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END OF PROJECT REPORT  
PROGRAM TO DEVELOP TECHNICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN  
LATIN AMERICA

Project Purpose: To contribute to the development of information systems in Latin America.

Strategy: (1) To train and motivate a group of key individuals to become the "prime movers" for the establishment and utilization of such systems. (2) To provide technical training to the managers and operators of information centers.

Duration: September 1970 - August 1972.

Methodology:

(1) During 1970 a technical study was organized to evaluate existing information resources in Latin America. This mission, which was composed of seven international experts, visited eight countries: Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico. Its objective was to gather information, to identify appropriate individuals to participate in the training program and to establish the basic elements of the program based on the real needs of the countries. In addition, the study

mission identified subject areas to be discussed during the seminar. (2) Battelle Columbus Laboratories of Columbus, Ohio, was contracted by the Regional Program for Scientific and Technologic Development to design and conduct a series of seminars.

(3) Following the seminar for policy makers of the Andean Pact nations, a second mission was sent to Colombia and Peru for further consideration of the existing situation and of the outlook for implementation of national and regional information systems and offering technical assistance.

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Activities:

(1) Seminars for Policy Makers/Prime Movers.

Four seminars were held in 1971 with a total participation of 63 persons. These seminars were related directly to training activities for technical personnel. The following countries and regional/subregional groups took part:

- a. Brazil, Argentina, Mexico.
- b. Andean Pact Countries, Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty for Central American Economic Integration, Junta of the Cartagena Agreement, and Venezuela.
- c. Central American Countries, Paraguay and Uruguay.
- d. General meeting for all of the above participants.

(2) Technical Training Seminars.

Two seminars were conducted in 1971 for high level technicians and managers of information centers. They were designed to complement the policy seminar series. 42 participants took part in this aspect of the program:

- a. Argentina, Brazil, Mexico.
- b. Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Financing: A special grant of \$300 000 from the United States was utilized as follows:

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| a. International Survey Mission  | \$27 000          |
| b. Contracted services (planning and conducting seminars), Battelle Columbus Laboratories. | \$129 836         |
| c. Technical assistance missions, staff support and other operational expenses             | \$44 864          |
| d. Travel and per diem for 105 participants  | <u>\$98 300</u> 2 |

Results to date:

(1) Data gathered by the international survey mission, as well as making it possible to better design the seminars of this project, has proved extremely useful in structuring technical assistance in the field to be carried out under the regular activities of the Regional Program for Scientific and Technologic Development.

(2) The seminar discussions, which focused on the structure design and operation of national technical information systems, made possible a detailed analysis of various models. A methodology was defined to facilitate decision-making with respect to the most appropriate structure for a national scientific and technological information system, given the circumstances of the Latin America countries.

(3) As a direct or indirect consequence of the seminars, plans have been formulated to create national information systems in Bolivia, Colombia, Uruguay and Peru. In addition, information services for industries have been created in Mexico within the "Centro de Información y Documentación del Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología" and in Chile in the "Instituto Tecnológico de Chile". In Brazil the activities of the industrial information service of the "Instituto Nacional de Tecnología" have been strengthened and made a subsystem within the national information system.

(4) In addition to actions noted above, the growing interest of the countries of the region in the development of information systems infrastructure has been witnessed in the kinds of request

Scientific and Technological Development. A project for the development of information systems was initiated during the current fiscal year and will lend its assistance to five information centers. It is expected that there will be a significant increase in these activities in the 1974-76 biennium.

(5) This special grant program has represented a valuable contribution to the preparatory work for and implementation of the Pilot Project on Transfer of Technology, which is using some of the seminar participants and newly created information networks in testing the most suitable mechanisms to improve the acquisition of technology by the Latin American countries.

(6) Finally, it is worthwhile to mention an intangible, and therefore unmeasurable, result of the program - the contact established between technicians of the various countries, the knowledge that they aren't working in isolation, the creation of a regional community of specialists concerned with the problems of technical information systems.