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AUTHOR Contado, Tito E.
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ABSTRACT

The Barrio Development School, a 4-year action-research project which has been in operation for 2 years, is located at Masaya, Bay, Laguna, Philippines. Begun by the University of the Philippines, College of Agriculture, and the Board of National Education, it is a secondary school program for barrio youths who have decided to stay, live, and work in the barrio as farm operators. It is aimed towards (1) determining whether a non-college preparatory secondary school program is possible in a village setting, (2) determining the extent of the school's contribution to the socioeconomic development of the people and the village, and (3) studying the sociological processes involved in the introduction and operation of such a school project. The Barrio Development School trains prospective (12-18 year olds) farm operators on their own farm, where day-to-day problems have to be studied and solved. In addition to learning about farm production, the future farmer learns about supply, labor, credit, marketing, and other management requirements of modern farming. The student operates the farm by himself, with the guidance of the agriculture teacher and his parents. This paper discusses the resistance encountered from the barrio leaders and parents, the program-supervised farming projects (i.e., raising rabbits for profit), and the school's impact on the barrio, parents, and educators in the country, as well as from other countries. This paper also compares the school project to the present secondary school programs. (NQ)

EDUCATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE UPCA/BNE BARRIO DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL PROJECT*

INTRODUCTION

The developing countries like the Philippines which are characterized by their agricultural economies have been faced with serious problems of rural underdevelopment, unemployment and underemployment. It is an experience that seems to be uninfluenced by the massive expenditures in education. With the present trends of education in these countries in which "the educated tend to regard their education as the badge that relieves them of any obligation to soil their hands"[1] the future, unless something positive is done, does not seem to be promising. Viewed in the light of supply and demand of labor, it appears that at the present stage of Philippine development, employment opportunities will continue to be short relative to the number of men and women who enter the labor force every year. The lack of employment opportunity is related to the lack of men and women who are trained to employ themselves and possibly to employ others productively.

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*A paper prepared by Dr. Tito E. Contado, Assistant Professor and Director of Extension Education of the U.P. College of Agriculture, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, for the Third World Congress for Rural Sociology, August 22-27, 1972 at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U.S.A. The UPCA and BNE stand for University of the Philippines, College of Agriculture and the Board of National Education, respectively. The UPCA/BNE Barrio Development School Project is being conducted by Dr. Tito E. Contado as project leader and Dr. Severino R. Santos, Jr., as project adviser both of the Department of Agricultural Education, U.P. College of Agriculture. Grateful appreciation is expressed to the Agricultural Development Council for making it possible for the author to present this paper at the Third World Congress for Rural Sociology.

In search of educational innovations especially in the area of relating education to rural development, the University of the Philippines, College of Agriculture (UPCA) and the Board of National Education (BNE) are jointly undertaking a pilot Barrio Development School Project in Masaya, Bay, Laguna, Philippines. This pilot project was started in July 1970.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The struggle for national survival and development must be inspired by a deep sense of idealism but must be pursued programmatically and eclectically. Since the problems of national survival and development are many and complex, efforts directed toward these goals must be based on a concrete analysis of the problem(s) for which solutions must be sought and pursued. There are numerous views on the problems of rural development with significant educational and policy implications.

The Underdevelopment Cycle of the Barrio

If the barrio is closely observed one will not miss to note the following: (1) the barrio has persisted for generations; (2) but it has remained relatively unchanged; and (3) it is not considerably populated relative to the number of babies born in the place.

These observations indicate three important points, namely: (1) the barrio persists because the old who die or migrate are replaced by their children; (2) the barrio remains relatively unchanged because

the young ones who replaced the old are no better than their predecessors, thus the cycle continues; and (3) it is not over populated because many of those who are born in the barrio migrate to other places, mostly to big towns and cities."*

These observations have important educational and social implications. It should be recognized that there are two general kinds of youth who grow up in the barrio with respect to their future work and residence. There are those who will leave the barrio and those who will stay. For those who choose to leave the barrio, the Philippine educational system is providing plenty (comparatively speaking) of opportunities for them to study in preparation for life outside the barrio. These are the general public high schools; the private academies, colleges, and universities; the trade, fisheries, and agricultural schools and colleges; and the more than 1,621 college preparatory

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*It is recognized that in a society which attaches high value on free choice of occupation or way of life, migration is a normal phenomenon; it must even be encouraged at certain points of development. But because of the sociological and biological nature of man, there is no single nation in the world, where rural areas, or where agriculture has been completely abandoned. What is observable in most developed countries is the corresponding improvement and attractiveness of the rural areas. As long as plants and animals grow and are used to satisfy basic human needs, there will always be people who will reside and work in the rural areas; not because they were forced to do so, but because they chose to for many good reasons. There are people who prefer to be farmers because it is in farming where they are happy and where they find fulfillment in life.

barrio high schools.** What is there for those who are staying to leave and work in the barrio? There is none!

Life in the barrio is faced with many problems. If the cycle of underdevelopment is to be broken, the prospective residents should be taught to identify and solve these problems by actually identifying and solving them while undergoing training. Young people who will devote their lives in improving their personal and community life in the rural areas should receive true-to-life training in their natural setting in the farm and in the barrio where they live. Their training should not alienate them from the barrio - it should make them well acquainted with the socio-economic structure of the place so that they will know how to play their role most effectively and efficiently.

The Rural Youth Situation

Although education is highly valued in the Philippines (about 1/3 of the national budget since 1946 has been on education and a big portion of the family budget goes into the education of children), only about 20 per cent of the 14 to 25 age group are in school.[2]

**This is perhaps alright, although a warning may be in order at this point. Because the graduates of these schools are college and employment oriented (as compared to entrepreneural orientation whose functions in society are to create jobs and provide opportunities for employment) time will come when the country will be plagued with an uncontrollable "educated unemployed population".

Considering that about 75 per cent of the high school age youth are in the more than 34,000 barrios and small towns,[3] it is obvious that school attendance of the rural youth who are 14 to 25 years old would be less than 20 per cent. In fact, it has been estimated that the fifth grade is the average level of education in the country.[4]

The comparatively low educational level of the rural youth led Dr. Pedro Orata to introduce the concept of a Barrio High School, a general secondary education program in the barrio. It is common knowledge that most barrio youth in the country are too poor to get out of the barrio to obtain education beyond the 6 years of free elementary schooling.

As a response to Dr. Orata's Barrio High School idea, reports indicate that from 4 pilot Barrio High Schools in 1964-65, the number increased to about 1,621 in 1970-71.[5]

But there are two important questions that must be raised regarding the barrio high schools. Being a college preparatory school what will the graduates do? How can the barrio high school contribute to the improvement of rural life? It is not difficult to see that since most of the barrio youth cannot afford high school education outside the barrio, very few of them can actually go to college. Since general high school-oriented graduates are not yet prepared for good paying jobs, very few will find suitable employment. A survey involving 200,000 youths ranging from 15 to 35 years old revealed that more than one fourth (or 25 per cent) were jobless, and about half were financially dependent upon their parents and relatives.[6]

In terms of self-employment in the barrio the prospect seems to be unpromising. General high school-oriented graduates are not prepared for self-employment because they are not trained to initiate, much less to operate a business enterprise. Furthermore, they are faced with the problem of lack of capital and of immediate income. Some may end up in the farm. Will they be any better than their parents?

Present Secondary School Programs - Dysfunctional to Barrio Development

There are two general kinds of secondary school programs in the country that serve the rural youth. These are the general high schools and the agricultural high schools.

The General High Schools

Including the 1,621 barrio high schools, there are about 3,915 public and private high schools throughout the country.[7] The orientation of these schools is general college-preparatory education. These schools are more consumption, rather than production-oriented. These prepare the students a way of life that finds its expression and fulfillment, not in the barrio, but in cities and big towns. These schools prepare the students for employment - which is not altogether bad if unemployment and underemployment are not serious problems of the country. As such, the one definite contribution of the general high schools to barrio life is it enhances the movement of people away from the barrio relieving it from too much population pressure.

The Agricultural High Schools

There are 107 agricultural high schools in the country.[8] Originally, agricultural high schools were established and operated with the controlling purpose of meeting the needs of persons 14 years or older who have entered upon, or who are preparing to enter the occupation of the farm or of the farm home.[9] In essence, the agricultural high schools were charged with the function of training the youth who are farmers and who are preparing to become farmers. But contrary to the expectations, the graduates of these schools, in general (about 74 per cent) choose occupations or endeavors other than farming.

Viewed sociologically, this unexpected off-the-farm occupational placement of agricultural high school graduates is clearly predictable. It should be noted that the agricultural high schools in the Philippines are of the boarding type schools. Structurally, it is set up so that the students live and study in the school compound for four years. This set-up results in the alienation of the youth from the barrio where he is supposed to live and farm. When he goes home after graduation, he is unfamiliar with the economic and social conditions in the barrio such as the nature of price changes, sources of inputs, marketing channels, credit and labor situation. This unfamiliarity rubs off his self-confidence in initiating a farm business venture in the barrio.

Related to alienation is the youth's change of group identity. Living and studying inside the school compound for four years draws the youth to identify himself with the academic sub-culture. This sub-

culture has a high value for scholastic or academic achievement and the symbol of success in life are the teachers and administrators who are college graduates. Studies have shown that about 50 per cent or more of the graduates of the agricultural schools go to college.[10]

Finally, the agricultural high school accentuates the problem of lack of capital in starting a farming enterprise. While in the agricultural school, the student conducts his farming program in the school farm with the production inputs supplied by the school. The student gets used to expensive tools and equipment provided by the school. But in real farm life the farmer has to cope up with the task of providing himself with the needed production inputs. He also learns that to make money by farming entails a big scale of operation requiring a big starting capital. When he graduates with skills and abilities in farming only, (because whatever project he started is left with the school) considering to go into farming can be further discouraging by lack of adequate starting capital.

When confronted with the problem of what to do after high school graduation, going to college gets the highest priority. This can be expected because in addition to alienation, change of identity, and lack of big starting capital, college education has a very high value in the Philippine society. Furthermore, graduates of agricultural schools compare favorably with the graduates of general public and private high schools in college work.[11]

In this case, an overwhelming majority of the agricultural school graduates do not return to the barrio. Thus the barrio remains uninfluenced by the country's agricultural schools.

Unique Training Requirements of Farmers

Training programs for a vocation in the country are mostly employment oriented. Hence, a clerk prepares for employment by developing skills and abilities in typing. A teacher studies and learns the subject matter and the methods of teaching in order to get a job as a teacher. On the other hand, training prospective farm operators should be entrepreneur-oriented because they are being prepared to employ themselves and possibly others. This makes their training needs inherently different and unique. It is not only production-skill development because production is only one facet of farming. It requires that prospective farm operators be trained, not in an artificial setting, but in their own farm where the inherent day-to-day problems have to be studied and solved. In this natural setting of learning to farm by actually farming in their own farm, the future farm operator does not only learn the skills of production but also the skills and abilities in coping up with supply, labor, credit, marketing and other management requirements of modern farming in the locality.

This cannot be done in a boarding type school where school projects are conducted in the school farm with a great deal of artificiality. The student is more often than not a mere farm worker or a tenant under the management of the project teacher or farm manager.

In essence, a sound program for training future farm operators should be student activity-centered rather than school-project centered. It should assist them to get started and eventually established in farming by actually operating the farm by himself with the guidance of the agriculture teacher and his parents. As farm operators they

will need knowledge and skills of production; business management skills and abilities; mastery of tool subjects such as communication, arithmetic, etc.; and social participation abilities which are needed by progressive farm operators in a democratic society. These unique aspects in the training of prospective farm operators are not clearly understood by many educators.

THE UPCA-BNE BARRIO DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL PROJECT[12]

Given the above conceptual background, the conception of the Barrio Development School was based more on practical rather than sentimental considerations. This is because education is viewed in this case as a means and an investment of the rural people for rural development. How can this hard earned investment maximally acrue to the improvement of rural life - increased productivity, income, home and family well-being, and community living? How can the cycle of underdevelopment of the barrio be broken? This cannot be done by a secondary school program that emphasizes college preparation because those who finish this program leave the barrio. Neither can this be done with the boarding type agricultural high school that have a twin purpose of preparation for college and vocational training. It develops among its students many educational results that also draw the youth away from the barrio.

If the succeeding generation of farmers in the barrio are expected to perform better than their predecessors, they must be trained right in their own barrio to become modern farm operators. This setting

provides a true-to-life situation and it does not alienate the youth; instead it strengthens his identity with the barrio. His achievements in supervised farming is recognized by his parents, neighbors and barrio folks. He develops a social prestige in the community. He values this social approval. This makes him feel that it is in the barrio where he can succeed in life and it is here where he belongs. He does not need to look for a job - if he does well in supervised farming, he should have an established farm business enterprise by the time he graduates.

As an action-research project, the Barrio Development School at Masaya, Bay, Laguna, Philippines, is being undertaken to determine whether a non-college preparatory secondary school program is possible in a village setting, to determine the extent to which it can contribute to the socio-economic development of the clientele and the village and to study the sociological processes involved in the introduction and operation of the school project itself.

Features of the Barrio Development School

The Barrio Development School is a secondary school program for the barrio youth who have decided to stay, live, and work in the barrio as a farm operator. The school curriculum among others include supervised farming program (conducted at the home farm of the student) as the core of instruction reinforced by classroom instruction in production agriculture, tool subjects and citizenship subjects. The tool subjects are language usage (communication skills), applied arithmetic, applied science, and farm economics. The citizenship

subjects include: Reading, Philippine History, Philippine Government, World History and Health. Supervised farming activities take one-half day while the other subjects are studied during the other half. Classroom instruction in production agriculture and in the other supplementary subjects are taught in relation to the supervised farming programs of the students. The medium of instruction is a mixture of Tagalog and English whichever facilitates understanding and learning of new ideas.

The teachers are required to reside in the barrio. They are paid the salary of the public school teachers of similar qualifications. Classes are conducted in the elementary school building designated by the school principal for the purpose. The school has a minimum of tools and equipment for instructional purposes. The expensive equipment such as the garden tractor are studied in the farm of the owner by arrangement. Students are encouraged to accumulate capital assets needed in operating their business farms such as tools and equipment. These features of the BDS make it very much less expensive to operate than the boarding type agricultural school where practically everything, i.e., teacher and student cottages, electricity, water, heavy equipment are provided by the school.

Credit and saving education is emphasized. Through a guarantee fund scheme, the student is aided in getting loan from the rural bank and in using and paying credit.

Support of the school is on a partnership basis. Through the student's tuition fee of P8.00 per month, the barrio people partly pay for the salary of the teachers. This gives the barrio people,

particularly the parents a sense of commitment and control of the school program. Being a partnership venture, the policies affecting the school and community rests upon the Local Advisory Committee. This committee is composed of the Barrio Captain, PTA President, one outstanding farmer leader, Public School District Supervisor, School Principal and the Agriculture Teacher. This committee regularly meets once a month.

The ultimate measure of success of the BDS is the establishment in economic scale farming by the graduates. It is anticipated that the value of economic output generated by the student of the BDS will more or less pay for the cost of operating the project.

Resistance Encountered

When the BDS idea was presented to the barrio leaders and parents, the initial reaction was rejection. "Well, if it does not prepare the students to go to college, what is the use of the school? The parents in Masaya wanted a high school that will allow their children to go to college after graduation." Another common comment of rejection was stated like this: "If it is only a school about farming, our children do not need it, they grew up in the farm. We ourselves never studied farming. We want our children to study something better than farming". The opposition was not just verbal, for in July 1970 a barrio high school was also opened at Masaya along with the opening of the Barrio Development School Project. In addition to the parents some well meaning friends prejudged the project to be a failure because "vocational education in this country will never succeed." General oriented educators opposed the non-college preparatory make-up of the

school because "it does not allow the youth to pursue higher education."

Masaya, the Project Barrio

Barrio Masaya is about 8 kilometers south of the U.P. College of Agriculture at Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. It is about 4 kilometers from the asphalted national road. The connecting dirt road was constructed about 12 years ago making it possible for Masaya and three other barrios further away to be linked with the town of Bay and the rest of Laguna province. In spite of the existence of the dirt road, Masaya has remained to be an isolated agricultural village. Being geographically and socially isolated the barrio has been a hideout of criminals, jeepney nappers and cattle rustlers. Work carabaos are kept under the house or inside a yard corral at night. Drinking liquor is a popular pastime. There are 280 households in Masaya as of July 1970. About 82 per cent of the household heads were in agricultural source of income. Only 18 per cent of these household heads were owner farm cultivators. The rest were share tenants, lessees and farm laborers. Except for a two-man freight train sub-station, one man health clinic, and a public school with 12 teachers, Masaya does not offer much employment opportunities. The farm laborers work as sugar cane planters and harvesters. Some work as coconut and coffee gatherers. The tenants grow rice and other food crops. Of the 20 students who initially enrolled in July 1970 only 5 of their parents owned one or more hectare(s) of land and another seven had leased land of one to six hectares.

The Students

There are 18 first year and 15 second year barrio youth studying in the Barrio Development School.

The second year students range in age from 13 to 18 or an average age of 15.5 years old when they enrolled last year. They were about 3 years older than the students who enrolled at the U.P. High School at Los Baños last year. Before they enrolled with the barrio development school 90% of them have been out of school for more than one year. As a group they have been out of school for 2.4 years. They have an average of 6 brothers and sisters and they belong, as a group to the 3rd or 4th sibling. They live about 16 minutes walk away from the school building with a range of 2 to 30 minutes. Excluding one who did not finish the sixth grade, the average sixth grade rating of the second year students ranged from 75 to 84 or an average of 80.2.

The first year students ranged in age from 12 to 18 with an average of 14 years old. As a group they have been out of school for an average of one year and practically all of them would not have been in school if there was no barrio development school in Masaya. They have an average of 7.6 brothers and sisters and 66 per cent of them belong to the second to the fifth sibling. They leave about 11 minutes walk away from the school building. Their sixth grade rating ranged from 75 to 82 or an average of 79. But like the second year students their literacy was hardly functional. Remedial reading classes have been a regular part of the school program.

Some Observable Impact of the Project

Since this is a four-year action-research project (with a ₱60,483.00 operating fund) it is not yet possible to make a comprehensive report of the outcome of the project. However, although it is only a little less than two years in operation there are many things that could be reported initially.

Supervised Farming Projects

During its first year of operation, 13 of the 17 students that finished the year raised rabbits. Rabbit raising was common among these students because it did not require much space and starting and operating capital. Being a new enterprise it has a good market. By April 1971 the value of the rabbit projects was about ₱1,900.00. Fattening pigs were raised by 7 students and by April 1971 the projects were worth ₱1,743.00. Two students raised broilers worth ₱1,192.10. In crop production only 3 students raised vegetables worth ₱158.00. In addition, these students earned ₱168.00 from a group vegetable project in an idle lot at the back of the school building. In all, the 17 students of the BDS put up economic projects worth about ₱5,061.10.

For its second year operation which ~~will end~~ ended in April 1972, ~~it is estimated by Mr. Perdon, the agriculture teacher, that~~ the value of the economic projects of the 33 students ~~is no less than~~ was about ₱40,408.45. ~~As of October 31, 1971, three months after the opening of classes, the value of the students' economic projects was ₱11,596.00.~~ This amount is not fantastically big, but when one considers that these youth started from about zero point, it is quite an achievement in a barrio. And when one

considers the P14,703.19, operating budget of the BDS project for the school year 1971-72, the economic accomplishments of the students more than pays for this educational investment. How about those outcomes to which no money value can be attached such as a new outlook in life, a new-found sense of self-confidence, or an anticipation of better economic livelihood?

Impact Upon the Parents

The parents who allowed their sons to "go and find out what this Barrio Development School is all about" are learning many new exciting things for their children and for themselves. One couple admitted they did not know what to do with their 17 year old son who had been out of school for 3 years doing nothing but serenading.

Surprisingly this young man enrolled with the BDS and with the encouragement and help of his parents he proved to be the best broiler raiser last year and still stands to be surpassed this year. In addition he raises two fattening pigs which will be expanded soon. Another parent feels victorious because he used to be ridiculed by his neighbors for allowing his son to study in the BDS to take care of only one rabbit. Now he is laughing at his neighbors because they see the tangible achievement of his son who raised a dozen of rabbits, one breeding and two fattening pigs. He used to remark, "where in the world can ~~you find~~ this happen where a student learns many things in school; where he learns to borrow money from the bank, put up his own farm enterprise and earn all at the same time?" Another father whose son transferred from the BHS, is proud to tell others that his son teaches him many new

ideas about farming now. Practically all parents consult the agriculture teacher not only on matters about the supervised farming project of the son but also about their own farming activities. During meetings practically all parents attend now.

About one third of the parents have been attending seminars on swine production conducted by the agricultural extension agent in cooperation with the BDS agriculture teacher. These parents are now raising their own hogs for breeding and fattening purposes. During these last two years the entire family of the BDS students seems to have found a new source of hope. Although the next school year is still three months away, no less than half a dozen parents have inquired from Mr. Perdon whether their son could study at the BDS next year.

Impact Upon the Barrio

At the beginning Masaya appeared passive and lacking in vitality. In fact, one could easily observe the lack of community spirit among its population. The school principal and most of the teachers who did not like to reside in Masaya, commuted to town everyday.

In February, 1970, a bus loaded with U.P. Medical and nursing students on an educational trip to the Masaya Comprehensive Community Health Center was held up a few hundred meters away from the barrio. Their valuables were taken away from them although most of these were recovered later. During the first meeting about the Barrio Development School Project which was attended by the Mayor and 14 barrio leaders coming from Masaya and the four surrounding barrios, municipal policemen were dispatched. On June 4, 1970, a jeepney driver was murdered

and the jeepney he was driving was stolen. Mr. Mendoza, an old time garden teacher and member of the Local Advisory Committee was very apprehensive regarding the safety of the school property and students' farming projects. This was the social condition in Masaya when the BDS project was introduced. Dr. F. Calora, then Director of Instruction of the UPCA remarked: "If you succeed in Masaya you will succeed anywhere else in the Philippines."

During the first year of operation a few social problems have been noted. Student discipline was a serious problem. Some of the boys were habitual drinkers and belonged to local gangs. Bringing long pocket knives to class was very common. They claimed they needed the knives for sharpening their pencils. When the project provided the class with a pencil sharpener, the teacher found good reason to stop them. In the effort of the teachers to identify themselves with the barrio people there were times when Mr. Perdon was called upon to join young people (non-students) in a drinking spree. He had to find a graceful way out of the situation such as making jokes.

On February 17, 1971, the two-month old heading cabbages (75 plants) of the students were stolen from their group vegetable garden at the back of the school. When the students missed the cabbages early in the morning, they looked for the stealers. By following the soil and leaf droppings, they found the uprooted cabbage plants under a house. They also found the two young men who stole the cabbages cultivating their backyard thinking that they could transplant the cabbages on their own yard! For the first time the barrio captain with the strong

support of the parents of the BDS students demanded that the stealers pay for the cabbages or else they would be jailed. About a month after this happened, the BDS school room was broken into. The teachers' drawers were ransacked, pentel pens were stolen and the only basketball ball in the barrio at that time was punctured no less than a dozen times. These can be considered the debit side of the operation.

But the credit side has been very encouraging. The principal now resides in the barrio and helps the agriculture teacher and the barrio people, especially the parents to work together for the improvement of their youth. Before, the agriculture teacher would not visit a boy's home unless he had a ~~comparison~~ Companion. Now he goes alone unafraid. He knows practically all the people in Masaya and he has earned their respect and affection. Barrio people consult him in all matters about farming especially in the care, treatment and immunization of poultry and swine. It is evident when one visits Masaya that there are many new pig pens in the neighborhood of the BDS students. Many of the owners who realized the possibilities of swine raising have been attending swine raising seminars. After the seminar they are assisted by the extension agent to get loans from the rural bank. Because the extension agent is not residing in Masaya, it is the BDS agriculture teacher that provides extension service when he is not around.

This year the barrio people voted into office a new set of barrio councilmen. Whereas the former barrio captain never attended the Local Advisory Committee meeting, the new barrio captain now attends every Local Advisory Committee meeting along with some members of the barrio council. These new barrio officials believe in the usefulness of the BDS.

This is because they can see its value and they are interested to make it contribute further to the development of Masaya. Because of the many Filipino and foreign visitors to their barrio, the council, in cooperation with the Comprehensive Community Health Center and the barrio school, have initiated a barrio cleanliness program.

To insure peace and order in the barrio, the selling of liquor within the community was banned. With the enthusiastic encouragement of the new barrio captain, the swine raisers of Masaya are getting organized into an association. To what extent these new developments will continue depend upon many factors. But the role of the BDS is an important one.

Impact Upon the Educators

The Barrio Development School idea is quite a departure from the usual educational thoughts and programs. To avoid strong pressures against its trial, it was necessary that the project be kept out of publicity, its funds had to be small enough not to require foreign aid, and the project proponents must not get any honorarium. In other words, the BDS idea needed to be tried for what it is and what it could contribute to barrio development, not because of money nor political sponsorship but because the idea is sound and workable under Philippine barrio conditions.

The first sign of usefulness of the BDS idea was the discussions it has generated among staff members of the Department of Education, UPCA then among colleagues in the Bureau of Vocational Education and other educational and rural development circles. Then the idea has been enthusiastically taken up in Agricultural Education and Rural Sociology

courses. After its unconspicuous first year operation, the papers and reports given to the Board of National Education got into the hands of the Secretary of Education, the Bureau Directors and many supervisors.

Since the opening of the school year 1971-72 the BDS project has been talked about during the Philippine Superintendents convention and conferences, Friends from the different international agencies for education and agricultural development who come to UPCA shopping for "new developments" at Los Baños got introduced to the project. As a result [redacted], about 710 curious people have visited the Masaya BDS project between July 1971 and March 1972. The biggest group of about 240 school superintendents and supervisors headed by Secretary of Education Juan Manuel, came last February 12, 1972. Last February 25 about 150 supervisors, principals, vocational agriculture teachers and students of the Bureau of Vocational Education visited Masaya.

On March 28, the Director of the Bureau of Public Schools, Dr. L. Soriano and about 50 members of the consultative board and staff visited the Masaya Barrio Development School project. Last year, the project had only 10 visitors, one of which was from the World Bank, two from FAO, three from the Barrio Book Foundation and the others from UPCA itself.

By agency the visitors to the Barrio Development School in Masaya were from the following:

1. Agricultural Development Council (ADC)
2. Barrio Book Foundation (BBF)
3. Bureau of Public Schools (BPS)
4. Bureau of Vocational Education (BVE)
5. Department of Education

6. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
7. Ford Foundation
8. Education Task Force
9. International Council on Educational Development (ICED)
10. UNESCO
11. UNICEF
12. World Bank

By nationality the visitors were Americans, Australians, British, Ceylonese, Filipinos, Koreans, Indians, Indonesians, Malaysians, Nepalese and Thais. Only the future can tell what influence the BDS has brought into the thoughts and actions of those who bothered to visit Masaya.

When World Bank President Robert McNamara visited UP at Los Baños he was reported to have taken particular interest in the Barrio Development School project.[13]

One of the things that impressed Secretary of Education Juan Manuel were the supervised farming projects of the students. He recalled in a radio interview that one student he visited belonged to a very poor family - "when you look up inside the house you see the sky. But around the house are cages of rabbits and swine and in the bank book of the student was money deposit of about five hundred pesos."

Since at the start visitors were not anticipated, this consequential aspect of the project presents a serious methodological problem. Visitors can create the Hawthorne effect even if the students and parents are told that their activities are not meant for the visitors but for their own benefit. Should visits to the project be stopped or minimized?

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This is as far as the project has gone this past two years. But it can be a significant beginning. The barrio people in Masaya are very grateful that the BDS project was put up in their barrio. A great deal has been learned about the possibilities and problems of the barrio development school scheme as an educational approach to rural development. These added insights and experience have increased the confidence and enthusiasm of the project team to make this educational approach truly an instrument of human development in the thousands of barrios for economic development and for the improvement of the well-being of the rural people.

This optimistic feeling is based on the Masaya experience. However, when one considers its general and wide application, a number of problems external of the school itself come into the picture. One of these problems is inherent to the economy of the locality where a barrio development school is located - the market or effective demand for agricultural commodities. Others include availability of such services as hatcheries, credit, transportation, feeds and chemicals. This of course suggests that the BDS should be established in barrios where these general economic problems are not very serious.

If and when the Board of National Education decides to introduce the Barrio Development School approach to several barrios in the country, the administrative consideration will come into the picture.

Functionally, vocational education in the country belongs to the Bureau of Vocational Education (BVE). But structurally, the BVE does not have barrio schools nor barrio-based officials. On the other hand, the Bureau of Public Schools which is in charge of elementary and general secondary education programs have schools in practically all barrios and therefore it has an administrative machinery in each barrio. Which of these two bureaus will be given the responsibility of administering the BDS? Of course, the answer to this question is beyond the scope of this paper but it is a question that must be asked even at this early stage of growth of the Barrio Development School idea in the Philippines. For if the BDS approach is to be truly an educational instrument of rural development in the Philippines, it must be implemented in the suitable barrios of the country.

Footnotes

1. Gunnar Myrdal, Asian Dramma: An Inquiry Into the Poverty of Nations (New York: Pantheon, 1968), p. 16-46.

2. Bureau of Census and Statistics: Yearbook of Philippine Statistics, 1966, p. 61.

3. Ibid.

4. Republic Act No. 6054: An Act to Institute a Charter for Barrio High Schools, Manila, Philippines, June 2, 1969.

5. Board of National Education, "Proposed Revised Guidelines" (For establishing barrio high schools, 1969, p. 3 and Barrio Book Foundation, Directory of Regular and Barrio High Schools.)

6. Antonio Isidro, Trends and Issues In Philippine Education (Quezon City: Alemar Publishers, 1968), p. 17.

7. Philippine Education Task Force Papers. Figures taken from the Barrio Book Foundation Directory of Public Regular and Barrio High Schools and Bureau of Private School Statistical Bulletin, 1970-71.

8. Bureau of Vocational Education Statistical Bulletin, 1970-71 and Annual Report of the Bureau of Vocational Education 1969-70.

9. General Educational Policies, A Report of the Board of National Education. (Manila: Phoenix Press Inc., 1955-57), p. 306.

10. Tito E. Contado, "Some Factors Associated with the Occupational Choice of the Philippine Vocational Agriculture Seminars" Unpublished M.S. Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1964, pp. 12 and 50.

11. Fortunato A. Battad, "A Comparative Study of College Students' Scholastic Performance at the Mindanao Institute of Technology," Unpublished M.S. Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1962.

12. Discussion of this section were mostly derived from the project design and progress reports contained in a compilation entitled: "The UPCA-BNE Barrio Development School Project: Its Design and First Year Operation" by T. E. Contado and S. R. Santos, Jr.

13. The Philippine Herald, November 15, 1971.

TEC:dmm