

(Re-typed Sept. 2012)

To: Vincent Brown, DD
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May 2, 1972

From: R.B. Scott/Cecil Uyahara, AD/DP

Subject: The Shamalan, Its People, and USAID Responsibilities

REF: Memos and one report by Richard Scott

1. "Comments on Programs", 2-5 pp., April 3 1971
2. "Further Studies in the Shamalan Valley", 10 pp., May 6, 1971
3. "The North Shamalan: A Survey of Land and People", 4pp., November 1971
4. "Attitudes in the North Shamalan", 2pp., March 9, 1972
5. "Attitudes toward the Shamalan Canal Project in the Said Village: Aynak, the 'Crisis Syndrome', and the continued need for public Information", 3pp., April 4, 1972
6. The North Shamalan: A Survey of Land and People", 55pp., August 1971

Between April 3, 1971 and April 4, 1972, Mr. Scott completed field studies in the Shamalan and prepared 5 memos and one research report on the North Shamalan all of which broached the subject of the social implications of the Shamalan Project and the peoples' involvement in it. While these reports vary considerably in subject matter and depth of data presented, one important element appears consistently – the people of the Shamalan area do not seem to be generally informed about project activities or plans and an absolute minimum level of involvement is being maintained among the farmers of the area.

The involvement of the people in the project has been varied. To begin, there was no information received: (Ref.2) "To this time no villager has been found who has had any direct contact with the government officials about the outline of the project." (p.2) "And apparently the Afghan survey crews have instructions not to discuss their activities with villagers." (p.3 Ref.2) Second, the information received has not always been completely accurate, or, at least, villager interpretations of policy statements have not been accurate. "...the project depended on the desires of the people; if they did not want it, it would not happen..." Ref.6 p.7). Recently, in the Aynak, villagers indicated their understanding, from official sources, that the project "...was basically an American scheme and was in a sense out of the hands of the local government to do anything about..." and further that they, the farmers, "...were left with the impression that the canal will likely bypass the village via the desert..." They were objecting to the canal passing through the middle of the village. (Ref.5 p.2) Third, rumor has also a place in the overall context. In the early stages of the report work, "...the rumor was that the landless farmers were to be given land by the project under a free redistribution system"; this having been current among the landless sharecroppers. (Ref.2 p.3). There have been numerous other unrecorded

rumors which can be expected in situations of: major change, basic distrust of the agents of change, and a lack of a proven source of official information. A fourth level of involvement, or events which probably reflect the level of involvement was the confrontation between farmers and construction crews last September when the work on the bypass was begun. Finally, (as the canal passes through the farmer's field) there are the vague or at least doubtful statements of what this fact means to the farmer in terms of payment for land lost to the project, and what the long term advantages may or may not be. (Ref.4 p.1)

So far, two men have received payment for crops and trees destroyed by the construction work. This they know. Mr. Scott has yet to find a farmer actively enthusiastic about the project.

USAID has pushed and is pushing a "total Package" of canal construction and land development in the Shamalan. In Mr. Scott's informal discussions with various Afghans in HAVA (up to but not including the Governor) he has yet to find one in support of the "total Package", which may partly explain the lack of information being disseminated – the lack of intent to carry out the "total package".

USAID, as well as the RGA, has a major responsibility to see that the farmers of the Shamalan are informed in detail about the plans and program for this project which is in the process of making major changes in their lives. The farmers must be involved. This USAID responsibility is at least as great as that of supervising the construction specifications.

Whether the total scheme is to be completed or not, the need for a responsible body in HAVA-HAVR to systematically inform the farmers about various aspects of the project, before the project actually arrives in their fields, must be met. Proposals for such a body have been noted in most every memo, and clearly spelled out in Ref. 3. To date, only stop-gap, situational measures have been taken.

Recommendations

1. That the urgent need for a face-to-face information program for the Shamalan be put on the HAVR PAR agenda.
2. That USAID insist that a face-to-face information program be immediately begun and a particular person in HAVA and HAVR be designated to carry out the program.
3. That an integrated Shamalan work plan be prepared by HAVA/HACU. Such a plan was begun in summer 1970 but never completed.

Drafted by: AD/DP:RBScott:fa:5/2/72