

## **SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN THE SERVICE OF IMPROVING LIVING STANDARDS**

### **The Valle del Yaqui Project**

Sergio Palleroni

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The Yaqui of the Valle del Yaqui (Valley of the Yaqui) in the Sonoran Desert, in the State of Sonora Mexico, are one of the more culturally isolated groups in all of Mexico. Living in the midst of one of the economic “boom” states of the country, and only a few hours drive from the US states of Arizona and California, their economic and social situation nonetheless has deteriorated as a consequence of the economic growth of the surrounding region. Deprived of their traditional hunter/gatherer migratory patterns by the growth of large scale agriculture for the US marketplace, the Yaqui Indians have, for the most part, seen their standard of living and their social situation dramatically deteriorate. In response, a highly innovative Sonora wide public / private initiative has emerged, that, though founded to provide appropriate housing to the Yaqui, is also addressing their economic and social situation. PROVAY, the Comité de Promoción Social del Valle del Yaqui (the Committee for the Promotion of the Social Development of the Valley of the Yaqui), has created a populist campaign of the Yaqui, and non-Yaqui population, with collaboration from business, industry, and social organizations working in the valley. Using models developed in Asia of community-based social banks, and some of the most innovative technologies currently being proposed for strawbale building, the project has been able to help the Yaqui build their own economic and social capacity while attracting significant international funding (e.g. Inter-American Bank) that is acting in service of the projects priorities. This paper will explore, from the perspective of the foundation and development work, the ways in which this model was implemented and has successfully allowed the Yaqui to maintain their cultural/social values while developing their capacity to survive in this region that is rapidly transforming economically and socially.

## **PRACTICAL NPO ACTIVITIES CORRESPONDING TO THE SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN A SUBURBAN COMMUNITY**

Yuko Hamasaki

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The fundamental factors for cultivating well-being in a changing suburban community will be discussed through NPO “Egao” (‘Egao’ means ‘a smiling face’ in Japanese) which was established in a typical residential town in Japan. Some proactive residents who have lived in this town since 1965 established the NPO Egao after continuous participatory activities to improve their community. An old terrace house that used to be used by small neighborhood shops was converted into an NPO office. The main functions are the private day service center for the elderly, the child support center with a library, and the culture center. The characteristic points are; 1) Informal support for the elderly to compensate for the lack of institutional public services for the elderly who wish to live at home. NPO Egao supports the caregivers as well as the elderly through counseling, and offers opportunities for children or spouses to accompany their elderly family members. 2) A well-coordinated network with Takurosho (a community-based multi-functional facility for people with dementia) helps to provide effective care for the first stage of dementia. 3) Recently, there are increasing cases in which old parents who have lived alone in rural areas are invited to live in their child’s home, or nearby. However, many of these newcomers experience transfer-shock. In these cases, NPO Egao functions as a mediator to introduce them to new friends in the community. 4) The library provides lending services and a reading class for small children and lectures for parents. 5) NPO Egao is carrying out informal and flexible services that aim to accomplish community building instead of a conventional welfare service. Nowadays, social problems range from care for the elderly to family relations. The practical activities of NPO Egao and the findings from them present the potential for a community solution.