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THE VILLAGE AID PROGRAM IN PAKISTAN

By

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Village AID is the name given by the Government of Pakistan to its nation-wide program of rural community development. The letters A, I and D in the title, although pronounced "aid," are in abbreviation for part of the full title--Village Agricultural and Industrial Development, or more simply, "V-AID." This program was initiated in June 1952; training of the first V-AID workers (VAWs) began in July 1953; the first development area of 150 villages was opened in February 1954; and today 108 development areas are in operation in all parts of Pakistan encompassing approximately 16,000 villages or 16% of the total in which live eleven million people.

Aims and Objectives of V-AID

The aim of the V-AID program is to assist villagers, both individually and collectively, to plan and implement self-help programs designed to eliminate or reduce their common problems and to reach agreed-upon goals. The types of assistance rendered by the VAWs to the villagers are designed to give them the confidence and ability to act

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\* Essentially a condensation of "Rural Community Development in Pakistan: The Village AID Program" by Dr. James W. Green, Community Development Review #6, September, 1957.

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through organized effort with a minimum of outside help.

V-AID uses the principles and methods of community organization and development. It looks at the village as a whole through the eyes of its people and uses their vast store of accumulated knowledge and wisdom, supplemented by that of the technicians, for their own welfare. It aims at coordinating the total resources of the people and the government for concerted effort to meet the needs of village people. In the words of the Five-Year Plan, "the specific objectives of the Village AID Program are:

(a) To raise rapidly the productive output and real income of the villager by bringing to him the help of modern techniques of farming, sanitation and health, cooperatives, cottage industries, etc.

(b) To multiply the community services available in rural areas such as schools, dispensaries, health centers, hospitals, sources of pure water supply, etc.

(c) To create a spirit of self-help, initiative, leadership and cooperation among the villagers which may become the foundation of an independent, healthy and self-perpetuating economic, political, civic and social progress.

(d) To create conditions for a richer and higher life through social activities, including recreational facilities, both for men and women.

(e) To coordinate the working of the different Departments of the Government and to extend their activities into the villages by providing an extension service to the country.

(f) To give a welfare bias to the entire administrative structure of the Government."

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Organization

The V-AID program is administered jointly by the central and provincial governments with the guidance and assistance of advisory committees at all levels. On each advisory committee sit representatives of the technical ministries which are concerned with rural development such as agriculture, health, education and industries. Also represented are the Village AID Administration, and at the divisional, district and development area levels there are representatives of the village councils. The chief administrative officer of government at each level presides over the committees in his area while the chief V-AID official at that level is the committee secretary. When available, ICA advisors also sit with the committees. These advisory committees are the policy making and coordinating structures of V-AID. In addition to rendering advice and setting policy, the district and development area committees allocate V-AID developmental funds to the development areas and villages, respectively, based upon requests from them.

The basic unit of Village AID is the development area. It is usually composed of approximately 150 villages with a population of roughly

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100,000. In West Pakistan 30 men VAWs are placed in each area giving an average of 5 villages per worker. In East Pakistan the number allocated is 20, which means that each worker is responsible for 7 to 8 villages on the average. The number of women workers being trained is very small compared to the number of men. They are being placed in each area at the rate of 5 to 10 depending upon their availability.

A development officer (DO) is in charge of the development area. To assist the development officer, three supervisors (SUPs), two men and one woman, are assigned to each development area in West Pakistan, but only one man and one woman in the East. The DO has full control of the SUPs, the VAWs, social education officers, adult literacy teachers, and any other persons employed directly by V-AID. Technical assistance is exercised only to the extent of his competency. For this function he depends upon such supervisors as may be technically trained but more especially upon the representatives of the technical departments stationed in the tehsil (smallest political unit, also called taluka and subdivision) in which the development area is located.

To insure maximum efficiency in the utilization of technical assistance from the departments, the DO has been given responsibility for operational coordination of departmental representatives working in his development area. This is necessary since all departments are committed, on the one hand, to give to the V-AID organization such technical assistance as may be required in implementing the democratically-planned programs of the village councils and development area committees; on the other hand, they are to use the V-AID organization as the channel for gaining the adoption of the technical practices recommended by these departments.

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Thus the DO is the focus of action programs requiring technical assistance which come up from the village councils and the development area committee, and of technical assistance resources coming down from the departments. In actual practice this operational coordination is achieved on a voluntary basis through the development area committee and personal contacts. Administrative control (pay, promotion, leaves, placement, etc.) and technical control (formulas for fertilizers, varieties of seed, methods of injecting vaccines, etc.) of the technical department representatives remain vested in the district officers of the respective departments. The DO is only concerned with securing their help at the times and places required and of making the services of the VAWs available to these departments.

Training of VAWs is carried out at present in nine V-AID training institutes with two more to be constructed in East Pakistan. All of the six planned for West Pakistan for the first Five Year Plan are in operation, three of single capacity (initial enrollment of 75 men, 12 women of whom 65 men and 10 women will be graduated) and three of double capacity. The remaining three are in East Pakistan, all double capacity. When all institutes including two still to be constructed in East Pakistan are in full operation, it is expected that 1235 men and 190 women will be graduated per year. The present rate is approximately 845 men and 110 women, enough to man 30 development areas. By the end of the first Five Year Plan in 1960, approximately one-fourth of the entire country will have been covered. During the second plan period the capacities of institutes will be further increased to make possible complete coverage by 1965.

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Each institute is headed by a principal. The tables of organization call for 13 instructors in a single capacity institute and 16 in one of double capacity. These instructors are deputed from the departments of agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, education, health, animal husbandry, home economics, cottage industries, cooperatives, and public works. Instruction continues for one year and is oriented to teaching skills in each of the fields listed above, as well as in human relations skills for leading the villagers in the democratic process of community development.

Recruitment of personnel to man the V-AID program analysis unit is also proceeding. This unit will establish a system of measurement of V-AID progress and will conduct research on problems of greatest importance to the program's administrators.

In order to provide special training to DOs, SUPs and institute instructors prior to beginning duty in V-AID, two V-AID academies, one in each of the two provinces, are being constructed with help from the Ford Foundation. The academies will prepare these officers for the roles they are to play in Village AID by offering training in the philosophy, organization and functioning of V-AID; public administration; substantive programs of other governmental organizations; teaching methods; and principles and procedures of community organization and development. In the meantime, two temporary special schools have been set up in Quetta and Dacca for training Development Officers and Supervisors.

No description of the organizational structure of V-AID would be complete without mentioning the advisory assistance of the United States International Cooperation Administration. V-AID was initiated in June 1952,

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with the signing of an agreement between the Governments of Pakistan and the United States of America. Under its terms, U.S. technicians from the social sciences, agriculture, health, cottage industries, adult literacy, communications, and home economics who were qualified as training advisors in community development have been posted as advisors at various levels from the central government to the training institute. The numbers and location of advisors are determined jointly by ICA and the Central and Provincial Governments. Although not a permanent part of V-AID, they have been a highly important part of the organization to the present and will probably continue to be so for several years.

#### Dunctioning at the Village Level

The VAW is the spearhead of the program at the village level. In his circle of villages he represents all of the development departments of government. All of these departments are concerned with his training in the institute; in using him as their agent in carrying out programs within their technical fields; and in giving him technical support and further training on job. Thus he is a multipurpose development worker, a single point of contact between the villagers and the development departments of government.

The VAW is unique among all government employees; he is not an "officer." Rather he is a "worker" -- a servant of the people. He has no regulatory or enforcement powers over the villagers and cannot so much as command lodging for himself. His approach is one of persuasion in both planning and action rather than the time-honored method of coercion, however gently applied.

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The functions of the VAW are as unique as his status. He is an educator, organizer and planner, friend, philosopher and guide to the villagers. As educator he carries to the villagers the fruits of research and knowledge of the various technical departments. Obviously he cannot be trained in one year to become an expert in all of the technical fields he represents. However, he is trained in the basic skills of each technical department which are most needed by the villagers in his circle. Where specialized technical advice beyond that possessed by the worker is necessary, he is taught how to obtain it from the subject-matter technical officers and to pass it on to the villagers. In turn he and the other 19 (in East Pakistan) or 29 (in West Pakistan) workers in his development area are channels for the technical officers to use in disseminating their own knowledge and skill in a much more effective way than they could do alone. Instead of one pair of hands, the specialist has twenty or thirty to multiply his effect on villagers made receptive by the workers who have already established rapport with them. If they lack a skill required, they are available to the specialist to be taught by him individually or in groups and thus raise their level of competence and usefulness to his technical department.

Analysis of the role of the VAW reveals that much of his time is spent in applying human relations skills in program planning and execution through organizations which he fosters, especially Chand Tara Clubs and councils, but he teaches their members to plan programs of action in a systematic and democratic manner. Indeed he often begins this process of program planning and action before attempting to establish a formal organization. By bringing together informally those who are interested

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in village improvement he is able to stimulate a discussion of village problems. He then helps the group to pinpoint some problem which promises quick results; which involves a number of people in its achievement; is within the capacity of the village to accomplish; and is easily seen and recognized as a product of group effort. Such projects as building an approach road to the village or a new school building, filling a useless village pond, and digging a new village well have been used as the initial undertaking. With such an accomplishment to their credit, it is usually easy to form a village council and youth club and approach the other problems of the village in a systematic manner.

#### Activities Stressed

There are no limitations upon the types of problems which may be defined by the villagers and upon which their resources may be brought to bear. The only criteria are that they must be needs felt and acknowledged by the villagers and on the solution of which they are willing to work. These needs are as broad as village life itself and include roads, streets, drains, wells, schools, sanitary arrangements, use of improved seeds and fertilizers, markets, land distribution, consolidation of holdings, housing, design of local industry products, and many others.

In the Five-Year Plan targets are established for each development area which are to be achieved within five years from the date of opening the area. These targets are subject to considerable alteration as they have no validity unless and until they have been made an integral part of the development programs of the village councils in the area.

For each development area development funds have been allocated to

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technical fields as a supplement to the maximum effort of villagers. The total amount for a development area per annum, Rs. 273,000 grant and Rs. 200,000 loan, cannot be increased, but the amounts allocated to the technical fields may be shifted from one field to another as program needs dictate. The amounts provided are intended to be used primarily for demonstrations, pilot projects and other educational purposes. More substantial economic aid in development must come from the respective technical departments.

Changes attributable to V-AID have, for the most part, not been measured. Some work has recently been done in the Lahore region but the results are not yet available. The program analysis unit which will spend all of its time analyzing the V-AID program is now in process of being created. That changes have taken place is evident from the periodic reports of field personnel and from casual observation of anyone who visits villages in development areas and talks to the VAWs and the people. A succession of short-term evaluations of the program have been made by the U.S. Executive Branch and by U.S. Congressional Committees, all of which are unanimous in stating that it is making substantial progress in achieving its objectives. All reports have urged the fullest support which V-AID is capable of absorbing. The Mansfield Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its May 1956 report stated that the V-AID program was making significant contributions to the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals.

Since little objective measurement has been done, the changes mentioned here must, of necessity, be tentatively projected. However, they are the product of five years intensive work with the program. It should

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be realized that in the absence of reliable quantitative data, it is difficult to make accurate appraisals.

### In the Economic Sphere

The physical products of group effort are to be seen in hundreds of villages. Many villages which have never had a road connecting them to the public highway have one today. Most of these roads were built on donated land by volunteer labor with little or no cost to the state. The same may be said of school buildings in which children are now learning-- buildings which range from a small raised earthen floor surrounded by four walls of split bamboo and topped by a thatch roof to large multi-room edifices made of burnt brick and boasting windows of glass. A few villages have streets now paved of brick. A great many streets have drains which transform them from mirey avenues of filth to dry pathways. Hundreds of tube wells to supply drinking water have been sunk and in these villages people no longer depend upon the canal with its water-borne diseases and consequent toll of sickness and premature death, the economic consequences of which are enormous.

Less spectacular and harder to measure are the economic changes occurring on individual farms and in the shops of the cottage industry producers. That capacity to produce agriculturally has been increased is revealed by the demands created for production items when V-AID-sponsored result demonstrations have shown the advantages of the use of fertilizers, insecticides, pure seed, etc. For example, demonstration plots of paddy on farms in a development area in East Pakistan yielded 42 maunds per acre as against an average yield of 9.9 maunds for the

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province. On these all of the inputs of fertilizers, good seed, etc., were used. However, not all of the farmers in this area can obtain such yields because the demands created by these few demonstration plots for the necessary seed, fertilizer, etc., are not being met by the department charged with this function. But there are thousands of farmers who are saving cow dung in pits, who are composting farm waste and returning fertility to the soil, who are transplanting their rice and growing it in lines where every plant has an equal opportunity to produce a good head. Such changes in practices cannot help but produce a greater yield of farm products.

If it is difficult to measure results due to V-AID in Pakistan, we do have the results of a comprehensive study published last year by the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, U.P., India, entitled "Extension Evaluation." A two page summary appears in the beginning from which I have taken a few excerpts:

"An experiment in Extension was conducted in 428 villages of the Allahabad district to (1) compare the performance of resident village workers having different educational backgrounds and training viz., graduates, intermediates, matriculates, constructive workers and couple units, and (2) compare the effectiveness of four methods of approach (initial emphasis) viz., occupation (agriculture), literacy, home and family, and felt needs." (p.i).

The results of the experiment concerning the performance of various categories of village workers are most interesting and worthwhile but we will not go into them here. More germane are the results of the comparisons of the four methods of approach. In order that the summary results may be understood it is necessary to explain what is meant by the methods of approach:

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"The method of approach; i.e., the initial emphasis which was to be carried on by the Gaon Sathis (village workers) in each circle was different.... Each Gaon Sathi worked at attaining the various targets that were fixed. They had to work on both a high target (the initial emphasis of the circle) and the low targets, (the initial emphasis of the other circles). Thus, for example, a Gaon Sathi working in Iradatganj circle had higher targets with respect to agriculture and lower targets with regard to literacy compared to the Jari circle, where literacy was the high target. In addition to these there were some general targets - such as, recreation, Youth clubs, anti-malaria programmes, etc., which were of uniform size for all circles. The assignment of initial emphasis to the different circles was done at random. In each circle all the five types of Gaon Sathis were assigned." (p.12).

Success was measured by the number of practices actually adopted by the villagers. The major findings relevant to the four methods of approach were as follows:

"8. The largest number of practice changes was effected where the felt needs approach was followed.

"9. Of the four approaches (emphases) tested, placing primary emphasis on agriculture resulted in the smallest number of practice changes.

"10. Emphasis on felt needs got the extension programme off to a good start in the first season and maintained a superior rate of practice changes throughout the experiment, while emphasis on agriculture resulted in the least significant improvement after a comparatively slow start.

"11. The initial emphasis on agriculture did not result in a larger percentage of agricultural changes than those in the home-and-family and felt needs circle....

"14. The initial emphasis on felt needs resulted in a higher percentage of agricultural changes than of any other type." (pp. i and ii).

It should be pointed out here that "felt needs" is the approach of Village AID; its rationale is the same as that used by the felt needs approach group in the experiment; that of doing democratic program planning with the villagers on the problems and goals considered by the villagers to be most important, such as a school, a connecting road to the highway,

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etc. Having enlisted the interest and support of the people in successfully solving the problems as they define them, confidence is built up in their ability and in that of the Village AID worker who has given methodological guidance and assistance in problem definition, planning and solution. With this confidence in themselves and in the worker the villagers move on to other less acutely felt problems or to those which require a longer period of time for solution, such as increasing agricultural production. A purely agricultural extension program cannot hope to win this confidence which is essential to increasing agricultural production because it does not begin with the felt needs of the villagers.

This work done at Allahabad shows how important V-AID is to meeting Pakistan's number one problem, the production of sufficient foodgrains. V-AID is generally thought of in terms of bettering the lot of the villagers and in giving them certain, shall we say, fringe benefits. This is at present so obvious because the V-AID program is still a new program and the village workers are still gaining the confidence of the villagers. The second phase, increasing agricultural production, is the longer range target to be reached after the people have confidence in themselves.

Perhaps the most important change of all for raising economic levels is the V-AID organization itself and its potential capacity for bringing about these changes. For the first time a method of reaching the individual producer both individually and through his corporate life is available. Now it is possible to link the economic planner with the final executor of the plans, the individual farmer and cottage industry artisan, and to motivate them to make the changes needed for a viable economy.

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### In the Political Sphere

Although the V-AID Council in a village has no statutory authority, it is a new political creation in affording the people experience in the democratic processes which underlie democratically-oriented self-government in the more formal sense. If government may be defined as an organizational device to achieve objectives of the people for the community, V-AID qualifies in the most positive sense of the term. Unlike the old panchayat, it is not loaded down with judicial functions or administrative duties, as essential as these may be. Rather it is free to work for positive community goals set by the most democratic of methods. There is evidence that the people are learning real democracy as they practice it in their councils.

### Social Structure and Process

The basic structure of village life has not changed greatly even in those villages which have made the greatest strides through V-AID. Land patterns remain much as they were and control of land is still a large factor in social relationships. The patriarchal joint family is little affected and retains its primary place in the social structure.

Perhaps the greatest change is in the way in which people look at themselves and measure their own capacity for solving their problems. The basic rationale of village life has from time immemorial been the acceptance of the status quo, of conditions as they are since they could not be changed. Villagers now tell the visitor that they have seen more change take place in the village since the advent of V-AID than in the

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combined lifetime of themselves and their parents, and those changes are brought about mostly by their own efforts.

The villager is not unmindful of the role of the government in this change. Formerly he knew the government only in its role of policeman and tax collector with an occasional handout in the form of relief or largess from a high official. The role the VAW plays and the use of public funds to supplement his own efforts make sense to him. The government is no longer his master but his helper. He begins to look on himself and his fellows with new respect for he believes that he is gaining a little control over his own destiny. He knows now that things can be changed to provide the better things of life -- that they are within his own power to change, for he and his neighbors have done it! A spirit of hope is springing up, not a hope for a ready-made Utopia, but for change which the villagers themselves can bring slowly but surely into being.

#### ICA Role

I touched briefly a few moments ago upon the place of the ICA advisors in the V-AID organization. I would like to point out two other important contributions ICA has made.

The first is in the training abroad of certain V-AID personnel where they receive special training in the community development process. This includes formal classes at an American university coordinated with field trips to outstanding communities. Visits to other countries where sound community development programs are in operation are also made. To date through FY 58, 87 personnel including administrators, principals and instructors of training institutes and development officers have gone or will go for training.

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The second activity has been the financing of supplies and equipment needed in the V-AID project which have required foreign exchange. This has included certain building materials, teaching aids for training institutes and many items needed in development areas including transport. ICA through FY 58 has given \$3,762,800 worth of this type of aid.

In closing I wish to say that ICA is proud to be associated with the V-AID program. It is proud to be able to help Pakistan meet its needs as expressed in the letter authorizing the implementation of the Five Year Plan on the 12th of May 1958.

"The paramount need of the country is to attain self-sufficiency in food. This is a matter which should receive top priority and the energies of the Central as well as the Provincial Governments should be devoted to the attainment of this objective."