

PROJET PRODUCTIVITE NIAMEY
DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES, INC.

QUARTERLY REPORT

January - June 1986

This report concerns 1) the participation of Development Alternatives, Inc. in the activities of the Niamey Department Development Project and 2) progress made during the first half of 1986 by the project. The report contains the following sections:

- A. Activities under the DAI contract;
- B. PPN activities
- C. Problems and Issues
- D. Annexes

Activities under the DAI Contract

This reporting period was marked by the departure of two DAI contract personnel, the utilization of three short-term people to carryout specific assignments, and the presentation by DAI of an annual report in addition to the normal functions carried out under the contract.

In mid-January Ms. Kathleen Heffron resigned from the position as advisor to the Participation Feminine cell to take a permanent assignment with the U.S. State Department. A decision was taken that she should not be replaced on a full-time basis. Rather short-term assignments would cover necessary assistance to the women's section of project activities.

Charles Routt, advisor to the Monitoring/Evaluation unit, resigned effective May 31. Because only seven months remained of the time allotted for this position and the fact that the position is not foreseen in the project extension, DAI is not planning on replacing Mr. Routt. TDY help for the computer operations of the project will be utilized if necessary. It is expected that the planning and budget exercise for 1987 can be accomplished with the current capacity available within the project.

Three TDY's were employed during this reporting period:

- A. Mme Piera Delaire - Participation Feminine
- B. M. Francois Vezina - Guide CPT/CVF
- C. Mme Cynthia Moore - Contre-saison Study

Mme Delaire was engaged to specifically carryout several recommendations made by Kathleen Heffron, namely to develop training materials for the women's component of the CVF's and to train agents de suivi/femme of the CVF's in the content of the material developed. By the end of June several modules (agriculture and livestock) had been developed in collaboration with the concerned technical services and a two weeks training course was held using and further developing these modules.

At the end of this reporting period another training session was planned in which another two modules (health and animation) would be the central topics.

During April and May Francois Vezina was engaged to work with the CPT/CVF unit to develop an operation's guide for the CPT's and another for the CVF's. The lack of any reference material available to the CPT chiefs, the agents de suivi, and others connected with the training programs at the CPT or CVF level made this work a top priority. The end results are separate operation's guides for CPT's and CVF's along with a detailed technical section.

This is the first time that such material has been made available in a systematic way to those responsible for carrying out the training at either the CPT or CVF level. These materials have been well received and appreciated by those in responsible training positions. However, these guides were not developed to be static documents. Rather, they were developed in both a spirit and style that should enable the project to update and revise them on a yearly basis or when required. Annex A shows the CVF Operation's Guide that is currently in use.

In June Mme Cynthia Moore was engaged to help the Monitoring/Evaluation unit to finish the necessary programming and data analysis for a study concerning contre-saison sites 1986. By the end of this reporting she had adapted the earlier programming work done by Charles Routt for this study and was overseeing the data entry. The third quarter should see the analysis of this data and a final written report incorporating the findings.

DAI purchased for PPN the following five vehicles in early 1986:

- a. Two 504 stationwagons
- b. Two R4 utility vehicles
- c. One Nissan double-cabin pickup

With these purchases DAI has now completed all the vehicle purchases foreseen in its contract, leaving approximately 2,000,000 CFA available for the purchase of spare parts or other authorized equipment.

PPN Activities

While the quarterly reports presented by most cells give detailed accounts of various PPN activities, this section will focus on certain major activities with which the cells and project management were involved during this reporting period.

CPT/CVF

With the reassignment of Abdoulaye Makoudi by the MAG to the CPT/CVF cell, planning began on the 1986 training program and calendar for CVF's and CPT's. The project deliberately reduced the number of CPT's to be operational during 1986 to six (originally PPN constructed ten CPT's) and programmed support to 19 CVF's.

Due to financial constraints (to be discussed in section three of this report) all openings of CPT's and CVF's were very late, i.e. none became operational before May and some only began to function in June. This lateness had two major effects. First, no intensive alphabetisation training was possible during April and May. Second, field work began late as did the dressage of the animals to be used with the animal traction equipment. The above combined with the lateness of the rains at most sites meant that at the end of June the prognosis of cultivation and related training was far from optimal.

One training session for CPT chiefs was held at N'Dounga in May in which the Operation's Guide was first distributed, utilized and studied. Normally such training occurs in February and March, much in advance of the opening of CPT's.

Local Organisations

The technical advisor and his counterpart developed an overall guide to the Local Investment Fund (FIL), a more simplified guide for use at the village level (this guide was also translated into the local language), and helped in the design and/or beginning stages of execution of several micro-realizations. In addition, a training course concerning the FIL was developed and given to chosen personnel of the technical services at the arrondissement level as well as several trainers of the project. This training concentrated on an understanding of the FIL, how village initiatives could utilize this fund, and the material being developed for training of the CVD's.

While CVD training is meant to strengthen the capacity of each CVD to better analyse, formulate and develop activities (for which the FIL could assist) at the village level, it is also meant to give a better expression to the efforts being made to advance the concept and realisation of the Societe de Developpement.

Annex B shows the current status of micro-realizations receiving assistance from the FIL while Annex C is the guide concerning the FIL that was developed for use at the village and CVD level.

Participation Feminine

Emphasis was placed on the development of training and resource material for the female component of the CVF and CPT formation and on the training of trainers (formatrices) working with the CVF's. Material was developed during this period to cover the subjects of agriculture (including "culture de case") and livestock raising. In addition, a good start was made in collaboration with the technical services to develop training material covering health, sanitation and winter season gardening. Annex D shows the material developed for use in the training that concerns livestock. Such material is translated into Zarma for village use.

A two-week training course was held in May/June at Hamdallaye (Peace Corps Training Center) for approximately 20 formatrices from the CVF's. The time was devoted to gaining a clear understanding of the technical components included in the material on agriculture and livestock by using a method of translating the material from French into Zarma and from the dialogue that ensued. This method, while time consuming, made certain that the participants left the training session with a real gain in knowledge and understanding. A report on this training is included as Annex E.

Another training session is planned for August where the subjects will include a review of the material covered in the first session as well as introducing new material concerning health and hygiene.

In June a decision was taken to develop a team of women in each CVF that will be capable of continuing to furnish the necessary expertise to interested village parties once the formatrice leaves the CVF. Currently being formulated is a plan to have a village team/group, where each member masters a certain subject area and becomes the resource person for that subject. Thus each CVF will have the capacity of a certain level of self-teaching ("auto-encadrement") once PPN support is reduced to a CVF.

Applied Research

Extension/field agents ("observateurs") were recruited and trained to work in the test villages suggested by the Agro-ecological zonal study. Six agents were retained after going through a process of testing by the Applied Research unit. Two-weeks training given by IPDR/Kollo followed this choice. The training consisted of very basic knowledge concerning research and layout of plots, fertilizer application, seeding densities and follow-up of trials.

In June these agents were placed in five test villages where the Applied Research unit planned on-farm trials based on recommendations of the zonal study and DECOR/INRAN farming systems experience. Initial contact and work with farmers in these villages was encouraging, though lateness in the coming of the rains at the end of the reporting period made for uneasiness within the unit for these trials and production in general.

A total of 61 trials in test villages, N'Dounga and CPT's were designed to investigate several aspects of crop production, with emphasis placed on intercropping, fertilizer use and improved varieties. Some 43 out of 61 planned trials are of the on-farm type and link directly with the work of DECOR of INRAN.

In support of the Nigerien Government's desire to increase niébe and arachide production, intercropping experiments of millet / niébe and millet / arachide were designed for several CPT's. These two experiments should give an indication of the stability, both economic and agronomic, of intercropping niébe and arachide with millet throughout much of the project area.

Credit and Input Supply

Much of the effort of C/I was devoted to providing assistance to the cooperatives and the USRC's for the purchase of animals for the trainees of 1985 and those of 1986 in both the CPT's and CVF's. Approximately 250 pair of bullocks were purchased during the months of April and May for the 1986 trainees. However, due to a late start in these purchases, several CPT's and CVF's did not have animals trained for the initial field work. This resulted in delays in planting and less hectares planted in various locations.

During this reporting period PPN was fortunate to receive approximately 50 tons of USAID imported sorghum that was deemed to be no longer edible for humans. In addition, an important quantity of spoiled CSM was donated to the project by CARE. These two quantities taken together should give the CPT and CVF animals sufficient supplementary feed for most of the year.

The stock of "son de ble" and cotton seed that the project ordered is not now expected before the end of the 3rd quarter. This purchase is being held up by powers beyond the control of the project. Thus the importance of the sorghum and CSM.

Follow-up assistance and control of cooperative books, stocks and orders continued throughout this period. A major inventory control of all cooperatives which PPN has supported is being planned for July 1986.

Monitoring/Evaluation

The monitoring/evaluation unit carried out in early 1986 the collection of field data for an in-depth study of contre-saison sites. A program using d-Base III was developed to handle the data from this study. Data entry was begun in June and is expected to be completed by mid-July. The results and analysis of this data should be available in report form in September.

Information was gathered for the 1985 PPN annual report. However, due to the inability of the unit to receive all necessary information from the arrondissements and departemental chiefs, this report cannot be completed. This situation illustrates a weakness that continually faces the project, namely the lack of being able to exert sufficient pressure on the technical services to furnish to PPN desired and necessary reports of activities in which they are involved and which are supported by PPN funds.

The monitoring/evaluation unit took the lead in working with all concerned parties to develop a workplan and corresponding budget for 1986-87. At the end of June a preliminary workplan was presented to the project director. This plan is less ambitious than past plans, containing only 92 distinct operations outside of normal administrative support, a reduction of 29% in the number of operations directly supported by PPN. The 1985-86 plan/budget supported some 130 distinct operations. The proposed budget is some one hundred million CFA less than that of 1985-86, coming to 416.000.000 CFA; this translates into a budget that is some 22% smaller than the current budget.

With the departure of the technical assistant to the unit, activities will now focus on monitoring PPN activities. Should special studies be required, these will be done under contract with PPN by outside individuals or institutions. This action is simply the recognition of the fact that PPN has neither the personnel nor the capacity required to do more than adequately and in a timely fashion monitor PPN supported activities.

ARMA

During the second quarter of 1986 ARMA began the actual production of prototypes of new and revised models of agricultural machinery, held a training session for maitre-dresseurs, started test activities with chosen contact farmers and with the CFJA, and spent an important amount of time making revisions and repairs on equipment acquired from the Central for the trainees at the CPT's and CVF's and in fabricating jougs for these same trainees. In addition, ARMA completed the interior work of the main project warehouse giving the project a secure and organized place for stocking parts and equipment. Also, it must not go unnoticed that a counterpart to the technical assistant was assigned by the MAG and began work

with ARMA.

This latter point is very important in that it should relieve the technical assistant of many current administrative duties that he has filled because of the lack of a homologue and enable him to concentrate his efforts on the technical side of ARMA. However, whether this will happen is somewhat in doubt in that the technical assistant has received clear word from the MAG that his counterpart is not to touch any matters that deal with money or the ordering of material. Thus the technical assistant must continue to handle such matters, with the result being that he will have less time to devote to the technical work of ARMA.

In an effort to reduce the cost of the animal traction equipment and the cost of traction power, ARMA is placing an emphasis on the development of equipment that requires donkeys or only one bullock for power. Important work in this direction was started during this period.

Training sessions for maitre-dresseurs and for village blacksmiths were planned for the 2nd quarter. Only the former occurred. The latter was cancelled because of the blockage of project funds by the counterpart fund secretariat (see section below).

Twenty-one people followed a 19 day training session in which the main subject was learning to break-in animals to work with animal traction equipment. Also presented were courses on animal care and hygiene. This course was attended by people who teach and work at the CVF and CPT level.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

Blockage of Funds

This reporting period saw the project grind to an almost complete halt in February and March because of a blockage of funds by the counterpart fund secretariat. The cause for this blockage was the question of justification of 208.000.000 CFA dating from late 1984 and early 1985. This sum represented the first counterpart funds that the project received and occurred long before the secretariat was established. That the secretariat then imposed such a harsh measure, at the most critical time of the year for PPN operations, and in a very arbitrary manner must be strongly deplored, more so in that only a very small amount of the 208.000.000 CFA was actually in question.

The consequences of this action by the secretariat meant that:

- a. all training scheduled for February, March and April was cancelled or postponed,
- b. CPT's and CVF's did not open on time (some not until

June),

- c. those responsible for executing the training program in the CPT's and CVF's were less qualified than planned,
- d. many activities of the technical services supported by PPN were delayed or cancelled altogether,
- e. staff moral was very low because salaries could not be paid,
- f. credibility with local merchants plunged due to the none payment for material delivered and purchased under project purchase orders.

Inefficiency of Current System of Local Currency Financing

The author of this current report must clearly state his continual dismay at the system that has been imposed on PPN for payment of all local costs through the counterpart fund secretariat. In some seventeen years of project work in both Africa and Asia I have yet to see such an inefficient, cumbersome and demoralizing system of project financing as PPN is forced to follow. The system in place does not foster a climate for initiative to be taken on management's part, nor build responsibility within the project, nor contribute to PPN objectives. Rather the system centralizes absolute control and payment outside of the project over all financial transactions engaged by the project at the same time that the GON is supporting a more decentralized approach to development.

USAID should rethink their commitment to the current approach of project financing through control by the counterpart fund secretariat and the Ministry of Plan. At the least the system should be immediately reviewed by someone who knows project financing systems and the use and control of counterpart funds. The results of the current system on project implementation and activities should be a central element of such a review.