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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1983

THE PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT AND
THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Report of the Administrator

I. UNV : THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SOFT WINDOW

1. Supplementing the Administrator's annual report for 1983 (DP/1984/5 and addenda), this paper is intended to inform the Governing Council of recent activities of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme; in the field of promoting participatory development activities in rural areas through community-based organizations.

2. UNV activity in this field began in 1977, following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 31/66, which called upon the Administrator to "develop further and expand the activities of the UNV in the field of domestic development services". Further impetus was given to this initiative by a number of decisions of the United Nations system calling for increased co-operation between the system and non-governmental organizations, including the "Guidelines concerning the relationship between UNDP and external institutions" (DP/414) adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session in June 1979 (decision 79/19).

3. The need to do more in the field of community-based participatory development is well established. It is, nevertheless, useful to call attention to several aspects of this question, in order to put the following report into perspective :

(a) For community based-development action to be effective, there must be popular participation;

(b) There is room for improvement in the efforts of Governments and the international development community to promote and implement community based-development, involving the sustained and active participation of the local population;

(c) In most countries there are organizations and associations at the local community levels which have manifested both the desire and the ability to work on the basis of people's participation in their own development. Unfortunately, most of these groups are weak in terms of financial and personnel resources which must be augmented if they are to work effectively;

(d) The international development community, because of the small size and the geographic dispersion of such local institutions within a given country, has yet to find a suitable formula for providing them with the necessary extra resources, without, at the same time, smothering instead of promoting local capability and initiative.

4. The special character of such organizations requires a response from the United Nations development system somewhat different from the accepted methods which have so often contributed very effectively to development in the Third World at the macro level. Both the cost and nature of traditional forms of technical assistance render them generally less suitable to tackle the problems of the poorest communities, particularly the rural ones, in the developing world. What is required is a technical assistance parallel to the "soft window" of capital assistance.

5. In recent years, UNV programme has become increasingly effective as UNDP's technical assistance soft window. In its regular volunteer programme it has been able to provide many capable and dedicated men and women to help solve development problems on a cost effective basis. A large percentage of these volunteers are living and working in rural (and urban) poverty stricken communities in many parts of the world. Through its domestic development services (DDS) programme, it has been able to extend the reach even further and has created an additional instrument to work with community based participatory development initiatives. The Administrator believes that the members of the Council will wish to know more about these activities and the unique potential which UNV embodies, were sufficient encouragement given to it, to make United Nations technical co-operation programmes more effective in this field, and more accessible to those who are in desperate need of more assistance.

II. THE UNV PROGRAMME AND DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (DDS)

6. Against this background and pursuant to the above-mentioned resolution, UNV accepted the challenge of becoming the lead agency within the United Nations system, to strengthen existing DDS organizations and also to help create new ones, where the required infrastructure and will are available.

7. Following extensive consultations with Government authorities, non-governmental organizations, and the concerned United Nations system organizations, and with financial support from UNDP, the project entitled "Technical Co-operation with Domestic Development Services (DDS) and Youth Organizations in Asia and the Pacific" (RAS/82/016) was started in February 1979 as a regional project. The main objectives of this programme are to :

- (a) Facilitate an increase in popular participation in development by the promotion of governmental and non-governmental domestic development services;
- (b) Help develop, at the regional level, operational frameworks of co-operation and mutual assistance among domestic development services;
- (c) Promote wider adoption and use of participatory development approaches and strategies in the provision of basic services;
- (d) Encourage the integration of this approach into local and national level development planning and programming;
- (e) Strengthen the involvement of youth in development activities.

8. In keeping with these objectives, the project has carried out the following principal activities:

- (a) The provision of volunteer assistance: A DDS volunteer is experienced in the field of participatory development and can act as a catalyst in integrated local

and self-employment opportunities and in linking local efforts with national policies and resources. During the period from November 1979 to February 1984, a total of 317 DDS volunteers were recruited from 13 countries (Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Mali, Nepal, the Netherlands, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the United States of America) and were assigned to 10 participating countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mali, Nepal, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tonga). The number of DDS organizations participating in the project as suppliers, or recipients of volunteers and volunteer trainees, totals 64 as at February 1984 (see annex for a list of co-operating DDS organizations). Areas of technical co-operation covered under volunteer assistance and advisory services have been wide ranging, including farm technology, agricultural extension, appropriate technology, alphabetization, primary health care, family planning, community development, youth and women's programmes, vocational training, cultural activities, marketing surveys and market development, capital formation, organizational development, and project formulation and evaluation;

(b) On-the-job training: Since the inception of the project, 75 persons have received on-the-job training and participated in management development programmes designed to provide opportunities to DDS workers to upgrade their knowledge and skills in most of the areas outlined above, as well as to strengthen managerial and organizational capabilities for participatory development activities at the national and local levels;

(c) Appropriate technology training: Such training, particularly for youth and community workers, has been provided in six small rural centres, established under the project. These centres have concentrated on such subjects as rural energy supplies, improved stoves, fabrication of simple agricultural implements and mechanical devices and herbal medicines, and weaving and batik, among others;

(d) Advisory services: Such services are provided by the project management to DDS organizations on a continuous basis. This includes management training courses;

(e) Mutual technical cooperation between DDS organizations: This form of TCDC at the regional and international levels has been stimulated through study visits, workshops, publications, and short-term personnel exchanges.

9. In order to preserve the essential character of participatory development activities, the following principles govern all such activities:

- (i) All project activities are designed and established jointly by the concerned DDS organization and UNV, with the full concurrence of the Government concerned;
- (ii) UNV support to DDS organizations is provided in the form of technical and other related assistance, rather than as grants;
- (iii) The level of remuneration of DDS volunteers is determined in consultation with co-operating DDS organizations and reflects the maintenance of DDS norms which limit allowances and other funds of compensation to DDS workers only to what is necessary to satisfy basic needs.

10. A DDS project along similar lines, Technical Cooperation with Youth and Domestic Development Services Organizations in Africa (RAF/84/058), has recently been developed for Africa. An initial programming workshop was convened in Bamako, Mali in December 1983. Requests from several countries for groups of DDS volunteers and recruitment are now under way. The full development of this project in a form analogous to the Asia and Pacific project must, however, await the provision of additional funds, as the amount originally budgeted is too modest to permit development of a full range of project activities.

III. THE DDS PROGRAMME AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT : AN ASSESSMENT

11. Since its inception in 1979, the DDS project has been the subject of continuous close monitoring, particularly in view of its experimental and innovative character. A series of impact studies is currently being carried out, of which two (Sri Lanka and Philippines) are now completed. An external evaluation is also scheduled to take place in a few months' time and the results will be included in the report on UNV presented to the Governing Council at its thirty-second session.

12. What emerges from these monitoring activities is that the programme has had a clearly visible and favorable impact, albeit modest in terms of overall magnitude, on the DDS organizations co-operating with it and on the many communities in which DDS volunteers are assigned.

13. Regarding specific achievements, space does not permit a detailed survey of all the results. Moreover, the essential character of participatory development activity is such that it is difficult to attribute particular accomplishments to an outside agency, because all activities are (or should be) the result of action by and not only for the local community. However, a few examples will illustrate the excellent potential of this type programme to provide assistance to development activities, based on community initiative and popular participation:

(a) In Sri Lanka, nearly all of the 89 volunteers who started their assignments between December 1979 and December 1982 were

- (i) A DDS volunteer from India introduced simple methods of soil testing in the Sarvodaya (community co-operative) farm in Tanamanwila, to which he was assigned, as well as in the adjacent villages. Based on the indications of soil tests, he was able to help popularize soy beans as a crop suitable to the area and, potentially, more profitable than paddy production. He established simple processing methods to make flour, pastry, various sweets and soy bean "coffee";
- (ii) With the assistance of other DDS volunteers, the Sarvodaya Centre in Tanamanwila, which started as a youth training farm, has evolved into a development centre for the region, with co-operative shops, health and nutrition courses, mother and child care activities, innovative cattle farming, including biogas generation, a weaving and batik training centre, and a herbal demonstration plot, among other activities;
- (iii) In Ratemulla, a blacksmith village, DDS United Nations volunteers from Bangladesh helped in the upgrading and modernization of blacksmithing techniques and equipment, the organization of a co-operative which dedicates a portion of its revenues to the poorest families of the village in order to help them establish an economic livelihood, the introduction of the women of the village to vegetable and spice gardening, the establishment of a local sports club, housing improvements, etc.;

(b) In the Philippines, the DDS programme has also demonstrated what can be accomplished with modest means:

- (i) In Malaybalay, Bukidnon province, four UNV DDS volunteers, skilled in brickmaking and working with local volunteers, trained 527 people, including community leaders, farmers, and out-of-school youth and children, among others, in selecting suitable clay, proper mixing, mold firing technique and brick construction using lime cement. The former trainees are now producing large quantities of brick for local consumption in municipal and other projects in the area. Employment and income have risen as one of the results of this activity;
- (ii) Twenty-five persons were trained with the aid of DDS volunteers in bamboo cement water tank construction, of whom 10 were hired by the Government to build a number of water tanks;
- (iii) 3,430 primary health care workers, of whom 970 were trained directly by the DDS volunteers, have learned herbal gardening and the production of herbal medicines, resulting in the establishment of 14 municipal and 45 barangay herbal gardens. The DDS volunteer from Sri Lanka who is specialized in this field has produced a manual on local herbs and prescriptions, and some 5,520 patients have, since his assignment, been treated by

14. Similar activities, with comparable results, have been undertaken in a number of villages throughout the Philippines by the 52 DDS United Nations volunteers and the 46 national volunteers assigned with them. The overall assessment of the impact of this activity, as presented by the Philippine co-ordinating authority, is that there have been increases in income from activities in non-agricultural and agricultural pursuits in the villages concerned; there is a better delivery of primary health care services; new incentives now exist for improving housing because of the introduction of locally available materials; and, finally, there is a much better awareness on the part of Government and of local and volunteer service agencies of what can be done, relying mainly on local initiatives, with carefully selected and well integrated outside inputs.

IV. THE REGULAR UNV PROGRAMME AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

15. It has been seen that UNV's DDS programme has characteristics which make it especially appropriate to participatory development activity, particularly that volunteers recruited on the basis of experience in and a demonstrated commitment to community service are attached to domestic development services in the receiving country, on special terms which approximate the emoluments of local development workers in the organizations to which they are assigned (typically, \$80 - \$120 per month). However, the relevance of the regular UNV programme to this form of development work should not be overlooked. As noted above, a large number of regular United Nations volunteers work in rural community development projects, executed by a number of the participating and executing agencies of the United Nations system, as well as directly by Governments.

16. As is now well known, the use of United Nations volunteers in projects makes it possible to extend activities into geographic regions and to work with smaller and more dispersed communities than would be possible otherwise, in view of cost and other factors. Moreover, the high percentage of United Nations volunteers who are recruited in developing countries to work in other developing countries greatly increases the prospects for their blending into the local communities where they are assigned, thus avoiding the kind of external input which may frustrate the very concept of popular-based development activity. While the comparative cost of using regular United Nations volunteers as opposed to DDS volunteers for a given activity is considerably higher, it is suggested that the fundamental issue is a programme, rather than a financial, consideration. Whether DDS volunteers - who are often (though not always) younger and less experienced than regular UNVs but who bring a special background and commitment in the field of community-based development - or regular UNVs should be used, since they generally present a higher level of technical competence than DDS volunteers, should be a decision based solely on the needs of the recipient organization or community. In practice, the existing DDS programme in Asia and the Pacific has often made very good use of a combination of both types of volunteers.

17. A good example of the way in which regular United Nations Volunteers are contributing to participatory development initiatives outside the framework of DDS projects may be seen in International Labor Organization's special labour-intensive public works programme, which employs United Nations Volunteers in a number of countries, including Bangladesh, Burundi, Nepal, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. These volunteers serve as the crucial link in this innovative programme by providing the necessary technical skills to the local communities which are carrying out the projects. The Governments concerned usually are unable to provide the communities with these skills. With the aid of United Nations Volunteers, projects in road construction, simple public buildings, irrigation, flood and erosion control, among many other projects, are carried out in an efficient, cost-effective way, which would not otherwise be possible. In addition, these projects train villagers in simple construction techniques and maintenance.

18. It is beyond the scope of this brief document to provide more details or to recount all the many other activities of a similar nature in which UNV is engaged in assisting participatory development activities. The above examples should suffice to indicate the potential and to stimulate thinking on further ways in which the UNV resource can be used more fully for this type of development project by all agencies of the United Nations development system.

V. A FORMAT FOR UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT IN PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

19. In light of what is now known and well documented about the development process based on popular participation at the community level, it is evident that not only much more needs to be done but that much more can be done by the international development community. The UNV programme, both in its regular volunteer activities and in its DDS programme, offers an effective instrument for bringing a greater volume of international technical co-operation resources to bear at the popular participation level of development.

20. Such projects, financed and supported by the United Nations system, could take the following format:

(a) Based on the needs and requests of the recipient Government and host domestic development service organization, a typical project would consist of a number of UNV DDS volunteers attached directly to local communities, each foreign volunteer being assigned to work with the local volunteers;

(b) Where particular professional skills are needed which may not be available either among the DDS volunteers or the local volunteers, regular United Nations Volunteers may be recruited and stationed at provincial or regional centres where they could support a group of DDS and local volunteers at the village level;

(c) In some cases, it may be desirable to have a chief technical adviser, depending on the size and circumstances of the project (in

the case of the existing regional DDS project in Asia and the Pacific, the chief technical advisor has a regional responsibility, provides support to all the volunteers and serves as advisor to all the participating Governments and organizations);

(d) Experience has also shown that the potential for such projects can be greatly enhanced if a small amount of seed money for micro-projects is made available. Such funds can come from any of a variety of sources: local or international special fund raising efforts, government cost sharing, funds-in-trust, UNDP Indicative Planning Figures, etc. More important than the source is the administration of the fund in such a way as only to provide the extra outside push necessary to make viable an existing local initiative which needs such help. In this way it is possible to avoid distortions and the possible augmentation or creation of a dependency condition on the part of the recipient organization. The presence of volunteers in the activity provide an additional assurance that the funds will be used as anticipated, especially when they provide technical expertise not already available.

21. Regarding the use of regular United Nations volunteers for participatory development activities, the scope is equally wide. The use of UNVs in the ILO-executed rural labour intensive public works projects finds its parallel in the use of United Nations Volunteers in many other kinds of projects at the rural level, particularly those involving agricultural and other kinds of co-operatives. The common denominator of these widely varying activities is the provision of additional assistance to popular participation projects in the form of technical skills of a nature that can easily be assimilated by the community involved and at a cost that can be justified in small, remote and isolated communities.

VI. THE FUTURE

22. Looking to the future, the Administrator foresees a need to continue the current DDS activities while beginning to concentrate on new areas of emphasis, as well as to undertake new projects in the field of DDS. In particular, the funding of the current programme for approximately four years beyond the present termination date set for the end of 1985 would enable it to move forward in the areas outlined below, thus providing a more comprehensive model for new DDS activities to be commenced in other regions. This would permit:

(a) Greater attention to assessing the efficacy of management instruments and methods utilized, thus strengthening the capacity of DDS organizations for sustained development without outside aid;

(b) A new programme of short-term staff exchanges between DDS organizations to promote collective self-reliance, the exchange of experiences and the cross fertilization of ideas among them;

(c) More equal distribution of project activities and services among recipient DDS organizations and the progressive extension of the programme to new participating countries;

- (e) In line with the orientations of the Grass Roots Initiatives and Strategies programme initiated by the Administrator, closer integration of activities in participatory development with UNDP country programmes;
- (f) Increased involvement of UNV's DDS activities with rural development projects carried out by United Nations system agencies; *
- (g) The creation of nationally based DDS Funds to provide seed money for micro-projects in communities to which UNVs are assigned;
- (h) More extensive co-operation with intergovernmental organizations, such as the Colombo Plan and non-Governmental Organizations in their rural development programmes;
- (i) A continuing dialogue with Governments, through UNDP resident representatives/United Nations resident co-ordinators, to encourage more support to DDS organizations;
- (j) A continuing dialogue with DDS organizations, particularly to encourage a shift from exclusively "project-oriented" approaches to more "process-oriented" approaches; to help build up public confidence in these organizations by assisting them in improving their management and communication capabilities; to help resist the possible tendency to allow foreign or national assistance to distort their role and render them too dependent on outside financial resources and to promote self-reliance; and, finally, to serve as an animator and facilitator of common actions among them.

23. It can be envisaged that, in due course, Governments may wish to form at the regional or subregional level intergovernmental secretariats for the co-ordination of DDS activities and thus become able, themselves, to continue realizing all the benefits of United Nations assisted action outlined above without the need for continuing outside aid.

VII. CONCLUSION

24. This paper has attempted to set out for the Governing Council's attention some of the special characteristics of the field of participatory development activity based on popular initiatives, to explain the special relevance of the UNV programme, and particularly

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- * Examples:
- | | |
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| FAO | - World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, and Freedom From Hunger Campaign |
| ILO | - Rural workers co-operatives |
| UNESCO | - Rural education programmes |
| UNICEF | - Community development training programmes; rural water supply programmes; mother and child care school |
| WHO | - Primary health care programmes for rural populations |
| UNCDF | - Rural Development Programmes |

its DDS programme, to this type of development, and to highlight some of the activities already under way. The Administrator thus feels that UNV represents an already existing operational capability which can help to implement the intellectual and policy initiatives flowing from the Grass Roots Initiatives and Strategies programme which has now been set up. At the same time, it constitutes an instrument which is part of and available to all the Agencies of the United Nations development system and to Governments who wish themselves to undertake activities directly in favor of their own DDS organizations, both governmental and non-governmental.

29. At its next session, the Council will have before it the results of the remaining impact studies and of the external evaluation of the DDS programme. The Administrator intends to present new proposals for future actions based on them. It is hoped that at that time the Council will endorse the strengthened mandate for UNV in the field of participatory development and domestic development services, and that it will consider favourably any new operational and financial modalities which a major new thrust in this direction may imply.

AnnexDomestic development services and youth organizations
cooperating with the regional DDS project RAS/82/016

- Bangladesh:
- Bangladesh Association for Community Education
 - Savar Gonoshastaya Kendra (People's Health Centre)
 - Youth Training Centre Jamalpur
 - Youth Training Centre Rajshahi
 - Youth Training Centre Savar
 - Youth Training Centre Sylhet
- Fiji:
- Naitasiri Land Development Project
 - Lami Youth Centre
- India:
- Child-in-need Institute Calcutta.
 - Health for a Million, Trivandrum
 - Jamkhed Comprehensive Rural Health Project
 - Nehru Yuvak Kendras
 - Ramakrishna Mission
 - Asian Institute for Rural Development
 - Extension Programme of Indian Institute for Engineering and Rural Technology
- Indonesia:
- Indonesian Volunteer Service BUTSI
 - Girakan Pramuka (Indonesian Scout Movement)
- Malaysia:
- Farm Youth Movement
- Mali:
- Toko Village Association
- Nepal:
- Social Service National Co-ordination Council
 - National Development Service
 - Nepal Children's Organization
 - Child Welfare Co-ordinating Committee
 - Nepal Leprosy Relief Association
 - Dhulikhel Youth Club
- Philippines:
- Philippine National Volunteer Service Co-ordinating Agency
 - Extension Service of the University of Northern Philippines, Ilocos
 - National Manpower and Youth Council

- Extension Service, Western Luzon Agricultural College
- Montreal Institute of Rural Technology
- Extension Service, Panay State Polytechnic
- Extension Service, Silliman University, Dumaguete
- Surigao Mothers Clubs
- Barangay Volunteer Medics Programme
- ("New Society") Improvement of Sites and Services programmes, Ministry of Human Settlements
- Volunteers for Information and Development Assistance

Singapore: - Singapore People's Association

Solomon Islands: - Solomon Islands National Youth Congress
- Master Lin Project

Sri Lanka: - National Youth Services Council
- Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement
- All Ceylon Young Men's Muslim Association
- Young Men's Christian Association
- Young Women's Christian Association
- Saukyadana Movement
- Sri Lanka Girl Guides' Association
- Sri Lanka Boy Scouts' Association
- Nation Builders
- People's Association for Development
- All Ceylon Hindu Congress
- All Ceylon Buddhist Congress
- Mahila Samiti (National Women's Movement)
- National Family Planning Association

Thailand: - Thai Graduate Volunteer Centre, Thamassat University
- Volunteer Division, Department of Community Development
- Thai Girl Guides' Association

Tonga: - Fakatonato Community Training Centre

Western Samoa: - National Youth Council

Vanuatu: - Tangrak Community Centre
- National Community Development Trust

Netherlands: - Netherlands' Volunteer Service

Federal Republic
of Germany:

- Eirene
- Catholic Youth Movement (BDKJ)

USA: - Volunteers in Asia