

Sosua, October 1952

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC., SOSUA

BRIEF INFORMATION

ON

SOSUA SETTLEMENT

(Province of Puerto Plata, República Dominicana)

Sosua settlement was founded in 1940 by the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC. (DORSA) with the purpose of settling refugees from Europe as farmers, artisans, etc. In the name of the Dominican Republic Generalísimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina offered this land as a present to Dorsa, and an agreement was signed between the Government of the Dominican Republic and Dorsa concerning the immigration and establishment of such refugees in Sosua.

Dorsa is financed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc. with head offices at 270 Madison Avenue, New York 16. Dorsa's offices are at 270 Madison Avenue, New York 16, and at Sosúa, Puerto Plata, República Dominicana.

I. THE AREA OF SOSUA

Sosua Settlement is situated on the north coast of Santo Domingo. It comprises an area of 8,952.33 ha. 2/3 of which are now under cultivation and are used mainly as pastures. The rest consists of swamp and mostly rocky forest, part of which serves as windbreak and therefore has to be left in its present condition.

II. VITAL STATISTICS

As per September 30, 1952 Sosua Settlement had a population of 183 persons, namely:

Single men	31	persons
Single women	11	"
Married couples	100	
Children up to 16 years:		
boys	30	
girls	21	<u>51</u>
Total:		<u>183 persons</u>

Of the above 51 children 19 boys and 12 girls were born in Sosua.

171 persons of the above population are farmers and their families while the rest of them (12) are artisans and employees and their families.

The greater part of these persons was brought here from various countries in Europe while a small part of them were refugees from

Shanghai.

Since 1949 settlers have brought some of their relatives from Europe to Sosua, and Dorsa endeavours to reunite more and more settlers with their relatives scattered all over the world.

III. HOMESTEADS

With the assistance of Dorsa all persons fit for farming were established on homesteads. At present 61 homesteader families live on their respective farms which were originally equipped as follows:

- 1. Land:** Each homesteader receives 30 ha. of land, 2 ha. of which are arable, while the rest is used for pastures.
 - 2. Buildings:** Every homesteader receives a house constructed of wood, and consisting of 2 rooms, kitchen, shower, and porch; one cowbarn; one shed; and one pigsty.
 - 3. Fences:** All the land is fenced in with barbed wire. Fences subdivide each farm into 3 cow pastures and 2 pastures for the calves.
 - 4. Water Supply:** Dorsa constructed two main water supply systems which connect almost all homesteads in Sosua. 90% of the homesteads receive their water from these water systems, while the others are supplied with water pumped from wells by either electric motors or windmills. The water is distributed to the house and to all pastures.
 - 5. Livestock:** Each homesteader receives 10 cows, 1 additional cow for his wife, and 2 more cows for each child. He furthermore receives 1 horse, 1 mule, and a loan for purchasing pigs.
- Homesteaders established since January 1, 1950 receive on loan two additional cows for each member of the family. These cows are loaned for a period of 5 years.
- 6. Electricity:** All homestead houses, as well as some of the pumps, are connected with the Sosua electric distribution system.
 - 7. Investment for, and repayment of, a Sosua homestead:** The total investment for the first 57 homesteads amounted to \$6,000 to \$7,000 each. Homesteads established after the war called for an investment of \$10,000 each. In spite of this, the debts of each of the first 57 homesteaders were fixed at a sum of about \$4,000 while the other homesteaders owe Dorsa \$6,000. This debt, plus 2% interest are being repaid in monthly installments of \$10 which include repayments on interest.
 - 8. Number of homesteads:** Until now 61 homesteads were assigned to individual settlers. 22 farms are used as communal pastures, and 11 for the grazing of Dorsa cattle.
 - 9. Agricultural products of Sosua:** Sosua's staple products are milk and meat which are processed into butter and cheese, and sausages and ham, respectively. These products are sold all over the Dominican Republic, but mainly in Ciudad Trujillo.

Furthermore the farmers grow corn, yucca, sweet potatoes, bananas, platanos, etc. and different varieties of vegetables such as tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, cucumber, onions, green pepper, etc.

IV. SOSUA COOPERATIVES

While the land was assigned to individual settlers and the farms are managed independently by their respective owners, the products are processed cooperatively. All homesteaders are shareholders in these cooperatives. Each homesteader owns one share of every cooperative. In a yearly General Meeting the shareholders elect a Board of Directores who manage the business of the cooperatives for one business year. All members of the Board of Directors are Sosua settlers. The following Cooperatives were established in Sosua:

1. C.I.L.C.A. (Dairy Cooperative):

Every homesteaders owns one share of this cooperative. Cilca was founded in 1941, was managed and subventioned by Dorsa for the first years, and became independent in 1944. In 1949 the Board of Directores decided that the constantly rising milk production called for an expansion and it was resolved to erect a new and bigger factory with modern equipment. This factory was inaugurated in 1951.

Cilca's turnover amounted to \$275,000 in 1951. The continually rising milk production, improvement of Sosua's livestock, and the efficient management of Cilca give good hope for a further increase of the output in 1952.

Cilca butter is considered the best in this country, and the production of cheese makes good progress. In 1950 and 1951 Cilca was awarded the Gold Medal for its products by the Feria Provincial of Puerto Plata and by a public poll taken by the newspaper "La Nación", Cilca butter was acclaimed "Best In The Country."

The transportation of all Sosua products is managed by Cilca. One Cilca truck collects the milk from the individual homesteads and brings it to the factory, and another Cilca truck transports the processed products to the markets in the cities of the Dominican Republic.

Cilca also maintains a repair shop which services its own cars and those owned privately.

2. Cooperativa Ganadera (Meat Cooperative):

This cooperative was founded in 1945 for the purpose of slaughtering animals and processing their meat. After having overcome many initial difficulties, this cooperative has now very good chances for a profitable business year. Its output amounting to \$200,400 in 1951, as compared to 164,400 in 1950, will be increased still further in 1952. Ganadera's sausages, cured meats, ham, etc. are excellent and are marketed at an ever-increasing rate in Ciudad Trujillo and other towns of this country. In 1950 Ganadera received a Gold Medal for its products at the Feria Provincial of Puerto Plata.

3. Colmado Cooperative (General Store):

The Comado Cooperative was founded in 1945. It buys settlers' products (vegetables, etc.) and sells everything necessary for farm and hous hold. Business at the Colmado is farily good; its turnover in 1951 amounted to \$ 117,700.

4. Caja Cooperativa de Préstamos y Ahorros (Loan Cooperative):

This Cooperative was founded in December 1946 with the purpose of granting long and short-term loans for constructive purposes to settlers and Sosua Cooperatives. Apart from this, the Loan Cooperative handles most of the money transactions of the Sosua Settlement, and a considerable number of settlers deposit their savings with this Cooperative.

5. Sosua Hotel Corporation

Sosua is one of the most beautiful spots of the Dominican Republic. Its beach is unique in its beauty and attracts quite a number of tourists each year. A few years ago a small hotel, "Garden City", was built which enjoys a very good reputation in this country.

In addition to the hotel the Hotel Corporation owns the Sosua restaurant "Oasis" which is being leased to one of the Sosua settlers.

V. COMMUNAL SERVICES

Most of the communal services of this settlement were transferred from Dorsá to the Sosua Council, whose members are elected in general elections by all Sosuans over 21 years of age. The Sosua Council receives a certain subsidy from Dorsá, but the management of its institutions and departments are left to its own discretion. Each department charges fees for any services rendered.

In accordance with a decision taken in January 1949, the Sosua Council manages and maintains the following communal services:

1. Electricity:

Sosua owns an electric distribution system of about 30 km of primary and secondary lines. Furthermore Sosua has a 7 KW auxiliary plant for emergency cases. All houses and factories in Sosua as well as some of the pumps are connected to the electric distribution system.

2. Medical Service:

Staffed by one physician and three nurses who are working part-time, the Sosua Hospital treated in 1951 a monthly average of 117 settlers and 137 Dominicans in its out-patient clinic.

The hospital has a capacity of 16 beds; it has a special room for patients with contagious diseases, and a maternity ward.

In 1951 four children were born in the Sosua Hospital. Only 3 new cases of malaria were treated, while 4 relapses were recorded.

The schoolchildren are examined regularly. Pregnant women receive systematic prenatal care. All settlers are vaccinated against typhoid and other infectious diseases. As a prophylactic measure all children are vaccinated against smallpox, diphtheria, typhoid, and whooping cough.

In general the health of the Sosua population, and particularly that of the children has been excellent.

The Medical Service continually controls sanitary conditions at the Sosua slaughterhouse, the dairy and meat plants, and the Colmado. Furthermore the water is examined regularly.

3. Sanitation and Mosquito Control:

During the first few years many malaria cases were recorded in Sosua. Continual spraying with Paris Green, DDT, BHC, and Chlordane as well as strictest controls contributed to a great extent to the prevention of malaria in this region. Today malaria is almost extinct in Sosua. The constant decrease of new malaria cases is proof of the efficient work of this department.

4. School and Kindergarten:

24 settlers' children and 14 Dominican children attend the Sosua School "Cristobal Colón" which employs 4 teachers. The school is directed in accordance with the Government's regulations for public schools. Its official language is Spanish. The children receive instructions in all the usual subjects, in addition to which they have classes in English and Hebrew. The pupils pass their examinations before the Government School Inspector of Puerto Plata.

The Kindergarten is attended by 13 settlers' children who are in the care of 1 Kindergarten nurse. The Kindergarten is equipped with all the necessary schooling and playing material.

All Dominican as well as Jewish holidays are celebrated in the school.

The children are brought to and from the school by a bus which is also used for the transportation of the adults.

5. Veterinary Service:

One of the Sosua settlers was trained as a veterinary and now takes care of the treatment of the entire Sosua livestock. The latest methods for the treatment of animals are applied with good results.

6. Slaughterhouse:

Up-keep and management of the slaughterhouse are in the hands of the Sosua Council.

7. Library and Reading Room:

The Sosua library has about 3,000 books in different languages (Spanish, English, German, French and Hebrew). In the reading room a considerable number of magazines and newspapers in English, Spanish, and German are available.

Besides this Sosua has a big collection of records. Thanks to the generosity of good friends of this settlement, Sosua received a shipment of new, excellent records and an automatic record player which enable us to arrange a variety of concerts of good music. This promotion of the cultural life of the settlement is deeply appreciated by the settlers.

8. Recreation:

With the help of Dorsa it was possible to arrange two concerts in Sosua during 1952. The first was given by the flutist Manuel Pla Cocco and the pianist Donald Palewonsky of Puerto Plata, and the second by Miss L. Palewonsky, an excellent pianist from Puerto Plata.

Sosua's Movie Theater gives 3 performances weekly. Its manager tries to bring the latest American, English and Mexican pictures to Sosua. Performances are well attended.

Dorsa still maintains the following communal services:

a) Water Supply:

Sosua has three sources for its water supply, namely

the Batey water supply system;
the Choco water supply system;
water pumped to farms from wells
drilled at various homesteads.

The Batey water supply system is supplied with water from the spring of the Sosua river which is brought to Sosua-Batey and part of the homesteads by a distribution system of about 8 km mainline and approximately 20 km secondary distribution lines.

The Choco water supply system obtains water from the spring of the Catalina river, is pumped to a reinforced concrete water reservoir of 60,000 gal. capacity, and from there it is distributed to the homesteads and other pastures situated in that area.

The rest of the homesteads are supplied with water from wells drilled at various suitable sites. From these wells the water is pumped into concrete tanks by either electric motors or windmills, and from there it is distributed to the homesteads (houses and pastures).

b) Guard and Fire Service:

Sosua has its own private police station (Guardia Campestre) which is fully cooperating with the military post stationed at Sosua.

The Sosua fire brigade was established in accordance with the recommendations of a Government expert for fire control. Fire extinguishers and other necessary equipment are distributed all over the settlement.

VI. PRIVATE ENTERPRISES

1. Haberdashery:

Besides selling the usual articles, this shop also manufactures shirts, suits, and dresses. The business is considered as good.

2. Artisans:

Sosua has a cobbler, a plumber, and a carpenter who take care of all the necessary repairs of their trades.

VII. RELIGIOUS LIFE

Most of the Sosua settlers are of Jewish faith. Sosua has a synagogue where services are held every Friday and Saturday, as well as on all Jewish holidays. The settlement observes all Jewish holidays either by special festive celebrations or by simple ceremonies commemorating the occasion.

The religious education of the children is under supervision of the Jewish Congregation. The children receive instructions regular-

ly in Hebrew and Jewish history.

Discrimination based on racial or religious prejudices is virtually unknown in the Dominican Republic.

VIII. RELATIONS WITH THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT.

Relations with the Dominican Government are excellent. At all times the Dominican authorities showed greatest understanding for Sosua's problems, and assisted in every possible way in the development of this settlement.

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