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MIXED FARMING PROJECT

END OF TOUR REPORT

By

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Acknowledgements

No assignment of this kind turns out productively without the cooperation and assistance of many people. The entire Project staff all went out of their way to orient this latecomer to the project, to make the whole family feel welcome and to help us settle quickly and comfortably into a strange community. Words cannot express our gratitude to Glen and Ardevee Fulcher who both worked overtime to keep the project running smoothly and who were on call 24 hours every day to relay telephone calls or to help with other emergencies. Every other project member could also be singled out for some special kindness and assistance. The Gambian counterparts were equally helpful and patient in explaining the basic fundamentals of Senegambian society to a neophyte and in introducing him into village Gambia. They greatly facilitated fieldwork; I have rarely done so many interviews so smoothly and with so little resistance. I benefited immensely from all the groundwork developed by my predecessors. It greatly enhanced my output.

Never in my experience has such a large and diverse group been able to leave its professional differences at the office and to socialize as harmoniously as did the Mile Seven neighbourhood. That very special group of congenial people made holidays and other occasions very memorable for the whole family. All of these kindnesses are greatly appreciated and are in no small measure responsible for whatever successes I have achieved here.

The Assignment

My contract with the Mixed Farming Project ran from January 1, 1985 to June 30, 1986. After travel and vacation time was taken out I was actually present in The Gambia from January 4, 1985 to May 15, 1986. As I understood my responsibilities I was to help conduct socio-economic impact assessments of the Livestock Owner Associations, the maize cooking demonstrations and the various technical interventions sponsored by Mixed Farming scientists. I was to lend as much aid and assistance as possible and to integrate our studies into the Planning, Programming and Monitoring Unit. I also initiated a study of land tenure to try to identify the constraints on development imposed by traditional tenure patterns. All of this work was conducted in close collaboration with Neil A. Patrick, William P. Spencer, Melanie Marlett, Marie Sambou and my Gambian counterpart, Momodou O.S. Jammeh.

Major Accomplishments

No true academic could present his accomplishments without listing his publications and this sociologist is no exception. The following list is annotated to describe briefly how each publication fits into the total sociology program.

1. The Cold Hard Realities of Agricultural Development by Clyde Eastman. Special Report released jointly by the Planning, Programming and Monitoring Unit (PPMU) and Mixed Farming Project. October, 1985. This short think piece was designed to provide a conceptual framework to be used in the social impact evaluations and to stimulate debate on the development process.

2. Social Monitoring Report (SMR) No. 1 : Sexual Distribution of Labour Inputs and Benefits of Irrigated Rice Production in the Jahaly-Pacharr Smallholder Scheme by Clyde Eastman and Momodou O.S. Jammeh. September 1985.

SMR No. 2 : Impact on Upland Crop Production of the Jahaly-Pacharr Smallholder Scheme: A Qualitative Assessment by Clyde Eastman and Momodou O.S. Jammeh. January 1986.

SMR No. 3 : Participation and Satisfaction with the Cooperative Societies by Jahaly-Pacharr Smallholders by Momodou O.S. Jammeh and Clyde Eastman. May 1986.

SMR No. 4 : Assessing Level of Living Impacts of the Jahaly-Pacharr Smallholders Project by Clyde Eastman and Momodou O.S. Jammeh. May 1986.

These four reports present the results of nine months of social monitoring activity in the PPMU. Mr. Sambou Kinteh, Director of PPMU asked me to help establish an active monitoring effort and I elected to do so under the general project mandate to provide technical assistance to PPMU. Monitoring is certainly a core activity of the agency and Jahaly-Pacharr provided an excellent vehicle to demonstrate how to conduct impact assessment. Moreover, few resources were required beyond transportation and per-diem since the enumeration staff was already funded by the project. While initial capability has been established and the social monitoring program is active as I depart, additional technical assistance will be needed in this area. Recommendations for continued assistance are presented below.

3. Gambian Livestock Owners Associations: An Assessment by Clyde Eastman and Momodou O.S. Jammeh. This technical report was released by Mixed Farming Project. September 1985.

The analyses were based on data collected by Manuel Alers-Montalvo and M.O.S. Jammeh before I arrived in The Gambia. The purpose was to provide an assessment of the appropriateness of the LOAs as vehicles for future livestock development efforts. This study was specifically called for in the Project Paper.

4. The Gambian Livestock System : A Socio-Economic Perspective by the project staff. This is a Technical Report to be released by Mixed Farming Project. The second chapter of this report on the role of livestock in The Gambia contains primary data not reported elsewhere. Goals of livestock owners and marketing strategy are described and Implications for development efforts are presented and discussed. Chapter 9 also contains analyses not reported elsewhere. June 1986.

5. Traditional Gambian Land Tenure and the Requirements of Agricultural Development by Clyde Eastman. I expect to submit this article to a development or sociology journal within a month after I return to the States. I need to polish it when I have access to literature which is unavailable to me here. This is the substantive piece de resistance of my work in The Gambia.

6. Comprehensive Maize Report by MFP scientists. I contributed to the maize cooking demonstration evaluations and to the socio-economic assessment of the technical interventions.

Comments and Recommendations

I offer the following observations and recommendations while being ever mindful of the difficulties encountered by development efforts in The Gambia. Overshadowing all else is the chronic lack of resources. Pay scales are so low that it is difficult to attract and retain talented personnel. Periodic shortages of petrol and electricity make it difficult to do field work and office work alike. In spite of these recurrent difficulties, I have found Gambians, with only occasional exceptions, to be remarkably enthusiastic, cooperative and eager to learn. Day to day problems of operation notwithstanding, a review of only a few years activities indicates that progress is being made. New capabilities are being institutionalized.

. The PPMU has assembled a competent staff as evidenced by the recently increased output of data, project proposals and monitoring reports. However, to maintain and expand these outputs the agency could benefit greatly from continued technical assistance. More demands for sociological advice and analyses are being received than can be met by the lone sociologist on the staff. As MFP winds down Mr. Jammeh is heading up a major cooperative study (one should add without the required cooperation from the Gambia Cooperative Union) at the request of the Permanent Secretary. This is part of a regional effort to lay the groundwork for future technical assistance for the cooperatives. There is also the ongoing monitoring activity at Jahaly-Pacharr plus a major input into the new Farming Systems Project (GARD). These three major activities are in addition to the ad hoc 'brush-fire' type activities which intrude from time to time in an organization of this type. More manpower is urgently needed if even this modest program is to be completed. This is to say nothing of provision for advanced training for M.O.S. Jammeh. Mr. Jammeh should go for an M.S. Degree in Rural Sociology at the earliest possible time. That level of training is needed in PPMU. Mr. Jammeh has an outstanding academic record and long years of dedicated service in the Ministry of Agriculture. By any criterion he is a most deserving candidate. However, his absence will leave a gaping hole which must be filled in some way. This need requires the highest priority attention.

. While there are real difficulties in doing so, I think that a determined effort should always be made to tightly integrate the work of development assistance projects into the ongoing program of the appropriate government agencies. This assures continuity and a lasting impact from development assistance. For example, this was possible in the case of the Socioeconomic Unit and PPMU only in the last year of the project. Some very real obstacles had to be overcome to facilitate such integration. It appears that other components of the project may also have had similar difficulties.

. The written output of this project would have been facilitated by a better organized and motivated secretarial pool. Some of the secretaries did not appear to know the proper format for business correspondence or that addressed envelopes are required. Table and reference formats would be changed haphazardly, and there was seldom any feeling of urgency about any of the work. Personnel shifts in the last months greatly improved the situation.

. One observation on management style would seem to be appropriate. I think projects generally benefit from management participation in substantive matters. When it comes to integrating the work of various disciplines into one coherent whole the chief-of-party provides the natural focal point. Familiarity with various program activities provides an excellent basis for comprehensive analysis and a more global and measured view of problems. However, in a project of the magnitude of MFP, administrative details if not properly managed or delegated can easily overwhelm. A concerted effort should be made in most situations to free up time for such substantive involvement. This may be accomplished by providing adequate administrative assistance and/or by delegating administrative responsibilities among the professional staff.

. Going beyond the specifics of the Mixed Farming Project, I have one more general comment on the development assistance that I have observed in The Gambia. Much technical assistance in agriculture tends to focus on research and extension, field trials and on-farm demonstrations. While more of this kind of technology and extension may be appropriate something else is also needed. A recent national fertilizer policy study uncovered a very different kind of major bottleneck in fertilizer use in The Gambia. A check of GPMB and GCU records revealed serious problems in the distribution system. It was impossible to determine from GPMB and GCU records how much fertilizer was actually in the country, where it was located or what condition it might be in. It would not be an exaggeration to assert that distribution problems pose more constraints to fertilizer use than does farmers' lack of knowledge. Fertilizer use dropped sharply in 1985 due in part to late arrival of new supplies from abroad but also due to inability to distribute what was already in the country. A technical assistance effort which sorted out fertilizer distribution into a timely and orderly process would probably do much more for national grain production than the introduction of new technology or another extension effort. Only then are research and extension efforts likely to be fully effective and beneficial. In other words more attention needs to be focused on institutional restructuring. Only then are research and extension efforts likely to be fully effective and beneficial.