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The MECOVI Program in Latin America and the Caribbean Region **

** MECOVI is short for “mejoramiento de las encuestas de condiciones de vida”, the Spanish translation for the improvement of the surveys of living conditions (ISLC) project.

IDB

The World Bank

UN-ECLAC

The MECOVI Program in Latin America and the Caribbean Region **

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What is the MECOVI Program?

- A regional program of technical assistance for capacity building to improve the household surveys to measure living conditions and poverty data in the Latin America and the Caribbean region;
- Jointly sponsored by the IDB, the World Bank and the UN-ECLAC of Santiago initially (1996); and with more donors' participation (Canada, Germany, Sweden, UNDP, etc.)

Program Objectives

- Improve the relevance and quality of household surveys and the poverty data;
- Promote wide utilization of the improved data for research and policy formulation;
- Promote free accessibility of the household survey and poverty data.

Program Components

- Country-specific TA programs (Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru);
- Regional seminars/workshops, and regional training courses on the household surveys and poverty analysis;
- Regional data bank.

How to Improve the Survey Data

- Reduce sampling error → improve sample frame and organization of field work;
- Reduce non-sampling errors → improve questionnaire design, strengthen the quality control in data collection (field work), data entry, and data editing.

Data Dissemination Strategies

- Studies fund to promote policy-oriented research;
- Encourage wide accessibility of the survey data;
- Regional workshops (survey strategies and design, income measurement, consumption expenditure measurement, poverty lines and poverty measurement);
- Regional training courses for producers and users of the survey data (sampling and survey process, and poverty analysis).

Key Design Features of MECOVI Program

(Program Governance and Coordination)

- Clear mechanism for governance, advice, and inter-institutional collaboration;
 - Steering Committee decides on key matters of policy, planning and resource mobilization;
 - Advisory Board advises on technical issues;
 - Program Coordinators handle daily operational matters, including coordination, project development and preparation, and implementation.

Key Design Features of MECOVI Program

(Design of Country-Specific TA Programs)

- Program development and project design is linked to the existing needs and capacity of the country;
- Key indicators and features for program design: overall strategy (relevance), sampling frame (coverage); lapsed time between the field work and data preparation (timeliness), utilization of the existing survey data (demand) reputation (perception), quality control, data access policy, organization of policymakers and user group (inter-institutional committee).

Key Design Features of MECOVI Program

(Design of Country-Specific TA Programs)

■ Key lessons:

→ Active role of the National Statistical Office (NSO) and wide consultation with other stakeholders in project design creates country buy-in;

→ Interaction of producers and users of the survey data increases the viability of the program;

→ Process to improve quality, promote studies, and democratize statistical information takes time;

→ Continuous inter-institutional communication to ensure harmonious program coordination.

Key Design Features of MECOVI Program

(Design of the Regional Component)

- To promote best practice in statistical capacity building in household surveys and poverty analysis;
- Key lessons from regional workshops and training courses:
 - Regional forum to introduce and disseminate the best practices;
 - Horizontal communication – participants learning from the experiences of one another.

Key Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Concept of deliverable product by the National Statistical Office (NSO) – relevant and high-quality data that are available on a timely basis to a wide group of users to conduct policy-oriented poverty analysis;
- Institutional commitment of the NSO to producing high-quality data creates expectation, further demand and public accountability;
- Sustainability remains a challenge.