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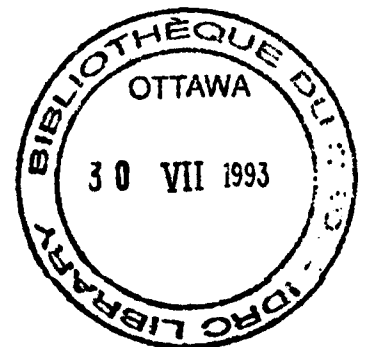
Project: "Moyens d'Information pour l'Animation Rurale"

(October 1988 - October 1990)

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E N D O F P R O J E C T R E P O R T

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## 1. I N T R O D U C T I O N

In 1988, the African Institute for Economic and Social Development abbreviated as INADES-Formation, obtained financial assistance from the International Development Research Council (IDRC) in Canada, to execute the project, "Moyens d'Information pour l'Animation Rurale," roughly translated as "Information for Rural Development." This project was the result of an earlier project which ran from 1986 - 1988 on the same theme albeit with slight modifications in its objectives. Like its predecessor, this project was carried out for two years i.e. between 1988 and 1990. The project was however extended by a few months into 1991 because it did not take off on schedule. To avoid repetition, certain details that the reader might have expected here are excluded since such details are found in the two annual reports earlier produced.

## 2. P R O J E C T O B J E C T I V E S :

- (a) To publish five (5) books derived from questions asked by the rural people and answers provided by experts; two of these books were to be adapted in two local languages - Féfé and Ewondo - for francophone readers;
- (b) To publish four (4) issues per year of "Rural Development Review" magazine;
- (c) To set up a documentation Centre for use by trainers and the interested public;
- (d) To broadcast two programmes a month over C R T V (Cameroon Radio and Television) Buea and Bamenda respectively, with each programme repeated once over C R T V Bamenda and twice over C R T V Buea;
- (e) To train trainers in the use of audio-visual materials;
- (f) To carry out eight (8) exchange visits; and
- (g) To produce a report of the experiences gathered in the course of the project as a guide to executors of similar projects in the future.

## 3. I M P L E M E N T A T I O N A N D A C H I E V E M E N T S:

- (a) Publication of 5 books :

A total of 90 recurrent or frequently asked questions against 100 called for in the project were collected and answers provided. These included 30 on agriculture, 24 on health, 26 on animal husbandry and 10 on general management. The questions were grouped into four broad headings as indicated above and are

being published into five books. The adaptations are yet to be made.

(b) Publication of magazine :

Five out of eight quarterly publications of the Rural Development Review magazine were realised.

(c) Documentation :

A documentation centre is in place as called for.

(d) Radio :

Radio programmes got along as stipulated. All radio programmes were produced.

(e) Training of Trainers :

Training of trainers was carried out but not in a sustained manner.

(f) Exchange Visits :

Of the eight exchange visits planned within the project, four were carried out with heartwarming results.

(g) Report :

This is the report you are reading.

#### 4. P R O B L E M S :

##### (a) BOOKS :

The main problem with the publication of books has been technical. There have been unnecessary delays by our printers who occasionally complain of break down of equipment. For the simultaneous translations into Fêfê and Ewondo which we earlier said was reserved for our national office in Yaounde, nothing has been heard apart from earlier arrangements with the "Société Internationale de Linguistiques (SIL)." It does appear there is a technical hitch at that level.

##### (b) MAGAZINE :

Even as we pride ourselves with the fact that the magazine was one of our most successful component of the project, we acknowledge that it was also one from which we encountered quite some problems. These include :

(i) Cost : For some inexplicable reason, the cost of production was grossly underestimated. For instance, the costs involved in the process of gathering materials for the magazine, distribution and even publicity appeared not to have been taken into consideration. Worse still, was the estimate for printing.

##### (ii) Equipment :

Undoubtedly, the project needed a Desk Top Publishing (DTP) or any other type-setting/layout equipment. The project had none and this somewhat affected the quality of production. If the magazine got any accolades as it did in its layout, design and printing, it was due more to the technical expertise of the journalist who edited and designed it.

(iii) Distribution :

A technical bulletin such as Rural Development Review magazine, needs quite a different distribution system from ordinary newspapers and magazines. We were able to develop an effective system only recently. Even then we were restrained by the means to make such a distribution network function effectively.

(c) DOCUMENTATION :

The first problem in this sector was that of procurement of books. The procedure to obtain foreign exchange is laden with numerous bureaucratic bottlenecks that more often, our efforts to get clearance to buy books from abroad were frustrated. This left us with a not-quite comfortable option - buying locally from established bookshops and publishers. Not only are the bookshops expensive but quite often, they are sparsely stocked.

The second problem in this area was that of making the public appreciate the facility. Ours is not a very good reading public, so much that fewer visitors than expected consulted the documentation centre.

(d) RADIO :

Like for the magazine, field trips to gather materials for the programmes were not budgeted for. But even more daunting was the absence of such vital equipment as an editing mixing machine. The little UHER the project provided does not go beyond field recording. But for equipment from church communication departments, production of quality radio programmes during the project would have been very difficult.

(e) TRAINING OF TRAINERS IN A/V EQUIPMENT :

There was no comprehensive and regular training schedule for trainers. Apparently the audio-visualist who got trained during the pilot phase of the project failed to implement this component. As a result, some trainers were not equipped with the necessary skills in the use of audio-visual equipment that form vital complements to their training.

(f) EXCHANGE VISITS :

The main problems here were time and cost.

(i) Time : We realised during the course of the project that two or three days for exchange visits were too short for visiting farmers and their hosts to share practical experiences and skills.

(ii) Costs : As a corollary to the aforementioned, exchange visits, even at the two to three days limitation were very costly.

5. I M P A C T :

(a) BOOKS ON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS :

Although the books are only currently being distributed or sold, the impact of this component of the project can already be measured by the lively atmosphere that characterises our seminars and workshops where every participant makes it a point of duty to raise questions. Equally, the survey we conducted on the Rural Development Review showed that 75 per cent of those sampled "highly approved and found our Questions and Answers rubric" very useful as against only 7 per cent that did not think it was of use to them. Also farmers regularly send questions directly to our radio slot "Rural Rendezvous."

(b) MAGAZINE :

The random survey on the RDR we conducted indicates that the magazine has come to be appreciated by the rural people themselves as their newspaper; this to us is a favourable assessment. Also we have been greatly encouraged by the several positive comments - written and verbal - from our increasing number of readers. And so too is the response from the rural people by way of their massive inputs in the production process. Village groups and individuals continue to send in contributions in form of letters and articles about their lives, activities and experiences. Much of this would never have been done and would never be with other media. All these are indications that the magazine has made an impact on the lives of these peoples.

(c) DOCUMENTATION :

So far our trainers no longer have to travel long distances to find research material for their training programmes, a situation which avoids the waste of valuable time and consequently increases output. Equally, the number of students from university centres and other agricultural and social centres on internship or secondment to INADES-Formation has increased tremendously owing to the availability of a documentation centre - as a resource centre. Much more is expected as we continue to expand our stock of books.

(d) RADIO :

The INADES-Formation radio slot popularly known as "Rural Rendezvous" as its other sister medium "Rural Development Review," has not only become the trade mark with which INADES is currently being identified, but has become a platform on which the rural voices shout themselves. Although a listeners' survey has not been conducted, we have it on record that most village groups in the North West and South West provinces follow our programmes with unreserved attention and put into practice what they learn from them.



(e) EXCHANGE VISITS :

The four exchange visits conducted have all born fruitful results. Not only did we register that communication between village groups was conducted in practical and familiar contexts, the farmers have since demonstrated that they gained new knowledge and skills and thus broadened their horizons. For instance, the farmers of Bamukumbit are now growing various kinds of vegetables in large and commercial quantities since they visited the Western province which is largely seen as the country's vegetable base. And so have the Ossing and Fotabe Women's groups increased the dynamism of their groups since they visited better organised groups in the North West Province.

6. S U G G E S T I O N

a) QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS :

The constant efforts to raise and modernise the lives and environment of the rural people have put the ruralites in a permanent stage of transition - from their serene natural lives to that of modernity. The situation is such that the rural people have so many questions to ask, day in, day out. They have to ask questions about almost everything new being introduced. In the last two years, we realised that answering their numerous questions was indeed relieving. It is therefore strongly suggested that this should be present in similar projects in the future.

b) MAGAZINE AND RADIO :

It is suggested that detailed studies about costs and distribution be carried out for future projects that would have these as components. Undoubtedly, the two remain very effective channels of communication especially if a large and diverse population must be reached. To these should be added television and video.

c) TRAINING OF TRAINERS :

Our experience here has been dismal, and for a similar project to avoid this, a sustained training programme must be drawn up within the project duration and appropriate training personnel or centres identified. Training is vital even to the best trained personnel on the project.

d) DOCUMENTATION :

A documentation centre remains an invaluable resource and therefore an asset to any project whose main base is education. To avoid the daunting exercise of procuring books from abroad, it is suggested that if the financier is abroad (and often they are) he should be allowed to buy books according to the needs of the project executors and mail to the latter.

e) EXCHANGE VISITS :

A minimum time limit of three days is called for and for which realistic costing should be made.

7. C O N C L U S I O N

If questions arise in the mind of the prospective executor of a similar project, as a result of this report, such a person or group is requested to address itself to us. We would be ready at all times to furnish clarifications or further details as may be requested.