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grassroots development

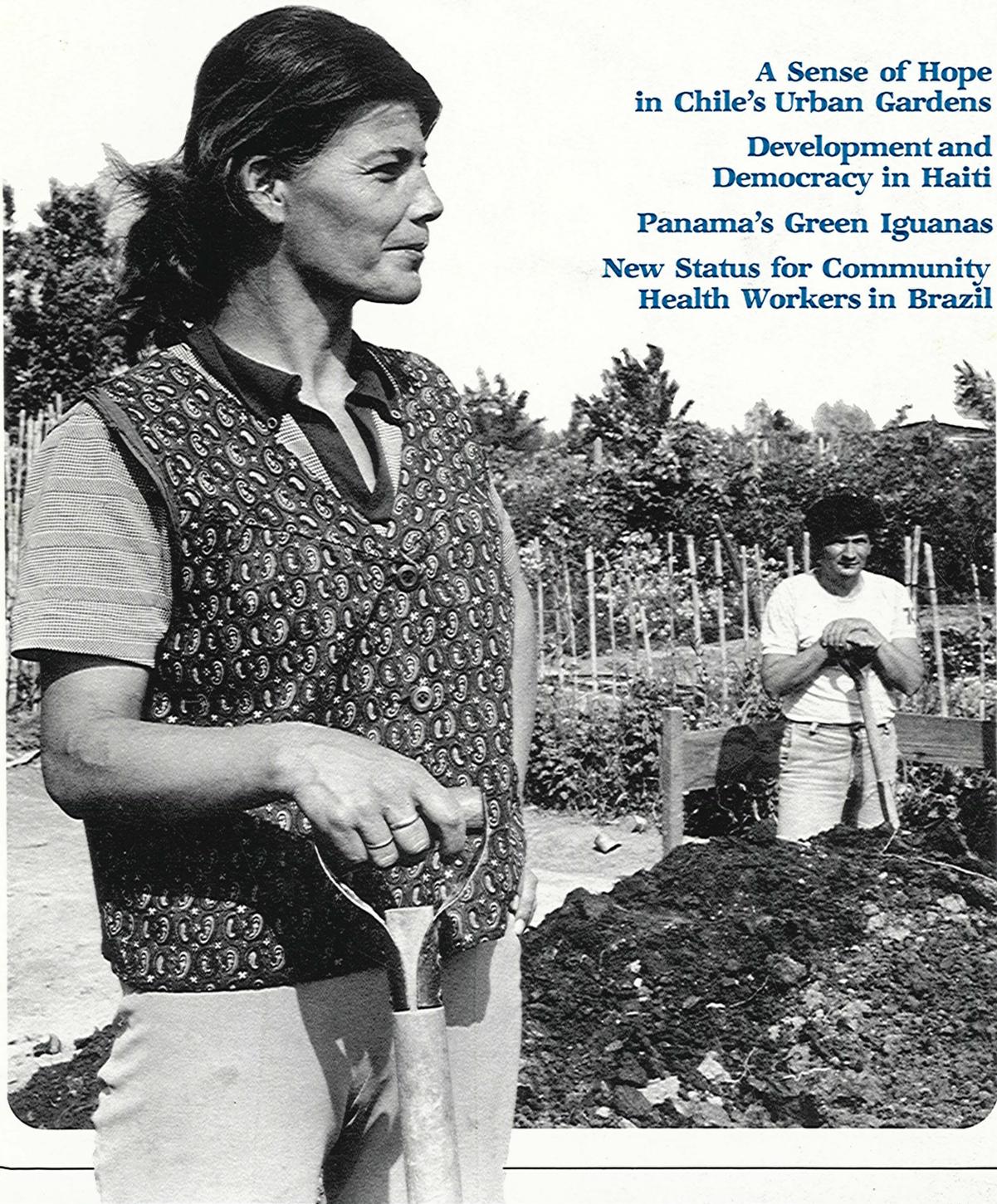
JOURNAL of the INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

**A Sense of Hope
in Chile's Urban Gardens**

**Development and
Democracy in Haiti**

Panama's Green Iguanas

**New Status for Community
Health Workers in Brazil**



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Cover photo: Participants in Centro de Educación y Tecnología (CET) program dig foundation for earthquake-proof home in Butaco, outside Santiago, Chile (see article p. 38). Photo by Marcelo Montecino.

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Volume 10, Number 2, 1986

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THE PANAMANIAN IGUANA RENAISSANCE

Mac Chapin

Scientists and campesinos are working together to re-establish iguana populations in areas where they verge on extinction, and to assure that these populations survive and flourish.



In the late 1960s, I was posted by the Peace Corps to a small agricultural school on the Atlantic coast of Panama, inside the Kuna Indian reservation. At one point we had just finished putting up a new set of buildings and were preparing an inaugural ceremony that would include village chiefs, the Vice-Minister of Agriculture, and an assortment of people involved with the school. Perhaps the most important part of the day's program would be lunch. The meal, everyone agreed, had to include some sort of meat. Canned sardines in tomato sauce, our usual fare and all we had on hand, seemed inappropriate for such a grand occasion.

An old man who farmed nearby stopped off to visit as we sat at an impasse, and suggested we should hunt some of the iguanas that, he assured us, virtually infested the tall trees in the vast, knee-deep swamp, only a kilometer away. So on the morning before the big event, we set out with a .22-caliber rifle and, in the space of several hours, brought down seven large iguanas. The inaugural festivities—capped by a full banquet of plantains, manioc, fresh garden vegetables, and exquisitely tender iguana meat—were a resounding success. There were no leftovers.

Aside from having my first pleasurable experience with iguanas as food,

I was strongly impressed at the time by the sheer bountifulness of nature. We had needed meat and had simply gone out, in what must be described as casual fashion, to return literally staggering under the weight of seven five-foot-long reptiles. When I later saw the piles of ham-strung iguanas in Panama City's open markets, I was prepared to believe that the whole country was, if not infested like our swamp, at least heavily populated with iguanas.

Indeed, the impression of an inexhaustible natural patrimony once came close to mirroring reality across most of tropical America. Since prehistoric times, the lowlands there have been dominated by lush jungle, and game animals have been an important part of the diet of rural populations.

Sadly, this natural abundance is rapidly becoming no more than a thin, nostalgic memory. During the last several decades, the forests have been retreating at an alarming rate as rural populations expand and the overflow moves into virgin areas to open up new agricultural frontiers. In Panama, it is estimated that fully half of the forest in existence 40 years ago has been destroyed, and the last untouched stands will be gone by the year 2000. With their habitat cut down and burned off, wild species throughout the country are facing extinction. Iguanas and other game animals are no longer found stacked on the floors of public markets, and many have vanished entirely from their traditional ranges in the interior

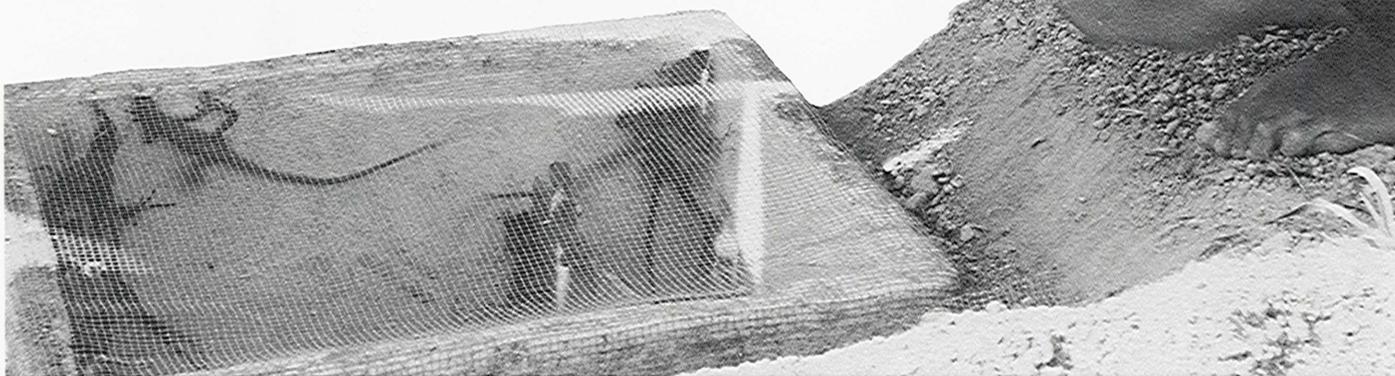
provinces. In just a short time, the last few decades, man has triggered what may become an irreversible erosion of his resource base.

That the humid tropical zones of the hemisphere are being laid waste in wholesale fashion is no secret. The course of destruction has been mapped in a growing number of articles, books, and reports. What has been largely missing is concrete action aimed at restoring the balance.

An isolated and singular effort along these lines is found in Panama, at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), one of the most important centers for biological investigation in the American tropics. Scientists there are working together with campesinos from the interior provinces to raise the green iguana (*Iguana iguana*) under controlled conditions for eventual release onto farms and into protected areas. The goal of the project is to reestablish iguana populations in areas where they verge on extinction, and to assure that these populations survive and flourish.

Accomplishing that will be no easy task. When respected German herpetologist Dagmar Werner was invited by STRI to initiate the Iguana Management Project in 1983 with a staff of four, several colleagues said that her scheme was unworkable. It would take years to assemble enough data to make the project operational, they said; and besides, Panama's campesinos would never cooperate in implementing conservation strategies. Despite these

Boy meets iguana at the headquarters of the Iguana Management Project in Soberanía National Park, half an hour from the bustle of Panama City.



Jane Shuttleworth

warnings, the project was launched and has, over the intervening years, rapidly built up a strong head of steam. "From the start," says Werner with a smile, "we have been convinced we could do the impossible."

The traditional range of the green iguana extends throughout the lowland forests of Mexico and down as far as northern Peru. The species lives in the upper branches of trees, preferably near a permanent source of water, and subsists primarily on leaves, fruit, and flowers. In favorable conditions with full vegetational cover, the density of iguanas may be as high as 40 animals per hectare.

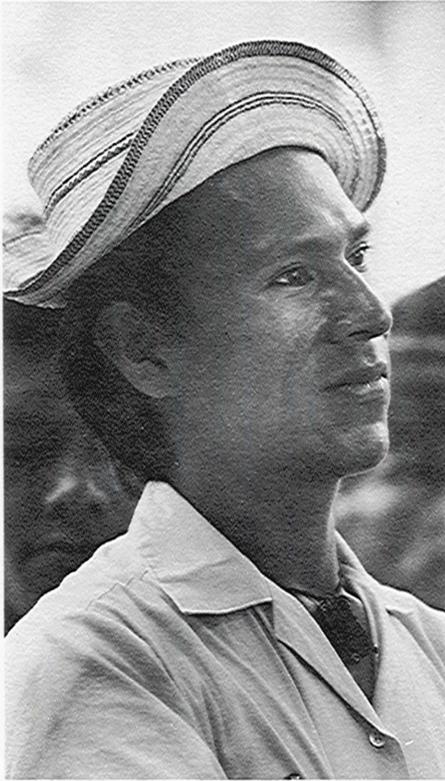
However, the habitat of the iguana has shrunk at an increasing pace, and both the eggs (thought to possess aphrodesiac properties) and the animals have been indiscriminately collected for food and for sale. Unfortunately, the reproductive habits of the animal are ill-adapted to stave off these two trends. After reaching sexual maturity at the age of 3, iguanas lay

average clutches of 30 to 40 eggs at communal nest sites in sandy soil. The nesting areas are easily identified, and since pregnant females return to the same place year after year in January and February, they are easy prey to humans and a host of animal predators. Without man's intervention, the number of iguanas that makes the journey from egg to adult maintains a stable population. The chances of survival decrease to zero, however, as massive deforestation crowds survivors into an ever-narrowing circle and predators become more concentrated.

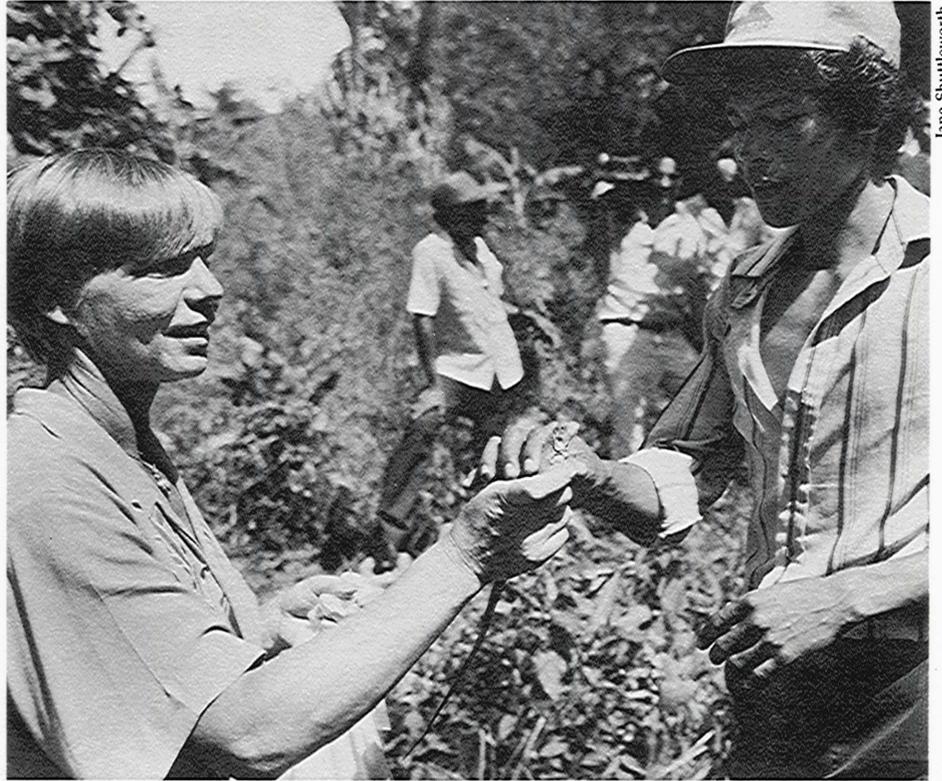
The Iguana Management Project is designed to extend a helping hand to the beleaguered species. The project's base of operations is an experimental center at the headquarters of Soberanía National Park, half an hour from the bustle of Panama City. The center contains a complex of high-fenced, corrugated-iron enclosures, scientifically designed nesting sites, styrofoam incubating boxes, wire cages, and open-air pens with raised

bamboo "iguana houses." The atmosphere is tranquil, and visitors are cautioned to avoid disturbing the reptilian inhabitants with loud noises or sudden movements. Despite the quiet, the compound has the aspect of a miniature city in which iguanas of all sizes can be seen lounging about on the branches of trees and inside bushes, poking their heads and tails out from bamboo tubes and from under roofs, and ponderously crawling about on the ground. In fact, wild iguanas find the place so attractive that they can be seen prowling around the fences, and they frequently attempt to break in.

Scientific activities at the center are supported by the Alton Jones Foundation, the James Smithson Society, and the International Foundation. Carefully designed experiments are closely monitored by project staff, which includes a growing number of students from the University of Panama. The goal of the project is to develop improved techniques for retrieving and incubating



From left to right: A campesino from Cabuya de Antón listens intently as program staff explain how to reintroduce and raise iguanas in the community; Dagmar Werner (left), head of the Iguana Management Program, hands a villager a baby iguana for release into the wild; campesinos carry bags of iguanas to nearby release site, a small river lined with trees.



eggs, raising the hatchlings under optimal conditions, and releasing them into the wild. This entails a bewildering series of controlled diets, population densities, age and sex combinations, egg-incubation temperatures and soils, and nesting strategies. While data are meticulously recorded and stored, and certain patterns fall into place, conclusive answers to questions such as how and why are often more elusive. For example, at higher incubation temperatures and humidities, hatchlings are born larger and with longer tails. Under similar conditions, one group may develop long heads while another develops short ones. Whether or not long tails and head shape are adaptive remains unknown. At this stage, however, these experiments can be left at the hypothetical stage. The knowledge at hand allows the team to forge ahead with the practical task of breeding large and healthy iguanas.

Because time is short, the Iguana Management Project is trying to advance on several fronts by applying scientific knowledge while simultaneously refining it. For instance, experiments to improve incubation strategies go apace, but the present success rate of 90 percent provides ample hatchlings

to proceed with other aspects of the project as well. In this way, the team continues to amass crucial insight into—if not definitive answers about—iguana growth rates, diseases, nutrition, predation, preferred diets, reproduction, and other biological and behavioral variables. Similarly, work with repopulating the species on campesino farms, perhaps the most difficult and poorly understood facet of the program, has been set in motion in the hope that project staff will learn from the experience and develop effective strategies and models. “If we want to restore the iguana population in Panama,” says Werner, “we must combine our scientific findings with the traditional knowledge of the campesinos. And to discover how to do this, we must simply jump in with what we know and start working with the people.”

One early attempt made it painfully clear that restocking Panama with iguanas would involve a good deal more than dropping them off at the sides of roads. In May of 1984, the team released several hundred animals of different ages into a small strip of forest on a farm in the arid region of the Azuero Peninsula, where iguanas have become virtually extinct. The chosen



spot was optimal—the owner was enthusiastic, and a creek running through the forest provided a steady water supply. Furthermore, the site was circumscribed by cattle pasture, which served as a barrier to iguana out-migration, a circumstance facilitating long-term study of the small colony's fate.

Unfortunately, this field experiment was abruptly cut short when several of the farmer's assistants unwittingly sprayed a powerful herbicide (2,4-D) on his pasture land and part of the forest. A careful check a month later turned up no iguanas on the farm, although a few were spotted patrolling the outer perimeter.

Thus, in late 1984, project staff began focusing attention on a field-based education program that would pave the way for repopulation initiatives and provide continuous guidance. The Inter-American Foundation came forward with financial support; three communities in the Azuero region were selected; and in late 1985, two education specialists took up resi-

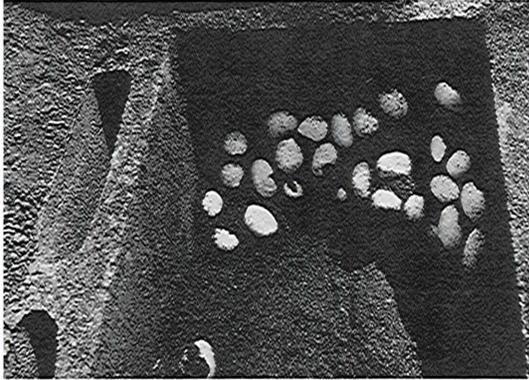
dence in the field. They led off with seminars and talks about nutrition, health, basic biology, the value of natural resources and the need to manage them wisely. In this way, the iguana was not presented in isolation but rather as one of the numerous actors operating within a complex ecosystem that included vegetation, water, soils, and other animals, including man.

On the most practical level, project staff have been working with community members to identify and implement techniques for managing iguanas on farms. The focal point for field operations is the property of Diego González, a resident of the village of Chupampa in Herrera Province. González, who raises both crops and cattle on his 40-hectare farm, is a pioneer. More than 20 years ago he began reforesting sections of his barren land with a variety of hardy and utilitarian trees selected from all over the region. At the same time, he noted which species attracted iguanas and soon had a resident colony of some size perched in the vegetation surround-

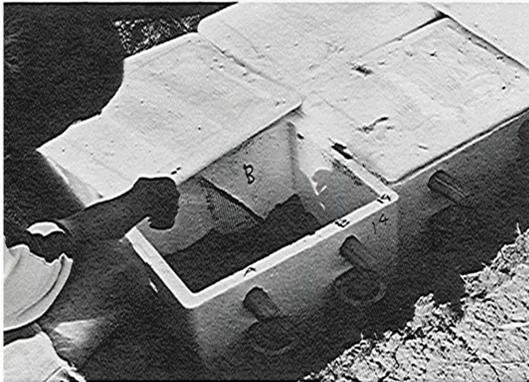
ing his house. González simply likes to have iguanas around, and protects them because they are endangered. He used to eat them, but no longer. And he dutifully guards them against poachers.

Project staff and villagers have collaborated to build a set of pens for hatchlings on González' land, and it is here that most of the educational activities are being staged. The interest shown by the entire community has outstripped all prior expectations. "The arrival of these iguana people is the best thing that has happened to this town in years," said Lita Polo, president of the local health committee. And indeed this seems to be the opinion of the village in general, which has taken the iguana project on as part of a new community image.

This sense of "iguana pride" manifested itself last February when seven of the area's best hunters collaborated to capture pregnant iguanas to provide eggs for the project. After laborious searching, six gravid females were rounded up and placed in suitable



photos by Richard Brosnahan



Top to bottom: Local hunters collect gravid females who lay eggs in artificial nests of earth and cement blocks; eggs are incubated in sun-heated styrofoam boxes sunk in the ground and filled with sand; hatchling breaking through its shell. Iguana survival can be multiplied 20 to 40 times with the management techniques developed in the project.

For most of the children, this was the first time they had seen any iguana, much less baby iguanas. And it was certainly the first time anyone from the village had witnessed the birth of an artificially-incubated iguana.

enclosures with hastily built nests. Some of the 130 eggs that were laid later began to hatch under the watchful eyes of villagers, who crowded around cautiously to witness the baby iguanas slice through the pliable shells with their special egg teeth and squirm out into the world. For most of the children, this was the first time they had seen any iguana, much less baby iguanas. And it was certainly the first time anyone from the village had witnessed the birth of an artificially incubated iguana.

Children at the Chupampa school are being enlisted as allies to the project and, in this way, are receiving an on-the-spot education in iguana ecology. They have helped release hatchlings on the community's farms, and periodically accompany the team on iguana counts, where they learn about such matters as the iguanas' favorite forage and how the animals try to protect themselves.

As the project develops and batches of iguanas are released on protected sites, farmers are becoming more and more concerned about the safety of "their" iguanas. Recently, a young man was caught with a pair of animals he and two adolescent companions had poached from González' farm. For the first time in the history of Chupampa, the culprit was taken to the authorities, who berated him soundly for soiling the honor of the village and sentenced him to 15 days of physical labor on the iguana project.

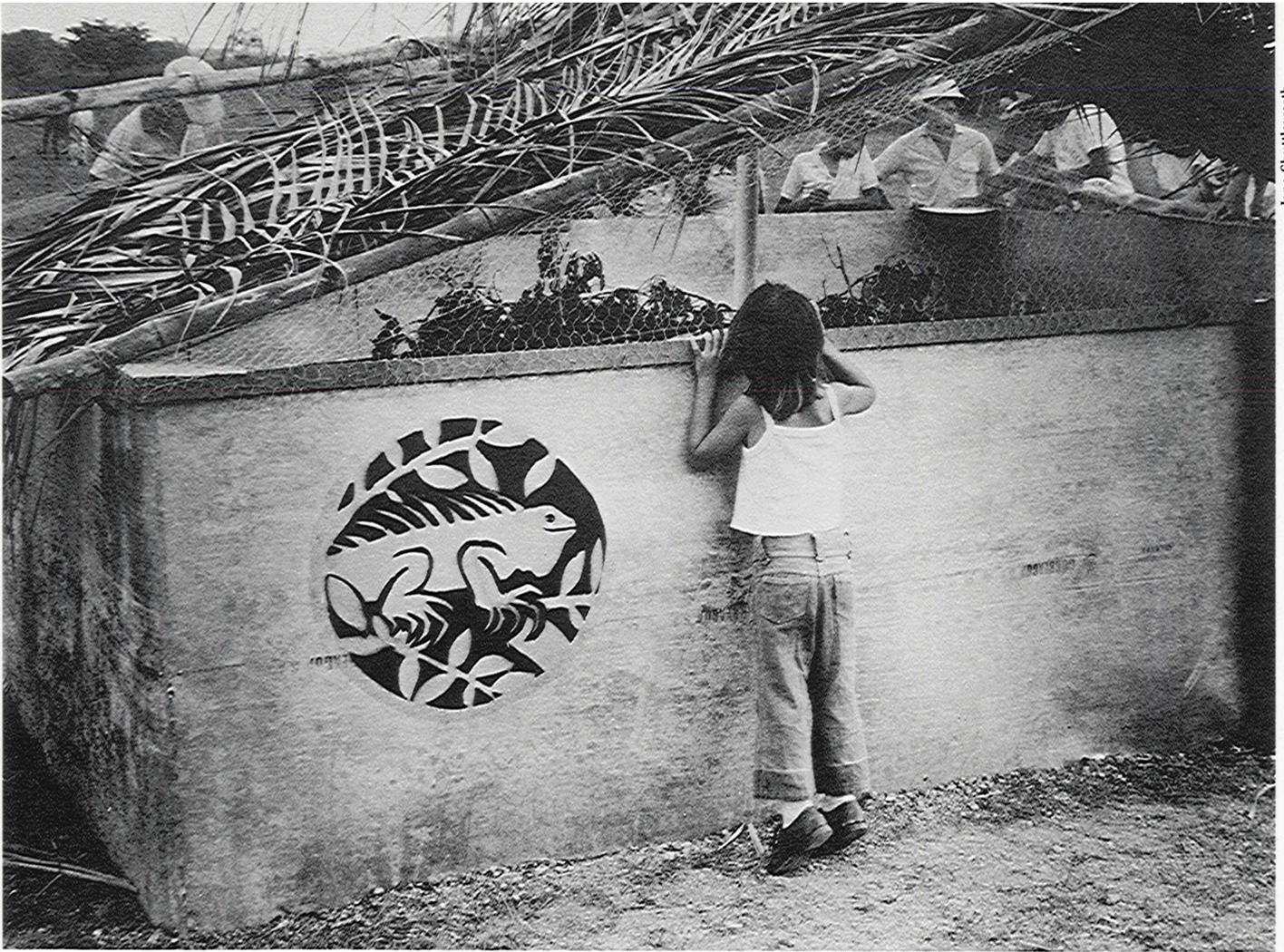
For their own part, the released iguanas have rapidly adapted to the benign treatment of their human patrons, and the few wild iguanas in the region are beginning, albeit cautiously, to poke their heads out from their protective cover. After they are freed, project iguanas make regular use of the feeding stations placed

along the branches of trees. They even become visibly disappointed when the farmer neglects his schedule and forgets to load the tray with fruit.

Work with the communities is thoroughly collaborative, in the sense that both project staff and community members are novices in the business of managing iguanas on farms. Project personnel impart knowledge of ecosystems and natural resource management as a backdrop against which the iguana, a single species, becomes intelligible, thereby raising awareness of broad issues, such as the need for reforestation, while practical tasks are being accomplished. At the same time, project staff gain a better understanding of how to adapt their scientific techniques to traditional patterns of village life. The technologies that gradually emerge from this symbiotic venture will be crucial to future efforts at iguana reproduction throughout the hemisphere.

The Iguana Management Project has received considerable notice since it began, and the reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. Scientists are impressed by the rigor of the experiments and the advancements that are being made in our understanding of iguana biology and behavior. Popular articles lauding the project have appeared in several languages, and the stream of visitors to the center has become a flood. The potential of the project has been noticed by ecologists and development specialists alike, and steps are being taken to train scientists throughout the hemisphere. World Wildlife Fund-US has recently provided the project with funds to hold a workshop to share what has been learned.

The Iguana Management Project is unique because it is the first systematic attempt to raise green iguanas under controlled conditions. Without doubt,



the research being carried out at the experimental center is tremendously important for preserving the iguana and improving the quality of life for human beings in the tropical regions of the hemisphere.

But the efforts of Dagmar Werner and Diego González and all of the other project participants are unique in another, equally significant sense. They constitute one of the few examples of a scientific project that moves beyond pure research to practical application for poor populations. The key point, in fact, is that Werner has deliberately chosen not to apply her knowledge to assist or seek financing from entrepreneurs interested in setting up lucrative "iguana ranches" where skins can be mass-produced for the handbag and cowboy-boot markets.

Instead, she has opted to expend her energies in the altogether uncertain yet exciting territory of raising the standard of living of campesinos and improving the natural environment around their rural communities. This calls for careful analysis of the iguana and its ecology, and a constant collaborative search for

acceptable technologies and strategies that can serve as the basis for training programs in iguana management by small farmers. The patience required in working with rural communities clearly makes it the most difficult option.

Without strong commitment from all involved, early enthusiasm may quickly wane and slide into apathy as long-term responsibilities must be met. It is here in the human arena then, that the Iguana Management Project will face its greatest challenge. However, work with rural communities is the only way to reach the project's ultimate goal. That goal is not conservation, but restoration, with a new set of understandings, of the earlier balance that existed between man and his environment, a balance in which conservation and exploitation go hand in hand. ◆

MAC CHAPIN is an anthropologist who was the IAF Representative to Panama from 1982 to 1984.

A child peers into a cage filled with young iguanas. Youngsters have been enlisted as allies to the project, sometimes helping to release hatchlings and accompanying staff on iguana counts.

STANDING TALL: Balanced Development in Haiti

Robert Maguire

The IAF field representative for Haiti reports on the mood, opinions, and needs of rural Haitians as they set about building a new democracy.

For the past seven years I have worked as the representative of the Inter-American Foundation for Haiti. During these years I have often been told that the country is a basket case with little hope for the future. One representative of an international development agency even suggested, in despair, that Haiti should be evacuated—that its population be packed up and moved to another country!

Even though Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, I have become increasingly angry at the "basket case" analogy. If anything Haitian were a basket case, it was never the country nor its people, but the government, hopelessly corrupt, greedy, and self-centered. I have argued that, given a chance, the Haitian poor could demonstrate that neither they nor their country are beyond hope.

In the aftermath of the demise of the Duvalier dictatorship on February 7, 1986, the people have that chance, and already things are changing. The Haitian poor, after 29 years of repression, are literally standing taller, as though an actual weight has been lifted from their shoulders. They are breathing more freely, as if a foul air has blown away. On the morning of Jean-Claude and Michele Duvalier's departure, many Haitians carried tree branches in their hands, using them as brooms to symbolically sweep out the evil spirits that had haunted their country for so many years.

Soon after, I arrived for a three-week visit that would include extensive travel in the countryside. I found that even the name of the airport had changed. François Duvalier International Airport was now simply Port-au-Prince International Airport. As in V.S. Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River*, all the external trappings of a family

dictatorship—photographs, statues, engraved passages from speeches, street signs—had been swept away. And with them went a cloud of fear. When I entered a cab to go into the city, the driver enthusiastically said, "Welcome to liberated Haiti!" He proudly displayed a large, round button with *Haiti Liberé* inscribed on a blue-and-red background. He explained that the button came from Miami and cost a dollar, but that did not matter. "It was worth it."

In the days that followed, everywhere I went I heard people talking. They were expressing themselves in public for the first time in decades—and I learned more on this trip than in the past 10 combined. I watched ordinary people marching and demonstrating, as though their feet had been unfettered. Undeniably, tremendous change had begun to sweep over Haiti, and nowhere was it more visible than at the grassroots—among the youth and the rural and urban poor—inspired, in large part, by the leadership of the Haitian Catholic Church.

These outward signs of liberation are just the beginning of what is needed, however. Given the breadth and depth of Haiti's poverty, walking tall, speaking out, and cleansing communities of the evil of the *ton-ton macoutes*—the henchmen of the dictatorship—though necessary prerequisites of broader change, will not in themselves solve the country's hard-and-fast economic problems.

Leaders of indigenous organizations involved in grassroots development programs throughout rural Haiti have identified steps they can take to begin to satisfy those needs. They have also begun to work out how international donors can best help them. To understand the gist of their ideas and plans, it is important to highlight two statistics. First, roughly 75 percent of Haiti's close to six million



Haitian craftsman proudly displays a woven soleil. The vibrant sunburst is representative of a brighter future for the people of rural Haiti.

people live in the countryside. Second, during the Duvalier years, 80 to 85 percent of all public expenditures were made in the capital of Port-au-Prince. Juxtaposed, these two statistics demonstrate the imbalance underlying the national economy, in which an extraction system had been imposed upon the rural population and had siphoned off resources while providing almost no parallel reinvestment. It is no coincidence that the most prominent buildings in Haitian communities have been tax collection offices, army barracks, and militia posts.

Haitians equate this extraction structure with a popsicle called, in Creole, *pesé sousé*, or "squeeze and suck." It comes in a plastic tube and is eaten by opening the container at the top and then squeezing at the bottom while sucking from the top. In making the analogy, rural Haitians specify that the *pesé sousé* represents not only their material resources, squeezed and sucked away by corrupt public officials and armed extortionists, but their rights as citizens. Years of this systematic extraction have polarized the country, concentrating resources in the hands of a few people, mostly city dwellers, while rural communities and the countryside itself were progressively impoverished.

One vignette illustrates how thoroughly the *pesé sousé* system devoured scarce resources and discouraged the rural population from working toward development. The story involves something very important to Haiti—trees.

The legal code governing rural Haiti specifies that whoever owns a tree must pay a five-cent tax to the state before the tree can be cut down. This tax is earmarked to support a

state forestry service and build nurseries throughout the country. In return, the small farmer is entitled to four or five seedlings from a state nursery to replace each tree that has been harvested.

That is not how the law worked in practice. Small farmers indeed paid taxes to forestry officers. However, the actual fees ranged from one to five dollars per tree, and the money did not help support tree nurseries. There are very few government nurseries in rural Haiti. Instead, the money lined the pockets of forestry officers, who were often *ton-ton macoutes*. Since local officers were required to forward certain sums of money along a chain of command to other *macoutes*, the level of extortion tended to become more and more exorbitant.

The average annual income of rural Haitians is less than \$100. The actual tax paid, then, might be as much as 5 percent of a farmer's annual income. And keep in mind that this was not the only tax squeezing the poor. There were taxes in the marketplace, taxes for rental of state lands, taxes for all official papers—all calculated to keep the poor ever poor. No wonder small farmers felt no incentive to support reforestation programs, even when they were sponsored by private groups. The trees, after all, were not really a renewable resource but a source of deepening servitude and debt.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the clarion call now coming from rural communities is for a reversal in the geographic imbalance of public resource expenditures and for an end to the corrupt *pesé sousé* system.



Foreign assistance can best help Haitians such as the small farmer working in his garden outside Gros Morne, above, and the school children at play, opposite, by improving the nation's physical infrastructure. Grassroots leaders feel that the development of the person is something Haitians must do themselves.

Haitian rural development leaders argue that taking these two steps will allow the country to begin to satisfy some of its chronic economic needs. If the rural poor can keep more of their resources to reinvest in their communities and their work, rural development (even without massive injection of outside capital) can take off and begin to be self-sustaining. Of course, improving the rate of reinvestment in the countryside of legitimately raised public funds will further accelerate this process. Given the ton-ton macoutes' almost instantaneous fall from power within their communities after Duvalier's departure, the first part of this process has already begun. With no one squeezing at the bottom for the moment, the pesé sousé system has begun to break down.

However, I was told repeatedly that "demacoutization" is a complex process with two phases. The first, the literal *dechoukaj*, or uprooting, of functionaries has been done. There are no longer men and women walking around in the blue denim uniforms of the macoutes, wielding authority. Yet scores of people—former macoutes and those who learned to survive through quiet submission—still carry the old system's values and expectations within them. Hence, a second *dechoukaj* to cast out that internalized mentality is underway. It will require a long, tedious process of education and reorientation, but this second casting out must be as definitive as the first if democracy is to become a reality. Otherwise, the ton-ton macoutes will

only re-emerge, wearing a different uniform. This, perhaps, is the key challenge facing Haiti.

Church leaders and the participants in grassroots development efforts with whom I spoke have begun to formulate how these changes can take place and to identify how international donors can contribute to the process. First, demacoutization requires the development of the person through education, information, and knowledge. Then, to help depolarize the economy, the physical infrastructure of the countryside must be improved through massive capital investment. Grassroots leaders feel more comfortable in having direct outside involvement in the latter—the infrastructural programs. The former, the education process and the development of the person, is widely felt to be something that Haitians must do themselves.

Donors and foreign governments can best help, then, by listening to Haitians and understanding what they want so that the assistance offered is appropriate and effective. An informed and sophisticated response is needed. The importance of Haitians' national pride, won through a revolutionary war fought almost 200 years ago, cannot be overlooked. Since then, Haitian nationalism, dignity, and pride may have been abused, but these qualities must be respected as the necessary foundation upon which to build any lasting development. Haitian leaders ask interested outsiders to support them as partners, not to dictate solutions.

They also ask donors to keep in mind that Haiti is more

than Port-au-Prince. Fundamental structural change is needed, and is occurring in rural Haiti, where the vast majority of the people reside. We should not be distracted by the inevitable headlines from Port-au-Prince and the attempts of some urban leaders to protect the old status quo. "Port-au-Prince," it is said, "a toujours mangé les révolutions (Port-au-Prince has always eaten the revolutions)." Outside investment, therefore, should focus on building rural infrastructure, particularly transportation, potable water, small-scale irrigation, and energy systems. In turn, this shift in priorities will further accelerate the dismantling of the public, para-statal, and private monopolies that extracted nearly every penny from the Haitian people—especially if the infrastructure of regional port towns destroyed by the Duvaliers is rebuilt.

Outsiders can also contribute to the literal demacoutization of the country in several ways. They can urge that macoutes and criminals of the old regime be brought to trial swiftly, under due process of law. They can support and facilitate the repatriation of resources stolen by the dictatorship. Governments can cooperate to ensure that members of the former regime do not have an outside base to threaten Haiti's future stability.

Donors can support the development of a different kind of infrastructure as well: the institution-building that underlies any democracy. They can provide financial assistance to support indigenous democratic processes, particularly by helping to ensure that honest, clear, and complete information is available to all Haitians. One way this can be done is by strengthening the broadcast power of Radio Soleil, the Catholic radio station that has come to symbolize national resistance to dictatorship. Closed during the last days of the old regime, the station reopened on February 7, broadcasting Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." Thousands of Haitians gathered outside the studios in downtown Port-au-Prince to sing the station's theme song, "Le-m pa oue Soley-la," which had become the anthem of the street demonstrations that preceded Duvalier's flight. Soleil's work promoting the social, economic, and spiritual development of its audience has resumed, but because of weak transmitters the programming cannot be heard throughout much of the country, particularly after sunset when most people have time to listen.

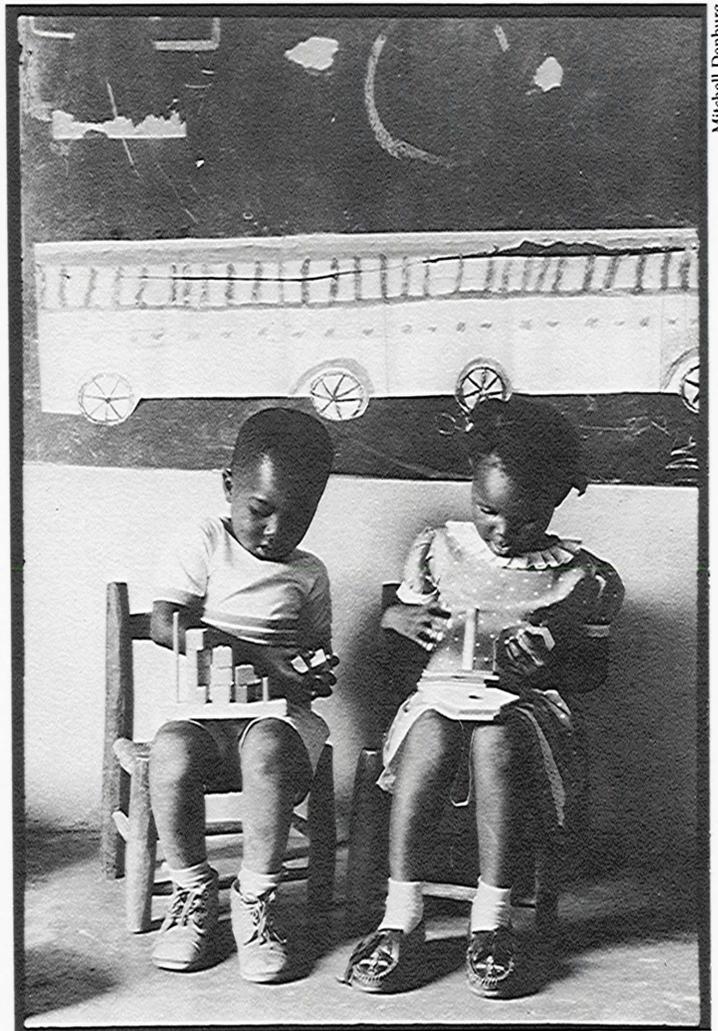
Development and democratization can also be supported by providing resources to:

- the national literacy program launched last year by the Haitian Catholic Bishops. Assisted by a grant from the Inter-American Foundation, this program intends to help as many as three million Haitian adults learn to read and write in Creole, and is widely viewed as the launching pad for expanded grassroots development and for popular participation in the democratic process;

- local programs to provide legal aid and protect citizen rights, thus ensuring that demacoutization of the country becomes and remains a full reality;

- the expansion of indigenous development education programs that work with the rural poor, particularly under the aegis of existing leadership training and regional group formation centers, most of which are linked to Church agencies;

- and finally, the community programs that enable producer groups to improve their incomes by opening access to credit at fair rates in order to store, transform, and market crops, and that encourage agricultural technologies



Mitchell Denburg

which improve production while helping to protect a dangerously depleted environment.

Many of these steps are already underway. To ensure that grassroots development proceeds on course, donors can encourage the interim government to reform and reorganize state institutions so that those institutions render real services and so local initiative is encouraged rather than discouraged. In the past, grassroots projects have often been paralyzed because it was impossible to determine what was permissible as well as possible. The Duvalier regime's extra-legal boundaries often changed impulsively and were, in fact, generally invisible. Of course, there are practical as well as ethical limits to the role any foreign agency can play. And it is worth remembering a Haitian proverb that simply states, "You can't carry eggs in a rooster's stomach." In promoting lasting rural development, Haitians, not foreigners, must take the lead.

With responsive and responsible support for their efforts at bottom-up development during what is being called Haiti's "second liberation," the Haitian poor and the Haitian nation can become healthier neighbors and demonstrate that a brighter future is at hand. ♦

ROBERT MAGUIRE has been the IAF representative for Haiti since 1979. He is the author of *Bottom-Up Development in Haiti*, published by the Foundation in 1981.

A SENSE OF IDENTITY

Patrick Breslin

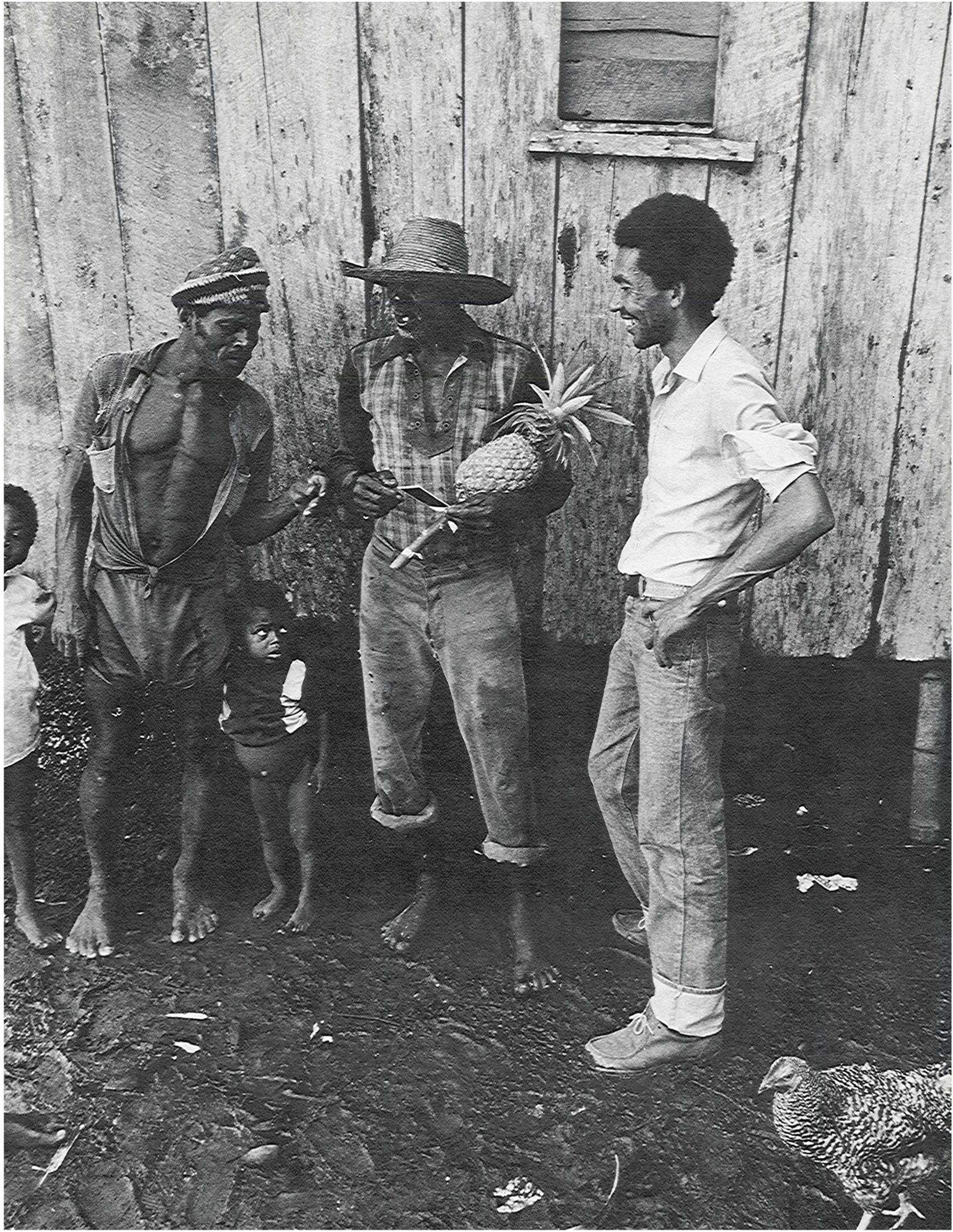
In his forthcoming book, *Development and Dignity*, author Patrick Breslin examines the first 15 years of the Inter-American Foundation. The following excerpt explores the vital but often overlooked connection between culture and development.

“**W**ho am I? Where do I come from? Where do I fit in?” In the gloom of the late afternoon in Quito, while storm clouds rumbled overhead, Juan García recited the questions that have driven him to become a one-man folklore commission for his people, the descendants of black slaves first brought to Ecuador in colonial times. Shelved on the office wall behind him were hundreds of cassette tapes filled with interviews, five years of his work. During those five years, the Inter-American Foundation supported García as he searched the river banks of Esmeraldas in Ecuador’s coastal lowlands or the dry hillsides of the Chota Valley for the old men and women who carry in their heads the history, legends, stories, and poetry of their race.

Juan García’s questions are asked frequently in Latin America and the Caribbean. They are voiced in Spanish, English, Portuguese, French, Creole, or in any one of dozens of Indian languages, sometimes in tones of intellectual curiosity, sometimes in pain and anger, often in desperation. The questions touch on some of the most serious and sensitive problems in the region: the tension between ethnic identity and national integration; the destructive effects of racial prejudice; the struggles for cultural independence and personal identity and for dignity. The efforts to find answers to those questions have taken many paths, some of them violent. In several cases in recent years they have involved the Inter-American Foundation in unique projects and carried the institution toward a more complex understanding of development.

Development is usually thought to mean change for the better in material standards of living, or at least to be aimed at that goal. If material standards of living are to be improved, many other kinds of changes in a society are usually required. Most development agencies, therefore, are in the business of social change. *They Know How*, a book about the Foundation’s first five years, summarized the sorts of projects the Foundation supported, and identified “changes in relationships” as the common denominator. Most of the people who came to the Foundation for backing were working for changes in the patterns of use, ownership, and distribution of land; in the forms of ownership, management, and employment in the workplace; in access to and control of credit, capital, and commodity flows; in the observance of human and civil rights; in the treatment of minorities.

Oral historian Juan García (right) talks with coastal villagers in Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador. García spent five years in the area recording the history, legends, stories, and poetry of his people.



But a small number of Foundation-backed projects indicate that there is another element to development besides change. Sometimes people must first fortify their base before they sally out to change the world. No matter how poor their material conditions, people always have resources available: intelligence, imagination, language, the skill of their hands, history, a sense of identity, a cultural heritage, pride, a certain piece of land. Sometimes the development process is not so much about change as about the preservation and strengthening of those resources. Without them, Juan García's questions go unanswered.

García's questions go back to his school days. His father was a Spaniard who arrived on the Esmeraldas coast of Ecuador around 1940, dedicated himself to mining, and married a local black woman. "Down on the coast, we have a saying, that one takes in his culture with his mother's milk. If your mother is white, you're white. If she's black, you're black." But in school, he began to wonder where he fit in. "The identity of Ecuador is Spanish and also Indian. The Indians have managed to insert elements of their traditions into the school. There are monuments to Indian leaders. But as a black boy in school, I had the problem of not finding anything in Ecuador to identify with. School children learn of Indian and Spanish heroes. But nothing of the blacks. No one identifies with the blacks, and blacks find no ancestor mentioned in the history books they read in school. There are no monuments to blacks."

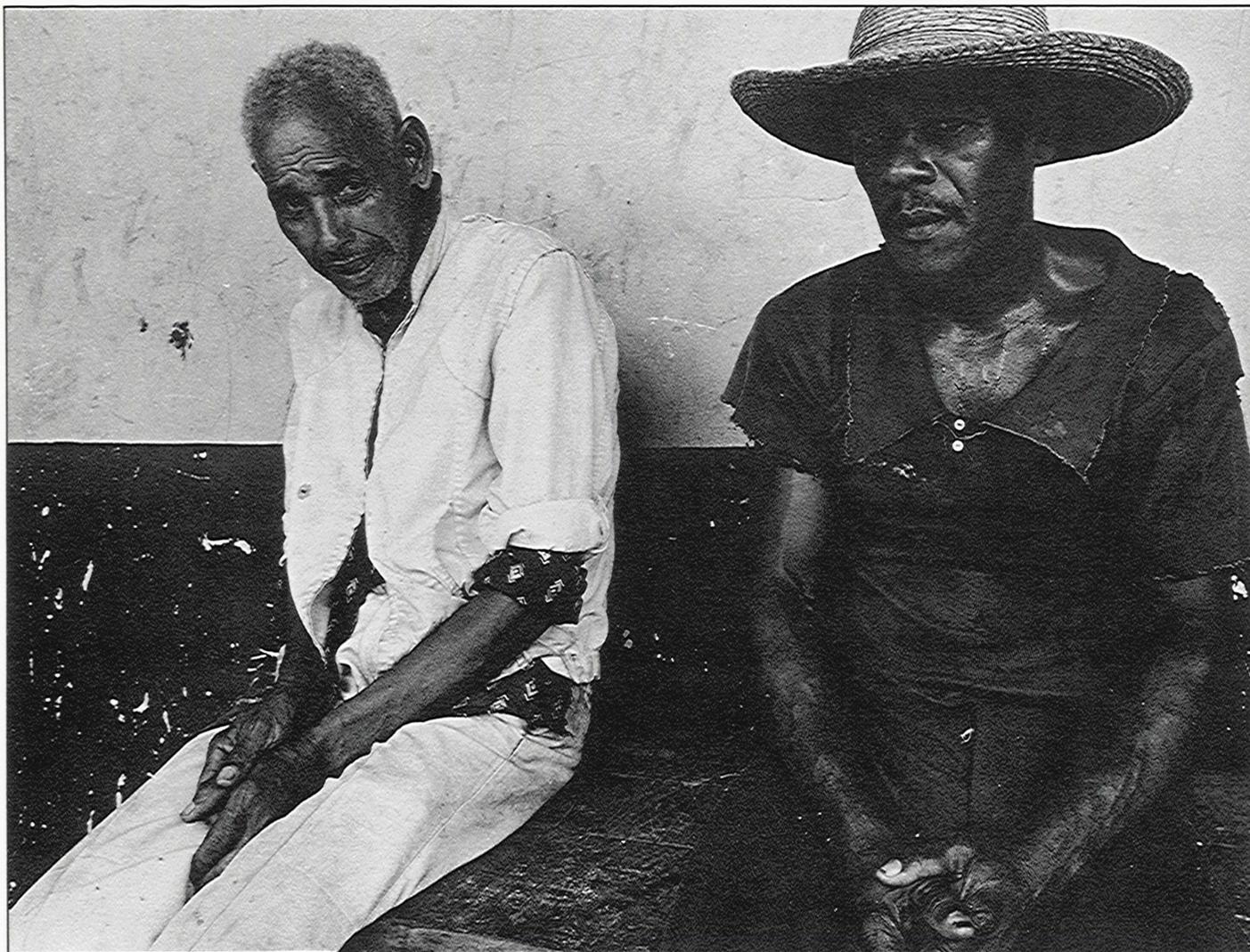
García was born near the sea, and his earliest memories are of swift trips to market in southern Colombia, riding the Pacific currents in outrigger canoes, and then the long return, poling the canoes through the dim light of the mangrove swamps and spending the nights in isolated houses on stilts above the river bank while old men spun stories. As a young man, he continued to travel and eventually wound up in Bogotá, the Colombian capital, where he ran a small factory. He frequented the university, took some classes, and talked with students. "There I learned that one ought to have a cultural tradition. I began to think about Ecuador. I decided to return to my own country to do something. I didn't know what."

Back home, he found himself caring for his dying grandfather and teaching in the local school. His grandfather's illness was prolonged. "It's because he knows so many secrets," the people said. "He can't die until he passes them on." The grandfather began to tell his stories and legends to García. "That's what began my interest in the old people, and the hoard of stories they have. And then I began to look in books. Who are we, the blacks in Ecuador? Where did we come from? And there was nothing. No one knew anything. No one had written anything.

"I began to travel the rivers in my own canoe to talk with the people. Whenever I'd see an old person, I'd stop to talk. And I began to see that there was a marvelous treasure in all the traditions but that it was going to die, to disappear. I started to think: 'Why not try to gather this material?' But I didn't have the means to do it right. I talked to a woman who could make *guarapillo*, a medicinal drink, and she told me she picked 100 herbs to make it. How was I to remember the names of a hundred herbs?

"I went to a foundation here in Quito, and they suggested I write a proposal, and they would send it to someone." García didn't know anything about the Inter-American Foundation, but one day someone introduced him to Chuck Kleymeyer, the Foundation's representative for Ecuador. "I told him what pained me most was the loss of this tradition, because every time I went back on the rivers, another old person had died." Kleymeyer accepted García's invitation to see what he meant. They traveled together by road to the mouth of the Santiago River, and then in a dugout canoe with an outboard motor for 100 kilometers up and down the river and its tributaries.

"The Foundation came through," García said. "I could get the equipment I needed to record. And I just went out and started taping. *Décimas* at first, our poetry. And then other things started coming out, legends that even I hadn't heard before. There were stories of white and black magic, of a man



Residents of the Esmeraldas Coast. Although there are some traces of Indian traditions taught in school, black Ecuadorians find no ancestors mentioned in history books.

who could turn into a hen or a bunch of bananas when the police came looking for him. The police would kick the hen out of the way or take two bananas, and afterwards, the man would limp or be missing two fingers."

Some of the stories told of dark bargains that people would strike with the devil so they could become wealthy. In one, a man raises a family from a dozen eggs he hatches with incantations, and his sons and daughters become, as he intended, expert thieves, rustlers, pirates, spies who amass great wealth for him. In another, a godfather violates the baptism ceremony by willing the priest's blessing to bypass the infant and enter a coin he holds in his clenched fist. The infant is left spiritually adrift, but the coin now has the magic power to attract all other coins it comes in contact with and to bring them home to its master. Such stories of conjuring up dark powers bespoke the powerlessness of the slaves' lives.

Other stories recounted the history of Ecuador's blacks; how their ancestors were brought down from Colombia; how some gained their freedom by fighting in the war of independence; how emancipation finally came in 1860, but only after the slaveowners were recompensed. There were religious stories, children's stories, tales of animals very like the Br'er Rabbit stories from the American South.

As García probed deeper into his people's folklore, he began to see in the old storytellers the monuments he had sought in vain as a schoolboy. "I realized they are the only monuments we have. But no one is going to make a monument of them. So I said to myself, the next best thing to a monument is paper. Get it down on paper.



Mitchell Denburg

Sisters in traditional costume take part in annual festival in Esmeraldas.

"Now, the question is what do we do with this material. I want to give it to the young people. I want to be sure that other black children don't have the problem I did of lacking a sense of identity. See how alienating the educational system is? Nowhere, not in stone, not on paper, do you find our people remembered. And this is a serious problem for the integration of the nation. It tells you you're not here, you don't exist. That's what this work is aimed at."

Of some 700 hours of interviews already taped, García has transcribed over 100. He has published nine booklets containing samples of the collected material. He hopes that it can be gradually introduced into the educational system. But he knows that his real work is for posterity. "This collection probably won't

be really used for years, until the country realizes what it has lost. Especially the black people. In 50 years, maybe, someone will come looking for it, saying, 'There was a guy named García who collected stories.' That's why I'm working."

Meanwhile, he's rekindled interest in the old storytellers. "In some places, we were able to reactivate the tradition of storytelling by the old people. What happened was we would visit the house of a storyteller and arrange to go back the next day to record some stories. These houses have large open areas. We would bring a few packs of cigarettes. And gradually, other people would come by, old people, youths. Sometimes we'd be there until dawn. Afterwards, the youths would ask us where we were going the next day. And so, during a month we'd spend in a small town, we'd reactivate a whole tradition."

AN OUTPOST OF ENGLISH

A dozen years ago, about the same time that Juan García returned to Esmeraldas, a young North American teacher on an extended trip wandered into Cahuita, a town south of Limón on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast. Paula Palmer says she was just looking for a good beach when she came to Cahuita, but what she found was an opportunity to help preserve a unique culture that was starting to disappear, a task that has consumed her ever since. "I guess I was something of a hippie," Palmer said. "I'd worked in the civil rights movement at home, and then traveled through Mexico where I worked with some Indian groups, and then kept moving until I got to Costa Rica."

Discovering that Palmer was an experienced teacher, a woman in Cahuita urged her to prolong her stay and teach her seven grandchildren English. Palmer did not understand why the woman was so insistent, but agreed. When she appeared for the first class, 35 children were waiting. Palmer called a parents meeting and discovered the interest in English instruction for their children was intense. Soon she had 85 students and no reading materials.

Meanwhile, Palmer had been learning the Creole language common to the Limón region, as well as the local history. The English-speaking black population of the region originally came from the Caribbean islands. Some were fishermen and hunters who had followed the droves of turtles up along the Panamanian coast. Later, farmers from Jamaica came to settle. Still later, jobs on the banana plantations and the railroads drew many more.

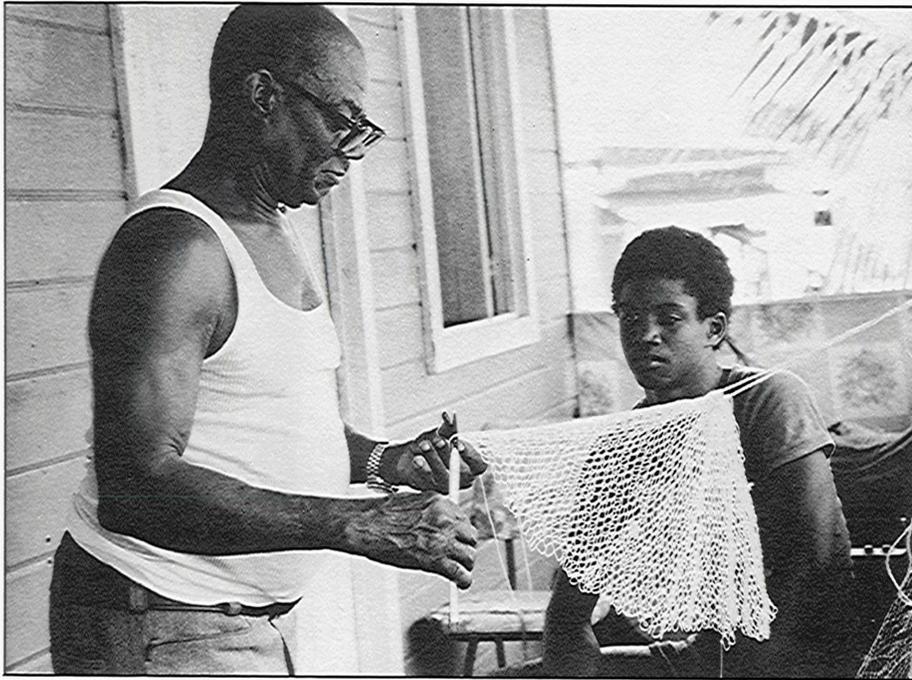
Until midcentury, the Limón region maintained its distinctive cultural identity. People went to the English schools; links were maintained with Afro-Caribbean people from other parts of the Caribbean basin. A rich theatrical tradition flourished. "They were doing Macbeth in Puerto Viejo in 1915," Palmer said.

Changes came in the 1950s. President José Figueres was intent on integrating the nation. Under Figueres' policies, Spanish supplanted English in Limón's schools. "As it did," Palmer said, "the people began to lose all the things the English school had done, all the cultural activities, that had formed a sense of being Afro-Caribbean."

As she listened to the older people recount the history of their community, it occurred to her that she could use their stories for her English classes. She began recording the oral history and then transcribed it. As the stories circulated in the community, the neighbors urged her to collect full time. They were aware that many of the old people were dying, and with them, links to their own past. After teaching three years, Palmer followed their suggestion. Two more years of recording led to her book *What Happen: A Folk History of Costa Rica's Talamanca Coast*.

"But even though the people were very interested," Palmer said, "they were concerned that their children were not. That led me to think that I should be teaching high school kids to collect their history themselves, rather than having me do it. And that's what we did."

A local agricultural cooperative, many of whose members were parents of Palmer's students, presented a proposal for research on the local culture to



photos by Arnold Haubelamp

Fisherman Bobby Walter of Costa Rica's Talamanca Coast shows Jorge Hudson how to make nets. Right: Doña Appolonia, a Bribri Indian, sings ceremonial songs.

the Inter-American Foundation and made Palmer coordinator. Soon many of the local youths were busy gathering material. "People have told me that it was important that I was a foreigner," she said. "They said the kids took it from me that this history and these traditions are rich and fascinating. They wouldn't have listened to their grandparents saying the same thing."

The gathering of oral history led to the renewal of cultural events and practices that had faded away. For the first time in 20 years, the people began to observe Slavery Day, a celebration commemorating their liberation. A cricket match was played for the first time in 35 years. Special ceremonies honored the old people of the community.

Eventually, the students gathered enough material for three publications on the history, culture, and economy of the black and Indian populations of the region. Impressed by their quality, the Costa Rican government reprinted them for distribution throughout the school system to increase public awareness of the country's heritage. But Palmer believes the project's main impact will be felt among the people of the coast. "More important than what we can teach the rest of the country about this region is what goes on in the souls of these thousand or so kids and what they'll do in Costa Rica because of the way they feel about themselves."

FLUTES AND DRUMS

Children, and how they feel about themselves, are the focus of another Foundation-supported project aimed at preserving cultural resources—this one in the remote and beautiful city of Sucre, Bolivia. Sixty percent of Bolivia's six million people are Indian and the rest are *criollo*. The line is drawn more by culture and history than race. An Indian is a person who comes from an Indian community, wears Indian dress, and speaks one of the Indian languages. A *criollo* is a white or *mestizo*—usually an urban person—who speaks Spanish.

Since the Conquest, "Indian" has also meant the people who have been exploited. Avid for the mineral wealth of the Andes, the Spaniards herded Indians into mines and then onto the haciendas that grew up around the mining centers. Institutionalized systems of mandatory labor preserved the serflike condition of the Indian for more than a century after independence. A common practice called *pongiaje*, from the Aymara word for "door," required that an Indian protect the landowner's house every night by sleeping curled



Bolivian street musician. Right: Campesinos bicycle across the barren altiplano near Sucre, Bolivia, where a group called Los Masis helped popularize Andean music.

up in the doorway. Even today the word *indio* is so weighted with connotations of oppression and degradation that it is considered an insult. The more neutral term "campesino" has replaced it in polite language.

Despite advances since the 1952 revolution, chasms of distrust separate Indians from criollos. Many Bolivians insist that the political instability and economic chaos for which their country is famous are only surface manifestations of these deeper rifts. They see scant possibility for genuine national development until there is both self- and mutual respect among the peoples of Bolivia.

But when a group of youngsters play the haunting music of the Andes, Bolivia's discordant culture suddenly seems a bit closer to harmony. Cultural harmony is represented in the instruments: the guitar brought from Spain; the *charango*, an Indian version of the guitar, its body fashioned from an armadillo shell; and the fur-trimmed drums, the *queñas* (flutes) and *zampoñas* (pan pipes) that are as Andean as the snow on Illimani's peak. Together, they produce a rhythmic, piercing music tinged with the desolation of the altiplano.

Several years ago, a group of university students in Sucre formed a group called Los Masis to play Andean music. Their practice sessions in local parks sometimes aroused the ire of passersby. Sucre is perhaps the best preserved colonial city in all of South America, and it has always preened its Spanish heritage, which included a deprecatory attitude towards all things native. Until 1952, no Indian wearing traditional garments dared even enter the city's central plaza.

However, when word filtered back from Paris and Rome that groups playing Andean music were the rage, many Bolivians began to listen with greater interest. During the 1970s, Los Masis prospered. They released several records and traveled thousands of miles on concert tours. But as its members finished their university studies and moved on to other careers, Los Masis broke up. Those who chose to stay with music began to teach local children and eventually opened a cultural center.

Since 1980, the center has offered nightly classes in guitar and Andean musical instruments. In its workshop, students are taught to make as well as play the traditional instruments. More importantly, they learn to value their own culture, a culture that for centuries has been scorned, leaving the people born into it with Juan García's existential questions. "A child will come in here crying," said a teacher in one of Sucre's poor barrios, "because someone called him an Indian. They have lovely legends, lovely traditions, but they're not



Patrick Breslin

valued, and so they don't value themselves. The problem is how to learn to value those things again, in the face of a modern world that devours tradition."

For Jorge Arduz, president of Los Masis cultural center, solving that problem is an indispensable part of development. "The important factor in any kind of development," he said, "is the human factor. To be productive, man has to value himself, which means being able to understand where he stands in society and in history. That's why for us, cultural development goes hand in hand with economic development."

CULTURE IS A PLACE

The projects described above are all based on the faith that if a fading cultural patrimony can be restored, it will strengthen the capacity of people to deal with the challenges that surround them. But can it be demonstrated that such faith is justified? If people can answer Juan García's questions confidently, will they be more successful at solving other problems? Perhaps the best place to ponder that question is from an island in the Gulf of San Blas, on Panama's Caribbean coast.

When a Kuna Indian awakens on one of the small coral islands where most of his people live, his gaze wanders past the thatched houses of his neighbors, out over the low-riding canoes of farmers headed for their mainland plots, and then across a mile or so of shimmering water to a mass of green forest rising, virgin and luxuriant, to the ridge of the San Blas mountains. At his back, the sun climbs above the calm Caribbean, and its first rays loosen the tufts of mist snagged like fleece in the clefts of the hills. For generations, this dawn panorama, serene and unchanging, has greeted the Kuna people.

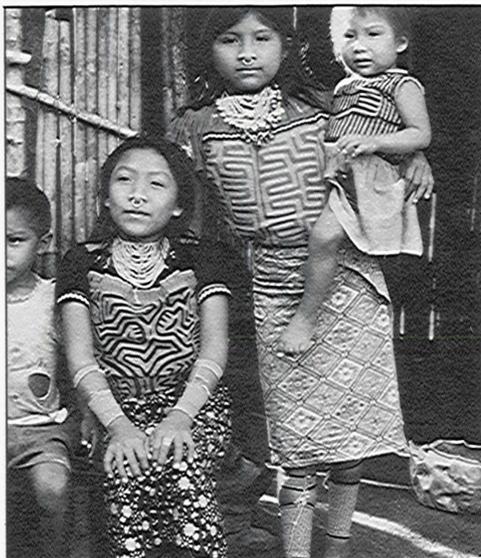
But if that Indian were standing atop the 2,400-foot-high San Blas range, the view down the other slope would be less reassuring. Large swaths of thick vegetation have fallen victim to the machete and the torch. Ash-gray tree trunks stand above the denuded landscape, skeletal remnants of the once-towering jungle.

For several years now, peasants from the increasingly arid interior of Panama have been slashing and burning—implacable as soldier ants—toward Kuna land. Cattle ranches, producing beef for the international market, drove many of them from their previous farms, and cattle are close behind them again. In three or four years, when the newly cleared and shocked land will no longer support subsistence crops of bananas, rice, manioc, and corn, they will plant pasture and try to sell their holdings to ranchers. In a few more years, the fragile soils will be so leached that even cattle-ranching will fail. The tracks of the future can be read on the southern slopes and lower ridges of the San Blas, where the erosion that will inevitably claim all the cleared acres has already begun.

Until recently, Kuna lands seemed safe from this specter. Although less than 100 miles from Panama City, they were practically inaccessible until the government announced plans to push a branch road from the Pan American highway over the ridge and down the northern slopes of the San Blas to the Caribbean coast. The Kuna were of two minds about the road. They welcomed the prospect of easier movement for themselves and their goods between San Blas and Panama. But they knew that the road had already brought settlers to the southern slopes, and they feared encroachment on their tribal land. With a fine sense of geopolitics, they realized that the point of maximum danger was a place called Udirbi, where the new road would enter their territory. It was there that they had to establish a presence.

First they attempted to carve out their own agricultural colony in the virgin forest. When that failed because of the poor soil, the Kuna began to explore the idea of creating a park for scientific research. As the plan developed, they saw major advantages in such a park. Twenty square kilometers around Udirbi would have clear, patrolled boundaries to bar intruders. Moreover, if the threat persisted, the international scientific community, handed an expanse of unstudied rain forest with richly unique flora and fauna, would be an influential ally in future struggles.

Eventually, the Kuna presented a proposal to the Inter-American Foundation. With Foundation backing, and support from several scientific and conservation



Opposite: A nuchu, or tutelary spirit, guards the gates at Udirbi Preserve in Panama. Above: Kuna Indian girls wear traditional mola blouses, wrap skirts, and gold nose rings.

agencies as well as USAID, they are now building housing and research facilities at Udirbi and are cutting nature trails to observation sites in the forest.

The completion of the park should forestall a serious threat to the land of the Kuna, but their determination to protect it springs from impulses much deeper than considerations of property rights. To the Kuna, this land is not just a physical resource, but a spiritual one as well. "We say that this land is our mother," Leonidas Valdez explained. Valdez is one of the three *caciques*, or chiefs, who are the principal spokesmen for the entire Kuna people. Kuna traditions say the green-clothed earth is the body of the Great Mother. In the beginning, they say, she was naked. Her union with the Great Father produced all of the vegetation—which became her garments—the animals, and finally humans. "The land is also the culture," Valdez continued. "Here are born all things necessary to our culture: the fronds we use for the puberty ceremonies, all the foods gathered for our communal feasts, the materials our artisans use, and what goes into the construction of our houses. All of it comes from the forest. If we were to lose this land, there would be no culture, no soul."

The Kuna have no trouble answering Juan Garcia's questions. They are one of the very few Indian peoples to have survived into the 20th century with their culture, their society, and their identity intact. Because of their self-confidence, they have been able to approach Western culture like careful department store shoppers rather than awestruck primitives. They pick through the wares of Western culture, select those ideas and techniques that seem useful, and then tailor them to their own traditions. All this, the Kuna believe firmly, is because they have their base in the land, to which they return for replenishment and reinforcement. Their historical experience suggests that self-confident people who know where they come from, and who derive personal security and group pride from that knowledge, are best prepared to accept and implement the changes their societies need. ◆

PATRICK BRESLIN, who received his Ph.D. in political science from UCLA, has lived and traveled extensively throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. He has worked for several international organizations, including the U.S. Peace Corps, USAID, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is also the author of Interventions, a novel about Chile.

MAKING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WORK: THE CASE OF FUNDAÇÃO ESPERANÇA

Raymond C. Offenheiser



All photos courtesy of Fundação Esperança.

Although many community health care programs around the world are foundering, a small Brazilian organization has devised new ways to decentralize its operations and bring quality health care to the people of the mid-Amazon region.

Two worlds are in collision along the Brazilian Amazon. One, existing in cities like Belém, Manaus, and Santarém, contains all the technological marvels of the age. It is a world of highrise buildings, hospital complexes, and universities, of streets packed with cars and trucks, of store windows displaying appliances, fashionable clothes, and the latest conveniences. There, electronic assembly plants turn out television sets for the national market, ocean-going vessels take on cargo for export, and international mining interests store machinery for shipment to newly found production sites in the interior.

Only minutes away, however, the roads end and another world begins. In the rain forest and along the tributaries of the Amazon, families have cleared tracts of land for farming

or to make a living by gathering forest products. Many of these settlers have come from the parched and chronically poor Northeast, hoping to start over and improve their lives. What they have found is a lush world that, while different, is no less harsh than the arid one they left behind.

For the past 15 years, the Fundação Esperança, a private organization founded in Santarém by Father Luke Tupper, a North American Franciscan priest, has been working to provide the widely scattered rural residents of the mid-Amazon region with effective health care. Esperança's early efforts centered on its hospital boat, which traveled up and down the river to reach remote settlements. During its first decade of operation, Esperança vaccinated some 150,000 people and provided general medical and surgical

services to countless others. The boat became a potent symbol of modern medicine, and its sponsors acquired considerable credibility in the river communities.

Nonetheless, by the late 1970s, the program's staff were beginning to question the long-term effectiveness of their efforts. After seven years on the river, the same faces and the same diseases kept reappearing, again and again. It was time to try something different.

THE MOVE TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The leaders of Esperança were not the only ones searching for new and better methods of providing health care to the rural poor. In 1978, the World Health Organization brought this effort into focus. It began to encourage a shift toward preventive health care programs that would emphasize cost-effective use of medical resources, highlight the needs of women and children, and stress community participation and education. The movement became known as primary health care.

In 1979, Esperança decided it could have a longer-lasting impact on health in the mid-Amazon region if it could mobilize rural communities to improve family diets and sanitary practices, and carry out comprehensive vaccination campaigns. Supported by a grant from Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT), it launched its own primary health care program.

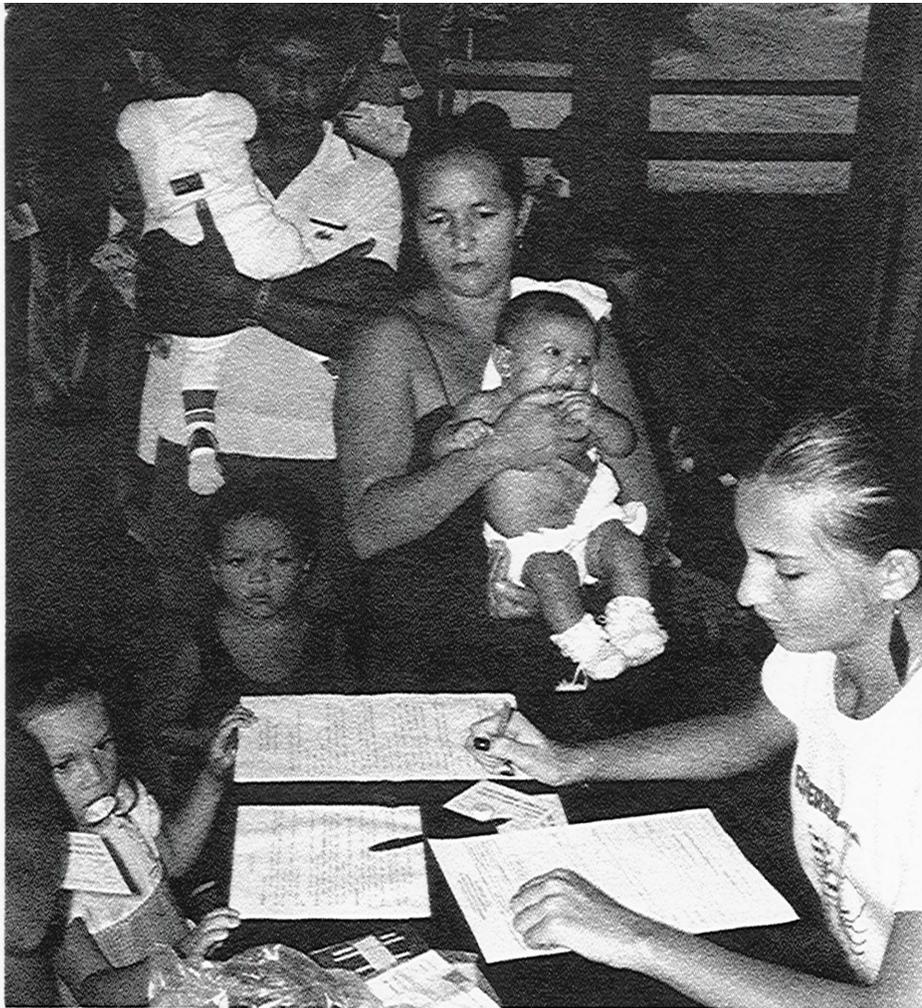
This initiative began with a health survey of the region. Studies revealed that one-third of the children under

the age of six were malnourished; 90 percent had untreated cavities; and two-thirds of 10,000 people tested showed evidence of parasitosis. There were higher than normal incidences of malaria, anemia, tuberculosis, diphtheria, uterine cancer in women, smallpox, and visual problems such as glaucoma and malformed lenses. As one might expect, infant mortality rates were astronomical. Uncorrected birth defects such as cleft palates and club feet were common.

The social, cultural, and demographic characteristics of the region were also discouraging. Most people lived in widely scattered river villages and were illiterate, with little understanding of hygiene, nutrition, or public health. Traditional dietary taboos caused many potentially nutritious foods to be overlooked, and most families subsisted on a diet of rice, beans, manioc, and fish. Poor diets combined with rampant parasitosis to produce widespread malnutrition, which further



Esperança's hospital boat, opposite, was beached when it was decided that the river communities could solve their own health care problems. Today, local paramedics, like the ones above who are being trained to give injections, are the main link between the communities and good health.



Parents line up to register children for vaccination program. Health care workers vaccinate children and newborns as soon as possible, a practice that has helped to lower infant mortality rates.

weakened resistance to disease. Communities lacked potable water and sewage systems, and the state lacked the resources to intervene. Most families drew water from the stagnant marshes at the river's edge.

None of the settlements had formal health care systems. Doctors and nurses from state agencies made occasional visits, often turning up only around election time. Like migratory birds, they flocked back to the city once the campaigns were over. Medicines also tended to be stockpiled for distribution during the electoral season. Esperança's boat filled some of the gap, but for much of the year people were on their own. They had to travel to Santarém for any real professional care.

Esperança designed its new program with all these factors in mind. At first, health workers were dispatched from the group's offices in Santarém to visit settlements, organize local health committees, plan vaccination campaigns, and develop small community gardens. The hospital boat, with its highly

trained physicians, continued to make periodic journeys upriver to provide more complicated services.

Almost immediately, however, the program ran into problems. The logistical burden of reaching the rural population through paramedics* based in Santarém was—and is—overwhelming. Only one major road connects the town with the Brazilian highway network, and a mere handful of nearby communities are along this route. Most of Esperança's client communities lay 8 to 12 hours by boat up the Amazon, Tapajós, or Arapiuns Rivers. The small passenger and cargo boats that make the journey can only come so close to shore. One must transfer to smaller canoes to reach land, and the communities themselves are often another seven or eight kilometers away. The trip by bicycle over muddy paths is neither pleasant nor easy. It is particularly difficult when cumbersome ice-chests full of highly perishable vaccine must be carried along.

Such conditions made it difficult to keep health care workers motivated,

and although visits provided direct contact with communities, medical services remained intermittent. Moreover, workers found organizing community health committees to be extraordinarily difficult. When committees were formed, they lacked direction or resources and had little idea of how to proceed. Esperança lacked experience and had no ready answers. The committees floundered, and the community gardens remained unplanted or went fallow.

REINVENTING THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE WORKER

Esperança's early problems were symptomatic of the difficulties plaguing primary health care systems in general. At first glance, these systems seem well designed—the appropriate ratio of physicians, nurses, and paramedics is calculated for a given area and population density, and hospitals and clinics are set up to handle the expected flow of referrals from outreach workers. Competent service is provided, yet over time, the region's major health problems persist. Why?

Two key variables seem responsible: the level of community participation and the role of the community health care worker within the overall system. Too often, primary care systems only *seem* decentralized; in fact, their underlying logic is geared toward the creation of an elaborate and expensive system of professionally staffed hospitals and clinics to handle referrals. While certain hospital-based services are needed for complicated cases, such costly programs do not attack the root causes of health problems at the community level. They cannot mobilize communities for massive vaccination campaigns against endemic diseases. They cannot support efforts to locate

Having observed the experience of health workers in other programs, Esperança staff knew that one of the major obstacles is often the community's perception of the paramedic as poorly trained and inept.

adequate sources of potable water. They cannot carry out an effective health education program. And the list goes on.

Ironically, Esperança had foreseen the dangers of misplaced priorities and clinic centered programs, but its initial attempts to decentralize services and mobilize local initiatives encountered difficulties all the same. At first, the staff was tempted to minimize its losses, pull back from community involvement, and try something simpler. Rather than attempting to create an integrated health care system, past experience had shown that it was far easier for paramedics to just show up in a town, announce that a vaccination campaign was underway, and vaccinate everyone in sight. Such programs are low cost, have a high profile, and most importantly, yield immediate results, particularly against certain diseases.

Esperança's leadership decided, however, that most health problems were immune to such one-shot approaches, and even vaccination campaigns might fail regionally if they did not reach enough people in a systematic fashion or if people simply did not wish to be found. So program designers refocused on making community participation a reality. Their first attempt had put the cart before the horse. Esperança lacked the human resources to maintain a substantial presence in the settlements to dispense even the most basic treatments or to mount public health campaigns. Local people had to be found who could be trained to perform these tasks. Program leaders also realized that the community health committees had failed because Esperança's approach had been too disjointed, and the groups had been asked to do too much too soon. They decided that their first task should be to select local residents to send to Santarém for training. The only stipulation was that each person should be able to read and write.

This strategy promised to solve three problems. First, the program would have an assured supply of paramedics who would actually be willing to live in remote settlements under harsh conditions. Second, the pre-existing community ties made it less likely that newly trained paramedics would choose to leave the program for work in the city. Finally, it ensured that the local committee and the paramedic would have a close working relationship from the beginning and could grow together.

Having observed the experience of health workers in other programs, Esperança staff knew that one of the major obstacles is often the community's perception of the paramedic as poorly trained and inept. In traditional programs, the important decisions are reserved for physicians. Therefore, community residents tend to ignore health workers as inconsequential, often preferring to rely on folk healers until the doctor arrives.

To avoid this pitfall, Esperança realized that the new outreach workers would have to be given real responsibility within the primary care system. Other programs had limited community-based paramedics to identifying the sick, offering minimal first aid, and then funneling patients to hospitals and clinics. Some groups added additional, but clearly secondary, duties such as teaching the basics in public hygiene and family planning. Beyond this, the health worker's primary task was to organize the community for the physician's monthly visit.

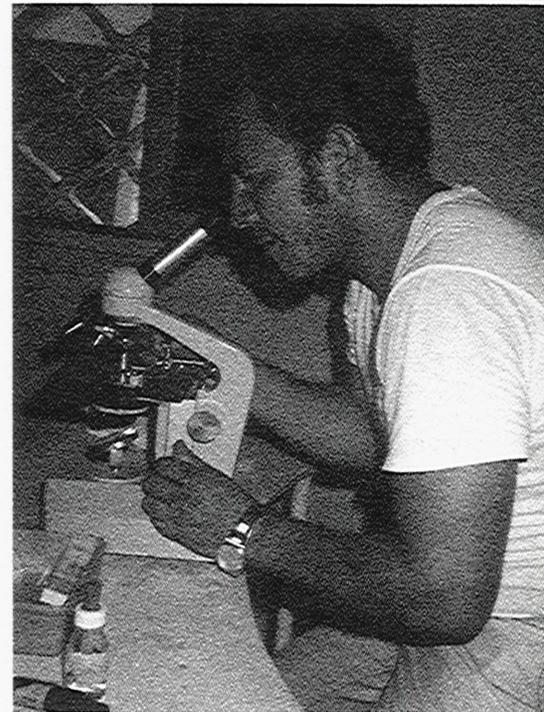
The low status that results from such limited responsibilities has a snowballing effect, making it difficult for the community health worker to mobilize people to carry out public health activities.

To offset this common perception, Esperança chose to make the community paramedic the keystone of its program, stating clearly that the out-

reach worker is the conduit to clinical services in Santarém. In time, it was also decided to phase out the hospital boat's activities. It had come to signal the wrong message; that the doctors were coming and good health was on the way. Esperança decided instead to help communities solve their own health problems. The key to making primary health care work this time was for communities to realize that certain basic steps, within their reach, could vastly improve the quality of their lives.

The relationship between the paramedic and the local health committee is the most obvious symbol of this new power to change the conditions of community life. The health worker is a resident, selected by the committee, and he or she is under the committee's

During training in Santarém, health workers learn to perform lab tests to identify intestinal parasites.





Dentist at Santarém clinic helps assistant with new procedure. Patients must be referred to the clinic by local paramedics, a practice which enhances the health worker's prestige in the eyes of the community.

supervision. In turn, the committee assists the paramedic establish adequate office space for consultation with patients and storage of supplies. Some committees have also arranged for the community to pay part of the health worker's salary. All of this reinforces the notion that the paramedic is a local resource for solving local problems.

And Esperança has worked hard to assure that the health workers have the skills to make a difference. They participate in an intensive 12-week training course at the program's clinic in Santarém, where they learn to perform basic lab tests to identify and treat the region's nine most common intestinal parasites. They are also trained to work with the health committees to organize village vaccination campaigns, which involve not only administering the injections but keeping records to ensure that people receive the complete series of shots.

Special attention has been focused on mothers and children. Health workers monitor all pregnancies closely. They provide prenatal training to expectant women, and are able to deliver babies. Paramedics have been taught how to spot potential problem deliveries, and these are referred to the clinic in Santarém. After birth, mother and child receive periodic checkups. Children are vaccinated as soon as

possible. Babies are weighed to see if they are gaining weight within normal ranges, and they are tested for parasitic infections. This careful monitoring has helped lower infant mortality rates and has provided an opportunity to educate families on better dietary and hygienic practices.

Paramedics have also been trained to identify a whole range of other diseases and health problems, including tuberculosis, malaria, diphtheria, polio, and cholera. If unable to make a precise diagnosis or treat the disease, they prepare the patient for referral to the clinic in Santarém. To do that, the health worker develops a file of the patient's medical history. A copy of this file will be the patient's entry ticket to the clinic, reinforcing the principle that the health worker holds the key to unlocking the process of treatment and, more importantly, that the initial assessment is integral to any eventual cure. Once treatment is concluded, the patient returns to the community, and a complete file is transmitted back to the field post to update the health worker's records.

The Santarém clinic performs as much of its work as possible on an outpatient basis in order to reduce costs and reinforce the status of the paramedic. When health workers first return to their communities after train-

ing, however, some families tend to bypass them and go directly to the clinic. This occasionally happens even after the paramedics become established. Staff at the clinic accept such cases but also direct the patients and their families back to the health worker, forcefully emphasizing that arrival and processing in Santarém are greatly facilitated by prior referral. When patients return to their home communities, the local paramedic conducts follow-up visits, changes bandages, treats any infections, removes casts, weighs babies, and provides medicines.

Reliance on the health worker is emphasized even in Esperança's surgical program. After beaching its river boat, Esperança concentrated all of its surgical activities in Santarém. An evaluation of local demand showed that a full-time staff of orthopedic, dental, and eye specialists was unnecessary and that it would be more efficient to schedule specific weeks during the year for intensive surgery. Paramedics are trained to spot prominent disorders such as club feet, cleft palates, glaucoma, and cataracts, and to arrange for surgical correction at the clinic during the appropriate week of the year. For poor families, this is, to say the least, a major event.

The health worker does not participate in the actual operation. Esperança usually counts on volunteer teams of Brazilian and U.S. surgeons, assisted by Brazilian medical students. (These occasions are also used as training seminars for students and interested physicians in Santarém on the latest surgical procedures and methods of treatment.) Patients are, however, referred back to the paramedic for postoperative care. The health worker will decide if it is necessary to return to the clinic early should some special complication arise. Otherwise, the health worker will schedule their return visits to the clinic for routine checkups. Again, it

Paramedics have become integral to the curative process, and physicians have taken a step backward to allow them to absorb part of the magic.

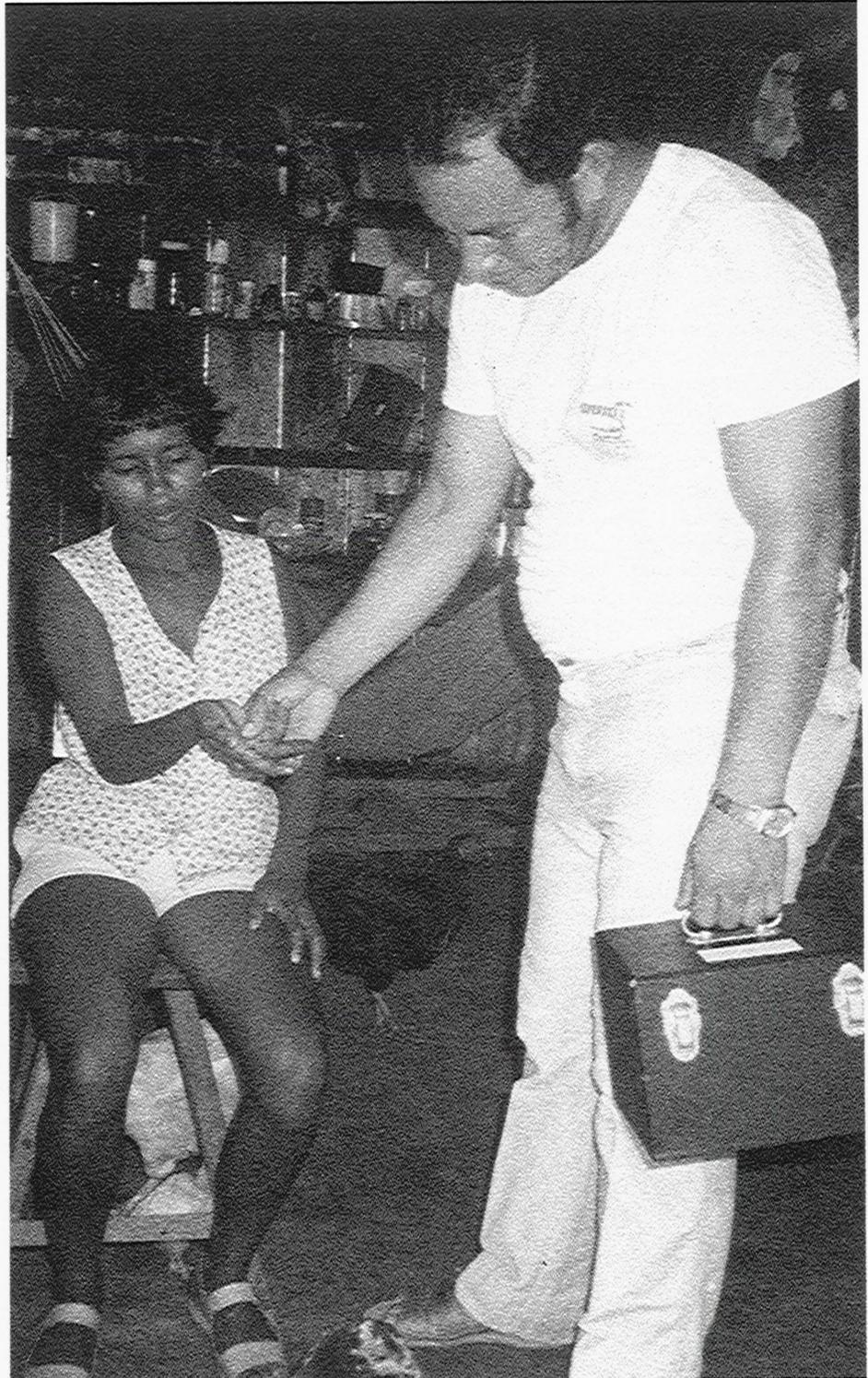
is emphasized that the paramedic has the key to unlocking the system.

By seeking to transfer as much information and control as possible to rural health workers, Esperança is affirming its belief that the major health problems of the mid-Amazon region can be most effectively treated at the local level. Paramedics have become integral to the curative process, and physicians have taken a step backward to allow them to absorb part of the magic. Using some of the prestige that comes from that magic, health workers are better able to tackle other kinds of problems, problems that require action by the entire community.

THE BENEFITS OF CLEAN WATER

As previously mentioned, Esperança's first attempt to organize health committees to promote community action campaigns was unsuccessful. The program lacked a central focus, and consequently energy was diffused through simultaneous efforts to plant group gardens, vaccinate villagers, educate people about public health, and a host of other worthwhile activities. Asking the committees to select potential health workers was the first step toward focusing and revitalizing cooperative efforts. When the paramedics returned to their villages, they brought with them a new project that Esperança believes was a breakthrough to broadening community participation.

Esperança staff had observed that village women and children often spent hours each day carrying water from the riverbanks to the settlements. This water, drawn from stagnant marshlands, was a rich breeding ground for parasites. Searching for a low-cost solution, Esperança requested assistance



Esperança paramedic makes a home visit to examine a patient.

**The prospect of the wells
started a mini-revolution in the communities.
It was led by women active on the health committees
who quickly perceived how this innovation
could transform their everyday lives.**

from Partners of the Americas, who sent an experienced hydraulic engineer to study the problem. He developed a pumping device made of simple, readily available materials: cement, plastic pipe, wood, and a leather joint. The water table in the river communities is often only six to eight meters underground, so wells could be quickly dug by work groups organized by local health committees. Esperança set about introducing the wells in its 12 participating communities. They were usually built in a central place and intended for general use.

Once they became available, the prospect of the wells started a mini-revolution in the communities. This revolution was led by women who were active on the health committees and who quickly perceived how this innovation could transform their everyday lives. The immediate and obvious benefit was the elimination of the need to trek several kilometers each day with five-gallon cans of water balanced on their heads. Sunday afternoon football games were postponed or suspended for several weeks while village men were drafted for the digging.

After the wells were opened, parasitic diseases declined dramatically, and people noticed the connection. Health committees are now soliciting Esperança to expand the well-digging, and paramedics are working with residents of each community to open new wells, each serving several families. The pump materials are fashioned in Santarém and sent upriver by boat. Their assembly and installation is supervised by the local health workers. Several community members are then trained to maintain the wells. Construction materials are financed through Esperança, and the community repays the loans through the health worker.

The communities' understanding of the importance of clean water has also been a boon to local potters. Esperança contacted several of them and showed them how to fashion large, inexpensive ceramic jars with small carbon filters and faucets at their bases. These jars, which are common in other parts of Brazil, limit tactile contact and provide a final filtering before water is consumed in the home. They are purchased directly from the potters.

The sudden abundance of clean water has had spinoff benefits, direct and indirect, for Esperança's program as well. Women and children now have more free time and, with the reduction of parasitosis, more energy. Many have applied this time and energy to planting household gardens, rekindling the effort to diversify family diets, an effort that seemed moribund a short time ago. The wells have replaced Esperança's hospital boat as a symbol of the power of modern medicine, mirroring the shift to low-cost, more appropriate technologies that reinforce the legitimacy of the paramedics and bond them more closely to local health committees.

The well program has also opened the door to relationships that might otherwise have been impossible. As health workers have acquired prestige from curing and preventing parasitosis, they have felt free to call on local midwives and healers to share their lore and incorporate it where possible. Based upon such conversations, staff members have compiled a book of herbal remedies to be used by paramedics in treating a variety of common ailments.

Realizing that local health resources must be maximized to solve local health problems, Esperança personnel have tried to work out other collaborative relationships with midwives and popular healers. For example, midwives have been offered training programs in

reproductive biology, hygiene, and nutrition. They now consult paramedics for advice and often try to work out arrangements for delivering babies in distant settlements.

EXPANSION AND REPLICATION

Esperança's program continues to evolve, so it is too early to judge its ultimate success or failure. There are, however, several hopeful signs. The training program for paramedics is an ongoing effort, and refresher courses to hone skills have been added. More importantly, with a US\$126,855 grant from the Inter-American Foundation in 1985, Esperança has now begun to work with local midwives to create a new category of volunteer health worker to assist paramedics in the field. Candidates from satellite settlements are being recruited and trained as "community health agents." They will work with the paramedics to extend the reach of vaccination campaigns and train families in nutrition and hygiene. They are being taught basic first aid to treat simple wounds and to handle emergencies until patients can be referred to the nearest health post.

For the past five years, Esperança has cooperated with the medical school of the Universidade Federal do Pará in Belém to train student interns in the field of community health. Esperança's leaders hoped that this kind of training program would contribute to extending primary health care throughout the state of Pará. Although assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank has allowed the program to expand, Esperança has learned, through experience, that the number of new



Made of readily available materials—cement, plastic pipe, wood, and a leather joint—Esperança's wells have greatly reduced the incidence of parasites.

doctors, nurses, and other health care specialists willing to subordinate professional prerogatives to the needs of a community-centered system is, for the moment, limited.

Medical schools themselves will have to adjust their priorities if Brazil is to generate an adequate pool of specialists able to work with paramedics to replicate fully programs like Esperança's.

In addition to its efforts to sensitize medical professionals to the reality of rural health care and the need for alternative strategies, Esperança has developed relationships with a whole range of public agencies. Some of these contacts may make it possible to expand and solidify the base of the primary care system—the paramedics themselves. The Secretariat of Health of the state of Pará has, for example, recently contracted with Esperança to train health promoters in its methodology to service other parts of the state. This suggests that small but flexible and innovative nongovernmental organizations like Esperança have a vital role to play in pioneering new social technologies to make larger, more bureaucratic primary care systems work.

Esperança also has an interest in forming a symbiotic relationship with public agencies. The long-range suc-

cess of its program depends on three things: finding ways to transfer existing health posts to state financing, preserving the Santarém clinic's support role to the posts, and guaranteeing that local paramedics retain sufficient autonomy to work effectively within their communities. A number of the river settlements are moving in this direction already, and if the experiment succeeds, Esperança will be able to open new posts in other parts of the region. That may eventually require the creation of a new clinic outside Santarém that is closer to the new villages.

Before it considers expanding its own operation, however, Esperança will have to make sure that it is building on a solid foundation. One way to do that is to develop internal mechanisms for evaluating project performance. If Esperança can begin to classify and analyze the growing body of records accumulating from patient files, it will be better able to measure changes in the incidence of various diseases and correlate them to specific activities in specific localities. The establishment of such minimal data bases could be an invaluable tool for future planning.

Based on its history, Esperança seems well equipped to take on additional challenges and navigate new, unknown

waters. Certainly, the government of the African nation Guinea Bissau thinks so. Last year, a delegation of officials from its Ministry of Health visited Santarém and the river communities of the mid-Amazon. Based on their favorable impressions, the Ministry contracted with Esperança to help set up a training curriculum for nurses and a primary care program for its rural population. Esperança personnel are now in Guinea Bissau working alongside professionals from official Brazilian agencies to implement the program. After years of work in carrying primary health care upriver, this small organization has now succeeded in carrying the richness of its experience across the sea. ♦

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**Paramedic, as used throughout this article, is translated from the Portuguese auxiliar de saude and refers to a person from the community who has received training in diagnosis, treatment, and preventive medicine intended to complement the services of a physician. Paramedics receive a modest remuneration from their communities or state health agencies.*

OPEN HORIZONS:

The Education of Juan López Díaz

Michael Morgan

Last September, a U.S. journalist accompanied Guatemalan peasant leader Juan López on a round of visits to rural coffee coops. The portrait that emerged is one of a man caught between two worlds.

The walls of the high valley are shimmering aquamarine, but they enclose. Weeding his plot of corn and beans, a campesino, dressed in the native costume of Jacaltenango, faces the end of youth. He has four children, is married to a woman selected for him by his parents, and can barely feed his family. He has not finished one year of school and can hardly read. Spanish, the national tongue, is only his second language. For 32 years he has dwelled in a world where the horizons press in so close—the sunrise of birth, the setting sun of death—that it seems he can reach out and touch them both.

Some 230 miles to the southwest, in the metropolis, another man, in his late fifties, the chairman of the board of a national organization, finishes up his day. He dictates a few telegrams to his secretary, takes a long-distance call from Hamburg, reads telephone messages scribbled on a notepad from one son who is a medical student and another who teaches political science at the university.

As this executive dictates, he remembers the dampness of London, the emptiness of South Dakota, the crisp artificiality of Washington, D.C. His work has taken him to all these places. His horizons are constantly expanding, receding into space. His world is immense, each new experience and success wondrous and unexpected.

These two men—the 32-year-old whose world is closing in, the 59-year-old who is ready for whatever comes next—



FEDECOCAGUA president Juan López (right) confers with director of finance José Mario René Salazar in Guatemala City.

would not seem to have much in common other than their Guatemalan nationality. You might assume that, were they to meet, they would have nothing to say to one another; they might even dislike one another, a dislike born of envy and resentment, of intolerance and insensitivity.

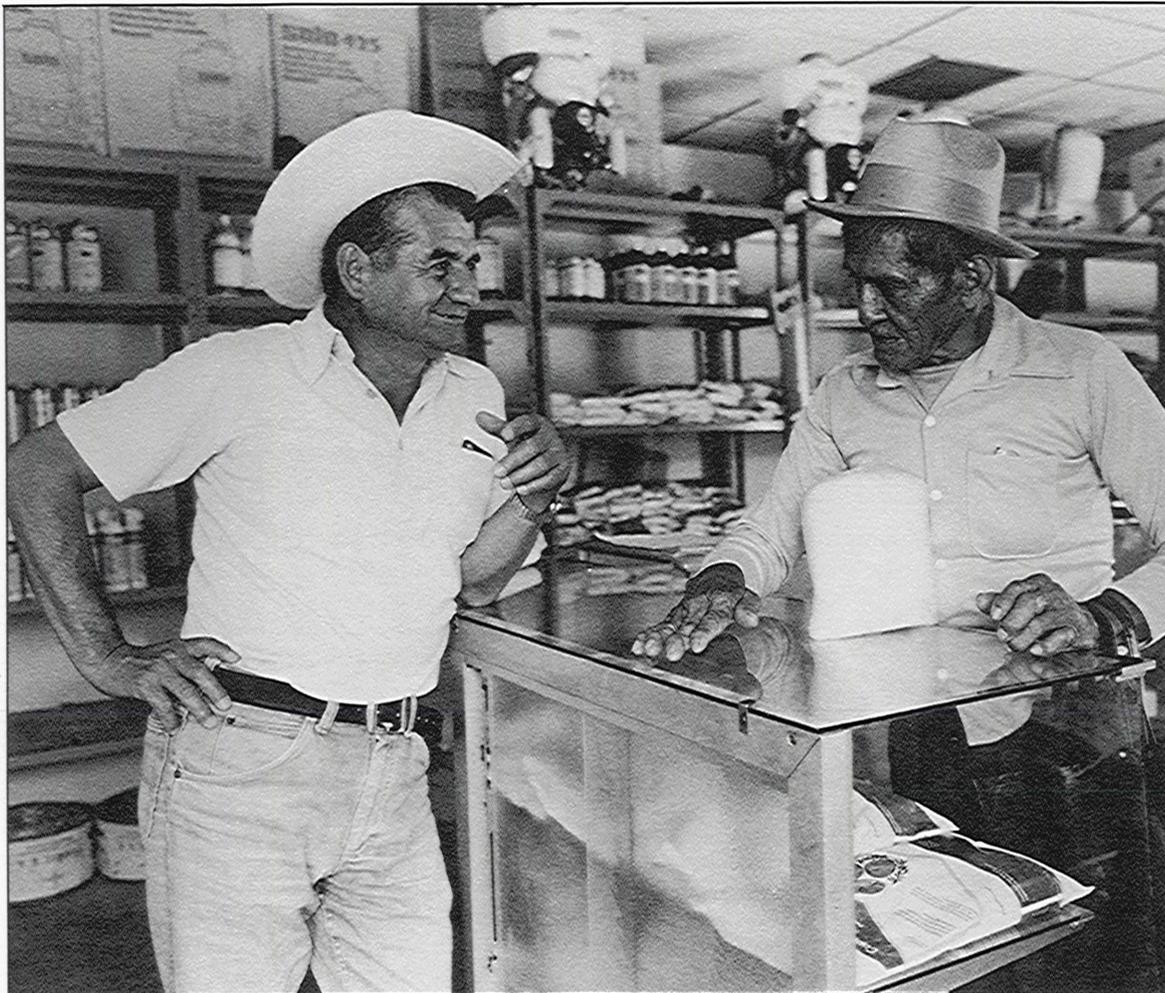
You would be wrong.

Not only do these men have much in common, they are the same man. His name is Juan López Díaz, and every day Juan the executive sees Juan the hopeless campesino in the mirror.

He knows that although the journey from one Juan to the other seems to have been foreordained, the trip was arduous and could easily have ended far short of its destination.

He knows that hundreds of the less fortunate in his valley, and in dozens of other valleys throughout the ancient land of Guatemala, look to him for solutions.

We are riding by jeep on the Pan American Highway headed away from Guatemala City, toward Juan's home village of Jacaltenango, not far from the Mexican border. The fog and mist of early morning rise from the valley up into the summits of the Sierra Madre, like ghosts. The air is chill and damp; members of the Patrulla de Auto-Defensa Civil can be seen huddled together, guarding the highway from vantage points up above. We pass a bridge, and then another, under construction. Or should we say



Far from the bustling capital city, Juan visits a cooperative store in San Antonio Suchatepequez.

“reconstruction,” for the original girders, twisted from the force of the explosions that destroyed them several years ago, litter the side of the road.

“The violence,” says Juan in Spanish, “is over now. It continues only in the more isolated pockets, away from the main roads. But it has affected the people. It will take some years to be forgotten.”

Juan López is of average height, trim, with short black hair gone mostly silver. There is a melancholic reserve about him when he is silent, but when he speaks a boyish exuberance animates his face. He is forceful, yet has none of the bombast that one might expect in a leader of his caliber. His quietness has none of the apologetic deference of the campesino; it is, rather, a disarming gentleness.

He is somewhere between two worlds. Although he quickly acknowledges that he is of Indian descent, his name suggests European parentage. His surname, he thinks, dates back to the time of the Conquest.

He explains this to me as we stand among the pyramidal ruins of Zaculeu, the pre-Columbian citadel that dominated what is now the Department of Huehuetenango.

“When the Spanish conqueror Gonzalo de Alvarado laid siege to Zaculeu in 1525, Comam, the leader of my people in Jacaltenango, came down to see how he could assist the Mam people who were being attacked. But when he

saw the overwhelming force of the Spanish, he too concluded that they were *hijos del sol*—children of the sun—and destined to rule. So my ancestral leader returned to Jacaltenango and told our people resistance was futile, that accommodation was the only alternative. Intermarriage was seen as one way of protecting the people, and as a result persons like my wife now have blue eyes. Comam, however, withdrew to the mountains rather than see his people subjugated. He died there, at the headwaters of the Río Azul.

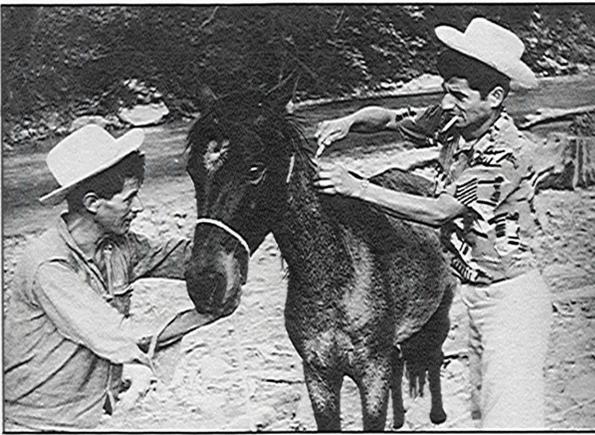
“In 1986, my people are still peaceful. They always have been. Violence is not a part of our tradition. You will see in Jacaltenango how we have worked peacefully together to build better lives for ourselves and our children. The success of our cooperative movement made this possible.

“Other communities,” Juan indicates with a sweep of his hand, “have not been so fortunate. Although things have generally improved since I was a young man, you can still find misery.”

He is right. I would see it later in some of the faces on the bus back down to Huehuetenango. It is a particular kind of human desolation, as deep as any I’ve ever seen in the Andes or elsewhere.

“There’s a lot left to be done,” Juan concludes, quietly.

The ruins of the fallen citadel gleam white in the sun, almost Egyptian, almost Babylonian in their symmetry.



Juan López was known for his ability to handle animals. Summoned to see the padre, he took the job.

Young Juan (right) vaccinates a horse.

The Maryknollers had come to Jacaltenango in the mid-1950s so Juan was aware of them, but he had no direct contact. Long ago, since he was a boy, other things had preoccupied him. His father had been ill, and his mother needed help raising small amounts of coffee for cash and a few crops for food. In 1961, Juan was 32 years old, with his own family to feed.

Then Father Kraus, who headed the local Maryknoll Mission, found one of his horses was ill. He was very dependent on his horses, so he asked around the community for someone who could help. Juan López was known for his ability to handle animals. Summoned to see the padre, he took the job.

"Father Kraus," says Juan, "had a certain Germanic style. Things were done with precision. I was in charge of 22 horses. If things weren't done the proper way, Father Kraus let me know. If he said I had to be up at 2:30 in the morning to have the horses ready for a trip, I was up. He was a hard taskmaster, but he taught me a lot. We are still friends. We correspond from time to time. He has left the priesthood and now lives in San Antonio, Texas."

It was while working for the Maryknoll fathers that Juan resumed his education. First, he took a course in cooperatives at Totonicapán. In 1963, the Maryknollers offered a course in Huehuetenango. The following year he traveled to Guatemala City for a six-week leadership training course given by the Centro de Autoformación de Promotores Sociales (CAPS) in affiliation with the Rafael Landívar University (see box on page 36).

"CAPS changed my life," says Juan, more than two decades later. "In those six weeks, I learned whole new ways of thinking. I learned the value of education . . . of love for your community . . . of caring for your fellow men."

Yet it was a turning point he almost missed. At that time, CAPS required at least a sixth-grade education for admission. Juan had not even completed the first grade. Despite his lack of formal schooling, Father William Mullan, who had replaced Father Kraus at the Jacaltenango Mission, believed strongly that Juan should go and vouched for his credentials.

Juan was also fortunate to have been among the program's first groups of trainees, at a time when teachers and students alike were fired by the enthusiasm of accomplishing something new and unexpected. CAPS had gotten off the ground with a strong Jesuit influence and initial funding from the U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID). Subsequent support would come from the Inter-American Foundation and MISEREOR. Created at a time when sensitivity training was popular in the United States, the Centro's basic orientation, according to a 1985 study of CAPS by Gerald Murray of the University of Florida-Gainesville, was "a belief in the necessity of first developing the individual in the realm of ideas. A well-developed person will contribute first to the development of his own family, then his community, and finally the nation. It is neither a trickle-down nor a bottom-up theory of development; it is more a radiating-out theory."

For Juan, the learning experience extended beyond the classroom walls. This was his first exposure to the capital, to a world in flux. He had to learn to navigate new kinds of social relationships, and decipher bus routes and maps to make the long commute between the center city where he was lodged and CAPS' suburban campus. The world was also growing larger in another way. As Juan puts it, "CAPS awakened my awareness of the social conscience." He learned it was necessary for all to work together to improve the community.

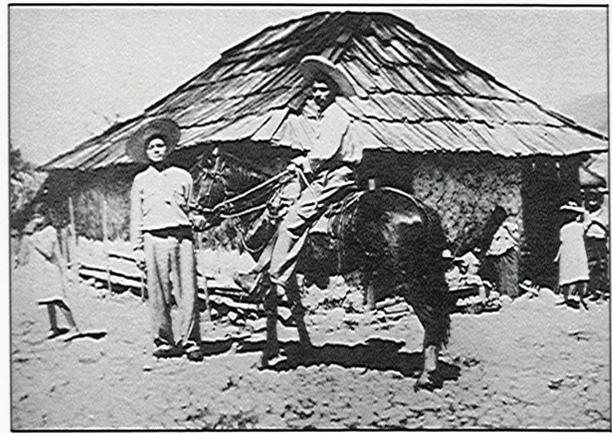
Juan says that, prior to his employment with the Maryknollers, the desperation of his economic plight, originally expressed in sadness, was becoming tinged with anger. He calls it *resentimiento*. But the Maryknoll employment was the turning point, and the CAPS training served to give his new feelings a focus.

He became a builder, an organizer—in his own words, a "cooperativist." In 1964, he helped found the Río Azul Cooperative of small coffee growers in Jacaltenango, and then served for six years as president of its education committee. Río Azul, whose current membership of 470 makes it a large, influential entity in Jacaltenango, became a driving force in transforming the town and its surrounding villages. The accomplishments of the last two decades are impressive. Once accessible only by horseback, Jacaltenango now has a serviceable road connecting it to the Pan American Highway, a two-hour drive away. Nine schools have been constructed. Running water has been introduced to five communities, and numerous other infrastructural projects have improved the quality of town and village life.

The impact of those projects is best appreciated in the statements of Jacalteco cooperative leaders, who estimate that over 90 percent of their members can now read and write, almost doubling the literacy rate that prevailed during Juan's youth. Of the 35,000 people living in and around

He became a builder, an organizer—in his own words, a “cooperativist.”

Juan (on horseback) dressed for village fiesta.



Jacaltenango, 2,400 are students in primary schools. The cooperative operates one *instituto básico* (the local equivalent of a junior high school), which it felt behooved to create when government authorities showed no interest in doing so. The instituto now has 250 students.

This “explosion” of community self-improvement projects since the 1960s owes its origin as much as anything else to the widening horizons of Juan López. Fusing his new-found “cooperativist” vocation with a dedicated belief in the importance of education as the essential first step in development, he became a catalyst who affected the lives of thousands.

As a result, the small farmer in 1968 found himself being urged to run for mayor of Jacaltenango.

“I hate politics,” he told me. “Politicians are alike everywhere. Looking out for themselves first. Too much corruption. Looking for ways to enhance their own businesses.”

The three parties most active in the town at that time—representing the spectrum from conservative right to center left—all wanted him to run. “I refused them all individually,” he says, looking back. “Although I didn’t rule out running, I wasn’t going to do it for any one party. Because I knew how Guatemalan politics operate. I wanted to build, first and foremost: roads, schools, health centers. I also knew if I declared with any particular party, that would mean the other two parties and their supporters would immediately see me as the enemy. I would have to do my building with only half or less of the community assisting me.

“So I called them all together, to my house. Of course they wouldn’t talk to one another, each sitting in their respective corners. I said, ‘Gentlemen, I am prepared to run but only if all three parties choose me as their candidate. Only that way will I be able to do good for the people of Jacaltenango.’”

Apparently the three rivals warily eyed one another, then looked back at Juan. After some quiet consultation, they agreed to his proposal.

It was a historic occasion. Juan knew of no other time when such a consensus was reached among Guatemalan parties that are such bitter rivals.

Juan was mayor from 1968 to 1970. Because of his work, he felt compelled to resign from his job with the Maryknollers, with whom he had worked for seven years. As he did so, he realized how much change the Maryknollers had

brought to his community and, ultimately, to him. He had moved fully from the arduous but fairly predictable world of managing livestock to the more complicated task of managing the affairs of changeable human beings.

As we continue north, headed for the Mexican frontier, I recount to Juan a report I saw the night before on television in the capital. The program was about Padre Andrés, a charismatic cleric who is trying to build support for a program to buy land for peasants. For his efforts, he has suffered death threats, and his own family has been subjected to violence.

“Land reform,” says Juan, “is an incredibly emotional subject here.”

Many analysts believe land reform played the key role in the fall of the Jacobo Arbenz government in 1954. Public calls for land reform are almost certain, even now, during Guatemala’s democratic renewal, to generate at least death threats. Land reform per se is not part of mainstream political discussion. Even its one-time supporters prefer to point out the failures of land reform in Peru and elsewhere. Yet Guatemala must find ways to treat the side-effects of rural underdevelopment: Recent U.S. State Department estimates reveal a literacy rate of 48 percent, an individual life expectancy of 55 years, an infant mortality rate of 79 per 1,000.

“The key for the small producer in Guatemala,” says Juan, “is to augment production. Land is expensive and getting more so. Increasing production is the only viable way of improving living standards.”

In my mind’s eye, I see Padre Andrés on the television screen, surrounded by the curious. He is dressed in a white cassock, his face framed by a black goatee and hat. From somewhere behind the reflection on his sunglasses, he stares into the camera defiantly.

As mayor, Juan was able to push forward with his “building” plan. Perhaps he was proudest of the new school with 16 classrooms, capable of holding 1,000 children. It was designed to reach its capacity in 20 years, but did so in five. And Juan says the cost was one-tenth the amount of a school built by state authorities.

During his term he also supervised the building of roads, health centers, and libraries, but his building plan also had a “human element.” Aside from being a leader and promoter, Juan as mayor came to resemble nothing so

much as a family counselor and mediator. He was sought out by wives who had been abused by their husbands, by sisters cheated by their brothers, by neighbors arguing over property lines. He heard endless tales of drunkenness, of family money spent on liquor and cigarettes, of children going without shoes while papa went drinking. He listened to the wives' side and then the husbands'. He tried to sort it all out dispassionately and then give it back to the disputing parties for resolution.

Simultaneously, he was also serving, in an unpaid capacity, on any number of boards and committees and groups that were devoted to development projects. He was working quite hard. Of course he was not alone. Jacaltecos and other rural Guatemalans have a long tradition of working together to improve their communities and help one another. When that energy is harnessed, it can lead to the building of a small facility for community health care, to cutting a road through impossible terrain to the next village, complete with dynamite blasting through stone. These unpaid efforts are not unlike the North American "barn-raising" of a century ago.

After two years as mayor, Juan was ready for other projects. He chose not to run again, but instead the following year became president of the instituto básico, the much-needed junior high school operated by the Río Azul cooperative that would carry the next generation of Jacaltecos beyond primary education.

He was followed as mayor by a man aligned with one of the political parties. After the unprecedented two years of three-party coalition government, things settled back into their old ways.

As Juan became more deeply involved in education, he began to see how something as basic as personal integrity, learned in children's earliest experiences with their parents, would resound in the community years later to advance or impede the entire process of social development. He saw education as a primary way to inculcate the values of civic duty and rectitude, which he believed were so lacking in Guatemalan public life.

In 1977, Juan was elected president of the Huehuetenango region of FEDECOCAGUA, the national federation of small coffee growers' cooperatives (see box on page 36). He held that job until 1981. But in 1978, in a historic breakthrough, Juan was also elected as a director of ANACAFE, the powerful organization of large coffee growers that had previously shown little interest in the needs of small growers. For the first time, the small growers had at least a voice and a chance to be heard in this forum.

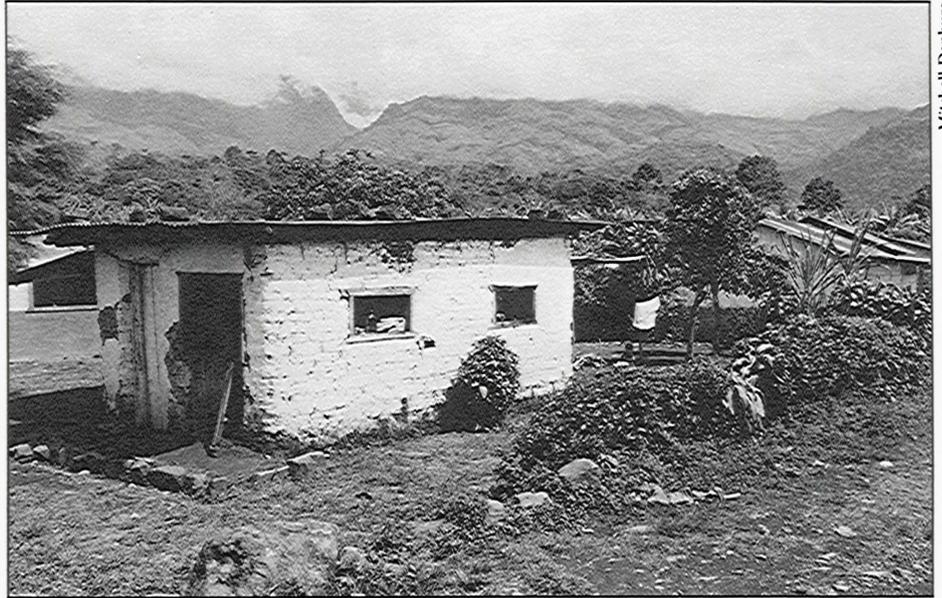
Looking back, Juan believes that the large growers of ANACAFE decided to reach out to the smaller producers for reasons of narrow economics and in recognition of the need for social reconciliation. It might also have been acknowledgment of the growing power of FEDECOCAGUA, which had begun to flourish after nearly a decade of work.

"I made some very good friends there at ANACAFE," Juan says, "friends that I still see. We meet once a month, even now. Big, powerful growers."

Juan was representing all of the nation's small growers, not just those associated with FEDECOCAGUA but also independents. He says it took him the first year to learn how to deal with his colleagues at ANACAFE, but in that year, they came to respect him. Although they are gener-



photos by Mitchell Denburg



From opposite left: *Don Miguel, a member of the Nahuala coffee cooperative, at home with his wife and children; Nahuala coop members in coffee warehouse; view of Nahuala cooperative.*

ally very commerce-oriented, they were not monolithic in their views, and asked for his insights into many pressing social questions that went beyond simple coffee production. They were impressed enough to donate US\$2,000 to him to build a school. He was also able to convince them to fund positions for two agronomists to help unorganized small producers.

For the first time, Juan was residing in the capital, although he had been there before on visits and, of course, as a CAPS student. For several years he lived in a residential hotel while his wife remained behind in Jacaltenango. Juan's "extended" family came to include hundreds of people, usually from outlying areas and not always from his home department. All had heard of his ability in facilitating solutions to any number of problems facing people of limited resources. He was asked for the names of doctors and hospitals, for aid in finding teachers and approaching organizations for development assistance. His family counseling continued.

During the early 1980s, Guatemala's countryside was embroiled in an escalating guerrilla war, and many areas of Juan's native Huehuetenango Department were feeling the brunt of the conflict. Although never very numerous, the guerrillas were active. Heavy-handed military response, which tended to view all locals as potential enemies and therefore deserving of punishment, shook the country to its foundation.

While some outlying communities were being virtually dismantled as people fled the violence, Jacaltenango was relatively fortunate. The local priest convinced people to stay, warning that otherwise the town would die. As the violence disrupted agricultural production, the priest ran a food distribution program for the most needy. The Río Azul Cooperative, which Juan had founded two decades before, also helped feed those affected by the violence.

Rather than hide during that period, the community built a health center and a library.

As one of Juan's fellow villagers, Bartolo Delgado Camposeco, who now serves as manager of Río Azul says, "Our people didn't want to carry arms or to waste valuable time guarding against some supposed enemy. Ninety-nine

percent of our people are Catholic. The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not kill.' We wanted to remain faithful to that."

Nonetheless, the department was convulsed. Even today you can sense it in the department capital of Huehuetenango, where the town plaza is curiously deserted after dark. Dozens of families were affected; many were forced to relocate out of areas where their mere physical residence made them seem suspect to one side or the other.

Juan, too, felt compelled to leave his own birthplace, but he was achieving new success in the capital. He was re-elected to two terms as a director of ANACAFE, and was active with the new Cooperativism Study Center (CENDEC) in Chimaltenango, which was operated by five major cooperative federations to train their members. In 1982 he was appointed to the Consejo de Estado, the body created by President Efraín Ríos Montt to serve as a legislative body during his military rule. The group had 60 members, all nominated by various interest groups in the country. Juan was the candidate submitted by nine federations.

Although he had not sought the opportunity, given his lifelong distrust of politics, he sees it now as a "great educational experience."

"Most important of all," he says, "I learned how laws are made." He became very involved in an effort to stagger national school schedules, so that children in one region who had to devote full time to the harvest would not miss part of the school year when they had to migrate to another area with their parents. He was unsuccessful. One effort that did succeed, and of which he feels proud to have been a part, was the passage of a law creating an independent electoral tribunal to guard against vote fraud.

The overthrow of Ríos Montt in 1983 brought the Consejo to an end, as part of the process that eventually culminated in democratic elections and the inauguration of a Christian Democratic government in early 1986.

As the violence in the northwest was subsiding, in 1984 Juan became president of FEDECOCAGUA, the national federation of some 8,000 small coffee producers. It is his current position, a job that has sent him on negotiating trips to London and Europe and, in 1985, on a fundraising visit to Washington, D.C.

CAPS, FEDECOCAGUA, AND THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION: LONG-STANDING PARTNERS

CAPS

The Centro de Autoformación Para Promotores Sociales (CAPS), a leadership training center for the rural poor, is part of the Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala City. Established and legally recognized in 1967, it provides courses in rural development to representatives of remote Guatemalan communities. During its 20-year history, CAPS has trained 16,000 "promoters" in courses held both at its Guatemala City campus and in rural communities. It has 23 full-time staff people and a nine-member administrative council that holds final decision-making authority. In addition to support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, CAPS has received funds for training and a revolving loan fund from the Inter-American Foundation.

CAPS was one of the first recipients of IAF funds, and has gotten five grants since 1973. At the outset, the program brought local leaders from their villages to the capital for training. Recognizing special regional needs of Indian populations, one early IAF grant supported training courses that discussed community problems, planned solutions, trained leaders, and facilitated the exchange of information between widely scattered development centers. Courses included social development philosophy, socioeconomic project analysis, and democratic leadership approaches. Another IAF-assisted project organized a series of meetings for local leaders from 14 provinces to plan and implement village reconstruction and long-range development following the devastating 1976 earthquake. In 1981, the IAF contributed to the expansion of a revolving loan fund that assisted over 30 projects, directly benefitting 5,000 families. A more recent grant enabled CAPS to expand this revolving loan fund and provide credit to poor Indian farmers in 40 rural communities. CAPS-trained community leaders have successfully initiated infrastructural projects (bridges, feeder roads, and potable water systems) and a wide range of agricultural production projects throughout the country. Specialized training courses have increased the effectiveness of rural school teachers, local public health personnel, and agricultural extensionists.

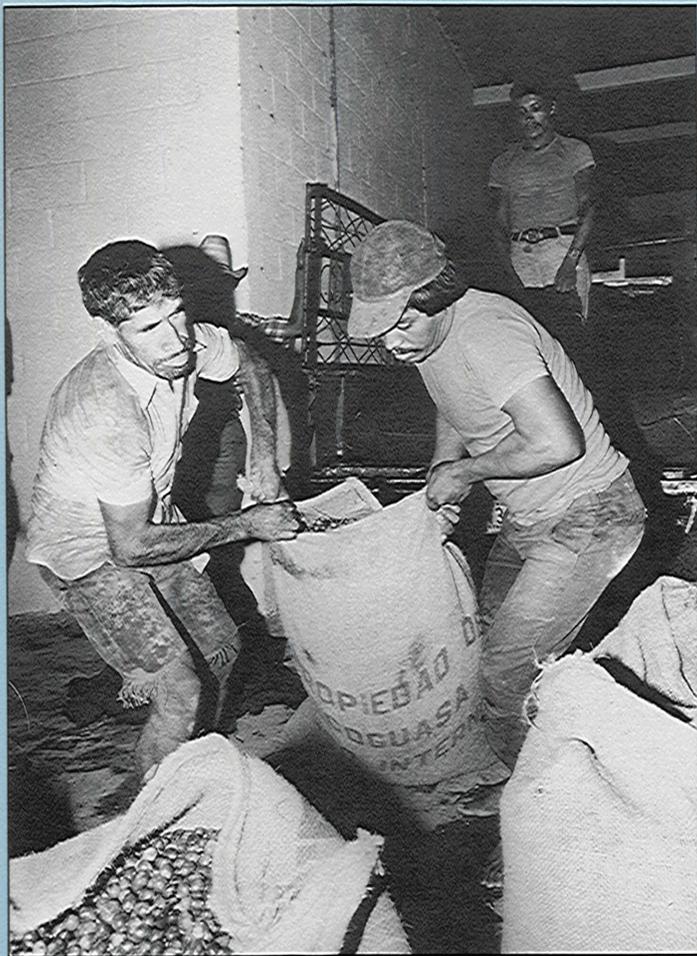


Young girl picks coffee at FEDECOCAGUA experimental farm in San Bernardino, Suchatepequez.

FEDECOCAGUA

The Federación de Cooperativas Agrícolas de Productores de Café de Guatemala, R.L. (FEDECOCAGUA) was organized in 1969. It represents 9 pre-cooperative groups and 54 of the 113 registered small and medium-sized coffee cooperatives in Guatemala, with a total membership of 7,400 families and some 50,000 people. Many of these cooperatives were organized by and for Indian communities living in the Guatemalan highlands. Among FEDECOCAGUA's numerous programs are coffee marketing, technical assistance, bookkeeping and accounting services, honey marketing, legal assistance, training courses, and projects for women and rural youth.

A general assembly sets policy and elects the board of directors and an oversight committee, which in turn hires and supervises an administrative and technical staff of 120 people. The central office in Guatemala City runs the federation and provides back-up services to staff in five regional offices. Most of its services are channeled through these regional teams, which consist of a director, two extensionists, two home educators, an accountant, a secretary, and a supply store and warehouse manager.



photos by Mitchell Denburg

Workers unload coffee at FEDECOCAGUA's main processing plant in Palín.

FEDECOCAGUA has received three grants from the Inter-American Foundation to help the federation respond to new challenges and changing conditions. In 1974, an IAF grant helped FEDECOCAGUA develop a network of processing plants to serve small growers, assist growers with financial and marketing services, and develop a national cooperative management training program. These efforts were designed to help FEDECOCAGUA increase its membership base and marketing capacity. A 1981 grant enabled the organization to expand its women's program. Training courses were provided to wives and daughters of federation members in home economics, child care, basic nutrition, sewing, home improvement, health and organizational development, and the women were assisted in organizing small enterprises. An IAF grant signed in 1985 contributes to FEDECOCAGUA's crop diversification program which enables small coffee farmers to plant corn, beans, yucca, potatoes, bananas, and assorted vegetables to provide additional sources of food and income and protect them against dramatic fluctuations in world coffee prices.

— A.M.D.

While FEDECOCAGUA has shown significant growth over the last two decades, Juan and the federation must now grapple with a debilitating deficit and the impact of constantly fluctuating coffee prices. Membership rolls dropped slightly during the last year. As Alfredo Hernández, general manager of FEDECOCAGUA, told an August 1986 meeting of the group's directors in a dynamic, almost evangelical speech, "FEDECOCAGUA and the country are in crisis."

He then proceeded to recite some telling statistics. He pointed out that 60 percent of the cooperatives represented in FEDECOCAGUA are indigenous groups, that 52 percent of the membership never attended school, that the remaining 45 percent had only completed third grade. He noted that the federation, begun with only US\$45 two decades ago, now had assets of almost US\$2 million, while individual cooperatives had assets between \$25,000 and \$35,000 each. Seventy percent of FEDECOCAGUA members had annual incomes of less than \$1,200 per year. And those 70 percent typically supported families of 7 to 15 people.

The purpose of the meeting was to set new policies, to confront the deficit, and to renew the cooperativist spirit. "Too many people," said Hernández, "have forgotten that the cooperative movement is a two-way street and that those who only take and do not give in return, drain it of vitality."

Juan and I are relaxing on a patio in the warm valley at Palín during a break in the FEDECOCAGUA meeting, and his face creases with his familiar smile. I ask if he ever considers running for higher office when his term ends next year.

He laughs and says, "No, I'm thinking of going back to Jacaltenango—to work with the hospital there, to work with the youth and the cooperative. There's too much that still needs to be done."

When I ask him to pose for a photo, he almost involuntarily withdraws into the same stony, melancholic expression I saw among the ruins at Zaculeu. Even when I say, "Smile," the melancholy is there.

The success, the world travel, the possibilities seem forgotten. This is the Juan López of long ago, when things seemed overwhelming, and a person didn't even have time to think about a solution. A person simply existed.

Which one is the true Juan? Is one artificial, one real?

In the end, I found it impossible to decide. Just as Guatemala, despite being at the dawn of a democratic experiment, cannot escape the cynicism arising from past disappointments, so Juan's forward-looking spirit is tempered by memories.

Of the valley closing in, of no horizon, of birth and death so close there is no life in between.

Those memories will be hard for him to shake off, if ever. They are a part of him, and a part of his country. ◆

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GROWING HOPE IN SANTIAGO'S URBAN ORGANIC GARDENS

Diana Page

A Chilean training center is responding to the needs of the poor by developing technologies that give people the confidence and skills to see alternatives.

Salad greens bursting out of raised beds flaunt their colors among the gray grid of cellblock-like houses in Castillo, a Santiago settlement defined by makeshift fences under a sky of smog-laden clouds. A woman, who has taken on the task of trying to grow her own vegetables in the slum, smiles ironically.

"They call us the women of the 'tombs,'" she says, pointing to the grave-shaped mound of earth. But these tombs bring forth life, and they seem to be the only sign of hope in this bleak Chilean neighborhood.

Castillo has little sense of community. After all, its residents were thrown together by an effort to relocate families flooded out of other shantytowns. On weekdays, many men, young and old, can be found, rooted in place along its rutted streets and the dumping-ground that might have been a park. Unemployment is so obvious that it's not hard to believe the parish priest when he says 50 percent of those in Castillo are out of work. He worries about the youth who saw their fathers lose jobs as Chile's industries closed down. Whatever dreams the children might have of getting ahead here are quickly destroyed.

Crime is so bad in Castillo that the bread vendors will no longer push their carts through the streets—money, bread, and even the carts have been stolen. This is especially unfortunate now that bread is often the only food many people can afford. Some families have been reduced to eating one meal a day, and mothers will say that the best thing about sending children to school is the lunch program.

Yet in the midst of this depressing scene, one finds patches of green—organic gardens—scattered in seemingly random patterns throughout Castillo.

Two women stand by a compost pile, planning an exchange of seeds. In the raised beds at their feet, lettuce, onions, radishes, and Swiss chard are jostling each other. Most of this produce will go directly to the family table, yet no one lives by Swiss chard alone. The gardens supplement a poor diet, but they don't provide a living. They provide something else.

The women talk about enjoying the time they spend on the garden. It's fun, they say, it makes you forget about other things. No one believed they could raise all these plants, but the evidence at their feet denies the skeptics.

On this winter day, other families in Castillo were digging holes for the almond and peach saplings that Rogelio Correa was delivering from the Centro de Educación y Tecnología's (CET) experimental farm in Colina. Correa is the social worker from CET who works with the gardeners, and CET is the organization behind the "intensive family gardens" in Castillo and other urban wastelands.

Two years ago, a group of 10 from Castillo's parish went to CET for training in organic gardening. Today the number of gardeners has grown to 40, all because of the inspiration provided by the original group. Some have taught their neighbors and become their coaches. One person with training can take on the responsibility for as many as 10 others, visiting them several times a week to share advice and encouragement. CET's professionals stand by, ready to back up the coaches in each neighborhood, and once a month, all the neighborhood gardeners meet to compare their experiences and to talk.

Since each community has its own character and experience, CET's support for the community evolves in dif-

ferent ways. There are neighborhoods where the efforts to start a gardening program came first, before the gardeners decided to work together to build their own houses. In another community, a group that ran the local soup kitchen and child nutrition program then organized a communal garden.

CET does not provide ready-made answers for Chile's poor. "We're not selling a product called organic gardening. The concept we offer is the possibility of what could be, the concept that there are alternatives," says CET's executive director Andrés Yurjevic. "This is particularly important since during the next decade there will be close to 200 million youths in Latin America living in poverty and excluded from the social process."

Yurjevic, an economist, was one of the four founders of CET in 1981, along with agronomist Oscar Letelier, educator Silvestre Jaramillo, and sociologist Gonzalo Valdivieso. All had been active in church-sponsored development programs, and they would emphasize that CET is the result of prior experiences and the historical moment in Chile. CET was intended as a resource for impoverished farmers, testing and teaching alternative methods of agriculture. The urban gardens are an outgrowth of CET's approach to the problems of Chile's poor.

The background for CET's development is important. When the military took over the Chilean government in 1973, the agrarian reform program of two previous administrations ended abruptly. Gone were the government programs — credit, extension services — that helped small farmers survive. Grassroots organizations were not only physically intimidated by the political upheaval, their basic belief in political organization as the means to alleviate poverty was shaken. It took



several years before the new political reality of Chile was perceived as a lasting one, but finally people realized they could no longer turn to the government for help. How then could the poor find ways to improve their lot or even survive? Private institutions with social concern, such as CET, began to answer that question.

Unlike peasants in other parts of the world who inherit agricultural wisdom from their forebears, many Chileans lacked a traditional knowledge of how to live off the land. Historically, indigenous cultures had been pushed aside to make way for the settlers who brought slash and burn agriculture, plantation systems, and capital-intensive farming to Chile. When land reform came, the peasants who had always followed the orders of landowners were not accustomed to making their own decisions. The farmworkers were used to large-scale, high-investment agriculture, and those who obtained land under the reform continued to try to apply this technology with the advice of government extension agents and subsidized credit for fertilizers. When these programs halted, many small producers knew no other approach to farming.

The U.S. agricultural model was the only one taught in Chile's agronomy schools. One of CET's agricultural engineers who specialized in soils for six years at the University of Chile recalled—in amazement—that no mention had ever been made of organic composts during his classwork and he wondered why. One reason was the lack of ready alternatives appropriate to Chile. Thus, when CET began its first agricultural experiments to solve the peasant farmer's problems, it entered a void in the Chilean education system. Eventually, a special research program, to be affiliated with CET, emerged from these activities. Under the aegis of the Comisión de Investigación en Agricultura Alternativa (CIAL), students and professors from several Chilean universities are studying a wide variety of topics that have practical application for small farmers. The experiments are carried out at demonstration centers and on farmers' fields in different regions of Chile, thereby taking into account the important variations in climate and soil conditions within the country (see box on pages 42, 43).

From the beginning, CET's founders saw the need for a private organization that fused social action, self-help efforts, and appropriate technologies. While this orientation was well established among professionals in the development field, it had reached few subsistence farmers and slum dwellers.

CET based its approach on several fundamental principles. To begin with, an organization promoting grassroots development must do more than enable poor people to organize; it must assist them in meeting their basic needs. The poor must confront these needs without becoming dependent upon the technology provided through outside assistance. Priorities for any project should be set by the participants themselves. In this case, CET found that the greatest need expressed by the urban and rural poor was for food.

that 32 different vegetables could be grown in an intensive family garden, eight meters by eight meters, providing an average of one-and-a-half kilos of edible produce daily, all during the year.

The intensive family garden, which is appropriate for both rural and urban families, is part of the half-hectare plot set aside to demonstrate the viability of such small parcels for Chile's *minifundistas*. The remaining portion of the 10-hectare model farm at Colina is reserved for experiments and demonstrations of techniques applicable to farmers who received greater land holdings through the agrarian reform programs.

Over 10,000 people a year—including farmers, students, professionals, and representatives of religious groups and development organizations—visit the center in Colina. They

CET saw the need for a private organization that fused social action, self-help efforts, and appropriate technologies. While this orientation was well-established among development professionals, it had reached few subsistence farmers and slum dwellers.

CET believed that small farmers—ones with at least a half-hectare of land—ought to be able to produce enough to support their families. Urban dwellers, too, should be able to take full advantage of available resources for their own subsistence. Achieving these goals would require a community effort on the part of the poor—and a rethinking of current agricultural technology. These beliefs led CET to focus on organic farming techniques, but first, testing had to be done to demonstrate they would work in Chile.

The experiment started within certain limitations: It had to be carried out close to Santiago, and the land utilized had to be similar to the kind of land the poor would possess. The Juan Ignacio Molina Institute, a scientific organization concerned with Chile's natural resources, sponsored CET and provided the Colina site for the first experimental farm.

The technical results of the experiment showed over a two-year period

come to learn about solar food dryers and plastic greenhouses, do-it-yourself chicken coops and aviaries, breeding pigs and dairy cows. These are the building blocks that can eventually sustain a family and provide income. The CET experience helps people answer the fundamental question—"how can this be done?"

This approach has led CET to consider how poor families can get decent housing. When countries suffer earthquakes, as Chile does, the sturdiness of housing is literally a matter of life and death. At Colina, an unusual two-story house, built of mud and wood with a Tudor-style appearance, catches the eye. This structure was built by a group that came to try out the low-cost housing techniques CET was developing. (The building itself was needed to provide space for CIAL's laboratories.) The housing experiment underwent a major test during the earthquake of March 1985. When the tremors were over, those who had helped build the mud-and-wood

house made their way to Colina to see what had happened. Even the most confident were relieved to see the building still standing. The cracks were easily repaired, and they also knew that even if it had collapsed, the housing materials were unlikely to seriously harm anyone inside.

Seeing the building standing after the earthquake, seeing the crops that now grow from once-poor soil, and seeing the university students working on biological control of pests is enough to make any visitor to Colina believe that anything is possible. That belief may be the most valuable lesson of any training program.

"Nature will resolve problems if we give it a chance, if we look seriously, scientifically, at what is available," said Oscar Letelier. As an agronomist, he found he had to learn different technologies from the ones he was trained to use. The principles he applies are basic: The soil is fundamental to life; everything has a use. Start with the small scale, the simple, the most needed, the readily available, and the attitude that you can solve any problem.

CET has two other such training centers—one near Concepción, the other in Temuco—because its objective has always been to help peasants in rural areas. Efforts in the countryside have moved more slowly than in urban communities. "Perhaps it's because in the cities there had been more social organization in the past, so groups started working together more easily," said IAF field representative Diane La Voy. "Or perhaps people in the cities feel that they have lost so much that they respond to whatever gives them hope."

Apart from its own community projects that have involved over 3,000 families, CET collaborates with other development groups by offering technical assistance and training to their specialists and extension workers. Some income is derived from these services, but CET also receives substantial support from European, Canadian, and U.S. funders, such as the Inter-American Foundation, who share the organization's commitment to self-reliance.

What distinguishes CET, then, is its philosophy as much as its technology.

"Technological options are not neutral; they can liberate the users or create dependence," CET's team wrote



Neighbors in the Castillo section of Santiago compare notes on urban gardening. Two years ago, a group of 10 began a project in organic gardening—today the number has grown to 40.

in an analysis of their work. "A technology that uses available resources, that can be understood and managed locally, creates the chance to change initially skeptic and pessimistic attitudes, replacing them with self-confidence and a sense of self-esteem.

"We often find that experts and professionals in various fields are not willing to rethink the technical options. They think all the technical answers to the problems of development are known, and the only problem is how

to teach people the answers. They have a clear view of the relationship between technology and production without looking carefully at the relationship between technology and the people who are meant to use it. From this angle, the technology choices again are not neutral. They can lead to feelings of inadequacy and passivity, or in the other direction, to activities that encourage groups to develop their own initiative and creativity."

Putting Research to Work for Chile's Poor

A little over three years ago, at the invitation of the Centro de Educación y Tecnología (CET) and other nongovernmental organizations in Chile, a group of professionals and university professors agreed to form the Comisión de Investigación en Agricultura Alternativa (CIAL). The group was to establish a research program—primarily in organic agriculture—that would lead to techniques appropriate for small farmers and people of limited resources. This meant facing a task no one in Chile had confronted up to that point, with all the challenges inherent in such an undertaking.

To begin with, CIAL had to initiate the research program with few physical materials—and to do so in a very short time. The goal was to extract as much information as possible from modern science and relate it to the traditional knowledge of the people, along with a large measure of creativity and resourcefulness.

CIAL wanted to develop a truly interdisciplinary approach, one that would not only focus on the ecological impact, but also on the social conditions in which each new technique would be applied.

It was also crucial that the results of the research be truly useful to small farmers. This required a

knowledge of their most pressing problems and an effective method of agricultural extension.

After that, the scientific, technical, and academic communities had to be convinced of the validity of alternative agriculture and that it had an important role to play in the future of the country. The involvement of students and young professionals was seen as the best way to accomplish this particular task.

The work of the past three years has demonstrated that while the challenges were not easy to meet, neither were they impossible. It has also shown that—like agriculture itself—each question should be approached from several angles.

The thesis program and other types of research at universities and CET-run model farms have led to various production alternatives for the small landholder, and even for urban dwellers. One such example is the refinement of the intensive family garden concept, in which large quantities of vegetables can be grown in very small spaces. Another is the organic subsistence farm, which demonstrates the possibility of agricultural self-sufficiency on plots of just one-half hectare.

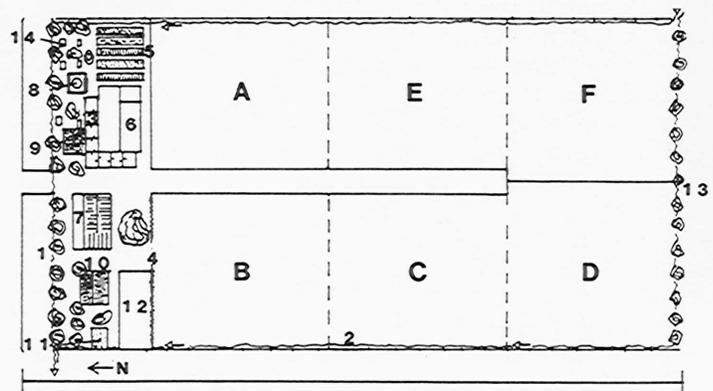
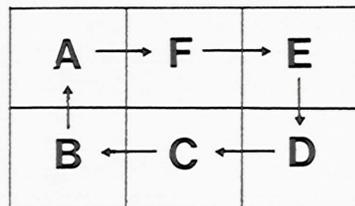
CIAL responded to a more specific problem recently when it learned that campesinos in the *secano* (a dry coastal region) south-

east of Santiago, were having a problem. Their strawberries, an important cash crop, were yielding less because the quality of the soil was deteriorating. Solidaridad y Desarrollo de Maipú (SODEM), a nongovernmental group that was giving the farmers technical assistance, turned to CIAL for help in exploring ways to improve the soil through organic means. Under CIAL's supervision, an agronomy student at the University of Chile took on the case as the topic for her thesis. She carried out experiments at the CET model farm in Colina as well as at a SODEM farm in the *secano*. After more than two years of work, the student defended her thesis recently as part of the degree requirements in agronomy. Before her findings and recommendations will be put into practice by CET and other agencies that work with small producers, they will be fieldtested on several small farmers' lands. Preliminary results suggest, however, that a number of diseases commonly affecting strawberries appear less frequently when organic methods are used.

To assure that its research will be applied at the base level, CIAL coordinates closely with nongovernmental development organizations such as SODEM and responds to the issues addressed

Through crop rotation and intensive land use as shown in this diagram, a half-hectare on the experimental farm in Colina yields enough food to support a family.

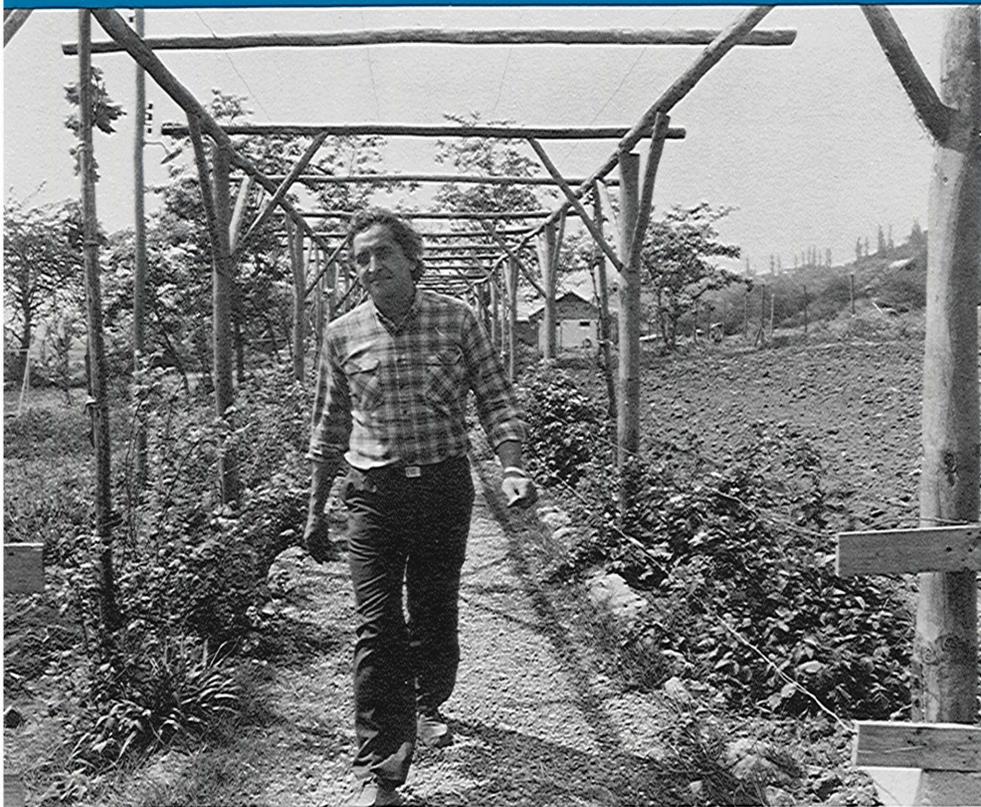
A corn beans potatoes	F pasture (3rd year)	E pasture (2nd year)
B favas or peas tomatoes onions squash	C oats/clover soybeans peanuts sunflowers	D wheat and pasture (1st year)



- 1 Fruit Trees
- 2 Irrigation
- 3 Grape Arbor
- 4 Espaliered Berries
- 5 Vegetables

- 6 House
- 7 Chickens, Lumber Pile
- 8 Water Well
- 9 Oven
- 10 Cows

- 11 Pigs
- 12 Compost Pile
- 13 Trees
- 14 Bee Hives



photos by Marcelo Montecino

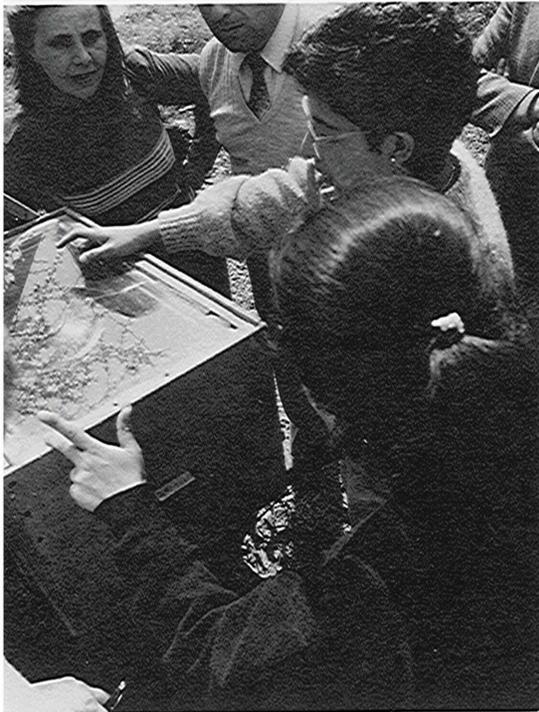
through their programs. As a result, four major areas of research have been identified as posing the greatest problems for small farmers: crop production, livestock production, protection of crops, and soil management. The research has been carried out from an ecological point of view in which the farm is seen as a system rather than merely as its component parts.

CIAL's research program—which currently includes some 75 separate investigations—has sparked a growing interest in academicians and other researchers throughout Chile. The thesis and summer practicum programs have also attracted a significant number of university students, including many who were previously skeptical of alternative agriculture. As proof of CIAL's impact, two of Chile's six university schools of agronomy currently offer courses in alternative agriculture as part of their curricula.

All this, plus the work carried out on lands belonging to CET and other nongovernmental organizations, the training courses, and the "open door" policy at CET's model farms have made organic farming a familiar topic to the Chilean public. But there are still more challenges to be met. Many basic questions remain to be answered, and each new technique resulting from CIAL's research raises another round of questions and possibilities.

The greatest challenge, however, continues to be the task of responding to the needs of the poor in the most practical and simple way possible. Researchers, instructors, and residents of urban and rural areas are working together to support extension and training efforts, translating research findings into methods that can be easily evaluated and applied at the grass-roots level.

(The preceding comments were taken from documents prepared by the staff of CIAL.)



Clockwise from top: Oscar Letelier, research director for natural pest control, on the grounds of CET's model farm; an agronomist examines plant specimen for evidence of insects or disease; visitors at model farm learn about solar food dryer.



Marcelo Montecino

Women dig raised beds for a garden in the barren earth of Batuco, a settlement north of Santiago. Successful gardens signify a triumph over pessimism in the community's grim surroundings.

What CET hopes to bring about is a change in attitudes that will lead to social organization and development. "A technology that people understand allows them to think through the mechanical problems," says Silvestre Jaramillo. "This can be the takeoff point for looking at the deeper reasons why problems arise, at the socio-economic causes, at the interests at stake in society."

The role of CET is carefully planned to cultivate the community's own capabilities. "Along with every action programmed, we should identify precisely what we are going to do to strengthen the organization—to generate new groups, to help them relate to each other, to bring out new leadership, to let them gain experience in carrying out plans," adds Gonzalo Valdivieso.

In the tense political environment of Chile's urban settlements, the embryonic organizations have been nonconfrontational. They have worked with municipal authorities and others, winning over diverse groups with practical answers.

The hardest people to win over are the poor themselves. Poverty divides and conquers individuals who become alienated and feel inadequate. This inertia works against involvement in any educational or communal effort. Yet despair can be overcome, not all

at once and not for everyone, but slowly the seeds take root.

It would be hard to find a more difficult place to plant the seeds for a community than in Batuco—north of Santiago, neither part of the city nor the countryside, another holding pattern for the poor. CET has been working with a group in Batuco for four years. They started by planting gardens, and together they decided after the earthquake to try to build mud-and-wood houses such as the one at the Colina center.

A family left homeless by the quake became the first to have a new house built by their neighbors. The proud owner of that simple one-story home says people often ask her how they can get such a house for themselves.

"Start with a garden, I tell them," she explains. Her raised beds take up most of the backyard. She picks a radish to quiet the youngest of her six children, a 4-year-old boy hiding his face in her skirts, while she talks about the house. Her husband was laid off from his job at a factory and could only get on a waiting list for the government's public work employment. While he was idle, he took the CET course in housing construction, she explains.

"You know there was a saying here in Batuco—nothing ever comes out of this place." After a moment she

continues, "And I say to those people: Just wait 'til I show you my garden!"

That garden signifies a triumph over the pessimism in Batuco, in Santiago, and wherever poverty is prevalent. The growing plants tell those who dared to dig into the barren, unpromising soil that they have accomplished something. They were able to reach one objective, why not try the next one? Climbing this ladder, they find that they are not alone. They have shared this tiny victory with other neighbors, and they can go on to the next battle because they share an attitude, one that CET uses as the title for its learning manuals, *Somos Capaces* (We are Capable). Some 20,000 copies of these books have been distributed in Spanish in Chile and throughout Latin America. The volume on intensive family gardens has been translated into Portuguese and French as well.

Batuco took the step from gardens to houses because underlying the CET program is a flexibility that brings together a group sharing a common problem, enables them to see how they can do something, then allows them to carry out that plan. The progression in terms of what can be done moves from the individual level, to the community level, and finally to the relationship of that community to the wider society. The latter stage must come later for the experiment is still young, but the first signs are there in Batuco.

The man who owns the sixth house just being finished by the group in Batuco stood back to admire it. He reflected on his experience. "We've learned something more than the techniques of building. We've learned to be united by shared experience. That didn't exist here before." ♦

DIANA PAGE is a Washington, D.C.-based journalist who recently wrote the book Duarte: My Story with El Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte. She spent 16 years covering Latin America as a reporter for United Press International and the St. Petersburg Times. Two volumes in the series of training manuals mentioned in the article, La Huerta Campesina Orgánica (The Rural Organic Garden) and Autoconstrucción con Madera y Barro (Self-help Construction with Wood and Mud) may be obtained by writing to CET, Casilla 16557, Correo 9, Santiago, Chile.

Development Notes

ENTREPRENEURIAL OUTREACH

"I am here because the community assembly chose to send me," explained Celia Arosemena, a Kuna Indian from the San Blas Islands who currently lives in a new housing project in Chivo Chivo, near Panama City. "The main idea is that I learn to manage our projects efficiently and that I transmit this knowledge to others who will run the new businesses being formed in our community."

Arosemena joined some 30 other Panamanian entrepreneurs and owners of small businesses to attend an intensive 3-week course last July and develop their skills as managers and "extensionists." While the roles of agricultural and health extensionists are well established in many rural communities, the concept of training entrepreneurial extensionists to develop and promote small businesses in urban areas is something much more novel. The innovative course was offered by the Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas (INCAE), through a grant from the Inter-American Foundation.

INCAE is Central America's only graduate school of business administration. Established in 1964 at the initiative of business leaders from each of the five Central American countries and Panama, it has since become one of Latin America's strongest schools of business administration and management. From the outset, the Institute has received professional assistance from Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration. Today, INCAE has campuses or offices in all Central American countries and in Ecuador and Colombia.

Until recently, the Institute's principal thrust had been toward economic development, rather than the social aspects of business and business education. Most previous educational efforts had been targeted at medium and large businesses, as well as government agencies, rather than firms involved in smaller-scale economic



courtesy INCAE

Over 30 Panamanian entrepreneurs and owners of small businesses attended a three-week course sponsored by INCAE, Central America's only graduate school of business administration.

activity. Some five years ago, however, INCAE reviewed its educational programs and began to focus on small and micro-enterprises and cooperatives.

During those same five years, the political, social, and economic situation in Central America worsened. Consequently, the region now receives much Latin American foreign assistance from the United States and other donors. As the most prominent center of advanced business education and research in the area, INCAE was naturally asked to participate in the efforts to develop Central America's private sector.

One result of this alliance has been INCAE's "Management for Development" program, which targets three beneficiary groups—cooperatives, small businesses, and private voluntary organizations. The Institute will work with these groups to determine the specific educational needs of leaders, managers, and trainers, to prepare teaching materials, and to conduct training sessions—such as the July meeting in Panama City—throughout the region.

One thing that sets INCAE's program apart from many other small enterprise development projects is

the unanticipated spinoff of entrepreneurial extension. The concept grew out of dozens of case studies of technical assistance, credit, and training programs for small businesses in Central America. Analysis of these cases showed that most failed to address the basic needs of small enterprises. According to Francisco Leguizamón, the first director of INCAE's small business program, there were several reasons why.

Technical assistance, credit, and training activities were not coordinated. Perceptions of the obstacles to small enterprise development differed dramatically. While the support institutions blamed underdeveloped business skills, the entrepreneurs themselves pointed to external problems, such as tax and labor legislation, foreign exchange rates, or import restrictions. Ultimately, these different perceptions were reflected in the behavior of the field staff of the support institutions, who often seemed more concerned with collecting data than providing assistance.

During seminars that brought technical assistance personnel and small business owner-managers together, a

Development Notes

photos courtesy INCAE



Celia Arosemena, left, and Clarence Greenidge participated in the INCAE seminar. Both feel they learned valuable skills they can share with other owners of small businesses.

new type of relationship between the two was suggested, one characterized by greater receptivity to initiatives by the entrepreneurs. To develop such a relationship, the staffs of support institutions would have to rethink their roles, seeing themselves not as technical experts but as extensionists with a desire to serve others.

Initial field experience in Nicaragua revealed that good intentions were not enough, however. Extensionists needed to understand the difficulties facing small businesses, have a practical knowledge of business management, and be able to diagnose problems. Communications skills, an entrepreneurial bent, and enthusiasm for working with owner-managers of small enterprises were also essential.

In 1984, the first group of entrepreneurial extensionists was formed in Nicaragua from members of ten public and eight private agencies. This private, nonprofit organization, known as ANEPYME, continues to meet regularly and to provide services on a volunteer basis.

Later, in training courses for rural Guatemalan entrepreneurs conducted by INCAE in 1985 with the sponsorship of the USAID Mission to Guatemala, the extensionist concept was

expanded to include the possibility of entrepreneurs helping each other. The response was encouraging. Seventy-five of the 140 participants, many of them from indigenous villages, completed their first small business assistance project and presented a report within three months.

This variation on the traditional extensionist model raised a number of questions, however, including how to overcome suspicion, how to resolve conflict of interest among competitors, how to obtain access to credit, and how to provide incentives to insure continuity. The three-week seminar in Panama City was designed to address these issues, as well as to offer specific guidance in how to manage a successful small business venture. By the end of the conference, the participants had decided to form an association of extensionists to give technical assistance to other small business entrepreneurs. It is yet to be seen how long their enthusiasm will be sustained.

"The seminar provided me with the ability to run a business," says Panamanian refrigeration mechanic Clarence Greenidge, "but it also prepared me to work with others. To the extent that you can help others succeed, you are strengthening the eco-

nomy, helping to lower the unemployment rate, and making the country a better place in which to live."

NEW DIRECTIONS

Saving whales, rare parrots, and endangered primates. Helping to create more than 130 parks and nature reserves in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Conducting the world's largest experiment in tropical ecology. Searching the jungle for plants with medicinal values.

These are just a few of the accomplishments the World Wildlife Fund-US (WWF-US) can point to proudly as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. Yet, when hundreds of environmentalists gathered at a conference in Washington, D.C., on September 17 to mark the occasion, a somewhat different agenda was being mapped for the future.

"Attention must be paid to the role of development as a requisite for effective conservation action," said WWF-US president William K. Reilly in his opening address. "The incomparable biological richness of the developing world can only be saved through economic development that offers options to the rural poor other than consuming and destroying their countries' natural patrimony."

Reilly also called for a recognition that Latin American and Caribbean institutions—nongovernmental organizations as well as government agencies—hold the key to making conservation work. Reflecting the conference title, "Partners in Conservation," 22 prominent Latin American environmentalists were invited to participate in panels during the day-long meeting. Three IAF grantees, including Armando Samper Grecco, chairman of the foundation committee of Colombia's Foundation for Higher Education, Guillermo Geisse, president of the Center for Environment Research and Planning of the Catholic University in Santiago, Chile, and Yolanda Kakabadse, executive director

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of the Fundación Natura in Ecuador, were among the speakers.

"Local initiative is showing signs of vigor and imagination and growing effectiveness," said Kakabadse. She cautioned, however, that foreign donors must be flexible and accept the reality of conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean. Rather than being locked into well-defined ten-year plans, there is often a need to improvise appropriate responses to local circumstances as they change from day to day.

The World Wildlife Fund-US's commitment to linking conservation and development goes far beyond silver anniversary rhetoric. In October 1985, for example, the institution began, with a matching grant from USAID, a three-year Wildlands and Human Needs Program to develop field management practices that will conserve wildland resources and help local people improve their standard of living. Less than one year later, the program had funded 11 projects in Latin America and the Caribbean and four in Africa. Model projects have ranged from the implementation of a multiple-use resource management plan for the giant 2.5 million hectare Pacaya Samiria National Reserve in the Peruvian Amazon, to the development of an integrated coastal management project on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. A smaller project financed the participation of a Central American wildlife refuge manager in a workshop on coastal resource management held in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Large or small, all projects must involve local people in their planning and execution.

"While this effort represents a new direction for the World Wildlife Fund and international conservation in general," says WWF-US vice president R. Michael Wright, "it reflects and complements the cutting edge of conservation thinking by resource managers in developing nations who have been quick to recognize the value and need for this integrated approach." ♦

EL AVANCE EN COLECTIVIDAD: EXPERIMENTOS POPULARES EN LA AMERICA LATINA, by Albert O. Hirschman. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1986.

Published in English in 1984 as *Getting Ahead Collectively: Grassroots Development in Latin America*, this volume is now available in Spanish. It is the result of a 14-week trip through Latin America and the Caribbean during which economist Albert O. Hirschman visited 45 cooperatives, micro-business associations, and social activist groups.

The book reports on a number of the more interesting grassroots experiments he observed. In a brief 120 pages, the author develops some hypotheses as to the dynamics of these projects and the benefits that individuals and society derive from such collective actions. As usual, Hirschman's hypotheses are not only original, but also convincing. At a time when *privatización* (individual self-interest) seems to be an overused byword, the subject of the book itself is original, since the author makes some strong points in favor of promoting collective actions.

Most of Hirschman's examples are of successful associations, no doubt due to the fact that many of the failures cannot be visited because they no longer exist. Although Hirschman does not say so, my impression is that mortality among cooperatives in Latin America is very high. For that reason, one of his most interesting hypotheses is that the breaking up of a cooperative may not actually represent failure, since it creates a feeling of solidarity and produces leaders who later generate other collective activities. My experience suggests that the idea has a good empirical base, and I must confess that it has led me to think more positively about the seemingly quixotic task of those who promote cooperatives.

Hirschman also examines the impact of collective action groups on society. He restates Alexis de Tocqueville's



Stephen Vetter

Albert Hirschman (third from left) and Sarah Hirschman (far right) with members of street vendors' association in the Dominican Republic.

hypothesis that an increase in the number of associations is a good index of the democratization of a society, and that the plurality of pressure groups and associations enriches the democratic process. The author notes that in authoritarian regimes, the masses are demobilized as much as possible and that demobilization leads to individuation: Everyone is interested in his own well-being and that of his immediate family. The flourishing of democracy in Latin America will require, consequently, a certain level of collective mobilization.

Hirschman goes on to mention the role that foreign donors play in the development of associations for collective assistance. Although much of the economic responsibility is taken on by the concerned parties themselves or by local intermediary groups (the latter support collective actions more than Hirschman may know), foreign agencies indeed are an important catalyst. The financing they provide is often contingent upon requirements for local matching funds, a system which encourages local donations by giving legitimacy to the activity being undertaken. For example, the Rockefeller

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Foundation supported the development of schools of medicine and agricultural research; the Ford Foundation has assisted several research centers, as well as public and private universities; the Inter-American Foundation provides assistance to the organizations that Hirschman speaks of; and the Inter-American Development Bank assists agencies that support micro-businesses throughout the hemisphere. Supporting such collective action may well be the best way for foreign donors to help strengthen democracy within the current political situation in Latin America.

MIGUEL URRUTIA, a Colombian economist, is the manager of the Economic and Social Development Department of the Inter-American Development Bank.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST, SOCIOLOGICAL VARIABLES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT, edited by Michael Cernea. New York: Oxford University Press (published for the World Bank), 1985.

This is a book of advocacy and exhortation. Its message is simple but compelling: Development projects would tend to be far more successful—both in social and economic terms—if they were more fully and genuinely informed by sociological variables. The mental habits, cultural practices, and human values of poor people or “beneficiaries” ought to be at the very center of development work.

The volume’s editor, Michael Cernea—sociology advisor to the World Bank—acknowledges that the book may be properly viewed as an “appeal to planners’ humanitarian feelings.” In arguing that “repeated failures have plagued development programs which were sociologically ill-informed and ill-conceived,” Cernea laments the fact that—despite increased institutional hospitality in recent years—sociological insights still tend to be neglected, or at least belittled, in nearly all phases of the “project cycle.” While sociological

expertise is sometimes called upon to appraise a project’s viability or assess its impact, it is rarely tapped, the authors maintain, during perhaps the project’s most critical phase—design.

This collection of articles sets out to make a case for redressing this imbalance. In drawing on concrete projects in a variety of agricultural subsectors—including irrigation, livestock, fisheries, forestry, rural roads, and agricultural settlements—the authors, many of whom are sociologists or social anthropologists, address precisely how increased attention to sociological variables would yield better project results. The articles are of varying persuasive power, but the underlying point—sustained by the recurrent focus on the fit between human values and project activities—is a generally cogent one.

Cernea points out that sociologists working in development have only been taken seriously to the extent that they have been able to go beyond conceptual flourishes and generate “operational contributions.” The challenge is to propose what Cernea calls “social inventions” and William Foot Whyte refers to as “social technologies”—organizational mechanisms, policy levers, and practical approaches for both project beneficiaries and administrators that will demonstrate, concretely and realistically, how to “put people first” in formulating and carrying out development projects.

On this score the volume is rather mixed. Several articles can be justly accused of belaboring the obvious and advancing merely commonsensical propositions. In fishery projects, for example—or any other kind of project, for that matter—few would dispute the assertion that “if the participants refuse to cooperate, the project will not succeed.” Repeated appeals that underline the importance of clarifying project objectives or coordinating institutional roles have an empty ring after awhile and hardly contribute to the sociologists’ efforts to establish greater credibility and legitimacy in the field. Economists,

for example—particularly perceptive and sensitive economists—are apt to ask, “So what? What else is new?”

Several articles, however, are more promising and break new ground in “social engineering.” The piece on agricultural settlements, for example, is unusually insightful and offers a dynamic conceptual framework—and practical guidelines—about how to match up patterns of social organization with project phases. Another article is particularly fruitful in going beyond the universal and somewhat trendy praise for “participation,” by distinguishing among different project tasks and analyzing the relevance of beneficiary participation for each. Recognizing real opportunity costs, “putting people first” in this instance may mean foregoing participation in some project tasks, and focusing on the most important ones.

The trade-off between participating in different project tasks suggests another trade-off that is not adequately treated in this volume. The authors generally assume that sociological factors and economic performance are mutually reinforcing. The relationship between sociological variables and economic performance ought to be viewed not as an easy presupposition, but as a rich and extremely important subject for careful, empirical study.

Aimed at “development practitioners and professional social scientists from developed and developing countries,” *Putting People First* is a valuable volume with a sound, compelling message. For sociologists and social anthropologists the book will be reaffirming. Economists, planners, and other development professionals are likely to be initially skeptical, though they too, one hopes, will eventually become sensitized to the key concerns addressed here. The exhortation to “put people first” and draw more extensively on sociological expertise is an important one that ought to be heeded.

MICHAEL SHIFTER, an IAF representative for Brazil, was a teaching fellow in the sociology department at Harvard University.

EXPERIENCIAS AUTOGESTIONARIAS EN AMERICA LATINA,

by Martin Scurrah and Bruno Podestá, with the collaboration of Ariela Ruiz-Caro. Lima, Peru: GREDES, 1986.

What can be learned from the relatively small number of experiments in self-management by industrial workers in Latin America? Do such firms, managed by councils of workers, represent a viable alternative to more familiar industrial forms? What factors led to the recent rise and subsequent demise of a variety of self-management schemes in Peru and Chile? These are some of the many questions posed by Martin Scurrah and Bruno Podestá in this thoughtful book, which culminates years of careful research and in-depth fieldwork, primarily in Peru and Chile but including seven other Latin American countries.

Proposed as an alternative road for industrialization and the modernization of the labor force, worker self-management—called *autogestión* in Spanish—has always been controversial yet has gathered support from surprising sources. In Peru, the concept was promoted by the reformist military regime of Velasco Alvarado, and marked the limits of that government's support for new forms of business organization. In Salvador Allende's Chile and revolutionary Nicaragua, labor management has been defended by conservatives, presumably to forestall state ownership. Miners' unions in Bolivia have supported the concept as a way to gain independence from state direction and control. In Argentina, labor management was associated with an earlier cooperative movement, and received little support from Juan Perón or the Peronist alliance of unions, the Congreso General de Trabajadores (CGT).

Although worker self-management has attracted a variety of proponents, it has usually been a minority position with little if any official support. This is a crucial factor since the authors



Members of Galvano Mecánica, S.A., a worker-owned enterprise in Lima, Peru, that recycles metal products.

found that the economic health of the firms they studied in Chile and Peru depended on and fluctuated with the degree of state assistance. Typically this took the form of subsidized loans, although tariffs and other price controls were important. Favorable public policies were short-lived in both countries, however, and worker-managed industrial firms suffered when drastic tariff reductions occurred in the 1970s.

The authors caution that this record of failure is somewhat misleading since traditional businesses performed dismally as well. It is true, however, that many self-managed companies were ill-equipped to compete in suddenly tightened markets. They were often newly established enterprises with insufficient business experience, or had already been rescued from bankruptcy once when the state or international donors absorbed the debts of former owners and turned over management to the workers.

If the experiences of Peru and Chile were too brief and politically inconsistent to shed light on the prospects for self-management as a broad-based alternative road to development, the experiences of other Latin American countries were even more inconsequential. Where, then, can we look for guidance? The authors are well

acquainted with relevant academic studies about worker self-management in Yugoslavia, Israel, West Germany, and elsewhere, and provide convenient summaries. The reader is again thankful for the absence of unjustifiably simplistic conclusions. Labor management is presented as an alternative system that has appeared within both capitalist (Spain) and socialist (Eastern Europe) economies. Employee stock ownership plans (ESOP) in the United States reflect aspects of self-management philosophy as well.

While this book cannot offer the final word on the advisability of adopting self-management, it does provide useful lessons grounded in practical experience. In particular, it details the difficulties workers often have in learning to master the marketing and managerial skills that are unrelated to production activities and suggests how some of those obstacles can be reduced. By adopting a dispassionate approach to such issues, a rarity in a field typified by inattention or diatribe, the authors have produced a book that is an indispensable benchmark to further discussions of the topic.

MICHAEL J. TWOMEY is an associate professor of economics at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. ♦

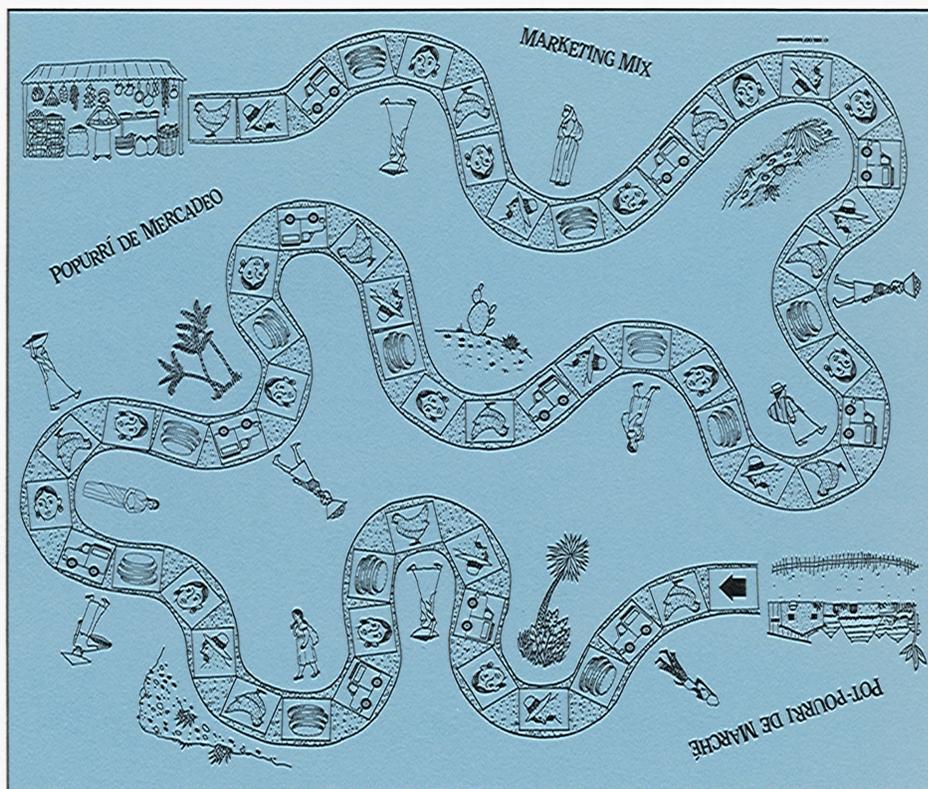
Resources

The following materials, all produced within the past year, relate to the complicated task of small enterprise development and to the effectiveness of the institutions that most frequently promote such development—private voluntary organizations. The documents range from the practical to the more abstract and include experiences from various regions of the developing world.

OEF International (formerly the Overseas Education Fund), a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., has just released another of its training manuals, *Marketing Strategy: Training Activities for Entrepreneurs*. OEF's guides are among the best-designed popular education materials currently being produced, and this one is no exception.

Through an array of varied training activities, *Marketing Strategy* provides Third World women entrepreneurs with ready access to the kinds of advice a business consulting firm might offer. Intended for women who already operate a business, the manual assumes that distribution—rather than production—is frequently the key bottleneck to higher profits. Exercises lead participants to ask crucial questions: What are the needs of customers? Should a middleman be used? How should prices be determined? Where should goods be sold and how can they be transported?

The cornerstone of the program is a board game, called the Marketing Mix Game, that makes participants think about the four components of marketing—product, price, distribution, and promotion. Additional exercises involve visits to local markets as well as group activities appropriate for either literate or illiterate adults. To complete all the activities outlined in the manual requires some 12 to 18 class hours. The optimum strategy would spread the training out over several consecutive days for groups of 12 to 15 participants.



The latest guide from OEF International includes the Marketing Mix Game, which makes participants consider the four basics of marketing: product, price, distribution, and promotion.

The manual, which is currently available only in English, was first developed in Sri Lanka. Since then it has been fieldtested in Central America and can be easily adapted for use throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Marketing Strategy: Training Activities for Entrepreneurs, by Suzanne Kinder-vatter with Maggie Range, is available for \$10.00 plus postage from OEF International, 2101 L St. NW, Suite 916, Washington, D.C. 20037.

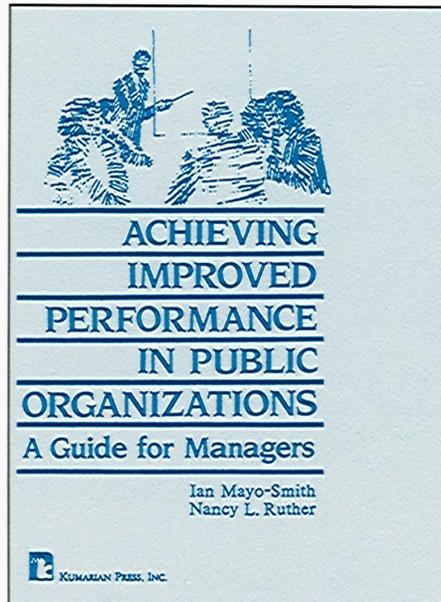
Regarded as one of the most striking development phenomena of recent years, the informal sector is the subject of current working papers by the Inter-American Foundation and by PACT (Private Agencies Collaborating Together). The IAF paper, titled *Urban Informal Sector and Small-Scale Enterprise*, is based on a seminar sponsored by the Foundation at the Massachu-

setts Institute of Technology (MIT). Co-authored by MIT professor Bishwapriya Sanyal and IAF representative Cynthia Ferrin, it explores how this sector and "microentrepreneurial activity" intersect. It begins with Sanyal's overview and analysis of the recent literature on the informal sector. His presentation is accompanied by a report on the discussion that followed among representatives of various private voluntary organizations and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies who attended the seminar. Histories of microbusinesses are provided, focusing on the variety of organizational forms and the supporting services they require. Examples span the globe, including Africa and India as well as the Western Hemisphere. Copies of the paper may be obtained free of charge from the Inter-American Foundation, 1515 Wilson Blvd., Rosslyn, Virginia 22209.

PACT's report, *The Solidarity Group Concept: Its Characteristics and Significance for Urban Informal Sector Activities*, is also the result of a conference. In this case, PACT sponsored a meeting for representatives of the five programs it has supported (in conjunction with its member agency ACCION International/AITEC) that pioneered the solidarity group methodology in Central and South America. As part of its commitment to document the event, which was called the "First Latin American Workshop on Solidarity Group Programs," PACT contracted Maria Otero, an economist with an extensive background in small enterprise and women in development programs. She participated in the workshop and accompanied the participants through the entire learning process. In preparing this report, she has added her own ample perspective to the papers written by the participants. This working paper may be ordered for \$5.00 from PACT, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017.

Shifting from Third World enterprise to the organizations that often support it, another new publication deserves mention. *Achieving Improved Performance in Public Organizations: A Guide for Managers*, is a practical manual and a theoretical guide for improving management skills. It is useful for people in both the public and private sectors.

Written by Ian Mayo-Smith and Nancy L. Ruther, who head the international branch of the University of Connecticut's Institute for Public Service, the workbook introduces a method—"performance improvement programming" (PIP)—for analyzing managerial structures. Initially developed in Egypt, PIP has since been applied in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through the five-stage process, participants move from defining goals, to identifying factors that support or restrain fulfillment of goals, and then on to action plans and



strategies for implementation. Illustrative examples accompany each stage.

Although complicated by a rather idiosyncratic terminology, the PIP process can effectively lead public managers to an understanding of the forces that help or hinder an organization. Success or failure of the approach, as the authors see it, depends on two fundamentals. First, managers must be genuinely interested in and be able to identify the problems and needs of their colleagues and subordinates as well as their agency's "clients." They must also be able to see their own and their organization's problems in the context of the total system in which they operate.

The manual may be ordered for \$12.95 from Kumarian Press, 630 Oakwood Ave., Suite 119, West Hartford, Connecticut 06110.

—John Burstein

The editors of Grassroots Development encourage organizations to submit newly produced materials—games, guides, manuals, audiovisuals—for review in this column. ◆

Your most recent issue of *Grassroots Development* just crossed my desk and I hasten to congratulate you on another excellent presentation of Inter-American Foundation activities throughout the hemisphere.

I was struck, however, by the omission of Save the Children's role in your coverage of the FUDECO program in the Dominican Republic (Vol. 10, No. 1). Save the Children founded FUDECO over 20 years ago and slowly and painstakingly nurtured it to its present independent status. We have continued to be a prime funding agent, fostered joint training of staff, and launched complementary program models including the much heralded CAOTACO. Save the Children's annual funding covers the lion's share of FUDECO's administrative expenses. Although you prominently mentioned assistance from Canada, Germany, Norway, and U.S. agencies other than the Inter-American Foundation, any reference to the special and critical relationship between FUDECO and Save the Children was left out.

DAVID L. GUYER
President
Save the Children

(The editors of Grassroots Development deeply regret the omission.)

Thank you for your very fine publication *Grassroots Development*. As a lobbyist on foreign aid policy, I have benefited greatly from the articles and reviews that have appeared in its pages. I will continue to look forward to each new issue.

PAUL NELSON
Bread for the World

I think you should include articles on development projects sponsored by the IAF that have failed—and explain why. Anyone who has worked on development projects knows the picture you are painting is a selective one.

DANIEL GADE
University of Vermont

Postscript

With this issue of *Grassroots Development*, the IAF completes a year of special events and publications commemorating the Foundation's 15th anniversary. Activities included receptions at the U.S. State Department and on Capitol Hill, as well as staff and grantee presentations at conferences that highlighted the agency's commitment to grassroots development throughout the hemisphere during the past decade and a half.

Although many of these observances were memorable occasions, the upcoming publication of *Development and Dignity* promises to have a more lingering impact. An excerpt, titled "A Sense of Identity," begins on page 12 of this issue of the journal. Much more than a mere history of the Foundation, the book tells the story of the IAF through the voices of those most uniquely qualified to comment upon its successes and its failures: the institution's grantees in Latin America and the Caribbean.

"I started off thinking about a sequential history," says author Patrick Breslin, who became acquainted with the Foundation in 1980 when he was asked to evaluate a series of IAF projects in Chile. "I knew the beginning would be fascinating, but I wasn't sure where it would go from there."

Breslin—whose other credits include the novel *Interventions*, published by Doubleday, and a Ph.D. in political science from UCLA—began looking for guideposts by skimming the earlier IAF publication *They Know How*. "I was especially impressed by the comments from grantees in the appendix," he recalls. "I was struck by the peoples' willingness to speak

so frankly—and by the fact that the IAF had published their remarks." It was then that he started to think about basing his book on a series of interviews with grantees.

During the year that followed, Breslin crisscrossed the region, meeting with over 100 Foundation grantees in a variety of settings, from remote villages to crowded capital cities. As people talked with him about their work, a moving picture of development in Latin America and the Caribbean began to emerge—and along with it an insider's view of the role the Inter-American Foundation has played in that process.

With chapters on topics such as urban, rural, and social development, the book is almost a primer on how the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean are working together at the local level to solve problems and improve their lives. Before examining these issues, however, Breslin devotes a chapter to cultural identity. "One of the most characteristic things about the Foundation," the author observes, "is that it has always understood the link between culture and development. If you know who you are and where you came from, you are much more likely to have the confidence necessary to manage a successful project."

Without exception, from academic researchers to peasant farmers, grantees everywhere always found time to talk. "I think their openness with me reflects their openness with the IAF," says Breslin. Indeed, many a scheduled 30-minute interview with a busy project director about a local program broadened into an hour-long discussion of how private voluntary organizations had emerged throughout the

hemisphere during the past 20 years and how the Foundation fit into that movement.

Breslin points to his interview with Ecuadorean oral historian Juan García as one of the best examples of this rapport. The two were to meet briefly on a Sunday morning, with the author looking forward to spending the rest of the day relaxing back at his hotel. When Breslin arrived for the 9 a.m. interview, García suggested they go for a walk. They walked and talked until lunch, then through the afternoon, and finally ended up at the home of one of García's friends for dinner. At midnight García drove the author back to his hotel, but Breslin returned early the next morning with questions that had occurred to him during the night. "Had I another week in Ecuador, I could have spent the whole time talking to Juan," he says.

We hope our readers, too, will share the same excitement as they read about García's efforts to preserve his peoples' culture in Ecuador, as well as similar work by others in Costa Rica, Panama, and Bolivia. The Foundation's 15th anniversary may indeed be winding down, but the stories of grantees such as these—and the others highlighted in this issue—will continue to guide the IAF for years to come.

We welcome your reactions—both favorable and unfavorable—to the articles and features presented here. Authors will be asked to respond to comments from readers to encourage a thoughtful dialogue. Let us hear from you.

Kathryn Shaw

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IAF Fellowships: The Foundation has created three fellowship programs to support Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. scholars researching development activities among the poor. Two support field research in Latin America and the Caribbean at the master's and doctoral levels; the third brings Latin American and Caribbean scholars and practitioners for advanced training in the United States.

Fellowship topics of primary interest are 1) the nature of effective grassroots organizations among the poor; 2) the nature of effective intermediary or service organizations; 3) systematic appraisals of local development activities such as studies of development programs and projects designed to reach the poorest populations, including small businesses in the informal sector, female-headed households, isolated Indian populations, and artisanal fishermen.

Applications and inquiries should be directed to:

Fellowship Office
Inter-American Foundation
1515 Wilson Boulevard
Rosslyn, Virginia 22209
(703) 841-3864

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