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CELADE
Latin American Demographic Centre

**THE IPALCA NETWORK:
AN ANSWER TO THE PROBLEMS OF LOCATING POPULATION INFORMATION
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

This document was prepared by Betty Johnson de Vodanovic, retired CELADE staff member, at the request of CELADE, for publication in the September 1994 issue of the *FID News Bulletin* of the International Federation of Documentation special issue on "The POPIN Network and the relevance of Population Information for Development", which is part of the POPIN activities for the International Conference on Population and Development.

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WHAT IS IPALCA?

The **Latin America Population Information Network (IPALCA)** was created to cover the needs and requirements of institutions in the Region requiring population information, in part through reinforcing and enlarging the use of the regional population bibliographic database of the Latin American Population Documentation System, **DOCPAL**. The latter was established in 1976 by the Latin American Demographic Center (**CELADE**), which is the regional population centre of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (**ECLAC**)

The **IPALCA Network** is a decentralized regional network devoted to specific activities on information processing, training and dissemination of information on population. Since 1988, the **IPALCA Network** has established various agreements of collaboration with national networks and governmental, university and private institutions and with individual users of bibliographic and numerical population information, following the recommendations of a regional seminar jointly sponsored by **CELADE** and the **Latin American Population Program (PROLAP)**.

In 1982, **CELADE** established a first agreement of collaboration with **SEADE** (**Sistema Estadual de Analise de Dados**) a Brazilian institution, in order to process population information data in Portuguese.

In 1983 the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**, in accordance with a specific recommendation of its member Governments began the organization of a bibliographic information database on migration, with the establishment of the **regional Latin American Information Centre on Migrations (CIMAL)**, which includes its bibliographic information on international migration in the **DOCPAL** database. The records in the database are marked with respect to their origin in **CIMA/IOM** or **CELADE**.

During the World Population Conference held in Mexico in 1984 **CELADE/DOCPAL** had the opportunity to inform and make known to other Latin American population centres in Bolivia, Mexico and Peru the methodology established by the Bibliographical Information System of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Other national population centres of Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Uruguay have gradually incorporated the use of this methodology. The only common requirement between the present participants is to work on population data and/or to agree to interchange this information. (See table of the participating centres of the **IPALCA NETWORK**).

The **CELADE/DOCPAL** database,- increased with the input of **IOM/CIMAL** and with the population information provided by the national centres already mentioned,- become a regional and international recipient/disseminator of bibliographic information prepared by national institutions and networks.

Since 1989 **CELADE/DOCPAL** and **IOM/CIMAL** jointly organized and coordinated the actions to promote the training of personnel working in regional population information units.

The IPALCA Network not only promotes the participation and interchange between national institutions working with numerical and/or bibliographical data but also reinforces their interest to receive information from institutions concerned with other subject matters.

IPALCA NETWORK GOALS

- to facilitate the interchange of bibliographic and numerical information within the national centres working on population in Latin America and the Caribbean
- to assist present and potential population information users to obtain the necessary documents and data required for carried out their work in governmental, private and university institutions, and
- to use new technologies to facilitate the interchange of information among national centres.

ITS STRUCTURE

Any Latin American and Caribbean institution interested in population and/or related data can participate in the IPALCA network. The institutional level of participation will depend on the number of available technical personnel (professionals and researchers); the existence of a library or information centre or unit. Members normally are expected to use the standard rules and methodology employed in common by CELADE/CELADE/ DOCPAL, ECLAC and CIMAL/IOM to facilitate data exchange or to be able to provide compatible files. These documentation centres and most of the members use MicroISIS from UNESCO on IBM PC-compatible microcomputers for maintaining and using their bibliographic databases.

Briefly, the components of the IPALCA Network are:

- An informal Secretariat jointly carried out by CELADE and PROLAP;
- The regional bibliographical database "DOCPAL", jointly maintained and updated by CELADE and IOM. The database is the main element for facilitating regional bibliographic interchange;
- Centers which are focal points of national networks, along with the national centres;
- Other participating centres under with individual status.

The program, funding and performance of the IPALCA Network, is jointly carried out by CELADE and PROLAP, which acted as the Executive Secretariat. Their communications are carried out by air mail, phone, and, lately by **INTERNET**.

CELADE and IOM are in charge of:

- The maintenance of the regional DOCPAL database which serves as the receptor/diffuser at the regional and world level of the bibliographic information processed by national networks.
- The relationship with international organizations in charge of the maintenance and updating of the *POPIN Thesaurus: Population Multilingual Thesaurus* which permits to assure the

inclusion and standardization of keywords in Spanish. The maintenance and updating of the Portuguese version has been delegated to Brazil.

- Training and technical assistance to requesting institutions.
- The strengthening of the relationships with international organizations in charge of developing the necessary actions to establish the rules for the world interchange of population information.
- The search for new procedures and technologies to improve the interchange of information.

PROLAP stimulates the participation of its members in the activities of the IPALCA Network and in the publication of the PROLAP Bulletin which serves as a liaison and as a way of diffusion of information among its members.

FUNDING

Initially, the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada provided the funds to create the DOCPAL methodology and database, the engagement of specialized personnel and the provision of specific services. Long-term support has been provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations regular budget. Many specific activities have been covered by funds from the Canadian International Development Agency and other funds have been received from the Netherlands. A number of the participating centres in the IPALCA Network have received seed money from IDRC and/or UNFPA.

SERVICES

CELADE/DOCPAL and IOM/CIMAL services are: bibliographic searches from the DOCPAL database (which is available on the local area network (LAN) in CELADE and the rest of ECLAC), provision of copies of documents cited in the database, and an abstract journal *DOCPAL Resúmenes*. Depending on their institutional capacity, IPALCA participating centres offer similar services to national users and often to regional users.

Since 1990, CELADE/DOCPAL and IOM/CIMAL have included the regional DOCPAL database on CD-ROM. This CD-ROM now also includes a combined database of the individual national databases of the participating centres in the IPALCA Network. A 1993 edition of the database (distributed in 1994) is part of an experimental CD-ROM produced by the Network of Networks, which is a consortium of many different networks in the region; this CD-ROM has a much improved interface which uses MicroISIS but does not assume knowledge of this software by the user.

The CD-ROM is the main service presently provided by the IPALCA Network to its users. This new technology allows each of the participating centres of the IPALCA Network and their regular users of population to access the DOCPAL and ECLAC databases, as well as other databases on the disk. Efforts are underway through the IPALCA Network to reach a more general audience of potential users of population information working in other fields in universities, government and the private sector.

IMPACT

The IPALCA Network has fostered within the region an increasing utilization of documents and searches of bibliographic population information. As a result of the strengthening of the capacities of national documentation units, some of these centres are already capable of providing horizontal cooperation to organize similar services in other countries in the region. For example, the Planning Ministry of Panama provided technical assistance for the organization of documentation units in the Planning Ministries of Ecuador, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

In 1994, INTERNET now opens up new possibilities to expand the connections among persons, centres and data banks, together the establishment of new lines of communication within each of the countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region.

CELADE/DOCPAL has been involved in activities of the **United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN)**, since conception in the mid-1970's and its creation in 1981. The IPALCA Network through collaboration with the presently newly invigorated POPIN, with its Coordination Unit in United Nations Headquarters, can gain access to the information of the African and Asian networks and share experiences on methodology and organization.

Betty Johnson de Vodanovic, Chilean librarian, was the chief of CELADE/DOCPAL during 15 years. Now she is retired from United Nations and occasionally acts as private consultant.

PARTICIPATING CENTRES IN THE IPALCA NETWORK

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| - CENEP: Centro de Estudios de Población | ARGENTINA |
| - INDEC: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos | ARGENTINA |
| - UPP: Unidad de Política de Población
CENDOP: Centro de Documentación en Población y Desarrollo
Ministerio de Planeamiento y Coordinación | BOLIVIA |
| - SEADE: Fundação Sistema Estadual de Análise de Dados
DOCPOP: Centro de Documentación | BRAZIL |
| - CEDEM: Centro de Estudios Demográficos
Biblioteca Especializada "Juan Pérez de la Riva"
Universidad de La Habana | CUBA |
| - PAESMI: Programa de Apoyo y Extensión en
Salud Materno Infantil
Centro de Documentación | CHILE |
| - CONADE: Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo
Centro de Documentación | ECUADOR |
| - Ministerio de Planificación y Coordinación del
Desarrollo Económico y Social
CENDOC: Centro de Documentación | EL SALVADOR |
| - CONSUPLANE: Consejo Superior de Planificación Económica | HONDURAS |
| - CONAPO: Consejo Nacional de Población
Centro de Documentación "Antonio Carrillo Flores"
(Colección Mexicana sobre Población y Mujer) | MEXICO |
| - Secretaría de Planificación y Presupuesto
Casa de la Presidencia | NICARAGUA |
| - Biblioteca del Ministerio de la Presidencia
Casa de la Presidencia | NICARAGUA |

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| - MIPPE: Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económica
División de Planificación Social
Departamento de Población
CENDOP: Centro de Documentación en Población y
Desarrollo Social | PANAMA |
| - BASE/ECTA: Educación, Comunicación, Tecnología Alternativa | PARAGUAY |
| - BASE/IS: Investigaciones Sociales | PARAGUAY |
| - CNP: Consejo Nacional de Población
CENDOC: Centro de Documentación | PERU |
| - AMIDEP: Asociación Multidisciplinaria de Investigación y
Docencia en Población | PERU |
| - PROFAMILIA: Asociación Dominicana
Pro-Bienestar de la Familia
Centro de Documentación | DOMINICAN REP |
| CIESU: Centro de Informaciones y Estudios del Uruguay
Centro de Documentación | URUGUAY |

RECENT NEW PARTICIPANTS

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| - APROFAM: Dirección de Educación e Información
Centro de Documentación | GUATEMALA |
| - IPARDES | BRASIL |
| - Sistema Agroecológicos de Manejo Comunal
en la Costa Norte del Perú | PERU |
| - Oficina Nacional de Planificación
Secretariado Nacional de Planificación
Departamento de Planificación Social | DOMINICAN REP. |
| - Universidad de Belgrano | ARGENTINA |