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DAVIS - MANPOWER PLANNING FOR
TRANSMIGRATION, AUG 28 '78



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Indonesia Transmigration Sector Review Files - Gloria Davis - Manpower
Planning for Transmigration Communities

August 28, 1978

DRAFT: MEMO ON MANPOWER PLANNING IN TRANSMIGRATION COMMUNITIES

From: Gloria Davis
Anthropologist AEP

The following is an outline of a paper to be written in more detail in Washington. Not all of the statistics are available at this time, but I feel that the conclusions are sufficiently important that I would like to discuss them prior to my departure from Indonesia on September 2.

Several lines of argument appear to be converging in our recent research on transmigration. Let me summarize the background material first.

1. Way Abung

Way Abung is of interest because it is the largest of the Repelita I settlements (12,000 families) and because it was designated as an area for rehabilitation under TRANS I. Both official opinion and our own surveys indicate that spontaneous migrants in Way Abung appear to be more successful (in terms of land opened, income and possessions) than regular government migrants. Common sense explanations hold that this is because spontaneous migrants are more motivated and industrious than those who arrive on regular programs. Our statistics indicate, however, that in addition to enthusiasm spontaneous migrants have significantly more adult labor available per family. There appear to be two reasons for this:

a. the household heads are older (and there are therefore more adult children);

b. the households are not necessarily restricted to the nuclear family./1

After the initial settlement period, however, spontaneous growth in Way Abung has been limited both by the absence of off-farm employment and by the fact that no further land is available for homesteading.

2. Baturaja

Baturaja is the community begun under a bank financed loan in 1976. It is interesting to us because it indicates quite a different pattern of development when wage labor is introduced into the picture. Baturaja Unit I, settled in late 1976, has 400 families. These families have attracted 440 new migrants in the first 18 months./2 This in-migration has been facilitated by wage work in road and housing construction and employment with PNP X which is block-planting migrant rubber. It may also be fostered by the efforts of transmigration authorities to prevent household heads from working off-farm. In this situation households recruit labor from Java and a symbiotic relationship is established in which the farm family provides food, housing, and emotional support in return for a small but "secure" cash flow into the household.

/1 Hameed's report "The Transmigrant Economy of Way Abung" gives a complete breakdown of the population in 1974, shortly after arrival. This should enable us to determine whether these families had more labor upon arrival or whether the extra labor has been attracted since settlement.

/2 A recheck in July (initial survey April 1978) indicated that this number may have been swelled by as much as 50% after the second wet season harvest.

As labor opportunities move from south to north in Baturaja, however, many laborers would like to settle in the vicinity of their families and friends rather than return home or move on. But so far this has been impossible. All opened spaces are settled by government sponsored migrants moved directly from Java and there is, as yet, no provision for integrating spontaneous migrants into these communities. Under these circumstances we have met migrants in Baturaja who were returning to Java to register to return to Baturaja./3

It is interesting that the migrants in Baturaja II may be outmaneuvering the rules. A preliminary survey indicates nearly 3 laborers per family in Unit II as compared to two laborers in Unit I. Since this is higher than in any other government sponsored program, one is left to conclude that the migrants already know that labor opportunities are available and are including extra laborers within their ranks. This is speculative and subject to further study.

3. Rimbobujang

How critical are land shortages in transmigrant communities? A survey of Rimbobujang which is probably one of the most remote and allegedly inhospitable settlements in Sumatra provides some indication.

The first group of 500 families was settled in Rimbobujang between December and May 1975/76. Among these were nearly 100 Social Welfare migrants (largely unemployed non-farmers). When their subsistence package ended, 78 of these families left. (There has been no appreciable decline in the rest of the population). Within the next few months these 78 houses and lots were allocated to approximately 50 spontaneous families who were already on site and to 28 youngsters who were or intended to be married./4 According to the head of Unit I there are now "tens" of additional families in RB I who have no hope of getting their own land as the government continues to fill one unit after another with migrants brought directly from Java. If we could generalize from the RB I figures we would have to assume that as much as 20% of the Rimbobujang population is "land short" a mere 18 months after the first migrants have arrived.

Clearly then there is some "floating" labor available in all these transmigrant communities which is available either to supplement on-farm work or complement it with wage labor; but the question is how much. Between August 18-25, 1978 a team from PTP VI worked with me to complete a manpower survey to determine whether adequate labor was available in Rimbobujang should the government decide to provide 2 ha of block-planted rubber/family. The data are only now being analyzed but the conflicts in labor allocation are already perfectly clear:

1. The migrants have been given large amounts of land (5 ha) of which about 2½ ha per family (Units I-V) have been felled and planted.
2. In the past this land has only been burned and dibbled (i.e. seeds are placed in holes in untilled ground). This year for the first time, however, alangalang is present in Unit I and after this season it is likely that Rimbobujang farmers, like Baturaja farmers, will have to till the soil to control alangalang.

/3 Migrants are reluctant to do this as they have no assurance that they will be sent to Baturaja rather than some place else.

/4 Once again the spontaneous migrants are reported to be doing better than the regular migrants, whether they have more labor available is not yet clear.

3. There is virtually no market for agricultural products of any kind in Rimbobujang./⁵ Under these circumstances families are seriously pressed to find a way of acquiring petty cash.
4. The transmigration Department officially discourages off-farm employment fearing that the land will not be properly opened and cultivated/⁶
5. The rapid growth of the area requires a paid labor force at this time.
6. Planting smallholder rubber while maintaining food crops on the large amount of land already opened will require increasing amounts of land in the future.

I find it ironic that the above statements are construed as a problem rather than an opportunity. The positive side of the picture is as follows:

1. The fact that there is at present no market for agricultural surpluses is not particularly serious, from the point of view of the migrants, if they have access to off-farm labor for cash.
2. Javanese farmers are well aware of their commitment to their land. If extra laborers become available the household head almost invariably remains on the land while the extra laborers have the status of boarders.
3. ___% of migrants claimed to know families who wanted to move to Rimbobujang, of these ___% were apparently willing to move on their own initiative if land or labor were available in the settlement.
4. The advantages of spontaneous migrants seem apparent to most of us, they provide a market for migrant surplus, they provide a ready supply of labor, they are generally quite motivated, they have a preexisting support system, and if they don't like it they can go home.

There is a tension of course, most spontaneous migrants want land, yet every land migrant is labor short. Under these circumstances, both fairness to the migrants and access to labor requires a consistent manpower policy which is carefully considered and implemented as soon as possible. I have taken the liberty of summarizing these arguments prior to assembling the evidence because I believe that the need for a consistent manpower policy has already become critical.

/⁵ Virtually the only things which can be sold in Rimbobujang are chilies and bananas, and as the migrants point out, the novelty of bananas is rapidly wearing out.

/⁶ Concessions are everywhere evident as in Unit VI where household heads rotate employment on the IPB seed farm. Each family gets 7 days of labor per month.

I speak only for myself when I suggest that the following issues should be considered:

Rapid economic development and differentiation should be encouraged

To this end transmigration sites should be viewed as development centers rather than simple agricultural settlements.

- A. Wage employment should be used to attract labor for
 - 1. road construction
 - 2. the construction of houses, community buildings, walls, etc.
 - 3. land clearing and block-planting rubber
- B. Small industries should be planned for transmigration sites. For example
 - 1. The tools to be given to transmigrants;
 - 2. roof tiles and bricks for construction;
 - 3. printed materials;
 - 4. seedlings and other planting materials;
 - 5. processing facilities;
 - 6. small industries utilizing female labor; should all be planned into the sites.
- C. Major employment opportunities should be planned for before the project begins.
 - 1. Nucleus Estates
 - 2. Large processing plants

To meet acute labor shortages in rapidly growing and diversifying communities

- A. Migrants should be encouraged to bring adult laborers with them.
- B. Spontaneous migration should be encouraged.
 - 1. Non-agricultural migrants could be encouraged by reserving 100 1/4 ha houselots near the center of each village.
 - 2. Labor shortages could be temporarily alleviated by guaranteeing land to migrants who had worked in the community for one year. Migrants could register on site with the understanding that if they remain a year they could settle in the next available site.
 - a) This year lead would be sufficient to plan settlement targets
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 - 3. Land should be reserved for inevitable growth
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