

Appendix 5

Report on a Practical Course in the Medical Department of LIDEP

Our Two Weeks' Stay at Bumbuli MPNRU

During the few days spent at Bumbuli a lot of accomplishment has been made to add to our former knowledge. Things like the procedure of the clinics, the surveys, the laboratory etc. were introduced generally.

MPNRU is a German society which was originally started by a German Scientist called Max Planck. Its branch has settled in Bumbuli area its main being to raise the nutritional standard in the country and also prevent diseases in children especially. To accomplish this the society has formed many parts such as the clinics, the surveys, labs for analysis of food and other specimen and rehabilitation centre.

The survey group seems to be the most important part of the unit because firstly it must have been the first step taken in order to get the proper place to establish the unit, and is also probably the most important at present. The results of the survey detect where the greatest help is needed. To get the proper places, specimens such as those of stool, urine and blood, are collected in several rural areas and analysed in the lab. When the places have been found it has to be decided whether clinics should be set up or not, and if so, the proper materials such as medicines, staff, transport and things like "unga" which can encourage people to attend are collected. In these clinics children are registered (with their ages etc.) and thoroughly examined. The examination includes accurate weighing and clinical examination. From the results of the examination children are treated medically and if underweight the mothers are given a highly nutritious food with which to feed the infants as an example of the type of food which should be fed to the children. Later or if possible before doing anything, the mothers are collected and given the necessary health education on certain headings.

At first, as might be expected, very few attended the clinics but those few had spread the news to many others so that in about two months time a heavy population of mothers (about 200) were attending the clinics. Clinics also increased till they now amount

paid daily, the cultivation season, misunderstanding of the aim of the clinics, ignorance etc. H.E. is also given but due to the language used and ignorance again it becomes hard for them all to understand.

On the whole the organization has so far been successful because even local people themselves comment that since the unit started the clinics their children's health has greatly increased generally and the number of deaths is reduced however, it might be relevant to change certain things in order to increase the capability of the unit and the number of people attending the clinics. Things like the way health education is given; actually, it might be better if a local person such as a teacher, a politician or any other respected person in an area could be chosen and taught the health education so that he/she may give it to the villagers who will probably understand and appreciate the instructions better than a foreigner. It would also be a good idea if the proper health education teacher for the proper people was chosen, e.g. a woman for women and a man for men. However, even though so far the health education teachers have not been in such particulars, the health education has been effective to some extent due to the attitude (hardworking) of the working staff in their work and towards the people.

Our appreciation on the way the people of MPNRU at Bumbuli welcome visitors is very great. Actually the knowledge that has been gained during the two weeks is all too great to be put wholly on paper. It is not to be forgotten that the family study for which we were assigned secondarily would have been a failure had it not been for the great help of the people. Indeed we are very grateful, and should it be possible in future for M.A. students to be assigned to this unit again, we should be glad to encourage them to come.

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