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BUILDING A BETTER HEMISPHERE SERIES NO. 14

Latin Americans garner benefits of Putting Point Four to Work

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POINT 4 IN ACTION

THE INSTITUTE OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

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TECHNICAL COOPERATION ADMINISTRATION

Latin Americans Garner Benefits of Putting Point Four to Work

By Robert M. Hallett

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The Christian Science Monitor



LATIN AMERICANS in underdeveloped areas are learning new jobs, to grow more crops on the same acreage, to eat better meals, to give their children better educational opportunities, to correct unsanitary and unhealthful conditions, and to build better homes to replace squalid shanties.

Much of this progress is the work of their governments in cooperation with the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. The institute not only has set a highly constructive record in helping underdeveloped Latin-American republics

but it also has evolved, tested, and proved techniques currently being followed in other areas of the globe.

Although announced as a "bold new program" by President Truman in 1949, Point Four programs to raise world living standards this year actually celebrated a 10th anniversary in this hemisphere in the form of the institute program.

Now part of the Technical Cooperation Administration of the Department of State, the institute is, in fact, a prototype for the two other area organizations within this worldwide body. These are the Near East and Africa Development Service and the Asian Development Service.

Projects Studied at Local Levels

Although the programs will be modified in each case to conform to local needs, the other Technical Cooperation Administration bodies are closely studying institute projects at the local level in American nations, as well as its relationships with foreign governments.

The institute, without doubt, has helped produce one of the most important changing patterns in international political, economic, and social relationships that has taken place since World War II.

Already experienced institute hands are "infiltrating" in friendly fashion into the worldwide agencies.

For example, the former chief of the food program in Peru spent more than five weeks in Iran with TCA last summer. And some TCA personnel are going down into Latin America to examine firsthand the institute's activities.

If they get to the mountainous back country of Peru they will see a significant project involving the "Irish" potato, a tuber which originated not in the Emerald Isle but right in the highlands of the Andes.

Over the years, however, soil insects and diseases attacked the plant and caused its abandonment in many areas, with great loss in food value.

Potato Production Tops Million Tons

To combat this an institute—Peruvian "Servicio Cooperativo" (Cooperative Service)—is checking this loss by the simple process of trying out, demonstrating, and distributing pesticides to farmers.

The difficult part of this small program has been to convince the traditionally suspicious Indians of the montañas to follow the advice of the technicians. As a result of their doing so, however, potato production was increased from 633,000 tons in 1947 to 1,300,000 in 1950.

The institute, headed by Kenneth R. Iverson, is now TCA's regional arm for Latin America. This marks the first time in the hemisphere that the United States will work with Latin-American governments on a countrywide unified program. The result should be more effective use of funds. Formerly several United States departments have made separate contracts for technical assistance with Latin-American governments.

The institute was established in 1942 as an outgrowth of the former Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, headed by Nelson Rockefeller.

Today it has 2,800 projects in the fields of education, food supply, public health, and sanitation in 18 Latin-American countries, exclusive of Argentina and Cuba. The program ranges from water-supply installations in small Venezuelan towns to agricultural experimentation stations of thousands of acres in several countries.

Cooperation Is Program's Keynote

Keynote of the organization is cooperation, not charity. And it is not just a survey or study group. It is a pick-and-shovel—or, perhaps better, a rake-and-hoe—agency that follows through by actually demonstrating know-how in the classroom, the cornfield, or city street.

The institute makes a little money go a long way. From 1943 to 1950 it spent only \$44,000,000 for a fairly substantial program, although it did slack off somewhat following World War II.

Under Point Four it is in an expanding stage again. In 1951 it actually signed nine new "servicio" agreements and put some more money into current activities to make them more stable and sound.

In the 1951 program the total Point Four activities of all agencies in government was a little less than \$9,500,000. The current appropriation runs \$18,000,000, a small enough sum in these days of multibillion-dollar budgets.

Not all the "servicios" have succeeded in all things they have attempted, but "our batting average is rising steadily" is the way one IIAA official puts it.

Over the years the contributions of the United States have decreased and the contributions from other American republics have increased. In the fiscal year 1951 the total cost for the cooperative programs was at the ratio of \$1 for IIAA and the equivalent of \$3 for other republics.

Limiting the comparison to the program contributions to the "servicio" fund (that is, excluding salaries and expenses of United States personnel), the ratio would be \$1 to \$8.

Self-Help Is Ultimate Goal

IIAA employs only 250 North Americans in Latin America, paying their salaries and expenses. The Latin-American republics, on the other hand, employ more than 8,000 of their own people on various projects.

The end objective of the institute is complete withdrawal, leaving the programs entirely in the hands of the respective government bureaus.

The program is not thrust upon the governments. A southern republic must first request assistance from the United States on a particular problem or in a general field of activity.

After consideration by appropriate United States officials, the institute sends a representative to negotiate a "basic agreement." The participating country undertakes to set up a "servicio" as part of a ministry having jurisdiction over the

particular activity—for example, agriculture, health, or education.

The Latin-American country is represented by the minister of the cooperating governmental department, and the institute by a chief of field party. In addition, the institute sends such technicians as are required, and the country itself also provides a much larger staff to carry on the work.

'Servicio' Retains Independent Status

While in governmental bureaus, the "servicio" retains an independent status. When governments have changed by peaceful or violent means, the "servicios" never have ceased operations.

In the 1951 election turmoil in Bolivia there was one issue on which both the reactionary "ins" and the revolutionary "outs" agreed. They both wanted the IIAA program continued and enlarged.

Only in leftist-dominated Guatemala did powerful Communist-oriented labor leaders succeed in forcing the government to abandon an institute rural education program which had been operating for six years.

It would appear from the permanency of such programs that the institute is making a fundamental contribution in the field of public administration toward a solution of one of the basic problems of Latin America—stability of government and continuity of governmental programs.

No two "servicio" programs are exactly alike. They are adjusted to the needs of the individual country.

In its decade of activities the institute has cooperated in hundreds of individual projects, many of which have been transferred to the regular departments of government.

The cooperative agricultural program in Paraguay is probably one of the best examples of economic rejuvenation to be found anywhere. Paraguay traditionally has been a land of the poor farmer. He lives in a squalid one-room hut and perhaps owns a wooden plow, a much-worn hoe, a machete, ax, and shovel.

The United States mission there has included six agricultural experts, a forestry specialist, and a home economist. The men help the farmer lay out land for money crops, pasturage for work animals and cows, and vegetable gardens. They demonstrate how to maintain fertility in the soil by use of manures. The home economist helps the farmer's wife in home management and in raising the family standards of living.

Show place of this agricultural "servicio" is a pilot colony of 35 farmers started in 1946. This colony was so prosperous from the point of view of human welfare as well as crop production that two years ago the Paraguayan Government resolved to follow suit.

Benefits Flow to U.S. Business

With the guidance of the "servicio," the government colonized 78,000 acres with 570 families, and today it is organizing two additional large colonies aimed at eventually resettling some 100,000 Paraguayans who have fled to adjacent countries in search of a livelihood.

Formal training is important, and the institute has brought to the United States over 1,200 Latin Americans for training as agricultural technicians, educators, sanitary engineers, and public-health doctors.

By-products of benefits also flow to United States business. Take the matter of farm machinery, for example. Exports of such machinery and tools alone to four republics with food production programs rose from \$976,000 in 1944 to \$5,107,000 in 1950.

Indicating the need for a food production program, hundreds of thousands of persons in countries like Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay are undernourished. In fact, the average diet for all Latin America is estimated at 2,000 calories a day, compared to 3,000-plus for the United States.

Occasionally, too, by intent or not, the work of the "servicios" will benefit tourists. Little towns off the beaten track in Mexico and Guatemala, for example, that are travel attractions have been provided with clean, pure water and sewer systems.

The seemingly simple act of providing a water system for a Venezuelan town may touch off a whole series of improvements. The inhabitants not only have sanitary facilities in their homes, but they also have water to keep their houses



This Paraguayan farmer (standing behind plant) is proud of the best tobacco he ever raised. The servicio agents helped him use insecticides and transplant properly.

and clothes clean and to wash their streets. They can have fire protection. And small industries are more likely to start in towns that have water systems.

Vocational programs are meeting a great need in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru. This type of training is woefully lacking in much of Latin America.

Aid Called Antidote to Communism

For example, Paraguay has leather, but few workers who can make shoes. It has a variety of useful woods, but few skilled carpenters. In addition to these trades, the vocational schools give instruction in electricity, plumbing, and auto and radio repair.

Institute officials concede the grave deficit of trained men in Latin America. They point out, however, that when they are given an opportunity of training in the "servicio" they are capable of doing a better job than many North Americans because they know their own country, its language, customs, and other factors.

After the war there was a serious question as to whether the program should be continued or not. It was the feeling of both the State Department and the Latin-American countries, however, that it was a very worth-while investment. Congress agreed, reincorporating the institute as a statutory corporation in 1947, and in 1949 extended its tenure to 1955.

Not the least of the program's benefits—and one of which the State Department naturally is aware—is the positive effect United States propaganda is making in the best sense of the word.

In fact, Point Four is thought to be the best anti-Communist measure that can be taken in the ideological battle for the minds of men. American deeds, it is felt, can speak louder than Communist words.

BETTER SEED — BETTER CROPS

A pleased Peruvian Indian couple shows servicio agent Duarte their fine potato field grown from selected seed potatoes planted under his supervision. An important IAA activity is the introduction of better seed varieties and improving quality of local varieties through seed selection.



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