

Project Profile: SIAST – Panama Rural Extension Development

Project Name: Rural Extension Development		Country: Panama
Project Location Within Country: <i>Panama City and Rural Ngobe-Bugle Comarca (reserve)</i>		Professional Staff Provided:
Name of Client: Funder: Canadian International Development Agency Partners: City of Knowledge, Panama City		No. of Staff: 5 No. of Person Months: 20
START DATE: October 1, 2000	COMPLETION DATE: September 30, 2004	Approximate Value of Services: Cdn. \$533,414
Name of Associated Firm(s), if any: Canglobal Management Inc. Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)		No. of Person-Months of professional staff provided by Associated Firm(s): 10
Name of Staff involved and functions performed: Medhi Abdelwahab, ACCC Senior Project Officer – liaison with funding agency; monitoring, administration Elaine McNeil, Project Coordinator, SIAST: Project Management Sandra Bassendowski, Education Consultant SIAST: Adult Education Trainer; manual development Sarah Minty, Crafts Educator, SIAST: development of Craft Marketing Training Manual; training needs assessment Tara Weisgerber, Small Business/Marketing Consultant: development of marketing and small business manual; needs assessment Larry Grant, Office Education/Small Business consultant, SIAST: development of training manual, needs assessment Brenda Eriksen: Project Coordinator/Training consultant, Canglobal Management Inc: overall field management; training coordination, liaison with local groups Cam Rizos, Education Consultant, Canglobal Management, Inc. Liaison with other funding agencies; training consultant Dennis Esperance, Education Consultant, SIIT: liaison with aboriginal groups		
Detailed Narrative Description of Project and Services Provided: Project Goal: To support the sustainable economic and social development of both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities in Panama through an increased capacity to identify and address local human resource needs. Project Objectives: To support the development of a Rural Development Center within the City of Knowledge to meet the technical and pedagogic training needs of rural extension trainers and their client communities. Technical assistance and training activities were provided which included the following:		

- Liaison with Indigenous Council of Panama (COONAPIP) and Ngobe-Bugle Indigenous Council to review project parameters;
- Consultation with government and non-government agencies related to Indigenous Affairs to provide overview of project parameters and to seek out partnerships;
- Review of other aid projects involving indigenous peoples identifying factors for effectiveness and gaps and weaknesses;
- Rural needs assessment techniques developed using participatory methodology;
- Needs assessment conducted in Ngobe-Bugle Comarca (reserve) related to identified sectors for rural extension training: eco-tourism, small business and marketing; crafts production/marketing and organic agriculture;
- Training for indigenous project support personnel to assist with project implementation;
- In-Canada study tour for four indigenous leaders related to cultural and educational policies;
- Training in organic agricultural practices for agricultural trainer;
- Identification of gender expert within Ngobe community; development of gender sensitivity training materials for master trainers;
- Development of training manuals for rural extension workers: Adult Education Techniques; Gender Sensitivity; Organic Agriculture; Small business/marketing; Crafts Marketing;
- Trainer selection criteria developed, trainers selected (5; 2 female) and trained;
- Pilot community selection criteria developed, pilot communities selected;
- Pilot training courses offered in pilot communities using trained trainers;
- Liaison with various government departments and agencies related to various programs for indigenous peoples;
- Rural Development Office at City of Knowledge houses project and staff;
- Development of funding arrangements with other government agencies to continue the work that was started with this project within the Ngobe-Bugle Comarca;

Results

1. Extension workers are able to systematically assess rural needs
2. Extension workers improve technical and teaching skills
3. Canadian and overseas faculty, students and community with an increased awareness of development issues including gender and environmental issues affecting the Ngobe-Bugle
4. Improved capacity of relevant government and non-government institutions to cooperate effectively to address rural indigenous community needs
5. Greater international cooperation among rural training institutions and communities
6. Greater access to multi-lateral funding for implementing rural development programs
7. Rural communities with greater access to relevant non-formal training for improvement of economic and social conditions
8. Reduction of poverty through increased farm income and increased access to off-farm rural employment and self-employment
9. Increased ability to organize rural communities – particularly for women- for economic and social development

