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A REVIEW
OF THE
RURAL/URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
OF THE
YMCA OF WESTERN SAMOA

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RURAL/URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

YMCA OF WESTERN SAMOA
AID GRANT 492-1605

The Western Samoan Setting

That all is not serene in this paradise of the Pacific becomes evident even to the most unconcerned tourist only casually looking about. The lush surroundings conceal a number of economic and social woes.

Youth is the foremost problem area. Outward migration - to New Zealand and to the United States has kept some of the pressure off Western Samoa. Over 100,000 Western Samoans live in the United States, and over 40,000 in New Zealand. Neither government is as hospitable to immigrants as it was only a few years ago, and this avenue of escape has been sealed off for many. Employment opportunities in Samoa are few to begin with, and the educational system, geared to "scholastic" achievement does little to prepare youth for the jobs that do exist. (Only 2% of secondary school students have the chance to take part in vocational training.) It should be no surprise then to learn that 65% of the crime committed in Western Samoa is done by young people between 15 and 24. Suicide among males in that same age group is said to be treble the rate it is in Switzerland (which has the highest rate in the industrialized West).

With very little industrial production, and none of that for export, Western Samoa must look to tourism and agriculture for its earnings. And agriculture is lagging; prices are down and production is dropping. There seem to be markets for Samoa's products, but archaic farming practices, coupled with a land-holding system not geared to commercial agriculture thwart entry into the competitive arena.

Enter the YMCA

The YMCA was established in Western Samoa in 1978 in response to an invitation extended by a group of Samoan citizens. The New Zealand YMCA sponsored the initial work from 1978 to 1981 on behalf of the World Alliance of YMCAs with financial support of the YMCAs of the United States, Australia, Japan and the Asia Area Committee. A local management committee was formed. Two development plans have been written and carried out. A spirited board sets the policy and very closely observes the entire process. Dennis Oliver, a New Zealand YMCA professional who had been pivotal in the establishment of the Fiji YMCA, was invited to be the first General Secretary. Western Samoa YMCA continued under New Zealand tutelage until 1981 when it was accepted as a full member movement of the World Alliance of YMCAs.

From the very inception of the Samoa YMCA, serious attention was given to the troubled youth of the island country. Consultation with the community, government, church, business and rural leaders led to the development of a program not unlike that in Fiji. Practical programs were designed to attack youth unemployment, agricultural production, deficiencies in management, and absence of motivation. Particular attention was directed toward the problem of suicide among the young.

The YMCA attack on rural and urban problems was launched in 1978, its scope and momentum materially assisted by a grant to the YMCA of the USA from the South Pacific Regional office of the Agency for International Development. An initial grant of \$412,544 was made to assist in financing the first three years of the program. In April 1983 another \$251,046 was added to the grant for an additional three years - making a total of \$663,590 available from AID. In March 1984, the YMCA of the USA stepped out of the picture and the balance of the grant was transferred to the YMCA of Western Samoa which now has established a direct relationship with AID, and is solely responsible for husbanding the resources made available by the grant.

In a very few years the Samoan YMCA has accomplished a great deal in establishing itself as a viable, effective institution:

- (1) it has recruited and trained a leadership system that includes:
 - 50 board and committee members who serve voluntarily;
 - 30 professional staff members of whom 1 is an expatriate; and
 - 200 rural committee members.
- (2) it has legally adopted a constitution, registered as an incorporated society of Western Samoa, became directly affiliated with the World Alliance of YMCAs, and registered as an indigenous voluntary organization with AID and thus became eligible to receive grants directly from AID.
- (3) it has constructed and operates a permanent headquarters and training center in Apia;
- (4) it has planned and implemented two development programs.

The board has a representation from most walks of life. It also includes representation from most of the religious denominations found in the islands.

The Program

From the outset the YMCA program in Samoa has followed two lines:

- (1) an attack on the problems of urban youth, and
- (2) a determined effort to increase agricultural production and to sell its surplus.

The Urban Program

A problem solving orientation is key to the program: training youth to fill jobs that need filling while examining the deeper-rooted problems. Here are the goals set in the Development Plans from 1978 through 1982 and the actual results:

- | | |
|--|---|
| - to train 120 youth in job-seeking skills | 235 trained, response enthusiastic |
| - to train 60 in basic carpentry | 75 trained, steady demand for more training |

- | | |
|--|---|
| - to train 40 rural persons in carpentry | 20 trained, building of center delayed program |
| - to train 24 in basic motor mechanics | 40 trained in 6 month courses, 12 more in short courses |
| - to up-grade trained mechanics | 13 trained, 5 of whom were rural persons |

The goals set for 1985 would increase each of these numbers considerably. (Refer to the Proposal for a Three Year Rural/Urban Development Program 1983-1985 for the YMCA of Western Samoa prepared by the International Division of the YMCA of the USA in August, 1982.)

In addition, there were several programs and studies conducted for which goals were not set in the two year development plans because they were identified as needs after the plans were written. These included 37 would-be migrants to New Zealand who were trained to adjust to their new life in that country; a study on the high rate of suicide in Western Samoa, followed by a national awareness campaign; a study of educational and social situation of street kids in Apia, the report of which was circulated to the Government of Western Samoa and the churches; and research on the needs for a course in supervision for construction for men and a course in small-scale business management.

The YMCA Center serves as the venue for most of the various courses available.

The Rural Program

The rural program set for itself the goals below - shown with an indication of present achievements:

- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| - to increase by over 25% the agricultural production of 2000 rural people | taro increased 166%
cocoa increased 90%
kava increased 242% | with
1,802
rural
people |
| - to increase management skills of 500 rural farmers | 265 trained - those trained apply for loan for agriculture - program delayed due to slow repayment of loans | |
| - to train 100 rural small engine owners in repairs | 242 trained, of whom 50% were women | |

The mainstay of the rural development program is the "club." It is the YMCA presence in the rural community, and it is the organizational unit around which extension programs are built. Its members receive the training in farming techniques and management. It raises and sells the produce. A "rural worker" provided by the YMCA is the guide and adviser to the club. Where the clubs take root, they do so firmly and completely. The entire community becomes a YMCA enclave. The spirit of the YMCA was pervasive in the villages observed by this reporter (-which is perhaps why they were selected for visits!).

Presently 32 clubs exist with a membership of 2100. The goal for the end of this grant is 50 clubs with 3800 members. Clubs not meeting the standards set by the YMCA are expelled; some drop out of their own volition. The formation of clubs results from inquiries coming from village groups who hear about the YMCA and feel this program will meet their needs and interests. As clubs are formed they organize committees on agriculture, social activities and training. They are trained in and encouraged to share leadership tasks among men and women, old and young. Individual crop and stock production will increase through training and competition. The training includes planning, budgeting, record keeping, marketing and agriculture technology. Marketing is organized especially for the export of taro and kava to overseas markets.

Equipment subsidy schemes are used for agricultural equipment which clubs and members purchase on a matching basis, dollar for dollar. Clubs and District agricultural fairs are organized with prizes of tools going to winners.

This grant pays the salaries of rural workers who are assigned to several villages. Rural workers report monthly in writing to the Committee listing the month's activities and problems experienced and plans for the coming month. Performance goals are set every two months by each worker in consultation with the Director. The Rural Work Committee reports monthly to the Board of Directors. The Samoan station, Radio 2AP, is used to send messages to rural clubs.

In part to provide club members with an incentive to adhere to the discipline required by the club, and in an effort to make its rural development program self-sustaining, the YMCA engages in the marketing of members surplus. A "YMCA Trading Company" is a unique "Y" enterprise. The YMCA has been able to obtain export licenses for taro. It supplied the Pacific games with staples, and presently is looking at market development in New Zealand.

Conclusions

The Program

By any tests, the YMCA program in Western Samoa must be judged successful. The YMCA of the USA can take pride in turning over to its colleagues in Samoa an activity that has prospered from the outset and shows much promise for the future. Considering how brief a time the YMCA in Samoa has been in existence, the results of the program are just short of astonishing both in terms of quantity and quality. The numbers exceed expectation in almost every endeavor (see Appendix I); a competent staff works diligently and with dedication; and a concerned Board of Directors, with a network of committees, provides policy guidance, and day-to-day oversight. Little wonder that villages that have formed YMCA Clubs are thoroughly immersed in the spirit of the program.

Recognizing that a visitor is seldom shown the activities that failed, nonetheless it is difficult not to be impressed by the commitment of entire villages to the new approaches credited to the YMCA. The enthusiasm is observed not only in rural villages, but in the classes taking place at the YMCA Center in Apia.

There is in place a solid core of doctrine, practice, substantive and managerial skills, around which an effective program can operate for some time to come. However arrived at, the YMCA of Western Samoa has a good thing going, and good people around to keep it going. One is immediately impressed with the competence and the assurance of those running the programs. The observer is equally struck by the knowledgeable and close interest shown by the Board and the committees in the project and in the institution.

The Institution - The YMCA in Western Samoa

There must have been a great pent-up demand for an organization like the YMCA to have it flourishing as it is after only a few years of existence. The founding members and succeeding boards must have had an uncanny ability to discern what the community needed, and how to provide it. The YMCA's attention to youth and its problems in the Samoan environment, the concern about mitigating the effects of a relentless process of modernization on a unique society singled out the YMCA as a special organization, intended for the present troubled times in Samoa.

Even so, the YMCA was not universally well received. Some church groups viewed it as yet another denominational community, and thus competition. The present Board reflects most of the religious groups existing in the islands and presumably this will enlighten those unaware of the nature and aims of the YMCA.

The Board is representative of the diverse constituents of Western Samoa. There are no figureheads; no pro-forma participation. Meetings are spirited. Exchanges are frank and open; and differences are voiced. To date, this has benefited the YMCA; hopefully the practice will continue to be constructive as well as analytical and even critical when warranted.

It has been suggested by another commentator on this project that its success is due to its emphasis on production rather than institution building. In a narrow sense, it is correct that the funds provided by the grant are directed to a large extent to efforts that have increased agricultural production. I would argue that while such benefits are desirable, the more important and more lasting result is to leave in place a strong, confident, dependable YMCA - one in which the community has faith and one strong enough to endure an occasional project failure. The networking of the club system, the organization of the communities, the mobilization of their resources and their efforts as YMCA Clubs are likely to have greater and more lasting effects than one season's greater harvest.

There has been speculation that the YMCA might be the intermediary through which other official aid (US) might flow to Samoa since government-to-government programs are not within the present US government policy in the South Pacific. If this is to be the case, all the more reason to be sure the institution has the strength and capacity to execute such programs. Meanwhile, there should be no reservations about modest increments to the YMCA's present programs.

The Numbers

My comments here fall into two categories - the numbers used to keep the books and to satisfy requirements of accountability, and the numbers used in program measurement - base line data, etc.

As to the former, the financial systems of the Western Samoa YMCA are exemplary. What with an able and conscientious bookkeeper, an astute accountant board member, and ever interested management committee, no transaction involving money is indifferently handled. Vouchers and invoices are kept, entries are scrupulously and immediately made, and the books are balanced daily. The internal systems appear to be very sound and satisfactory.

Because US government requirements - and particularly those of AID are not self-explanatory and are generally unknown to the staff of the Western Samoa YMCA, I recommend a consultation between the YMCA staff and the financial people of AID's South Pacific Regional Development office when the grant is transferred. (If this occurs in Suva, Fiji, it might be useful to invite participation by the Fiji YMCA staff as well.)

This project has received high praise from a number of sources because it is susceptible to quantification. Its base-line data, its benefit-cost analyses, and its quantifiable results are commented upon favorably in a number of places. Its founder had a great pre-occupation with collecting and keeping numbers. I would not gainsay the desirability of assembling and maintaining data. But I would not use it at this stage for any purpose but discerning gross trends. It's reliability is questionable - the people collecting the information have not done it before, and the tools for measurement are primitive or non-existent. (e.g. how many scales are there in the villages of Savai'i?) The benefit-cost analyses are essentially exercises in long-division supplemented by an unverifiable factor for "indirect" beneficiaries. The YMCA staff is aware of the softness of the numbers and plans to do research on the subject. Meanwhile the YMCA is meticulously recording everything that can be counted. This is good discipline and good training for the staff and for the club members. But our expectations of what it tells us at this early stage should remain modest.

The YMCA Trading Corporation, Ltd.

From the outset there has been pressure on the YMCA of Western Samoa to make this, and its other activities self-sustaining. From total dependency on external aid to very little dependency in a short space of time has been the objective. Hence-revenue producing activities. Helping farmers sell their surpluses, developing export markets, acquiring some average for YMCA production, acquiring land for housing sites, supplying the Pacific games with food are among the imaginative revenue producing devices that have surfaced. At the time this examination was being made the new General Secretary and a Board member were exploring markets and marketing devices in New Zealand.

The activity is rationalized as benefitting the membership. And, indeed, it is true that if agricultural surpluses were not quickly turned into cash, they might be a one-time-phenomenon.

Nor is there any denying that there is great pressure on the part of donors to reduce the donor share of project costs, and to have the voluntary agency carry the full burden of its recurrent costs.

Nonetheless, I have a great uneasiness about a voluntary agency engaging in commercial enterprises - and particularly in brokering commodity sales. Intercession with government to obtain export licenses or to change policies is one matter; buying and selling another. There is the image of the YMCA to be considered; there is the risk factor in a volatile trade; there is the matter of staffing requirements if the job is to be done professionally; there is the possible jeopardy of its "non-profit" tax status. Considering all factors, I believe the disadvantages outweigh the gains in the long run. I would recommend that the Board examine with care its initiatives in these directions and that donors ease-up on schedules for attaining self-sufficiency. The expression of this concern may not be immediately helpful, but if the Board were to turn its attention to creative alternatives for fund-raising, it may well save itself problems at a later date.

Staffing

The Western Samoa YMCA has a new General Secretary. His credentials suggest that he can do the job required. He needs the support and the confidence of his board.

The professional staff seems well-suited to its tasks. The Director of the Urban Program is particularly impressive; the Director of the Rural Program has good rapport with the villages and their chiefs and seems to understand the local agricultural scene well. More frequent contact, and perhaps joint programs with the Agriculture College of the University of the South Pacific should be encouraged - this looks like a vast resource waiting to be exploited, and the YMCA's club network would allow the academics to test their programs in the field without setting up a parallel system.

If the motor mechanics course is to be continued, it is not too early to be thinking about how the present Peace Corps volunteer will be replaced.

I am more perplexed by the woodworking/carpentry instruction. The fundamentals were being taught and practiced, but the finish work and details were crude. It was explained that the product turned out was what the market demanded. Perhaps this is true. But a little more sanding and planing, a little more care with the joinery, and a vastly superior piece of furniture would result.

There was a hum of life and energy present at the YMCA Center. Everyone seemed to be doing something, doing it with enthusiasm and doing it well. Whatever the formula, it seems to be working. I would recommend that the Board create incentives to retain the able staff that it has and that it develop programs to recognize professional growth and excellence in performance.

	End Project Goals	Results	1984 Goals	1983 Goals
<u>Urban Work</u>				
1. Social Survival Skills	100 youth trained	166 youth trained	100	100
2. Youth Sports Program	200	70 involved	200	200
3. Social Research	Suicide: National Rate to be reduced 25%	National reduction 40%		
	Resurvey needed for small business course	result negative	?	?
4. Small Business Course	Abandoned	—	—	—
5. Prepare for New Zealand	120	112	200	120
<u>Trades Training</u>				
1. Carpentry School	40 trained	37	40	40
2. Village Carpentry School	40	12*	40	40
3. Small Engines Repair School * training suspended, instructor terminated	180	40	200	180
4. Motor Mechanic School	30	26 trained	30	30
5. Upgrade Motor Mechanic	20	2	20	20
6. Carpentry Refresher Course	Pending: awaiting start of YMCA Flats project			
7. Supervisors Course	Pending: awaiting start of YMCA Flats project			
8. Septic tank and flush toilet construction course	Pending: awaiting start of YMCA Flats project			

	End Project Goals	Results	1984 Goals	1983 Goals
<u>Rural Work</u>				
1. Village Clubs	38 clubs 2500 members 2500 members	35 clubs 2100 members	40 clubs 2500 members	38 clubs 2500 members
2. Training in Farm Management and loan program	100	100	100	100
3. Training, leadership, planning, and budgeting	500	NIL	500	500
4. Increased agricultural production	25% over baseline	82%		
5. Cost-benefit study	not established			

POPULATION OF VILLAGES

<u>Villages</u>	<u>Both Sexes Total</u>	<u>Age Group 15-59</u>	<u>Number of Families in Villages</u>	<u>Number of Families in YMCA</u>
1. Auala	633	273	NA	NA
2. Afega	1691	749	64	13
3. Iva	658	291	130	85
4. Faiaai	430	196	44	34
5. Fagasa	165	86	NA	NA
6. Falelima	523	275	64	35
7. Fasitootai	1206	551	127	20
8. Foalalo	397	194	NA	NA
9. Foaluga	573	247	NA	NA
10. Fogasavaii	289	132	NA	NA
11. Manono - Uta	705	317	126	36
12. Matautu - Lefaga	707	318	NA	NA
13. Mutiatele	218	102	40	25
14. Neiafu - Uta	270	106	24	11
15. Neiafu - Tai	270	106	24	10
16. Papa	534	210	NA	NA
17. Patamea	556	228	33	24
18. Sagone	729	326	NA	NA
19. Saeaula	644	275	53	35
20. Samatau	860	377	NA	NA
21. Saroalepai	353	164	47	19
22. Satupaitea	1731	731	39	21
23. Satuiatua	322	130	NA	NA
24. Saleaamua	NA	NA	NA	NA
25. Solaua	130	54	NA	NA
26. Tafatafa	174	75	28	20
27. Tafitoala	435	182	NA	NA
28. Vaiafai	383	152	46	42
29. Vaipua	438	220	37	19
30. Saleimoa	684	328	NA	NA
31. Ulutogia	279	112	NA	NA
32. Tafagamanu	NA	NA	NA	NA

Totals:	17,947	7,939	Average 68 Families Per Village	Average 28 Families Per Village
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Average of 41% of families in village are YMCA members in villages with YMCA clubs.

*NA - not available

Additional Clubs - 12/31/73

(no data available at this writing)

Salesatele
Gataivai
Salaui

Club Dropped - Matauto - Falelatai

YMCA RURAL CLUBS WESTERN SAMOA YMCA
December, 1983

Name of Club	Date Started	Rural Worker	No. of Clubs Under Worker
1. Foaluga	Feb. 1979	Vivisema Tauialo	3
2. Fagasa	Apr. 1979	Vaovale Selesele	3
3. Neiafuuta	May 1980	Pati Burgess	2
4. Falelima	May 1980	Aiolupo Faiva	1
5. Vaipua	May 1980	Pili Mafuatu	1
6. Fasitootai	Aug. 1980	Elama S. Manu	2
7. Foalaio	Sept. 1980	Vivisemu Tauido	3
8. Fogasavaii	Oct. 1980	Leilua Moetu	2
9. Saleaula	Nov. 1980	Semau Soaai	2
10. Satoalepai	Nov. 1980	Semau Soaai	2
11. Manonouta	Nov. 1980	Mulipola Aoelele	2
12. Patamea	Jan. 1981	Aveese Levi	1
13. Vaiafai	Jan. 1981	Lea U. Tofilau	2
14. Faiaai	Mar. 1981	Asomua Eperu	1
15. Tafatafa	Mar. 1981	Fesui'ai Fagalilo	3
16. Mutiatele	May 1981	Fatai Anae	3
17. Papasataua	Sept. 1981	Vaovale Selesele	3
18. Satuipaitea	Sept. 1981	Samuelu Taulupoo	1
19. Neiafutai	Oct. 1981	Pati Burgess	2
20. Iva	Jan. 1982	Lea U. Tofilau	2
21. Auala	Jan. 1982	Vaovale Selesele	3
22. Samatau	Jan. 1982	Mulipola Aclele	2
23. Afega	Feb. 1982	Charlie Ulia	1
24. Matautu Lefaga	Feb. 1982	Tuala Tepatasi	2
25. Satuiatua	Feb. 1982	Vivisemu Tauialo	3
26. Tafitoala	Apr. 1982	Galuefa Sau	1
27. Solaua	Apr. 1982	Peteli Tuaepepe	1
28. Salepouaw Saleimoa	Apr. 1982	Elama S. Manu	2
29. Ulutogia	Apr. 1982	Fatai Anae	3
30. Sagone	Feb. 1982	Leilua Moetu	2
31. Saleaamua	Dec. 1982	Fatai Anae	3
32. Tafaga,amu	Dec. 1982	Tuala Tepatasi	2
33. Salani	Oct. 1982	Fesui'ai Fagalilo	3
34. Salesatele	Feb. 1983	Fesui'iri Fagalilo	3
35. Gataivai		Samuelu Taulupoo	2