perceptions of rate of progress and degree of success these outside criteria established. The project aims to develop a community development infrastructure in a region where no such community enterprise has previously been tried. Thus, the success of a CBIRD project in this situation should not be based on the extent to which outputs are produced (e.g., wells, schools etc.) according to schedule. Rather, it is the process by which such outputs are eventually produced that should be considered of primary importance. The goal of CBIRD is to enable communities to learn to work together to identify, implement and benefit from development projects. Goals and timetables established by outsiders often hinder this process.

The Doukoula pilot project has demonstrated some important highlights:

- CBIRD has been successfully introduced in Kar Hay; the community development process is being reinforced and is continuing to mature as institutional linkages evolve.
- Institutionalization, particularly government management of the project, is being achieved, though support systems and financial timeliness need to be reinforced.
- The Doukoula community development model has proven to be replicable: the Community Development Department has requested Save the Children to open two new project areas (opened in July 1981) and discussions continue on other sites, based on the experience and lessons learned in Doukoula.

B. Recommendations

- 1) At the project design stage, selection of a target area and communities should be based on careful research, involving a detailed socio-economic study. Local residents should be included in any needs assessment conducted by SCF.
- 2) During design thought must be given to project objectives and the priorities given to means and ends. Timetables should be adjusted accordingly and deadlines should remain flexible. In most cases SCF should be prepared to remain involved beyond the established termination date if necessary.
- 3) Recognizing that CBIRD projects are perhaps the hardest of all development projects to implement, both in terms of goals and target population, SCF should give very careful attention to selection and training of its personnel, both expatriate and national. Careful thought must be given in training project managers to effectively assess local politics and then use their knowledge to improve the community development process. Such training is as relevant for national as it is for expatriate staff. Selection and training of field coordinators is even more important because they are the key to successful community development. Whenever possible, Field Coordinators should be assigned to live and work in a specific community.
- 4) Prior to the assignment of project staff, SCF should be responsible for establishing all government contacts and making all necessary institutional arrangements to insure active support, especially during the project start-up phase.

- 5) Community participation in development means more people finding the freedom to make choices about their lives and their community. In many third world societies, only a minority participate in community decisions and a CBIRD project designer should consider how more people in the community could be given the chance to become involved. The indisputable necessity of working with traditional rural leaders should not prevent SCF from exploring ways of broadening the base for community decision-making. In particular, women and young people must be brought into the process.
- 6) Monitoring and evaluation should not be an activity reserved for the Project Manager. Finding out what one wants to do, how one is doing it, and whether one is doing what one wanted to do should be an activity in which all members of the community development team are involved. One of the responsibilities of the Project Manager is to help the staff and community achieve this goal.
- 7) Efforts should be made to expand vertical linkages, particularly with private agencies who have approaches and insights to share.
- 8) All of the evaluation team members felt that the project would benefit from SCF involvement beyond June 1982. Every effort should be made to continue SCF funding for at least one more year (Dr. Lantum suggested three years) for the following reasons:
  - To avoid the perception that SCF is abandoning the project;
  - Government funding in any new project is slow in being networked and delivered; SCF presence will reassure staff and communities;
  - Community Development Department staff still need our guidance in initiating and implementing activities;
  - Government commitments, although firm, are minimal in some areas in this first year (staffing levels are good; implementation and administrative support needs to be increased;
  - The project is a pioneering community development effort in North Cameroon and still needs a little outside influence and tenacity to catalyze the project into a continuing, viable program.

LIST OF SCF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN KAR HAY (1/2/62)

VILLAGE	WELLS	SCHOOL	HEALTH POST	WORKSHOP OPEN-YOKE	VEGETABLE GARDEN	TREE NURSERIES
1. GOING	2	X	X	-	-	-
2. ZOUAYE	3	X	X	X	-	-
3. SIRLAWÉ	3	X	X	X	X	-
4. GUISSIA	1	X	X	-	-	-
5. TAKREO	1	X	X	-	-	-
6. DOUAYE	2	X	X	-	-	-
7. SAORINGWA	1	X	X	X	-	X
8. LOKORO	1	-	X	-	X	-
9. BOUGAYE	3	X	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	16	7	8	3	3	1

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE DOUKOULA EVALUATION MISSION

These terms of reference may be considered as the activities to be undertaken in order to achieve an effective evaluation. Evaluation is applied history -- we want to know what happened in the past in order to achieve a "brighter" future.

It would appear that the mission's findings should be useful at two levels, the local and the national. At the local level, the objective should be to assist the Doukoula people and their neighbors, as well as the local community development officials, to strengthen the community development process. At the (provincial) and national level, the mission's findings should be taken into account for future planning and implementation of CBIRD projects.

The terms of reference listed below are divided into two sections, although in the organization of the work it is likely that many of the activities will be carried out simultaneously. The first section is analytical and follows the standard evaluation program schedule of looking at design - objectives - inputs - activities - outputs - effects; the second section is more of a synthesis and involves a summing up of various aspects of the projects in the light of recommendations to be made concerning the future of CBIRD projects in Cameroon.

The amount of time allotted for the evaluation may mean that the beneficiaries (SCF and Community Development) should decide on which aspects of the projects the mission should concentrate.

### Section One

1. Examine the original concept of the project and the extent to which it can be viewed as appropriate with regard to the priorities and needs of the various participating groups:
  - target villages
  - local government authorities
  - Community Development Department
  - Save the Children Federation
  - USAID
  
2. Identify the Project's objectives at the start of implementation and investigate the ways and the extent to which each of the participating groups listed above had been involved in the choice of objectives. Examine whether there was a reorientation over the course of time and why this occurred.

Assuming that the project had several levels of objectives, investigate whether there were differences in weighting placed on these levels by the various groups (e.g. Group X most concerned with reducing disease and Group Y in achieving community problem solving).

3. Examine the inputs of the various groups listed above:

- personnel
- finance
- equipment
- lands & building

4. Look at the project's activities, both planned and implemented, e.g.

- formation of VDCs
- seminars
- surveys
- well-digging
- classroom building

5. As far as possible, quantify and qualify the project's outputs, e.g.

- linkages established
- wells dug
- health workers trained

6. Examine the extent to which the outputs have been effective in achieving the project's objectives. Identify any unanticipated effects and whether these are viewed as positive or negative by the various participating groups.

#### Section Two

7. Assuming that a primary objective of CBIRD project is the achievement of ongoing, self-perpetuating community action for local development, examine how far this has been achieved in Doukoula and whether the ideas have diffused to neighboring communities.
8. Examine the extent to which the integrated approach has been achieved with regard to linkages between objectives and also activities, including the involvement of a range of services and institutions.
9. Examine the process of institutionalization with regard to the gradual assumption of all SCF functions by the Community Development Department and determine whether the latter has the management, technical and financial capability at the provincial and departmental level to support and extend the Doukoula project after the SCF withdrawal.
10. Because Doukoula was a pilot project examine whether the Community Development/Save the Children partnership can be replicated in other parts of Cameroon and what common procedures and methodologies have already been established.

11. Draw up recommendations concerning

- (a) the future of the Doukoula project;
- (b) Community Development Department/Save the Children partnership for on-going and future CBIRD projects in Cameroon.