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INTER-AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

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Dr. Alfonso Reyes
Colegio de México
Sevilla 30
México, D. F., México

Estimado Dr. Reyes:

Recibido
Hace algun tiempo tuve la grata oportunidad de conocer su amable sobrino, José Luis Reyes, en aquel entonces estudiante en la Universidad de Maryland.

Entre otras cosas el me dijo que usted probablemente tuviera interés en el programa de nuestra organización, la Fundación Inter-americana de Educación. De conformidad con esta sugerencia y con el motivo de darle un idea del programa nuestro, yo le transmito junto con esto algunos folletos y artículos sobre el trabajo de la Fundación.

Con las mayores muestras de mi consideración personal, me remito,

Su atento y s.s.

Lloyd H. Hughes

Lloyd H. Hughes
Education Officer

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*A D Daniel Rubín de la Borbolla,
para colección de informaciones.*

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Inter-American Educational Foundation and Its Program

Recent research has shown that many of the educational problems of the American Republics are strikingly similar. As a result of Hemispheric agreements a cooperative program is being carried on in the several countries by the Inter-American Educational Foundation to strengthen educational facilities.



by LLOYD H. HUGHES

The Inter-American Educational Foundation was established by the Office of Inter-American Affairs as a Government corporation on September 25, 1943, for the purpose of implementing long-standing plans for Hemisphere cooperation in the solution of basic educational problems. Research by educators in the last 10 years has shown that the fundamental educational problems of the various American Republics are strikingly similar.

As a result, several recent Hemisphere Conferences have adopted resolutions proposing cooperative action, through bilateral and multilateral agreements, to improve and strengthen educational facilities. Resolutions suggesting such action were approved by the Pan American Scientific Conference of 1940, the Conference of Ministers of Education of the Central American Republics of 1942, the Conference of Ministers and Directors of Education of the American Republics of 1943, and the Chapultepec Conference of 1945.

In undertaking its program, the Foundation operated on the theory that educational cooperation between nations implied a mutual interest, a mutual desire to understand, and a mutual effort to disseminate knowledge of each other's system of education. Viewed from the United States, educational cooperation with the American Republics, in the Foundation's opinion, required a desire to understand the educational and related problems of Hemisphere neighbors, a friendly willingness to assist interested Latin Americans to develop educational philosophies and programs designed to attack

and overcome their educational problems, and a genuine and friendly desire to help those south of the border to understand our educational philosophies and programs.

Objectives

With these general principles in mind, the objectives of the Foundation were formulated. The general aim was the development of cooperative educational programs in collaboration with the Ministries of Education of the American Republics that would emphasize the improvement of elementary, secondary, and normal schools; vocational and health education, especially in rural areas; the improvement of rural life through community school programs; literacy; and the teaching of the English language.

The more immediate objectives were: (1) To further inter-American relations upon a basis of the fullest mutual understanding among all the peoples of the Hemisphere through educational programs based on cooperative agreements adapted to the needs of the several countries; (2) To raise the general levels of education, literacy, and living standards in the American Republics; (3) To prepare healthy and skilled workers and technicians for the rapidly expanding industrial establishments of the Hemisphere; (4) To develop locally instructional and other materials needed in the several countries; (5) To emphasize the development of community schools, especially in rural areas. A community school, as the Foundation visualizes it, is one that operates as a full-time educational center for children and adults; utilizes the resources of the locality to invigorate the curriculum, which must be based on a study of community structure, processes, and problems; improves the community through participation in its activities; and coordinates all the educational efforts of the region in which it is located. (6) To train nationals of the

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Motion pictures are proving a successful educational medium in Latin American countries. Here a group of *campesinos* wait outside a Bolivian rural school to see a film on good-health practices.

various countries as teachers and supervisors to carry on the programs initiated by the Foundation.

Set-up of Programs With Emphasis on Agriculture

The type of collaborative program to be undertaken in any country is determined by the educational authority of that country and not by the Foundation. When a Minister of Education determines the kind of program or the type of assistance that he wants, or even before this, if he requests it, the Foundation assigns an educational specialist to advise him on ways and means of carrying out his program.

All programs are cooperative between the United States and the participating governments. To date, all agreements signed have provided for 3-year cooperative programs, with each participating government, as well as the United States, making a proportionate contribution in funds, material, and personnel. Although the Foundation's support has been guaranteed to these programs for a 3-year period, realization of its objectives will take a much longer time, and all that can be expected in 3 years is the acceptance of the general program by the host country and its integration into the national public school system. By concentrating on one or two major educational problems in each country, it is hoped that during the life of the Foundation's programs

sufficient momentum can be developed to insure the continuance of projects initiated.

Every country has its own peculiar problems. Consequently, the type of program has varied in accordance with these problems and the wishes of the educational authorities. Certain things, however, are common to all programs. All provide for sending educational specialists from the United States to work with the Minister of Education and his staff, the development of teaching materials, and the interchange of educators. Since life in Latin America is predominantly rural and agricultural, even in Mexico and Bolivia which usually are thought to be primarily producers of metal, emphasis has been given to agricultural training in almost all programs. This emphasis can be noted in the activities in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Haiti, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. In these countries an attempt is being made through the schools to improve agricultural techniques and practices, so that rural diet and economy may be improved.

The interchange of teachers and supervisors is another important aspect of all programs. Teachers and supervisors are carefully selected. Only those Latin Americans who have established positions in education to which they plan to return are eligible for interchange grants. This policy of selection has

been followed to prevent the awarding of interchange grants to persons who merely want to come to the United States for the trip or who on their return home are not assured of positions in some way related to the Foundation's area of operation. The Foundation has insisted that all interchanges be definitely related to and a part of the action programs being carried out in the various countries. Educators from the United States who participate in interchanges are also carefully selected. Only those with the necessary technical competence, language background, and adaptability are selected for service. The Foundation does not assume administrative responsibility for the programs it is assisting to develop, but only gives technical advice and guidance to local administrators who have full responsibility for the execution of the cooperative programs.

Some Programs Already Operating

To date, agreements have been signed and programs are in operation in 14 countries. Though the details of these agreements differ, they fall into three general types. Principal emphasis is on vocational education in the programs of the Dominican Republic, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and one of the two programs adopted in Brazil. In Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and in the second Brazilian program the main emphasis is on rural education and the training of teachers for rural schools. In Chile the program is unique and is concerned exclusively with assistance to a Chilean Commission charged with responsibility for the reorganization of secondary education.

Panama's Program Is Vocational Type

Panama represents an example of an exclusively vocational program. Under the terms of the agreement signed by the United States and Panama a 3-year cooperative program was inaugurated. Each country contributed \$50,000 to provide for interchanges of educators, the preparation and distribution of educational materials, and the drafting of local projects for the furtherance of Panama's vocational education program. In addition, the treasury of Panama has been authorized to float a bond issue of \$2,000,000 to be used in the construction and equipment of a new vocational school in Panama City and smaller vocational schools in outlying cities. Consultant

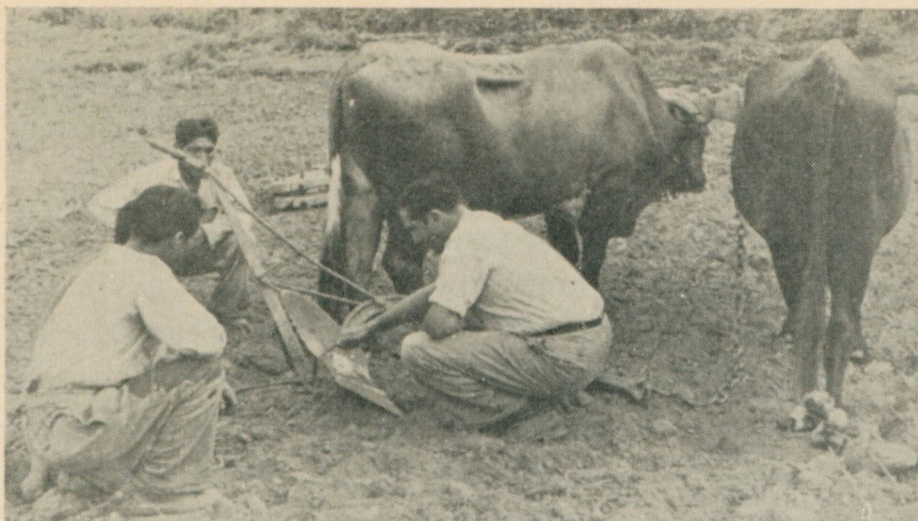
service provided by the Foundation will be used primarily to work with the Government of Panama on the utilization of the bond issue for vocational education.

In response to a request from the Panamanian Government, the Foundation in 1944 sent Dr. George H. Parkes, Director of the Technical Institute of Williamsport, Pa., to Panama to study the vocational needs of that country and to suggest a program based on the best United States practices and adapted to Panama's needs. After visiting many schools, commercial establishments, industrial and technical plants, talking to workmen, foremen, and supervisors, and discussing the problems with many educators, Dr. Parkes recommended a three-unit program consisting of a basic artisan course, a technical course, and a superior course. Following Dr. Parkes' return to the United States, Dr. Nariño Rivera, Director of the Escuela de Artes y Oficios, came to the United States to study under his guidance. He has returned to Panama and is assisting in the planning of the new school.

The program is still in the initial stages, but it shows much promise and indicates the extent to which other countries are willing to go with financial support once their interest and enthusiasm are aroused. This program benefits not only Panama but also the United States. Panamanians, on the completion of their training, will work for the Canal Zone and the United States Army and Navy. Because of the acute shortage of industrial personnel in Panama and the United States, workers trained in this Panamanian vocational school will not be in competition with workers from the United States.



A class in English in a Guatemala City grade school.



A Peruvian farmer receives instruction as part of his country's agricultural education program.

Bolivia Has Rural Education Program

Bolivia's program emphasizes rural education. Recently the Ministry of Education completed a thoroughgoing reorganization of the Department of Rural Education in accordance with plans suggested by Ernest E. Maes, of the Foundation. The objectives of the program are to bring together in one department all rural-education activities, to develop a more practical and functional curriculum, to improve the preparation and training of rural teachers, to interest rural schools in the life and problems of the communities in which they are located, and to make available to rural schools better types of equipment and teaching materials.

Plans have also been made to improve agricultural skills and techniques, to develop the use of more effective tools, and to improve the methods and materials of instruction. Several projects are in operation including: Agricultural instruction for 20 rural supervisors; training in health education for a group of rural supervisors; training in home economics and nutrition for a group of women teachers; and cooperation with Peru in the development of an education program for the Indians of the Lake Titicaca Basin. The Health and Sanitation Division of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs and the Bolivian Development Corporation are collaborating in the development of these projects. In addition, Bolivia is contributing personnel, equipment, school buildings, and franking privileges to the program.

Chile Reorganizes Secondary Education

In Chile the Ministry of Education is planning a complete reorganization of secondary education, and has requested consultants and technical advisers

from the United States to assist. This personnel has been requested to make necessary background studies and to advise the Chilean specialists having administrative responsibility for the reorganization. In addition, a number of Chilean educators will come to the United States to observe and study secondary education, and also to lecture and write about Chile and Chilean education. Dr. Harold Spears, one of the leading authorities in secondary education in the United States, has been appointed Special Representative to Chile. He and a staff of specialists in home economics, English, guidance, vocational education, art education, science education, physical and health education, and mathematics have arrived in Chile and are working with Chilean educators in the program of reorganization. One other specialist in social science education has been selected and will arrive there soon. Chile, like Bolivia, is contributing personnel, equipment, school buildings, and franking privileges to the cooperative program.

Collaborative Program A Long-Range One

Through the cooperative education programs, educators of the American Republics, for the first time, are collaborating on an extensive scale. The educational experiences and philosophies of the various countries have been organized into a vast and common pool of knowledge, which is now available to all of the Hemisphere Republics. It is hoped that education in the United States will benefit as much from this cooperative venture as education in any of the other American Republics. Our experience in technical and scientific education can contribute much to the vitalization of technical and vocational training programs in the other American Republics. At the same time, education in the United States can benefit from contact with the humanistic and cultural programs developed by our Latin American neighbors. Intercultural programs in the United States, in particular, can profit from a study of the culture that prevails throughout Latin America.

Results so far are encouraging and indicate that progress is being made toward a solution of fundamental educational problems. Final evaluation of the Foundation's work will have to wait, however, until the generation now in school reaches maturity. Only then will it be possible to measure the Foundation's contributions concretely.