

Role of Social Organizers in Pumped Irrigation Systems in Subang, West Java, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

THE MAJOR OF the people in Subang are **peasants** who live in conditions of poverty. The economic resources are poor and the area is isolated and is suffering from the effects of drought. In **1982**, the village of Sidajaya suffered a serious **food** shortage. the result of a very long *dry* season. About this time, after having studied the socioeconomic situation in Subang, Bina Swadaya. in cooperation with the local government, undenook to help the people to overcome these problems.

Before starting, a study was made to reexamine **the** technical, economic, and social feasibility of project implementation in the proposed region. In addition, in May **1984**, a baseline survey **was** made to collect data necessary for project management and for comparison at the time of final project evaluation. The baseline survey covered the six villages of Sidajaya, Sidamulya, Padaasih, Cihambulu, Cikaum. and Pangarengan. Data were collected by a **team** consisting of five persons from Bina Swadaya and Bappeda Subang. The feasibility study for installation of pumping systems was conducted jointly with the Kabupaten Public Works Service. The findings concluded that a pumping system in Cikaum village would not **be** feasible and this village **was** dropped from the project.

The project is managed cooperatively and is organized under the water users' associations. Up to **1988** this project has covered **506** hectares in 5 villages.

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PROJECT AIMS

Through a process of motivation and consciousness-raising of the community, the aims of the project were formulated as follows:

- * To generate income.
- * To create employment opportunities.
- * To increase income equitableness among **the** following groups: **landless** farmers, landowners, and small farmers.
- * To increase community participation in the development process.

These aims **are** achieved through the efforts of social organizers who provide information, explanations, and guidance, to assist **the** development of **the** communities. There are now 85 self-reliance groups with a total membership of 3,190 people.

Farmers usually have a very limited **role** in irrigation development and often **take** little responsibility for system maintenance. Many facilities which have been well-constructed according to technical standards have a shorter life than planned **as** a result of insufficient maintenance. It has also been observed that certain irrigation facilities (**structures/canals**) **remain** unutilized, because they do not satisfy farmers' needs. This has been recognized **as** due to **an** insufficient sense of ownership, which is the result of farmers being uninvolved in the planning and implementation of the development of the system.

Negative results may be prevented in the future by increasing farmer participation. To obtain such participation social organizers who will live among the farmers are **needed** to **carry** out the following actions:

- * Motivating the farmers to participate in all stages of development of **the pump-irrigation** system.
- * Developing the farmers' organizations.
- * Identifying the farmers' needs **and** desires and communicating them to the technical planners, as well **as** submitting project suggestions to **the** farmers.

In Subang the social organizers carried out the above actions by applying the following basic strategies:

- * Improvement of technical design based on farmers' expressed needs.
- * Helping **the** water users' associations with organizational development, **including** identification of objectives, historical background, **area** location, membership, **organization** structure, and financial and administrative procedures.
- * Providing continuous technical assistance for institutionalization of water **users' associations** through extension, baseline-data collection, participatory planning and recording, and evaluating and monitoring.

It should be noted that project success is determined to a considerable degree by community participation and the quality of the social organizer. The social organizer who could be of either sex should have the following qualifications:

- * **An** agricultural field-worker background.
- * Age between **22-30** years.
- * In good health and preferably **not** handicapped.
- * Ability to communicate; to be creative, flexible, and logical.
- * Passed the socia-organizer training carried out by the *Pusdiklat* (The Education and Training Center) of Bina Swadaya.
- * Ability to speak in local dialects which is an added advantage.

ADVANTAGES OF THE PROJECT

Income Generation

From the point of view of landowners, irrigation permits the harvesting of two crops of rice per year as compared with only one when unirrigated. For landless farmers income is increased when two rice crops are harvested per year. This group may also produce a non-rice crop in the third season of each year.

Increased Employment Opportunities

The increased productivity of the land permits more workers to be absorbed into the local agricultural activities, reducing problems of urban drift.

Equitable Income

Landless farmers are able to raise a third crop under irrigation in the dry season without paying additional rent, thus increasing their annual income. This contributes to more equitable income distribution in the region.

Increased Participation in Development

A package of education, training, and guidance offered to local groups on a regular basis increases their knowledge and skills. This process helps to increase their level of participation in community matters.

The training program is organized on two levels:

- * Promoter level: To stabilize the promotion of self-reliance groups, with 15 promoters (local volunteers) from the project-fostered villages trained in a special course.
- * Group level: Training by subject, with several courses already held in all of the fostered villages, encompassing basic accounting, leadership, and management, as well as various vocational courses.

As a final note, the success of this project depended on community participation. This was made possible through

- * The involvement of formal and informal personages in motivating the community.
- * The quality of social organizers, especially their perception, commitment, and skill.
- * The benefits expected by the farmers if this project is successful.
- * Community involvement from the planning stage.
- * Confidence in financial management instilled in the community during physical project implementation.
- * The presence of field promoters residing in fostered areas.
- * The sense of belonging which grows and is fostered among the project beneficiaries.