

REPORT

On the Second National Congress on Rural Development and Education

Reporting : Daniela Bruni
Country visited : Villavicencio, Colombia
Date of Mission : 20-23 June 2007

The main objective of the duty travel, upon the official request of the National University of Colombia to FAO/ERP, was to give a technical support to the Congress by presenting the Interdepartmental Working Group for Training for Technicians and Capacity Building (IDWGTT) activities and Education for Rural People (ERP) Partnership.

Background

The Second Congress on Rural Development and Education was an innovator space for an academic action and exercise towards education and development in Colombia. The congress with a national impact was organized by different local actors and stakeholders.

Before the Villavicencio event the National University of Colombia had organized the 1st National Congress on Education for Rural People which took place in Manizales, Colombia in 2004.

Participants

The Second Congress was attended by 478 people among all 26 Colombian regions, FAO, UNESCO Barcelona, UNDP, Universities, Rural Associations, Farmers, NGOS, Researchers, Teachers and students.

Main Outcomes:

The meeting was organized by presenting international activities with an overall policy focus on education, training and development for rural people in Colombia. Three round tables were organized to analyze the following issues:

Education and Development.

Education and Conflict.

Education and Environment.

The round tables and the plenary sessions allowed participants to share experience and knowledge of education, training and rural development in Colombia.

The Opening Ceremony was chaired by the Governor of the Department of Meta, Dr. Juan Manuel Gonzalez, who also gave a brief welcoming address. Both the mayor of the Villavicencio and the Dr. Germán Albeiro Castaño Duque, Dean of the National University of Colombia, gave a brief welcoming address.

During Session 1, Ms Bruni on behalf of the IDWGTT and ERP Coordination Unit, presented the IDWGTT, the material of education and training produced by the technical departments which has been inserted in the ERP tool Kit, the collection of good practices to be published shortly, and the Global Partnership on ERP

The activities presented have stimulated the interest of many participants. Chancellors and University professors have accepted to become members of the Global Partnership to start a technical collaboration with FAO/ERP.

During the other sessions speakers (both University Professors and national farmers associations) presented Agriculture Education programs in Colombia focusing on the fundamental importance of rural development. (See attached Agenda)

Results:

The work of many national and international experts, Universities and Organizations, including the collaboration of FAO IDWGTT and the ERP partnership, made the Congress a great success.

The Congress achieved its overall purpose of raising the levels of awareness of the need to give special consideration to education, training in Colombia as a key aspect to support food security, agriculture competitiveness and sustainable livelihoods.

The Closing Ceremony included remarks especially for FAO for its participation by the National Secretary of Education, Dr. Hidelbrando Albarracín.

Proposals:

During the opening forum it was proposed to organize the third National Congress on Rural Development and Education, in 2009.

The National University of Colombia proposed to organize and International event on Higher Agriculture Education by FAO/ERP patronage in Cartagena, Colombia with the participation of many Latin American Universities to identify the development of the sector.

A draft recommendation will be finalized before September and it will be distributed to all participants.



Junio 21
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