

PD-ABM-462  
98117

PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT  
SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND  
Project No. 515-0222.01

October 27, 1988 - December 31, 1994

I. SUMMARY:

The Self Help Community Fund Project was established on October 27, 1988, under an agreement that had been signed on June 28, 1984, between AID and the Government of Costa Rica dated June 28, 1984. This new agreement was for a total amount of ₡31,202,000 colones, to finance during 14 months the Special Development Fund (SDF), aimed at helping fund small scale community development projects in the areas of construction of schools, health posts, school lunchrooms, water systems, rural roads and bridges and support for group income generating activities. Funds for this Project came from the Economic Stabilization and Recovery V Project, No. 515-0222. The Project was managed primarily as a USAID activity, implemented with Peace Corps Volunteer assistance and coordinated with the appropriate GOCR entities.

The Self-Help Community Fund Project was amended ten times to extend the Project Assistance Completion Date through December 31, 1994 and to increase the total obligated amount to ₡181,202,000, of which ₡177,855,176 was used during the life of the project and the balance was deobligated.

2. PROJECT STATUS VS. PLANNED OUTPUTS:

Planned EOPS:

- I. Provide financial support to rural communities for approximaely 920 small-scale projects, designed to promote develoment at the community level.
  - During the life of the Project, 1032 sub-grants were approved for equal number of community projects, mainly to support the construction of classrooms, health posts, school lunchrooms, water systems, rural bridges and to support group income-generating activities.

Seven sub-projects could not be finished before the Project Completion Date. With the exception of one, the other six communities were not at fault for the delay, which was mainly due to the failure of the national water institute to provide its support on time. However, three of these projects were finished by the communities a few months later.

2. Contributions from the recipient communities are at least equal to the Project's donation.

- All recipient communities contributed land, labor, wood, fuel, design costs, tile floors, chain link fences, construction tools, etc. Their contributions were always equal to the donation received from the SDF and, in at least 75% of the cases, were worth more than the amount received.

3. PLANNED VS. ACTUAL INPUTS: Inputs were provided as planned.

4. END OF PROJECT STATUS:

As indicated in Section 2, "Project Status vs. Planned Outputs", by the Project Assistance Completion Date, the Project had met or exceeded all of its goals.

5. PROGRESS TOWARDS PLANNED PURPOSE:

Section 2 above, indicates that the Project surpassed its targets in most cases.

6. POST PROJECT MONITORING REQUIREMENTS:

None.

7. LESSONS LEARNED:

- The main lesson learned from the experience is that the overall success of the sub-projects depended mainly on the community's level of organization and management capability.
- The poorer, the smaller and the more remote the beneficiary community was, the the greater the impact was, since the community did not have access to other sources of support.
- It was desirable and necessary for the sub-projects to be coordinated with other public and private institutions, but the latter were not directly responsible for their implementation and maintenance. The communities were at all times in charge of developing, and managing the sub-projects, and that was one of the main reasons for the success of the Special Development Fund Project.

- **The close partnership between the Mission's office in charge of the Special Development Fund and the Peace Corps and, especially, the work done by the volunteers involved in this Project, were key elements to ensure its integrity and success.**

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