

# **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The Community Spirit Development Project (CSDP) was originally designed as a four year project sponsored by the Baptist Union of Sweden. The project started in August 1987 with the goal of assisting hilltribe villages to become more self-sufficient. The CSDP set up a five-faceted, integrated program which included:

- (1) Marketing assistance
- (2) Rice bank programs
- (3) Fertilizer banks and agricultural equipment
- (4) Community Spirit development
- (5) Christian stewardship training

After the first two years of operation, CSDP had established five rice banks and ten fertilizer banks in fifteen villages within seven provinces of northern and central Thailand, assisting three tribal groups: Lahu, Karen and Hmong. In 1992, the project was extended an additional year.

Since that beginning, the project has expanded to 49 villages in 4 provinces. The tribal groups assisted have also broadened to include Chinese Haw and Akha, but Lahu, Karen and Hmong still make up the largest proportion of the target population. (Table 1 - Number of villages by tribe.) The present project, designated CSDP II, is intended to operate for two years (1993-1994). Phase II will be followed by a three-year Phase III which will be implemented from 1995 to 1997.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT II**

Throughout the duration of CSDP, the formally stated objectives conceived at the outset of the project have remained essentially unchanged. As stated in various project publications those objectives are as follows:

- (1) To provide basic training to introduce the concept of co-operation through the establishment of rice and fertilizer bank co-operatives.
- (2) To assist rice bank co-operatives with the construction of rice storage facilities.
- (3) To provide information and training in bookkeeping, management, and agriculture to ensure the successful continuation of the co-operatives.

- (4) To provide soft loans to purchase initial stocks of fertilizer and equipment necessary to start fertilizer banks.
- (5) To assist tribal villagers in the marketing of agricultural products.
- (6) To teach and encourage good stewardship of one's own and others' resources.

The following is a brief description of how CSDP planned to meet the project objectives. In some cases, these methodologies have changed. These changes are noted in the Findings and Recommendations section below.

### **1.2.1 RICE BANKS**

CSDP assists and supports the establishment of rice banks in project villages. Project staff provide information and training in management, maintenance and problem solving in rice bank operation during monthly (or more often) visits. Special seminars are also conducted in Chiang Mai for this purpose, primarily for training related to group management and bank accounting. Normally, a minimum of 15 members is required to establish a rice bank, but this is waived in the case of smaller villages. Limits on bank loans and other bank operating procedures are set by each individual village group, with CSDP field staff providing advice.

The actual rice storage facilities are constructed by the villagers following a detailed plan designed by CSDP and using material provided by the project. All storage facilities are constructed to the same basic specifications.

### **1.2.2 FERTILIZER (AND AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT) BANKS**

The CSDP project supports the purchase of chemical pesticides, fertilizers and agricultural equipment and teaches the villagers how to use them correctly in order to increase production. In most cases, CSDP staff purchase the fertilizer for the villagers and transport it to the village in project vehicles. A soft loan is provided to purchase initial stocks of fertilizer and the equipment necessary to start a fertilizer bank. No-interest loans from the bank must be repaid within 3 to 5 years, depending on the contract agreed upon by the members and CSDP officers. There was no indication that composting or use of botanical pesticides had been introduced by CSDP.

### **1.2.3 MARKETING**

The CSDP provides limited assistance to villagers in the marketing and transport of agricultural products, e.g., to Chiang Mai. The villagers pay 10% of the value of crops sold to help cover transportation services. The project also provides some advice to villagers on where to sell their products at the best price. In some instances, CSDP not only helps to establish a marketing source but also gives advice about the variety and selection of seeds such as coffee, kidney bean, soybean, ginger, sesame and kapok.

#### **1.2.4 TRAINING**

The main objective of CSDP is to teach villagers how to find ways to solve their problems by themselves without depending on help from outside the village. To this end, the project provides on-site training about alternative choices for future development. In addition, villagers are trained in bookkeeping and management to enable them to become planners and administrators of their own projects.

#### **1.2.5 STEWARDSHIP TRAINING**

CSDP teaches and encourages Christians to provide good stewardship for themselves and other villagers. An opportunity for Christian education is provided for interested persons, with emphasis on teaching them how to assume responsibility, how to be good Christians and encouraging them to support their local church. Local church leaders were often involved in this process.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE CSDP II PROJECT EVALUATION**

Specific evaluation objectives which this evaluation report attempts to achieve include answering the following questions:

1. To what extent are the objectives of CSDP being met?
2. To what extent are CSDP activities meeting the needs of the target group, e.g., training, marketing, rice banks, fertilizer banks, paddy rice funds?
3. To what extent are villagers being prepared to continue project activities when project assistance is terminated?
4. What changes in methodology, scope, etc., of the CSDP project should be considered if the CSDP project is to continue beyond its currently scheduled completion, e.g., development of credit unions, extension of larger value loans?

### **1.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

A selection of representative villages was made, to include different tribes and both villages new to the program and villages which have participated in the program since the last PRDI evaluation in 1990.

Evaluation was accomplished by a team of PRDI personnel with experience in rural development. The team conducted in-depth interviews with village leaders, villagers (both members of CSDP banks and non-members), CSDP staff, and other individuals with knowledge of CSDP activities.

Specific recommendations were discussed with CSDP personnel prior to finalizing the evaluation; however, final decisions on the content of recommendations in this evaluation report rested with PRDI.

PAYAP UNIVERSITY