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ILPES

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NOTES ON THE TRAINING PROGRAMME OF THE LATIN AMERICAN
INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PLANNING

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NOTES ON THE TRAINING PROGRAMME OF THE LATIN AMERICAN INSTITUTE
FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PLANNING

A. General background

In 1961, at the initiative of the Governments of Colombia, Chile and Venezuela, it was decided to recommend the establishment of an institute in response to the demand for training and advisory assistance which CEPAL was unable to meet with its own facilities and resources.

This initiative crystallized in resolution 218 (AC.50) of February 1962, extended and amended by resolution 220 (AC.52), which established the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and defined its functions.

Thus an autonomous agency was set up under the aegis of CEPAL to provide the countries with training and advisory services, at the request of their governments, and to carry out research on planning techniques.

In January 1974 the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America decided that ILPES should become a permanent institution, with its own identity and responsible directly to the Executive Secretary of CEPAL.

The training activities of ILPES were initiated in 1962, the same year in which the Institute was established. The purpose of these activities was to fulfil the following objective of the decision ^{1/} by virtue of which the Institute was set up: "to raise the technical level of government officials and specialists through training programmes in the form of courses and in-service training". At the same time, it replaced CEPAL in this function, which from 1952 to 1961 had held nine international courses on development planning attended by 173 participants, and 19 intensive courses on the same subject, with 1,310 participants.

^{1/} Resolution 220 (AC.52) of the Committee of the Whole of CEPAL at its ninth session in June 1962.

/ILPES continued

ILPES continued to hold basic courses on development planning, while introducing the modifications and additions dictated by the changes in the economic and social situation. Thus the courses came to include special components on thematic and sectoral planning, such as public sector, industrial, agricultural and other types of planning, in line with the changes which, in scope, level of aggregation and complexity, affected the planning systems.

The growing concern for social aspects of development induced the Institute to develop a second type of course, which covered health, housing, education and human resources planning.

As certain economic problems and sectors acquired increasing importance, the Institute endeavoured to include them in their training programmes. The special subjects of the global planning courses were converted into sectoral courses, and new areas of training were introduced, such as operational planning and the formulation of projects as instruments of planning.

In 1970, courses on regional development planning were initiated in response to a new type of demand arising from the countries' interest in dealing with their economic and social problems on the basis of regional analysis and the organization of economic space.

Finally, some approaches have been made to new subjects in recent years, examples of which are the courses on environmental variables of development and the programming of some specific resources.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the courses have undergone internal modifications in the form of changes in the content of the subject-matter and the inclusion of new questions arising in development planning. Among these, mention may be made of conjunctural factors, short-term economic policy implications and new planning techniques.

/During this

During this period the ILPES Training Programme produced a large number of studies and texts which have been published in the Cuadernos del ILPES series and by the Editorial Siglo XXI, and most of which are used by universities in the region and technical personnel in planning offices.

From the operational point of view, it should be noted that the courses have been held more and more in the countries themselves, with the increasing co-operation of local teachers. Along these same lines, greater emphasis has been placed on promoting and supporting national centres for studies and training in connexion with development planning problems.

In the institutional field, increasing efforts were made to seek association with national and international institutions, thus extending the training activities both in scope and in depth.

The training activities of ILPES throughout its existence are summarized in the following table:

COURSES HELD BY THE ILPES TRAINING PROGRAMME
IN THE PERIOD 1962-1977

	Number of courses	Number of participants
1. Basic Planning Course	11	553
2. Intensive Courses on Development Planning	90	3,742
3. Internacional Regional Planning Courses	8	221
4. Sectoral courses or courses on specific subjects *	23	734
	<u>132</u>	<u>5,250</u>

* Including national courses on Regional Planning.

/To sum

To sum up, the training activities of CEPAL and ILPES since 1952 have included 160 courses attended by 6,733 specialists from all the Latin American countries.

B. Orientation of training activities

The Institute's training activities are designed to provide regular and specialized training for government officials working in planning systems and institutions concerned with the assignment of resources in the countries of the region.

These activities take the form of national and international courses, seminars, and support for training institutions in the various countries.

The following basic points are considered in programming these activities:

(a) The need to provide basic training for the development of conceptual schemes that will help to understand the economic and social situation in the Latin American countries; and

(b) Technical training in the analysis and preparation of plans, programmes and projects.

The courses are prepared on the basis of these two broad variables, taking into consideration the Institute's programme, the interests of the Governments, and the internal capacity in terms of the availability of human and financial resources.

The international courses take place at CEPAL and ILPES headquarters. The sub-regional courses are held in whatever countries of the region offer the facilities for the purpose.

The national courses are held in the respective countries jointly with their planning ministries or offices. Depending on the type of course, other ministries, banks or universities are also called upon to collaborate.

/If there

If there are any public institutions specializing in training, an attempt is made to hold the courses in association with them.

C. Design of the curricula of the courses

The courses provided by the Training Programme centre on the general subject of development planning, while de specific courses depend on the demand existing at a given moment. In this context, the central idea of the Training Programme is to use training as a catalytic activity to help develop the following processes or mechanisms in Latin America:

(a) Reflection concerning the limitations and potentialities of social change in Latin America and the crystallization of an original line of thought in relation to development and planning problems in the region;

(b) The incorporation of modern methods of analysis and action suited to the Latin American context in connexion with the governments' economic policy decisions;

(c) The dissemination of ideas and methodologies in line with the above approaches through the preparation of bibliographical material;

(d) The strengthening of the Institute itself by means of inter-agency collaboration with similar, parallel or complementary institutions both inside and outside the Latin American area.

Within the context of these ideas, the courses provided by the Institute all maintain a fairly similar structure, which has proved functional in this essentially professional rather than academic training activity.

In line with this idea, the courses are so designed as to provide an overall view of Latin America's problems, which is reflected in their social and technical content, in the broadest sense of these terms, as in the case of the planning process seen through its various levels and decision-making systems (global, regional, sectoral).

/Lastly, in

Lastly, in organizing the courses, account is taken of the participants' heterogeneous background and training, which has determined the establishment of a levelling stage.

In the light of all the conditions described above, the ILPES courses follow the lines of a formal model which is roughly defined as follows:

(a) A group of subjects which form an introductory section designed to harmonize and update the participants' knowledge and standardize the professional language used in the course. This section generally represents 20 per cent of the total number of hours of classes. The specific content of the section includes subjects such as economic analysis, quantitative methods and social accounting;

(b) A group of subjects aimed at presenting and discussing the main theoretical aspects of the central theme of the course. The composition of this section differs according to the course and usually represents about 20 per cent of the time;

(c) A group of central planning subjects and analytical techniques related to the main subject of the course, accounting for about 30 per cent of the time;

(d) A group of subjects associated with the various action policies deriving from the central section of the course, covering about 25 per cent of the time;

(e) Whenever appropriate, a final exercise which enables the participants to apply and summarize the knowledge imparted with reference to actual situations.

The courses are intensive, from Monday to Friday. In the morning there are two class periods of one and a half hours each. In the afternoon there are seminars for applying the subject-matter taught in the classes, lectures by specially invited guests or supervised reading.

At the beginning of each course the trainees are given the programme of subjects and respective bibliography, divided into compulsory and reference.

The compulsory bibliography is provided by ILPES.

/D. Recruitment of

D. Recruitment of teaching staff

The teaching staff is recruited on the basis of academic training and, in particular, experience in planning activities. With these references, recourse is had first to technical experts in ILPES, CEPAL and other United Nations agencies like the World Bank, FAO, UNIDO, etc., then to teaching personnel in centres with which ILPES maintains co-operation agreements, and lastly to advisers from institutions in their respective countries.

The advisers as a rule are Latin American Professionals specially noted in the fields included in the programmes of the various courses. An ad hoc team of associate teachers has been formed of those specialists who have made a positive contribution to the development of the courses.

Thus the Institute has been able to rely on specialists who, while continuing with their regular professional activities in their own countries, also collaborate with their knowledge and experience in the training activities of ILPES.

E. Financing of training activities

The Institute's training activities are financed with contributions from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Governments benefiting from this service, other international agencies, and national technical assistance agencies of developed countries.

In the case of national courses, part of the cost is paid by the counterpart agency.

/F. Selection

F. Selection of participants

The selection of participants starts with a whole process of dissemination of the courses through the offices of the United Nations Development Programme in the various countries, national planning offices, other public institutions and academic centres.

The Governments are responsible for nominating candidates through the UNDP Resident Representatives, who submit the nominations to ILPES.

A Selection Committee is set up in the Institute, consisting of a representative of the Executive Secretary of CEPAL, a representative of the Director General of ILPES, and the Director of the Training Programme.

This Committee is responsible for selecting, first, the countries and, secondly, the individual candidates.

The countries are selected on the basis of the broadest possible geographical distribution, but preference is given to those presenting the following characteristics:

- (a) Existence of United Nations technical co-operation projects in the specific field covered by the course;
- (b) Relatively greater need for specialists owing to the existence of national programmes on the subject of the course;
- (c) The Institute's need to strengthen its ties with certain countries;
- (d) Existence of specific mandates to provide technical assistance to particular countries.

The participants are selected on the basis of their relative merits, keeping in mind the following general criteria:

- (a) Professional linkage with the subject of the course;
- (b) Present professional position and possible future post;
- (c) Possibility of disseminating the knowledge acquired by the candidate;

/(d) Institution

- (d) Institution in which he is employed;
- (e) Academic background;
- (f) Balance between candidates from "central" and "local" institutions (for regional planning courses);
- (g) Adequate representation of women, as consistent with UNDP's recommendations;
- (h) Recommendations or priorities suggested by the governments or by United Nations projects or agencies;
- (i) Commitments assumed by ILPES or CEPAL; and
- (j) Personal information provided by members of the Committee.

G. Subjects of training courses

1. Subjects most frequently dealt with

The subjects of the training courses are based on an analysis of documents defining the objectives and functions of ILPES, decisions of the Technical Committee, the interests and demands expressed by government authorities, and the availability of human resources and technical experience in the Institute itself.

The following are the main subjects covered by the Institute's current activities: (a) global planning and economic policy, (b) regional planning, (c) agricultural planning, (d) industrial planning, and (e) preparation and evaluation of investment and pre-investment projects within the framework of planning, on which many courses have already been held.

Annex I gives a brief description of the courses offered by CEPAL and ILPES on these subjects.

H. Conclusions

The following general comments are based on the Institute's experience in training activities.

/1. The holding

1. The holding of courses over a long period was useful in training a large number of planning specialists, which covered the initial training requirements of national planning systems in this field.
2. The courses were basically provided for technical personnel of the public sector (87 per cent), mainly from central government institutions.
3. Virtually all the participants in the courses (98 per cent) had had university training; 69 per cent of these were economists; and 92 per cent attended the courses to obtain specialized training in planning.
4. The training activities carried out by CEPAL and ILPES played a useful part in the development of training in the planning field in the academic institutions of the region and, more recently, in special centres of government agencies concerned with training technical personnel of the public sector. The Training Programme maintains contact with many of these institutions through assistance in the organization and design of courses and the exchange of teaching personnel and bibliographical material.
5. The preparation and development of the courses led to the drafting of class notes and textbooks and the performance of research which has given rise to many of the titles published by the Institute (51 books and Cuadernos in 330,000 copies).
With the same object in view, ILPES prepared and selected an additional quantity of bibliographical material, classified by courses and by subjects, which, besides being distributed among the trainees, has been made available to the technical personnel of planning services on request.
6. Through former participants, an informal network of communication and collaboration was set up among the technical personnel of planning systems.

/7. The results

7. The results of the courses have made it possible to appreciate the advantages of associating research and training activities. At the same time, however, the absence is noted of any regular attempts to organize Latin America's experience in the development field on a systematic basis.

The systematic organization of experience in the interpretation of development, planning, investment programming, project preparation and evaluation can be a useful contribution in correcting a certain trend towards formalism, which is the result of accentuating theoretical and technical development over and above empirical analyses.

The preparation and adaptation of planning techniques and instruments for certain specific processes in some Latin American countries can also help to combine realistic treatment in complex situations.

8. The growing complexity of the economic and social systems of the region and the increased knowledge as a basis for their analysis and planning has led to an extension and intensification of the courses. At the same time, however, a reduction is noted in the time which the top cadres have available for regular and specialized training.

It would seem advisable to design a system of progressive and complementary seminars and courses in accordance with the national programmes of human resources training for development, which will harmonize these two variables.

10. The courses held by ILPES have shown the advantages of inter-agency co-operation. These advantages could be even greater, however, if such co-operation were programmed in a systematic and complementary manner, on the basis of the comparative advantages of the agencies concerned.

Among the joint activities which may be envisaged are the design, organization and holding of courses; the performance of research for teaching purposes; the preparation of teaching material; the exchange of teaching personnel, etc.

/11. The ILPES

11. The ILPES Training Programme has established a register of teachers by subject, who act as associate teachers in the national and international courses held by the Institute.

This register, which has lately been enriched by contributions from some national centres, could be increased and improved with information that might be forthcoming from other institutions in the region.

These centres could also exchange information with on teaching personnel.

12. The national and international institutions engaged in human resources training for development could promote studies on requirements in this field, with the object of orienting the activities of agencies performing these functions. The studies could be used in the preparation of co-operation programmes.

Annex I

This annex presents a brief description of the prototypes of the commonest courses.

1. Basic Course on Economic Planning and Policy

This course, with emphasis on global planning, is designed to enhance the professional capacity, both in conceptual and specifically technical aspects, of Latin American government officials working in institutions connected with planning processes.

In order to achieve this aim, the course has been programmed with a comprehensive view of what the training and improvement of personnel involves. Thus it covers a great many elements such as:

(a) Complementing the knowledge of economic theory and applied economics with an analysis of economic and social development, focusing on the salient aspects of this process in Latin America. In this respect, the planning process is recognized as being situated in the economic and social sphere. Accordingly, the course is designed with an interdisciplinary conception in which sociological and economic interpretations complement one another, thus permitting a fuller and more correct understanding and inter-relationship of the planning process.

(b) Analysis of the planning process in a broad dimension of time, carefully considering the long-term perspective in which it is assumed that the development styles of the Latin American economies should be defined. Thus, the study of the present situation in the region is properly located within a historical perspective on the basis of which it is possible to interpret the formation of our economies and visualize their future possibilities.

(c) Acquisition of skills in the handling of modern planning techniques and economic policy tools. Knowledge of their handling is imparted after a review and analysis of the technical body supporting them. Moreover, the idea is to concentrate the training

/activities on

activities on those techniques and methods which best respond to the needs, structural characteristics, availability of information and capacity of execution of the countries of the region.

(d) Intensive exercise in identifying and selecting significant problems, diagnoses, choice of methods for solving them and, in general, operations that may be considered as part of the "art" of planning and economic policy. The aim is to extend a bridge between theoretical learning and the need for flexibility and speed in dealing with the daily problems facing professionals in their respective areas of work.

(e) Operational consideration of the interrelations between conjunctural economic planning, and between this and other areas of government action such as education, health, social security, etc. This arises from the necessity to ensure that the design of short-term economic policy is not exclusively guided by conjunctural considerations and objectives, but incorporates the postulates of existing plans, thus contributing to their effective implementation.

In the light of the above-mentioned elements and the professional training and background of the participants, the course is generally programmed on the basis of four blocks of subjects.

First, an introductory section for training in some disciplines which help the participants to acquaint themselves with the main theoretical, economic and sociological approaches and provide them with a basic knowledge of quantitative techniques and economic accounting. This group of introductory subjects is intended to harmonize, standardize and update the knowledge of the participants, in view of their natural heterogeneity, and also to standardize the technical language that will be used in the course. This section normally comprises subjects such as economic analysis, social accounting, mathematics and statistics.

/The section

The section on the analysis of the Latin American situation includes an integrated group of subjects designed to facilitate an economic and sociological attempt to interpret that situation as a frame of reference for the use of economic planning and policy techniques and instruments. The subjects normally included are economic development, social aspects of development and international economic relations.

In the third section on global aspects of economic planning and policy, a study in depth is made of these subjects, with particular attention to regional and public sector planning. Therefore, this group of essentially instrumental subjects usually comprises global planning, economic policy, public sector planning and regional planning.

Lastly, the fourth section on specialized training in general planning deals with advanced technical topics, with particular emphasis on the time dimension of aspects of planning and economic policy. It also covers those sectoral planning fields a knowledge of which is essential for the tasks involved in harmonizing a global plan, and some techniques, such as those used in the selection and evaluation of projects, which are used on a general scale. The following subjects are generally covered by this section: advanced planning techniques, short-term harmonization, agricultural planning, industrial planning, and pre-investment and projects.

As the course develops, moreover, training in these subjects is complemented by a cycle of seminars.

At these seminars, with the collaboration of noted persons in academic circles and high-level government officials experienced in the conduct of planning, some specific planning experiences in Latin America are analysed on an integrated basis, from both a conceptual and a practical point of view. Such seminars are held concurrently with others of a practical and instrumental nature programmed for each subject and with exercises to be solved by the participants.

/2. Regional Development

2. Regional Development Planning Course

This course offers Latin American professionals a form of training in the regional development field which combines training closely linked with the social, spatial and economic situation of Latin America with learning about more abstract and complex types of analysis and operational instruments such as those normally used in academic centres par excellence. For this purpose, ILPES has established an agreement on academic co-operation with the Institute of Social Studies of The Hague, by virtue of which the regional development planning courses may be continued at that institution in order to obtain a Master's degree in regional development planning. The agreement also establishes an exchange of teaching personnel between the two institutions.

The main theoretical and practical problems found by the Latin American countries in regional development planning are discussed at this course. Emphasis is placed on the desirability of studying regional development problems from a national point of view, i.e., of considering regional development planning as an integral part of the national effort to accelerate economic and social growth.

This approach is based, in the first place, on the fact that the economic and social heterogeneity observable in the Latin American societies is of a spatial or territorial nature and, therefore, the introduction of specific methods of analysis and regional action in a development effort is indispensable in order to obtain the best possible results in the use of economic policy instruments.

Secondly, account is taken of the fact that regional development problems in a given economy are partially the geographical reflection of specific forms of social and economic organization of society. Thus, the correction of regional development problems should be considered in the broader context of global solutions and actions, from which it may be inferred that regional development planning should be incorporated in the global planning system.

/Thirdly, it

Thirdly, it is considered that the empirical recognition of interregional relations in a country makes it necessary to consider the group of sub-national planning units as a whole in order to ensure the co-ordination of different economic policy measures applicable to different parts of the national territory.

The Regional Development Planning Course is organized on the basis of homogeneous and successive groups of subjects. Concurrently with the reading part of the course a permanent seminar is held, and culminates in the presentation of a research study.

The first group of subjects is intended to update and reduce the disparity in the participants' knowledge, and standardize the terminology used in the course. It includes the following subjects: quantitative methods, economic analysis, social accounting, economic and social development, planning theory, spatial economic theory, regional development theories, and population dynamics.

The purpose underlying the second group of subjects is to discuss the theoretical, methodological, instrumental and operational aspects of regional planning on a national scale. The subjects include: regional planning theory and methods, regional analysis techniques, and management and financing of regional plans.

The third group of subjects is designed to highlight the central problem of regional planning: spatial organization, understood as the interrelationship between population settlements, the location of economic activities and the connecting network among persons, resources, goods and communications. The subjects included in this group are of an essentially normative character. They comprise: organization of urban space, organization of rural space, industrial location, and transport and communications.

The reading part of the course concludes with a period in which the problem of the investment projects and integrated programming of a region is examined on the basis of the knowledge and techniques discussed earlier.

/The last

The last few weeks of the course are set aside for the preparation and presentation of the results of the research carried out by the working groups throughout the permanent seminar.

3. Course on Agricultural Development Planning

The purpose of this course is to train the government officials needed by national and regional bodies responsible for planning agricultural development. It endeavours to provide a theoretical view and the technical instruments required for identifying problems and working out solutions to global aspects of regional and national agricultural development. The trainee learns about all the activities involved in the planning process (diagnosis, formulation, implementation and evaluation control, and reformulation) and the components of the planning system (organization, policy machinery, resources, etc.).

The following points are introduced and discussed during the course: the content and methodologies required for making the diagnoses (global and specific), the establishment of objectives and goals, and the formulation of the strategy of agricultural policy. Other subjects considered include the instrumental machinery of planned policy, programmes, projects, financing, reform of public agricultural administration, and regional and annual plans, in the context of their close relation with the activities involved in implementation and evaluation control and the reformulation of planned agricultural policy.

4. Course on Industrial Planning

This course is designed to provide training for government officials of national and regional agencies concerned with industrial development planning.

The course covers the salient aspects and problems of industrial development, sectoral programmes and manufacturing policy, and the main industrial planning concepts and methods.

/Moreover, the

Moreover, the various levels at which the manufacturing sector operates (global, specific industries and projects) are analysed with special emphasis on the identification, formulation and evaluation of industrial development projects.

5. Course on Investment and Pre-Investment Projects

This course is intended for professionals concerned with investment analysis and programming in the institutions that form part of the planning systems.

The course aims at associating training in investment analysis techniques with a broader view of development problems and planning.

It consists of two parts: an introductory part designed to provide a broad view of economic questions from the global and sectoral viewpoints, without which the treatment of projects would be incomplete or insufficient. In the second part, the analytical techniques and methods used in the formulation and evaluation of economic and social development projects are presented, discussed and applied. It covers all aspects of the project from the stage of identification of investment ideas and opportunities to the preparation and presentation of a feasibility study or final draft project on the basis of which the investment can be negotiated. It also includes some indications regarding the programming of the remaining activities involved in the final stage of preparation of the complete project, engineering and execution, and the subsequent phases in which the investment is actually made and in which the complete project is used for executing and operating the production unit.

