

Cover Sheet DCS 300-9/66 Community Development -Bridge Construction
-Santivanez CITE School Constr.
-Rehabilitation Center

Under the auspices of the La Paz municipal Community Action program, a badly needed bridge in the Cotahuma residential section is finding active support from both Civic Action segments of the Bolivian Army and residents of the area.

One side of the foundation for the proposed 2-lane bridge is finished and work is proceeding on the other half during week-end community work sessions. The area for the foundation was first cleaned and blocked off from the water flow by Bolivian soldiers. Laying of the actual foundation was accomplished by civilian residents of the area, supervised by Community Action (Accion Comunal) personnel and by US Army SP/7 Alfredo Valdez, 3rd Civil Affairs Detachment, Fort Clayton, Canal Zone.

Accion Comunal is a regional institution whose work is limited to the urban and suburban areas of La Paz. It was begun in May of 1964 as a municipal department with the specific function of coordinating community organizations, neighborhood councils, etc in self-help programs in such areas as community hygiene, housing and other construction, community facilities, and public parks and recreation areas. *The staff of 10 is headed by -*
Accion Comunal

To date, ~~the program~~ is in the midst of ten specific projects, one of which is the bridge ~~at~~ in Cotahuma, a suburban area of La Paz. Specific support, other than coordination and initiation of projects, is in the areas of tools, necessary machinery, and financing. Financing is on a participating basis with as much as 60% of the funds coming from the Alliance for Progress ~~or~~
~~the~~ *similar agencies.* All thoroughly planned projects are subject to the approval of the Alcalde, or mayor, and approved projects are carried out preferably on Sundays or holidays. Volunteer workers are often brought out to work by installing a loudspeaker system in the project area and calling for community support.

The advantages of community improvement projects being carried out in this manner is that it takes advantage of community resources and of individual initiative. Combined with the technical assistance available from the Accion Comunal staff, Accion Comunal affords a conscientious study of community problems and democratic participation towards their solution. These problems are much the same as faced by any major city of rapid growth such as La Paz, whether from rural migration to the city or from growth of the population within the city. A side effect of the program is that it is gradually eliminating the dependency on the authorities to become aware of a problem and to come up with the necessary funds and manpower.

Another important aspect of the work done by Accion Comunal is that it organizes suburban communities of the city to have a mayor and a kind of community council. In this manner, any time the residents of the community need a project initiated, or the city needs assistance from the residents for some other project, the residents of the community have a spokesman immediately available.

Another important aspect ~~is~~ of community development is that of school construction, an activity to which the men of the Centro de Instruccion de Tropas Especiales (Instruction Center for Special Troops) in Cochabamba give much of their attention.

One of the projects they are now engaged in is the addition of two rooms to a school they built recently in Santivanez, Bolivia.

under the Civic Action program

Built originally for 30 to 35 students in the town of 2500, the school soon found itself helplessly overcrowded with 320 students. For this reason, funds originally set aside for another small school were diverted for the two additional rooms. The cost of \$1500 for materials is being borne by Alliance for Progress and covers cement, lumber, roofing tin, blackboards, etc.

The Bolivian Special Troops, from the 180-man Military Assistance Program supported company of airborne soldiers, furnish technical assistance in the form of stone masons, etc. Local community residents furnish the site, *adobe* blocks, and manual labor.

~~While under construction, these schools of which~~ The Santivanez school is one of four ~~are~~ either finished or under construction this year in the Cochabamba 7th Army Division area. It is a Type A school, a classification which indicates that it has a boys and girls toilet and a room for the teacher in addition to the regular classroom. Since 1963, 9 Type A and 8 Type B (without separate room for teacher) ~~are~~ built in ~~in~~ have either been planned or built by the Army working with the USARMIS group in Cochabamba. Aside from the Army's ~~work~~ 7th Division work on school construction, the Bolivian Air Force Detachment has built four and the NCO academy students 3 under Civic Action since 1963.

While under construction, the Special Troops projects are inspected

by the company's airborne advisor, Captain James K. Evetts, Jr, USARSED, USMILGP to Bolivia in company with CITE Commander LtCol Miguel Ibanez Roca. These inspections occur ~~midway through construction~~ while construction is underway and after the school is ready for occupancy.

While the Officers and EM of USMILGP to Bolivia have been concerned with Civic Action projects, ~~Community development~~ from road and bridge ~~construction~~ to ~~military~~ school construction, their wives have not been idle.ⁱⁿ

Though no official funds are involved, and no reports written ~~for~~ on volunteer progress made, their/work is nevertheless of social importance.

This volunteer work at the La Paz Rehabilitation Center for Bolivian Physically Handicapped Children takes many forms. Once a month, the USMILGP wives bake cakes and help furnish ~~fig~~ gifts for a sort of community birthday party at the Center. In this manner, those children who have had a birthday in the past month celebrate together. At other times, the wives stage various sales to help raise funds for the Center. The contributions are may be small in terms of time and money, but/large in terms of satisfaction gained from helping the children, often abandoned because of their handicaps, Hand in hand with this is the fact that the children themselves gain a healthier outlook on life, learn basic scholastic skills and often a trade, and grow up able to help themselves and sometimes others with similar defects.

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A case in point is Jimmy Paz, nephew of former Bolivian President Victor Paz Estenssoro. When he first came to the home some time ago, he was totally immobile. Now he walks with the aid of braces made at the home...and he returns often to entertain the ~~is~~ other children with songs and guitar music. Floreal Gaston, who now makes the braces and other mobility aids, is a victim himself of a legg-crippling disease.

The La Paz Rehabilitation Center is under the direction of Mrs Kenneth B. Watson, a multi-lingual native of the French Riviera whose interest in

rehabilitation work began some 15 years ago in a La Paz TB hospital.

At that time (and in some cases, today) men, women, and children suffering from all manners of diseases were indiscriminately huddled together in barn-like structures. Bone patients mixed, and shared accomodations, with Koch's bacillus lung victims, progressive cases of Pott's disease, etc.

With the idea of removing the children from such an environment, Mrs Wasson opened a small home. At first, no thought was given to rehabilitation, but contact with Dr. Howard A. Rusk of the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of New York University and discovery of a boy born without arms or legs gave impetus to her projectx so that today bone TB deformed victims have been replaced with children crippled by congenital deformities, ploiomeylitis, accidents, and so forth...and the whole aim is rehabilitation.

In 1960, Mrs Wasson decided that local services for physical medicine and rehabilitation were necessary. Prior to that time, serious cases had been helped in Brazilian hospitals.

Raising funds among friends, Mrs Wasson built the first unit which is used for vocational training. Here there are looms, a carpentry shop, book-binding equipment, and the brace-shop whose equipment was given by the World Rehabilitation Fund.

Two years ago, the physical medicine unit was inaugurated. Here treatment is given out-patients in addition to the 31 children living in the Center. For in-patients, preference is given to rural victims as in most cases La Paz residents can be treated as out-patients. *They receive ~*

All services at the Home are free. Financial aid comes from such workers as the UBMILGP wives and the Christian Children's Fund of Richmond, Virginia.

Other help comes from the American Women's Club of La Paz and members of the American community. And to insure continuity of her work, Mrs Wasson is in the process of establishing an endowment fund and a board of trustees for the Center.

often

The Center, with help from the ~~XXKAR~~ USMILGP wives, has also been successful in placing a number of the children in American homes. The 6-year old most recent was Javier who attended his last community birthday party and then left for his new life as Brodie Barber in Santa Monica, California.

staff - who pays

NOTE:

Mrs Wasson is a well-known personality in child welfare work. She presented a paper on "The Child Under Stress in a Changing World-Latin America" before the World Children's Day meeting of the International Union for Child Welfare. And in September 1966, she will present a paper entitled "Evaluation of Child Welfare-Latin America" before a World Seminar on Child Welfare in the Hague.