

COMMUNICATION

SAREC'S LATIN AMERICAN PROGRAM

SAREC, the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries, is a public agency established in 1975. Its principal objective is to advise the Swedish Government and the Swedish International Development Authority, SIDA, on assistance to be given to research institutions in developing countries and research on development problems within international organizations. SAREC is governed by a board composed of ten University and Government representatives. The SAREC secretariat is composed of a General Secretary, 10 research officers and administrative staff. Its overall budget for the fiscal year July 1978—June 1979 amounts to 110 million Swedish kronor i.e. close to 22 million dollars.

SAREC's task in Swedish co-operation for development is to assist countries of the Third World to obtain better access to the results of international research and, above all, to increase their own research capacity. In direct co-operation with some countries receiving Swedish aid — so-called "program countries" — SAREC gives support for efforts at promoting a development-oriented research policy and for improving the working conditions for researchers in these countries e.g. by open-ended support to national research councils.

SAREC also contributes to the financing of research in developing countries and at international institutes on matters of significance for several developing countries. Support is given to the principle that research is to be conducted to a growing extent in developing countries or in co-operation between developing countries. SAREC's objective is "to promote research that can assist the developing countries in achieving a greater measure of self-reliance and economic and social justice". SAREC is, however, not restricted only to collaboration with Swedish aid program countries.

Most Swedish development assistance has tended to concentrate on such program countries, most of which are in Africa and Asia. Vietnam, India and Tanzania are among the main recipient countries. According to a parliamentary decision one criterion for selecting "programme countries" is, that the country should strive for socio-economic development and social justice.

Both for historical, economical and political reasons little Swedish development aid has been going to Latin American countries. The only notable exceptions have been Chile during the Popular Unity Government and Cuba. However, aid to Chile was interrupted upon the military coup in September 1973. Aid to Cuba, according to a parliamentary decision, is to be gradually replaced by new forms of cooperation including commercial, cultural and scientific exchange programs.

SAREC's principal objective is thus to contribute to *building research capacity* in countries of the Third World. However, under certain circumstances it is at least as important to contribute to a better utilization or maintenance of existing capacity or, still more, to *prevent the destruction* of research capacity. Clearly the latter objective becomes the more important under present circumstances in some parts of Latin America where the political conditions make the continuation of important development research efforts extremely difficult.

SAREC has argued that Sweden can best contribute to building or preventing the destruction of research capacity by promoting programs of *regional or sub-regional cooperation* in the field of development research. Examples of such programs being supported by SAREC constitute the Latin American Council for Social Sciences, *CLASO*, which, similarly to its African counterpart *CODESRIA*, has requested and received yearly support from Sweden upon recommendation by SAREC. SAREC does not have the administrative capacity to provide individual scholars with research grants. Some of these are being catered for by *CLACSO* scholarship programs.

Similarly, the Central American University Council, *CSUCA*, based in Costa Rica, is being supported for its social science research program.

A regional research program into population problems in Latin America, *PISPAL*, has been supported by Sweden for some years.

SEPLA, the permanent seminar on Latin America, based in Mexico with a group of prominent researchers in exile also receives a grant from Sweden. The same is true for *ILET*, the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies in Mexico.

CIP, the International Potato Center in Lima, Peru is part of an international agricultural research consortium *CGIAR*, also supported by SAREC.

In addition to fostering regional cooperation in the field of social sciences SAREC tries primarily to support critically oriented development research centers and institutions within the countries. SAREC's "Southern Cone Program" is an example initiated experimentally in 1978.

In the second place support should be given to researchers who have been forced to emigrate from their countries of origin or work. Part of the research institutions in Mexico supported by Sweden falls into this category.

In the third place, although only exceptionally, support has been given to

research efforts of exiled Latin American researchers in European countries, who work under very difficult economic circumstances. Latin American researchers in Sweden can compete with Swedish researchers for research grants that are distributed annually among Swedish research institutions.

The SOUTHERN CONE PROGRAM is part of a recent effort to assist independent national research centers in the countries most exposed to threat to the traditional "academic freedom". Thus support is given to research centers that are deemed to be able to maintain and develop their research activities in spite of adverse political conditions. More often than not such research has to be carried out by research centers outside the traditional university structure.

Among the institutes thus supported by SAREC are *CEBRAP*, the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning in São Paulo, which since 1969 has been doing important cross-disciplinary research into the functioning of the Brazilian society including economic growth, population distribution and fertility, urbanization patterns, election systems, the church etc. Another independent research center is *CEDES* in Buenos Aires, where an interdisciplinary research group carries out research into problems of economic development and social structure in Argentina. In Argentina ad-hoc support has also been given to the *Bariloche Institute* in order to finalize reports on ongoing research projects in the natural and social sciences and to *CICSO*.

In Chile support is given to the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, *FLACSO*, which, being an international organization, has been able to continue its task as an independent research institution with a critical focus in spite of the difficult situation in this country.

Similarly, in Uruguay a research grant has been provided to *CINVE*, the Centre for Economic Research.

These programs taken together represent an annual Swedish contribution of about eight million Swedish kronor i.e. little more than 1,5 million dollars or eight per cent of SAREC's annual budget.

The contents of the Latin American Program will be evaluated towards the end of 1978. Until then new contributions will only exceptionally be granted. In continued close collaboration with our Latin American colleagues we will then discuss the forms of continuation of present programs or introduction of new ones to be presented to SAREC's board with the objective to assist the Latin American research community in its efforts to overcome the present difficulties.

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(For further references, SAREC's annual reports and special research reports can be requested from SAREC c/o SIDA, S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden.)