

THE VILLAGERS

VIDEO

Pounding millet-start on millet

25"

Riverside

1'17"

AUDIO

A hungry people is not a free people... and that means most of the world is not free because seven out of ten in the world are poor. But in the have-not nations, changes are taking place... changes that will force the land to give more to people and make life better for the VILLAGERS.

TITLES

To live off the land is to endure a way of life that is filled with problems... problems that add to the burden of being a new independent nation. The United Nations has given almost a half billion dollars to the agricultural development of new nations. But development is more than getting greater productivity from the land. It is improving the daily lives of all the people. Development is not a rapid process and it often goes against the traditional ways of doing things. But those ways must be taken into account if change is to occur.

In Senegal on the West Coast of Africa, the earth is baked by desert winds and the people are dependant on the water they get from the unpredictable floodings of the river.

If your fields are near the river, they are more fertile.

But you still must battle against weeds, insects and birds. Chemical pesticides are too expensive for Senegalese farmers. It is cheaper to hire human labor like Aloun Dy and his entire family to live on the land and patrol it twenty-four hours a day.

1'51"

Aloun Dy synch translation

"My family and I walk around the fields keeping the birds off the crops. We have to keep chasing them all day, even in the heat of the sun. I get no rest at all."

Peasant family

Even though Aloun Dy works at the most basic kind of farm labor for other farmers, he lives better than his family before him. His grandfather was a slave and they never owned any land.

Jewelry making

One tradition is fine handicrafts and the Senegales spend much time and money making their own gold jewelry which their wives and daughters show off. But the ways people have traditionally done things can be obstacles to progress.

3'05"

Goats

The more goats you have, the more important you are. It doesn't matter whether you get milk from them or use their hides...

what matters is how many you have. A man who has many goats is rich even though goats tear up the land.

If the village mosque is tall and splendid, it will be seen from far away and will bring reknown to all the village.

3'30"

Here people respect the wisdom of elders, who are their leaders. When the leaders examine proposals for change, they usually reject them because they believe it will lessen their authority.

But the government wants change for Senegal and it is cutting through barriers of resistance by sending out agents for change. Who respect people's traditions and stimulate action. People like M. Ange. He is a government officials, but even more important, he's a member of a rich local tribe and a tribal prince.

4'27"

Dispensary

Paul N'Diaya is another agent for change who works in the dispensary as the village medical assistant. He may succeed in his efforts despite the handicaps because he knows the local language and respects the customs.

4'52"

There's a message to get across; so once a week he visits the villager's homes, starting with the chief. Let your water pots dry in the sun after washing and let the river water settle before you drink it. Better still, strain the water through a cloth filter... especially if the children are going to drink it, for they are the most vulnerable.

Teacher with ruler in class

Here one out of every ten children die before they reach adolescence and those that do grow up get very little education. In this village only one of the 7 children go to the state school and most of these drop out by 11. The rest attend Moslem school where they study the Koran and learn to obey tradition.

6'29"

M. Ange with women

In this school there are only two girls. Education... in school or out... is the way villagers will realize that change is possible. M. Ange hopes to transform the influential women of the community into agents for change for women stand to gain the most.

7'3"

By attending courses away from the village, they learn new agricultural techniques and ways to improve life. There's a whole new way of looking at things, so the new village market has concrete floors that can be swept and kept clean. And a tin roof to keep the sun off the food so it will be cooler and fresher. This may not seem very big but it was a giant step forward because it was the first step that worked.

7:48"

Fatou in kitchen with fish

Fatou Bassi; one of the chief influential women has lit a small but growing flame of efforts. She gets the women together, talks about their problems, makes suggestions. And then she urges each woman to go back and work on her husband... to get him to go along with the new ideas.

8:35"

Vegetable garden

Getting a new community vegetable garden wasn't easy, but now the women are growing vegetables that no one here had ever seen before.

Wrestling

When the sun goes down and the cool breezes sweep in, the villagers go to watch the wrestling. Since most of the young men have

9'15"

Twilight

left town to look for work, youngsters just learning the sport, are the attraction.

Centuries old ways of doing things do give way to modern methods and ideas. Senegal's problem is to make the change of pace fast enough to bring benefits to her people.

Family ploughing

Senegal's slow march into the future contrasts with the more radical and sweeping changes planned for Peru. Of the 14 million people in Peru, half of them are Indians who were conquered by the Incas and the Spanish.

10'8"

For the last few centuries the Indians have been shackled to a system of working the land without owning it themselves, and they have been outside the mainstream of Peruvian life.

In order to have development, the Indians must own their own land and make a profit from it. They must have a greater stake in the society and must learn how to improve their own lives. These changes will effect farmers like Santiago Tueros who lives in the village of Chongos, high in the Andes Mountains.

10'38"

Breakfast

For Santiago family, this is both breakfast and lunch... weak hot chocolate with no milk and some bread. There'll be no other food until evening. It is hard to be a farmer here in the Sierra; poor land, little water and bad conditions for farming. There's hardly enough water to raise a few goats much less properly irrigate the fields. Santiago must wait for rain and if it doesn't rain, all the work is for nothing.

12'7"

Family ploughing

Everyone in the family works the five acres, but Santiago can't even be sure the land is his. There isn't a land registry yet to prove ownership. But when the government completes the land reform and gives out deeds, it will be a memorable time.
(start before chewing scene)

People chewing coca leaves

At 10,000 feet up, the air is so thin and cutting you can't work all the time. So people stop to chew coca leaves, a mild narcotic that helps them forget the cold and hunger.

12'48"

Some villagers are trying new ways. The village coop manager understands the problem of convincing farmers to join the cooperative.

Coop manager
synch

13'36"

"Yes, there is always opposition but it is not strong relatively . You see communal work is in our tradition. We work in the old ways of the Incas, the "uyaa" which means we help each other".

The coop for the region covering Chongos-Bajo supplies cheap fertilizers and insecticides. It also has a stock of farm equipment which members can rent cheaply.

Hauling a rope

Santiago's son, Hector, usually is in school but today there are no classes: all the school boys are helping to make bricks.

Bricks molds

The bricks themselves are solid proof that the coop works. The villagers got together to get money from the government to build a brick kiln. Now that the villagers need a dispensary, everyone pitches in to help even the village mayor.

Mayor synch
translation VO

14'46"

"We 're building a medical post. Although Chongos has one, it's run down. And it only has two rooms. This will have two consulting rooms, one for dental surgery.

Mrs Santiago
washes baby

But more than a dispensary is needed to bring good health to the people. They must learn about nutrition and also about proper sanitation. Officially all Peruvian children have to go to school, but no one knows how many children really do go.

School girls

In fact, historically, few Indian children could read and write. But the next generation will be able to.

(children in class)

Whips

Part of the way students learn is by getting involved in the social and economic life of the community. The word goes out about a meeting to explain the new laws on land reform. To whip up interest in the meeting, the new schoolmaster has gotten students to put on wolf masks -- symbolising the big landowner.

16'46"

Schoolmaster
synch VO translation

Before beginning this talk on agrarian reform, I must draw your attention to the absence of those persons who have the greatest obligation to our village. The village authorities are not present. It is at election time that they appear. That has been the old type of politics, You young people must put an end to this. We can not think of the freedom of man when we evade our own responsibilities. We cannot think of changing our own institutions when we are first to run and hide, ignoring the needs of the people. This is why I raise my voice in protest. This is the reality of our village. And this is the tragic reality of our villages.

Peruvian narrator

On all saints Day, homage is paid to the spirit of ancestors, but Santiago's children look to the future as much as some look to the past. His children look to their government and to themselves... and their own ability to make a better life.

18'31"

Volcano

For most villagers in Indonesia, life today is pretty good. The land is so rich that it will grow almost anything and yield three or four crops in one year.

19'40"

But in order to develop Indonesia's agricultural potential, a farmer must grow more than just enough for his family.

Siswarmato in field

Siswarmato owns four fields and people consider him a rich man. He can afford to use fertilizer and does, but it doesn't pay for him to grow a lot of rice because the market is unstable and he has no place to store the grain until he can get a good price.

Well with children

Siswarmato believes his children have no future on the land, so he wants them to move to the city. He doesn't realize that cities are overcrowded and that there's no work.

21'6"

Volcano and damage

It's predicted that Indonesia's population will double by the end of the century.

The piece of land Siswarmato and his fellow villagers have chosen to live on is in the area of an active volcano on the island of Java.

21'45"

Siswarmato synch

When lava rushed out of Mt Merapi, it destroyed the village of Binangun and all its inhabitants. Rebuilding the village is a community project, because there's just not enough money for the government to help.

My name is Siswarmato and I am a farmer of this village. People wonder why we choose to live so near to the volcano. We stay here because the lava makes the land fertile and the closer we farm to the lava, the more fruitful our crops. When the volcano erupts, we may die in the fire so be it, but if we survive, our faith is renewed.

Medicine man

For those with bad dreams, pain, illness... there is the medicine man. Sastro is his name and the people believe strongly in him... With gentle massage, a sympathetic ear and healthful herbs, Sastro gains his patient's confidence. He is also a farmer. Sastro now uses fertilizers and pesticides only in the dark of night so that his neighbors who think fertilizer is an evil spirit won't see him.

They think that when his rice grows high and full, the spirit of the fertilizer has stolen the good out of their land and put it in his.

23'30"

Demonstration field
and rice harvest

French agricultural experts came here to bring change and develop a demonstration project which shows people that they can have good crops; Instead of just coming in and superimposing their values on the community, they took the trouble to learn the Indonesian language and the customs of the area.

Music

They did more than just demonstrate how bigger and better crops could be grown. They also showed the village how a coop could get them a better, more stable, financial return for their labor.

24'26"

Indonesia narrator

Threshing machine

Now with a coop the grain is stored until the villagers can get a good price for it. By sharing the cost of a threshing machine, everyone in the village can use it... not just one wealthy individual.

21'15"

People getting paid

There's enough money in the coop to pay each farmer something as soon as the crop is in. And after the crop is finally marketed, everyone shares the profits.

This is a small and inexpensive project that works because people can see it benefits them directly.

Thresher

But it will be a long time before all farmers in Indonesia have the use of a thresher.

Fatou Bassi

Peruvian farmers

And a long time before Fatou Bassi can get the Senegalese villagers to add new foods to their diet. And a long time, too, before Peruvian farmers can be persuaded to join cooperatives.

Peruvians dancing

26'03"

But if new nations continue to strive for change that works, they and all who share this earth will reap the benefits.

Edited from Material

Directed by

- DERRICK KNIGHT
- BERNICE NASSAUER
- PETER NEAL

Written by

- NORMA DAVIDOFF

Narrator

- ATHMANI MAGOMA
- ALBERTO OLIVIO
- PETER THOMAS
- TATO SUTANTO

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