



A study of rural youth programs in the Americas (Except United States and Canada)
by Earl Jones

A-thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION .
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The research problem was:,to study the relationships between some socio-economic needs of rural youth and the functioning of existing rural youth programs In the Americas. The main procedure used was personal interviews with club members and health, agriculture, education,,extension,,and rural youth program officials in all the American countries except the US and Canada.

Some socio-economic problems discovered to be affecting rural youth were that most farms were small subsistence units, rural incomes were low, and high population growth rates prohibited most youth from remaining on the farms. Only 38.2% of the 7-19 age group were in school in 1960-and only 0.8% were participating in a rural youth program. .Rural family living was classed as inadequate by health and home economics specialists and they pointed to malnutrition, inadequate housing and furnishings, and poor sanitary conditions as urgent problems.

The 49 existing rural youth organizations were classified, in order of number of members, in the following types: primary school clubs, 4-H, vocational education, and cooperatives. Their objec-tives included raising levels of living,,increasing education,,and providing social activities. "Learning by doing" through meetings, demonstrations,classes,workshops, and home and farm projects was the chief education method employed.

Nearly \$5,000,000 was spent on 36 programs in 1960 for an average of \$21.67 each for 229,512 members. Eleven professional man-years were used per 1000 members and officials reported four voluntary leaders per club. Half the voluntary leaders were school teachers. Most programs offered in-service training for professionals in 1960 but only half gave training to voluntary leaders. The principal problems of the programs were shortage of funds and lack of professionals and voluntary leaders.

Interviewed club members said they joined to learn something useful for the farm and home,for companionship and social activities, and to advance toward urban careers. Individual projects and recreation were the activities liked most by members; collective projects and competitions least. Nearly 90% judged the club to be of much or some usefulness to them and every member had applied at home at least one skill he had learned.

Four general recommendations were: Every country should immediately begin investigations on the methods they are using. Both structural and impact evaluations should be continually in progress in all rural programs. More general, sociological, and psychological training should be provided for professional personnel and voluntary leaders. Rural youth programs need to make greater use of community leaders if their effectiveness and efficiency are to be measurably increased.

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(EXCEPT UNITED STATES AND CANADA)

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EARL JONES

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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In 1960 the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences of the Organization of American States signed a contract with the American International Association to promote rural youth work in the Americas. The program was to be carried out through a special staff appointed by the American International Association and the members of the Department of Economics and Extension of the Tropical Center for Research and Graduate Instruction of the Institute in Turrialba, Costa Rica. This organization, with headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica, and a regional office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was named the Inter-American Rural Youth Program.

Since little investigation had been conducted on rural youth programs in the Americas outside of the United States and Canada, the Inter-American Rural Youth Program announced a general survey of the existing programs as its first goal. The writer of this report, then an International Cooperation Center Carnegie doctoral fellow in the Department of Education of Montana State College, was designated as responsible for this research. The study was felt to fulfill the requirements for the doctoral dissertation of the fellow and after his assignment to the staff of the Institute in January of 1961, the investigation was begun.

The writer sincerely appreciates the work of the hundreds of persons who aided this study as interviewers, interviewees, advisers, informants, or in any other way assisted in its realization. Particular gratitude is owed to the following:

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This study is dedicated to the rural youth of the Americas with the hope that the findings will contribute to greater progress and well-being.

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ABSTRACT

The research problem was: to study the relationships between some socio-economic needs of rural youth and the functioning of existing rural youth programs in the Americas. The main procedure used was personal interviews with club members and health, agriculture, education, extension, and rural youth program officials in all the American countries except the US and Canada.

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Four general recommendations were: Every country should immediately begin investigations on the methods they are using. Both structural and impact evaluations should be continually in progress in all rural programs. More general, sociological, and psychological training should be provided for professional personnel and voluntary leaders. Rural youth programs need to make greater use of community leaders if their effectiveness and efficiency are to be measurably increased.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Organized rural youth work is considered to have contributed significantly to the socio-economic progress of Great Britain, The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, the United States, and other countries. Starting through bunds, agricultural societies, cooperatives, and rural schools, many of the movements have grown to mammoth proportions. During this century, and principally since 1917, the task of conducting these programs has generally passed to agricultural extension services and vocational education departments although a few, notably the British Young Farmers, still pertain to non- or extra-governmental entities. Since World War II the programs have been introduced to newly-developing countries all over the world.

The rapid-expansion of this type of work has led to a whole new field of applied science and copious literature now appears from most of the organizations. Unfortunately, relatively little research has been conducted previous to program development and most organizations have necessarily based their work on the experiences of others and on experimentation within their own programs. The immense pressure of the job to be done plus serious gaps in the knowledge of such sciences as psychology and sociology have generally retarded the needed investigations.

Since 1945 considerable advance has been made in fundamental research and program methods and impact can now be tested more scientifically. Nevertheless, hundreds of new rural youth organizations have not even conducted their basic inventories which would pave the way for depth studies of the various program phases.

Many officials of rural youth programs are dissatisfied with their organizations, pointing to slow or sporadic growth, small reenrollments, parental and general public apathy, and the small number of tangible results as symptoms of inadequate adaptation of the programs to the needs of rural youth in their countries. Since few studies have been conducted on determining the extent and causes of the problems of the various rural youth programs, it was felt that an investigation of these would make a useful contribution to the field.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed as an overall survey of the rural youth organizations and the conditions under which they operate as the basis for a better understanding of individual program difficulties. The central problem for this investigation was: to study the relationships between some socio-economic needs of rural youth and the functioning of existing rural youth programs in the Americas. The central problem was considered to have four phases:

1. A study of some general socio-economic conditions of the areas in which the rural youth programs exist.
2. A study of the functioning of rural youth programs.
3. A study of the opinions of some members of some of these organizations as to the objectives, operation, personnel, and benefits derived from belonging to them.
4. A determination of some relationships between program functioning and the socio-economic needs of rural youth.

It was hoped that the results of this investigation would assist rural youth programs in evaluating their work.

Procedures

Five basic procedures were employed in securing the data. These were:

1. Officials of government agencies were personally interviewed, with written questionnaires used as guides, in order to determine the socio-economic conditions affecting rural youth work.
2. Officials of rural youth organizations were personally interviewed with guiding questionnaires so as to understand the present functioning of the organizations.
3. A brief questionnaire over socio-economic conditions was administered to census bureau officials by mail in order to check data gathered in the previous steps.
4. Census publications and other literature on the Americas were studied so as to verify the information gathered in the first three steps.
5. Members, a random sample of 65%, of six clubs were interviewed personally to determine their opinions as to the functioning of the rural youth organizations.

In procedural steps one and two, data on the socio-economic conditions and on the rural youth organizations were secured from officials in 28 political entities¹ in the Americas.

¹These included all the political entities except the United States and Canada. For convenience of wording, each entity will be called a country in this report even though all the units do not qualify as such. The status of those that were not countries in 1961 was as follows:

- Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana: Departments of France.
- Surinam, Netherlands Antilles: Parts of the Tripartite Kingdom of The Netherlands.
- Jamaica: Member of the West Indies Federation but to become an independent nation in 1962.
- West Indies: All British Caribbean islands now included in the West Indies Federation except Jamaica.
- Puerto Rico: Associated Free State with the US.
- British Guiana: Administrative unit with Britain.

Interviews with club members, step five in the procedure, were conducted in Jamaica, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Panama.

Limitations

This study was restricted to 28 of the 30 political entities in the Americas. Both the United States and Canada have conducted considerable investigation in rural youth work and the need for greater knowledge of their programs was not as acute as for those countries included in this report.

Limitations of time prevented a study of all the factors affecting rural youth work. Therefore, this investigation included only the socio-economic factors of agriculture and rural family living. Such phases as industrialization, class structure, and political organization are important to rural youth work but were considered to be outside the possible scope of this research.

Only six clubs in four countries were used in the study of the opinions of members as to the functioning of the organizations. Both time and accessibility limited expansion of this phase of the investigation.

Construction and Administration of the Questionnaires

The general plan for this investigation and the preliminary questionnaires were prepared with the assistance of the writer's advisers at Montana State College. Following this step, the questionnaires were revised and translated to Spanish with the assistance of the staffs of the Department of Economics and Extension of the Institute and the Inter-American Rural Youth Program in Costa Rica. This second draft was used

as a pre-test with the youth program in Costa Rica. After carefully analyzing the pre-test data, the questionnaires were again revised, incorporating the suggestions of the Extension Service of Costa Rica.

The investigator was unable to visit every country himself. He did, however, do entirely or extensively participate in administering the general questionnaire in nine of the countries and administered most of the questionnaires for members of all six of the interviewed clubs. Personnel of the Department of Economics and Extension of the Institute, the Inter-American Rural Youth Program, and the Costa Rican Extension Service assisted with or conducted parts of the research in the other countries. Careful instructions were given to each interviewer and the few problems that developed from the participation of the several investigators were resolved by correspondence.

Personal interviews could not be conducted in Belize¹ and Cuba. The cyclone of late 1961 prevented the interviews in Belize and permission could not be secured to conduct the study in Cuba. Information on these countries was secured entirely through mailed questionnaires and a study of available literature on them.

¹Belize is also known as British Honduras.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF RURAL YOUTH WORK

Rural youth work has been conducted over a sufficiently long period that certain general concepts have been developed. The philosophies and educational bases of the various kinds of programs have been synthesized in this chapter in order to give the general background from which this study was planned.

Philosophy of Rural Youth Work

Jose Figueres (26, p. 6)¹, while president of Costa Rica, proposed, as a moral philosophy for rural youth movements, that the personal development of individual members was much more important than their economic advancement. Translated² from the Spanish, his appeal said:

That which is worth most in this world is the human being. Especially when production methods advance and when progress brings greater results from brain and brawn, must we remember that man is first of all a moral being and that this man must be served before all riches. Thus the whole economic battle to produce more goods and the entire social struggle to better distribute the fruits of this labor, must necessarily be methods in the moral and intellectual formation of better educated man.

Long before these words were spoken, many rural youth organizations had attempted to implement this philosophy by a triad program of individual improvement, group development, and material enhancement. These are

¹Because of the number of bibliographic citations, permission was granted to number them consecutively and place all of them at the end of the dissertation.

²This and all other translations appearing in this report were done by the author.

still the guides for many older movements and have universally been adopted by the newly formed ones. The principal method for achieving these goals has been that of "learning by doing," stated in myriad ways but always emphasizing the active, voluntary participation of rural youth in its own educational process. Educational process is used here to describe rural youth programs because the phrase must form the basis for all planning, execution, and evaluation activities of the groups if they are to accomplish their aims.

Types of Rural Youth Organizations

Within the "learning by doing" framework, four chief types of organizations have developed: vocational education, 4-H type clubs, school clubs and cooperative associations. A fifth kind, association branches of parent organizations, has considerable acceptance in North America.

The first of these, vocational education, has found ample articulation in the Future Farmer and Future Homemaker chapters (clubs) in the United States, Japan, Mexico, Peru, and other nations. Here, first emphasis is placed on formal, in-school instruction, generally within secondary education, and adds home and farm projects for practice in the economic part of the goals. In addition, individual and group development are fostered through a chapter organization whereby social practice is provided.

Vocational education gives considerable training in techniques along with some knowledge of the theoretical bases and fundamental sciences from which the student should, with experience, be able to practice improved

agriculture or home living. While skills are emphasized, considerable background knowledge is also provided.

The second type of "learning by doing" organization is 4-H and its many counterparts such as 4-S in Colombia, 4-A in Argentina, and 4-C in Paraguay. In this type of program, weight is placed on the club organization within which vocational education is a part of the activity. 4-H, then, is chiefly an out-of-school education. It, too, depends upon home and farm projects for practice of what it teaches within the meetings.

4-H primarily aims to teach agricultural and home skills. Background knowledge, due to limits of time and facilities, is imparted to a lesser degree. 4-H uses the economic gain of farm and home projects as a stimulant to learning and to provide practice in the teaching process. It is expected that once satisfied that improved methods pay dividends, the individual will continue to seek knowledge through an extension service or other source of special information.

The third development in this series of organizations, usually for younger children, is the primary school club in which some simple vocational instruction is given by the primary teachers both in the classroom and during meetings. Practice is most often provided at the school plant, either with a common garden or cooking and sewing exercises. Home and farm projects are ordinarily encouraged but not required. Uruguay's Clubes Agrarios Juveniles are among the better known of this movement.

School clubs mostly attempt to give rural orientation, that is, it is hoped the children will learn enough to develop an affinity for home and farm improvement and through this, a desire to continue their personal

betterment. Because of the age of the members, the training of the teachers, and the time available, profundity of skills or knowledge is generally impossible although some movements have been able to incorporate greater amounts of both.

Cooperative youth associations are more prevalent in Europe than in the Americas but one group in Argentina has widespread membership. This type of organization attempts to teach the theory of cooperation and, in addition, gives practice in and inculcates the habits of mutual effort in the members. While youth under 19 are invited, this movement finds its fullest expression in those young farmers beginning in independent agriculture since these have a greater need for cooperative assistance.

The fifth kind of club is that formed as a youth branch of a parent organization. Grange, Farmers Union, and Farm Bureau in the United States and British Young Farmers, as a branch of the various agricultural societies in several parts of the Commonwealth, are well known examples. These groups chiefly provide prestige and other social benefits but some agriculture and homemaking is taught through lectures. No strong association of this kind is found in the Americas except in the US and Canada.

Justification for Rural Youth Work

All of the programs require relatively large expenditures of personnel, time, and money. Why, then, are these resources spent on individuals not yet able to put into full practice what they learn? Why not concentrate on the education of adults? While generally discussing rural youth work, Bechara (8) justified the effort in these restated terms:

1. Younger persons learn easier and faster.
2. Youth desires change and is willing to try new things.
3. Youth has more productive years left and thus the investment is potentially more efficient.
4. Few people are actually starving in the Americas today but unless production and utilization greatly improve, the new generation may well be faced with this disaster.
5. The social and psychological problems from multiplied personal contacts could worsen with increasing population numbers unless education can provide the means for meeting these problems and adjusting to them.

Precisely, then, effective and efficient rural youth work is very necessary if man is to achieve and progressively enjoy a good life.

Some Effects of US Rural Youth Organizations

Little definite research has been conducted on the total impact of rural youth programs in the US. Most studies have been of regional and topical character and give only a partial picture of any contributions of youth organizations, leaving the inference that the results are widely applicable. Nevertheless, these studies are of some utility in justifying program existence whether these be 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Grange, or Farm Bureau Federation. Since the first two have the largest membership, the present discussion will be confined to them.

Statistical reports from these two organizations demonstrate that some of their members have become successfully established in farming. In earlier years these occupied new lands and presently mostly replace retiring farmers. These new farmers are said to be more progressive than the former ones and the reasons are stated as follows:

1. The organizations stimulate greater individual member profit from, and longer continuance in, general primary, secondary, university, and out-of-school education such as extension (77).
2. These ex-members farm more efficiently because of the partial scientific and technical education they have received (79).
3. The combined formal educational activities with the active participation in farming with their parents provides a better equipped farmer (17).

As proof of progressiveness, Meaders (54), Schlutt (74), and Olson (63) cite greater adoption of improved farm practices among ex-members than among non-members.

Programs for girls are claimed to have similar results in improving home living conditions, that is, they make better use of their money and time resources (86) as well as participating more in outside activities. Both 4-H and the Future Homemakers of America (FHA) have developed extensive programs for this part of the rural family.

Apparently these organizations provide direction toward and partial training for rural-related occupations such as county agents, home economists, vocational instructors, supervised credit, marketing, and investigation (55). A part of this is credited to better performance in college (18) and in part due to the skills they obtained which are directly applicable to certain professions (62). Thomas (80) also studied ex-members performance in non-farm occupations and found a trend toward greater success.

Educational Bases of Rural Youth Programs

The educational bases of rural youth work are a peculiar mixture of

general societal education of learning at home, on the farm, from friends and associates, and the more formal brand of in-school education. It is expected that the first will provide:

1. Specific manual skills and techniques,
2. The consciousness of needs for education beyond society's teachings,
3. The proper setting for effective practice of what is learned in the more formal sessions, demonstrations, and trips.

The second part of the mixture, the formal techniques, is supposed to:

1. Provide some amount of background knowledge, thus making future change easier and more probable,
2. Engender a propensity to change from having observed the advantages of change,
3. Develop a change of general attitude toward change agents thus better enabling youth to profit from future developments in knowledge and techniques.

In essence what is proposed is that the student be kept inside his environment as much as possible and handed information and opportunities for experiences so that he can materially and socially better himself within his present sphere of activities. A basic tenet of most rural youth programs is that of keeping the youngsters in their circumscribed positions, that is, on the farms and in the rural homes. Only a few organizations are intentionally preparing youths for off-farm employment.

Psycho-Social¹ Approaches to Programming

Education through rural youth organizations must be based on the

¹The combined term "psycho-social" is used here to designate the use of group pressures to achieve changes in individuals.

needs and problems of the individual and the community. Out of this communal circumstance, then, a program is theoretically built that will make youth appreciate what they have but at the same time strive for some improvement. This striving has to be controlled so that the newly created desires are within reach, thus minimizing frustration and stagnation. Once the subject has achieved one objective, he can proceed onward to the next, progressing through a rational development.

Both the processes of keeping youth at home and of inducing them to change are sought through an intermediary, the voluntary leader. This leader is previously defined so that he remains a symbol of the community but still represents and probably fosters change by his own progressive outlook and actions. An amplification of the leader concept may be found on page 41.

Psycho-Social Approaches to Personal Development

The dual nature of programming concomitantly demands two foci in the approaches to development. These two can be described as working directly with the individual and aiming at him through group processes. The general literature about rural youth programs, particularly those conducted as a part of extension services, weights the group approach heaviest even though most of the methods used result in emphasis on the individual.

While the lack of personnel is most often used as justification for working with groups, the pressure of the group on the individual is considered to be a favorable factor. The necessity to conform is thus expected to play an important part in causing some members to change.

Working through the group's leaders in order to reach the followers is also an announced approach. While seldom proclaimed, a third benefit from clubs is that of allowing members to hide anonymously within the group until such time as they can perform separately.

Approaches to individuals are preponderant in youth work. Home and farm projects, club offices, member demonstrations, competition, home and farm visits, and most public presentations mostly concentrate on one person at a time. Many of these methods give preference to those youths who are physically, mentally, socially, or economically better able to perform. Regional organizational hierarchies, conventions, contests, and most other recognition devices serve to enunciate individual differences. Despite this difficulty, these activities are generally considered to be worthwhile because some members attain polish and poise through successive participation. Most youth movements emphasize the stimulus to greater local achievement, a feedback from these events, as an important effect of individual advancement. A relatively new and still not widespread stimulus method is that of recognizing an entire club rather than individuals within it.

In recent years, 4-H work in the US, Jamaica, and Costa Rica has been trying to develop a greater number of individuals through emphasis on the "growing up jobs" of adolescents. In summary, these are (59):

1. Dominate the physical environment.
2. Become sufficiently competent so as to earn a good living.
3. Achieve the ability to make friends and choose a mate.

4. Understand self in relation to community.

5. Gain emotional maturity, flexibility, and adaptability.

Working through these points, it is hoped that agents and leaders will be able to enter sufficiently into the adolescent world to help youngsters develop within their own framework of reference rather than in terms of a strictly adult world. Force is placed, then, on an orderly individual growth of all members rather than on the superachievement of the most able. Some evidence of success with this approach has been demonstrated through the US Citizenship Improvement Study of the National 4-H Club Foundation.

Educational Methods in Rural Youth Work

The body of educational methods used in rural youth work differs only slightly from those of general education and most of the difference that does exist is in emphasis given to a particular part of the learning process. This mental process of learning can be described as (a) basing instruction on, or awakening interest in, needs of youth, (b) following four organized steps of preparing the teacher and the student: presenting the material, giving opportunities to practice what was presented, and helping provide proof of utility, and (c) motivating the students to successively follow each of the learning process steps.

Theoretically the members of rural youth clubs make their own program through a study of the situation and a determination of their problems. If properly guided and trained in this procedure, the program cannot help but be within their interests. This, too, should provide some motivation

since they can see in the program, a solution to some of the problems they face. Additional motivation is thought to be added through contests in which certain levels of achievement are rewarded and the lower levels are punished by withholding recognition, thus stimulating greater effort. Grading systems, different color or size ribbons, material awards, and championships are common methods used as stimuli.

Teacher preparation includes the ordinary phases of dominating the subject matter, planning the presentation, obtaining those materials needed, and rehearsing if necessary. Since learning through youth organizations is thought to be somewhat more voluntary than in-school situations, many authors (10, 12, 17, 29, 88) have emphasized the need of adequately preparing the members for learning.¹ Principally, club preparation consists of convincing the members that they can dominate the material and that economic or social gain will follow application of what is learned.

Presentation of the lessons may be done by a professional teacher or agent, a voluntary leader, or by members themselves. Preference is given to the last two in teaching club members; agents should act through the leaders when at all possible. Physical demonstration of methods or results is demanded as an accompaniment to oral instruction. This is thought to provide greater possibilities of capturing the message, of facilitating future practice, and of reinforcing the preparation of members by convincing them that they, too, can carry out the action.

¹Gates (33) and Smirnov (78) view the learning process as always voluntary and individual and therefore there could be no difference in the need for 4-H club member or classroom pupil preparation or motivation.

Practice of any skill is conceived as having three phases. The first is mental and is provided by repetition of the oral expression, that is, mental participation with the instructor during the presentation. Secondly, when possible, the students should immediately have the opportunity to practice under supervision. Finally, it is expected that members will try what is learned at home or on the farm, either in helping their parents or through individual projects of their own. This step is designated as "learning by doing".

Proof should be offered in each of the previous three steps as well as emphasized in this final one. As previously mentioned, preparation, presentation, and practice should prove to the learner that he can accomplish the lesson and that the lesson is worthwhile. The results, if positive, of his having practiced, will now offer objective proof of his ability and the utility of what is learned, thus favoring retention and future application by guiding individual evaluation. The six factors -- interest, motivation, preparation, presentation, practice, and proof -- are seen then as indispensable parts of a carefully integrated process from which club members can learn.

Means of Implementing the Learning Process

Lectures, written literature, visual aids, demonstrations, and home, community, and farm projects are the principal means used in rural youth work. Since the first three are common in most educational programs, demonstrations and home and farm projects will receive the attention in this exposition. This does not indicate, however, that these latter are

exclusively youth club means but rather that greater relative importance to learning is attributed to them in this kind of education.

Demonstrations are explained as bringing the materials to be used in the lesson to the people or taking the people to the materials and then performing the function while orally explaining it to the members. Making a rope halter at the meeting in the club house, cooking a balanced breakfast in the community center kitchen, or pruning coffee trees on a neighboring farm illustrate demonstrations of methods, or the "how to do it" process. Each part of the process must be explained and shown as a separate step, insuring that everyone captures the idea. A final repetition and summary should provide an overall view of the process as one complete unit.

A second kind of demonstration is that of results, offering the proof of the possible benefits of any particular recommended action. The steps of how the recommended action was done are explained and those attending are then visibly offered the end results for examination. Better fit may be demonstrated following patterned dressmaking, more corn per acre resulting from fertilizers, or better speaking ability following mirror practice are customary examples.

Home and farm projects are important features of youth club education. In the ideal, a boy or girl owns the physical materials used in the project. plans the execution jointly with the leader and parents, does all or nearly all of the work, and retains the profit realized from the project. A girl might buy 100 chicks and the necessary feed, raise them herself, and finally sell them. From the profits she might buy additional

clothes, a radio, or save the money for her university education. That a project is, however, a cooperative one, is seen in the necessity of technical advice from the agent or leader; counsel, space, used of equipment, and marketing assistance from her parents. Both girls and boys are urged to carry out projects which will:

1. Be within the economic and educational possibilities of themselves and their parents,
2. Provide a vehicle for learning something useful and interesting to them,
3. Yield a visible profit, and
4. Contribute toward establishment in farming or homemaking.

Not every requisite can always be met but all project planning should attempt to fulfill them.

Record keeping is generally required of members of all types of organizations. This consists of narrative, chronological descriptions of what was done and how. Also, a simple accounting system is included to help demonstrate the real profits of the project, to help instill the steps of an economic venture, and teach elementary accounting. Record keeping appears to be difficult to teach and to execute but remains a desired phase of the project methods.

Two other types of projects, communal activities and community betterment, are often included. Communal activities may be recreation, a joint crop project, a cooperative, religious services, or any other group event. These usually have goals specific to each activity as well as the overall goal of fostering and developing mutual assistance. Community

betterment is conducted as a communal activity with most of the club participating. This type of project is planned to increase mutual assistance, show how youth can help the community, and demonstrate the club's worth to others.

In summary, rural youth movements are extramural programs designed to assist in the development of this important segment of our population through direct personal improvement, economic gain, and favorable attitudes. They approach this development by working with the individual and the group, basing all work on the problems of the members. Both professionals and voluntary leaders attempt to teach by an organized process of convincing members of the utility of improved home, community, and farm practices, principally through demonstrations and projects. The integrated program of planning, teaching, and practice purports to assist general education in developing active and intelligent rural citizens who can profit from their environment and live happily in it.

This chapter has summarized the nature of rural youth work as a reference from which rural youth organizations can evaluate their own functioning. One of the first concepts stated in this explanation is that organizations must attempt to help their members solve the problems existing in their daily lives. Following this recommendation, the next section of this report, Chapter III, presents the socio-economic conditions discovered in the studied areas and highlights some of the problems facing rural youth today.

CHAPTER III

SOME SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT AFFECT RURAL YOUTH WORK

Rural youth programs, as with any other educational organization, are social institutions and operate as dependencies of the general society while at the same time attempting to bring about improvements in that society. In order to understand the media in which these programs are conducted, a questionnaire was designed to aid in studying the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the various countries. This questionnaire was administered through personal interviews to officials of agencies concerned with agriculture, health, education, and welfare in the rural areas.

Several officials were interviewed in each country so that the best possible data could be secured. In addition, mailed questionnaires to census bureaus and available literature on the countries were used to check all information. This chapter presents the results of these studies of the socio-economic conditions in a description of the general setting and rural living.

General Socio-Economic Conditions of the Countries

The studied area is big and varied; so big and so varied that it is difficult to describe it without generalizing too much. The Americans comprise about 40,000,000 square kilometers which are inhabited by more than 404 million people, more than half of whom, 206,567,317, live outside of the US and Canada. The studied political units range from the

very tiny French department of Martinique, 2,849 square kilometers, to mammoth Brazil, nearly equal to the United States in size. Populations, too, show differences from 30,000 in French Guiana to more than 65 million in Brazil. Between these extremes fall the other 26 countries with their equally varying cultures, peoples, and topography (Table 1-A¹).

Classically the Americans are considered as Spanish, Portuguese, French, or English but heavy influences are felt in most of them from other Europeans, Africans, or American Indians. British Guiana's population includes a high percentage of Asians. Each nation has its own cultural features which stem from a mixture of racial origins, neighbors, benefactors and enemies, the land, and history. Often the differences within a country are so great that some countries are but slowly developing a unified national type. Some differences will probably last for centuries.

The land is often thought of as rich but much of it has failed thus far to give to its inhabitants a high level of living. While some of the techniques and much of the necessary knowledge are yet lacking on how to produce the optimum from the land, thus limiting productivity, it is probable that much of it will never permit great intensification of the present livestock-cropping regimen. Cold Patagonia, the rainwashed tropics, the deserts, and the steep mountain slopes are prominent examples of these

¹To facilitate reading this report, all secondary information tables have been placed in Appendix I, which begins on page 83. All tables appearing in the Appendix will be marked with the letter A (for example, Table 1-A). Table numbers not appearing with the letter A will be found on a nearby page in the text.

problematic lands.

Of the 20 most important agricultural enterprises, 11 are primarily for export, indicating the extractive nature of this segment of the economy (Table 2-A). These are also characteristically produced on large-scale farms, indicating that much of the wealth is concentrated in a few hands in many countries. Many of the other enterprises are produced principally as subsistence items.

Despite the diversity among the countries, certain problems and symptoms of problems are generally felt throughout the area. For example, although the population per square kilometer ranges from one-third to 267 (Table 1-A), many of those countries with lower figures suffer because their arable land is scarce in relation to the total area. Obviously, those with the higher densities feel considerable pressure and are looking to pursuits other than agriculture to maintain the people. Puerto Rico's "Operation Bootstrap" has become a classic example of this search.

Most of the countries, 22 of the 28, have populations that are more than 50% rural (Table 1-A). This not only demonstrates the agriculturally based economies but also points to many problems that may arise from widely scattered populations. One of these problems is that services are necessarily higher in rural areas because of distance and often these services cannot be or are not being provided.

A high rate of population growth, estimated at 2.5%, is evidenced throughout the area and the preponderance of youth is particularly felt in the rural sections. The distribution of the age groups also presents

a problem to many countries. Some 26% of all people over 29 years of age live in rural zones but 30% of those under the age of 20 do (Table 3-A). Put another way, the generally accepted productive age of 20 to 60 makes up only 46% of the rural population and is supporting the other 54%. Approximately 80% of the urbanites maintain a younger 20%. The capacity, then, to pay for services is considerably lower in the countryside.

Even though there are some notable exceptions, primarily among the European-associated entities such as Surinam, Jamaica, and British Guiana, there is a very close inverse correlation among the percentages of rural population, literacy, and the 1960 enrollment, .72 for all countries and .80 excluding the dependencies. The correlation can be observed in Figure I. Many countries, such as Peru and Costa Rica, are waging literacy campaigns but in a few the educational authorities expressed the view that they were losing ground among the agrarian population.

Gross product per person appears to be closely tied to urban concentration. This is especially true if the canal and oil revenues are subtracted from the gross product figures of Panama and Venezuela. Obviously the combination of high rural population percentages and low literacy work in a "hard-to-break" cycle with low incomes (Table 4-A). The percentage of farms with areas of less than five hectares also shows a strong corollary tendency with gross product per person but curiously enough, the percentage of farm ownership seemingly has little relation to other factors (Table 5-A). The income figures available were for the

