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Agua del pueblo

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BRUCE CLEMENS

agua del pueblo

CHAIRMAN: Mr J M G van DAMME

The CHAIRMAN explained that Professor Diamant was not available to present his paper on education. However, Mr Bruce Clemens would talk about the work he had been doing in Guatemala.

2. Mr Bruce CLEMENS has worked with Agua del Pueblo (AdP) for the past seven years. AdP, "The Peoples Water Company", is a private non-profit technical assistance institution working in Central America. AdP is a small scale, grass roots organization, based in the rural highlands of Guatemala. AdP provides potable water by collaborating with its beneficiaries - or rather AdP provides the means by which the beneficiaries improve their own water supplies. AdP was founded by a multi-disciplinary team of engineers, social scientists and technicians in 1972. AdP has been responsible for 36 rural potable water supply projects benefitting 35 000.

3. There were 5 reasons that AdP chose to work with rural potable water supply. First and foremost, it was a response to a felt need. Committees approached AdP directly for technical assistance for water supply projects. Secondly, water supply projects are conducive to improvements in community organizations. The entire community must work together and a representative body must be chosen to make decisions for the community as a whole. Thirdly, improvement in water supply directly benefits the most critical target group, namely rural women and children. Another reason for choosing water supply was the visibility of the project, a flowing tap is a concrete testimony to the project. Lastly improved water supply is avowed to improve the public health. However, this last benefit is the lowest on the priority list for

the beneficiaries. As a rule the rural inhabitants want water improvements in quantity and accessibility, however they don't perceive the need for potable water.

4. Mr CLEMENS presented Table 1 showing AdP's approach to development, summarizing their work in Guatemala.

5. AdP assists communities with technical expertise, however, the communities must contribute substantially to the capital costs for construction materials through loans and provide all of the skilled and unskilled labour.

6. Mr CLEMENS stressed the integrated nature of AdP's approach. They were not simply concerned with water supply, but attempted to assist the committee in all aspects of community development.

7. One of AdP's most noteworthy projects is the training of paraprofessionals for rural potable water supply programmes. Over the past 5 years, AdP has demonstrated and documented that there is a vocational gap in the personnel structure of the institutions responsible for rural water supply. The gap can be divided into two; a technical and socio-cultural hiatus.

8. The technical gap hiatus exists because there is a substantial number of qualified engineers and a large number of efficient construction contractors and skilled labourers; but there is a lack of qualified intermediate personnel. The engineers are over-skilled, over-specialized and over-qualified for the necessary tasks. On the other hand the skilled labourers are

THE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT OF AGUA DEL PUEBLO

<u>OBSTACLES</u>	<u>GOALS</u>	<u>MEANS/PROJECTS</u>
ABSOLUTE POVERTY AND DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES	IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS IN RURAL AREAS	A. RURAL WATER SUPPLY PROGRAMS i) individual projects ii) integrated rural environmental sanitation pilot programs B. OTHER PROJECTS i) disaster relief ii) hydro-electric plant iii) schools iv) clinics
FAILURE OF INSTITUTIONS TO DELIVER DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES	STRENGTHEN CAPABILITIES OF DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS	A. MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT: BAREFOOT ENGINEERS AND SKILLED LABOUR B. DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMMING METHODOLOGY FOR RURAL WATER SUPPLY C. OTHER PROJECTS i) housing studies ii) environmental impact studies iii) irrigation feasibility studies iv) appropriate technologies for rural water supply (IBRD) v) consulting contracts
INABILITY OF RURAL POPULACE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVAILABLE DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSCIOUSNESS LEVEL RAISING	A. FORMATION OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS B. ENCOURAGEMENT OF CATALYTIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS C. FOMENTATION OF COMMUNITY INPUT IN ALL PHASES

not capable of planning and designing a safe and adequate water system.

9. The socio-cultural hiatus exists because the engineers are socially and culturally remote from the intended beneficiaries. The engineers cannot understand the needs of the rural population and at the same time the beneficiaries have difficulty in communicating with the engineers.

10. The solution proposed by AdP to fill this vocational gap is the development of rural water promoters (I.T.A.R.'s). ITAR is an acronym for the Spanish: "Impulsor y Técnico de Acueducto Rural"; translated: Facilitator and Technician for rural acueducts. The ITARs are natives of the rural area trained to organize, plan design, and supervise the construction of rural water supply projects. To date AdP has trained only 4 ITARs using an on-the-job, person-to-person pedagogy, however, national and international agencies have demonstrated interest in institutionalizing the concept.

11. The work of AdP was extending to other countries in Central America, and with USAID financing, AdP is carrying out a feasibility study for the development of similar country specific programs in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

12. The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr CLEMENS for his most interesting talk and said how good it was to listen to someone who was actually augmenting - and augmenting successfully - a programme to provide water for rural communities.

13. Mr Jozsef BUKY asked for information about the financial arrangements for the programme. He was interested in the source of funds, the allowances paid, rate of interest charged and so on. Mr CLEMENS replied that the cost for personal and operating including technicians salaries amounted to \$US 200 000 a year. The funds were obtained from private foundations and donations from the United States, and from the USAID. Funds were also obtained from Church World Services and the OXFAM Foundation. The Guatemala government has also provided some materials.

14. In reply to a question from the CHAIRMAN, Mr CLEMENS said that a great deal of his time was spent obtaining funds.

15. In reply to further questions from Mr BUKY, Mr CLEMENS said that agreements for receiving and repaying funds were signed on behalf of "Village Improvement Companies". The Ministry of Health was also integrally involved. Agua del Pueblo prepared programmes and drew up the agreements.

16. Mr G S HOYLES asked whether PVC pipes used in the programme were imported or made in Guatemala. Mr CLEMENS said the PVC pipes were made locally from material imported from the United States. Galvanized pipes had also been used, and asbestos cement pipes were also made in Guatemala.

17. Mr M Z KARIM said that mention had already been made during the Conference of evaluation of projects. Mr CLEMENS had mentioned evaluation of water supply with other development. Mr KARIM had some experience of such surveys, where a latrine programme had been related to the health of the people. Mr CLEMENS wished he had more time to devote to evaluation of the benefits of the water supply schemes which had been provided. He stated that a recent World Bank survey of AdP projects showed that approximately 85% of latrines were being used. Agua del Pueblo had only been required to make extensive repairs for operation and maintenance of one rural water supply scheme and that was due to the earthquake of 1976.

18. Mr K B NYASULU noted that the communities provided with water seemed to be away from the administrative centres and enquired about the relationship between Agua del Pueblo and the government. Mr CLEMENS said he had worked with the regional governments in the area and site visits were often made in the company of a ministry official. On the other hand they tried to keep government interference at arm's length. Communities had told Mr CLEMENS that the closer Agua del Pueblo got to the government, the further they moved from the local people. Some collaboration with the government was necessary, for the people received some government subsidies.

19. Mr NYASULU asked whether the people were represented by a chief when they first approached Agua del Pueblo. Mr CLEMENS replied that the first contact

with the people was usually with the religious leaders of the villages. A major problem was always trying to get everyone involved.

20. In reply to a question from Mr M Y SINKILONGO, Mr CLEMENS said that communities which were helped with water supply schemes invariably went on to carry out other improvement projects. The villages had approached AdP directly for assistance. This usually meant that they were villages with some communal spirit, and where a representative of the village spoke for the community as a whole.