

Technical Assistance in Education

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How does the Point IV Program in education operate? This question is answered, along with others, in this article by Paul E. Smith, director, International Educational Programs, Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, Washington 25, D. C.

WHEN President Truman introduced the Point IV Program to the world in his inaugural address on January 20, 1949, he spoke about the betterment of mankind. The following from the address gives hope to freedom-loving nations:

"For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people . . . I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life. And, in cooperation with other nations, we should foster capital investment in areas needing development . . . Only by helping the least fortunate of its members to help themselves can the human family achieve the decent, satisfying life that is the right of all people . . . Democracy alone can supply the vitalizing force to stir the peoples of the world into triumphant action, not only against their human oppressors, but also against their ancient enemies—hunger, misery, and despair."

With these compelling words, the Point IV Program was launched in an effort to create stable economic conditions necessary for world peace. Here is a program of balance, of wisdom, based upon a pervading sense of social con-

sciousness. Here also is a program of great urgency—needed in these troubled times. Why such a program is necessary in the current crisis requires little further discussion at this point because the peoples of the free world know that need and suffering are obstructions to peace and security.

Point IV in Operation

How Point IV operates, however, may be of more than passing interest. With the passage of Public Law 535, 81st Congress, the United States committed itself to a program of combating want, hunger and ignorance. Included in the Act for International Development was the authority to implement the Point IV Program.

This mechanism provided for the organization of the Technical Cooperation Administration in the Department of State. Unlike many other programs of foreign aid, Point Four is one in which effective operation does not rest upon the allocation of money to economically underdeveloped areas. It is an enterprise of technical assistance, as well as of foreign investment of capital. Its over-all success is dependent more upon international cooperation than upon financial pump-priming. Because it is a long-range program linked to foreign policy, Point IV was located in

the Department of State. The enabling legislation also provided for the creation of an advisory board to recommend action to the President, and the establishment of an Interdepartmental Advisory Council composed of representatives of U.S. departments and agencies so that the total technical competence and skill of the Government are available to the administration of the technical assistance program.

Over-all, the Point IV Program may be envisaged as a phalanx attacking disease, hunger, ignorance. Technicians in many fields are needed: Houses have to be built, roads constructed, swamps drained, schools established and teachers trained, food produced, as well as many other essential activities. The success of Point IV depends upon the whole-hearted team work on the part of the technicians as well as upon the cooperation between governments.

How Projects Originate

Point IV projects originate in the government of another country. The request for assistance comes through the Foreign Office of the other government to the U.S. diplomatic mission. After review by the mission staff, it is transmitted to the Department of State with the mission's evaluation.

There follows a detailed analysis by the Technical Cooperation Administration in cooperation with interested government agencies. On completion of the analysis the request is granted, rejected, or held for future consideration. If a project is authorized, then funds are granted for its operation.

Its wide variety of projects in all fields makes impossible an outline of

general procedures which are used in the Point IV Program in education. The following examples show the differing patterns. In one country where UNESCO has already made a survey of educational needs, a project may be authorized to supplement and complement the staff which UNESCO has made available. There may be needs in teacher-training programs, vocational education, textbook writing and adult education. The role of the Office of Education, then, once it is authorized by the Technical Cooperation Administration to proceed, is to recruit a person as head of a party in education along with advisors, specialists and teachers in the fields that are needed.

Teams Go To Work

As the team sets to work, it cooperates fully with the specialists assigned by UNESCO as well as with Ministry of Education officials in working out the program for that country.

At the same time, the chief of the education mission is in constant touch with the chiefs of other U.S. teams, such as those in health and agriculture, so that a total impact may be made on the problems of the country. Through the educational programs for adults, for example, come the systematic attacks on problems of health and agriculture.

In another country American educators, working with the local education officials, demonstrate the effectiveness of story books, blackboards and practical examples instead of learning by rote. They also aid in improving and lighting classrooms and installing curricula in vocational training instead of just the three R's.

In still another instance, one technician will go to a country to work with the Ministry of Education to assist the Ministry in determining needs and in setting priorities to meet these needs. Upon his return to the United States, the technician reports his findings and makes recommendations for future action.

In all countries the Point IV Program starts where the people are and with what resources are available; it foresees the development of skills, not by imposing a new system, but by using those at hand and developing them.

Point IV rests on the premise that to increase production, there must be skilled workers; and these workers must be taught. It goes further in that to maintain a democratic free society, there must be a great body of literate citizens who understand issues and vote wisely.

One Team Reports

Just as Point IV was beginning, the Office of Education under another program had the opportunity to send a man and his wife to an economically underdeveloped country. The man taught agriculture, his wife home economics. Together they did a grand job completely within the spirit of Point IV. Witness a part of their report about the planting season:

We got the seed here just in time for planting. Otto had the ground all prepared ahead of time. Then came a mad scramble getting the seed down in between rains, which is the way you have to do here, since you can't plant at all until after the rainy season starts. The farm manager, farm hands, agricultural stu-

dents, Otto, and yes even I helped get those seed in the ground. One student, who was a little more precocious than the others, was allowed to put in a special plot of pop corn. Just as he started dropping the seed in the rows, a dark cloud came up. He came running to Otto for more help. Two other students and I grabbed some seed and ran to help him. When we were nearly through it began to rain, and Hkin Ma Aye was very distressed when, after he implored me to go under shelter, I kept on helping him until his precious corn from America was all planted. While this was going on, Otto was getting wet also, planting beans. Different ones keep telling us that never before have they seen white people do such things.

In setting up the first food preserving unit in the part of Burma where they were stationed, the home economics teachers used what was at hand to improve the living conditions. Here is an account of the vinegar making and its results:

As soon as the vinegar which I made from some wild figs (free to the public) right after I reached Taunggyi was ripe, we arranged for and gave a pickle making, vinegar and kraut making demonstration. We used the 100 copies of the directions for making these things that we had prepared. About 100 people were present for the demonstration, and several have told me that they have made some of these things since. Yesterday one man brought me a sample of the vinegar he had made by our directions. He was delighted with it. 'Just think', he said, 'it was made of free wild fruit that generally goes to waste, and even though free,

it has a better taste, aroma and sourness than the imported vinegar which sells for over \$1.50 a bottle.'

The preservation of food and juices made a profound effect on the people. Some of the students at this center come quite a distance to attend the school. And of more than passing interest is the letter one of the pupils wrote to this small pre-Point IV team upon his return to his home:

I arrived back in Old Lashio on the 21st Dec. at noon. As soon as I arrived at Lashio, I went and saw Sao Hom Hpa, (North Hsenwi Sawbwa) Special Commissioner of Shan State. (He is 2nd only in importance to the Shan Minister Himself) and he promised me to get me canning apparatus and he asked me to start teaching to the Shan Youths as soon as I get the apparatus. I also hope that a canning community will be formed very soonly. I start doing what you asked all pupils to do, and I will give a speech in Shan language on canning to the Shan Youth League at North Hsenwi on the coming Monday.

I arrived back in Lashio safely as you prayed for me. I pray and hope that you will return to America and back to Burma again safely, and see and help us to do work that you and all of us are dreaming. I would be very much obliged if you will kindly find and send me some books on food preservation and canning from America.

These reports are representative of the types of activities in education to which Point IV is addressing itself. These reports also reveal the kinds of people needed for this enterprise. The Office of Education is assembling a roster of educators in various fields so that when agreements between this country and other countries are signed, there will be little time lost in getting a program under way.

Persons selected to serve as members of U.S. Educational Field Parties abroad are appointed by the U.S. Commissioner of Education, subject to the approval by the Administrator, Technical Cooperation Administration of the Department of State. Appointments are normally for a period of two years.

It is hoped that the roster will include persons who could serve as chief of party, who would be responsible for the entire Point IV educational program in the country of assignment. Needed also are persons who would carry responsibility for a program in a specific state, province or geographic area. To assist these officers there is need for project supervisors and instructors in specific units of activity. They will conduct classes, prepare instructional material, initiate workshops and perform other duties.

Educators interested in the Point IV educational program should write to the International Educational Programs Branch, Office of Education, Washington 25, D.C.

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