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NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT
KADAVU, FIJI

The Asia Foundation

in Partnership with the Methodist Church in Fiji

Final Report

November, 1984

INTRODUCTION

Between October 1981 and June 30, 1984, The Asia Foundation, in partnership with the Methodist Church in Fiji, has implemented the Non Formal Education, for Development project in Kadavu Province of Fiji. This project established ten non formal education programs at schools in the province and assisted twenty seven village and community organizations with self-help projects, intended to improve the general quality of life. The severe hurricane of 1979 prompted the project, as did recognition that the prospects for economic development in Kadavu were not as bright as in other parts of Fiji. In addition to being subject to recurrent hurricane damage, the villages of Kadavu are isolated from one another by rugged hills. There are few roads in the province and access from the sea is limited by dangerous reefs and lack of harbors. Communication and transportation links with Suva and other parts of Fiji are inadequate. Private ships do not call often because Kadavu is a limited market and offers few goods for export. Government ships call when possible, but their schedules are erratic and infrequent. To a large degree, the quality of life in Kadavu is dependent upon the cooperative efforts of its inhabitants to utilize the local resources of the land and sea, supplemented with the cash income of relatives who have emigrated to Suva and other cities for work. The project addressed the needs of Kadavu by providing opportunities to learn appropriate practical skills through non formal education and by supporting community self-help projects with financial and technical assistance.

Mr. Neil Jorgensen, a Peace Corps Volunteer who had served in Kadavu, assisted from the very beginning to pull together the essential elements in the project: The Methodist Church in Fiji Staff, The Regional Development Office of USAID, the Provincial Government leaders, The Asia Foundation, and the people of Kadavu.

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NON FORMAL EDUCATION

The ten non formal education projects varied in their duration, the number of persons trained and the costs per person. Four of the projects extended for over 2½ years. None of the non formal education programs were shorter than five months. The number of persons trained in each program ranged from fifteen to 280, with the total trained being 1220. The cost ranged from \$300 per student to \$3 per student, with the cost being dependent upon the teaching staff involved as well as the duration and complexity of the program. The non formal education at Richmond school was the most structured and involved two full time instructors; its cost was therefore proportionately higher than those which were directed by school committees and principals, or teachers on a part time basis.

Non formal education projects have both immediate and long term effects. The immediate effects of most of the projects included improvements in the diets of students and acquisition of skills which increased individual, institutional or family welfare. For instance, carpentry skills could be applied immediately to homes, boats, and to the school itself. Farming projects contributed to immediate improvements in the nutrition of students and their families, while poultry and fishing projects provided both increased protein for local consumption and potential cash income. The long term impact of non formal education will be observable over the coming months and years, as those who participated in the program apply their knowledge to daily life.

Successful non formal education programs require supportive school personnel and community cooperation. Enthusiasm remains high if the participation in the program produces income in kind, if not cash. The most popular non formal education programs were those which participants could realize a cash gain within a relatively short period of time. In the least successful of the ten projects, the implementing teacher was transferred and the school administration was not firmly behind the project. Without that support, student participation dwindled and the farming club became inactive.

Among the non formal education projects, the Richmond Methodist High school offered the most comprehensive variety of classes. The cost per participant in this program was high due to the extensive staff commitment, materials and equipment

involved. On the other hand, the very low cost Ratu Nacagilevu Primary school farming and fishing program had the most immediate impact on diet and income of participating students and their families. Both types of programs were successful; The Asia Foundation - Methodist Church experience suggests that future programs should include both participatory low cost programs at primary schools, concentrating on basic food production skills, and more complex programs at selected high schools. The latter, on the model of Richmond High school, would offer vocational skill training applicable to subsistence farming or salaried employment. In both types of programs, careful planning should assure that participation in non formal education has an observable positive impact on the well being of those who study. The positive impact may be in the form of improved diet as a result of farming and fishing classes, improved home and boat structure as a result of carpentry and construction classes, improved clothing as the outcome of sewing classes, and cash income as the outcome of handicraft, fishing, poultry and piggery classes. The non formal education boat building classes at Richmond provided an added bonus to the people of Kadavu: the Project Boat. Without the boat, the implementation of activities at remote villages would have been impossible. Enthusiasm for non formal education is closely related to the benefits realized from participation. Most of the non formal education opportunities provided by this grant were successful because they provided information and skills which were needed and they resulted in some improvement in the well being of those who participated.

The disastrous hurricane of 1983 destroyed some of the gardens, houses and boats established in the non formal education programs. However, the skills learned in the program enabled the Kadavians to repair and rebuild their homes and farms with greater efficiency and confidence.

VILLAGE SELF HELP PROJECTS

Village self help projects supported by this grant were based upon traditional skills and community needs. Initiation and implementation of village self help projects was complicated by the need for the cooperation of local government, traditional community leaders and the participating villagers. The Project Manager applied the lessons learned from his earlier experience in implementing Peace Corps and The Asia Foundation Accelerated Impact Projects. Many of those projects had limited success due to lack of grass roots support and lack of training or skills among the people who were expected to contribute their labor.

Twenty seven Village Self Help Projects were initiated with the assistance of this grant. The progress and problems encountered have been summarized in our earlier reports. Only six projects remained uncompleted, at the time of evaluation. The delays in completion of self help projects were due to lack of materials and supplies. Projects dependent upon supplies and equipment from outside Kadavu are faced with long delays. Commercial shipping services are very expensive and do not call at the minor ports of Kadavu frequently. Government shipping service is inexpensive but even less frequent. The emergency relief effort in the wake of the 1983 hurricane Oscar further interrupted the transportation facilities, as all ships were occupied in supplying emergency food and medical supplies.

A second problem which limited the success of village self help projects was lack of training. The most successful projects either simply provided equipment to improve the effectiveness of activities in which the villagers were normally involved or those which had a strong training component. For instance, better boats for fishing were constructed as village projects and had significant impact. A poultry project at Wailevu was able to send a member for training at the Fiji College of Agriculture. A result of this training was the most successful poultry business on the island. Summarizing the experience of the village self help projects leads to the conclusion that activities which villagers themselves recognize as important can be assisted with cash and equipment and result in improvement of efficiency and resultant quality of life. If appropriate training can be obtained, the positive impact is likely to be much higher. Apparently worthwhile projects which are proposed by a chief or government official, but lack grass roots support, have a high failure rate. Most of the village self help projects initiated during the life of this project were successful due

to the presence of a Project Manager who could identify grass roots support, arrange funds for equipment and supplies, and provide access to expertise or training facilities appropriate to the activity undertaken. Success were limited by delays in the arrival of equipment and supplies, and in some cases the lack of sufficient training. In spite of these problems and the setback of the 1983 hurricane, the projects provided substantial social and economic benefits to the people of Kadavu.

SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

A socio economic survey was carried out during the evaluation, providing data to be compared with baseline data collected earlier. The socio economic survey was limited to six villages, rather than the province as a whole. The results were mixed, largely due to the complete disruption of life caused by the 1983 hurricane. For months following the hurricane, food expenditures were decreased due to the lack of food for purchase and the availability of emergency relief supplies. Housing costs increased in general due to destruction in the hurricane. Although unquantified in the survey, the skills learned in both the non formal education and the village self help projects were of great benefit in the recovery effort. Kadavian economy is a complicated mixture of subsistence and market, with most cash income the result of returns from family members who have found salaried employment elsewhere. The profits from successful village self help projects may take some time for realization especially in the case of reforestation and certain agriculture projects.

CONCLUSION

The people of Kadavu, their traditional leaders, local government officials, the Methodist Church and The Asia Foundation in the course of implementation of this grant gained experience which will be helpful for the future. These lessons learned may be considered by others who are concerned with the economic and social development of Fiji. First, it has been found that increased income is a primary need of individuals and communities. Distribution of income from projects is best achieved through cooperatives in which individual members receive compensation in proportion to their contribution. The benefits of projects are increased by provision of training; without training, funds and equipment can only support traditional practiced techniques; with training the techniques of fishing, carpentry, boat construction or sewing can be improved while project resources provide material inputs. The most profitable enterprise for Kadavu is likely to be one of the most traditional, fishing. Improved techniques and equipment, such as fish traps and sea-worthy boats, can greatly improve fishing yields. Increased fish harvest can be substituted for the purchase of tinned fish or sold for cash. The most serious problems in this project's implementation were caused by shipping difficulties and the weather. Housing and agriculture in Kadavu must be hurricane proof to the extent that is possible, or long term improvements in the standard of living will be erased by hurricanes. The sale of goods produced in Kadavu and access to necessary supplies and equipment is severely limited by the shipping problem. A ship owned and operated by the province or the Cooperative Association could answer this need, but it might take several years for such a shipping service to become profitable.

All funds allocated to this project have been expended. As soon as the final determination of Foundation program services and indirect costs has been made, a financial report will be submitted.

The Foundation is pleased to have had the opportunity of cooperating with the Methodist Church of Fiji and the USAID Regional Development Office in bringing assistance to the people of Kadavu. The practical skills and organizational techniques learned in the course of this project should continue to assist the development of Kadavu. The lessons learned may be applied to similar efforts in other parts of Fiji.

Attachments: 25 Sept 84 Letter of Inike Nabulivou
Report of the Methodist Church, with attachments