
AGRICULTURAL TRAINING OF MANOBO BOYS.

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The Manobos in their primitive state were a very simple people who lived in isolated groups between which blood feuds were common, and who looked upon the "Bagani," a man who had eight or more killings to his credit, as a headman to whom the greatest respect was due. They knew little about the value of coins and were an easy prey to those traders who ventured among them. Often they were cheated of half their money by the simple process of making change.

Their agricultural pursuits were the most primitive, it being their custom to select a site for their farms on the edge of the forest and to cut down the trees. Without further clearing, they planted such crops as camotes and corn. This land was used for one or two crops, or until the grass sprang up and choked the crops, when it was abandoned and a new clearing was made. The chief aim in founding schools among these people has been to induce them to establish homes in or near the settlements, to demonstrate to them the possibility of permanent farms, and to give them an elementary academic education which will fit them to compete with their neighbors in trade and social activities.

The first schools among the Manobo people, since American occupation, were established in 1903. Very little was done toward extending the work until about 1905, when several new schools were opened. These have been increased in number until at present there are 17 settlement farm schools and one agricultural school, where a total of 1,223 Manobo children receive instruction in agriculture. Funds have been made available for the opening of at least six new schools during the year 1916-17. This will add over 300 to the number of children already receiving instruction.

At first many difficulties were encountered, among which were the superstitions of the Manobo people, and the trouble in securing teachers who would remain at the isolated stations. A young man from Manila was sent to Bunagit, where one of the most prosperous schools is now located. After about two days' service, having witnessed a "diwata," a dance following the death of a Manobo, he left the settlement and returned to Manila

thankful to escape with his life. Even now, teachers from outside the Province of Agusan have fears until they learn that they are as safe among the Manobos as among their own people. Health conditions in the beginning were poor. On account of the dense vegetation surrounding the settlements, malaria was prevalent.

Till 1909 Visayan was taught in most of the Manobo schools, the idea being to prepare the people to deal with the Visayan traders who visited the settlements. In 1909 English was introduced in all schools, and a better class of teachers was secured.



Grade 1 boys raising corn at a settlement farm school, San Vicente, Agusan.

No industrial work of any type was attempted until 1911, when gardening on a small scale was introduced. This was enlarged upon in 1912, when the present system of school farms was established. The Manobos did not take kindly to the work at first, and they constantly brought up the fact that former teachers did not require the children to work. When clearings were made, people refused to send their children to a school where a "baliti" tree had been cut down, as they believed that the "busao," an evil spirit supposed to make his home in the baliti, would take revenge on the school.

Practically all school sites were dense forest which required a great deal of hard work to clear, and progress was slow. Since 1912 the work has been pushed forward steadily, clearings have

been enlarged, and a gradual change in the sentiment of the people has taken place. At present all schools have from one to six hectares under cultivation, and new land is rapidly being cleared in order to enlarge the farms.

The plan followed in these settlement farm schools is to devote one half of the day to farm work, and the other half to academic work. The schools continue in session throughout the entire year, the pupils being given their vacation by grades. Thus the farming continues without interruption. Teachers desiring vacation are relieved by others until their return to duty. In connection with these settlement farm schools there is also an agricultural school for Manobo boys maintained at Bunauan about 150 miles up the Agusan River.

Several of the boys who completed the work in the Bunauan Agricultural School have established permanent farms. They now have several thousand abacá plants about ready to produce. Others have taken up the work of trading among their own people, the result being that the Manobos are more honestly dealt with.

The boys from the settlement schools are helping in the handling of the products from the farms of their parents, and in securing better returns in trade for those products. The value of their schooling is recognized by the Manobo people, and the children are consulted in practically all commercial dealings of their parents. When the people bring a boat load of products to Butuan for sale or trade, they often bring along one of the more advanced pupils of their school to assist them.

The distribution of seeds and plants by the schools, and the growing of new food crops have greatly improved the diet of the Manobos. The rotation of crops, although not yet understood by the people, is being gradually introduced among them. The chief value in their opinion lies in checking the grass and weeds by keeping the ground covered with crops suitable to the season. In a few settlements, community farms modeled after those at the schools are being successfully maintained by the people. In the establishment of farms, the forest and dense vegetation about the settlements is being cleared away. There is a consequent decrease in malaria.

Work animals together with modern plows and cultivators have been introduced by the schools in a number of the settlements, and the boys are being taught to plow. This will have a far-reaching effect, for as the people clear their land they will realize their need for the work animals, and they will secure them, together with modern implements.

Steps are being taken to enlarge all school farms to 16 hectares. This will give plenty of room for the planting of permanent crops like cacao, coconuts, and hemp.

The popularity of the schools is on the increase throughout the upper Agusan valley. This is shown by the numerous requests received from the various settlements for the opening of new schools, and by the willingness of the people to give all possible aid in the construction of buildings and in clearing new sites.

SCHOOL CREDIT FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT.

Formerly credits were exclusively based on work done in school during school hours, or on work assigned for preparation at home. There has been a gradual departure from this practice, the most recent being that of giving credit to pupils for work done at home for the good of the household. In the Philippine public schools, this innovation is claiming attention, especially in the case of industrial activities.

Since present-day education aims to make home better through the influence of the schools, this new policy is in keeping with the trend of educational evolution. The school seeks to establish a closer relationship between itself and the home. Improvement in the home indirectly promotes the efficiency of the school by directly influencing the individuals who go to school.

The credit plan for home work places the school in a position further to demonstrate its practical value to the community. In a bulletin on "Education for the Home," issued by the United States Bureau of Education, Dr. B. R. Andrews says: "The child is school minded. For this reason the child can be reached through the school. The school can help the home by reënforcing the natural interest of the child in the home, by imparting knowledge necessary in home activities, and by affording some practice in them." (J. M.)

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"Work, in every hour, paid or unpaid; see only that thou work, and thou canst not escape the reward; whether thy work be fine or coarse, planting corn or writing epics, so only it be honest work, done to thine own approbation, it shall earn a reward to the senses as well as to the thought."—Emerson.

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"Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not."—Huxley.