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GDD Paper No. 3

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROGRESS
OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

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and

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International Cooperation Administration

Drafted January 30, 1961

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NOTE

In connection with proposals to redirect the foreign aid program Community Development Division branch chiefs were asked in January 1961 to draft regional papers.

Charles Nelson, who had served in community development in the Philippines and Iran prior to receiving ICA sponsored training in African affairs joined the staff of this Division in November 1961. In addition to a Regional paper on Africa he was asked to draft this document as the Latin American Branch was uncovered at the time. Mr. Nelson left the Division to join the Peace Corps staff in March, 1961.

William E. Davis served in Pakistan from 1952 until 1956 when he was transferred to ICA/W. Since that time he has served as a Branch Chief with the exception of four months when he was acting chief of the Training and Resources Branch. Mr. Davis was designated as Chief of the Latin American Branch February, 1961.

He updated but did not make any major revisions in the Nelson draft.

Community Development and the Progress of Latin American...

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International Cooperation Administration.
Community Development and the Progress
of Latin American Countries. Charles J.
Nelson and William E. Davis. June 1961.
8 p.

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Latin America.

LATIN AMERICA

BACKGROUND

A concern for social and economic development programs in Latin America which would benefit all segments of society has been voiced by Senator Mansfield who in writing on "The Basic Problem of Latin America," states the problem with insight and clarity: 'The modern Latin American nations began as beachheads in the New World in much the same way as did our original thirteen states but they have more or less atrophied in this form. The returns from exports were stopped largely at the beachhead cities. This process underlies the great concentration of wealth in a few hands and the spectacular growth of some Latin American cities into islands of lush modernism in a sea of social stagnation. The social structure does not deliver enough; it does not provide for a sufficient number of people that intangible but essential element of prouderful participation in the present and hope for the future which is the keynote of political stability. In the past our economic policies in respect to Latin America have not been focused on the problem of the beachhead nature of its societies. We have dabbed at the inner difficulties of the Latin American nations with small Point Four programs. Our policies encouraging the flow of private U.S. investment have had the effect of reinforcing the beachheads. Only a relative handful of Latin Americans have benefited.'

'We must enlarge the beachhead societies of Latin America into truly national democratic states. Success is essential to Latin America's future and to the future of this nation.' 1/

Within the past year the U.S. has given belated recognition to the need for social development in Latin America through the appropriation of \$500 million for a Social Development Program. Establishment of this program resulted in the Act of Bogota which is the basic OAS declaration regarding it. The Act summarizes the aims of social development as immediately enlarging the opportunities of the people of Latin America for social progress and strengthening their hopes for the future. It points out that emphasis should be given to those measures that meet social needs and also promote increases in productivity and strengthen economic development, manifesting a recognition

1/ New York Times Magazine, December 4, 1960.

that social development and economic development are not only compatible but go hand in hand and must proceed apace.

Concerning the participation of the rural population in economic development the OAS Committee of 21 agreed that improved technology, financing and proper land tenure systems are not enough to improve rural life. In addition, conditions should be established which enable rural communities, through the community development process, to participate actively in improving their own environment. The U.S. has indicated full agreement with the goal of complete participation of the people in the process of economic and social development and favors the "Community Development process" for accelerating the rate of economic progress while at the same time establishing conditions for a fully democratic way of life by promoting self-reliance and self-respect among the inhabitants of the rural areas.

The main deterrent to programs of social development in Latin America has been the lack of strong leaders dedicated to programs that would bring about an enrichment of the lives of the peasantry. Latin America has not had a Magsaysay or a Nehru. In part this may be explained by the fact that the elective process is only beginning to come into primacy as a device for installing new governments. The social environment with a small governing elite from which political leaders are drawn, the lack of experience in the democratic process by all elements of the society and the slow pace of economic and social progress combine to make for generally weak coalition government, unwilling to embark on far-reaching national programs of economic and social change. Additional factors have been the role of certain elements of the church and the oppressive land tenure system.

Regardless of the lack of a favorable climate community development programs have been undertaken in certain parts of Latin America. For example in British Guiana under ICA auspices a community development program was started with an advisor stationed there from 1954 to 1958. While no advisor is now present the Government of British Guiana continued this program and ICA is now providing assistance through the provision of training grants in the U.S. and third countries for persons associated with community development. Under the Ministry of Social Welfare in Panama a small field program utilizing paid village workers is in force in five provinces. One Community Development advisor is currently stationed in Panama. The largest effort now underway in Latin America is in Brazil where one advisor is stationed. The Brazil program which is in the initial stage of implementation involves a U.S. contribution of \$708,000 for (1.) a program for the teaching of the social sciences through a university contract

and (2) holding of a National Seminar of developmental agencies to define the role of each in rural development and to establish guidelines for greater cooperation in programs designed to reach the rural population. The Servicio Social Rural has held short training courses for community workers and supervisors now working in the field. Ecuador, with UN assistance, is attempting to develop a national community development program as a complementary activity to agrarian reform. Bolivia, again with UN assistance, is trying to move toward a national program. Mexico has a number of uncoordinated programs aimed at improvement of rural life. Jamaica has an ongoing rural community development program and the U.S. is assisting the government in starting an urban community development program in connection with slum clearance in Kingston. Colombia, with assistance from the UN, National Federation of Coffee Growers, CARE, the Peace Corps is embarking on a national program. Venezuela has a small community development activity in CORDIPLAN and the President of Venezuela, in addressing the National Congress, stated quite precisely the role of community development:

"The immediate objectives of these programs are to stimulate the spirit of progress in the population, to create habits of cooperative action, to create new sources of labor that would permit obtaining greater income and, finally, strengthen autonomous legal government that will be the expression of a democratic process, the essence of community development. Programs of community development have great importance within integrated economic planning, because they awaken individual initiative and promote active participation of the community in the realization of works and projects making maximum use of financial and human resources, achieving at the same time organic interrelation between economic and social development."

DISCUSSION

In Latin America efforts to establish national community development programs have been generally unavailing. The majority of Latin America countries gained their independence a century ago in contrast to countries in other regions of the world which have gained independence since WW II. In the period since independence they have developed groups with deep-rooted vested interests which are not easily disestablished. Thus they have lacked the stimulus of recent independence to consideration of the "rising expectations" of their people. In those cases where government officials made their

own interpretation of community development and its contribution to the development of self-government at the local level, they feared it because of the effect on vested interests. In part the lack of understanding by host countries of community development and the lack of awareness by the various USOMS of its role in development has been the absence of community development advisors.

With the advent of Castroism and its identification with the cause of the poverty stricken masses, programs such as community development, which seek within a permissive framework to improve the conditions of living of the majority of the population and to bring them into a positive association with the state, have added urgency. To forego the development of the masses within the compass of the democratic process leaves ultimately only the Castro alternative, which is untenable.

There has been interest in the community development technique by professional groups in Latin America but planning on a national scale has been lacking. In the prevailing climate in Latin America it is not possible to mount national programs in all countries. The choice is to select one or two countries where government is favorable and action to date indicates that cooperative efforts will achieve meaningful results -- results that might influence neighboring states within the region as has been the case with the Philippines and India in the Far East and South Asia.

Colombia and Brazil have been selected as countries that not only satisfy this condition but where the need is paramount.

COLOMBIA

Colombia is by far the most populous nation in the Caribbean area. With its fifteen million people, Colombia has twice the population of Cuba or Venezuela, or approximately the same number of people as all the other independent countries of the Caribbean. Colombia's population is increasing, moreover, at the rate of approximately 3 per cent annually, a rate of growth among the highest in the world.

In the last few decades the social situation in Colombia has been greatly aggravated with violence in the rural areas becoming a major problem. Illiteracy is 43 per cent and Colombia is one of the few countries in the world where illiteracy actually is increasing.

Per capita income is less than \$5.00 weekly and over the last two years has been increasing at a rate of only a penny a day. The USOM concludes that a great proportion of the people live a subhuman existence and urges that a wide plan of social investments based on external financial assistance be undertaken immediately. The problem is that if the foremost primary U.S. objective in Colombia, that of maintaining political stability, is to be reached, Colombia must make a number of social changes which may not be in the immediate interest of the ruling elite. Institution of an extensive, government-supported community development program, with U.S. financial and technical support may form part of the answer to Colombia's problems.

Recently the Government of Colombia established by decree within the Ministry of Government, the senior ministry, a Division of Community Action with national responsibility for community development. Operating funds have been provided and basic staff is in the process of selection. The new division will also assume certain responsibilities vis-a-vis the National Planning Board for regional planning and urban development. In conjunction with GOC action the National Federation of Coffee Growers has approved a program of economic and social development approximating 210,000,000 pesos, of which fifty million has already been allocated. Among the activities to be undertaken are a loan fund, a development fund, and a program of village development. The Federation's community development activity is to be carried out in close alliance with the Division of Community Action.

The Federation gained many of its ideas regarding community development through observation of Community Development programs in the Philippines and Iran. These observations, which were in part underwritten by CARE, represent the first awareness by Colombians that ICA does participate in country community development efforts, financially and technically. CARE staffed and financed in part a three-man survey which established the framework for community development and led to its becoming a national undertaking. CARE has entered into a contract with the National Federation of Coffee Growers to provide a three man staff to assist in the launching of the program. In this connection 60 Peace Corps Volunteers will be sent to Colombia under contract with CARE to assist in moving the program to the rural areas.

The Community Development Division believes that an opportunity exists in Colombia for the U.S. to establish an effective posture toward the Government of Colombia attempt and determination to undertake a national program of community action leading to accelerated social and economic development. In addition to government

efforts there is, also, participation by the private sector. Much needs to be done to coordinate these efforts and the U.S. experience could lead the way. U.S. association is not only beneficial from the standpoint of assistance to the Government of Colombia but in terms of the U.S. position in Latin America. Perforce, if this development activity is a successful one its ramifications will extend beyond the borders of Colombia, becoming an example of international cooperation for economic and social development as well as an example of government and business cooperation toward this end.

BRAZIL

With its large population of sixty-two million, and its burgeoning young industrial growth, Brazil is the foremost nation of South America. Her stature, however, (Brazil's GNP for 1960 is estimated at \$14.2 billion) can not conceal serious internal weaknesses. Average per capita income is only \$4.00 weekly and increasing at the rate of 10¢ a week. In addition, as the USOM points out, the middle groups so important to a democratic state, are just beginning to emerge. Brazil's progress has been hindered not only by economic factors such as inflation, but also by the nation's rigid social structure. Most of the leading groups in public life have not recognized the necessity to assume civic responsibilities to solve fundamental political, economic, and social problems. Resistance by these groups to constructive change has been a primary factor preventing extension of education, health, and agricultural services to the mass of the people. Educational resources are severely limited; yet those that do exist primarily benefit a limited number of upper-class students. The lower schools are organized only to sift out upper-class candidates for an anachronistic, non-utilitarian brand of higher education.

The historical elite retains power today in Brazil especially in the northeastern region, a section much worse off than other parts of the nation. The Northeast, comprising only 15 per cent of Brazil's total area, contains one-third of the Brazilian people, who receive approximately 15 per cent of Brazil's income. Per capita income is one-third of the national average. Recognizing the explosive proportions of the problem in the Northeast, the Government of Brazil in 1959 set up a separate organization for development of this area. Recognizing, however, the social, especially rural, problems of Brazil as a whole, an ICA consultant recommended a nationwide community development program for Brazil. He urged building up Brazil's educational resources in social science and proposed a community development staff to work with Brazil's Rural Social Service.

The present ICA program in Brazil is large. TC funds for FY 1962 will be about \$10 million. The present Community Development program, however, provides only one Community Development advisor and the recommended contract to stimulate training in social science. The USOM does have, however, tentative plans for a Northeast Brazil development project.

CONCLUSIONS

Programs of community development are needed in Latin America to facilitate and energize efforts toward economic, social and political development. The small magnitude of current community development activity is due in part to the absence of advisors and unawareness or lack of appreciation by ICA staff of its role in the development process. Under these circumstances the establishment of country interest and understanding has been difficult.

There are in Latin America ongoing programs of community development. In the main these are small programs concerned with particular areas or problems in the country of location. They do represent positive beginnings that should be nurtured. A corollary effort should be started by sending various Latin America leaders to the U.S. and to third countries having national programs to observe the community development process in action. The efficacy of this approach is proven by the Colombian experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that in Latin America U.S. policy be to concentrate major community development efforts in Colombia and Brazil. These countries are selected in terms of (1) their eventual influence on other Latin American countries and (2) evidence that their governments are desirous of mounting programs that will deal effectively with rural poverty and the problems of social change. In Brazil it is further recommended that a northeast development program, if found feasible, should be a coordinated project akin to rural development under JCRR in Taiwan or the concentrated EARIS project in the UAR, rather than a straight-line community development operation.

In addition to the establishment of national programs in Colombia and Brazil it should be U.S. policy to encourage current community development activities in Latin America and provide community development advisors where national programs are being attempted such as in Colombia and Ecuador. It is also recommended that a multi-country

technician be based in Central America to be available to work in any country in the area when advice and guidance in the establishment of programs is desired. For example such a person could explore certain indications of C.D. type activity in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. In regard to specific countries, the efforts in Panama, which have seen acceptance by government should be continued and expanded when necessary. In Surinam beginning efforts are taking shape in terms of a rural development program; these should be continued. Provided the Government of British Guiana requests it, the services of a community development advisor should be reinstated. Presently the government is carrying the program forward without advisory assistance. In Chile, Peru and Costa Rica where ICA and University consultants have recommended that community development staff be assigned efforts should be undertaken to establish advisory support leading to pilot community development programs.

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Staff Paper - LA Supplement
ICA Community Development Division
January 30, 1961
SECOND DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROGRESS
OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

NOTE: This paper was prepared as the LA supplement to a staff paper recommending more emphasis on community development as a part of the U.S. foreign aid program.

LATIN AMERICA

BACKGROUND

A concern for social and economic development programs in Latin America which would benefit all segments of society has been voiced by Senator Mansfield who in writing on "The Basic Problem of Latin America," states the problem with insight and clarity: 'The modern Latin American nations began as beachheads in the New World in much the same way as did our original thirteen states but they have more or less atrophied in this form. The returns from exports were stopped largely at the beachhead cities. This process underlies the great concentration of wealth in a few hands and the spectacular growth of some Latin American cities into islands of lush modernism in a sea of social stagnation. The social structure does not deliver enough; it does not provide for a sufficient number of people that intangible but essential element of prideful participation in the present and hope for the future which is the keynote of political stability. In the past our economic policies in respect to Latin America have not been focused on the problem of the beachhead nature of its societies. We have dabbed at the inner difficulties of the Latin American nations with small Point Four programs. Our policies encouraging the flow of private U.S. investment have had the effect of reinforcing the beachheads. Only a relative handful of Latin Americans have benefited.'

'We must enlarge the beachhead societies of Latin America into truly national democratic states. Success is essential to Latin America's future and to the future of this nation.'^{1/}

Within the past year the U.S. has given belated recognition to the need for social development in Latin America through the authorization of a \$500 million Social Development Program. Establishment of this program resulted in the Act of Bogota which is the basic OAS declaration regarding it. The Act summarizes the aims of social development as immediately enlarging the opportunities of the people of Latin America for social progress and strengthening their hopes for the future. It points out that emphasis should be given to those measures that meet social needs and also promote increases in productivity and strengthen economic development, manifesting a recognition that social development and economic development are not only compatible but go hand in hand and must proceed apace.

Concerning the participation of the rural population in economic development the OAS Committee of 21 agreed that improved technology, financing and proper land tenure systems are not enough to improve rural life. In addition, conditions should be established which enable rural communities, through the community development process, to participate actively in improving their own environment. The U.S. has indicated full agreement with the goal of complete participation of the people in the process of economic and social

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development and favors the "Community Development process" for accelerating the rate of economic progress while at the same time establishing conditions for a fully democratic way of life by promoting self-reliance and self-respect among the inhabitants of the rural areas.

The main deterrent to programs of social development in Latin America has been the lack of strong leaders dedicated to programs that would bring about an enrichment of the lives of the peasantry. Latin America has not had a Magsaysay or a Nehru. In part this may be explained by the fact that the elective process is only beginning to come into primacy as a device for installing new governments. The social environment with a small governing elite from which political leaders are drawn, the lack of experience in the democratic process by all elements of the society and the slow pace of economic and social progress combine to make for generally weak coalition government, unwilling to embark on far-reaching national programs of economic and social change. Additional factors have been the role of certain elements of the church and the oppressive land tenure system.

Regardless of the lack of a favorable climate community development programs have been undertaken in certain parts of Latin America. For example in British Guiana under ICA auspices a community development program was started with an advisor stationed there from

1954 to 1958. While no advisor is now present the Government of British Guiana continued this program and ICA is now providing assistance through the provision of training grants for persons associated with community development in the U.S. and third countries.

Under the Ministry of Social Welfare in Panama a small field program utilizing paid village workers is in force in five provinces. One Community Development advisor is currently stationed in Panama. The largest effort now underway in Latin America is in Brazil where one advisor is stationed. The Brazil program which is in the initial stage of implementation involves a U.S. contribution of \$708,000 for (1) a program for the teaching of the social sciences through a university contract and (2) a program of community development in one area of Brazil yet to be selected. Mexico and Jamaica also have ongoing programs of community development. Of interest are recent surveys undertaken through the auspices of the UN in Ecuador and Venezuela, which have resulted in recommendations that community development programs be started. While there is no indication of government institution of a community development program the President of Venezuela, in addressing the National Congress, stated quite precisely the role of community development

"The immediate objectives of these programs are to stimulate the spirit of progress in the population, to create habits of cooperative action, to create new sources of labor that would permit obtaining greater income and, finally, strengthen autonomous legal government that will be the expression of a democratic process, the essence of community development. Programs of community development have great importance within integrated economic planning, because they awaken individual initiative and promote active participation of the community in the realization of works and projects making maximum use of financial and human resources, achieving at the same time organic interrelation between economic and social development."

DISCUSSION

In Latin America efforts to establish national community development programs have been generally unavailing. The majority of Latin America countries gained their independence a century ago in contrast to countries in other regions of the world which have gained independence since WW II. In the period since independence they have developed groups with deep-rooted vested interests which are not easily disestablished. Thus they have lacked the stimulus of recent independence to stimulate consideration of the "rising expectations" of their people. In those cases where government officials made their own interpretation of community development

and its contribution to the development of self-government at the local level feared it because of the effect on vested interests. In part the lack of understanding by host countries of community development and the lack of awareness by the various USOMS of its role in development has been the absence of community development advisors.

With the advent of Castroism, however, and its identification with the cause of the poverty stricken masses, programs such as community development, which seek within a permissive framework to improve the conditions of living of the majority of the population and to bring them into a positive association with the state have added urgency. To forego the development of the masses within the compass of the democratic process leaves ultimately only the Castro alternative, which is untenable.

There has been interest in the community development technique by professional groups in Latin America but planning on a national scale has been lacking. In the prevailing climate in Latin America it is not possible to mount national programs in all countries. The choice is select one or two countries where government is perceived as favorable and action to date indicates that cooperative efforts will achieve meaningful results. Results that might influence neighboring states within the region as has been the case with the Philippines and India.

Colombia and Brazil have been selected as countries that not only satisfy this condition but where the need is paramount.

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In the last few decades the social situation in Colombia has been greatly aggravated with violence in the rural areas becoming a major problem. Illiteracy is 43 per cent and Colombia is one of the few countries in the world where illiteracy actually is increasing. Per capita income is less than \$5.00 weekly and over the last two years has been increasing at a rate of only a penny a day. The USOM concludes that a great proportion of the people live a subhuman existence and urges that a wide plan of social investments based on external financial assistance be undertaken immediately. The problem is that if the foremost primary U.S. objective in Colombia, that of maintaining political stability, is to be reached, Colombia must make a number of social changes which may not be in the immediate interest of the ruling

elite. Institution of an extensive, government-supported community development program, with U.S. financial and technical support may form part of the answer to Colombia's problems.

Recently the Government of Colombia established by decree within the Ministry of Government, the senior ministry, a Division of Community Action with national responsibility for community development. Operating funds have been provided and basic staff is in the process of selection. The new division will also assume certain responsibilities vis-a-vis the National Planning Board for regional planning and urban development. In conjunction with GOC action the National Federation of Coffee Growers has approved a program of economic and social development approximating 210,000,000 pesos, of which fifty million has already been allocated. Among the activities to be undertaken are a loan fund, a development fund, and a program of village development. The Federation's community development activity is to be carried out in close alliance with the Division of Community Action.

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efforts, financially and technically. CARE also staffed and financed in part a three-man survey which established the framework for community development and led to its becoming a national undertaking.

CDD believes that an opportunity exists in Colombia for the U.S. to establish an effective posture toward the GOC attempt and determination to undertake a national program of community action leading to accelerated social and economic development. In addition to government efforts there is, also, participation by the private sector. U.S. association is not only beneficial from the standpoint of assistance to the GOC but in terms of the U.S. position in Latin America. Perforce, if this development activity is a successful one its ramifications will extend beyond the borders of Colombia, becoming an example of international cooperation for economic and social development as well as an example of government and business cooperation toward this end.

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important to a democratic state are just beginning to emerge. Brazil's progress has been hindered not only by economic factors such as inflation, but also by the nation's rigid social structure. Most of the leading groups in public life have not recognized the necessity to assume civic responsibilities to solve fundamental political, economic, and social problems. Resistance by these groups to constructive change has been a primary factor preventing extension of education, health, and agricultural services to the mass of the people. Educational resources are severely limited; yet those that do exist primarily benefit a limited number of upper-class students. The lower schools are organized only to sift out upper-class candidates for an anachronistic, non-utilitarian brand of higher education.

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development program for Brazil. He urged building up Brazil's educational resources in social science and proposed a community development staff to work with Brazil's Rural Social Services.

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CONCLUSIONS

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There are in Latin America ongoing programs of community development. In the main these are small programs concerned with particular areas or problems in the country of location. They do represent positive beginnings that should be nurtured. A corollary effort should be started by sending various Latin America leaders

to the U.S. and third countries having national programs to observe the community development process in action. The efficacy of this approach is proven by the Colombian experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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In addition to the establishment of national programs in Colombia and Brazil it should be U.S. policy to continue current community development activities in Latin America. To overcome the lack of community development advisory staff in many of the countries it is recommended that a multi-country technician be based in one country to be available to live in three others when advice and guidance in the establishment of programs is desired. For example such a person could explore certain indications of C.D. type activity in Honduras and Guatemala.

In regard to specific countries the efforts in Panama, which have seen acceptance by government should be continued and expanded when necessary. In Surinam beginning efforts are taking shape in terms of a rural development program; these should be continued. Provided the government of British Guiana requests, the services of a community development advisor should be reinstated. Presently the government is carrying the program forward without advisory assistance. In Chile, Peru and Costa Rica where ICA and University consultants have recommended that community development staff be assigned efforts should be undertaken to establish advisory support leading to pilot community development programs. The Prime Minister of Jamaica, which has a community development program, recently requested U.S. action. This request should be acted on affirmatively.