

CHAPTER 5

Major Points for Consideration

SUMMARY

The evaluation team believes that the Pwo Karen Agricultural Development Project has made substantial progress since its inception. The bottom-up, small-scale approach to helping the Pwo in this remote area is admirable. The Project is to be congratulated for having avoided the temptation to operate in a grander style involving massive inputs. Already there are examples of villagers who, after first declining to become involved, changing their mind after seeing Project efforts meet with success. The Project is also to be congratulated for having channeled so much of its budget into the field while spending so little on overhead and administration.

HIRE MORE FIELD STAFF

The evaluation team believes, however, that too little was invested in overhead and administration. Because of the difficulties in reaching all the remote villages in the Project area, the difficulties in approaching the Pwo, and then, once the trust of the Pwo is won, in effectively implementing the desired changes, the Project staff has been spread too thin.

These obstacles are exacerbated by the need to train and provide incentives for the extension workers. As the evaluation team found itself in recruiting staff to assist in its data collection, trained persons who can speak the languages of the Pwo in the Project area are hard to find. This is made even more troublesome by the fact that non-Christian workers cannot be expected to work for a Christian project with as much dedication as the Christian extension workers (although there were indeed exceptions to this in the Project).

The evaluation team suggests that more field staff be hired. In the previous section, some ideas were presented regarding how the additional staff might be used. Regardless of whether these are implemented as stated, what is needed, especially at the early stages of development, is more workers in the Project areas. The Project's reputation suffered unnecessarily because too many coffee seedlings died and too many problems were encountered with demonstration sites. Although there were problems with the irrigation systems, these were mainly technical in nature and easier to solve over the long run than those involving agricultural techniques.

TRAIN BOTH WOMEN AND MEN

The evaluation team cannot stress enough the need for proper training of both men and women in the Karen villages. Karen women work in the fields at least as much as the men. If they do not feel comfortable at the training sessions, the Project must find new ways to approach them. There are many trained, educated, and dedicated Karen women in Mae Sariang. More use of them should be made. There are also women working in the Karen Baptist Convention, particularly some with ample experience in nutrition, who could help.

DO NOT OVERLOOK THE SGAWS IN THE "PWO" AREA

To the surprise of the evaluation team, there were some villages in which quite a lot of Sgaw Karens lived. In fact, one of the assistants who spoke only Pwo turned out to be ineffective in these villages. It was impossible to assess whether this impeded Project operations, but the multi-lingual nature of some "Pwo" villagers should be kept in mind. Working through these Sgaw may be a way by which some of the Pwo in the area can be reached too.

CONTINUE ASSISTING ALL RELIGIONS

Comments made by the German volunteer who assisted the Project and others who have observed the efforts in the field led the evaluation team to believe that there might be a pro-Christian bias. Believing that if this were so, it might be counterproductive, the team made a check of project involvement in terms of Christianity, Buddhism, and Animism. As it turned out, and as is shown in Table 7, we found that Christian villages averaged 3.6 projects per village; Buddhist villages 4 projects per village; and animist villages 2.2 projects per village.

The lower amount of involvement in the animist villages reflects the more traditional nature of these settlements. Both Christianity and Buddhism among Karens in the Project area is largely a recent occurrence. Those who are Christian or Buddhist either are converts themselves or the children of those who made conversions. Because they were willing to make major changes in their life, away from a very strong type of matrilineal spirit worship common among the Pwo here, they are more open to other less weighty changes.

PROVIDE MORE ASSISTANCE TO VILLAGES THAT ARE NOT HOMES OF EXTENSION WORKERS

These data show, however, that there was a bias in the distribution of Project assistance. As can be seen in Table 7, the home villages of extension workers averaged 4.6 projects, well above the average. The Project should spread activities to more villages. The Thai government with good reason formerly did not allow natives of one province to serve as officials in that province. The Project is encouraged to rectify this situation.

PROJECT INVOLVEMENT BY RELIGION

TABLE 8

	WATER SYSTEM	IRRIG. SYSTEM	ALLEY FARM	COFFEE NURSERY	RECEIVED SEEDLINGS	SEED/FERT.	SPRAYER/HULLER	WELL IMPROV.	WATER HOSE
CHRISTIAN									
PHUE RUE KHEE*	X		X	X	X	X			
MAE SA TA NOI	X								
KAY TU KHEE	X		X		X	X			
OH LOH THA					X	X	X		
BAW LU	X				X	X			X
MAE HA KHI*			X	X	X	X			X
EE WE JO		X			X	X			
BUDDHIST									
DONG DAM*	X				X		X		
TUNG CHAMROEN*			X	X	X			X	
LAY KHO*	X		X	X	X	X			X
KAW MOO KHEE			X		X	X			
ANIMIST									
HIN LUANG	X				X				
LAW PLA SAY	X				X				
MAE SA TA	X		X		X				
HUAY PLA GANG			X	X		X	X		
OM DAH NUA	X								
MAE OB TY	X								
HUAY CHAI YONG			X		X	X			
HUAY NAM SAI		X			X	X			
WAE PAE TA		X							

* Denotes home village of an extension worker.

The evaluation team checked this by asking villagers what their preference was regarding what group they wished to have help with future projects. The positive evaluation by the team is echoed by the villagers who scored the Project extremely well in comparison with the government. There was one family each in Dong Dam, Huay Sai Yong and Huay Nam Sai villages were not interested in any group coming into their village, but this was not statistically significant.

RELIGION AND GROUP MOST PREFERRED

TABLE 8

	BUDDHIST	CHRISTIAN	ANIMIST	GOVERNMENT	CHRISTIAN	BUDDHIST	DOES NOT MATTER
AGE							
DAM	65.0%	35.0%		20.0%	30.0%	15.0%	30.0%
CHAMROEN	85.0%	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%	25.0%	15.0%	55.0%
LUANG	41.7%		58.3%		25.0%		75.0%
PLA SAY	5.0%	15.0%	80.0%	25.0%	40.0%		35.0%
RUE KHEE		55.0%	45.0%	10.0%	45.0%		45.0%
SA TA	5.0%	30.0%	65.0%		50.0%		50.0%
SA TA NOI	9.1%	72.7%	18.2%	9.1%	72.7%		18.2%
PLA GANG	5.0%		95.0%		20.0%		80.0%
AH NUA			100.0%	7.7%	15.4%		76.9%
AH TY			100.0%				100.0%
OB TY			100.0%	10.0%	30.0%		60.0%
CHAIYONG		6.7%	93.3%	13.3%	6.7%		73.3%
KHO	92.3%		7.7%	7.7%	7.7%		84.6%
NAM SAI	35.3%	11.8%	52.9%		11.8%		82.4%
TU KHEE		50.0%	50.0%		50.0%		50.0%
MOO KHEE	100.0%				26.7%	6.7%	66.7%
PAE TA		25.0%	75.0%		25.0%		75.0%
OH THA		100.0%			36.4%		63.6%
LU		100.0%			40.0%		60.0%
HA KHI	15.0%	60.0%	25.0%		30.0%		70.0%
IE JO		72.7%	27.3%	9.1%	27.3%		63.6%
TOTAL	24.9%	28.6%	46.5%	6.3%	29.6%	2.3%	60.8%

Religion of family head is displayed.

THAI CITIZENSHIP

Although beyond the scope of the Project, it cannot be denied that the lack of Thai citizenship by many villagers in the Project area obstructs the goals of the Project. Any help that can be provided in qualified Karens becoming citizens will yield beneficial results in terms of improving the Karen's financial and educational position.

PROJECT A MORE POSITIVE IMAGE

The Project is encouraged to publicize its activities among the Karens in the Project area. Similarly, it need not be shy about letting government officials know what it is doing. Although there are new methodologies for private organizations working in the hills, all parties support activities such as the Project is promoting. In other studies, we have identified the problem of a lack of Karen pride. Quiet confidence over the Project's successes should be of some help in showing Karens, both in Mae Sariang and other towns as well as in the villages that Karens can function meaningfully in the Thai world and still be Karens.

INTEGRATE ACTIVITIES WITH KAREN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Having gotten off to a satisfactory start, the question arises of where administratively the Project should be located. The evaluation team suggests that the Project should be integrated into the Pwo Karen work of the KBC. Although the team does not believe that the role of a missionary need always be restricted to working through existing institutions, in this case, since Mr. Binkley will be shifting his base of operations to Chiang Mai and there is no likely replacement to follow him to Mae Sariang, we suggest that the Pwo Agricultural Development Project become part of the KBC's ongoing activities. This should allow for the trained female expertise to be used to the benefit of the women in the Project area. Care of course should be taken to insure that it is the Pwo who continue to benefit from this Project.

To insure the stability and productivity of future work, the team suggests that an office in Mae Sariang be maintained. This will provide better liaison with the villages in the area. Also, the Karens, who usually feel more comfortable visiting Mae Sariang than the big city of Chiang Mai, would also be more likely to keep in touch with Project leaders in times of need.