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The IBGE-UNGEGN International Toponymy course held in Rio de Janeiro, May 15-19, 2017

Submitted by the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy **

Report on the IBGE-UNGEGN International Toponymy Course held in Rio de Janeiro 15-19 May 2017

With 34 participants from 7 countries (Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tomé e Principe and Uruguay) the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) and the UNGEGN WG on Training Courses in Toponymy organized a 5-day course in toponymy. Lecturers came from Brazil, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands.

The course was opened by Paulo Rabello de Castro, President of IBGE, Helen Kerfoot, honorary chair of UNGEGN, and Cecille Blake on behalf of UNSD, and the first two days sessions were held on the functions of geographical names, an introduction to the terminology used, on the standardization of geographical and statistical names and national names standardization programmes and on the support provided by UNGEGN. Tuesday afternoon the fieldwork was introduced, through a description of the place name history of the area, (by the chair of joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy Prof. Paulo Menezes) as well as a geographical and historical description of the fieldwork area. Names collection and interview techniques were discussed, the name forms to be used were introduced and it was made sure that GPS equipment could be used, in order to locate the named objects collected in the field.

On the Wednesday, the group travelled by vans to the fieldwork area, around the historical town of Mangaratiba, on the coast some 85km south of Rio de Janeiro. The ensuing fieldwork was different from the usual (topographical) fieldwork in the following sense: usually all names found through interviews and signs would be collected in the field, but this time the exercise consisted of a certification fieldwork: The IBGE staff (Equipo do Centro de referencia da CCAR), consisting of Vania Nagem, Beatriz Souza and Ana Resende, had studied the geographical names of the area in advance, through old maps, current map editions, historical and current publications, and had come up with a number of 'doubtful' names, that is names whose spelling, location or category could not be ascertained. So, it became the task of those participating in this fieldwork exercise to come up with the proper data for those names. The participants were split up into three groups, accompanied by interpreters for those not fluent in Portuguese and by IBGE technical staff usually engaged in fieldwork operations.

One of the cases for instance was the name of a mountain settlement originally called *as Alminhas* ('the little souls', named after a children's cemetery that used to be located there). A rich landowner had since been able to get this name changed on the topographic map into *Bela Vista*, and indeed that name is also used for the settlement in the commercial global GeoNames names server. But the local population (see figure 1), though they knew about it, never used it; during the fieldwork it became clear that they only referred to their village with the name *Serra do Piloto*, after the mountain ridge on which the village was located. Notices in the local press, banners and road signs all referred to Serra do Piloto.

Figure 1 Interview during the fieldwork

After the collection of all the names to be certified, the group returned to Rio again, and there prepared the geographical names for submission to the 'names bureau': a meeting of a names bureau was simulated where the arguments for standardizing the names as proposed by the fieldwork groups were discussed and the names finally certified if appropriate and well-supported.

The next step, led by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, convener of the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic data files, consisted of instruction in the building of the names databases – under perfect circumstances as the classroom was equipped with laptops for all participants with the proper software installed. After construction of the database, demonstrations were given how to derive products from it, such as gazetteers and automatically labelled maps. An exercise in map lettering was held, to show the necessity of subdividing the map names into categories, each rendered by specific letter font styles, for easier retrieval. As names standardization makes no sense without publicizing and disseminating the standardized names, national dissemination programmes were discussed, as well as global and commercial names servers. International names standardization was also discussed, with the added issues of conversion between different writing systems and the use of exonyms, with the example of a world school atlas: the participants were asked to consider themselves as atlas editors, having to make decisions on names issues.

The lectures also included toponyms as cultural heritage. According to Beatriz Souza, who introduced its history, the Mangaratiba area, in its toponyms, showed many traces of the Tupi Indians as the first inhabitants, the name Mangaratiba stems from the Tupi name for the Araceae plants. After the coastal colonization by the Portuguese who defeated the local Indians in 1567 the Jesuits founded some villages. Later on, sugar cane came to be planted and slaves were brought in from Africa, paid for with the Cachaça distilled spirits made from fermented sugar cane. Mangaratiba became an important hub and slave market on the road from Sao Paulo to Rio de Janeiro, also used for the gold transports, as a site where the coastal mountains could be crossed. In the 18th and 19th century coffee was planted in the more mountainous areas. As one of the major Brazilian ports at the time, in 1831 the settlement was made a town, named *Nossa Senhora da Guia de Mangaratiba*. Trade in slaves was forbidden in 1850, and because of the heavy tolls on the roads, railway lines that passed by Mangaratiba were constructed, and the decline of the town started. It was only in 1912 that the place was linked to the Brazilian rail network.

So, the Mangaratiba area formed an excellent background for lectures on toponymy as cultural heritage: African names could be found there, like Benguela and Rio Matutu, the families that had played a leading role in developing the area like the de Sá family were reflected in the toponyms and hydronyms, and names of features like ruins of former slavery-linked buildings still reflected their original function. In the terrain plaques were found that explained visitors of the area these names and functions. An example of a name that travelled was the name of the São João Marcos church in Serra do Piloto: this church was built and named after the neighbouring village of São João Marcos, from which, when that village was threatened to be flooded by a proposed reservoir, the local population brought the statue of their saint to the present location (see figure 2).

Figure 2 - São João Marcos church in the village of Serra do Piloto, close to the town of Mangaratiba.

The course was financially supported by the United Nations Statistics Department, which enabled the Working Group to pay for the accommodation and airfares of the seven foreign participants and the three foreign lecturers – without this support the course would not have been possible. But it was thanks to Ana Resende, Vania Nagem, Beatriz Souza and their colleagues from IBGE that the course actually became a big success. There only was a short time available between getting the green light from UNSD in January 2017 and the start of the course in May 2017; only four months were left within which everything had to be organized, from the transfers of money, procuring flight tickets (by UNSD staff) getting visas, selection of the fieldwork area, studying the sources for the fieldwork area, organizing the logistics, classroom, and translating the manuals. Nevertheless, thanks to their commitment and drive it all worked out very well.

In the closing session, Cecille Blake who had attended the whole course on behalf of UNSD, and the convener of the working group, Ferjan Ormeling, reflected on this and gave due thanks.

Documents, texts, forms, power point presentations, fieldwork material and photographs of the course will be posted at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/Toponymy_Trining_Brazil.html

Appendix 1. Programme of the 2017 Rio de Janeiro UNGEGN training course in toponymy

Days	Sessions
Monday	**Opening session** -Addresses by local and international representatives -Introduction of the participants
	Session 1: Functions of geographical names 1.1. Naming principles 1.2. Terminology; the UNGEGN web course
	Session 2: Standardization and national names programmes 2.1. Standardization of geographical names 2.2. National agencies; functioning of geographical names bureaus 2.3. Managing a national names programme
Tuesday	**Session 3 Standardization and UNGEGN support** 3.1. Standardization of statistical area names 3.2. Support provided by UNGEGN in standardizing geographical names
	Session 4 Fieldwork preparation 4.1. Place name history of Rio de Janeiro state 4.2. Names collection techniques 4.3. Name forms 4.4. Geographical and historical description of the fieldwork area 4.5. GPS demonstration
Wednesday	**Fieldwork**
Thursday	**Session 5: Processing the geographical names collected** 5.1. Processing the collected names for their submission to the names bureau 5.2. Simulation of a names bureau meeting 5.3. Data base creation
	Session 6: Building the database 6.1. Hands on experience in building the database 6.2. Developing derived products from the database: gazetteers
Friday	**Session 7**: **Map labelling and names dissemination programmes** 7.1. How to insert the names collected in a digital map 7.2. Exercise in map lettering 7.3. Names dissemination programmes 7.4. Presentation of national names standardization programmes by course participants
	Session 8: **Names dissemination and cultural heritage** 8.1. Names servers 8.2. World atlas databases 8.3. Toponyms as cultural heritage
	Session 9: Closing session -Handing out of diplomas -Closing addresses