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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE



REPORT ON
CARICOM/ECLAC/CELADE TRAINING COURSE IN
POPULATION POLICY FORMULATION
(Saint Christopher and Nevis, 27 October - 5 November 1985)



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

INTRODUCTION

1. A training workshop on 'Population Policy Formulation' was held in St. Christopher and Nevis, 28 October - 5 November 1985. The course, which was organised by the CARICOM Secretariat, was designed and conducted by the ECLAC/CELADE Demography Unit of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

Attendance

2. A total of fifteen participants from the National Population Task Force of four countries attended (Dominica, Montserrat, Saint Christopher and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

Opening Session

3. The workshop began with an opening ceremony attended by a number of persons including several government ministers. The main address was delivered by the Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and Development, Hon. H. Heyliger, while brief remarks, and overviews were presented by Mr. Terrence Goldson, Project Director, CARICOM, Ms. Barbara Boland, Population Affairs Officer, ECLAC/CELADE Demography Unit, Hon. S.E. Morris, Minister

of Education, Health and Community Affairs, and Mr. A. Hart, Director of Planning, Saint Christopher and Nevis.

4. At the end of the workshop a brief evaluation session was held to gain feedback from participants on the effectiveness and usefulness of various aspects of the course.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the workshop were:

- (a) To improve skills for population policy formulation;
- (b) To broaden knowledge of population interrelations with socio-economic factors
- (c) To generate background information required for formulating a first draft of population policy;
- (d) To build skills in communicating results to political leaders and other planners/policy makers.

Course Content

6. The course was divided into four basic sections:

- (a) Introduction to population/development interrelations provision of theoretical background on social and economic determinants and consequences of population dynamics.
- (b) Basic demographic concepts/methodologies - to provide understanding of demographic data, uses and interpretation.

(c) Theories/methodologies for population policy formulation - provision of guidelines, strategies.

(d) Practical exercises - the development of a skeletal draft of a population policy by the participants for their own countries.

Participations<1>

7. Participants represented a wide cross-section of planners, policy-makers and statisticians from government ministries (Health, Planning, Education Family Planning Associations and Statistical Offices). This served to promote wide discussions of issues from a multisectoral perspective as well as to strengthen research and data analyses conducted during the workshop.

8. Some of the participants however, were not members of their country's population task forces which may present an obstacle to their involvement in the policy formulation process of their country.

<1> The list of participants is given in Annex I.

9. In an attempt to utilise the skills of these persons, however, a recommendation has been included in the Plan of Action proposing that the country's participants at the training course (both members and non-members of the task force) be designated as the technical working sub-committee of the National Population Task Force.

10. An additional participant to the course was the CARICOM population policy and programme officer whose responsibility, among others, is to provide follow-up relative to the activities of the countries, after the training course, and assist the Population Task Forces in getting the policy accepted in Parliament. The presence of this officer served to facilitate and enrich discussions as well as assist in shaping future activities.

Prerequisites

11. Participants were initially requested to bring to the workshop data/information needed as inputs into the policy formulation process. These included census data, vital statistics, development plans, literature on demographic trends, speeches, newspaper articles implying demographic concerns, and other socio-economic data.

12. All participants provided a wide variety of data/information as requested. However, the data collection process was better organised in some countries than in others.

Training Materials

13. Several handouts were presented at the workshop. This included course outlines, data lists, guidelines for policy formulation, guidelines for data analyses and copies of methodologies from other source books.

14. In addition, a number of reference materials - books, pamphlets, demographic analyses of countries - were put on display for use by participants during the course.

Time Schedule

15. Workshop sessions were conducted between 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. each day with a fifteen minute coffee break for each session.

16. In the original timetable, structured formal classroom lectures were planned for Saturday and Sunday also. However, on the request of participants, the course timetable was adjusted for classroom lectures to be conducted only on week-days, Monday to Friday, with the weekend reserved for informal working groups.

17. The resultant reduction in the length of time devoted to course lectures meant that lecturers had to develop additional training materials in the form of detailed guidelines in an effort to make up for lost teaching time and to assist participants in their informal country working sessions.

Output of Training Course

(a) Population Policy

18. The training course provided the participants with the theories and techniques for preparing the first draft of a population policy. Four draft national population policies were formulated at the end of the course for Montserrat, Dominica, Saint Christopher and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Each policy contained four sections: Rationale/Trend Analysis, Goal, Strategies/Measures and Institutional Arrangements.

19. In the first section, participants

- (a) Utilised the data/literature of their countries and analysed past, current and future trends;
- (b) Identified and clarified their country's perception of a population problem;
- (c) Discussed implications for development planning and
- (d) Provided a justification/rationale for their population policy.

20. Goals were identified in the second section of the policy which participants considered should be achieved by their countries in order to resolve some of their social and economic problems.

21. In the third section strategies/programmes/measures were designed in order to successfully accomplish the goals. Finally, an organisational chart was developed proposing the institutional arrangements most appropriate in each country for implementing the policy measures.

22. The content of the policies varied according to the social, economic and demographic situation of the countries. For example, whereas most of the countries designed strategies to reduce fertility, in contrast, the policy of Montserrat included incentives for increasing fertility.

(b) Plan of Action

23. In addition to formulating the first draft of a population policy, participants drafted a 'Plan of Action' for the National Population Task Forces. This consisted of recommendations for facilitating the process of policy formulation and gaining its legal and political acceptance.

24. The recommendations fell under six headings:

(a) Follow-up activities for development of first draft population policy;

- (b) Information/education/communication programmes required;
- (c) Need for additional research/data;
- (d) Co-ordination mechanisms with other organisations,
- (e) Further technical assistance from CARICOM and ECLAC,
- (f) Institutional arrangements for population task force.

25. The Plan of Action will be submitted to the National Population Task Forces in each country for eventual implementation.

Work Performance

26. One of the main objectives of the training course was the development of a skeletal draft of a population policy to be completed by the participants on return to their individual countries. However, participants demonstrated such a high degree of dedication and commitment that, instead of producing merely a skeletal draft, they developed what appears to be a very comprehensive first draft of a national population policy.

Evaluation

27. An evaluation by participants of the effectiveness and impact of the course was conducted for the purpose of strengthening the design of the next course scheduled to take

place in 1986. In general, participants considered the course to be very useful and effective in providing them with a great deal of knowledge and techniques for formulating a population policy in such a short space of time.

28. Members of the training course felt that they had also learnt from the exchange of experiences: the differences in the socio-economic situations of countries reinforced the learning experiences and brought out more clearly the various types of goals and strategies that are required to solve similar demographic situations.

29. Additional comments were made on the time frame and training material components of the course:-

(a) Time Frame

It was felt that, since many of the participants were not demographers, and thus, most of the teaching material being presented was new, more time was needed for absorption and assimilation of the new information to enable participants to make stronger inputs into the policy draft.

It was therefore recommended that the time frame of the course be expanded to at least two weeks.

(b) Training materials

With respect to the training component on methodology, it was suggested that additional materials be circulated

containing details of methodology for constructing various demographic concepts, lifetables, projections etc. This would enhance participants understanding of the subject.

(c) Data Lists/Prerequisites

In addition to the list of prerequisites circulated prior to the course, a detailed list of data requirements as well as a request for each country to develop a factsheet would save time on research activities required to develop the policy during the course of the training seminar.

Recommendations

30. With regard to the organisation of the second course for four other Caribbean countries in 1986, the following is being suggested:

(a) Selection of participants

Efforts should be made to ensure that participants are members of their country's National Population Task Forces.

(b) Composition of participants

Each country group should include a member of the Statistical Office as well as the Planning Ministry in order to strengthen the group's capabilities for data analyses and to promote wide ranging and balanced discussions necessary for inputs into policy.

(c) Preliminary data collection

The selection of a group leader responsible for co-ordinating the preliminary data collection activities prior to participation at the workshop would ensure the collection of adequate and appropriate data required for the practical working sessions.

(d) Time frame

Consideration should be given to expanding the Training course to two weeks.

General Remarks

31. The final product of the training course was the development of the first draft of an explicit national population policy as well as a Plan of Action to ensure legal and political acceptance of the policy.

32. Moreover, the approach to population policy formulation in these four countries has been quite different to that of the other two Caribbean countries with recently completed documents. Rather than utilising external consultants for document preparation, the CARICOM/ECLAC training course has enabled the countries to adopt a 'bottom up' approach in which a wide cross-section of the government community have been given the opportunity to acquire the skills to analyse their demographic,

economic and social situation for themselves and design goals and strategies based on their own knowledge and experience. In this way, the determination of goals and strategies of the population policies reflect the peculiarities of the individual countries and bear greater relevance to the realities of their socio-economic situation.

ANNEX I

CARICOM/ECLAC/CELADE TRAINING COURSE IN

POPULATION POLICY FORMULATION

(Saint Christopher and Nevis, 27 October - 5 November 1985)

PROVISIONAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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