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**Southern University and A & M College  
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EVALUATION OF A PLAN TO INCREASE THE  
EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL FOR RURAL PEOPLE

BY

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FORWORD

The Unemployment and Underemployment Institute was created to coordinate all international economic development activities of the 211(d) grant at Southern University.

In 1972, the Agency for International Development (AID) approved a five year grant to Southern University to strengthen and increase its capacity in economic/agricultural economics to enhance Southern's capabilities to contribute to the resolution of problems of rural unemployment and underemployment in developing countries.

The general objectives of the Institute are (a) to develop and coordinate the activities of the University for greater participation in international economic development programs; (b) to make available the capacities and expertise thus developed to public and private agencies involved in industrial development programs; and (c) to conduct research, seminars, and workshops on domestic and international development problems including cooperatives, manpower utilization, small farmers, housing, population, nutrition, leadership training, and community development.

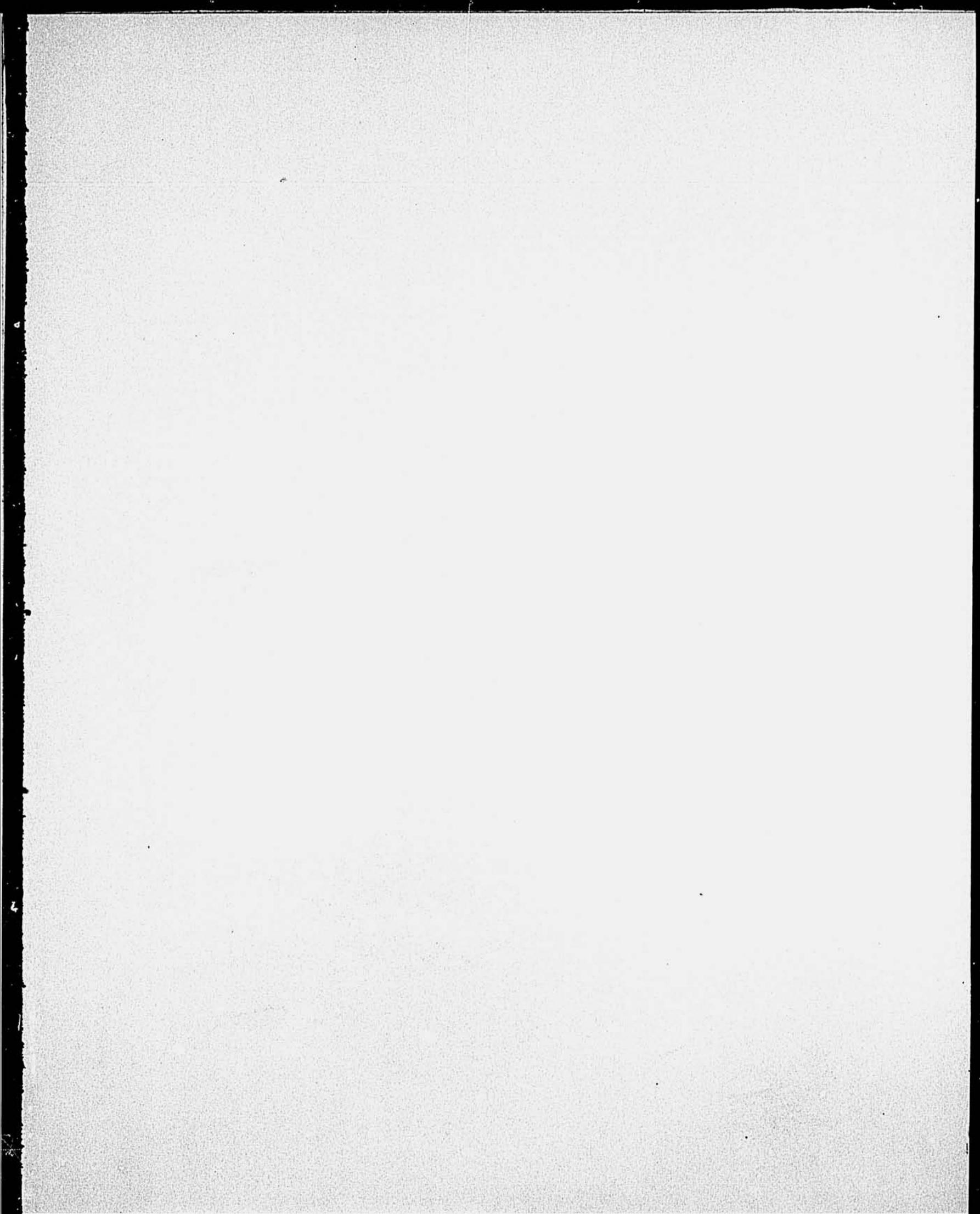
In keeping with objective (a), the University supports several faculty members working towards advanced degrees in the area of economic development and related disciplines, supports undergraduate scholarships to foreign and U. S. nationals in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, provides travel to professional seminars for faculty, foreign exposure to development experiences, and special training on techniques of program design and evaluation.

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The above activities of the Institute demonstrate the capacities and expertise of Southern University developed through the 211(d) program. As a result of the 211(d) grant, the Unemployment-Underemployment Institute at Southern University is in a position to offer expert and technical personnel to private and public agencies involved in international economic development programs.

T. T. Williams  
Director



EVALUATION OF A PLAN TO INCREASE THE EMPLOYMENT  
POTENTIAL FOR RURAL PEOPLE

BY

T. T. WILLIAMS

INTRODUCTION:

The general purpose of this study was to ascertain some factual data relative to the land development scheme for use in the formation and the implementation of economic development programs in Malaysia. Data summarized in the study should be of special use to institutions of higher learning in the development and the implementation of teaching and extension programs which are attuned with the changing economic and social patterns of rural areas in general, and Malaysia in particular.

This report is being published at the request of community development leaders in the south (USA) who are involved in various land development schemes for the landless. The original data for this study were secured by the author while serving as a Fulbright Professor at the University of Malaysia.

THE SETTING:

Sungai Merab is a state land development scheme located in the Ulu Langat District of Selangor, State of Malaysia. The 1,320 acres of land encompassing the scheme were developed in two phases. Phase I comprised 680 acres with provisions for 85 settlers, and Phase II comprised 640 acres with provisions for 80 settlers.

The selection of settlers and the assignment of land were the responsibilities of a committee consisting of the district and settlement officers, assemblyman and Penghulu. The major criteria for selecting

settlers were: (1) resident of the Beranang, Kajang, or Semenyeh Mukim communities; (2) married with a relatively large family; (3) under 50 years of age at the time of selection; and (4) landless. The number of settlers the scheme could accommodate was determined by the acres allotted each settler. Size of farm unit was eight acres---two acres for the farmstead and six acres for commercial agriculture or rubber trees. Both the commercial and farmstead acreages were assigned to settlers on a draw-lot basis in which chance determined the location. The farthest distance between the farmstead and the commercial areas was approximately two miles, while the nearest distance between the farmstead and the commercial area was less than one-tenth mile.

Prior to permitting settlers to locate on the Scheme, the land was cleared and rubber trees were planted and budgrafted. Although the two acres of farmstead was assigned each settler, immediately upon selection to locate on the Scheme, the six acres of rubber trees (commercial area) was allotted to the settlers at a later period. Each settler in Phase I was provided with a house valued at M\$1,1602 (US \$1 = \$3 Malaysia dollars), and in Phase II with a house for M\$1,200. The difference in house cost was attributed to the construction arrangement rather than the costs of materials, size of dwelling, or workmanship.

Before and after the analysis of data got underway, the author met and discussed with the settlers, land development officials, and government officials at the local and state levels. In addition, periodical visits were made to the Merab Scheme and other Schemes in the area. During these visits, the author ascertained and recorded the strong and weak points of the land development Scheme and program. During such meetings the observations and comments provided the author with an insight into the intended thrust

of such development programs from both the settlers and the planners viewpoint.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

Costs of supplies, fertilizer, fruit trees, and the dwellings were charged to the account of each settler with payment to commence when production of harvesting started for the commercial product (rubber latex), usually seven years. Fertilizer was delivered to the contractor and charged to the settler.

Only Phase I settlers were provided with fruit plants and subsistence allowances. The years Phase I settlers were provided with subsistence allowances were the years they were required to maintain the rubber tree acreage.

Phase I and II settlers were permitted to seek employment with the maintenance contractor. The maintenance contractor was responsible for planting the rubber seedlings and maintaining the commercial area for six years. After the six year maintenance period, each settler assumed the responsibility of the six acre rubber tree land.

Three land settlers in Phase I were entrepreneurs in that they established retail outlets with borrowed capital. These retail stores provided local settlers with food and sundry items. In addition, the entrepreneur provided local market outlets for surplus farm income, (sale of crops and animals) even though the need for off-farm work or non-farm employment was cited more often by the settlers in both Schemes. The need for employment was cited by all settlers even though Phase I settlers had resided on the Scheme for over two years.

Visitation by agricultural oriented officials to the farm units were limited. Less than 30 percent of the settlers reported a visit by an

agricultural official during the previous year of the survey even though a rubber technician (Scheme resident supervisor) resided on each phase of the Scheme. The resident supervisor assisted by the Scheme committee chairman was responsible for the day to-day-operation of the Scheme.

The typical husband and wife of Phase I settlers were older than their counterparts among Phase II settlers. Eighty percent of the husbands and 29 percent of the wives of Phase I settlers were 37 to 48 years of age as compared with 42 percent and 16 percent, respectively, of Phase II husbands and wives. Approximately, 18 percent of the child population (5.7 per family) were under three years of age; 51 percent male and 49 percent female.

Water supply, human waste disposal, and power machinery were facilities most needed by the settlers. Over 36 percent of the settlers listed road improvements as a facility needed to increase farm income, and 77 percent listed water supply as necessary to improve their living conditions.

Football and sepak raga were the two most popular sports for husbands, while mat-making was reported as the major handicraft by the largest number of wives in both phases of the Scheme.

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

##### A. Summary

Desire for the ownership of a home and land were strong motivating factors in getting the landless to move into the Scheme. However, the experiences during the two years on the Scheme had negative impact upon sustaining and strengthening these objectives.

The rapidity with which land development Schemes can increase the employment potential of the previously landless people will depend upon two primary factors: (1) the intensiveness of the land development Scheme's educational program-the thrust of the educational program should emphasize

the diffusion of information regarding the thrust of the Scheme as an economic unit for low-income people; and (2) the degree to which settlers are infused or knowledgeable of their role and responsibility in promoting employment opportunities. The former is concerned with the proper coordination of all programs and activities of the Scheme to sustain active participation of settlers in economic development, while the latter relates to activities designed to involve settlers at an early stage in the development of the land Scheme.

B. Recommendations

Enumerated below are four specific recommendations with implications for improving the employment potentials for the landless rural people:

(1) The use of farmstead acreage lacking in planning. It was obvious that the two acres of farmstead land could be used as a major source of income if the area was viewed as a unit for the production of commodities for home and commercial production. The off-farm employment pattern of settlers served to de-emphasize the importance of producing food for home consumption and sale; (2) Limited contact with the settlers by the Scheme supervisor deprived settlers of an opportunity to learn and practice leadership. There was a need to instill in the action of prior landless people the responsibilities of those in leadership in the realization of the Scheme objective. The long delay in the completion of land clearing, dwelling, construction, and occupying the settlement units served to prolong the period settlers could direct their attention to the development of an economic unit; (3) Allocation of land to settlers at the time they were selected but after the area had been cleared and planted to rubber seedlings prevented settlers from sharing in the initial development of the Scheme. In addition, the

chance method of allocating the farmstead did not take into consideration land capability and resulted in the misuse of land; and (4) The disproportionate number of amenities located in Phase I as compared with Phase II, and the pathless road conditions in both phases, made transportation and communication within and outside the Scheme rather difficult. Inadequate water supply and human waste disposal facilities created a potential health hazard among Scheme settlers.

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