

BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

1. CONTROL NUMBER
PN-AAH-653

2. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION (695)
JD10-0000-G355

3. TITLE AND SUBTITLE (240)

Planning in the Ministry of Education of El Salvador; organization and planning activity

4. PERSONAL AUTHORS (100)

Davis, Russell

5. CORPORATE AUTHORS (101)

Harvard Univ. Ctr. for Studies in Education and Development

6. DOCUMENT DATE (110)

1979

7. NUMBER OF PAGES (120)

42p.

8. ARC NUMBER (170)

ES379.1.D263

9. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION (130)

Harvard

10. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (500)

(In Harvard Institute for International Development, development discussion paper no. 70)

11. ABSTRACT (950)

12. DESCRIPTORS (920)

El Salvador
Case studies
Educational planning
Planning
Organizing

13. PROJECT NUMBER (150)

931008900

14. CONTRACT NO.(140)

AID/ta-C-1336

15. CONTRACT
TYPE (140)

16. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (160)

ES
379.1
D263

PN-177H-653

Development Discussion Papers



Harvard Institute
for International Development

H A R V A R D U N I V E R S I T Y

PLANNING IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

OF EL SALVADOR:

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING ACTIVITY

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DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION PAPER No. 70

June 1979

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Development Discussion Papers 59 through 73 were originally prepared for the United States Agency for International Development under a research contract with the Center for Studies in Education and Development of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The Harvard Institute for International Development collaborated with the Center in this project and the papers included in this series are a sample of the contributions by participants affiliated with HIID.

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This case describes the organization of a planning office and planning process in the Ministry of Education in El Salvador. Analysis is from the viewpoint of a North American advisor who is assisting in the organization of the planning office; the view is close-up and circumstantial, rather than abstract and analytic. There is analysis of different general approaches to educational planning, and analysis of the different perspectives on planning of Ministry officials. The case makes the point that planning is always going on, whether a planning office or formal process exist or not; and there are benefits and costs to formalizing planning. The main narrative ends with the organization of a planning office and the start of formal planning but there is a follow-up section on the functioning of the office in subsequent years. The setting is El Salvador, but many of the problems and situations are general, or at least widespread according the case writer's experience in other countries.

Background of the Narrative

The writer went to El Salvador to serve as an advisor in educational planning to the Ministry of Education. The month of August 1971 was spent studying educational planning activity in El Salvador and proposing alternatives for organizing this activity. In January of 1972 the advisor returned to study the newly created Office of Planning and Organizational Development (ODEPOR) in the Ministry of Education, and to assist in organizing for the forthcoming Five Year Plan for Education. In June of 1974 the advisor returned to El Salvador to study the two year performance of the office, to discuss accomplishments and organizational problems, if any, and to study the major activity of the office: a comprehensive analysis of the educational sector in El Salvador.

Between visits the advisor read reports on the organization and work of ODEPOR, corresponded with Ministry officials, and occasionally met with them. This narrative covers mainly the first working visit and events surrounding the organization of ODEPOR. It is based on unaided memory over a seven year span, memory aided by reports and cryptic notes, and memory reinforced by other participants' memory of the events recorded six or more years later.

Background of the Narrator

The writer, a Professor of Education and Development at Harvard University, had worked several years in educational planning in developing countries, including brief work periods in El Salvador, prior to the first visit in 1971. The writer would describe his approach to planning, in 1971 and presently, as Street Rational, rather than Straight Rational, meaning

that it is first necessary to find out what is going on, and in the terms of those it is going on for; that it is then necessary to discover if any of the goings-on are amenable to rational, read ordered, array and analysis; and lastly to apply rational analysis methods to that part of the action where makes sense, common and rational, to do so; and to fish around for ways to work with the "other" parts of the action; and to live and work with the inevitable contradictions that result. This approach, if it can be called one, is difficult to bottle for academic consumption, in lecture or book form, but it permits a lot of room for moving in the field.

Background to the Task

The advisor did not go to El Salvador to set up a planning office, and would not have accepted a task order to do so. The work order called for "examining current activity in planning," "study of the way educational planning is organized," "assessment of the need for educational planning;" and, as a fourth point, "determination of the feasibility of organizing, staffing, and supporting a formal planning activity in the Ministry of Education."

The task was so structured because the advisor's experience suggested that there would already be educational planning going on in El Salvador, and the formal organization of such an activity into a planning office is no more essential than the formal portrayal of planning activity in a document called "a plan."

Background on the Auspices

The auspices for the work were joint, but not equal; the more powerful was the Ministry of Education, personified by the Director of COPLACE, the Ministry office in charge of planning and implementing school facilities programs; less powerful was the USAID mission represented by the Chief Education Advisor.

The COPLACE Director initiated the request for a planning advisor (though the Education Advisor may have encouraged this), selected the planning advisor's resume from the group submitted by the contractor, briefed the advisor on the approach to the work and the results expected, controlled, but only partly because the advisor had been there before, access to information and people, but most importantly of all supported the advisor and mediated for him and for planning with the most powerful figure in the piece, the Minister of Education.

The AID Education Advisor also briefed the Planning Advisor on his expectations from the work, but left the approach and means open, reminded the Planning Advisor where the money had come from, asked to be kept informed particularly on any proposals that would require recruitment and funding of outside technical experts, and provided some useful background on Ministry people, including the Director of COPLACE.

The Minister, his presence felt rather than seen, his influence pervasive and his persona palpable, provided a counter auspice, used by the AID advisor and the Director to keep the planning advisor on his toes while at work and on the edge of his seat while at rest. Minister was said to be a very hard sell indeed on the planning route.

Both the AID advisor and the COPLACE director were strong, supportive but demanding of full disclosure, and too bright to be openly intrusive. They agreed on the need for planning, but not on many other things.

Background to Motivations Behind These Auspices

The AID Advisor

The AID advisor got a first briefing. He wanted a planning office and he wanted useful information available from such an office. His reasons were that AID had poured a lot of money into education, especially

for ITV and school facilities in support of reform, and there was a prospect of more money for more buildings and more and better programs. His "gut feeling" was that the investments were good, and the Salvadoreans working on the projects were good, but he couldn't show this with facts and information. Everyone in the Ministry who could do anything was doing too much and had no time for planning, assessment and information. The Minister had brought in a group of bright young men and given them full freedom to do, and little time to ponder on their doing, and typical was the bright, driving Director of COPLACE who was also won to the need for planning. The AID advisor seemed to want some Ministry office, some prime source, where he could go for general information and special study information, mainly systematic and mainly comprehensive and quantitative. Notes of the time, read: "there's no one there (Ministry) to go to, to talk to; everyone's too busy."

The COPLACE Director

The Director of COPLACE also wanted formal planning activity. The Reform had been running for almost four years; a lot had been done, with very little rationale beforehand, no time to consider alternatives, no general structure within which to consider them, no evaluation... Assessment of past activity and more coherent planning of future activity were necessary.

On the first day of work the advisor assessed the Director's motives for support of planning as several: a) he truly believed in the reforms and wanted them to last long enough to yield results; b) he was uneasy about some things done in haste; c) a change was coming in government in the next year and he wanted rationales developed to protect programs against new people who might sweep into office and change everything

out of motives -- here old notes show the phrases "personalismo," "egoismo" and "por motivos netamente politicos".

The advisor probed other reasons -- why should the planning be formal and organized into an office? Was it that formal planning would also be useful in providing a sounder basis for continuing or increased external assistance? The Director agreed that this was possible, but stated that this was more a prime concern of foreign agencies, particularly AID, and specifically the Education Advisor.

Why an organized planning office or cell? Was it possible that this cadre of technical people might survive the change and preserve a nucleus committed to the Reform? The Director made no direct answer, but his eyes moved.

A Recollection on the General Approach: Underlying Model

Later analysts have identified El Salvador as a counter example of rational planning, but the advisor, even allowing for his admitted bias, and the passage of time, remembers it otherwise. In the first meeting, the Director, then and subsequently the key man, thought of the planning advisor as a rational planner,¹ expected that he would have a systematic approach and in fact a model or schema of how he would structure the field of planning, cited other work (of the social sector planner in CONAPLAN)² as an example of systematic and comprehensive planning that he approved of and wished there had been more of, mentioned the need for an overall

¹ "Rational planning" may not always have been the term used, although the notes indicate that it was sometimes used, as were other terms such as "systems", "systematic", "objective", "comprehensive", "integral", and the terminology, e.g. "models", "projections", "alternatives", "input-output" and the rest of it...

² CONPLAN is the National Planning Office.

structure to assess progress and to plan ahead in a multi-year, system-wide perspective. In short, his model of planning was at least as "rational" as that of the advisor; and his awareness of how rarely reality aped a model of planning, rational or otherwise, was fully as acute.

Approach to the Task: The Process

In their discussion of how the work would be carried forward the Advisor emphasized process, the need for talking to officials in the Ministry to assess the analysis and planning already going on, and to learn how officials felt about planning. He also proposed to talk to people outside the Ministry, in the National Planning Office and the Census and Statistics Office, to assess planning relationships, planning use, and sources of information and assistance to support planning. Meanwhile he would hold open the model of how much more rational or systematic the planning should be, and above all how planning should be formally organized in an office.

The Director emphasized the need for the advisor to have a structured idea of what he thought planning was; otherwise everyone would say they were doing it and the game would be over. The Director did not think much planning was going on in the Ministry in any case.

The Advisor pointed to the activity schedules, project monitoring charts and the school location maps on the wall, and said that it looked like planning to him, and formal planning at that. There was some scattered planning the Director thought, but it wasn't comprehensive or tied together and it had little address to the goals of the Reform.

The Advisor said it might also be useful to review past experience

in formal planning, because there had been some planning and a Ministry planning office existed when he had visited El Salvador in the sixties. The Director said the review wouldn't take long. There had been some planning and a Ministry office, but the Minister had abolished it early in the Reform. After that educational planning had been done as part of social sector planning by a very competent planner in CONAPLAN, the National Planning Office. This planner had gone on to other things, and that was why the Ministry now needed a planning office of its own. There would be opposition, perhaps even indifference from the Minister, but he could be persuaded if the advisor did his work well.

Early on, the writer remembers it as the first interview but it may have been the second on the afternoon of the first day, the advisor suggested that if the problem were to get acceptance of planning and for the organization of it, the task might not so much call for the skills of a rational planner as for the skills of a specialist in organizational analysis and organizational behavior. The Director thought that both skills were required, rational planning so that the advisor had something to advocate, and organizational skills so that the advisor would know how to advocate it. (This topic was to rise again in discussing the qualifications of the first director of any planning office that might be established.) As an aside the Advisor asked what on his record had suggested organizational behavior skills. The Director said that the Minister had noticed: first, that the advisor had gotten into so many countries; second, that he had gotten out of so many; and third, that he sometimes went back to the same ones.

First Steps in the Work

These were the first steps in the work, taken the first day:

1. The Advisor requested a copy of the Ministry of Education Organization Chart, discussed a schedule of interviews with the Director, and the Director began to arrange interviews.

2. The Director briefed the Advisor on each office head he was to interview, speculated as to how much planning the man did and how much he might want.

3. The Director briefed the Advisor on the Minister, but this many faceted person required an almost continuous briefing; and on the last day the Director was still briefing the Advisor on the Minister, the most useful briefing form being illustrative anecdotes that were slowly acquiring the patina of legend. Example, told to the Advisor after he had been there and acquired some trust, "The Minister was driving by one of our volcanic lakes and suddenly exclaimed, 'I hate those things, those lakes there. They just lie there and do nothing. Never move. Give me rivers or the ocean.'"

4. The Director and the Advisor agreed on work guidelines, and these held for the duration of the arrangement:

- a. The Advisor was employed directly by the Ministry and responsible to them primarily and directly for his work.
- b. The Advisor was to finish the bulk of his work in El Salvador. All reports would be done in quick draft and in Spanish, fully discussed and, if need be, changed.
- c. If a formal report was required later for contract or AID purposes, it would be an English translation of the original Spanish reports agreed upon in El Salvador, and contain nothing new.
- d. A first interview with the Minister should take place at once and hopefully it would be no more than a "protocol" visit, but

the Advisor should be prepared to outline his whole approach and justify it under challenge, if challenge came.

- e. Inasmuch as the Advisor would have things outlined for the Minister anyway, there should be no problem in having a first draft report ready for group discussion by the end of the first week. By then the Advisor would have talked to most of the key people, and either he would feel comfortable with them as supporters, or have identified them as indifferent or opposed.
- f. Inasmuch as there was general agreement -- the Director and the Advisor were alone in the Director's office at the time -- that structured and formal planning was required, and an official organizational embodiment of this would be necessary, the Advisor should start thinking immediately about how to model the planning process and how to set up an office.

On that part of the street which the advisor had visited there was a demand for "rational" planning as a model, at least for providing the starting point; and both of the principal sponsors, the Director and the AID Advisor, wished planning to be based in a Ministry office. Though the criticism of rational planning had not become as modish as it presently is among the academic followers of fads and fashions, the early, seminal critiques of Lindbloom (1965 and 1968) on planning, Alexander (1964) on rational decision making, March and Simon (1959) on organizational dynamics, Wildavsky (1964) on budget and politics, and Hirschman (1963 and 1967) and Waterston (1965) on development and planning were known to the Advisor and discussed with the Director, but the rational model seemed to be what he wanted.

The First Meeting with the Minister

In later analysis of the El Salvador situation and in the recollections of some participants, including those of the Minister himself, the proposition was advanced that the Minister opposed planning, and particularly rational planning. This proposition rests partly on fact, partly on simplification, and partly on error. The true part may be inferred from the Minister's speech of welcome to the advisor, recollected as going something like this: "I don't know why you're here." There then followed a torrent of words, the gist of which was that the Minister did not know of any general evidence to demonstrate the worth of planning; that the Ministry had abolished it; but if the bright young men -- the Director was present and was one of this group -- thought there was anything to it, the Minister would at least listen.

It was then up to the advisor to answer. The advisor reviewed the sorry history of planning as imposed by the U.S., through the Alliance for Progress, on Latin America. This offering and the interspersed rejoinders of the Minister illustrate the later simplifications in the interpretation of the Minister's position. The Minister was not opposed to the theory and method of rational planning as much as he was opposed to having it imposed from outside by groups who did not know the reality of the country or have to live with the results, and who didn't practice what they preached in their own country. Planning was also thrust on countries where there were no trained planners but rather a group of "vivos" who picked up the foreign catch words, and who were in fact bureaucrats who got into offices, did nothing but maintain their little empires and retarded progress in so doing. The Director pointed out that this was not the case of the Planner at CONAPLAN, and the Minister agreed. This suggested to the Advisor, who had

read through the CONAPLAN work during lunch hour, that the Minister did not oppose attempts at rational and general planning. He opposed planning by people he did not respect for competence and disinterest, and who protected their jobs and failings within an official enclave in the Ministry. (Throughout there was much class flavor to appraisals of people, a point to be dealt with later.)

The ensuing dialogue suggests other simplifications of the Minister's position. The Minister did not so much oppose general planning, though he may have viewed it as harmless rather than helpful, but he was opposed to evaluation and social science research. As the Minister posed the argument, it was hard to handle. Evaluation-research in such countries was suspect because it had to compare something that now existed with the nothing that existed before. The study of alternatives was impossible unless the alternatives existed to be studied, but a poor country could not afford to play around with alternatives, but had to put the scant resources it had into doing something. If alternatives were posed in the abstract how could they be compared with the reality? The Advisor's murmur about "baseline and post measures," "comparative experience with alternatives" and "pilot projects" was blown away. "Baseline and post measures" was jargon not worthy of answer; comparative experience was the old foreign imposition game and illogical in something as particularly national as education; and pilot projects were a form of political naiveté, for either it was good or it wasn't, and if it was good you did as much as resources permitted, and no one would hold still for study of the matter. On the other hand, the Minister could see some use in general portrayal of the system, its goals and accomplish-

ments. Without such a systematic appraisal and analysis there was no way for the President (of El Salvador) to evaluate the stewardship of his Minister of Education. Without system-wide analysis and planning, the President could not know what the Minister was attempting in the Reform; nor could the "Primer Mandatario" be sure of how the national resources were being spent for the education of the people.

In summary, the Minister did not oppose rational planning or systems planning; and if he was suspicious of anything it was social, or pedagogical, research.

Initial Study of Planning in El Salvador

Using the Organization Chart furnished by the Director of COPLACE, the advisor began his assessment of planning activity in the Ministry of Education. The first interviews were with the Director General of Education, largely a protocol visit. The Director General of Administration was useful to provide access to his directorates; and the Director General of Culture, Youth and Sports was interviewed mainly because the hierarchy was arranged this way, and because the Director of COPLACE was interested in an appraisal of activity in this directorate general. (Later the COPLACE Director became Director General of Culture, Youth and Sports.)

In explaining the purpose of his visit to each office director, the Advisor stated that he was not necessarily an advocate of formal planning, nor did a formal organization of planning have to be concentrated in a single office. The advisor was certain that a good deal of planning was already going on in the Ministry, and he wished to hear about it, before recommending any changes. This was usually sufficient to stimulate the office head to talk. For the first fifteen minutes of the interview the advisor took no notes, but for the final thirty minutes, notes were taken, because, as the

advisor explained, the material was "simply too rich to rely on unaided memory".

Most of the time was spent in the directorates general of Education and Administration (see Exhibit 1); the directorates of Technical-Pedagogical Services, Basic Education and Adult Education; the directorate of Finance, directorate of Personnel, directorate of Maintenance and the department of Data Processing. In some directorates only the director was interviewed and in others, key staff, small groups, or the entire group participated. From these interviews the advisor's tentative conclusions, some of them wrong, were:

1. There was a great deal of planning already going on in the various offices. This was no surprise and merely confirmed what the advisor anticipated, and provided examples useful for illustrating that great interventionist wheeze: "You not only can get there from here, you're almost there."

2. The planning was of varying quality, some quite good, but it was unhitched at key spots, e.g., between the planning and capital budgeting of facilities and the planning for staffing, operating and maintaining the facilities; between these and the training and assignment of teachers; and between ITV and almost everything else. In fact, between and among most things.

3. There was little link between the Five Year Plan and the annual operating plan, such as it was, and between these things and the budget process, which was then changing to a program budget format under Ministry of Treasury auspices.

4. Everyone said a five year planning exercise was starting, but no one was coordinating the effort, although there was activity in the Department of Statistics.

5. A strong and capable man was in the Department of Statistics, seconded from the National Office of Census and Statistics, and at work gathering and marshalling basic system data. For the advisor this was a joyous find, because it gave him some place to work at technical tasks while nursing his anxiety about what to do. Displacement activity, if it were only that, has its merits.

6. There was very little communication generally in the Ministry and high anxiety about this. This was characterized as, "The Minister's manner of managing things, one-on-one (mano a mano)," and his custom of confiding mainly in a "small trusted circle." Apparently, there was no fear, though, because strangers, and some former "connections," spoke openly about it.

7. There was surprising support for comprehensive and more organized planning, much of it for the same reasons as the Director had advanced, but also among those not close to the throne there was the hope that it would open and broaden ("abrir" and "ampliar" were words used) general communications. More specifically, some wanted a "forum" where their views and those of others could be advanced. The advisor, no partisan of "class calculus," inferred a clear class split between lower middle class groups who had come up the education and bureaucracy ladder, and the upper class groups the Minister had brought in and trusted. This feeling was not personal in most cases, for the Director was generally trusted and even liked, and admired for his skill and energy... but he was young, U.S. educated, rich, and powerful within the Ministry because he had the Minister's ear...

8. The Advisor made some hasty and poor judgments of people and motives, some corrected early and some that took a year or more to correct. The Director of Technical-Pedagogical Services spoke as a strong advocate for systematic planning. Because his background was education-pedagogy and he was not a member of the in-group at that time, the Advisor mistrusted the supportive statements and underestimated the breadth and integrity of the man. The Director of Technical-Pedagogical services also recommended that the advisor contact the education advisor of the UNESCO mission, a man who had played a strong role in the Reform programs, and a man described by many as an "eminence grise" to the Minister. The Advisor also misjudged this man, "grey eminence" indeed, but a wise educator and strategist, and an honest supporter of planning.

Outside the Ministry

The advisor also interviewed the former member of CONAPLAN, who had developed the most recent five-year plan, and found that he was not sanguine about improving the rational basis for planning in El Salvador, and not very interested in describing his own experience or discussing some of the seeming anomalies in the past plan documents. He was supportive of trying to improve things "within the limits of rationality" which prevailed. The Advisor looked into CONAPLAN but found no locus of activity there, checked at Census and found not much available on detailed characteristics of the population, but the office had seconded a man to the Ministry of Education and would support the work in whatever way they could.

At this time trouble was brewing in the streets and focusing on the Ministry of Education where the teachers unions were protesting the salary policy that governed the implementation of a key feature of the educational

Reform. To get more coverage in rural areas, where population was sparse, the so called 6-3-3 system was implemented, where all 6 grades were offered (morning and afternoon session) in three classrooms by three teachers. Instead of a double salary for teaching two sessions, not double in time usually, the Ministry, most prominently the Minister, was proposing a "sobre-sueldo" of about twenty percent above base. The union and teachers were asking for double pay, although there may have been negotiation room between 20 and 100 percent, but the Minister adamantly opposed this. One reason for the Minister's adamancy may have been the Minister's imperfect view from a privileged class position of the economic impact on teachers then paid about \$160 a month in base salary, who were offered an increase of \$30 a month when they believed they were doing double duty in terms of productivity.

There were other reasons. The minister was a patriot, viewed his own service and that of his young men as a sacrifice and expected the same from teachers. The Minister admired the Japanese for their industriousness and discipline. He hoped that education would develop similar character traits among Salvadoreans. Teachers had to set an example through work.

Also, the 6-3-3 system was a centerpiece of the Reform. For the Minister and the UNESCO advisor it was the only way, given resource constraints, to serve poor and rural groups. The advisor proposed a study of the 6-3-3 arrangement against alternatives of 6-6-6 schools, nuclear schools, and team teaching arrangements. When the advisor questioned whether the three classroom construction module was the best base for expanding schools to cover basic schooling, the Minister rejected the question. The advisor opposed the 6-3-3 study as an example in his report, and this was probably a tactical mistake. (Later, a World Bank Mission raised the same question, but in a context of loan money.)

In general, outside there was trouble and, for some periods, the Ministry building was cut off and closed, and the advisor had to work nights and weekends in an Embassy office -- also attacked -- and outrun stones and pickets to get back into his hotel. Hence, the advisor was not unmindful of the fact that the Reform, admirable start though it was in a hard situation, had not solved all the social problems of El Salvador. The Minister finally faced down the strikers and in a manner of speaking "won the battle." But meanwhile the planning study went on.

First Exchange

When the Director of COPLACE called for a preliminary report, or first exchange, the advisor was unprepared. Either he had forgotten the agreement, hoped the Director had forgotten it, or was distracted by interviews and study of documents, or by the trouble in the streets. He had no prepared report for the first meeting of Ministry officials.

Consistent with an approach to planning of first finding out what was going on, the advisor opened by reporting that there was already a great deal of planning underway in the Ministry. This was no news and evoked no reaction. The advisor began describing the planning. Boredom. The officials, listening only to reports on their own planning because that was all that interested them, found nothing new in what they themselves had reported. Unvoiced reaction of the listeners: "Is this what we paid good money to this jodido to come all the way down here and tell us?" The advisor began to criticize the lack of linkage in the planning. Restiveness. It was too early for an outsider to criticize. The author described the main problem of planning to be one of process, a lack of communication among program heads. Unease. The observation was true, but the participants didn't want the topic brought up yet. First they wanted the model, structured approach, and technical patter -- the expert's thing -- just as the Director had said.

So the advisor provided a structure. He outlined ad lib and in algebra and Spanish on the blackboard the essentials of the model or schema shown in Exhibit 1. The schema, taken from the advisor's book on planning and based on a model later developed and implemented in Chile, depicted, in activity analysis linear programming format, an educational system on which there were demographic and social demands to educate a target number of children, economic demands to educate and train them for work, resource constraints for capital and current expenditures, and a black boxed process of input coefficients for instructional activity based on the prevailing educational technology. Two systems objectives might be to minimize the cost of education while staying within resource constraints or to maximize return on various levels and kinds.

The advisor then described the working of education as he saw it in El Salvador; that the reform primarily addressed social demand, less directly and over a longer time period economic demand; that there was limited manpower information available in any case; that the technological coefficients imperfectly reflected educational processes which had to be researched and studied; and that the model, imperfect though it was, provided a structure for outlining various planning tasks. The advisor discussed these tasks and the offices they concerned, and talked of alternative objectives for the system.

Having outlined the model, and concerned about its limitations and overly technocratic basis, the advisor began to point out flaws in the model, but he was stopped by the questions and the obvious interest the model stimulated among the participants. This was precisely what they had expected and apparently wanted of the advisor. Could he amplify the model and the discussion, put it on paper and discuss it at a second session? The Director thought the advisor should have the weekend to get the report draft ready,

and agreed that because no typist could work on Sunday, the following Tuesday would be a reasonable day for presentation and discussion. The advisor said he was concerned that the deadline didn't allow the participants much time to study the report; everyone laughed and the date was fixed.

Second Exchange

In the second exchange, before turning to the model, the advisor outlined the present process of planning and some alternative approaches to organizing for planning, this time using a set of copies of the Ministry Table of Organization. Exhibit 3 is a schematic of the present system of liaison between the Ministry of Education and CONAPLAN. Exhibit 1 showed the present status of dispersed planning in the Ministry and illustrated some of its weakness. As an alternative, an isolated office of planning in the Ministry was shown in Exhibit 4. Exhibit 5 showed straight coordination, and 6 the complexity of liaison with each office. Finally, an organization chart with no planning organization was shown. This chart was what the advisor wished to discuss -- what were various possibilities for organizing an office to get around the problems of dispersion, isolation, no power, too much power, too much expense and staff... An what form of organization would help the process of communication, keep it open, keep it continuous, and yet provide technical assistance for that part of planning that was technical and for which already overburdened ministry officials had little time?

The advisor then went back to the model of planning, discussed the education system as he saw it (almost wholly as Ministry officials had already described it, since the advisor knew little about it), and outlined some possible studies and promised to furnish some detailed designs for those studies the officials judged interesting.

The proposed studies that elicited interest were: 1) The relationship of the schools and work in El Salvador, and specifically study of non-formal education, and the diversified bachillerato program; 2) a study of the kind of adult education programs that the people wanted or needed; 3) a comprehensive study of rural education with analysis of specific alternatives to the 6-3-3 form, for example, nuclear schools... A proposed study of teacher training was rejected on the grounds that the Reform had solved the problem by consolidation, although the advisor raised the question of whether current output was close to what was needed for future projections of coverage. The Advisor then outlined ways of linking studies to the more general goals of the Five Year Plan. Time ran out and there was a proposal for a third meeting, with the Advisor to detail some of his study proposals.

The Third Meeting

In the third meeting, the advisor, now in possession of more information about education in El Salvador was able to detail more of the studies. A proposal to improve manpower planning was rejected on the grounds that it lay outside of Ministry of Education territory; a proposal for school achievement testing was put aside because some people were "thinking about it;" better school mapping was discussed, but the shortcomings of demographic statistics were recognized; a model for school enrollment projection stimulated some interest but there was less interest in investigating ways to improve the estimates of promotion, repetition and drop-out.

Interest was also expressed in carrying out organization and management studies in the Ministry: studying personnel, maintenance, transport, budgeting... A question arose as to what office might do the studies identified as interesting. This brought things back to organization again.

It was in the third meeting that the idea of organizing planning as a Ministry-wide committee with a technical secretariat came up for

discussion. This was the key organizational proposal but the advisor has no recollection of where it came from and how much he contributed to the suggestion. He at once entered it on the blank chart, and sketched in the three technical sections that would support the secretariat: (Exhibit 7)

1. A Planning section that would help with long-range (actually five year) plans, that would cover physical planning, fiscal planning and capital budgeting. The section would work with a Programming section to calibrate the annual operating plan and budget to the longer-range plans

2. A Programming and Applied Studies Section that would design and carry out (or contract) special studies, organizational and management studies being one of the first priorities. The program office would also do program analysis and evaluation. (Program monitoring and control became the central activity of the section later, but for obvious reasons, of anxiety about oversight, this feature was not discussed much in the early stages.)

3. A statistics and information section. The functions of this office were: to collect and analyze statistics to provide information to section heads; to organize other statistics (manpower and demography); to run projections and to furnish technical assistance on data processing and analysis. A second major set of functions was to handle public information, a task, if one looked at the streets, that was not performed by the Ministry. Many may have seen the importance of this, but few wanted to discuss it much. Another activity tossed in was the library and archives. Safe and useful to all.

The statistics section provoked the most immediate trouble, because it existed and was under the Directorate of Administration and represented real bodies that would have to be moved. It also represented a lot of posts, fairly low level in most cases, but jobs. The other sections represented

only jobs to "be created." These posts, as birds in no one's hand, did not excite great emotions. On the matter of the statistics and information section, the Advisor was adamant. It had to go in as an earnest of purpose. The rest of the office was pie in the sky. The Director saw this at once and supported the move strongly in the Ministry. When the time came, the Minister supported it, without any stress on the "Public Information" function, mainly because statistics was no big thing to him. There was also some chair shifting going on within the Ministry at the time, and this may have helped.

The Staffing

Interviews continued but the game was mainly over for that trip. A more polished version of the basic report, on the structuring of planning, the organization for planning, and proposed studies and procedures, was prepared, presented to the Minister and elicited no comment. The Director's main interest at this point was in the kind of man who might fill the job of "head of planning." He thought of the committee and the secretariat mainly as a transitional step to a "real" office of planning, but he agreed that it might be a necessary step.

The Director and the Advisor spent considerable time discussing the demands of the post, agreeing that strong background in human relations and organizational development was required, especially of the man who would first lead the office. A strong technical background would also be required if the man was to have respect among his technical support staff, and if he was to restore service for the other Ministry offices. The Director felt there was opposition crystalizing, although the Advisor did not confront any directly. The UNESCO advisor and the Director of Technical Pedagogical services also smelled opposition, or foot-dragging, but the Advisor suspected, wrongly it turned out, that this reflected their own feelings.

The Advisor and the COPLACE Director agreed that the crucial matter was the selection of the man who would lead planning, under whatever form it took. Perhaps it is the yield of hindsight, but the Advisor sensed, or perhaps has a vague memory, that the Director had a specific man in mind. A faithful portrait of the man, who did eventually head the office, evolved during the final days of discussion between the Director and the Advisor.

The Final Presentation

The Minister participated only sporadically in the final presentation. He was then harried by outside events. Other officials raised no open objections to the proposal. The essentials of the organizational features were that planning would be a responsibility of a Ministry-wide Committee of program operations chiefs. Planning was not to be left to planning technicians; but was a task responsibility of all offices. This--in theory--could minimize isolation, open communication, and promote planning under its two most important constraints, operational reality and human diversity. The Committee would be served by a technical secretariat, lead by a planner and staffed by technicians. This would--presumably--insure a technical product and service to operations chiefs. The head of planning, advised by Minister and office heads, would prepare the agenda for regular meetings of the Committee. Technical support would be furnished by the secretariat to the offices on a continuous basis. The secretariat would both initiate, and respond to, requests for special studies. (Exhibit 8)

Below the surface of the organizational and technical specifications for the office was the basic requirement that the first director of planning be skilled in communications and human relations in order to bring planning into the regular operations and social dynamics of the Ministry. (The importance of opening organizational participation below Ministry level received pious acknowledgement.)

The Minister was preoccupied, and his reaction to the proposal was enigmatic. The AID Education Advisor supported the draft report and the agreement that the final English report would simply be a translation from the Spanish draft in El Salvador. (Later the advisor found this difficult because he had some new ideas and had changed his mind on some points; but he suppressed any belated creativity, translated the report and honored the agreement.)

The AID Advisor requested only that the planning advisor write an additional section on any technical assistance requirements that might be called for, specifically the recruitment of foreign experts. With the job descriptions written, it was only necessary to attend the final reception for the Minister, hosted by the AID Advisor. The AID Advisor issued the only direct order he had issued to the planning advisor during his stay--show up at the reception a half hour early, and the uniform of the day was tie, coat, and matching trousers, preferably dark. The final reception would be important, the AID Advisor said. It was the last chance to sound out the Minister. The planning advisor, made restive by ties, suits and receptions, disagreed, but the AID Advisor was right.

Despedida

The Minister arrived late, and apparently fresh from some triumph. People rushed to shake his hand. (It is the writer's recollection that he had won agreement on the teacher salary matter, or the President had agreed to back him. In any case, trouble had quieted on the streets.) The advisor in due course was fetched around to greet the Minister. The Minister was affable and for the first time spoke in English to the advisor. He said something like, "You work hard, I'll say that for you. And you didn't try to cram something down my throat like that manpower man from Harvard.

But...the idea of the Committee will never work. Not in Latin America. Your idea about a prepared agenda is good, but no one will stick to it. It won't work."

The Director of COPLACE, standing directly behind the Advisor, whispered, also in English: "We got 'em. He's thinking of how it will work."

Epilogue I

The writer returned to El Salvador five months later. The Office of Planning and Organizational Development, called ODEPOR, had been created. A director had been named, and he fitted almost exactly the requirements outlined by the COPLACE Director and the Advisor. The Committee and Technical Secretariat notion had not been formally adopted but the spirit of the proposal had.¹ In his first outline of the organization, its founding principles, approach, and work, the Director of ODEPOR had strongly backed the holding of regular meetings of the operating heads of the Ministry for exchanging information and offering planning assistance. The new director had sent his first paper to the advisor for comment and criticism, and the advisor had little to add. In January the director invited the advisor back to look at the office and its work.

The advisor commented favorably on the organization of the office. Organizational matters were largely accomplished. The staffing was well underway, and the work begun. The major task for the advisor was to help the staff, mainly the head of the statistics section, to develop guidelines for the forthcoming Five Year Plan, assemble necessary statistics, and organize the planning activity.

The advisor made some criticisms. Capital development planning and operational planning were still unhitched, and budgeting and fiscal planning were still only dimly related. Communications were not all that much improved, but the Director was working on the problem in ad hoc but effective fashion. Not much was actually underway in evaluation and studies -- too many possibilities seemed important -- but there was an attempt to develop criteria and priorities for selecting studies. Planning to improve the fit between work and education was still weak, and no one, including the new director, favored improving manpower information and planning. But

¹The secretariat notion failed partly because it didn't fit into job titles and Table of Organization; and partly because it may have been a ploy all along.

the major point was that the office was accepted and most people inside and outside the Ministry thought it would last long enough to do something. The Director of COPLACE had now become a Sub Secretary in charge of Culture-Sports-Youth, and though he seemed to be urging ODEPOR to do more studies of cultural activity and non formal education, he was giving ODEPOR the strong support it needed.

Epilogue II

The writer returned to El Salvador two and a half years later, in June of 1974, this time at the invitation of the first director of ODEPOR who was now Sub Secretary of Culture, Youth and Sports. By now ODEPOR was an established entity; in fact, central in the Ministry of Education. A five year plan had been completed in mid-1972. The Sub-Secretary requested that the writer study and comment on the present structure, functioning, relationships, and special tasks of ODEPOR. In summary the writer's comments were:

1. ODEPOR was established, productive, generally approved and effective.
2. Long-range planning, the Five Year Plan, was far stronger than the annual operating plan which was disconnected from the longer range plan.
3. Cooperative working relationships between ODEPOR staff and ministry directorates seemed effective, and useful technical assistance was being provided by the planning staff.
4. Statistics had greatly expanded; still no public information; the archives and library were strong, but most of the activity was in data processing.
5. Programming was very large and the activity was very complicated and time consuming, and much more designed for project monitoring and control than development and innovation. Programming was

complicated, and the activity had divided and disaggregated programs so finely that it was difficult to keep track of them and almost impossible to get a general picture amidst the welter of detail. Programming was heavy on control, rather than design and development.

6. Costing and budgeting were still crude and scatter-shot.
7. Most of the evaluation and special study had now passed to one project, Sector Analysis, jointly sponsored with AID and heavily supported by AID. Many of the studies seemed useful, and in fact resembled studies that had been selected several years before. But there seemed almost too many of them, and the study schedule seemed ambitious for realization, and likely to drown the Ministry in data. (It did not do this, thanks largely to the hard work and effective cooperation between foreign advisors and Ministry planners.)
8. Not much preparation for the new five year plan cycle was underway and most of the planning section resources were absorbed in Sector Analysis. The writer wondered if the Ministry planners would be too busy with Sector Analysis to develop a new Five Year Plan. (Subsequently, this worry proved only partly justified, because the sector analysis studies formed a major component in the next five year plan, 1977-82.)
9. Finally, it was the writer's opinion, clearly not without bias, that despite the criticisms, the planning office in El Salvador, ODEPOR, was doing the highest quality work of any Ministry planning office known to him, and the work was affecting education and development more than in any other planning office elsewhere.

Closing Editorial

In El Salvador, creation of ODEPOR did contribute to improving educational planning. Improved planning has seemed to contribute to expansion and improvement of education, by maintaining the impetus of the Reform, and expanding and improving on it. A large number of initiatives that were only ideas, and sometimes words, in the early days of the Reform, had been planned, programmed and implemented. Though the advisor was never satisfied with the relevance of education to work in El Salvador, programs of accelerated studies and accreditation for workers, weekend schools, ITV enrichment, and work and production cum training centers were small, but alive. Outreach to rural areas was increasing, but the deficiencies in educational services, in fact all services to rural areas, still existed.

It is less clear that education contributed to economic and social development, although some evidence showed that it had. (in the combined studies of the Sector Analysis). That education could have contributed more to enhancing economic growth and promoting distribution and equity is surely true, but where is it not true? El Salvador is itself and no other place, and though it is no model of general prosperity and social justice, it is not clear just how much a more radically different educational development could have improved matters. Or for whom, and how many, and at what cost?

If education is affecting the larger social and economic conditions that afflict El Salvador, it is doing it only slowly, and indirectly. The cost of that approach is time and patience, and suffering. When it comes to change, the gun is quicker, and perhaps surer, although the direction of the change may not be. Change by the gun has costs, mostly for those not lucky enough to be advocates from long-distance. In between the gun and the book

there must be something that is safer than the gun and faster than the book, but those who have run field trials with both the gun and the book have not yet found an ideal and all-purpose implement for the hard places, El Salvador or elsewhere; and in any case the issue is usually settled, not by analysis and plans, but by events occurring in unfathomable and mixed states of nature that permit no calculus beforehand.

For the writer, education and reform, aided by planning, brought more and better education to more youngsters in El Salvador who would not otherwise have had the chance; and that in itself is a fine thing; but it's just the chance; and that is not everything.

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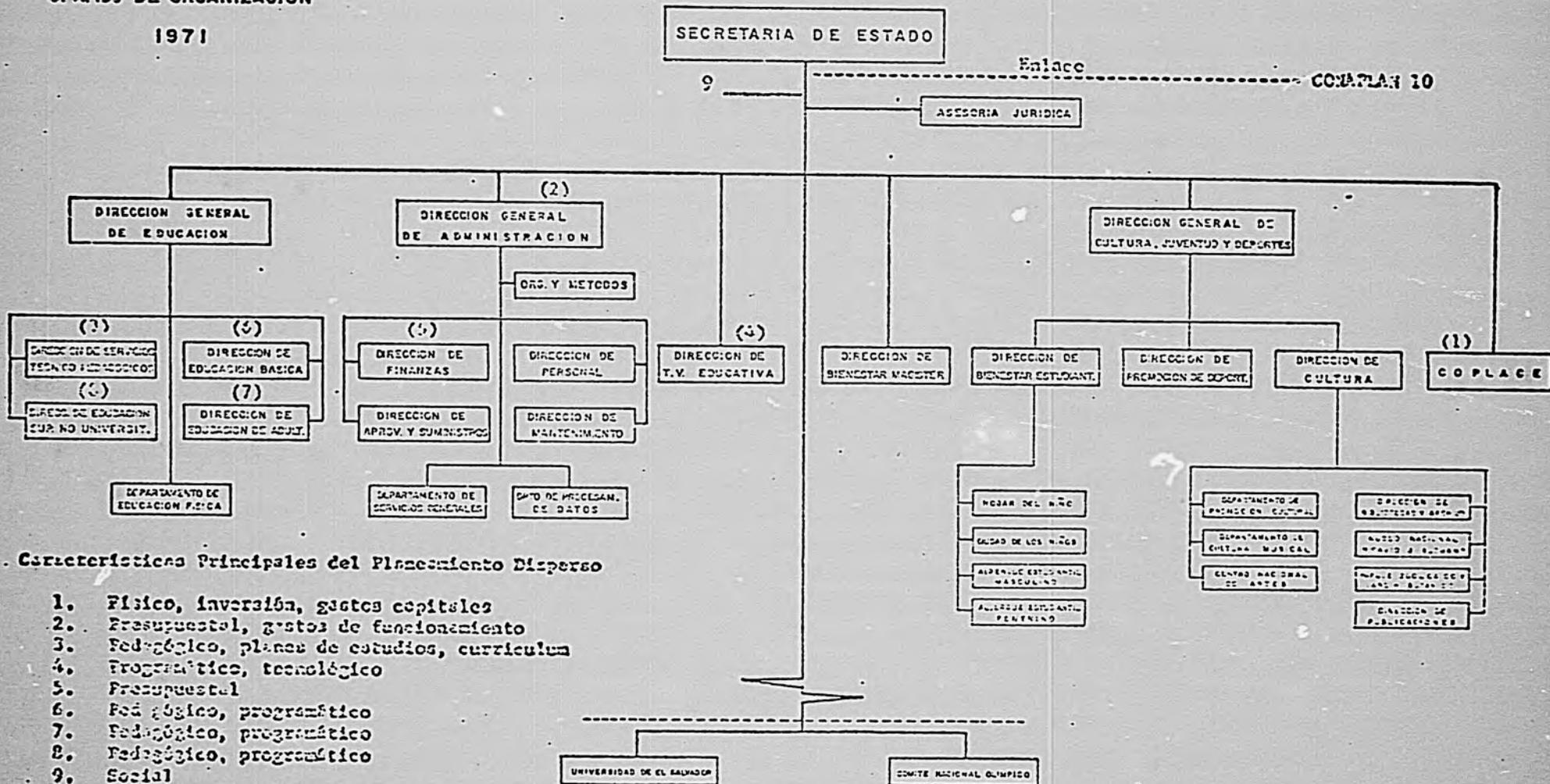
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EXHIBITS 1 - 8

EXHIBIT I

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACION
GRAFICO DE ORGANIZACION
1971

Alternativa 1
Situación Existente
Planesamiento Disperso



Características Principales del Planesamiento Disperso

1. Físico, inversión, gastos capitales
2. Presupuestal, gastos de funcionamiento
3. Pedagógico, planes de estudios, curriculum
4. Programático, tecnológico
5. Presupuestal
6. Pedagógico, programático
7. Pedagógico, programático
8. Pedagógico, programático
9. Social
10. Financiero, social, económico

EXHIBIT 2

Annex A

Schema of Educational Planning (Simplified and Abbreviated)

Content

Variables--Activities (under policy control)

X= Children in single age groups (to educate)
Z= Enrollment (by grade levels attained)

Coefficients

r= return on investment in human resources development
a= input per pupil, cost per pupil (operational costs)
d= investment costs, per pupil (capital costs)
F= coefficients of flow from age groups in school
P= coefficients of flow of enrollments through system to work force

Exogenous Conditions

L= Economic demand, necessity for workers trained to certain level of education (expressed by z)
S= Social Demand, necessity for training certain numbers of age groups which results in $f(S) = S$
B= Resources available for operating school system
I= Resources available for capital investment in system
t= Index of time, usually in single years

Result

C= Cost
R= Return

Simplified Schema

$$F x = f(S)$$

$$F x = Z$$

$$a_{11}z_1 + a_{12}z_2 + \dots + a_{1n}z_n \leq b_1$$

$$\leq b_2 \text{ etc.}$$

$$d_{11}z_1 + d_{12}z_2 + \dots + d_{1n}z_n \leq i_1$$

$$i_2 \text{ etc}$$

$$\therefore PZ = L$$

Two Planning Approaches

Objectives

Maximize $R = r_1z_1 + r_2z_2 + \dots$

Minimize $C = a_1z_1 + a_2z_2 + \dots + d_1z_1 + d_2z_2$

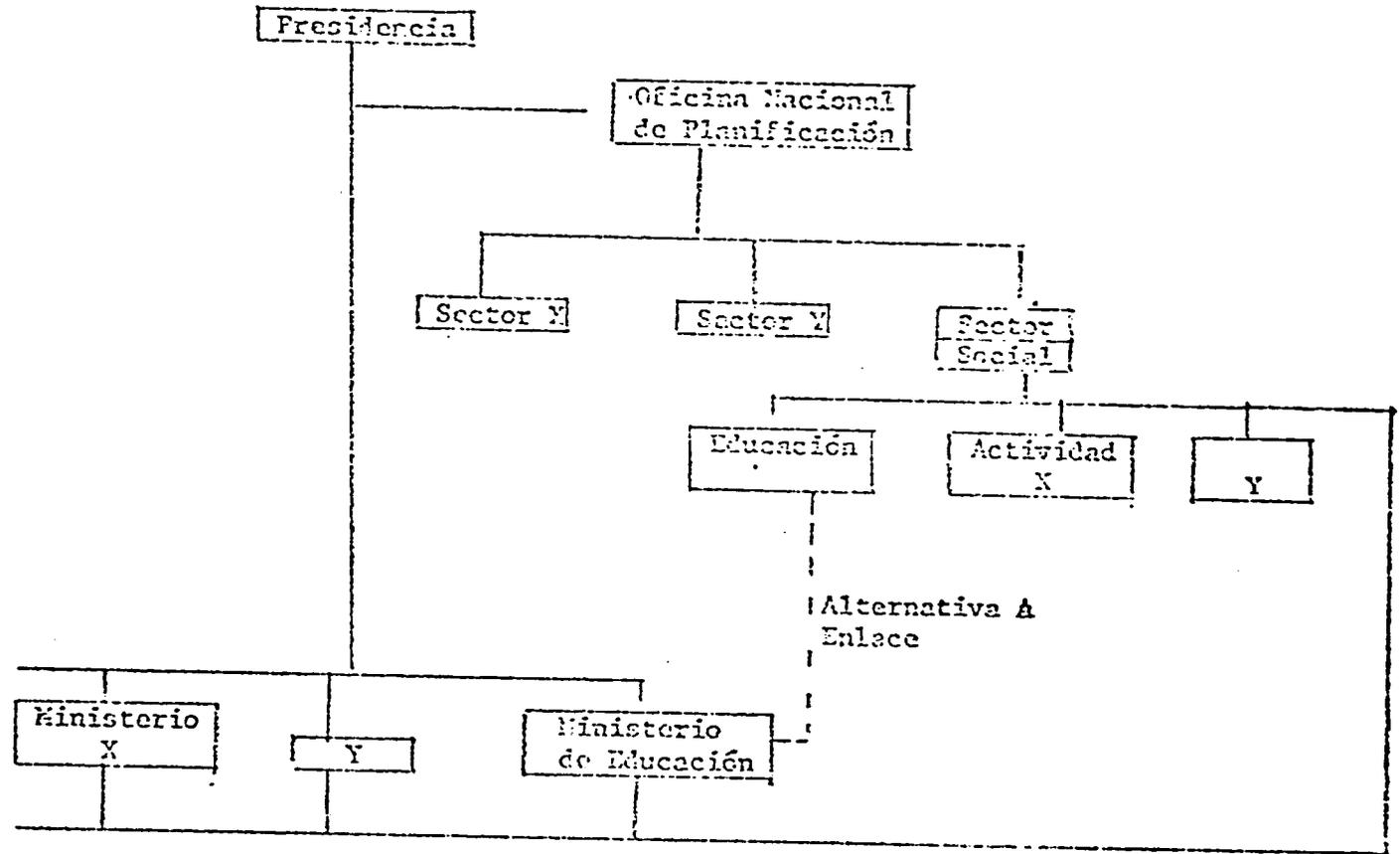
The tasks of planning:

1. Work to satisfy the goals expressed in $f(S)$ and L
2. Work within constraints imposed by B and I
3. Work within time constraints t
4. Analyzing the relationships implied by the coefficients that reflect the technology of education (a and d) is the heart of educational planning

The activities of planning consist in estimating (or using estimates provided) of the social and economic demand (which derived from the objectives of the system and the society), relating them with the characteristics of the educational system and satisfying the goals within the limits of the resources, within the given time period.

EXHIBIT 3

ESQUEMA DE ESTRUCTURAS ALTERNATIVAS



Alternativa B
Coordinación

Alternativa C
Control: no existe

EXHIBIT 4

Alternativo 2
Aislada

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACION
GRAFICO DE ORGANIZACION
1971

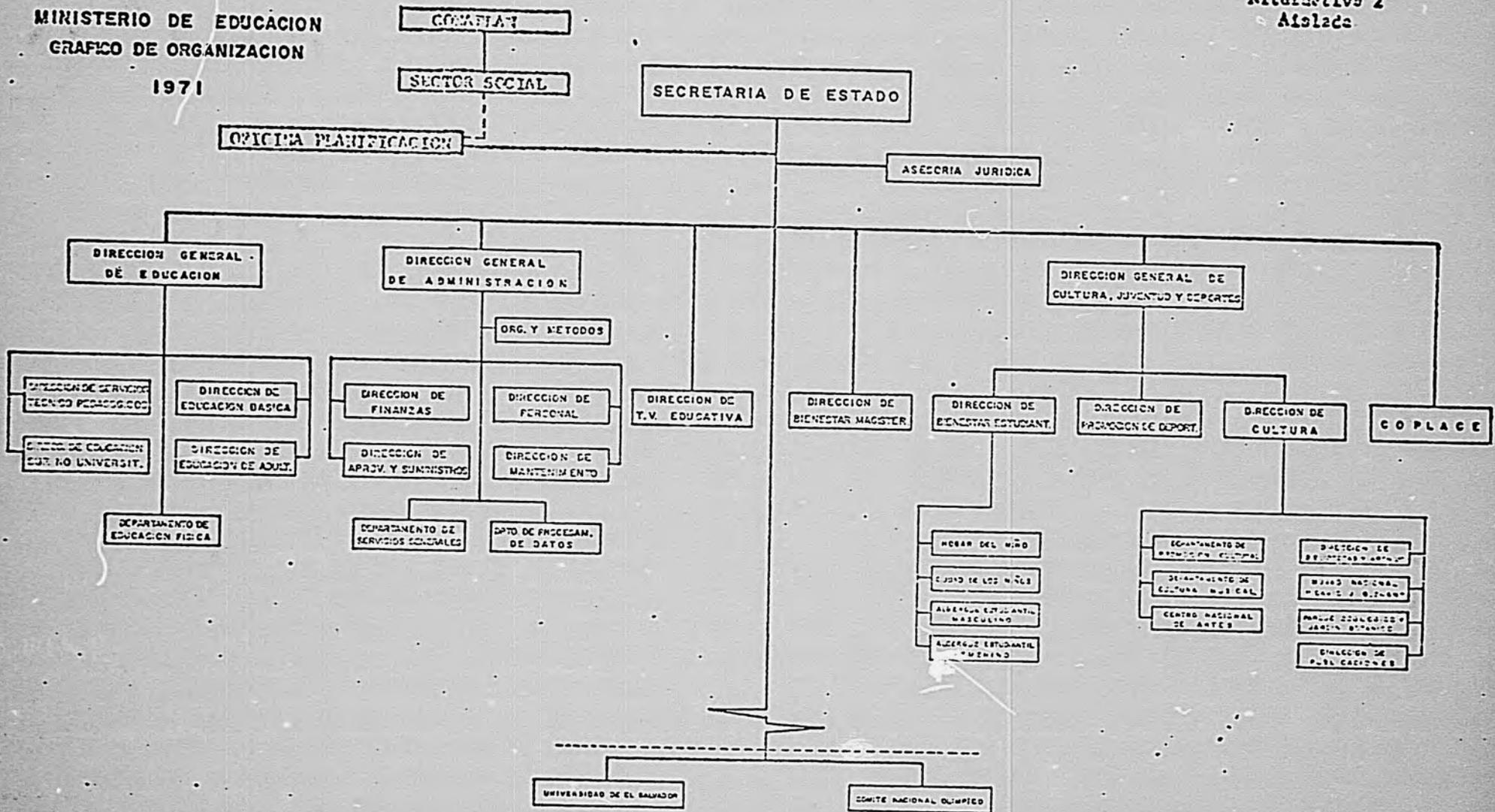


EXHIBIT 5

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACION
GRAFICO DE ORGANIZACION
1971

Alternativa 3
Coordinación/Control

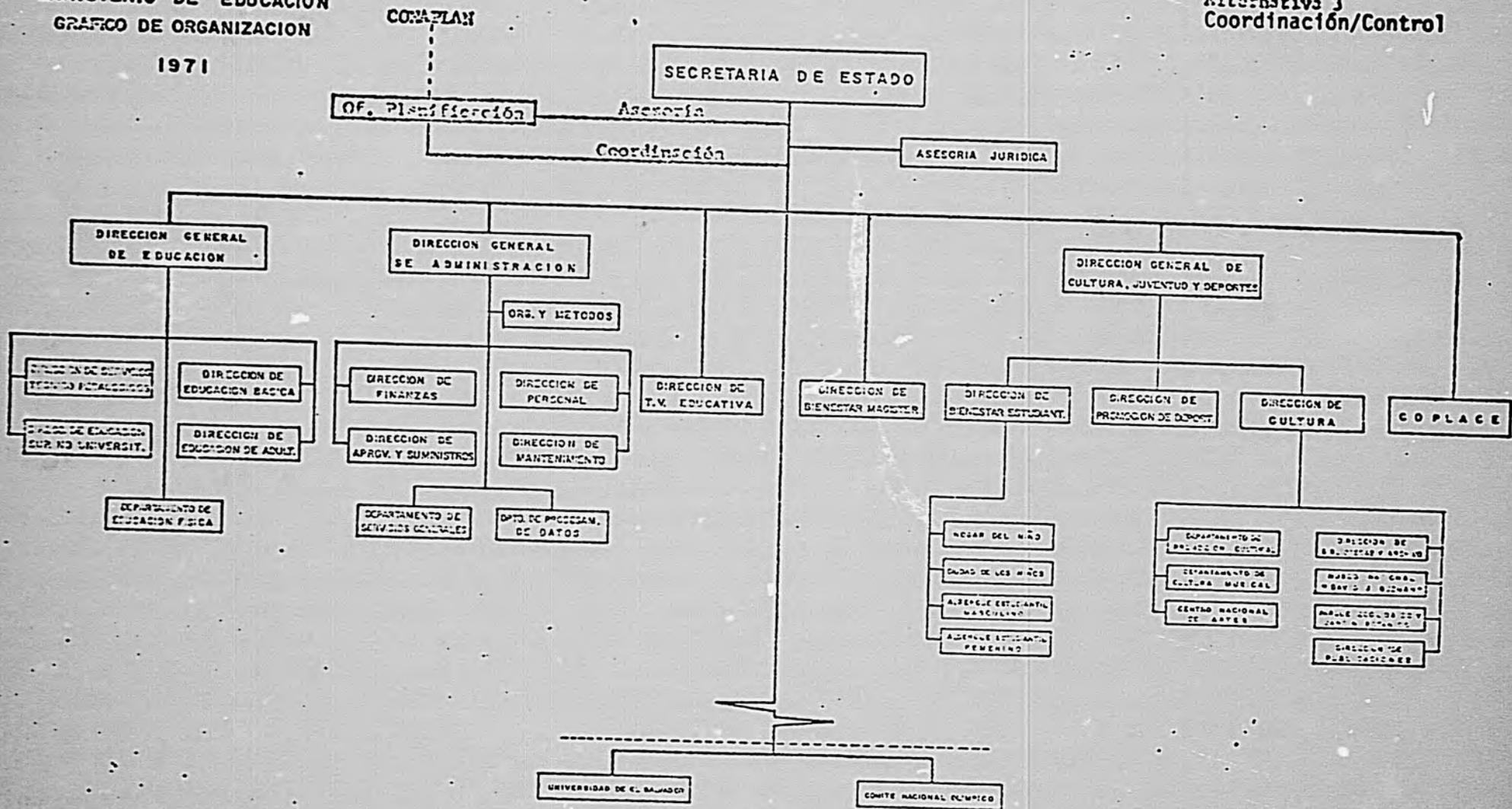
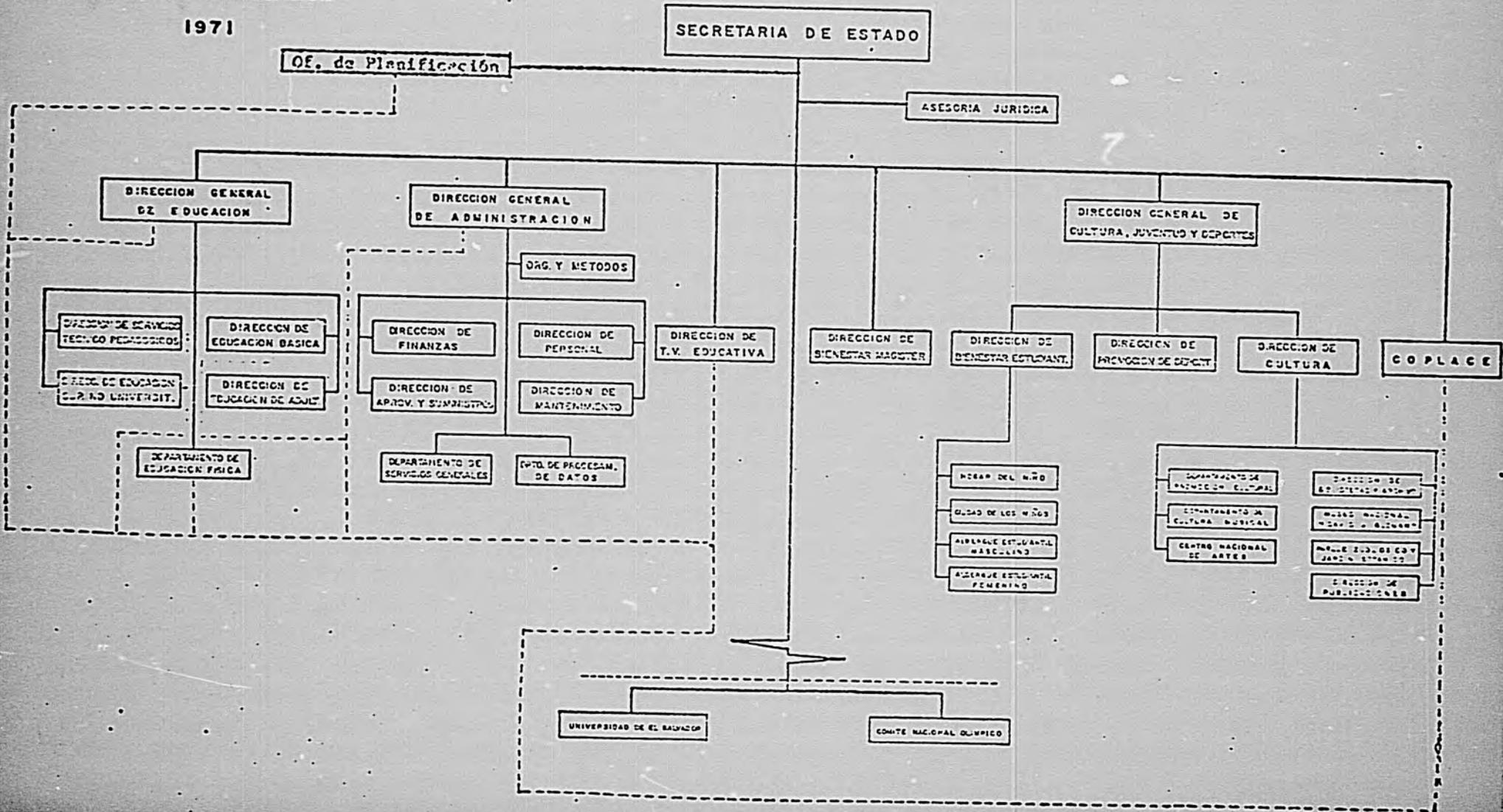


EXHIBIT 6

Alternativa 4
Enlace Funcional

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACION
GRAFICO DE ORGANIZACION

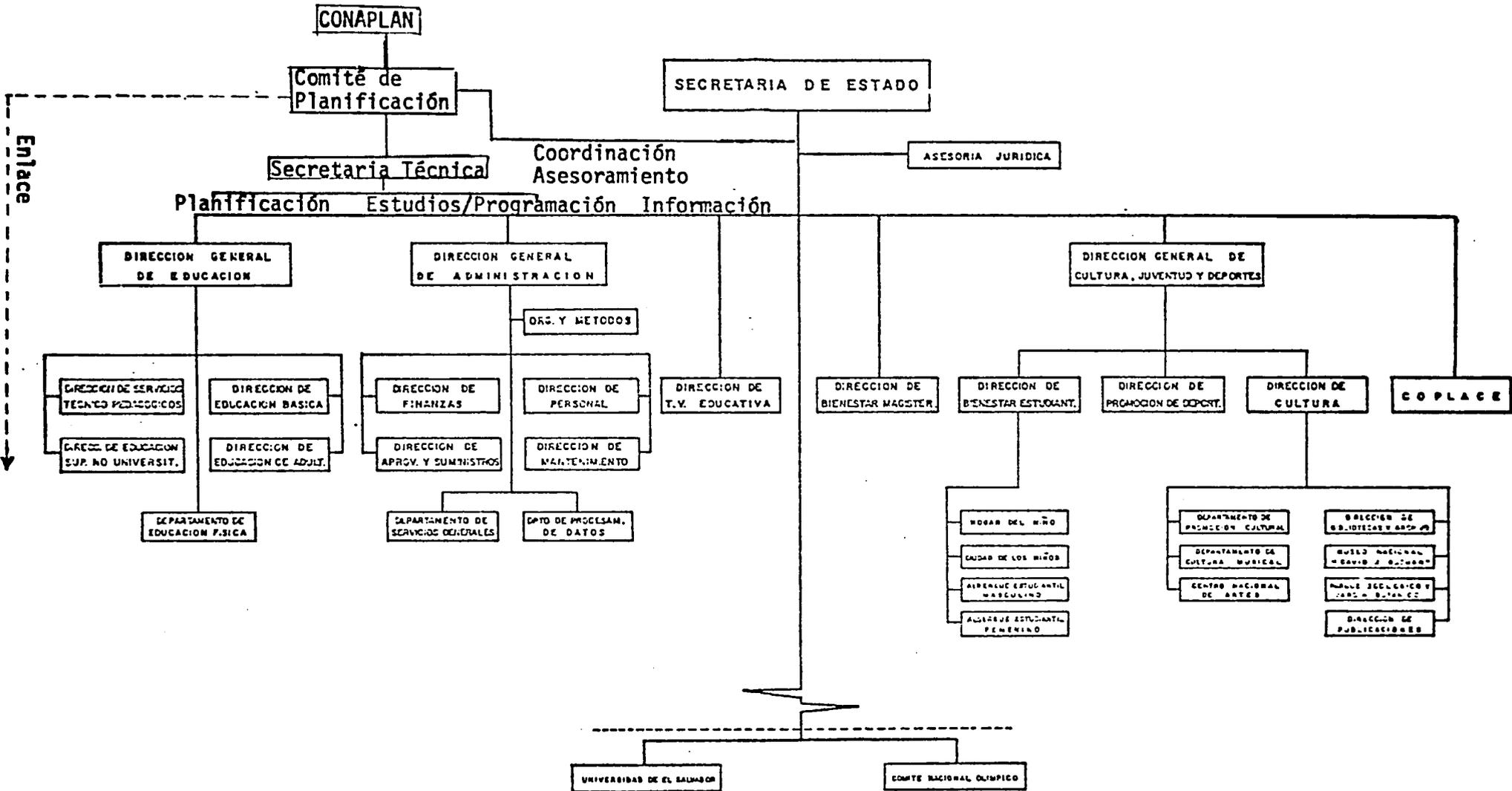
1971



MINISTERIO DE EDUCACION
 GRAFICO DE ORGANIZACION
 1971

EXHIBIT 7

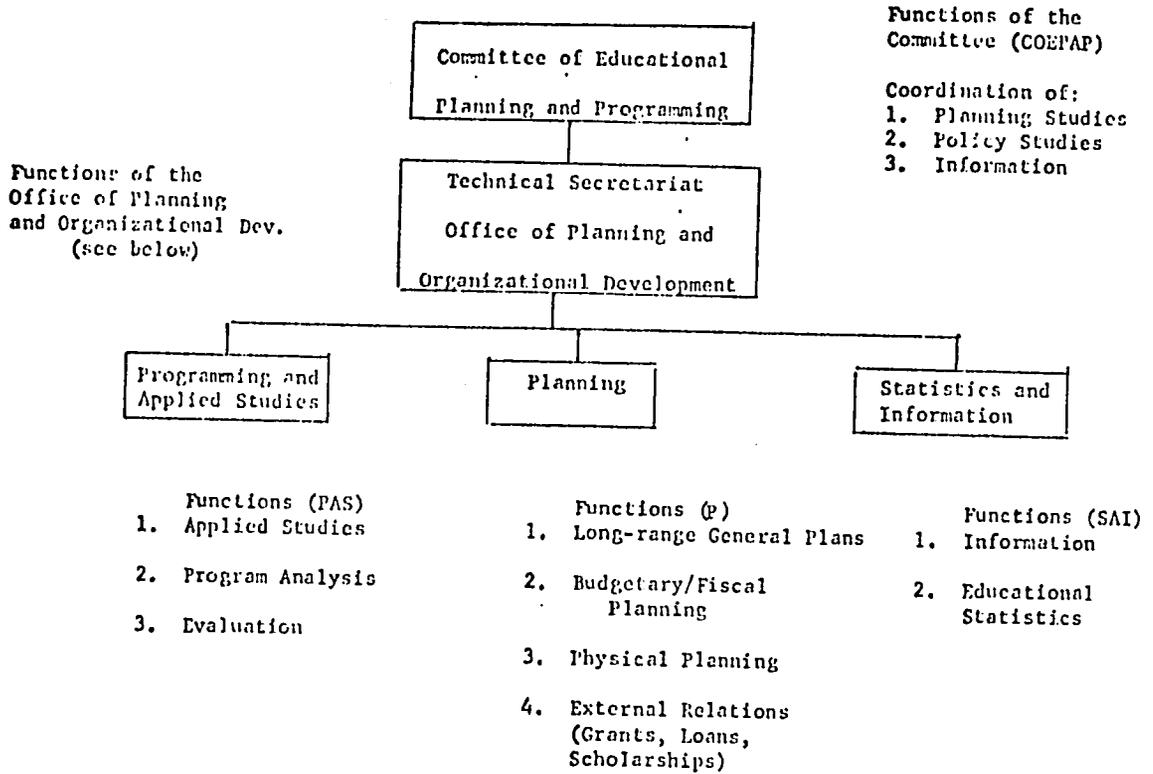
Alternativa 5
 Comité/Secretaría Técnica



Enlace

EXHIBIT 8

Organizational Schema of the Office (Final Version) 1/



Functions of the Office of Planning and Organizational Development

1. Technical Advice and Information to Committee and President (Minister)

that would cover:

- A. Planning; long and short range, budgetary and physical planning
- B. Policy Studies
- C. Program Studies
- D. Organizational Analysis and Organizational Development
- E. Information and Public Affairs

1/This may well not be the final version, but it is the most recent version. In Annex C there is an early version of the organization scheme that was changed after discussions in El Salvador.