

# How has T.E.E. Succeeded in Latin America?

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## **The Beginning of T.E.E.**

Theological Education by Extension has been an item of major interest in many areas of the church for about 15 years. Some have called it "A breath of fresh air for missions," others have considered it "The hottest thing to hit the mission circuit since the indigenous church policy," and others, a new way of developing leadership which will literally save the church.

Though there are many aspects to Theological Education by Extension, it is basically an attempt to meet the leadership needs of the church which are not being met by the traditional methods and training programs now in effect. It differs from the traditional type of program in almost every respect with the exception of this end result. In place of seeking people who are to be prepared for leadership in the church, it seeks to train the natural leaders already in the church for even greater service. This training is to be done without dislocating the student from his place of residence or disrupting his normal life and method of earning a living. The training is given by means of printed materials, which afford the opportunity for study and self-teaching. This is combined with periodic meetings with an instructor or tutor to discuss and review what should have been learned. The student is able to study as many subjects as he wishes and can go as fast as he is able without disrupting the whole idea of a class. The teacher is largely replaced by programmed texts which enable the student to learn the materials required and to learn how to study. His activity in the actual work of the church's program affords an opportunity to put the newly acquired knowledge to use and to be convinced of the relevance of that which he is learning. T.E.E. is not an altogether new idea. It is rather an attempt to apply to the field of theology the principles and procedures of education by extension which have been in use with success in other fields.

T.E.E. had its beginning in Latin America about 1962 in the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala. The experiment was prompted by circumstances and need. The traditional type of seminary program had been active for more than 25 years in a mission over 80 years old, but the problem of adequate and sufficient leadership in the church was still with them. For lack of trained leadership, many churches had no other than that which had developed in the local churches themselves. Many of the leaders who were trained in the seminary failed to gain acceptance in the society that looked to the older experienced for leadership rather than to the younger educated men. Many of the graduates suffered not only from the lack of acceptance, but they found that they no longer fit into the rural more primitive way of life. In many cases they were over trained and could not be supported as they had grown accustomed without outside funds. Thus the plan to bring the school or the sem to the student rather than the student to the sem was developed. Plans were made to train on several levels. It was felt that there would be limitations for many who were to be trained and the need for training at the highest academic level was not considered necessary for all the areas of the church. The plan included the items mentioned: home study, regular consultations with the instructor and continued activity putting into action that which had been learned.

The promoters of this new type of training stated: Our direct purpose is not to train theologians since that kind of training almost by definition involves direct contact with the theologians of the world themselves, and that involves going where they are. Yet we do expect to invite outstanding people to the seminary for special conferences several times a year. Our direct purpose is that of refining and enhancing the skills that already are manifest on the congregational level. In other words, the idea was to give practical training to the existing leaders to permit them to function more effectively and widely.

The program was not wholeheartedly and enthusiastically accepted by all, but it was begun. At first a fairly traditional curriculum was followed and included the following:

First Year	Second Year	Third Year
1. O.T. and N.T. Introduction	1. Theology	1. Church Administration
2. Matthew	2. Genesis and Exodus	2. Jeremiah and Romans
3. Church History	3. Religious Movements	3. Sects
4. Homiletics	4. Christian Education	4. Pastoral Psychology
5. Psychology and Sociology	5. Communication	5. Hygiene

Other courses were offered as optional. While the curriculum was considered as traditional in nature, all of the Bible courses were based on the inductive method with the idea that the student would have the tools necessary to continue to study the Bible on his own. Again the idea was to teach how to study as well as teaching that which was considered as necessary material to be learned.

After the plan had been in operation for several years it was reviewed with the following observations:

1. The older men and recognized leaders were being given the opportunity to study theology.
2. The teaching method in use forced the student to rely more on reading and self-expression as opposed to passive acceptance of the material presented in lectures.
3. Instruction at different levels was facilitated.
4. The new type of training made the transition to tentmaker ministry more natural.
5. Pastors developed to a greater degree the desire and means for continued study.
6. Costs were much lower
7. Enrollment increased greatly. ('62-5; '63-50; '64-88; '65-90; '66-143)

### **The Idea has Taken Hold and the Movement has Expanded**

Even though the T.E.E. movement began in Central America it has spread to almost all of Latin America and around the world. As we have stated, it began in 1962 in the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala. The first group of students numbered only 5 and for three years this program stood alone although it was gaining more students each year (see above). In 1966 the California Friends Mission in Chiquimula, Guatemala, launched an ambitious and well organized program which placed 15 centers into operation, and, besides serving 100 students, this program produced several texts which are considered excellent.

1967 has been called "The Year of the Breakthrough." By the end of that year the number of institutions operating extension programs through the direct influence of the Presbyterian experiment rose from two to nine. The plans for these new endeavors were made as a result of a workshop held in 1966.

By 1968 the number of groups which had made a commitment or beginning at this type of training increased to 18. The movement had spread to other parts of Central America (Honduras, Costa Rica), to South America (Ecuador, Colombia), to the West Indies (Guadeloupe and Martinique and the Dominican Republic) and north into Mexico. In 1972 it was reported that the Southern Baptists had made a beginning in Venezuela with 6 centers which served 90 students the first year and had a three year course of 10 basic studies. The movement moved farther to the south. The Evangelical Baptist Seminary of Argentina opened five extension centers in the northern part of the country offering just one course to sixty students. A committee for Lutheran Seminary Extension was formed to coordinate plans and programs among members of Lutheran churches. The Anglicans in northern Argentina and Paraguay followed in making plans for an extension program which would train on four levels: the members, lay helpers, presbyters and assistant pastors, and bishops or pastors.

In a paper presented to the committee and staff of the Theological Education Fund in London in July of 1973 it was reported that there were approximately 80 extension programs serving 11,000 students in Latin America. These programs included the historic denominations: Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, and Quakers, even more the independent and conservative missions and increasingly among the Pentecostal groups.

In 1974 the Extension Theological Seminary of the South in Merida, Mexico, (Presbyterian) had grown to 13 centers in the three southern states of Mexico and Belice with almost 400 students taking part. The majority of the students were leaders in their churches and many were candidates for ordination as pastors. The first class was graduated in 1975 after six years of operation. Twenty-one men received certificates for the diploma (6th grade) level after having completed thirty courses which would be about five courses a year. Ten new centers have been since opened in the capital (Mexico City) and some in the state of Vera Cruz.

During February of 1974 F. Ross Kinsler traveled Central and South America for ALISTE (*Asociación Latinoamericana de Institutos y Seminarios Teológicos de Extensión*) and upon returning offered the following comments on the progress of T.E.E. in that area. It was obvious that cultural differences in places like Perú, Bolivia and Argentina require major adaptations of the extension structure. In some places the concept of extension has been interpreted as the enemy and supplanter of residence institutions and this has brought about considerable tension and set-backs. In respect to the contribution of T.E.E. to the life of the churches he said that in some cases claims and idealism have far outstripped actual performance and serious evaluation is needed. Some of the additional observations were more or less the same as those which were made after the program had been in operation for three years in Guatemala. He included the following:

1. There has been a more or less radical change of structures. The change permits local leaders to study and to enter fully into the ministry. It brings about a new relationship between theological studies and practices, between clergy and laity, between leaders and members, between institutions and churches.
2. The extension method has forced many people to look for new methods and technology in theological education. The lectures, readings, and library study have in a large part been replaced by self-study materials and periodical seminars. There has been a widespread concern for clarity of objectives, careful curriculum planning and evaluation of results in terms of effective ministry.
3. New relationships between teacher and student are being discovered. The experience and the maturity of the students lead to an appreciation of the fact that both teachers and students are primarily colleagues in the work and all are learners. This produces new dynamics and greater depth in learning.
4. The hegemony of the academic hierarchy is gradually giving way to the concept of contextualization. It is becoming clearer in some contexts that the raising of levels is harmful and that an extension program can be as effective as a residence program and that in some cases correspondence courses and short term institutes are of great help.

### **Some of the Problems are being Faced and Solved**

Since T.E.E. was a new concept or new idea in the field of theological education, it also presented new problems while it was seeking to solve old ones. Two of the basic problems were recognized and attempts were made to face and solve them. These have to do with the teaching materials, texts, etc., for the program, as well as the teachers or the instructors.

The texts have been one of the crucial elements in the movement because the extension student must learn a great amount on his own. This new idea required that the texts provide the basic content of the course and guide the student progressively in the learning process. This kind of material simply did not exist when the program was started. Thus the first stage of seeking to solve this problem was characterized as isolated, individual efforts. The people who began to experiment with extension had to produce their own materials. These at first consisted of an adaptation of the materials that were already available. Then simple workbooks were devised. Though there was some interchange among the different groups testing this new method, for the most part each program struggled independently with this task.

A workshop at Armenia, Colombia, in Sept. of 1967 led to the formation of several groups and committees to foster and produce the materials needed. Notable was CATA (*Comité Asesor de Textos Autodidácticos*) and CLATT (*Comité Latinoamericano de Textos Teológicos*). These organizations set in motion a program which attempted to use the resources of all the groups involved in order to produce a complete set of "intertexts" (texts that could be used by various groups, or basic texts). The plan was to produce the texts in just two or three years. It seemed as if the planning was easier than the actual production. Some authors got tied up in the mechanics and theory of programmed instruction. Others discovered that they did not have sufficient background in the subject matter. Many did not have the time needed.

At the next meeting held in Bogotá in 1969 a different approach was taken. In place of seeking to complete the whole series of projected intertexts, it was decided to go more slowly and seek to encourage a few of the most promising authors to work hard on their manuscripts. Others were left on their own. By 1972 several manuscripts were produced and published, but only one had gone through the complete process outlined and was approved. Even though several levels were envisioned, this effort by CATA and CLATT limited itself to postprimary level (6th grade). From that time on greater cooperation has brought about a number of texts.

In connection with the intertext project, the matter of curriculum had to be faced (function, content, structure and level). It is evident that there would be problems if texts were to be produced to fit the needs of a variety of groups and institutions. Since each intertext was to be a link in a coordinated plan of study it became necessary for someone to set down the whole curriculum or at least for all to come to agreement on it, in order that it could be divided into course units. It was more a practical consideration than an attempt to impose a curriculum or a particular doctrinal position on the groups and institutions involved.

The new program also took a new approach to the curriculum. In place of defining the curriculum in terms of content and then breaking it up into the traditional categories, the new curriculum developed by CATA began with an analysis of the ministry and was oriented toward the functions which the student should learn to perform. They tried to ask themselves: What do we want the student to be able to do? in place of asking, What do we want the student to learn or to know? Each course was defined in terms of skills to be acquired as well as in terms of the information to be assimilated. In Bible studies for example, a minimum of course time was to be spent in the study of historical background, introduction, and content of the books of the Bible. Major emphasis was to be placed on learning to do inductive study.

The basic curriculum included the following:

#### BIBLICAL STUDIES

History and composition of the O.T.	History and composition of the N.T.
Inductive study of Genesis, Exodus	Inductive study of Mark
Inductive study of a poetical book	Inductive study of Romans, Galatians
Inductive study of Isaiah, Jeremiah	Inductive study of Revelation

#### HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

History of Christianity	Biblical Theology
Protestant Christianity	Systematic Theology
Latin America Church History	Personal and Social Ethics
Romanism	Sects

#### PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Anthropology and Psychology	Church Administration
Homiletics	Evangelism
Pedagogy	Church Growth
Christian Education	Christian Home
Music	Pastoral Counseling

Even though systematic theology is included in the listing, no plans were made for the production of an intertext in this field. This was left entirely to the individual institutions so as to allow for greater freedom in

this area and to avoid any doctrinal alignment in the intertext project. It also eliminated the presentation of divergent views on the different doctrines.

Guidelines were developed for the production of the programmed materials with the idea of making the texts more uniform and more serviceable. Though the ideal envisioned was to have Latin Americans write the texts, it was discovered that this was more difficult than first thought. Workshops are still being held to help proposed authors. Manuscripts are being reviewed, field tested and reevaluated with the aim of final production.

Recently I received a list of materials available from the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala. The list included 17 of the above courses. The following comment by Mrs. James Emery would indicate the progress that has been made in the intertext project: "Our courses range from excellent to mediocre, depending on the stage of development and the time the professors have had to revise them. Therefore we are ashamed of some of them and proud of others. The inductive Bible study courses are the best."

Efforts to produce materials for the many T.E.E. programs have not been limited to the above program. Many groups and many institutions are still working independently. One of the groups active is known as the SEAN team from the *Seminario por Extensión Anglicano* in Tucumán, Argentina. This program began to function in 1971 and serves the Anglican church and other denominations at work in that area. The emphasis is given to the development and production of materials on the certificate (3rd grade) level. It is a team effort and is being prepared in several Indian languages. A *Compendium of Pastoral Theology* based on the life of Christ according to Matthew is considered to be an excellent course. It is being published in 6 volumes of 25 lessons each including a teachers' guide.

Several Lutheran groups are working together on the production of literature in *Co-Extensión*.

Since 1973 the concerns of CATA and CLATT have been combined with the concerns for the development of professors for theological education by extension in Latin America under the group name ALISTE (*Asociación Latinoamericana de Institutos y Seminarios Teológicos de Extensión*). In seeking to develop professors and materials for the extension program the idea is not to seek to develop higher and higher academic standards. The new concept of quality is called contextualization. It is an effort to seek to develop programs and leaders who can relate the educational process to local culture and needs. It requires a new appreciation of the value of local cultures and churches and a new understanding of the dynamics of leadership and development in church and society. It includes the involvement of theological professors directly in the extension program for limited periods of time. They would participate in the local community and church life, give part of their time to the preparation of a course, teach it, revise it and prepare it for publication. It also includes plans to have these professors share experiences with other workers and thus help to develop both missionary and national leaders for the extension program. Plans are being made to conduct this kind of pilot project in Guatemala using the seminary there as home base and study center to plan and carry out the workshops which will help prepare teachers for the extension program.

T.E.E. did not catch on rapidly all over. Mexico is an example of this even though it borders on Guatemala. One of the chief reasons was the heavy commitment of a number of denominations to a different type of program.

In 1966 a group of protestant (evangelical) leaders in Mexico approached the Theological Education Fund requesting funds to establish a common seminary in Mexico. The T.E.F. supported the project and provided loans and grants totaling \$350,000.00 on the condition that three or more seminaries locate on a common campus. The Episcopal, Lutheran and Union Seminary (Methodist, Congregational and Disciples of Christ) established this common campus and a theological community in Mexico City. It was considered to be the answer to supplying the need for trained workers of several denominations not only in Mexico but also in other nearby countries as well. After some time a self-analysis revealed that certain shortcomings were preventing the project from reaching its desired goals. They included the following:

1. A cooling off was experienced between the churches and the institution.
2. The program was proving too costly (\$3,000.00 per year for each student not counting the expense for staff which is paid by the denominations taking part.)

3. There was a lack of students who had the necessary previous training required for the courses which were being offered.
4. The students attending often times suffered from de-contextualization during the four years of resident study.
5. The curriculum was not related to the needs in the field.
6. The program was not reaching the great number of local, natural leaders dispersed in the congregations and who desired to prepare themselves adequately to serve the Lord and the church better. Neither were the students being trained to train the natural leaders.

The result of this self-analysis was the conclusion that T.E.E. offers some viable option which could lead to the solution of some of the problems. Consideration was given to seeking a means to combine extension work with the residence program.

While the Lutheran Church in Mexico is involved in a type of extension program called *El Plan Setenta* (the 70 Plan, which consists of a series of basic courses for training of lay people and the preparation of Sunday School teachers), leaders from Mexico have joined with Lutherans in other countries where no resident plan was in operation and where the extension method caught hold faster. The group is called *Co-Extensión*.

In 1973 it was reported that programs were in operation in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela. (Since then a program has been started in Uruguay.) The same report indicates that there are 18 centers in operation with 25 teachers and 129 students. The majority are at the diploma level (6th grade). The majority in Bolivia is at the certificate (3rd grade) level and a few are at the secondary level. At least 8 texts have been prepared on the lower levels by the Lutherans.

### **A Survey**

In order to become better acquainted with the progress of the extension method among Lutherans in Latin America I sent out the attached questionnaire early in the year to Lutherans working in nine different countries. The following is a summary of the programs reported by people in six of these countries.

#### **Venezuela**

An extension program called *Instituto Teológico Juan de Frias* has been in operation since 1970. Previously ministerial candidates were sent to the seminary in Buenos Aires with unsatisfactory results. Three candidates married girls from there and did not return. Candidates were also sent to Mexico, but none ever finished the entire course and those that returned were unable or unwilling to function in situations where foreign money was not available.

The majority of the students are at the diploma level (6th) and the program for ministerial studies involves completing 30 courses which last 15 weeks, but experience has shown that half of the students need to take courses at the certificate (3rd) level because they are not adequately advanced for the diploma courses. The individual courses have experienced a drop-out rate of about 30%. Some of the materials used have been produced locally or by other Lutheran groups. Outside material is also used. The comment was made that they found 9 out of 10 texts of the ALISTE catalog were unacceptable either for doctrinal or pedagogical reasons.

Presently 20 students are in the program at various points. The teaching staff consists of 2 missionaries and 2 nationals, all on a part time basis. Enrollment is somewhat limited because of the small base (10 congregations averaging 30 members) but the extension program should widen the base and provide more people to be trained and thus expand more rapidly.

#### **Ecuador**

The World Mission Prayer League has had an extension program in effect in Ecuador since 1969 which is really the beginning of any program to train the national workers. There are 35 enrolled at the present time. The program has three levels from certificate to university but is mainly directed at certificate and diploma level. The aim of the program is to train the congregational leaders and permit them to put into practice what they have learned. Another goal is to develop the ability for self-training so that the ministry can grow by means of continued self-study and experience.

The course as presently outlined is composed of 36 semester subjects and up to three courses may be taken each semester. It is felt that the national ministry can be trained by this method, and they see no need for any other type of training. They do, however, realize that full training will take a long time. No one has actually finished the course which is prepared but 15 of the 35 enrolled are already directly involved in church leadership while they pursue their studies.

### **Colombia**

The Lutheran Church in Colombia has a dual program. An Extension program has been in operation since 1971 but some students are still being sent to the Seminary in Mexico City. A Bible school was in operation formerly, but it became an accredited High School and a new program was needed.

20 students are participating in the extension program at different levels—Primary, Secondary, and University—but the program is directed chiefly at the diploma level (6th). In age the students range from 17 to 64 with a drop-out rate of about 50%. Till now no one has finished the complete course. Progress is being made, and the students are used as they develop and as they are accepted by the congregations. The program follows the one outlined by Winter quite closely with weekly, monthly and annual sessions. The field work of the students is under the direction of those who teach in the different centers.

The staff consists of one full time and one part time missionary in addition to the three national teachers in the centers who give part time to the program. It is felt that the extension method can supply the need of the field for workers if the congregations are willing to accept functional workers who are receiving training. However, it is also felt that it would be better to have both types of programs in operation because of the long time needed to complete the course by the extension method.

### **Bolivia**

The extension program of the World Mission Prayer League has been in operation in Bolivia since 1970. This program replaces a Bible Institute which was operated formerly at the Caoba Farms which was closed for lack of students. In the past 5 years 85 students have taken part and though no accurate record has been kept, it was felt that the drop-out rate was too high. The program is designed to meet the needs on three levels, but the majority (90%) is at the grade school level.

The purpose of the program is to give additional training for those already serving and to train others who might want to serve. No estimate was given as to the amount of time needed to finish the course because this depends to a large extent on the amount of free time that could be dedicated to the lessons.

Fourteen courses are offered on the grade school level and four additional courses on the middle school level. Some of the materials used have been prepared by the *Co-Extensión* group, but courses from other groups are being used while they continue to prepare their own. Classes are held weekly where teachers are available and an annual workshop of two weeks offers 80 hours of instruction. The staff consists of two missionaries working part time and ten nationals who are used as teachers.

It is felt that this method offers the leaders of the church some needed training at their own level and in their own social context. They seem to think that extension will be of great help to them, but it is not thought of as a cure-all.

### **Argentina**

Argentina responded, “Unfortunately we have not started a program of extension.” It appears as if there is talk about it and support for this type of training. A traditional type of program is being carried on in the seminary in Buenos Aires. In addition to the regular courses offered they have additional ones for the advancement of pastors and other courses for the preparation of Sunday School teachers. In a recent convention of the church a resolution was passed asking the seminary faculty to make plans for and prepare to begin an extension program adapted to their situation.

### **Brazil**

It appears that there is no program of extension in operation. The training program is traditional and residence which has been in operation since the beginning of Mo. Synod work there, or since 1903. The student body numbers 81 and a new class of 20 is expected to be formed at the end of the year. The course is for four years with a semester of practical work. It appears as if all courses are not offered the same year, but that a class is carried along through and new classes are formed from time to time. Courses are also offered on a pre-seminary level to prepare those who want to enroll but do not have the necessary background. Drop-out rate is from 5-7%. Eleven professors are active and two of these are not nationals.

An interest has been shown in the extension method. The type of program has been authorized and plans are being made to make a beginning.

### **How has T.E.E. Succeeded?**

With the material thus far presented before us we can return to the question stated in the title: How has T.E.E. succeeded in Latin America? The answer to the question will depend to some extent on how we measure success. If it has to meet all of the needs for theological training, then the movement has not been a success, nor will it ever likely be one. But even under those conditions we can say that it has been a partial success. While the plan was formed to serve on various levels, reaching up to full complete training of pastors, it is clear that the emphasis has been on the lower level either because of greater need or greater potential for candidates. It is doubtful if full training can be achieved even when materials have been developed on the higher levels. In areas where full training is considered unnecessary and even undesirable, T.E.E. could offer the answer. It also provides the means to make continued studies possible for those already in the ministry.

If we consider the number of those taking part in this educational program we could say that it is succeeding. And while the rate of attrition is high, the training received should be of benefit to the church whether it has been received by those who serve as pastors or as Sunday School teachers or in other positions.

T.E.E. has also been successful in bringing about much self study and self analysis of the education program of the church. It is very easy to settle into an established program without giving much consideration if it is still meeting the needs and the conditions under which we are working. Even the best of programs is not working well if it does not meet the needs or take into account the local conditions and culture.

T.E.E. has either revealed or created a desire for study in the field of theology as evidenced by the enrollments and participants. This is a good sign since it is the Word that the Holy Spirit uses to create saving faith and the same means by which it is increased and preserved in the people of God.

Almost all who are involved in the extension method speak highly of it and feel that it is worthwhile and meeting a need in their field even though it is not providing for all the needs in the area of education. Thus it would seem well that we continue to study the program with the aim of developing our own program to meet our needs and to fit our circumstances so that more people might be better prepared to serve both the Lord and His Church.



## Questionnaire

1. Do you have a seminary or worker training program in operation on your field?
2. What type of program is it? Extension? Resident? Other?
3. How long has the present type of program been in operation?
4. Was there another type of program in operation previously? If so, what kind? Why was the method of training changed?
5. How many students are enrolled at present? Where are they in relation to the complete program? How many were enrolled last year?
6. What has been the average rate of attrition among the students who have enrolled? What has been the chief reason(s) for failure to continue or finish?
7. What is the educational level of your present students? Age level?
8. What are you preparing your students to be? Pastors? Evangelists? Lay Workers? Other?
9. How long will it take to complete the training of workers in the above groups?
10. What educational level is your training program to serve?
11. What are the courses offered? Which are required?
12. What are the texts used? Textbook? Programmed? Workbook? Other?
13. How much of the material you use has been developed by your mission staff? By other Lutheran groups? Other denominations?
14. Do you have a program to develop your own instructional materials? If so, which courses have you developed? What do you intend to produce in the near future?
15. If you have an extension program, How closely does it conform to the program outlined in *Theological Education by Extension*?
16. How much correlation is there between instruction, classroom and other, and field work? What does field work include?
17. How is the field work supervised or directed?
18. How often does the staff meet with the students for instruction? Seminars? Are both local and area seminars held? How often?
19. How many members of your staff are involved in the training program? Full time? Part time?
20. How many national workers are involved in the program? In what capacity?

21. Do you think the extension method is the answer for training workers?
22. Can complete pastoral training be provided this way? If not, why not?
23. What do you feel are the strong and the weak points of the program which you are presently using? What do you think would improve your program and make it more effective and useful to you and the national church?
24. What hints would you give to those who are thinking about or beginning a program of worker-training? For beginning an extension program?
25. How many national workers have you prepared in the past 5 years? How many do you reasonably expect to prepare in the next 5? Will this supply your needs for national workers?
26. Have you observed or heard of programs which you feel are ideal or at least very good programs? Explain.