

REPORT  
SECOND CARICOM/ECLAC REGIONAL TRAINING SEMINAR ON  
POPULATION POLICY FORMULATION  
7 - 18 July 1986  
BARBADOS

## INTRODUCTION

The second CARICOM/ECLAC Regional Training Course on 'Population Policy Formulation' was conducted in Barbados, 7-18 July 1986, for five countries - Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada and Saint Lucia. These training activities form part of the wider CARICOM 'Population and Development' Project, funded by USAID.

The seminar was officially opened by the Minister of Health, Hon. Keith Simmons at an opening ceremony on Monday 7 July. Other speakers at the ceremony included Mrs. Dawn Marshall, Senior Programme Officer, CARICOM; Mr. Neville Selman, Health and Population Advisor, USAID; Mr. Allison Daniel, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health and Dr. Barbara Boland, Population Affairs Officer, ECLAC/CELADE.

## OBJECTIVES OF COURSE

The aim of the course as stated in the project document was as follows:

### Goals

To strengthen capabilities of planners, policy makers, and members of the Population Policy Task Forces to enable them to be more self reliant in the formulation and implementation of their population policy, thereby accelerating the process of integrating population into development planning.

## Objectives

1. To improve skills for population policy formulation;
2. To broaden knowledge of population interrelations with socio-economic factors;
3. To generate background information required for formulation of first draft of population policy; and
4. To build skills in communicating results to political leaders and other planners/policy makers.

## PARTICIPANTS

A total of 18 persons attended from five countries. Participants were representatives of a wide cross section of the government sector (Statistical offices, Ministries of Health, Education, Finance and Planning) which proved useful for the development of population policies with a strong multisectoral component. Most delegations included a trained demographer on the team which greatly facilitated the development of the first section of the policy concerned with an analysis of past and likely future demographic trends.

Participants were also members of their country's National Population Task Forces with the exception of the delegation from Belize, whose government has not yet constituted a National Task Force. In the case of St. Lucia, which already possesses an explicit National Population Policy, the delegation, comprising representatives of their government's population policy implementing committee - the National Population Council - was given the responsibility of updating their national policy.

## DATA REQUIREMENTS

A list of data requirements for the policy formulation exercise was circulated to participating countries prior to the seminar. Consequently, participants brought a wide variety of data which included vital registration data, migration statistics, census data, various analyses of demographic trends, life tables, population projections, national development plans as well as documents related to other social and economic programmes.

In addition, each participant was provided with a package of training materials containing thirty-five handouts which included Population Policy documents and guidelines, lecture notes, tables, diagrams, and other policy-related reports considered essential background reading for the course.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

The course was restructured to provide participants with a broader perspective of the developmental factors interacting with population growth components as well as a deeper insight into the policies and programmes of other socio-economic sectors that may have some bearing on the goals and objectives of the population policy.

The training sessions were divided into three basic parts:

- (1) General demographic theories, concepts and implications for planning

In these sessions, participants were introduced to theoretical frameworks for analysing the determinants and consequences of fertility, mortality and migration as well as the general interrelations with other socio-economic sectors.

Basic demographic concepts were also discussed and methodologies such as the construction of life tables illustrated.

(ii) Social, Economic and Development Programmes

A number of socio-economic sectors were selected for more in-depth focus on the training programme. In this respect, individual sessions were devoted to the following topics:

- (a) Introduction to development planning
- (b) Employment and manpower planning
- (c) Education
- (d) Health and nutrition
- (e) Women and development
- (f) Family Planning and
- (g) Agriculture

Each session was conducted by a specialist in the field, who was also responsible for assisting participants in the formulation of population-related goals and objectives.

(iii) Guidelines for Population Policy Formulation

Lectures on the process of population policy formulation were presented on the first day of the seminar and participants were provided with guidelines for the development of a policy.

Additional lectures were also presented on the implementation aspects of policy development such as (a) Institutional Mechanisms - organisational structures required for implementation of policy and (b) Information/Education and Communication Strategies - necessary for awareness creation and the achievement of a broad consensus on the policy goals and objectives (c) Strategies/Guidelines for attaining legal

acceptance of the policy document in parliament and (d) guidelines for the development of a Plan of Action. During the latter session, the CARICOM programme officer was able to share her experiences gained from assisting the first four countries implement their plan of action and provide advice concerning the modification of activities to be incorporated into the new plans of action.

#### OUTPUT OF TRAINING SEMINAR

The final output of the seminar was (i) the formulation of the first draft of a national population policy for each country and (ii) the development of a Plan of Action for submission to the National Population Task Forces providing recommendations for finalising the document.

##### (i) Population Policy

Although the original aim of the seminar was the development of a skeletal draft of a policy to be fleshed out on return to their countries, participants seemed intent on producing a much more substantial document.

Given the restructured format of the programme and the additional time allotted to working group sessions, each delegation was able to produce the first draft of very comprehensive document containing four sections :

##### (a) Trend Analysis

The first section was devoted to an analysis of past demographic trends, a discussion of likely future changes in population growth components and an interpretation of the implications for the development plans of the country. Much

research had to be conducted for this section. In addition, the statistical data from sources such as census, vital registration and population projections were utilised to develop the rationale for a national population policy.

(b) Goals

In the second section, the goals of the policy, conceived as an integral part of the country's social and economic development process, were defined. For some countries, quantitative targets were set.

(c) Strategies

A series of strategies and measures were then developed in the third section for the successful accomplishment of the stated goals. These were essentially were multisectoral in dimension and reflected a broad spectrum of concerns. In many of the documents, the policies and programmes of specific public and private sector institutions were identified as having a direct bearing on the goals of the population policy.

(d) Institutional Mechanisms

In the final section, the institutional arrangements required to ensure the successful implementation of the policy were suggested. In addition, an organisational chart was developed to illustrate institutional responsibilities and information flows. There appeared to be a great deal of variation among countries with regard to the kinds of institutional mechanisms viewed as appropriate for the implementation of population policies. Despite the guidelines put forward emphasising the need for the Planning Ministries to play the pivotal role of co-ordination, the general consensus was

that country's should work around existing structures already charged with responsibilities for population matters, and that the capabilities of these institutions should be strengthened, where necessary. This, it was argued, would facilitate speedier acceptance of the document by the political directorate.

(ii) Plan of Action

The second document developed at the seminar was a Plan of Action to the National Population Task Force suggesting a number of strategies designed to facilitate the development of the draft policy and to obtain its legal acceptance in Parliament.

Many of the strategies were oriented towards information/education/communications activities for awareness creation and to obtain a broad consensus and political support. In addition, the strengthening of some of the institutions responsible for data collection and research was also recommended to the Task Force for action.

COMMENTS/EVALUATION

(i) Seminar Objectives

The basic goal of the seminar was successfully accomplished - the first drafts of five National Population Policies were developed. In addition to improving the skills of participants for formulation of their country's policy, the seminar served to generate background information and data required for the policy formulation process.

#### (ii) Participants

The strong motivation, dedication and enthusiasm displayed by members of the delegations in developing their country's policies is very encouraging and should provide the fuel needed to sustain them along the long road of policy fine-tuning required to gain legal acceptance of the document.

#### (iii) Implementation Schedule

The formulation of the first draft was accomplished through a system of division of labour, which was instituted within each delegation for development of separate sections of the policy. While this was effective for the production of a very comprehensive document, it did not fit in well with the implementation time table for the completion of assignments. Although a time schedule was provided for completion of the four policy sections over the course of the two weeks, deadlines were not always kept and most of the material for the documents were presented on the last two days of the seminar for typing. This, of course, placed much pressure on the persons responsible for editing and typing.

#### (iv) Programme Restructuring

The restructuring of the course content and the stronger focus on social and economic programmes provided participants with more indepth knowledge of the programming and problem solving aspects of other socio-economic sectors which greatly enhanced their ability to design more realistic goals as well as relevant strategies.



(v) Length of Course

The extension of the length of the seminar to two weeks provided adequate time for rest but, more important, allowed participants additional time for reflection and absorption of new materials. This was clearly reflected in the quality of the document which demonstrated more logical links between goals and strategies and in which there was evidence of greater awareness of the interactions between population growth components and the policies and programmes of other socio-economic sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) Data Prerequisites - A large portion of time was spent in developing the first section of the policy document - the trend analysis - which involved much research as well as data manipulation by the demographers on the course. It is being suggested that the demographic trend analysis be considered one of the data requirements to be prepared in the country prior to participation at the seminar. The process of refining this section could then be accomplished during the early part of the training programme.

(ii) Composition of Delegation - there is need for each country to nominate a leader of the delegation at the beginning of the course. One of the main responsibilities of this person would be to liaise with the course organisers with respect to the monitoring of the status of assignments and the scheduling of dates set for submission of policy document sections for typing. This should strengthen co-ordination of the preparatory research activities as well as ensure the completion of policy sections on time.

(iii) Addition of new component for training - Given the fact that a number of existing laws, policies and regulations may be inadvertently providing impediments to the effective achievement of the population policy goals, it is being recommended that a training session on the topic of legal reforms be conducted by a legal officer and a review made of specific areas such as civil code, labour code, family code, rights of women and illegitimate children. This should enhance the incorporation of the legal aspects of population related issues into the policy documents.

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