



I.I.A.A.

BUILDING A BETTER HEMISPHERE SERIES NO. 8

The Role of Education

in

TECHNICAL-ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

By

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POINT 4 IN ACTION

THE INSTITUTE OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

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TECHNICAL COOPERATION ADMINISTRATION

The Institute of Inter-American Affairs *Presents*



A typical class room in Ecuador before working with the I.I.A.A.—Ecuadorian Servicio. The children learn by rote—crammed with facts which have little bearing on their lives.



Rote learning is replaced by activity method. Arithmetic lesson is done with cards.



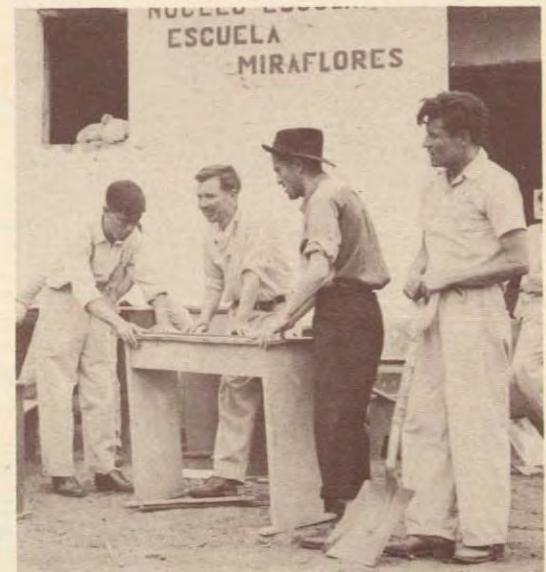
Providing students with manual skills to enter local occupations is a primary purpose of the program.



Training teachers who in turn train others is basic approach of the Cooperative Education Programs.



Greatly intensified interest in the school results when the community itself builds a new school or improves an existing one.



Members of community work well together improving school facilities.

The Role of Education in Technical-Assistance Programs

By

WILLFRED MAUCK

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THE Technical Assistance Program, under which the relatively well-developed nations of the world are attempting to assist the less-advanced nations to improve their lot, has many facets—education, agriculture, health, industry, mining, communications, to mention only a few.

In a broad sense, all phases of technical assistance must develop as educational processes, if they are to be effective. The objective in all of them is to help make peoples stronger, more self-sufficient, less dependent upon their stronger neighbors, better able to develop their own resources. That objective can be attained only by helping the less-developed nations to improve their own capacity for doing the job themselves, by themselves, for themselves; in other words, through education.

A technical-assistance program in health, for example, might be developed by sending in foreign technicians to clean up malarial areas—to combat yellow fever, cholera, hookworm—or to build hospitals, clinics, sewerage and water systems. But within a few years there will be no appreciable vestige unless local technicians are trained in the why and how of continued control of malaria, yellow fever, cholera, and hookworm and unless there is established some means of maintaining a steady supply of trained technicians to administer, staff, maintain, and increase the facilities created.

The same principle applies to all forms of technical assistance: we cannot do a job for others; all we can do effectively is to help them to help themselves. The vital element is not just money or supplies. It is know-how—the introduction of techniques, the training of technicians, and establishment of a system by which future technicians will be locally trained by local technicians. This is education.

But all this is education which is highly technical in nature and not usually associated with a nation's schools (other than advanced technical institutions) or with the mass education of children and adults. Is education in *that* sense a legitimate part of the technical-assistance program, or is it a gigantic boondoggle? Let us look at the picture.

The broad objectives of the technical-assistance program are to raise the standard of living in underdeveloped regions of the world, promoting better health, better nutrition, increased production, building better citizens for stronger nations who are or may be our friends in peace and our allies in war. They are aimed at helping those friends of ours to develop their resources, for their sakes and for ours.

If we push aside such considerations as humanitarianism, individual enterprise, the sacredness of the

individual, and the Rights of Man—even if we were willing to accept, tacitly, such other doctrines as that Man Exists for the State and that the wealth of a nation consists not of men but of resources of goods and gold—even if we were to act upon such assumptions, it should be clear that the goods and the gold, and the strength of the state itself, depend ultimately upon men and women to develop and support them. And, if one depends upon men and women, one leans upon a weak reed indeed if they are listless from disease and malnutrition, discontented and resentful because of unremitting hunger, so hopeless in the lot accorded to them by governmental providence that they are the easy prey of the agitator from the other side of the mountains. Men cannot progress if they are so ignorant and so illiterate that they are in no position to learn to live better, to understand new techniques, even to understand concepts of patriotism, to say nothing of democracy. If one is to avoid all that, it must be through education. Not simply the professional education of a few leaders in health, agriculture, transportation, and industry, but mass education. Education is the indispensable key to unlocking a nation's most valuable resources—its human resources.

That is why many of those directly concerned in the technical-assistance program have referred to education as perhaps the most important task of all.

In what forms should technical assistance in education be offered? It is often thought of in terms of mass media for adult education. Much can and should be done in that field. Yet it is not enough.

We think of the potentialities of the radio, the movies, the film strip. They are useful. But there are serious limitations upon mass media as educational devices. In areas where assistance is most needed there are few radios; there is no power for projectors; and special, costly equipment must be provided to furnish facilities in mobile units. Moreover, experience shows that people usually tend to view films or listen to radio rather for entertainment than for serious study, so that much of the purpose is defeated. It is fairly well recognized that, while such devices as the radio, the cinema, and the film-strip are valuable educational aids, they are no more than that. They are a most useful aid to the teacher, if properly used, but they are relatively useless unless they are utilized as supporting tools to sustained effort by a trained teacher.

Newspapers, pamphlets, and posters have the value of mobility, wide distribution, and maintaining current interest. However, each issue's impact is relatively temporary. With the shortage of newsprint,

they represent a considerable cost for a short-range effect per issue. They require a sizable corps of technicians to see to it that the materials are effectively distributed, read, and understood. But the chief obstacle to the effectiveness of this type of media lies in the widespread illiteracy in underdeveloped countries.

Figures on literacy in underdeveloped nations are unreliable. There is, for one thing, no common definition of "literacy." Thousands of people who are listed as literate achieved that rating by being able, at some time, to read and write their names, and many of them forget even that. Some learn to read simple sentences, but unless constant use is made of the knowledge, they tend to forget that, too. One foreign official said to me: "My country has a much better literacy rate than most of our neighbors. I believe it is 80 or 85 per cent. The trouble is, most of them can't read or write. . . ." Throughout underdeveloped areas, the percentage of illiteracy is not less than 50 per cent. It is probably nearer 75 per cent and in some countries it is over 90 per cent. When one recalls that most of the literates are in the cities and that most of the people who must be reached by mass education are in the less literate, rural areas, the limitations on use of the printed word alone for mass education become painfully apparent.

Much attention has been given in underdeveloped countries to adult-literacy campaigns. When "mass education" is spoken of, the average citizen thinks almost automatically of such campaigns. It is probable that thousands have won the rating of "literates" who would have been illiterate but for such work. Yet the sustained value of adult-literacy campaigns by themselves remains to be demonstrated. A "campaign" can have only temporary effect. For permanent impact there must be machinery to keep the effort moving, to keep the new literates literate. This requires a steady stream of new and interesting reading material that will have functional value. Even when all those elements are provided, the group affected is the age group with the slowest learning rate. They have the least flexibility of ideas and the greatest preoccupation with earning a living, so that maintaining their interest in and acquaintance with reading is most difficult. Campaigns, if properly conducted, are good for attaining short-range objectives. For the long pull, campaigns are not enough.

For long-range results technical assistance in education can be made effective only by working with the schools. This may also include use of the schools as centers for adult education. In the schools we work with the most flexible age group, where the soundest foundation for learning may be laid. It is the group least concerned with other pressing pursuits and therefore least likely to treat education as an incidental. The schools already form a permanent system—established machinery, with a recognized, though adequate, share in national budgets. There

are other advantages, but these will serve as illustrations.

We are concerned especially with those areas of school education which affect the mass of the people—the elementary, the secondary schools, and the vocational schools which teach trades, agriculture, and distributive vocations. Above all we are concerned with the training of teachers, for the success of the schools depends primarily upon the kind of preparation enjoyed by the teachers themselves.

The Institute of Inter-American Affairs has been carrying on technical-assistance programs in education since 1943, and until very recently it was the only government agency engaged in such work, with the exception of education surveys and short-term, education advisory services. On the basis of practical experience over several years, the institute has developed certain views as to what can be effectively done and how it can be done. Those views are always subject to further development and modification as further experience accumulates, but I believe that the principles which have been developed thus far are fundamentally sound. They apply not merely to the particular programs which the institute has developed and is conducting, but to the problem of technical assistance in education in its world-wide aspects. While I am addressing myself to the total problem of the role of general or mass education in the technical foreign-aid program, I am giving at the same time a description of what the Institute of Inter-American Affairs has already done, and is doing as an integral part of President Truman's Point 4 Program, as a workable pattern for general use.

Just what can be done to assist underdeveloped areas to improve their schools as instruments of social and economic betterment?

We can help to devise a curriculum which will contribute to that end. Our technicians should not attempt to devise the curriculum by themselves. They should assist the national technicians, in foreign countries requesting such aid, to do it, against the background of specific national requirements. In elementary education the curriculum in the elementary schools in all the underdeveloped areas is usually strikingly similar. It consists of an unwieldy body of too many "subjects" crowded into the first three or four years of grade-school education. Each subject is designed to cram into the heads of children an enormous number of facts—learned by rote, and mostly having only the vaguest possible bearing on their daily lives or on their future adult life. Educators and officials of the country receiving assistance in elementary education have eagerly welcomed help in reorienting the curriculum to the interests and needs of the children and communities. They have substituted, for the old, sterile curriculum, effective instruction in health and hygiene, simple agriculture, home-life education, and simple manual skills. Naturally, the three R's are fundamental. But even the

three R's are more effectively taught, if the content material is drawn from familiar scenes of the home, the farm, the village street, the market.

In secondary education the schools in the underdeveloped areas have had the objective—as they did until recently in the United States—of preparing pupils for entrance to the university. Only a small proportion of pupils in those areas ever reach the secondary schools. A smaller proportion reach graduation and very few actually enter a university. Much can be done through technical assistance to help develop a curriculum which will serve the practical needs of the majority of secondary-school pupils who will never receive more formal education. It may be done by making available secondary courses in vocational or prevocational training. It may also be done by relating the general-education courses more intimately to daily life and interests, as in the elementary schools. In either case, it can and should be done without lessening the facilities for those whose needs demand university preparatory courses.

In vocational education, there is at present an almost universal preoccupation with theory. There is little actual shopwork. Too often the courses offered in a given technical school do not bear a relation to trades opportunities in the area. Very effective work can be done toward improving the economic life of the country by helping to establish a proper balance in the curriculum between theory and shopwork, with proper equipment, and by training technicians in making industrial surveys and establishing sound counseling and guidance systems.

Not only the curriculum, but the teaching methods can be improved. Even in the teacher-education institutions, rote learning is now too heavily depended upon, and an outmoded, authoritarian approach is used in such limited demonstration and practice teaching as may be available to the student teacher. In the elementary and secondary schools themselves the rote system is almost universal. Teachers in the underdeveloped areas tend to view with some suspicion at first, then with skepticism, then with a bit of puzzlement, and finally with real enthusiasm, the introduction of concepts and methods which we have come to accept. These include pupil participation in classroom activities, group instruction, centers of interest, units of work, integration of play activities in classroom work, use of school clubs on the 4-H model, school-lunch programs as part of the instruction as well as for direct nutrition, school-garden and small-animal husbandry projects as vehicles for teaching, the use of textbooks and other teaching materials. The marked increase in pupil interest and retention and in voluntary school attendance, brought about by introduction of these modern methods, is recognized and welcomed by the teacher, once he has really grasped them.

If the use of teaching materials is to be introduced, assistance must be given in developing them. Usually

they must be developed to serve each individual country receiving assistance, though there are some materials which can be developed on a regional basis. It is not generally feasible to translate and introduce materials developed in the United States or Europe. Even the adaptation of such existing materials can be done on only a limited scale. They are usually truly effective only if they are developed, with such assistance as may be offered by foreign technicians, by the writers or educators of the country itself.

Such changes in curriculum and methods frequently call for assistance also in revising the national and local system of school administration. The highly centralized, rather authoritarian, form of administration now in general effect in the underdeveloped areas does not lend itself well to the flexibility needed to manage a functional type of education, such as is needed to make possible an effective contribution by the schools to economic and social progress.

I have already indicated what can and should be done in educational programs of technical assistance. These steps included improvement of curriculum, methods, teaching materials, and administration. Now, how should it be done?

Any program of assistance should be based on certain fundamental assumptions. First, the effort should not be allowed to disperse itself among many unrelated projects, laudable as each project might be in itself, but should concentrate upon improvement of educational systems. There must be individual projects, but they should be so planned as to have a demonstrable relation one to another, and all consciously aimed toward a single, over-all goal, and the goal is a better educational system.

Second, they should be aimed at national development of national systems. Introduction of entire systems imported from a foreign land might actually be easier for the foreign technicians. This method will probably not work; but, assuming that it could work out, it would have the disadvantage of causing the loss of precious natural cultures. The problem must be approached as one of assisting Sudamians to evolve a better system for Sudamians. Much that is foreign in origin and practice can be effectively introduced into Sudamia and so adapted as to become Sudamian. But Sudamia has her own conceptions of how her social sciences, for example, should be taught to her children or of the place of religion in their instruction. No outsider, even with the best of intentions, can afford to intrude in such matters with a careless hand.

Third, effective technical assistance in education, the goal of which is to contribute through education to improvement of standards of living, must cling to the principle that education has for its purpose the preparation of children for life. It must stress better attitudes toward, and knowledge of, self—better hygiene, better ability to think and to meet unexpected situations, better equipment with the tool

knowledges. It must stress improved attitudes toward the community and acceptance of community responsibilities, toward the nation and its welfare, toward the part the nation must play in the world.

Fourth, such a program of technical assistance must concern itself with substance rather than form. "Façadism" is a disease very prevalent in underdeveloped areas, and not unknown elsewhere. Requests for technical assistance are frequently confined largely to requests for providing school buildings, or laboratory equipment, or textbooks and other supplies. But if these alone are provided, the programs will defeat their purpose. It is what goes on inside and around the buildings and the human beings in them that are really vital. It is the effectiveness with which teachers are trained to use the laboratory equipment and the other instructional materials and to create more of them that counts. Capital expenditure in programs of technical assistance in education can really be justified only to the extent to which it is necessary to provide certain physical facilities so that the technical work itself can proceed.

Fifth, the programs must be aimed at bringing about permanent improvements. That can be done only if they are primarily concerned with making it possible for the country receiving the aid to carry on the improved systems after technical assistance is withdrawn. That means that the central attention should be focused on development of a sound teacher-education system. This does not mean just training a few teachers, but establishment of means by which future generations of teachers will be soundly educated. A self-perpetuating system is essential.

Sixth, it is important to help develop a closer relationship with the school on the part of the national government and of the community. On the national scene, it is closer interest rather than closer control that is needed. It may involve, for example, encouragement to the movement for increasing the salaries of teachers or devoting a larger share of the national budget to education. There is great value in stimulating interest of the local community in the school by increasing the responsibility of adults for the school welfare. In some countries where the community has traditionally depended upon the central government to furnish all facilities for schools, there is a consequent lack of community interest. Programs in technical assistance which have mobilized the community for work in building new school buildings or improving existing ones have resulted in greatly intensified interest in the school as something belonging to the community itself.

Seventh, since the purpose is to help create a national system, based upon existing needs and conditions, it is important that efforts in technical assistance be carefully geared to existing, or attainable, local and national resources, rather than upon foreign

resources introduced during the term of the program. A certain amount of foreign financial aid is essential for project expense during the early phase of the program. This is necessary partly to encourage stronger financial support by the recipient government for its education system, and partly because such a contribution by the assisting country is an important element in insuring influence of the technical-assistance field staff from abroad in the formulation and administration of projects. Financial contributions should always be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve the technical goals and to help carry the program until such time as the recipient government is able to carry on the work with its own trained educators and its own resources.

Technical assistance between nations in the field of mass education is really something rather new. Its techniques are still being developed. It takes time to work them out, because no preconceived plan is likely to work. Only experience can show the way. An educational program must require long periods of time for its development. The maturing process is involved. That process cannot be hurried. Relationships between highly intelligent people of differing cultures are involved. If any hint of a patronizing attitude is revealed, it not only is unjustifiable, but may prove disastrous. Differences in national and even in racial ways of thought are involved. Time and effort must be spent in arriving at mutual understanding. Long, gruelling hours and years of routine, detail, and trial-and-error are required, and if quick results are not achieved there is always the danger of boredom developing. The indispensable elements in programs of technical assistance in education are not so much the elements of diplomatic negotiations, of protocol, or even of finances, but those of patience, humility, understanding, and hard work—and then some more patience.

Under such circumstances, even when political changes or temporary financial stringencies do not intervene, progress is bound to be a bit painful and at times discouraging. But it cannot be helped. There is no substitute for a sound foundation.

An important compensatory factor is the satisfaction provided by the stimulating contacts between educators of different nations. There is satisfaction, too, in seeing the results of progress, slow as they may be in coming. There is also the satisfaction of knowing that, if the great, over-all program of technical assistance is to achieve its high moral purpose and have lasting effects, it can be done only by the development of human resources. That guidance must come from education, and primarily from that phase of education which is intimately concerned with the masses of children now playing in the city streets or walking the fields and paths of jungle and desert and mountain-side.



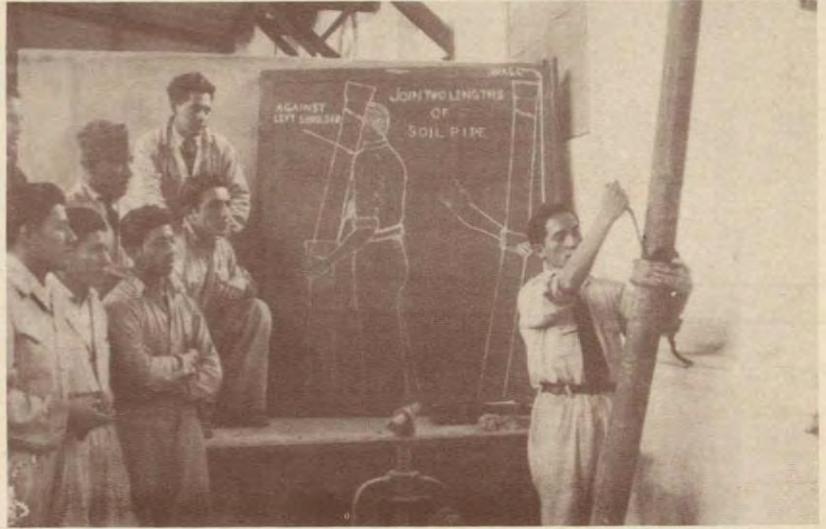
The industrial program includes training of skilled craftsmen in industrial trades.



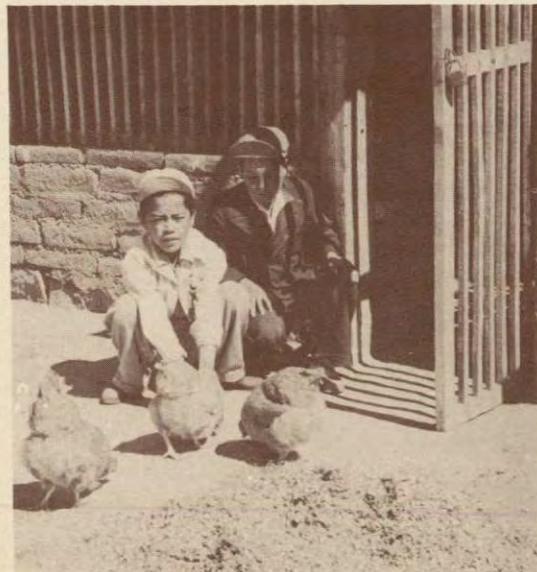
Under the Cooperative Education Programs, the I.I.A.A. assists in organizing, planning, and teaching vocational courses in trade and secondary schools.



Teachers in summer school session learn gardening techniques for the future instruction to their pupils.



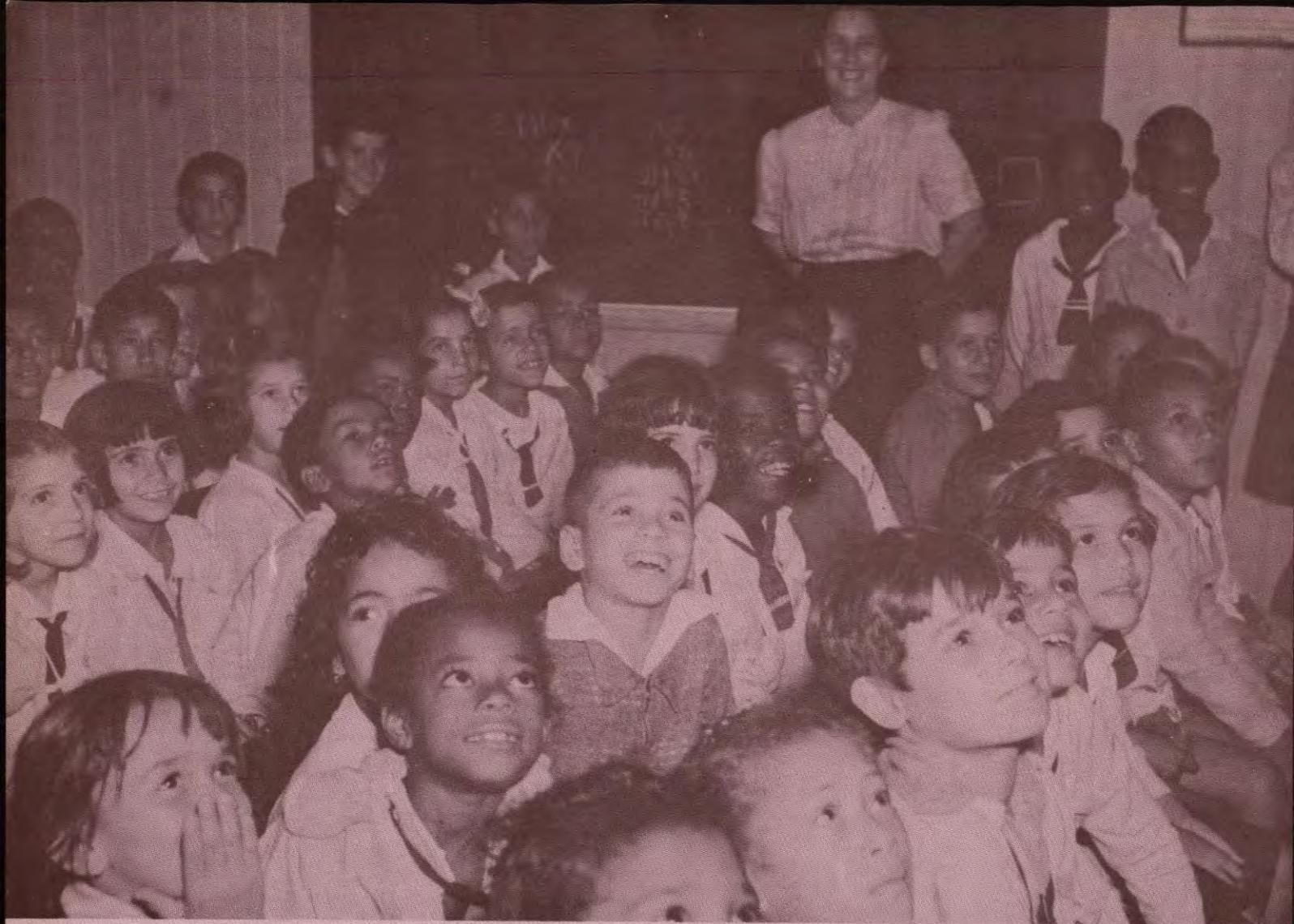
Plumbing course for future teachers of vocational education in Politecnico Principal in Lima Peru.



Raising chickens is class project of pupils in rural schools.



Clean hands are important. Developing proper health habits is a major part of the education of children.



Class room motion pictures are valuable educational aids when used as supporting tools to sustained effort by a trained teacher,

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