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COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (521-0155)

RAPID ASSESSMENT

Review of this project during the April 7 Engineering Sector Semi-Annual Review meeting established that after almost two years of implementation (June 1984 - April 1986) only 1 (Rosier) - out of the 40 planned water systems - has been completed to date. Concerned about this significant lack of implementation progress, and before taking action on the commitment of the one million dollars programmed for obligation by September, Mission management requested in-house personnel (Smith, Gardella and Cesar) to conduct a rapid assessment of this project as soon as possible, to pinpoint project implementation problem areas. Although this project is scheduled for evaluation in September, Mission management wanted information as soon as possible to guide action on the extent of future funding support of the project.

The evaluation team left Port-au-Prince Monday, April 28 and returned Wednesday, April 30. The following sites were visited: St. Georges (between Aquin and St. Louis du Sud), Port-a-Piment, Rosier (Roche-a-Bateau), Arniquet and Maniche. In addition, considerable time was spent interviewing CARE/Cayes project implementation personnel, the Care/Haiti Assistant Director, as well as SNEP field animators assigned to project sites. The evaluation team's general mandate was to identify problems impeding water system construction. My findings are summarized below:

A. Project Construction Status

According to the first year project implementation plan developed by CARE, construction work was planned on 5 to 7 systems and 2 were expected to be completed during this period. However, during the June 1984 - June 1985 period, the pace of implementation was already behind schedule: Rosier was completed, but construction work had only started at Port-a-Piment, and only community organization work was started at St. Georges, Morisseau/Aquin, Arniquet and Maniche. Design work was also prepared for the last two sites mentioned.

The second year implementation plan scheduled the four systems at Port-a-Piment, Maniche, Arniquet and St. Georges for completion, as of the end of April 1986. In fact, Port-a-Piment is about three months behind schedule and the latter three, two months behind schedule. CARE is currently planning to initiate construction work in April at La Cahoanne, in June at Zanglais and Morisseau, and in July/August at Tiburon. Following is a tabular presentation of construction work completed and planned during the first two years of project operation:

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION SCHEDULE
DURING YEARS 1 & 2

<u>LOCALITY</u> <u>(NAME)</u>	<u>STARTED</u> <u>(M / Y)</u>	<u>ENDED</u> <u>(M / Y)</u>	<u>DURATION</u> <u>(# MONTHS)</u>
Rosier	3/85	6/85	3
Port-a-Piment	6/85	7/86*	13
Arniquet	8/85	6/86*	10
Maniche	9/85	6/86*	9
St. Georges	12/85	6/86*	6
<u>TOTAL</u>			<u>41</u>
AVERAGE DURATION (Unweighted)			8.2

* Planned Construction completion date

Construction performance during the first two years of project implementation was clearly inadequate. What is evident in hindsight is that project designers did not realistically anticipate the time required to carry out the activities prerequisite to the initiation of construction. The PP implementation plan called for commencing water system construction about 3 months after the June 1984 signing of the Project Agreement. For example, CARE was expected to set up a regional office at Les Cayes, hire and train project personnel and have the necessary imported equipment and materials on hand to begin construction in September/October. The fact that CARE experienced some difficult personnel problems during the first six months - delay in contracting the Implementation Manager, resignation of the Health Advisor in October and two engineers - compounded the difficulty of establishing a functioning field project implementation unit. Funds for the procurement of essential imported vehicles and materials were divided in two tranches. Although first tranche funding was available as planned to allow CARE to order some vehicles and materials in July (which arrived in September), the second tranche - the major 1.2 million dollar allotment programmed for November 1984 - did not become available to CARE until April 85. Given the fact that 11 major field activities - such as site selection, field surveys for design work, community organization, etc. - were all dependent in large part on the availability of vehicles, it is evident that they could not be carried out during this time period.

In addition, the Project Agreement called for intensive collaboration between SNEP and CARE, particularly with regard to site selection, private connections, handling of community funds, and community organization. As these two agencies have had poor and perhaps antagonistic working relationships before project start-up, it took time to develop cooperation in these areas. In fact, in the case of private connections and community funds, a mutually agreed upon general modus operandi was not negotiated until October 1985 in the case of community funds, and until April of this year with regard to private connections.

During the second year of operation, starting in October 1985 through March 1986, a series of unforeseen events occurred which also disrupted the flow of project implementation. As documented by CARE Quarterly reports, heavy rains during October and November caused the L'Acul and Cavaillon rivers to overflow bringing work at Arniquet and Maniche virtually to a standstill. In addition, the access road to the Port-a-Piment work site was washed away and only limited progress was made on river crossing construction at all sites. Fuel shortages, especially diesel, which began in November and lasted through January 1986, were compounded by growing civil unrest. Further, the CARE/Cayes project office and warehouse facilities were pillaged, and project personnel had to be evacuated to Port-au-Prince for security reasons. Although CARE tried to resume field activity during the early part of February, the unstable situation caused sporadic close downs of the project office during the latter part of February. Field travel was often restricted during March and delivery trucks of Food For Work (FFW) commodities were often hijacked. CARE estimated total losses to be about \$55,080, broken down as follows: \$43,756 in project materials and equipment; \$9,714 in office supplies and equipment; and \$1,610 in vehicle damage.

The civil disturbances which culminated in the overthrow of the 29-year Duvalier regime, also emboldened the masses to utilize the same methods to try to achieve fundamental economic, political and social objectives almost overnight and sometimes, to commit acts of outright banditry and settle personal scores. Thus, strikes, protests and demonstrations were common occurrences during February and March, instead of being the tools of last resort. This new attitude was also manifested in project community residents who often refused to work, or dragged their feet in working for FFW rations whose dollar value amounted to only one-third of the daily three dollar minimum wage. Thus, CARE project staff will have to spend considerable time in the recovery effort to regain the confidence of community residents, and may have to restructure its ration policy. CARE estimates that several hundreds of man/days will have to be spent in reorganizing and restarting activities.

B. Community Participation

CARE's development philosophy in implementing potable water projects calls for significant community participation. Experience has shown that when water systems are built without community involvement, there is no sense of ownership, and they are subsequently neglected and soon fall into disrepair. As point of fact, a lot of defective POCHEP fountains litter the Haitian countryside. CARE requires community residents not only to establish a bank account by collecting \$1.00 per family as an initial community fund to maintain the water systems, but also requires project beneficiaries to do the following work on a voluntary basis: constructing or repairing access roads to springs and construction sites, transporting local materials such as sand, gravel, etc. to the water source, and cleaning the water source to facilitate proper operation of the systems. In addition, local residents are also expected to dig 1 meter per person of pipe trenches on a voluntary basis, with any additional amount over that mark to be compensated with Food For Work.

At least one animator or community organizer was observed at each project site visited. CARE provides two, and SNEP provides three animators. The SNEP animators have been seconded to CARE, as originally stipulated in the Project Agreement, to motivate and organize target community residents. They seem to be well integrated in the communities they serve and are judged to be generally competent by CARE. While they appear to be knowledgeable about their field, it was difficult to gauge the level of their effectiveness given the fact that we could not observe them in action. In general, the animators work with community residents about three months before construction work begins, except in Port-a-Piment, where this phase took 5 months, starting in January 1985. During that three month period, animators have to conduct a population census to survey the number of potential beneficiaries of the system, establish the community bank account, mobilize and organize residents to form the local water committee (CAEP), help organize residents into work teams and motivate them to do work on a voluntary basis.

While community residents appear to accept, at least in principle, the idea of working on a voluntary basis, in fact, it is usually a small core of people who do so: the poor who provide the heavy manual labor, and the town "notables" or elite who occupy CAEP management positions and, along with the animators, perform motivation, planning, coordination and organization functions that result in the construction of the water system. The voluntary labor phase goes along relatively smoothly when the work is short, as in Rosier, or where there is a history of community self-help efforts, as in Arniquet. Community participation was especially problematic in Port-a-Piment where residents had prior negative experiences of doing voluntary work and not getting the improved water supply promised by a Catholic priest.

CARE project management is just now starting to address the issue of long-term system maintenance, including training of CAEP members in management and accounting principles, and indicated that the organizational structure to implement this new operational phase should be in place within the next 6 months. USAID project management should carefully monitor developments in this area to ensure that the necessary amount of resources are allocated, and to make timely interventions to make it a success.

C. Food For Work

Once residents have provided voluntary labor, any additional work is to be compensated by FFW rations. CAEP members interviewed indicated that this operational phase caused them the most trouble. There exists a fundamental difference of opinion between CARE and community residents where FFW rations are concerned. While residents view the ration as a wage for their labour, CARE on the other hand perceives it as an encouragement to people working together to develop their community. CAEP members indicated that residents complain that the daily ration is not enough, since it is valued at only \$1.00, one-third the amount of the minimum three dollar daily wage. While CARE's development philosophy is perhaps laudable, this approach might well be putting an undue burden on the peasant by expecting him to work for an extended period of time for FFW, which means that he is not free to engage in

his customary economic activities that support his family. At the very least, a means should be found to increase the daily food ration up to an amount equal to the daily minimum wage.

D. Productivity

As project implementation experience accumulated, CARE has modified its field modus operandi in order to increase logistical efficiency and productivity. The initial way that FFW was distributed, beside the ration size issue, caused a lot confusion and discontent throughout the ranks of construction workers. The problem was the work was organized in a "vertical" fashion, i.e., into work groups each of which was responsible for different operational stages. Thus, some work groups did work on a voluntary basis, while others received FFW rations. This disparity inevitably brought complaints from group members receiving no rations; this is in fact what happened in St. Georges. CARE has since learned from this experience and has taken steps to organize work horizontally, i.e., in such a way that every worker gets the opportunity to work alternatively on a voluntary basis and also to receive FFW rations.

Another operational problem area was the lack of field productivity. What was happening was that field staff were basically working a 3-day work week, with Mondays and Fridays spent on logistical and organization details to get to work sites and homes, respectively. CARE project management has since initiated a monthly work schedule whereby field staff work 3 six-day work weeks at work sites and have the fourth free to spend with their families. CARE indicated that this method has resulted in considerable improvement in productivity because work is better organized, workers are less rushed, spend more time in the field and get the opportunity to spend one whole week at a time with their families.

Another field method adopted which increased staff productivity is what CARE calls "sideways expansion", which - despite resulting in a slower implementation pace - takes into account the intensive periods spent in community organization work and has increased coverage of more communities in the field. Thus, CARE staff currently are working simultaneously at 6 sites.

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Ainnart, ENG
David Smith, ENG

FROM: Alexis M. Gardella, OPVD

THRU: Barry N. Heyman, OPVD *BNH*

SUBJECT: Assessment of CARE's Community Water Systems Development Project

DATE: 14 May 1986

BACKGROUND:

In early April 1986, Mission management expressed some dissatisfaction with the rate of implementation of CARE's Community Water Systems Development Project (S21-0153) in the Southwest peninsula. The difficulty in mobilizing voluntary labor in each community was signalled as the prime factor impeding progress.

In April 29-30, site visits were arranged by CARE for an assessment of these problems by a USAID team consisting of Dave Smith, ENG (Project Manager), Daniel Cess, DRE, and myself. The team visited Anniquet, Fort-à-Piment, Rosier, Maniche and St. George -- all communities with water systems nearing completion, with the exception of Rosier, which has been operating for 11 months.

FINDINGS:

The slow pace of construction of these water systems is due to a series of complex constraints, not all of which can be consigned to community organization difficulties. These include:

1. Ill-considered early commitments made by SNEP without consulting CARE's team, and without adequate technical and social feasibility assessments. For example, in Fort-à-Piment, the spring source is 9 kms. from town over particularly difficult terrain; in St. Jean du Sud, there is no spring at all, forcing an unplanned-for well-and-pump system; and, in Maniche, particularly large numbers of VSN and concomitant community factionalization resulted in more problems than normal in the mobilization of labor.
2. SNEP's continued recalcitrance in coming to terms with CARE concerning the by-laws for private connections to the systems under construction, which has in turn led to community dissatisfaction with the project in many instances.
3. Six-month delay (11/84-04/85) in the receipt of a major tranche of project funding, and consequent delay in start-up of field operations.
4. Logistical problems related to the inaccessibility of the target communities themselves, as well as of the water sources vis-à-vis the towns. Heavy seasonal rains have also slowed construction in some areas.
5. Recent political events resulted in a period of relative inactivity during the second quarter of FY 86.

As the Mission suspected, difficulties in the area of community "organization" have also played an important role in slowing the pace of project implementation. Specifically, the recruitment and organization of community labor has been problematic. Problems encountered by CARE in this connection, however, are essentially endemic to the Haitian rural context, and clearly did not arise because of any shortcomings in CARE's implementation approach.

CARE, in fact, has faced these problems, and resolved many of them, with a remarkable degree of sensitivity and flexibility. Indeed, their ability to respond appropriately to the context within which they are working has allowed them to continue successfully in each community, rather than to give up in frustration. Moreover, they have obviously learned much in these initial projects which promises to facilitate implementation in the future.

Some of the more salient constraints confronted by CARE include:

1. *Inherent problems in the community council system*

Because CARE's charge under this project does not include community reorganization, they have been forced to work with community councils already in place in each of the target provincial towns. Community councils, unfortunately, are most emphatically not "authentic" communal groups. Indeed, in the vast majority of cases, they are no more than an institutional manifestation of those social relations of hierarchy and coercion which have always characterized Haitian rural communities. Rank-and-file members are understandably unenthusiastic about participation in any activity sponsored by "their" council, since there is usually a long history of their "community" labor being exploited in projects that ultimately benefit only the leaders of the organization. While CARE's current efforts do not conform to this pattern, initial skepticism and reluctance on the part of the potential labor force are virtual "givens" within the existing system.

(The PP proposed the use of "groupements" in mobilizing labor for these water systems. The PP had in mind the groupements currently organized in Gros Morne and the former Groupement Pilot Project in Bayonnais as models. Apparently it was not realized that these groupements are the fruit of many years of organization effort and could not possibly be incorporated into a project such as this. The groupements mentioned in the PP as already existing in nascent form in the targetted regions are in fact "groupements communautaires", which are nothing more than satellite groups of the community councils situated in the provincial towns.)

2. *Food for Work and encouraging community responsibility*

CARE expects each community to participate in the construction of these water systems by providing unskilled labor. Part of the community labor is voluntary, part is compensated for by FFW at the approximate rate of \$1/day. The expectation of voluntary community labor is crucial in CARE's implementation strategy as it is hoped that this contribution will foster community responsibility in the subsequent maintenance and management of the water system. This is, as yet, an untested working hypothesis. However, it should be continued until proven false, based as it is on negative experiences with water systems built entirely with FFW community labor.

Low FFW rations and even partial dependence on voluntary labor necessarily entail a much slower rate of progress than would be the case with fully paid manual workers. Labor expended on such a community project has, understandably, a much lower priority than day-to-day livelihood. The trade-off here is a higher sense of community responsibility for the

shed water system, instead of a more rapid completion of each system.

CARE has made some significant improvements in its method of apportioning voluntary labor and FFW labor since it began constructing these water systems. Initially, CARE had assigned voluntary labor teams to work at the water sources where the work was much more arduous. It was soon discovered, however, that rural "groupements communautaires" were shouldering most of the voluntary labor burdens, while townspeople, doing much less strenuous work, were receiving the FFW compensation. CARE has now righted this situation by insisting that voluntary labor sections be performed in the towns, and FFW compensation be used for the heavier work involved at the water sources. This, together with the construction of various branch systems serving the rural areas the water pipe passes through, has defused a previously inequable labor situation, and helped speed up the pace of work.

4. Gaining the local population's confidence

The Southwest peninsula, like so many areas of the country, has experienced many hollow promises made by the government of Haiti as well as a myriad of international and private organizations. Promises of various development projects are thus met with skepticism and often outright derision. (In Fort-Ariment, a previous, ill-designed water system was completed although it never brought a drop of water to the town.) This sort of situation can seriously delay the implementation of a project, especially one that relies on community participation. CARE is well along in overcoming this potential liability as the first systems near completion and news of the systems operating spreads. CARE has arranged for visits of completed or near completed systems by people in communities where water systems are planned. These visits have resulted in a noticeable upswing in community enthusiasm. In all of the currently working sites, a marked rise in community enthusiasm and participation occurred once water arrived through the pipes within the vicinity of the towns.

In sum, then, it is fair to say that there is nothing wrong with CARE's progress in the construction of these water systems. The slow progress-to-date can be attributed to factors beyond their control and not fully considered in the original design of the project. CARE's resolution of these constraints in the field are likely to speed their progress on future systems.

Recommendations

In the interest of increasing CARE's efficiency in negotiating these community problems in future systems, the following points are recommended:

1. The preliminary community assessments are sketchy at best. This weakness appears to be only at the level of actual documentation, not at the level of working knowledge of individuals in the field. Efforts should be made, however, to enlarge the scope of preliminary community assessments, so that outside scrutiny be facilitated, so that personnel discontinuity not cause major loss in working knowledge, and so that "lessons-learned" be preserved for future projects of any kind. To this end, the following topics should be included in each community assessment:

-specific issues which have aroused discussion and conflict within the

- community, currently or in the past;
- the actual resolutions of these issues, whether proposed by CARE or by the community, and the results;
- a description, in full sociological terms, of the various community factions coalescing around the specific problems encountered in the course of work; and,
- a notation of the time involved for these various conflicts, their resolutions, or other significant social events.

2. If possible, clearer controls should be established on the styles of work employed by the SNEP animators. There may be significant differences in formation, motivation and perception on their part that are affecting relations in the communities. This is a delicate matter, but CARE could perhaps devise a means of addressing these issues in a general way at their monthly staff meetings.

3. CARE should re-examine their modes of first contact with each community. In fact, before actual public contact or public announcements, CARE animators (or SNEP animators) should discuss in detail the nature of the community in question with disinterested parties, e.g. the local priest or pastor, outsiders working in the area, other development organization personnel, etc. In this way factors such as the particular nature of the community council, the particular arrangement of social factions and their histories, the positions and reputations of local "notables", and specific instances of successful or failed projects in the area could be solicited and a reasoned, contextualized approach and working strategy could be devised at the outset. Caution should be exercised in supposing that previously successful working arrangements can be applied in each and every case.

4. CARE should raise its current FFW ration from approximately \$1/day to the going equivalent wage rate in the area. If there are other FFW projects going on in the area, or in the recent past, efforts should be made to standardize the FFW rations with the other agency involved.

In certain communities, those smaller and more homogeneous with less socio-economic contrasts like Rosier and St. George, active members of the CAEP should be partially compensated in FFW for their activities in mobilizing labor in the community. These are cases where CAEP members are losing time in making their own livelihood so as to organize the community. In the larger towns where the community councils are dominated by the local elite, this should emphatically not be the case. The nature and standing of each CAEP member's profession relative to the majority of the community should be a sufficient indicator.