

**MATERIALES DE ENSEÑANZA EN  
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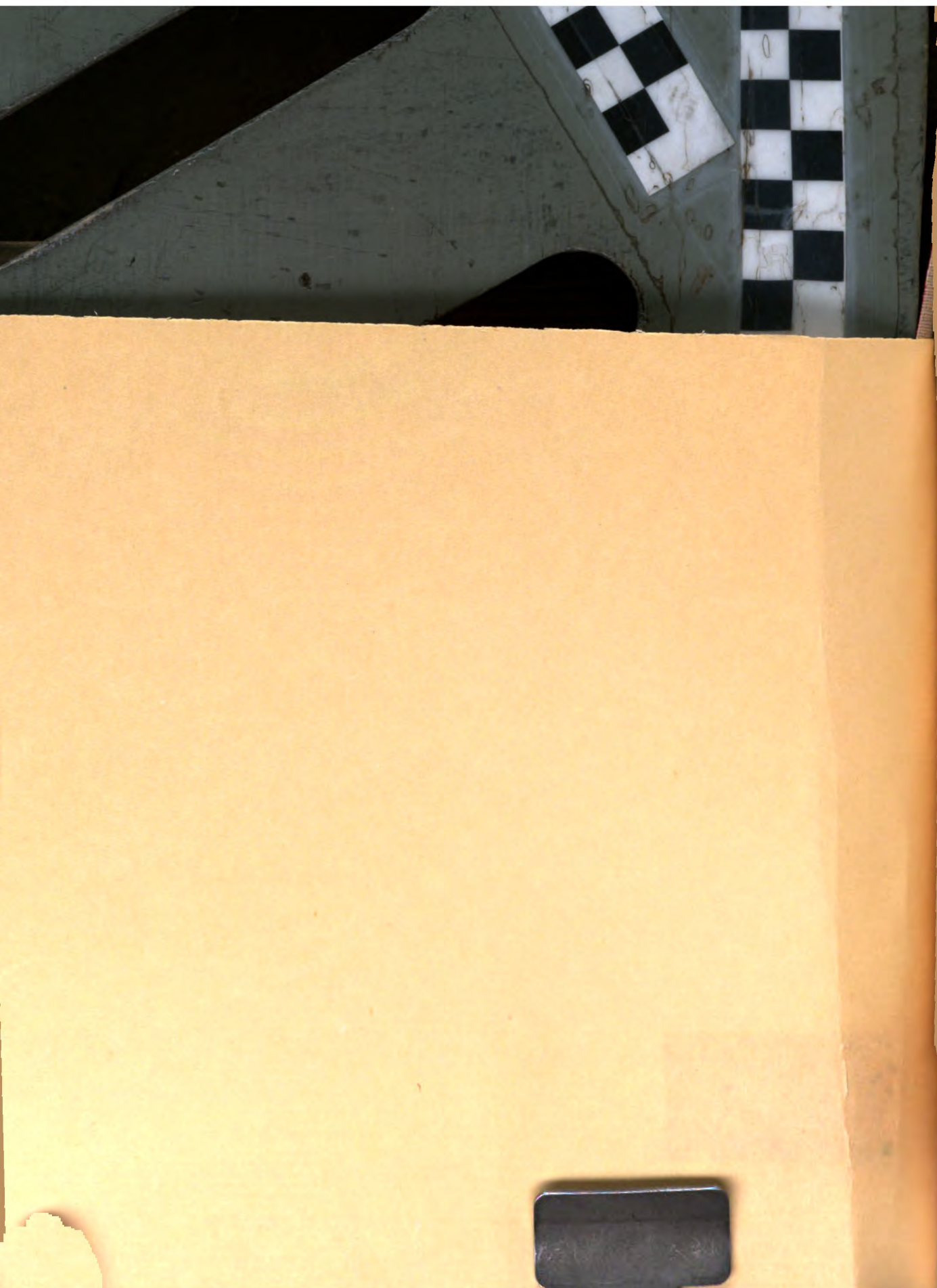
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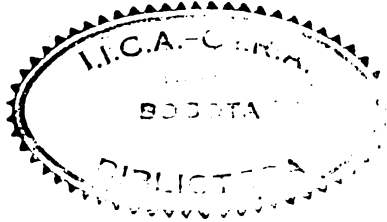
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A JOB TO BE DONE

by

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## A JOB TO BE DONE

Joseph Di Franco

What is it that the Latin Americans want their Extension Services to do? The primary aim of Extension should be to develop people and the development of rural areas. Latin America is still predominately a rural society engaged in agricultural enterprises. Improving agricultural production, therefore, is one major area that needs attention. Increasing amounts of food and fiber are essential to sustain growing populations and to support industrial expansion.

In addition to increasing production of food and fiber there is also the need to keep people on the land. Latin American industry is expanding but as yet not at a sufficient rate to absorb the increase in population. Unemployment is still relatively high as indicated by the low salaries and daily wages paid at all levels of the economy. To rapid a migration from farm to city would aggravate this situation. Rural occupations, however, must provide adequate incomes. It is an accepted fact that increased rural incomes stimulate expansion. A subsistence income in rural areas does not contribute much toward national prosperity.

These needs seem obvious, but what is the real objective behind these needs? To serious minded "Latinos", it is to develop an adequate citizenry working for and with the national interests. One major national interest is to provide for a better level of living for its people. If this is done, will it not raise the Latin American nations to a more prominent place among the nations of the world? People who can take care of themselves, contribute much to world development.

Extension services can contribute to the development of people. The major goals in Extension, therefore, are first to help rural people raise themselves and their city brothers to higher levels of living and second, to stimulate people

to promote national welfare. This means that all the citizens must be concerned and therefore must be involved.

The question now arises as to the nature of this effort. Many prominent leaders of Latin America have expressed in one way or another that many difficulties and problems can be overcome by improving or expanding the system of agricultural education. Many others have agreed that the job is one best solved by education of its people. This implies that the schools have a major role in this responsibility. The work the schools are doing in the most part, they are doing well. There is no argument that the formal education programs should be expanded. However, to obtain more impact in the present we need to also prescribe a program of Education for Adults. Education for adults especially the rural adult population, is another tremendous task. There is a need for two educational systems that may be utilized. One is the formal school programs and the other, the out-of-school program. The two complement each other.

It is interesting to note that those nations leading the world in formal education facilities also lead in out-of-school education. The educational jobs are different and require different approaches, different programs and even different personnel. However, they are both educational jobs.

In the case of out-of-school education, the question is education for whom? It has already been stated that it should be education to help the rural citizenry contribute more to the national welfare. This national problem is made up of the collective problems of its individual citizens. Part of the job then is to find out what the needs of the rural people are.

Many of the needs are obvious. Too often, however, those involved do not see these needs in the same priority. Many times the needs of rural people as seen by government officials

are different from needs the rural people feel are important. Although both groups may be right, this leads to conflicts and causes some government leaders to get into trouble. They forge ahead preferring to dictate a program of education. To these individuals, caution is advised.

An analogy may be in order. For example, most fathers have the best interest of their children at heart. They provide opportunities for them to learn how to get along for that day when they can no longer be together. What happens in a family where the father makes all the decisions? His children only carry out orders, but they are unable to make decisions in emergencies or when they are left alone. The father who holds too tightly to the purse strings without taking the family into his confidence, finds his family plotting against him and each other to obtain more. This kind of father must rule by force, not through respect. His sincerity is not in question. On the contrary, he may force his decisions upon them because he is concerned for them. Unfortunately, his methods defeat him.

People who have an interest or share in attaining something not only work for it but help to protect it.

For instance, providing new homes for those who live in slums often only results in a temporary respite before a new slum develops. After all, when the new home becomes old again, someone will provide better quarters. The people usually do not respect the property because it is not their own. Why should they take care of it? Who knows who will benefit in the future since it is not their own? This leads to thinking that these people are stupid, useless and deplorable. However, the man who is given an opportunity to earn or build himself a home, not only works for the improvement, but takes care of it. In this case he is not considered stupid or useless.

This indicates that education should be an integral part of any program or project designed to help people improve. Education is needed that involves people who have problems.

This education should be for and with the people in rural areas.

Before attempting to discuss further what kind of education this should be, it is necessary to keep in mind what the needs of rural "Latinos" are.

It has already been stated that there is a shortage of the basic necessities of life. In too much of Latin America, rural people live on a day-to-day basis. Many existing on a subsistence level. It is obvious that even in the rural areas there is a need to increase food and fiber to provide a more adequately balanced diet and provide better living conditions. Here is where the need develops for more basic technological support. But the technology must be brought to the people and they must be helped to put this knowledge to work.

Many leaders say that the best way to increase agricultural production is to provide more credit, more land, equipment, etc. These services are necessary. On the other hand, what good is credit unless farmers know how to put credit to work? What good is agricultural research unless farmers can interpret it and apply it? What good are cooperatives if farmers do not know their responsibilities? What good is government if its citizens do not support it? All of these services become increasingly important as rural individuals know how to use these aids to progress. This indicates a need for more education. An educational process that helps them to educate themselves.

This also means that rural people need help; an educational process does not just happen; someone has to start the process.

People need encouragement. They need the right mutual environment, special attention, and advice. They need to be shown the way and helped to develop the ability to think for themselves. They need to be able to make decisions. Again we repeat as this is basically an educational job. Latin American Extension services must accept this responsibility and they must find a way to involve people in this educational process. Latin American governments must provide their people with an educational



opportunity to help them help themselves. Extension services must live up to the expectations of their government and the people they serve. And of course, the people must be given a chance to improve themselves and their country.

In all that has been said not much new has been added. It is only another attempt to reinforce the argument that the basic job for progress is education. That Extension services can support and speed up progress through providing educational opportunities for rural adults.

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