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grassroots development

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Celebrating Culture and Development

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Cover photo: At the Smithsonian Festival of Folklife, Alejandro Flores Huatta of Taquile, Peru, explains the Incan symbols on a belt he has woven. He later briefed a hemispheric meeting of Indian groups about his community's tourist business for visitors interested in authentic Andean life. (See article page 32.) *Photo by Ron Weber.* *Opposite:* Artisanal fishermen from a co-op federation inspired by an Afro-Ecuadorian folklorist return home with their catch. (See article page 22.) *Photo by Juan García Salazar.*

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Finding Common Ground

Redefining Women's Work in Colombia

A strategic alliance of professionals and the working poor multiplies the social value of self-worth.

Jamie K. Donaldson



Jamie K. Donaldson

Emma Ojeda, a trabajadora del hogar, or household worker, prepares a meal for the family who has employed her for two decades. Ojeda is part of a large, but socially invisible, group of women paid to care for the homes and children of their employers.

Although she richly deserves her one day of rest each week, Emma Ojeda rises early every Sunday morning. With a mixture of duty and affection, she carefully sets out the ingredients her "family" will need to prepare breakfast when

they waken. Ojeda, nearly blind since birth, has spent 45 of her 57 years living in someone else's house, adjusting to their regimen. When she finally slips out the door to the street, she hesitates, looking one way then the other as if momentarily lost. Actually, she is waiting for *her* day to begin.

Soon the friend arrives who will escort her on several buses across sprawling Bogotá to the office of the Asociación de Mujeres Trabajadoras del Hogar (AMUTRAHOGAR). Like one of every four working women in Colombia, Ojeda and her *compañera* are maids, members of that large but socially invisible group of *trabajadoras del hogar*, or household workers, who are paid wages to cook and clean, and care for children.

The crosstown journey will take the better part of the morning, but Ojeda's life has taught her patience. Born to a poor farming family from a village in the blue mountains of Santander Department, she has slowly inched her way south, since the age of 12, to the capital city and the home of her present employer, an upper-middle-class family under whose roof she has worked and lived for nearly two decades.

When Ojeda and her companion arrive at AMUTRAHOGAR's door, they are not alone. The office has been open since 7:00 a.m., and a steady file of women has passed through, seeking legal counseling, educational courses, or just a friendly place to gather and chat. Inside this single room is a bustle of activity. Around a table, two household workers equipped with a calculator and pencils huddle with a peer who recently left her job. Together they are figuring out how much the woman's former employer owes in severance pay and unused paid vacation. Several women browse nearby, examining photographs of the 1987 household workers' march for social security coverage, taped to the wall, fingering the chits that determine their turn at the table.

An impromptu crocheting class has formed in one corner. Sitting on the floor by her mother's feet, an infant chatters at the strands of bright yarn she has scooped up in her hand.

At the far end of the room, a handsome, grey-haired woman quizzes a group seated around a table, dispelling myths about *domésticas* or, worse yet, *mantecas*—terms with pejorative connotations for household workers commonly heard in Colombia. Drawn by the laughter, Ojeda edges in to join the lively discussion. "Are you domestics?" the discussion leader asks. "What are domestics?"

she repeats, drawing out the syllables ironically.

In unison, Ojeda and the others roar: "Household pets!"

Soon, these women, and others who filter in on their one afternoon off, will convene AMUTRAHOGAR's regular weekly meeting. Ojeda's decision to come here—the very existence of the Asociación as a kind of elective family, a source of moral and legal support—would not have been possible without long years of arduous and often frustrating work by an extraordinary alliance of household workers and women lawyers and educators from Bogotá. These seemingly disparate groups—one largely unskilled and rural and the other professional and urban—have broken through social barriers to find common ground. Together they are striving to transform the conditions of Colombia's *trabajadoras del hogar* and, in the process, rethinking what it means to do women's work.

With the possible exception of prostitution, no other occupation in Latin America is as stigmatized by gender, social rank, and sometimes race as domestic service. Only rarely is paid housework considered by government ministries, labor unions, or even the workers themselves to be a true profession. The job consists of tasks traditionally assigned to the women of a household and is presumed to be part of their "natural" duties. Compared to almost any labor performed by men in the home or on the job, "women's work" is depreciated in most societies. The fact that an outsider is paid to do this "unvalued" work does not elevate her in the eyes of others to the status of a legitimate employee so much as it separates all members of the household from the drudgery and stigma of these tasks.

Household workers are also, without exception, from lower social strata than their employers, making



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Here, household worker Elena Rojas mops her employer's patio. Many live-in workers view their situation as temporary: Rojas hopes to become a seamstress.



Pages taken from a cartilla, or training manual, produced by ACEP outline the rights of household workers. Colombia's Law 11 opened the door for household workers to receive social security coverage.

it difficult for *patronas* to identify with the situation of their employees, even though both have been on the losing end of the sexual division of labor. The poverty levels are such in Latin America that even lower-class families can find women in direr straits who will work for a pittance. In some countries, black or indigenous women are commonly employed in the homes of mestizos; the inverse rarely, if ever, occurs. The combination of gender, class, and race relations that characterize paid domestic service makes household workers among the most unprotected members of the labor force in Latin America.

In Colombia, there are at least a half million household workers who are live-ins, like Emma Ojeda, or work part-time for several employers. Precise figures are impossible to come by since many of these positions fall into the largely untabulated informal economy. A decade ago, the vast majority of household workers were live-ins, but today the ratio is rapidly approaching an even split. The live-ins tend to be young single women, since few employers are willing or able to house a second family.

As in the rest of Latin America, Colombian household workers are predominately migrants from the countryside. Pushed out of villages by endemic violence and poverty and the lack of educational opportunities, and pulled to the city by hopes for a better life, they arrive unskilled and often illiterate. Unable to find a formal-sector job in a factory, store, or restaurant, most of the new arrivals—like the procession before them—end up as maids in private homes. Few of these young women have set out to become maids; most experience the outcome as a surrender to fate. While young, most hold on to the hope that their luck, like Cinderella's, will change; but their new situation often intensifies the initial setback into defeat, resulting in the low self-esteem and internalized sense of inferiority that characterize so many household workers.

The horror stories of physical abuse and virtual slavery suffered by maids throughout the hemisphere are, fortunately, largely a relic of the past. Today some household employees enjoy good working relationships

with their employers, based on mutual trust and respect. Nonetheless, tenacious problems remain. Live-ins face the dilemma of being treated as both a hired worker and a member of the family. In some cases, they have fled troubled homes and are especially eager to find affection, or merely fair treatment, under a new roof. Yet, even if class or race does not prevent bonding, the affective relationship can still vanish if the household worker becomes ill or is otherwise temporarily disabled. Pregnancy is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Day workers, while relatively more independent, confront tough conditions also. Many are single heads of households who, after a day laboring in someone else's home, face a second shift of cleaning, cooking, and child care in their own. They are better paid than live-ins, but this is offset by greater job insecurity and the cost of taking public transportation to work.

Much of what we know about Colombia's household workers comes from the pioneering research of sociologist Magdalena León. For nearly 20 years, León has studied Colombian women's contributions to development, particularly their "hidden" participation in the labor force. Examination of life in the



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Magdalena León, former director of the Asociación Colombiana para el Estudio de la Población, developed the first program to identify and meet the needs of household workers.

countryside led her to follow the trail of rural migrants to the city, recording how young women, motivated by dreams of better schooling or perhaps a job in a factory, awoke to find themselves reduced to domestic service. Their testimonies about working conditions and frustrated hopes touched a raw nerve, making León wonder how well she had known any of the many servants who had worked for her family as she was growing up.

"After patiently answering my questions during these interviews," León adds, "invariably they would ask me one of their own—'What must we do to change?'" The growing commitment she felt to rural women and the need to answer this question led her to shift from abstract to applied research. Joining other women professionals at the Asociación Colombiana para el Estudio de la Población (ACEP), a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Bogotá, León developed a program to identify and meet the needs of household workers.

The ACEP program was launched in 1981 with support from the Inter-American Foundation. The first step was to review existing labor laws on the rights and responsibilities of household workers and interview maids to determine how well the legal code was being applied to meet their needs. Outreach efforts would then be undertaken to sensitize staff at government agencies and NGOs to the gaps that needed to be filled and to provide legal and educational services to help workers and employers understand and meet their respective obligations. Finally, the program would work to help the Sindicato de Trabajadoras del Servicio Doméstico (SINTRASEDOM) consolidate itself and become a forum for household workers to articulate and begin to meet their own needs.

ACEP lawyers learned that Colombian labor law entitled live-ins to the legal minimum wage, one day of rest per week, and holidays off. Other provisions set standards for paid vacation, maternity leave, and severance pay. In practice, the research team discovered that these targets were seldom met. Employers—and often workers—were unaware of the laws or simply ignored them, since they were neither widely publicized

nor enforced. Even when efforts were made to apply the minimum wage, for instance, live-ins often found themselves with little more than pocket money after their patronas deducted the costs of food, clothing, shelter, and other in-kind items. Another loophole was the absence of a legal definition for the workday. It is not uncommon for live-ins to work a steady 16 hours and then be available "on call" in case the family needs them. Finally, some employers simply do not consider maid's work to be a binding labor contract, making it difficult for dismissed workers to obtain a *liquidación*, the calculation and payment of severance pay and other obligatory fringe benefits.

The ACEP attorneys incorporated what they learned into short courses that were offered to household workers, employment agency staff, social workers, and law students at several universities. Radio ads invited both workers and employers to use a bi-weekly, legal services clinic established at ACEP's Bogotá headquarters. In addition to providing information about Colombia's labor law, the clinic provided liquidación services, which proved to be a popular drawing card. Employers had access to a quick and fair transaction; and household workers, with the weight of ACEP's legal team behind them, usually were able to reach agreements following job termination without recourse to judicial action.

Based on early successes and a favorable evaluation, the IAF made a second grant to ACEP in 1983 to expand the program to the cities of Cali, Medellín, Barranquilla, and Bucaramanga. The Ford Foundation provided additional funding the following year. The idea was not to administer a centralized services program from Bogotá, but to transfer project activities to outlying NGOs that were experienced with women's development issues and able to provide support to future membership organizations. The program found a home in Cali at the Centro de Apoyo a la Mujer y al Infante (CAMI), a non-profit legal and health agency. In Medellín, the program was started by an ACEP lawyer and later assumed by the group *Vamos Mujer*. In Barranquilla, the program passed through



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Mariela Loaiza, former president of AMUTRAHOGAR, calculates the benefits owed to a fellow household worker. With the help of ACEP and AMUTRAHOGAR, workers were able to reach financial agreements with former employers without court actions.

several different agencies before ending up in the regional office of Foro Nacional por Colombia, a major NGO dedicated to promoting self-help organizations among the poor. There were no women's organizations available to house the program in Bucaramanga, so ACEP outreach workers enlisted sympathetic staff at the branch office of the government's national employment agency to administer several key project activities, such as the liquidación service.

As project activities got underway elsewhere, the Bogotá legal clinic continued to refine its activities. Informal courses were added on topics such as citizenship, sexuality, and the role of women in Colombian society. For the first time, these discussions brought household workers together to reflect on their situation and begin developing a sense of common purpose. ACEP encouraged this self-examination, introducing the concepts of gender and class to enable workers to make sense of their queasy feelings of job dissatisfaction. The women were encouraged to examine their personal and work-related goals, and to look beyond paid domestic service. Recognizing, however, that societal and economic constraints prevented most workers from abandoning domestic service, the ACEP staff helped them to realize that

it is a profession like any other, protected by Colombian law—however imperfectly—and worthy of dignity and a fairly negotiated wage.

These workshops, and the testimonies of the many women seeking liquidación services, gradually brought an underlying anxiety to the surface. Older workers spoke of their dread that, without sufficient wages to put money aside or access to a retirement pension, they would one day end up out on the streets. Younger workers reinforced those fears, making it clear that workers of all ages were just one prolonged illness away from unemployment and destitution. This inspired project staff to review eligibility requirements for the nation's social security system to see if household workers qualified for retirement benefits, subsidized medical care, and disability pensions like any other Colombian working under contract.

What they found would thrust the ACEP project onto a new course and draw household workers into the thick of the action. A 1977 reform of the Colombian social security code stipulates eligibility for people, including household workers, who are paid for services by private individuals. The social security tax for eligible workers is to be split between the

employer and the employee. With such a law already in place, why were household workers feeling such anxiety about their futures?

There were two primary obstacles to accessing the system, one of them obvious from ACEP's discovery itself. Few citizens were aware of the eligibility reform because the Instituto de Seguridades Sociales, or Social Security Institute, never publicized the law it administered, fearing a flood of new beneficiaries. The second barrier effectively excluded most household workers, even if they managed to circumvent the first. The social security tax for workers was based on earning the minimum wage rate—pricing participation beyond the reach of all but a few women.

ACEP staff devised a three-pronged strategy to make social security a reality for household workers, launching a quest that catalyzed individual concerns about health into a grassroots movement. The professional team would open contacts with social security and labor officials, sensitize public opinion through the media, and nudge household workers into organizing to improve their conditions. At a meeting attended by 40 household workers on May 1, 1985, ACEP and SINTRASEDOM agreed to join together to inform the Colombian public about the need for bringing household workers under the umbrella of social security.

As a first step, they sponsored a rally on August 15, at which 200 household workers gathered for an afternoon of dance, sociodrama, and music. Interested women took turns at the microphone discussing the issue of social security, while television crews and a handful of newspaper reporters looked on. For many of the participants, it was the first time they had ever addressed a crowd.

Bolstered by the experience, the group decided on a more ambitious step: They would make their case in October directly to the Presidency at the Plaza Bolívar, the traditional site for presenting petitions in Bogotá. Household workers formed a publicity committee, designing flyers and posting them in parks, stores, and other public areas frequented by maids on their day off. Meanwhile,

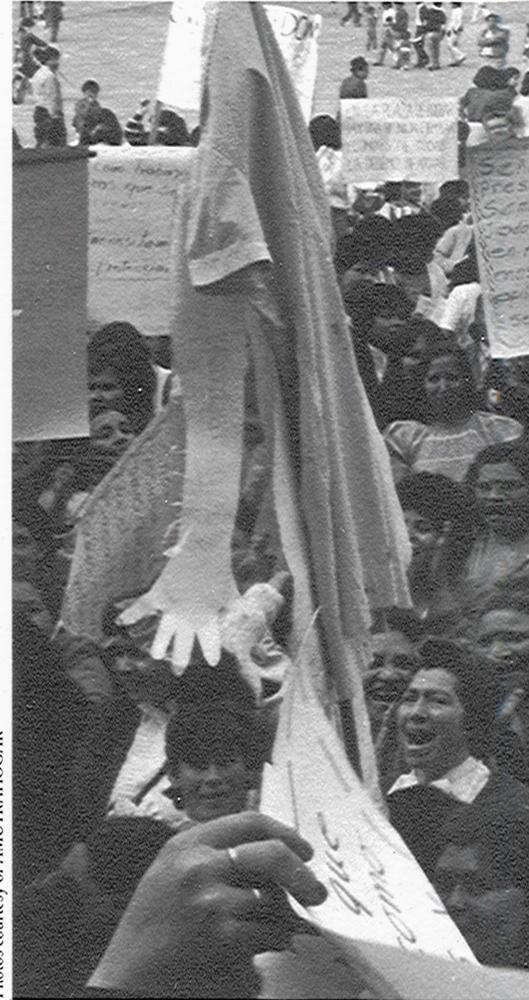
the ACEP professionals drafted press releases.

Some three months later, hundreds of household workers, their enthusiasm undampened by a sudden cloudburst, convened in the Plaza Bolívar with a letter addressed to then-President Belisario Betancur. The petition outlined concrete suggestions for making the social security law viable for employed women like themselves. Perhaps attracted by the novelty of the sight, the local press turned out in full force. For a moment the nation seemed to catch a glimpse of something previously invisible.

The glimpse proved fleeting, however, eclipsed by two national catastrophes within a month—the November occupation of the Supreme Court by the M-19 guerrillas and the volcanic eruption of the Nevado del Ruíz that killed more than 20,000 people. With the government and public numbed by these two disasters, 1986 became a year of crisis for the newly organized household workers. Some abandoned the crusade for social security once their hopes for quick success were dashed. Others left, fearing reprisals from employers for involvement in “upstart” activities or simply too worn out at the end of a hard week to attend planning meetings on Sundays. By the end of the year, the leadership of SINTRASEDOM was in turmoil; despite ACEP's best efforts to help the organization stay focused, it severed relations with the program. For awhile, ACEP lost its direct link to the women it was designed to serve.

Fortunately, a committed core of household workers continued to meet in Bogotá. Several were women who had participated in SINTRASEDOM and had become convinced of the widespread need for social security by hearing their own concerns echoed in the testimony of coworkers. Others were women who had gained a new sense of self-awareness during the recent campaign. Joining together, they formed the Comité de Trabajadoras del Hogar, which later gave birth to AMUTRAHOGAR.

There were also signs of life outside the capital. In Barranquilla, 40 household workers turned out for the *marcha de los delantales*, or parade of aprons, to publicize their need for so-



Photos courtesy of AMUTRAHOGAR

cial security and right to a day of rest. It was the first such event conducted and led by women in the city's history.

Noting that the program had taken root in other cities that were possible sources of renewed energy, ACEP convened a national congress in 1987 to provide a forum for household workers to take stock of the accomplishments and setbacks of the previous year, reflect on their common situation, and develop a united resolve. Participants included women from Bogotá and all four regional offices, members



of SINTRASEDOM, unaffiliated household workers, and staff from employment agencies and the public sector. The congress set the stage for the April 5, march for social security.

In one sense, this march should have been a victory celebration. Newly elected President Virgilio Barco had announced that social security coverage was being extended to household workers as part of his program to alleviate poverty. ACEP's lawyers, however, had uncovered a potential flaw in the plan. In effect,

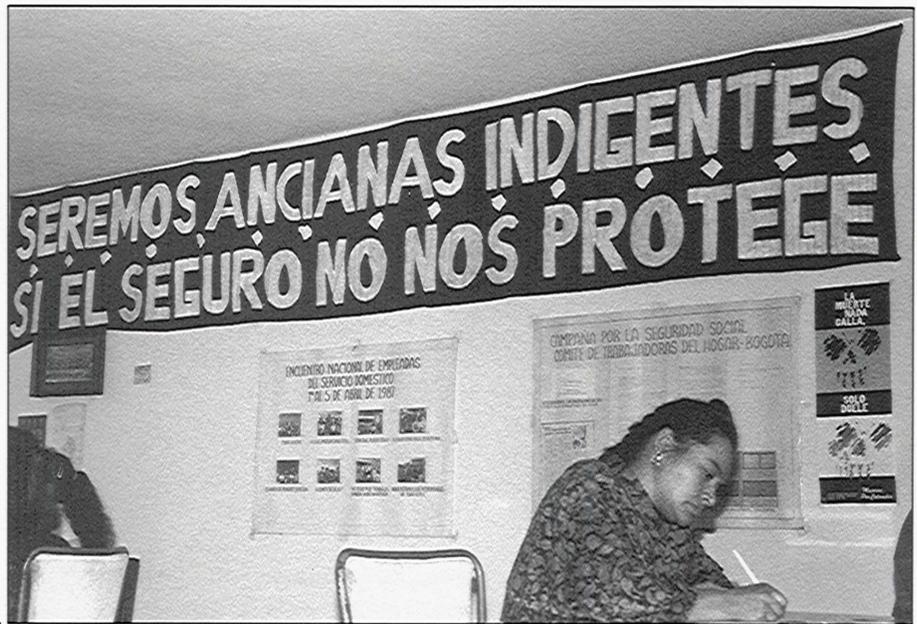
On April 5, 1987, more than 1,000 household workers nationwide gathered in Bogotá's Plaza Bolívar for the march for social security, informing the public of loopholes in social security coverage. After months of negotiation, agreement was reached to subsidize full social security benefits through the Treasury.

the first barrier to implementation of the 1977 reform, lack of dissemination, was being removed through this public declaration. But the second barrier—the terms of participation—remained and in some ways was hardened. By classifying day workers as self-employed, the Barco plan implied there was no employer responsible for severance pay, paid vacation, and other benefits previously conferred under labor contract law. It also made day workers responsible for the entire social security tax, effectively excluding half of the household workers, including most of those with families, from the system. This de facto classification threatened to further atomize household workers, undermining the group consciousness needed for them to create viable self-help organizations.

ACEP lawyers informed household workers of the possible side effects, and the Bogotá Comité de Trabajadoras del Hogar took the lead in planning the April rally to publicize corrective measures. They spread word of the impending march to co-workers, went on radio and television programs, and plastered the city with posters and flyers.

On a springlike day in early April, more than 1,000 household workers from all over the country gathered in the Plaza Bolívar along with local radio and television crews and reporters from the two principal national newspapers. Mariela Loiza, a leader of the household workers, addressed them, and the citizens of Colombia, with compelling urgency. "We have come together here," she said, "many from far away and at personal sacrifice, to ask the state and society to quickly and effectively remedy the lack of health care that household workers have to live with and must submit their families and children to."

There was no official public response in the days that followed, and some household workers quietly left the program, fearing this signaled another defeat. Others, however, joined ACEP staff in meetings with midlevel officials charged with drafting new legislation for the administration. ACEP lawyers worked with the Labor Ministry. In late summer, the ministry announced it was submitting legislation to the Colombian



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A banner at the AMUTRAHOGAR headquarters proclaims the need for social security protection. The challenge is now to implement Law 11, expanding coverage.

Congress that would rectify the social security norms pertaining to household workers.

The draft removed the definition of day workers as self-employed, and recognized that nearly all household employees earn less than the minimum wage and could not afford the prevailing social security tax. The rate would be lowered to increase access, but in exchange, household workers would qualify for reduced benefits. ACEP lawyers were not only afraid that the benefit floor was too low to be effective, but thought the bill sent the wrong message to household workers and society: Although no longer invisible, domésticas would remain second-class citizens. After working with members of Congress, the Instituto de Seguridades Sociales, and the Labor Ministry, an agreement was hammered out to subsidize full participation for household workers through the Treasury.

One major problem remained: collecting the tax from workers and employers. For live-ins, the solution was relatively simple since their jobs were usually stable and there was a single employer who could forward the tax directly to the Instituto de Seguridades Sociales. For day workers, however, collecting partial contributions from several employers presented the Social

Security Institute with a logistical nightmare and seemed beyond the means of individual employees. The solution was to use intermediaries called *entidades agrupadoras*, either pre-existing or specially created NGOs that would collect the quotas from day workers and their employers for delivery to the Instituto.

The Bogotá Comité de Trabajadoras took an active role in this process, building support among their peers, meeting congressmen and other officials, talking to the media, and organizing a national letter-writing campaign.

In January 1988, five years of hard work by Magdalena León, the other ACEP professionals, and the working women they had come to know so well paid off. President Barco signed Law 11, opening the door wide for household workers to receive social security.

As ACEP's sponsorship of the program phased out later that year, there was much to be proud of, not all of it easily quantifiable. For many participants, the debilitating stereotype of household workers as women without self-esteem or job pride was overturned, instilling the confidence that they could change their condition. Oneida Guzmán, a 27-year-old black woman

from Cali, puts it this way: “[The ACEP program at] CAMI opened my eyes to the fact I had a real job. But first I had to learn to value my work so others would too. Part of that means learning to value ourselves as women, as human beings, and not as objects, which is what society and our condition had seemed to make us.”

The NGO professionals also learned from this process. “The program helped me see things I had overlooked in women’s domestic work,” says Isabel Ortiz, a psychologist with the Fundación Mujer y Futuro in Bucaramanga. “In helping household workers deal with their problems, I began to clarify my own family life, valuing my responsibilities as the woman of the house but also fighting a little harder for my rights as a person within the family.”

For others, the program validated issues on which they had staked their professional careers. The cofounders of Mujer y Futuro, for instance, had labored for years in near isolation and anonymity to understand the roles women play in Colombian society. Trained in sociology and human sexuality, their interests were considered too peripheral or hypothetical for mainstream academic research. Working side-by-side with the beneficiaries of the ACEP program gave them the opportunity to demonstrate vividly how women can participate in development.

Ana María Rojas, a staff lawyer at CAMI, says, “For me, it was a turning point. I began to see that my profession was related to issues of social value, and could be a tool for improving the lives of people.” In defining her commitment to social development work and explaining why she shifted the focus of her legal practice, she also provides a clue to how the ACEP program was able to make a potentially profound impact on Colombian society.

It is rare for lawyers in Cali or Bogotá, or in Europe or North America for that matter, to have marginalized groups as their clientele. Few have the interpersonal skills to work with poor women and the willingness to accept NGO wages as compensation. Fortunately, Magdalena León, through trial and error, was able to find competent lawyers and staff who did not look



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Household workers Pastora Mecias Vidal and Oneida Guzmán share chores in their employer’s home. Trabajadoras del hogar will often work 16 hours a day, 10 of which can be spent in a hot kitchen.

down on their clients but looked them straight in the eye.

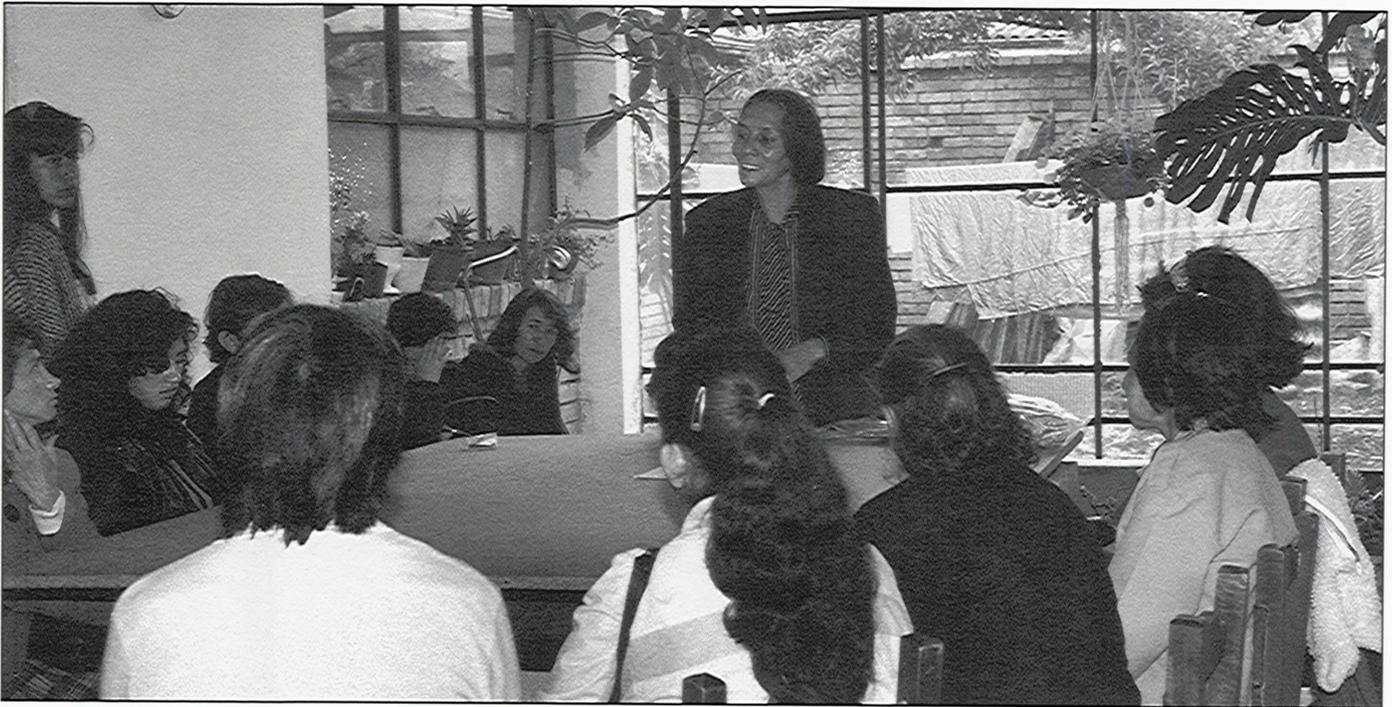
Openness on the other side of the table was also not a given. The job isolation of household workers affords little opportunity for relationships with others. Group efforts, particularly with women of higher social rank, are virtually impossible.

Yet that is exactly what happened. What made the alliance between ACEP professionals and household workers possible was the ability of the program to build on the ground both groups held in common: their gender. Nonformal courses on the role of women in society helped household workers to see how the traditional culture of machismo prevented full participation in Colombian life by half of its citizenry. The professional women developed empathy for the situation of household workers once they realized that their own labor was also undervalued. By introducing the concept of gender into the discussion of domestic service, ACEP staff were able to demonstrate that “women’s work,” whether performed in one’s own home or

someone else’s, was worthy of appreciation and respect.

This leveling process created a climate of mutual trust that fostered communication and cooperation and made ACEP’s strategy to extend social security coverage possible. This three-pronged strategy involved working directly with government officials, sensitizing public opinion through the media, and encouraging household workers to organize. The professionals had the contacts to facilitate the first two, but the household workers were indispensable for the third. All three tracks were parallel and mutually reinforcing, so if one was momentarily blocked, attention could be shunted to the other two in order to keep moving forward. In changing themselves, these two relatively small groups of highly motivated women opened opportunities for change to thousands of others.

Will that opportunity be realized? From the outset, ACEP staff were concerned with maintaining momentum over the long haul and transferring re-



Matilde Zapata, an AMUTRAHOGAR leader, directs a discussion group for household workers. Informal training in bookkeeping, legal processes, and the calculation of fringe benefits is available at the AMUTRAHOGAR offices.

sponsibility for the project to household workers themselves. In Bogotá and the other four cities, ACEP offered nonformal courses and training in such topics as the legal forms of organization, bookkeeping, and group dynamics to help the women develop the self-confidence and practical skills needed to be on their own.

For a number of reasons, the organizational progress has been uneven since ACEP formally ended its sponsorship of the program. Predictably, the first independent membership group of household workers emerged in Bogotá—where the ACEP program began in 1980. The Comité de Trabajadoras del Hogar, which has some of its roots in SINTRASEDOM, played a key role in the campaign for social security eligibility and benefited from close contacts with ACEP promoters until 1988, when the group decided to formally organize as AMUTRAHOGAR. An ex-ACEP staff member continued to provide legal advice and technical assistance for awhile, but the relationship eventually unraveled over personality conflicts.

In 1989, the IAF made a small grant to AMUTRAHOGAR to help cover basic operating and training costs while the organization got on its feet, and to

publish a newsletter for household workers. While AMUTRAHOGAR has yet to achieve the institutional capacity to act as an entidad agrupadora for collecting social security taxes, it does offer workshops to inform household workers of their basic job rights and the procedures for accessing the social security system. Members of the Asociación have also been trained to perform liquidaciones, for which they charge a nominal fee of 200 pesos, or about 30 cents. The fact that so many non-members were waiting for this service on the Sunday morning of Emma Ojeda's visit to AMUTRAHOGAR's office testifies to the unmet need that continues to bring household workers together.

Yet recently, AMUTRAHOGAR has begun to drift, grappling with the need for outside professional guidance and confused about the next step it should take as an institution. Several of its leaders are burned out from the decade-long struggle on behalf of all household workers. The crisis typifies organizations whose identities are tied to a broader social movement, which often coalesces around one or two clearly articulated goals.

Once those goals are seemingly met, the group that led the way must

make the difficult transition from a movement to a development organization in order to tackle new problems as they arise and insure that hard-won gains are not lost. Organizational consolidation requires a new style of leadership and often new leaders, as well as the honing of accounting, management, and planning skills. There is a danger that, without a broad vision for the future, AMUTRAHOGAR will settle into a social club where women like Emma Ojeda can find friendship and a sympathetic ear and a narrow range of services, rather than take the next step to become an entidad agrupadora and tackle the unresolved issues that face household workers.

Although the organizational process in Cali began later, it may soon leapfrog the accomplishments in Bogotá. When ACEP's direct funding ran out in 1988, CAMI continued to operate its branch program with a small Ford Foundation grant. The following year, the IAF joined in to help consolidate the gains among Cali's household workers, who were starting their own membership organization with CAMI's assistance. The Unión de Trabajadoras del Hogar (UTRAHOGAR) is now well on its way to autonomy,

and members are researching organizational forms to find the most suitable one before they legally incorporate. UTRAHOGAR already provides liquidación services, but the group is also engaged in drafting statutes that will enable it to become an entidad agrupadora for collecting the social security tax. Using CAMI as a sounding board for analyzing how gender and racial issues affect working women in Colombia, UTRAHOGAR is busy crafting a program to aid the household workers of Cali.

In keeping with its Colombia funding strategy of strengthening networks of grassroots support organizations, such as ACEP and CAMI, and the membership groups they work with, the IAF also made a grant in 1988 to Fundación Mujer y Futuro in Bucaramanga, created the previous year by women who had worked closely with Magdalena León. The relatively small urban population and the deeply ingrained culture of machismo have made the northern department of Santander a difficult environment in which to work. Nevertheless, Mujer y Futuro is the only piece of the former ACEP network that has established an entidad agrupadora, enrolling 60 household day workers in social security to date and collecting monthly quotas from a total of 256 employers. Recently Mujer y Futuro accompanied the birth of the 25-member Asociación de Trabajadoras del Hogar de Santander, which received legal recognition in December of last year.

In Barranquilla on the north coast, the regional office of Foro Nacional por Colombia continues to offer liquidación services as part of its larger program for poor women. But the organizational process lost steam once the drive for new social security legislation ended. As for Medellín, no one seems to know what happened to the former ACEP affiliate.

Measuring progress outside these five sites is difficult at best. Four years after Law 11 was passed, fewer than 15 percent of household workers are affiliated with social security. The lack of free time and the fear of losing one's job continue to make it difficult for women to form autonomous organizations. There is a danger that the lack of organizational wherewithal at the grassroots level and the lack of dissemination at the national level

will leave most household workers with a paper right no more bankable than the reforms of 1977.

Yet there are hopeful signs. Many of the women who have already joined social security have families, and their children are perhaps now a little less likely to join the legion of homeless youth who populate the streets of Bogotá and other major cities. Some NGO professionals who work with microenterprises also believe that the formula for extending social security to household workers can be a model for others in the informal sector, providing a new incentive to organization and new ideas for administrative collaboration between agencies of civil society and the public sector. And though progress may be slow, household workers now have organizations of their own, like UTRAHOGAR in Cali and the Santander association, to defend their interests. They represent a new generation of women who are determined to make the climb toward full participation in Colombian society by changing popular attitudes.

Anecdotal evidence suggests they are being heard. In Cali, radio broad-

casters now no longer air want ads for domésticas. They no longer ask for "household pets," but send out a call for professional household workers. ❖

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VIDEOS

Asociación de Apoyo de la Trabajadora Doméstica.

La Trabajadora Invisible.

These videos on the ACEP program are available for rent or purchase from: CINE MUJER, Avenida 25C, No. 4A-24, Apto. 202, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia.



Aspirina. Italia.

This cartoon—from a poster announcing international women's day—satirizes ingrained social attitudes. Through ACEP, "women's work" has gained new respect, and its meaning is no longer defined solely by traditional machismo culture.

Protest to Programs

Neighborhood Associations in a Brazilian Municipality

Bruce W. Ferguson

Conventional wisdom about neighborhood organization in Latin America holds that community groups are locked in a never-ending war with city hall to get vital public works and services. The reasons for this widespread mistrust of local government are well-founded. Practicing the politics of clientelism, those in power have channeled government funds to their friends, relatives, and supporters rather than to improved community services. Public officials have often ruled by fiat rather than dialogue, relying on coercion and the selective distribution of favors to co-opt neighborhood leaders and manipulate popular movements.

The revival of democracy and recent moves to decentralize national government power in many parts of Latin America have encouraged a new kind of relationship between local authorities and citizens. Through "participatory administration," municipal government and neighborhood leaders jointly fashion community-oriented programs and generate the votes necessary to maintain them. This new style of grassroots politics transcends patronage, actively engaging local people who once waited for solutions to arrive "by parachute" from city hall.

This synergy can help stretch the meager financial resources available to local governments in Latin America; for instance, per capita revenues in Brazilian municipalities average

In planting a community garden, a poor neighborhood helps sow the seeds of change at city hall.

less than \$5. Even when funds were available, public agencies have often lacked the detailed information and the credibility needed to operate effectively in poor neighborhoods. Community groups and the non-governmental organizations that work with them can fill these information gaps and mobilize voluntary labor to extend the reach and reduce the cost of public services.

This article examines how an electoral alliance in the Brazilian municipality of Cambé between a reform mayor and neighborhood groups has weakened the strangle hold of clientelism, strengthened community organization, and encouraged residents to move beyond protest to participate in designing and implementing development programs.

Located within the greater metropolitan area of Londrina—the third largest city in southern Brazil, with a population of 500,000—the region around Cambé was settled and grew prosperous as a result of labor-

intensive coffee cultivation. In the 1970s, multiple forces joined to drive small growers and farm workers off the land, including subsidized credit for capital-intensive agriculture, laws that discouraged hired labor, a glut on the international market that caused the Brazilian government to subsidize the destruction of "excess" coffee bushes, several disastrous freezes, and a boom in West European demand for soy oil. Mechanized soybean and wheat farms and extensive cattle ranching increased dramatically, displacing over a million people from rural areas in the north of Paraná State where Cambé is located. This *éxodo rural*, or rural exodus, had disastrous social consequences: Many heavily populated, prosperous rural municipalities became stagnant backwaters, while metropolitan areas were flooded with poor ex-farmers lacking job skills.

Cambé was inundated too. Its population increased by nearly 60 percent during the 1980s, from some 54,000 to 86,000 residents. Most of this growth occurred in informal settlements called *loteamentos* that lacked basic infrastructure such as water and sewers, and threatened to overwhelm the municipality. Fortunately, both local government leaders and a neighborhood movement arose to meet the challenge. The three oldest associations in Cambé's poorest neighborhoods—Jardim Tupy, Santo Amaro, and Novo Bandeirantes—led the way, shedding light on what can be ac-



Residents of Jardim Tupy in the Brazilian municipality of Cambé, cultivate their community garden. Participating families have been able to improve their diets and increase incomes in this once "disreputable" neighborhood. Today, Jardim Tupy is the model for 14 other community gardens in the region.

completed when citizens' groups and concerned municipal leaders work closely together.

Jardim Tupy

Jardim Tupy is Cambé's poorest neighborhood. Ninety-six percent of its families earn less than \$150 per month, compared with 80 percent in Cambé proper. Located on the wrong side of the railroad tracks from the city center, the neighborhood sprawls down steep hills until it reaches the coffee fields that provide seasonal labor for much of the loteamento's 3,000 residents. Ten years ago, the neighborhood was notoriously seedy. Winter rains carved enormous pits in dirt streets, at times making them impassable even for emergency vehicles. Summer winds whipped up clouds of dust that caused respiratory ailments and

stained people's faces and possessions the color of rust. The neighborhood lacked water, sewers, schools, basic health care, and other infrastructure and services. Jardim Tupy's reputation for thievery, prostitution, and violence made its residents virtually unemployable.

The protest movements that had swept the nation toward the end of military rule in the 1970s eventually stimulated ferment in Jardim Tupy. Residents held street meetings to discuss the lack of basic public services. Those most concerned mounted loudspeakers on trucks and drove throughout the city, venting their grievances. In 1980, Abel Alves Feitosa and a handful of others formed a neighborhood association. Christening it "Democracy and Freedom," they attempted to meet with the mayor to discuss the neighborhood's problems.



Abel Alves Feitosa, founder of the neighborhood association "Democracy and Freedom," is influential because he listens to his neighbors.

The mayor typified the Brazilian tradition of clientelism. He ruled by command rather than consulting advisors or residents, administered by parceling out favors rather than developing programs, and politicked through *festas*, or popular celebrations, and personal contacts rather than encouraging neighborhood organization. He viewed the poor of Jardim Tupy with disdain and refused to consider any request for infrastructure or public services. The leaders of Jardim Tupy focused the local media's attention on the situation, but the mayor remained

adamant. Despite the gains achieved by confrontation, Jardim Tupy's leaders soon grew convinced that the association's future existence depended on sustained social change, and that required a change in city hall.

After interviewing the four mayoral candidates running in the November 1982 elections, the association's leaders concluded that only Luiz Carlos Hauly was "committed to the common good." Hauly's staff developed a platform in consultation with Cambé's incipient community movement and also agreed to Jardim Tupy's demand for land to plant a

community garden. Hauly's garnering of 97 percent of the vote in Jardim Tupy and substantial majorities in Cambé's other poor neighborhoods proved key to winning the election. Shortly after taking office, he persuaded a local landowner to grant the use of a 1,000-square-meter plot in Jardim Tupy so that "Democracy and Freedom" could establish its garden. This garden has played a pivotal role in the evolution of the association and has become a model for 14 other community gardens in Cambé. Some benefits were immediate as participating families improved their diets and earned new income. Others were unexpected and perhaps of greater long-term importance. In organizing to make the garden work, the people of Jardim Tupy organized themselves.

At first, the neighborhood association attempted to organize collective cultivation by community residents. But quarrels over how to work the land and divide the produce resulted in poor crops. The association then subdivided the land and distributed plots to the eight families who had worked hardest. For awhile, vandalism by nonmembers was a problem. The association responded by inviting new families to join, and cultivate their own plots. By 1985, the municipality had arranged with the landowner to increase the garden size to 8,000 square meters, which was subdivided into 162 parcels, enough for approximately 25 percent of the loteamento's families. Every family in Jardim Tupy was eligible to participate, although they were required to cultivate their own plot and follow the neighborhood association's rules to keep it. In practice, the amount of land has been large enough to support the number of families willing to garden it actively.

In its eight years of existence, the community garden has produced good and bad yields, depending largely on how effectively residents have organized their own efforts and lobbied for agricultural inputs and services from local government. The garden has been a handy yardstick for teaching people the importance of working together and showing them the political strength of sticking together. For instance, a natural spring supplies the site with abundant water, but a pump was needed to irrigate all the plots. The association raised the money for the pump and successfully lobbied the municipal government to pay for the electricity to operate it, and for access to fertilizer, seeds, and other inputs, encouraging awareness that "there is strength in union."

The neighborhood association's first victory occurred later that year, in the aftermath of a tragic accident.

adamant. When Jardim Tupy's leaders traveled to Brasilia to join national protests organized by a broad coalition of groups in 1981, they met an even more hostile reception. An army battalion blocked their march to the capitol building by threatening to open fire.

The neighborhood association's first victory occurred later that year, in the aftermath of a tragic accident. A truck carrying farmworkers back from the fields overturned, killing four residents of Jardim Tupy and maiming a half-dozen others. The neighborhood association organized protests, sued the farm company, and, with the aid of a lawyer involved in the local community movement, won a settlement enabling the victims' families to buy plots of land and the materials to build houses. Buoyed by this victory, the association intensified its organizing efforts, gaining members and political mo-

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they have to offer us, and we expect them to deliver." In addition to Feitosa, several other neighborhood leaders have been formed by this experience. Among them is Neuza Pereira, who first got involved in community work as secretary of the community garden, and who would play a key role in developing the infant health program described later in this article.

The spur to consolidate and expand Cambé's neighborhood associations, including Jardim Tupy's, into effective organizations came from the new mayoral administration. During the first two years of his term, Haully was absorbed in the tasks of clearing up the fiscal and administrative chaos left by his predecessor and applying to various state and federal agencies for new sources of project funding. When funds for public works and services became available in 1984, Haully established a rule that profoundly influenced the neighborhood movement in Cambé: The better organized the neighborhood, the more investment it would receive.

The number of community groups exploded from 3 to 21, covering all of Cambé. The better-organized neighborhoods received dramatic increases in public goods and services during the next four years. In Jardim Tupy, the municipality paved 70 percent of the roads, extended water and electricity throughout the area, added grades five through eight to the primary school, installed sewers to half the houses, put in public telephones, and provided a day care center and a nursery school.

The community garden and the enthusiastic participation it generated in the neighborhood association soon caught the eye of another program that would further accelerate Jardim Tupy's organization. As the garden gained momentum, the Catholic Church in Brazil began



A community health worker in Jardim Tupy, weighing a child, participates in UNICEF's "Pastoral of the Child," a program aimed at reducing deaths among infants and young children.

working with UNICEF to introduce the "Pastoral of the Child," a health program for reducing mortality rates among infants and young children. Because of its "high level of community organization and extreme poverty," according to the local bishop, the Catholic Church selected Jardim Tupy to be the second neighborhood in Brazil to participate in a program that would eventually include more than 4,000 neighborhoods nationwide.

In July and August of 1984, a nun accompanied the secretary of the community garden, Neuza Pereira, door to door to ask the people of Jardim Tupy if they wanted the program. Virtually everyone did. In September, a group of residents surveyed all 600 families in the neigh-

borhood to develop a socioeconomic profile of conditions affecting the health of children in the area. In December, 23 local women volunteered to become health extensionists for their blocks. Working without pay, highly committed volunteers were trained in five areas: prenatal exams of pregnant women, the importance of breast-feeding, vaccinations, rehydration therapy, and how to monitor and record weights and other key medical indicators for children through the age of five.

At first, health workers had to visit families at home to explain the program and persuade them to participate. Today, people visit the workers not only for advice about infant health but also on a range of problems—from adult illness to unemployment. Health workers have become an informal reference bureau that either steers people to appropriate public or private agencies or intercedes directly with those organizations. Although they are unpaid, 22 of the original group of 33 have continued this work during the past 6 years for "the sheer pleasure," as one of them put it, "of seeing a child grow up well and knowing that you have played a part." Other local women have been trained to replace those who dropped out. A doctor who staffs the neighborhood clinic run by the municipality finds the results of their work visible in the children, noting that they are "healthier and look better cared for than those of other poor neighborhoods around here." This clinic has hired Pereira, who now heads the Pastoral of the Child in Jardim Tupy, as one of its two nurses, helping to knit the two programs together.

Jardim Tupy is no longer the notorious slum of ten years ago. It remains very poor but it enjoys greater access to public infrastructure and services, a relatively high level of infant health, and improved levels of nutrition. Res-



Above: The health clinic, community center, and paved playground of Santo Amaro. With the support of a participatory local government, the residents of Santo Amaro successfully lobbied city hall for a broad range of public works and services. Through revenue-generating projects such as weekend dances, sporting events, and plays, the neighborhood is now able to stand on its own when municipal budgets are tight. Below: On any given weekend, 600 to 800 citizens attend the local dances, generating income to be used for community services.

idents credit these improvements to the close cooperation among the neighborhood association, the Pastoral of the Child, the local Catholic parish, and a thaw in their relationship with local government. Unlike earlier administrations that ignored community groups, municipal department heads now make it a point to attend neighborhood association and Pastoral of the Child meetings when they are invited. In turn, community leaders are well received at city hall.

Experience with politics and the operation of projects, such as the community garden and the Pastoral of the Child, have also taught neighborhood leaders an appreciation for the limits of local government. This awareness tempers their frustration when demands remain unmet because of fiscal constraints, and underlines the importance of self-help initiatives. Lead-



ers often remind residents that being mayor, like being president of the neighborhood association or the community garden, is difficult and that responsibility for improving conditions rests with local people as much as government. Most people would agree with Abel Alves Feitosa's view, however, that "if politicians want to

rise in the world, they have to begin by doing something here first."

Santo Amaro

The second neighborhood to be examined is Santo Amaro, a flat expanse extending from a local industrial park to the highway leaving Cambé for Londrina. Primarily populated by the families of factory workers, most of its 8,500 people are poor, but better off than the residents of Jardim Tupy or Novo Bandeirantes. With its modern community center, child care facility, health clinic, police station, public phones, paved streets, street lights, and numerous sports fields, Santo Amaro resembles a middle-class area—although none of this infrastructure existed ten years ago.

While Jardim Tupy is the best organized area in Cambé, the neighbor-

hood association of Santo Amaro has come closest to solving the greatest organizational problem plaguing community groups: lack of their own resources. Encouraged by the nationwide protest movements of the late 1970s and early 1980s, residents of Santo Amaro formed a neighborhood association in 1981 and also petitioned city hall for better services. They met the same stone wall Jardim Tupy had encountered a year earlier, but unlike them, soon disbanded.

Mayor Haulý's decision to peg infrastructure investments to the level of neighborhood organization stimulated some of Santo Amaro's residents to revive the association. Led by its president, who would later win election to the municipal council, members of the local Catholic youth group took charge and successfully lobbied city hall for a broad range of public works and services.

One of these projects, the construction of a community center capable of holding 1,000 people, opened the door for independent fund-raising. Income from weekend dances in the center, which regularly attract 600 to 800 people, has allowed the association to develop a network of 5 commissions and 14 other bodies to provide a range of services.

The sports commission pays umpires' salaries and organizes soccer tournaments year round. The cultural commission stages two or three plays annually and organizes a parade for Carnival. The social assistance commission helps support a municipal child care center, distributes milk from municipal and federal government programs, and provides notebooks to needy schoolchildren. The health commission works with the local municipal clinic, while the security commission lobbies for better police service and promotes neighborhood



Representatives of Santo Amaro's social assistance commission present a check to the staff of the local child care center.

watch programs to combat crime. The 14 other groups receiving association support range from mothers' clubs to a community garden. All of these activities are funded and coordinated through the association at a semi-annual "community council" of representatives from participating groups.

Because of its resource base and many activities, Santo Amaro's neighborhood organization is better able to stand on its own when fiscal shortfalls paralyze city hall. As one resident put it, "Our first attempt to organize fell apart when the mayor ignored us, but now we are self-reliant enough to continue our programs even when the municipality has no money."

The municipal elections of 1988 proved to be a referendum on the reform administration of Mayor Haulý, and increased Santo Amaro's influence in local government. The president of the neighborhood association, Waldemar Ribeiro da Cunha, ran successfully for a seat on the 11-member city council, where he was joined by three other colleagues from the community association movement. Each continues to work actively in the neighborhood that pro-

vides his base of electoral support. For instance, da Cunha continues to attend meetings of the neighborhood association that he once headed and constantly helps Santo Amaro's residents solve problems, mediating between citizens and municipal agencies. Da Cunha's political clout has helped make Santo Amaro the best-equipped low-income neighborhood in Cambé. Together, the four "community movement" council members have increased the influence of neighborhood associations and helped block a return to the traditional politics of clientelism.

However, the key victory in 1988 occurred in the mayoral race. As Brazilian law prohibits

mayors from serving two consecutive terms, Haulý groomed a successor, José do Carmo Garcia, to carry on his policies. Garcia's running mate was the lawyer who had helped Jardim Tupy win a settlement for the farmworker victims of the truck accident in 1981. Running against them was the former mayor whose administration had typified Brazil's clientelist tradition. Although the ex-mayor had begun to use the rhetoric of participation to suit the times, a historian of Cambé politics noted that "he basically remained unchanged, running a campaign based on personality." Piling up huge pluralities turned out by neighborhood associations in Cambé's loteamentos, Garcia won a decisive victory in his first campaign for public office. Participatory administration would continue for at least another four years.

Novo Bandeirantes

The third neighborhood examined here, Novo Bandeirantes, illustrates how a neighborhood association can take the lead in designing and implementing public programs. Located



Members of the neighborhood association of Novo Bandeirantes survey area residents to find which new social programs will best meet their needs. Input from home visits to over 1,200 families led the mayor to reorient municipal services.

astride the highway to Londrina, where most of its residents work in services and commerce, Novo Bandeirantes has experienced a population explosion in recent years and now totals more than 16,000 people. Its neighborhood movement also grew out of the protest movements of the 1970s and benefited from support by the local Catholic parish. Haul's election in 1982 spurred the neighborhood to organize itself and lobby city hall, leading to paved streets, street lighting, installation of public telephones, a community garden, a health clinic, and a campaign to clear trash from vacant lots.

Believing this was only a first step, the parish priest, an Italian missionary who had played a key role in organizing the community, met with the president of the neighborhood association to plan a more active approach to grassroots development that went

beyond simply pressuring local government for more services. In 1986, they called a meeting with the mayor, municipal council members, and local residents to propose a socioeconomic survey to map out new programs targeted at community needs.

With assistance from the municipal secretary of health, they drew up a list of 52 questions, which 120 people from the neighborhood association and various church groups would ask during home visits with 1,200 families. They conducted the survey in December 1986 and tabulated the results early the next year with computer assistance from the municipality. Some of the results surprised everyone: Despite an extensive prior electrification program, 5 percent of the households still had no electricity, and an unexpectedly high portion of them—10 percent—had no bathrooms of any sort. Other results con-

firmed impressions already held by the neighborhood's leaders and the municipal administration: Twenty-five percent of the children lacked common vaccinations for polio, tuberculosis, and other diseases, and 47 percent of the families had problems with land titles.

In March, the neighborhood association called a follow-up meeting to discuss the results with the mayor, municipal department heads, and residents. Each problem uncovered by the survey was aired in a common search for solutions. Residents suggested, for instance, that city hall could tighten building code enforcement, while the neighborhood could organize a publicity campaign to increase awareness of how sanitation was linked to health. The municipal secretary of health then recalled a colleague informing him of a federal program to install bathrooms, and offered to apply for funding. When the lack of electricity in 5 percent of the households was revealed, the mayor noted that the electrification campaign had been shut down only because coverage was thought to be complete, and that he could reactivate it.

Using the survey results and ideas generated at the meeting, the neighborhood association and local government agencies drew up a plan of attack. The municipality applied for federal funding to build 400 latrines, while the neighborhood association located and registered the households that needed them. While waiting for funds to arrive, the association began planning an ambitious health campaign to show how latrines and vaccinations protected everyone from contagious diseases.

The vaccination problem, in particular, illustrates the kind of situation in which neighborhood associations can have a dramatic impact. The municipality had opened a clinic in Novo Bandeirantes some time before, and amply stocked it with vaccines.

Yet the survey revealed that many children had not been vaccinated for a variety of unanticipated reasons. Many mothers thought the oral polio vaccine protected against all diseases. Working mothers sometimes had no one to take their children to the clinic during the hours it was open. Others lacked documentation and believed that excluded them from eligibility for the vaccinations. The association and the secretary of health developed a slide show to clear up these misunderstandings and held a series of meetings for mothers in which a nurse from the municipal health department explained the importance of vaccination and how the local clinic worked. By the end of 1987, vaccination rates had shot from 42 percent to more than 100 percent of the World Health Organization standard for effective coverage. Without the survey, the access to neighborhood people, and the volunteer labor provided by the association, the local government's original vaccination program would have failed without anyone ever discovering why.

Although official documentation is unnecessary for receiving vaccinations in Brazil, it frequently blocks people from acquiring other government services and employment. To solve the documentation problem revealed by the survey, the neighborhood association arranged for federal police officers to visit Novo Bandeirantes on four weekends with the cameras and laminating equipment necessary to make official identification cards, resulting in the issuance of 42 photo IDs.

By the end of 1987, funds to construct latrines had arrived. The municipality used them to manufacture cement blocks and other construction materials and arranged with the state department of health to supply faucets, toilets, and sinks. To be eligible for the program, families had to contribute the labor of one person on

weekends, but twenty members from the neighborhood association and church groups did the bulk of the construction, supervised by a municipal foreman. On weekends during the next year and a half, they constructed 350 bathrooms. They also took the opportunity to teach recipient families hygienic practices, to clean up debris in yards, and to cap open septic tanks.

Unlike traditional public works programs, this one was intended to

hood association knew that this thorny issue would require considerable resources and outside political support to resolve. When Novo Bandeirantes was developed as an illegal subdivision, the owner of the land sold plots using contract forms that did not convey legal title. Many of the original buyers had resold the land using the same method. Others had moved out because of marital or other problems without leaving any documentation to the subsequent oc-

By the end of 1987, vaccination rates had shot from 42 percent to more than 100 percent of the World Health Organization standard for effective coverage.

inform beneficiaries and change their attitudes. This comprehensiveness required an enormous amount of unpaid time and effort from neighborhood association members to succeed. As the president of the association explains it, "What motivated us was the belief that we were solving the health problem of the *entire* community. Above all, we were working to change people's minds by showing families that they could help themselves, that they had to act if they wanted things to improve because it wasn't just the government's problem. The municipal programs I know of where city hall just put in the bathrooms, without caring what happened after construction crews left, haven't improved public health much, if at all."

By 1989, the latrine program had accomplished most of its objectives, and association members again looked to the survey results to decide what to do next. Lack of proper land titles ranked as the number one concern of residents, but the neighbor-

hood association knew that this thorny issue would require considerable resources and outside political support to resolve. When Novo Bandeirantes was developed as an illegal subdivision, the owner of the land sold plots using contract forms that did not convey legal title. Many of the original buyers had resold the land using the same method. Others had moved out because of marital or other problems without leaving any documentation to the subsequent oc-

cupant. To further complicate matters, the original owner of the land had died, and his heirs lived in São Paulo. This tangled situation was an insurmountable obstacle to all but a handful of the most persistent residents, who had gained title to their property with great effort and at exorbitant cost. Although clearing up the area's land title problem represented a daunting task, the neighborhood association could count on the full support of city hall because two municipal council members owed their election to overwhelming pluralities from Novo Bandeirantes. Backed by local government, neighborhood leaders entered into agreements with the heirs of the former owner and with the land registrar to expedite title transfers and lower their cost. The association obtained funding from state government for residents too poor to pay even the reduced fees. With the system in place, community leaders, a municipal council member, and the registrar held

15 Friday night meetings to explain the process to residents, followed by 15 Sunday afternoon meetings to register their titles. The mayor delivered the first 130 titles at a celebration in February 1990 to further publicize the program.

Just as Jardim Tupy's community garden inspired many other community gardens throughout Cambé, word of Novo Bandeirantes's public health and land-titling programs has spread, and other neighborhood associations in Cambé are copying them. When local government is a partner rather than an impediment, successful neighborhood programs become a bank of ideas for community groups to draw on.

A Sum Greater Than the Parts

The experience of Cambé shows that cooperation between local reform governments and neighborhood associations can overcome clientelism and generate new resources for grassroots development unavailable to either party acting alone. The president of the Novo Bandeirantes association explains: "Many community groups assume they always have to fight city hall. They spend all their time complaining, so they never get around to building something. That costs them credibility and gets little from the local government. Even when something happens, it is usually only an aspirin. By electing two council members and working closely with a reform administration, we were able to get our neighborhood on its feet."

This sentiment is echoed by the secretary of the mayor's office, who has worked with community groups for ten years. He notes: "Neighborhood associations understandably have been afraid of the way traditional politicians have tried to control people, but sometimes this leads them into the error of believing a



The showpiece investments of Mayor Hauly's predecessor, such as illuminating this state highway leading to Cambé, failed to motivate self-help community efforts.

fight is the only way to avoid co-optation. If they cooperate, they can solve the problems of their community and politically strengthen the position of responsive municipal officials at the same time."

The experience of Jardim Tupy, Santo Amaro, and Novo Bandeirantes suggests what local governments and neighborhood associations can expect from each other and what each does best. First, neighborhood associations provide entrée to and information about poor areas, helping local government use its resources more wisely. Municipal governments often have sketchy or inaccurate information on life in poor neighborhoods. Thus, the lack of bathrooms and electricity revealed in the Novo Bandeirantes household survey surprised municipal administrators who had suspended or failed

to apply for programs to solve these problems, believing coverage to be nearly universal. The Cambé planning department also discovered that the streets it planned to pave first were not those most important for residents, which led to regular consultations with neighborhood groups before carrying out future construction projects.

Without this information, local government risks both wasting money on investments irrelevant to the vast majority and losing the next election. Mayor Hauly's clientelist predecessor spent large sums during his term of office on showy projects such as illuminating the state highway into town. Hauly's participatory administration shifted investment to health clinics, child care centers, neighborhood streets, water, electricity, and other basic public services for which residents hungered. Not surprisingly, the clientelist ex-mayor lost the 1988 mayoral elections to Hauly's successor.

Second, neighborhood associations can mobilize local labor so that limited municipal resources can be stretched further. Thus, the 33 health workers of the Jardim Tupy Pastoral of the Child monitor virtually all children and pregnant women in this poor neighborhood. They devote endless hours to weighing babies, explaining the importance of breastfeeding, teaching rehydration therapy, and carrying out other activities related to the health of infants and small children. Their work allows the local municipal clinic, which is staffed by a doctor and two nurses, to concentrate on providing backup support for seriously ill patients and on medical emergencies. Similarly, the neighborhood associations of Novo Bandeirantes took the lead in documenting and solving the area's health problems, while city hall provided the essential funds and expertise to make the association's efforts work.

Health, housing, and recreation activities seem especially promising areas for strong local participation to maximize public resources. The Cambé experience also suggests that active community organizations may be the best, if not the only, way for these public services to reach the poorest neighborhoods.

In turn, assistance from local government can play an essential role in stimulating and strengthening neighborhood groups. As the president of Jardim Tupy's association points out, "Attendance by the mayor and other public officials at our meetings is a great thing in itself and gives our organization credibility. It tells people that our work is serious and encourages them to participate."

Eventually, the most sophisticated and effective neighborhood groups move beyond demand-making into self-help projects. When a fiscal crisis dries up public funds, these activities allow neighborhood associations to weather the storm and continue providing minimal services. Local government, however, cannot realistically expect community self-help efforts to replace vital public goods and services. Only local government has the means to construct large infrastructure projects such as roads, water, sewers, electricity, and health clinics. Active participation by the poor ensures that these investments reach those who need them most.

Cambé's experience in community participation has been exemplary, but how likely is it to recur elsewhere? The evidence from other parts of Brazil is encouraging. The grassroots movement of which Cambé is a part spans two decades—seeds planted in the mid-1970s flowered with the return to democracy in the 1980s.

Two early examples, in particular, can be singled out as precursors. The first, Boa Esperança, is a small rural municipality in the state of Espírito Santo whose land had been consoli-

dated into large estates used for cattle ranching and held for investment. During the late 1970s, the municipal administration initiated a neighborhood planning process that stimulated community involvement, culminating in programs to lease land from absentee owners for small-scale farming and to generate effective support services by reforming local fiscal and administrative systems. The second example comes from the more-urban municipality of Lajes in Santa Catarina. A reform administration stimulated widespread community organization and pioneered self-help housing and neighborhood garden projects before a clientelist mayor won the subsequent election and dismantled the programs.

Mayor Hauly of Cambé visited Lajes shortly after his election in 1982 to see what he could learn from its experience. He says, "What I found in Lajes was very positive. We based many of our initiatives on its programs for poor neighborhoods. But we also learned from its mistakes. They broke with the middle class and lost the next election. We tried to motivate participation to improve services across a broad spectrum in Cambé, and won the next election with support from much of the better-off downtown districts as well as from the people living in the loteamentos on the outskirts."

While Cambé's mayor was using the lessons of Lajes to initiate new programs and form a coalition to sustain them, leaders in the loteamentos were also tapping their experience to start neighborhood associations and form them into a movement. Abel Alves Feitosa, president of the association in Jardim Tupy, for instance, had organized community groups in a small rural municipality in Paraná before migrating to Cambé.

The movement they formed and its alliance with the new reform mayor reflected the second phase of partici-

patory administration in Brazil. By the 1980s, the community movement nationwide was moving from an ideology of *assistencialismo*, the effort to leverage greater handouts, to a belief in greater self-reliance based on direct experience gained from organizing self-help housing, neighborhood gardens, and community councils. Perhaps the best publicized example is in Toledo, Paraná, where between 1983 and 1988 the municipal government took the slogan of Boa Esperança—"the community is in charge"—and used it to inspire formation of neighborhood associations, start a series of community industries, and network them through a community council that had input into the municipality's annual budget process.

Despite these encouraging signs, the trend toward participatory administration is not universal, and its initial results are mixed. Hauly's administration in Cambé, which won awards for its participatory health and education programs, has performed among the best. As other municipal and community leaders take advantage of the new opportunities afforded by the return to democracy and learn from each other, their experience will deepen, helping citizens put aside the legacy of centuries of clientelism to find solutions to their problems in themselves and their neighbors. ❖

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Cultural Energy & Grassroots & Development

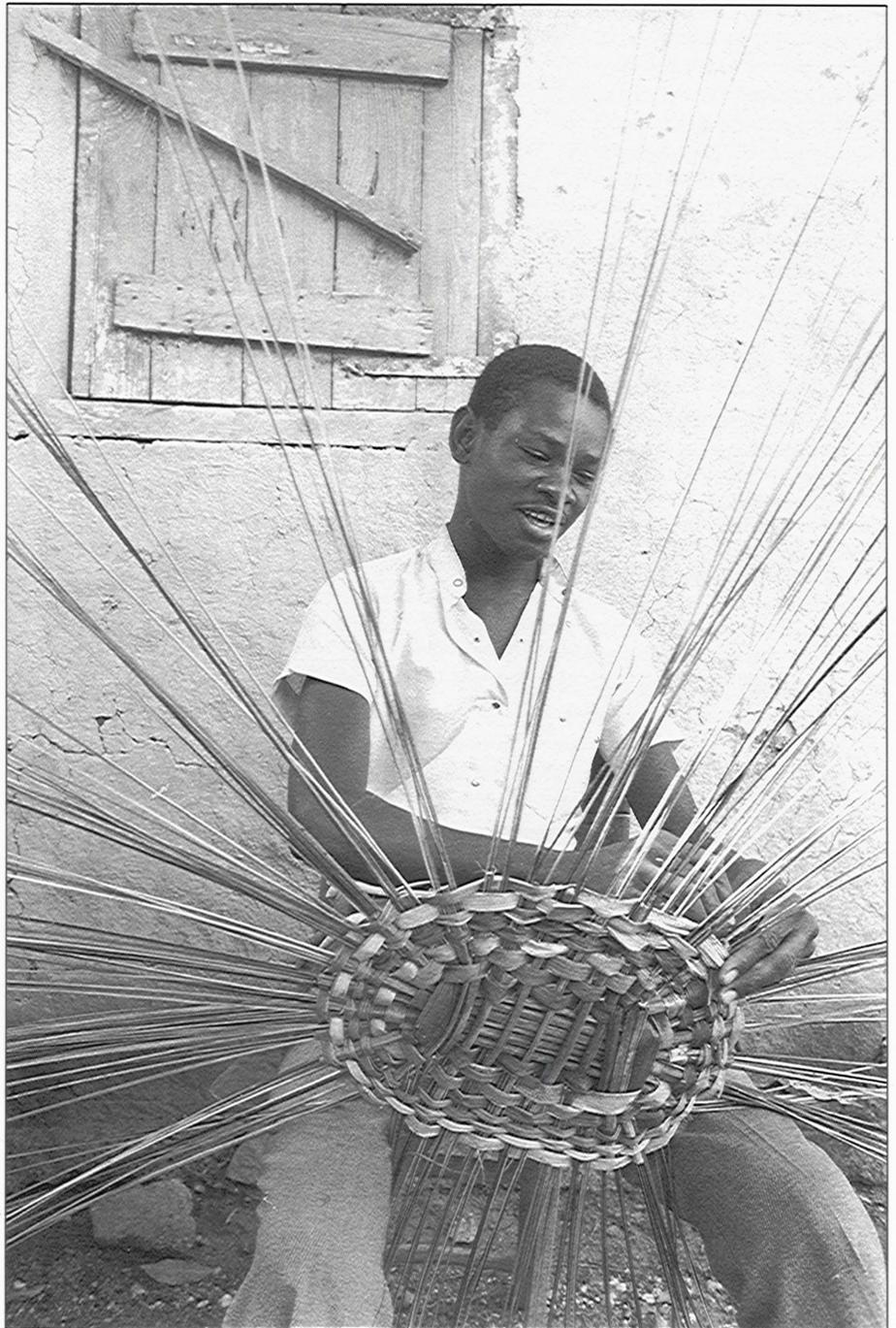
*Is the culture of
marginalized populations
an anachronism to be cast
aside or an opportunity
to be seized?*

Charles D. Kley Meyer

"Culture is like a tree," says Mariano López, a Tzotzil Indian leader from the municipality of Chamula in Chiapas, Mexico. "If the green branches—a people's language, legends, and customs—are carelessly lopped off, then the roots that bind people to their place on the earth and to each other also begin to wither. The wind and rain and the elements carry the topsoil away; the land becomes desert."

More than 2,000 kilometers to the south, along the lush green coast of Ecuador, Afro-Ecuadorian folklorist Juan García echoes this urgency and, in so doing, offers a solution. "Cultural rescue," he says, "is impossible without development at the community level. And the converse is also true."

Both of these testimonies imply that cultural expression, in all its richness and variety, is not just a by-product of how a society organizes its social and productive relationships; it



Mitchell Denburg

is a vital instrument for generating the insights and energy needed to transform those relationships. In his theory of "the conservation and mutation of social energy," Albert Hirschman (1983) has argued that grassroots projects—including many which seem to have failed—work cumulatively to generate the commitment and skills that poor people can rechannel into new and more-ambitious efforts of development.

The present article builds on case material reported in more than a decade of *Grassroots Development* publications and examines the broader IAF experience to see how cultural energy is key for mobilizing the social action that drives successful grassroots projects. Cultural energy is a prime motivator of social action among individuals, groups, communities, and even nations. It is generated by common people through everyday creative expression—in work and in "entertainment," which often overlap. It is also galvanized by the concerted efforts of cultural activists who consciously use it as a development tool. They realize that the presence or absence of cultural energy can make the difference in whether a project is launched, sustained, and expanded. Cultural energy is a powerful force in the creation and reinforcement of group solidarity, organizational efficacy, participation, and volunteer spirit—all of which are basic ingredients of successful grassroots development initiatives.

Fewer than 10 percent of the Foundation's 3,307 grants during the past 21 years have focused on culture as a potential tool for development. This sample is too small to form a generic blueprint for project implementation, but it offers funders, government agencies, and local organizers crucial insights into the grassroots development process and how it can be strengthened. Before that can happen, however, certain misconceptions about the nature of culture and development must be overturned.

The Search for an Alternative Development Paradigm

Technicians and planners staffing government agencies and private institutions have long tended to over-



Mac Chapin

Opposite: Haitian artisan weaves a soleil, or sunburst wall hanging, for a craft revival project. Above: Two Kuna Indian girls from a village near the San Blas Preserve wear traditional mola blouses, headwraps, and gold nose-rings.

look the positive linkage between culture and development, between tradition and change. When the resource base fueling the world's industrial economy seemed inexhaustible, it was possible to think of "development" in mechanistic terms, as a problem of scale rather than value. Technology was a skeleton key for unlocking "the wealth of nations," and both capital goods and the institutional framework for using them were presumed to be one more set of consumer products for export, pouring off an assembly line in the North. By the late 1960s that optimism had dimmed, and many development theorists blamed the lack of progress on backward-looking traditional cultures.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, this criticism was frequently internalized, particularly in countries with sharp ethnic divisions dating back to the European conquest. Cultural homogenization that expressed the values and needs of modernizing urban elites was thought to be a precondition for economic growth, and local cultural and social differences were thought of as obstacles to be overcome rather than opportunities to be seized. Whether market-oriented or state-led, modernization

was a regime to be imported from abroad and imposed from above.

The limitations of this approach were exposed during the 1980s by the debt crisis in developing countries and by a looming worldwide environmental crisis. A search is now underway for alternative methods to spur "sustainable development," in which long-term economic growth is presumed to depend on more careful management rather than on more intensive exploitation of resources. This requires a new way of thinking about problems that emphasizes diversity and seeks to tap the strengths of indigenous cultures and local communities, to see them as rich repositories of knowledge that has been distilled through generations of hands-on experience.

Recently, anthropologist Alaka Wali (1990) examined the experience of two IAF-funded development projects among the Aymara and Mapuche peoples in Chile. In examining these programs, Wali identified two urgent reasons for supporting indigenous local cultures. First, when people are uprooted from the countryside by ill-considered public policy, they lose not only their land but their cultural roots, that mixture of values, social relationships, and skills which forms the bedrock of their productivity. They are likely to flock to cities

where, unequipped to support themselves, they are in danger of becoming a permanent underclass, further burdening a national society already unable to provide basic social services for its urban population.

Second, indigenous people may be the most effective stewards of the fragile ecosystems they often inhabit. When the Aymara in the Norte Grande range of the Chilean Andes organized to protect their traditional agricultural water rights from pollution by nitrate mining, they affirmed their intention that the land remain livable long after its mineral wealth was exhausted. In taking this long-range view, they protected their livelihoods and the watershed supplying the lower valleys and coastal cities of this arid region.

Generations of social and economic oppression and the concentration of power in nation states have made it unlikely that many indigenous peoples will save their land without outside assistance. Nearly two decades of grassroots development experience confirms Wali's contention that this aid is wasted unless it builds upon and strengthens the patterns of community organization which form the core of ethnic identity. This means the community must be given options that allow local people to set the agenda for their own development and to select technologies that reinforce rather than undermine community cohesion.

The Riddle of the Kuna

Nowhere has the hopeful identification between the fate of indigenous culture and the environment been more pronounced than among the Kuna Indians of Panama. With assistance from the IAF and other donors in the early 1980s, the Kuna created a park for scientific research that demonstrated their ability to select useful ideas and techniques from Western culture and adapt them to their own needs.

The park, which began as a roadblock to prevent colonists from encroaching on tribal land, evolved into an ambitious proposal for decoding Kuna lore about their ecosystem in order to discover methods of sustainable agriculture suitable for tropical forests. In reporting on that experience,



Julia Weisse-Vargas

Above: *The Feria Educativa performs a traditional dance to "break the ice" in a Quechua village of Chimborazo, Ecuador. Below: Feria member Paulina Paca (middle) asks a village member how she would resolve a sociodrama about a local problem.*



Julia Weisse-Vargas

political scientist Patrick Breslin (1986) believed it was the Kuna's secure sense of identity—their knowledge of who they were and where they came from—that permitted this experiment to go forward. Breslin also offered it as a model for the kind of self-confidence required in *any* successful grassroots development project.

It is disturbing, then, to learn that traditional Kuna culture may be vanishing despite one of the most energetic and self-conscious efforts by any Indian group in the hemisphere to control the process of change (Chapin, forthcoming). Anthropologist Mac Chapin notes how the introduction of new skills needed to coexist



Julia Weise-Vargas

Above: After the performance, village leaders discuss their community's needs with Feria member María Ajitimbay (second from right). Below: The Feria's work inspires community development projects such as this poncho-weaving enterprise in El Lirio.



Julia Weise-Vargas

with Panama's political and economic systems has slowly unraveled the tie between education and traditional work patterns, disrupting the transmission of beliefs to the young and undermining the ancestral view of how the world works and the proper place of human beings within that world.

The Kuna began setting up Western-style schools more than a half century ago, and now include within their ranks university-educated lawyers, biologists, and other professionals. Some of these helped establish the research park. According to Chapin, they envisioned the project as a receptacle in which the old culture could be mixed

with Western science to create a new and stronger alloy. Yet their plans to catalogue the community's rich oral tradition, to bring Kuna ritual specialists to the park for identifying flora and fauna, to have elders work alongside project technicians to study the scientific basis for traditional forestry systems have not come to fruition.

Logistical difficulties are partially responsible since the park is inland and upland from the coastal-island communities where the elders live, and several hours from Panama City where most project members reside in order to coordinate the program with outside agencies. But the underlying difficulty is a generational rift among the Kuna themselves. The elders view culture as a body of inherited knowledge that is renewed through each generation's intimate contact with the reefs, estuaries, and jungles of the San Blas region; it is the sap of a living tree. The acculturated young view culture as a clue to what it means to be a "genuine" Kuna, a solution to the riddle of self-identity posed by modernization. For them, culture is the immense and inert heartwood that holds a tree upright in a gale.

The park's limited progress reflects the narrowness of the generational consensus. The park's primary purpose was to form a coalition with sympathetic outsiders that would stem the rising tide of colonization by other outsiders. Some temporary breathing space has been won. But what will happen over the long term if the Kuna are unable to renew the spirit of the old culture before it is reduced to an elaborately carved ornamental bowl? Can a variant of Western ecology still emerge to fill the bowl with something nourishing, or will it become a receptacle for the emptiness that comes from being neither Panamanian nor Kuna?

The answers are far from certain, and that poses an even thornier riddle. If one of the few indigenous peoples in the hemisphere to survive into the twentieth century with their culture, identity, and political and economic autonomy relatively intact cannot weather the buffeting of modernization, what are the prospects for culture-based development anywhere?



Cecilia Duque

The Asociación Colombiana de Promoción Artesanal (ACPA) helps traditional artisans such as this fique weaver from Boyacá. ACPA's participatory research helped inspire the Escuela Nueva curriculum for the nation's rural schools.

Polishing the Mirror of Self-Awareness

One clue comes from the Quechua-speaking Indians of highland Ecuador, where the Servicio Ecuatoriano de Voluntarios-Chimborazo (SEV/CH) has made impressive strides since the 1970s. SEV/CH works in Chimborazo Province, which has one of the highest concentrations of poverty-stricken native peoples in South America. Living in more than 1,000 villages, at altitudes

that sometimes exceed 12,000 feet, the 250,000 indigenous inhabitants of Chimborazo have only recently emerged from a hacienda system that sharply limited their possibilities for self-sufficiency, social advancement, and economic growth. Nature has been no kinder, ravaging the land with drought, freezes, landslides, and severe soil erosion.

For more than two decades, streams of national and international organizations have set up shop in the

province, offering relief and the prospect of change. Typically, the representatives of these public and private agencies have been white-collar professionals with social and cultural backgrounds far removed from those of local people. Most of these professionals never strayed far from the Pan American highway. Pulling into a village, they would meet with a handful of leaders, invariably men, explaining in Spanish how their agency was prepared to improve the community's lot. Local participation was limited to a brief question-and-answer period that concluded with a request for community leaders to attend all future meetings of the new project. Then the technicians would pile into their Jeeps for the three-hour drive back to the capital city of Quito. Unfortunately, despite much goodwill and expenditure of funds, most of these programs failed, leaving little if any trace behind.

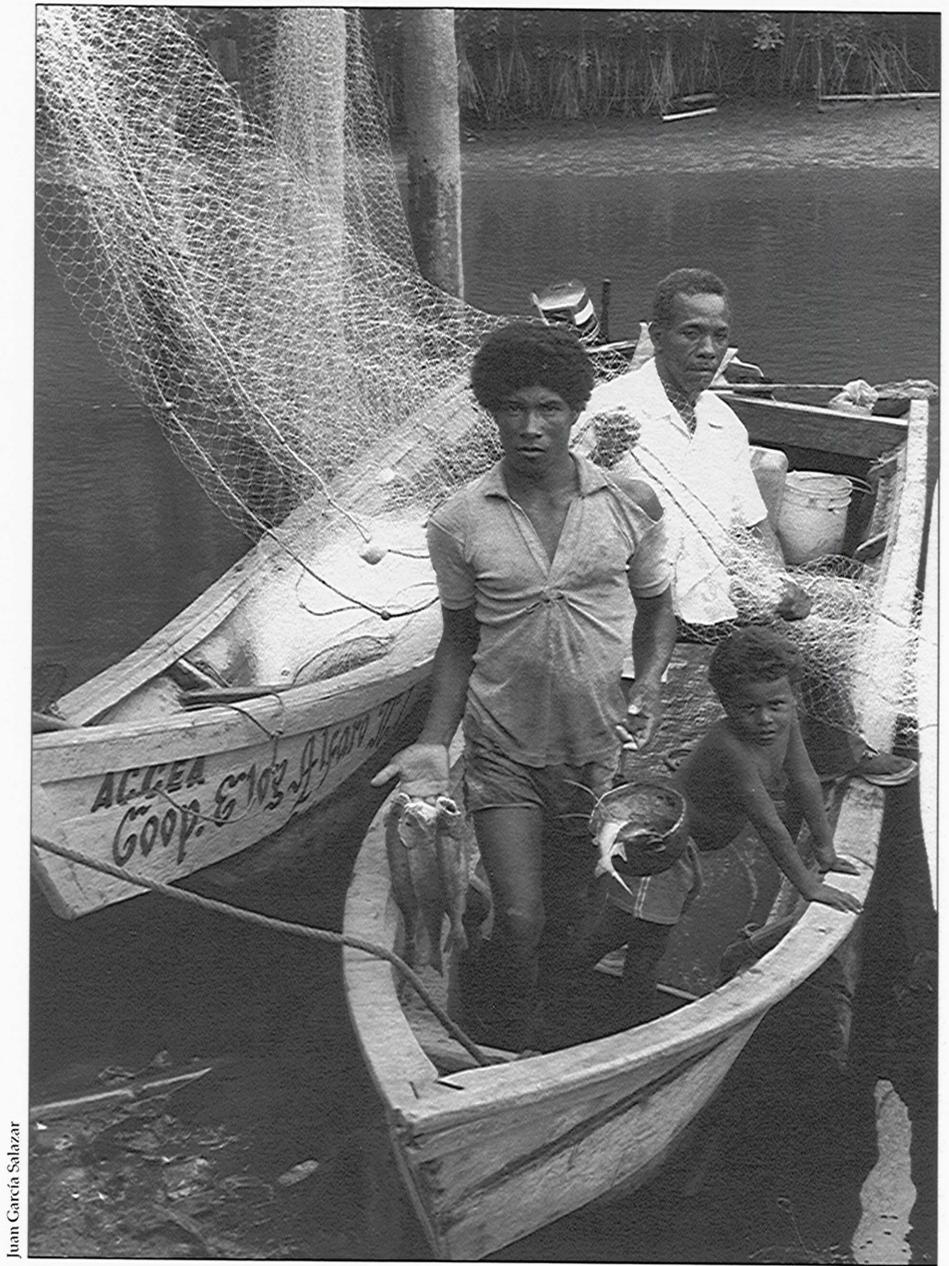
The most successful grassroots initiatives in Chimborazo have sprung from the province itself. In the case of SEV/CH, a group of individuals—many of them born in indigenous villages—believed they could do a better job than the outsiders for whom they had once worked. With the Servicio's support, a group of young indigenous men and women formed the Feria Educativa, or Educational Fair, to promote cultural revitalization and self-help efforts among the Quechua-speaking people served by SEV/CH (Kleymeyer and Moreno 1988).

The Feria decided from the outset to learn from the mistakes made by programs out of tune with the local setting. The Feria enters a village only after being invited. It performs songs in Quechua and gets people to dance. Once the ice has been broken, the Feria begins to encourage community members to identify their difficulties and consider possible solutions. Two means for doing this are sociodramas and puppet shows. Vignettes are performed that sketch out a common problem—such as illiteracy, poverty, or discrimination by urbanite mestizos against the indigenous rural poor. As the performance builds toward a climax, it suddenly stops, and the floor is turned over to the audience members, who are invited to bring personal experiences to bear in crafting a resolution.

Slowly, this process leads to a collective recognition of how the problem being enacted is rooted within the local reality. Sometimes this results in proposals for immediate action, but more often the Feria merely sets the stage for a much longer process of reflection that will one day culminate in a community development project.

The results are impressive. Since 1979, the Feria has visited more than 750 villages. These contacts helped pave the way for a literacy program that has established more than 1,050 training centers, blanketing the province and becoming the most successful effort of its kind in Ecuador. The Feria's promotional work has also been key for a program that has established more than 30 community bakeries and 45 artisanal workshops, and helped villagers build 145 community centers and reforest barren hillsides with more than 200,000 trees. Many of these communities have joined together to form federations that sponsor their own cultural revitalization efforts and integrate them with training, production, health, and other development activities. The Feria has helped train other groups like itself, and by 1988 there were more than 100 groups collecting or performing traditional music throughout Chimborazo.

Groups like the Feria use cultural expression not only to spark action but to provide people with a mirror to examine their culture from within. This is a crucial skill for surviving in the modern world. In a series of lectures delivered at Harvard University about poetry and modernity, Mexican Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz (1974) said that the essential quality of modernism is change, and its dynamo is a critical deconstruction of the immediate past that requires the reinvention of identity. This "identity crisis" is chronic and afflicts nations as well as individuals. The previously noted ability of the Kuna Indians of Panama to window-shop through Western culture and select what seems useful is part of this equation. But the other part, which the Kuna are still struggling with, is the ability to shop wisely through their own past. That is, the only antidote to the corrosive self-doubt that accompanies modernization is constructive self-criticism.



Juan García Salazar

Two fishermen from the first federation of membership organizations to coalesce in Esmeraldas Province display their catch for the Afro-Ecuadorian folklorist and photographer who was a catalyst for the consolidation.

Cultural Awareness and Participatory Evaluation

An example of this process comes from Colombia, where the regional health service some years ago asked a team of anthropologists to help rescue a medical program among the Sikuani Indians that was on the verge of collapse (Herrera and Lobo-Guerrero 1988). Indigenous paramedics trained by the health service seemed powerless to halt the spread of intesti-

nal, respiratory, and skin diseases in their communities. Drop-out rates among the paramedics approached 60 percent, and public health service officials wondered if the rest stayed on only because of their modest government salaries.

Solutions were not readily apparent. Providing more advanced diagnostic training and medicines would only intensify Western-based resources that were already underutilized by the paramedics. Part of the

problem was the inappropriateness of training, which had been based on the needs and experiences of highland Colombians rather than lowland tribal communities. But the project team also began to question the program's technically narrow focus, wondering if the real problem was not the inability to treat tropical diseases but the failure to promote health.

Probing beneath medical symptoms for deeper sociocultural roots, the project team proposed a program of participatory research in which the paramedicals would explore Sikuani history and myth in tandem with their communities. Slowly a picture formed of how the transition from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a sedentary, agricultural lifestyle had polluted streams and resulted in lower-protein diets and widespread malnutrition. As the research deepened, a classification system emerged for traditional medical practices that were incorporated into the health program, not only recovering knowledge about alternative food sources and curative plants but also providing clues about how communities could tame Western technologies by making them their own.

By allowing them to examine their culture from within, participatory research provided the Sikuani with a powerful tool for problem-solving that unleashed the latent creativity in their own culture and provided the means for reconciling tradition with change. The Sikuani have institutionalized this process by teaching a second generation of paramedicals to guide their communities in attacking a wide range of medical and economic problems. This has paralleled the rise of a representative political organization to defend the interests of all Sikuani communities vis-à-vis the outside world.

A similar process has been underway for over a decade in the Amazon region of neighboring Ecuador, where the Shuar and Achuar peoples have engaged in a program of cultural recovery that has strengthened the federation they formed in 1964 to defend their traditions, their livelihoods, and the rainforest itself. The Federación de Centros Shuar-Achuar, in turn, helped found an Amazon-wide confederation of Ecuadorian indigenous peoples and staffed many of its highest offices. The

lowland Quechua-speaking Indians, spearheaded by the performance group Los Yumbos Chahuamangos, also played a key role in this effort. They were coorganizers of the confederation and sponsored cultural festivals that brought together disparate tribal groups in one place for the first time ever. The Quechua-speaking Indians also inspired a subsequent confederation project to create a bilingual, multicultural education program for the Amazonian region of Ecuador.

One thing is immediately apparent in how these examples of cultural activism have unfolded: They are not attempts to restore an ideal, perhaps imaginary, past. Nor are they attempts to enshrine "the primitive," a concept that may reflect the West's nostalgia for reliving its own vanished past through proxies in the developing world. Rather they are attempts to make explicit what is implicit in every grassroots project, the linkage between culture and development that Juan García alluded to at the beginning of this article.

Learning to Tap Cultural Energy

Cultural expression grows from the living roots of traditional culture. Properly focused, such expression updates tradition in ways that energize a people to renew themselves and their society. This cultural energy has the power to mobilize individuals, groups, and communities to a heightened sense of purpose. It gets people to lock arms and pull together in a common effort. It brings them to meetings night after night. It keeps them working long hours on a community project as unpaid volunteers. It stirs their imaginations and their longing to transform their lives, and it shores up their confidence and courage to face the challenges that lie ahead.

Cultural energy helps people to reach within themselves to find a previously hidden reservoir of strength and resolve. Cultural expression takes many forms: a gospel choir bursting into song; the panpipes of an Andean band blending with the wind of a high valley; the actor triumphing over adversity, through performance; the products people make and use in their daily lives; and the stories people tell to locate their place and make

a way in the world. Cultural activists understand the link between cultural expression and energy, and seek to consciously harness it to spark grassroots initiatives.

This linkage has been compelling in the 215 grassroots projects supported by the IAF during the past two decades in which cultural expression has been a key element, even in those that began as archival efforts. Although the full impact of Juan García's work compiling the oral folklore of Afro-Ecuadorians awaits the response of future generations, García's presence has been crucial to the consolidation of numerous artisanal fishing cooperatives in his native province of Esmeraldas, culminating in the birth of the region's first federation of membership organizations. In an isolated section of Costa Rica, the effort of students in an agronomy school to collect and publish oral histories of the region (Palmer 1982-83) preceded efforts by a local group to stitch together an organization for starting experimental tree nurseries to diversify food and cash-crop production among the area's diverse Afro-Caribbean, BriBri Indian, and mestizo communities. In highland Bolivia, an Aymara musical group helped revitalize traditional Andean music around the old colonial capital of Sucre and then began to help a Tarabuco Indian group tackle the problems of rural poverty and development (Breslin 1986).

When cultural expression is linked to real life through action, it extends people's awareness of their latent power as individuals and as a group. Instead of being depleted, the store of cultural energy tends to grow with use. Although most cultural action projects exist in geographic and ethnographic isolation from one another, some of them offer clues about how this energy bubbling up from the grassroots can have a national impact.

Ironically, the clearest indication of how cultural rescue can have such an impact comes from an institution—the rural school system—that cultural activists have often viewed skeptically as an instrument of sociocultural homogenization (Goff 1990). The difference is that many of the teaching materials used in the Escuela Nueva program serving nearly half of Colombia's 26,000 rural schools have



Mitchell Denburg

This woman has learned to make and use puppets as part of a popular education project run by CIMCA in Oruro, Bolivia, which trains women to become community development leaders.

their roots in “participatory research,” and are intended to inspire students to apply the same techniques to their own lives and communities.

The curriculum for Escuela Nueva is grounded in popular culture and designed to build self-esteem through participation. Students are encouraged to investigate the world around them, learning how traditional crafts are rooted in family enterprises that young people can join or help start. The community becomes a laboratory for discovering and multiplying locally available resources for development. Multimedia educational materials based on regional cultures are being collated with standardized packets for national distribution, offering the next generation of citizens a vision of how they can together create a Colombian model for development.

The program has attracted widespread interest and support from international funders, including UNESCO, the World Bank, the IAF, and others. It has been studied by officials from 46 other nations as a promising model for replication. This level of interest in a culture-based development project is highly unusual, and it suggests two things—a growing realization of the need for a new development paradigm and the general lack of knowledge about which combination of techniques might make a workable model.

The fact that large-scale development institutions know so little about the process is in itself revealing. The cultural component of the Escuela Nueva program has taken nearly two decades to evolve, and it happened with minimal outside support. Like

many other cultural projects funded by the IAF, it began with local voices responding to local needs. The fact that so many disparate groups from all corners of the hemisphere have felt this urgency and adopted this strategy despite the general lack of outside support suggests that there is a common source of energy driving grassroots development. There is an urgent need to record these experiences, to find an analytical framework that fits the contours of what is being lived, so that knowledge can be shared, refined, and passed on, so that vital lessons will not be limited to those who live within range of a project’s voice and will not be lost when the project ends.

The Prospects for Culture-Based Development

The IAF’s experience with cultural expression projects shows that timely and appropriate outside assistance is often vital for ethnic and community groups to diagnose their problems and mobilize local resources for development. When the Chilean writer Ariel Dorfman (1984) visited a number of these projects nearly a decade ago, he wondered if they could hold their own in a time of financial scarcity and if these individual voices, noble as they were, would ever be heard above the din of the mass media. This is a crucial question because neighborhood or community self-help can seem futile if the only available images of successful people are North American or European actors on syndicated television series, or if the solution to problems is portrayed only in terms of mass consumption.

Only a handful of projects—such as Radio San Gabriel in Bolivia and Radio Latacunga in Ecuador—have gained access to the airwaves to broadcast culture-based, nonformal educational programming to widely dispersed communities. Their experience suggests that the same modern technologies which threaten to undermine traditional cultural forms can be harnessed to preserve and renew them.

Juan García, for one, is acutely aware of both possibilities. He argues that radio and television have done

more damage to ethnic culture in his native Esmeraldas during the past 30 years than slavery did in 300. Yet, he is among those who recognize that new technologies can become tools of survival. Low-cost tape recorders and cameras and readily available print technology, such as presses, off-sets, mimeographs, and photocopiers, are being used with great skill by cultural activists throughout the hemisphere. The potential for such interactive technology is great and needs to be developed further.

Some critics believe that even these minimal investments are unjustified at a time when the pool of development resources is shrinking relative to growing worldwide demand, particularly since cultural action projects offer limited benefits compared with projects concentrating on "basic" human needs such as food, shelter, family incomes, and health care.

Grassroots projects that have incorporated cultural action as an underlying strategy offer a counterargument. In each case, low-income people have spontaneously chosen to allocate their own scarce time, materials, money, and energy because they take a broader view of basic needs and deprivations. They understand the anger, diminishment, and paralyzing shame that come from

negative stereotyping. Reversing that process can transform a group's culture into the foundation upon which firm structures can be built to satisfy basic needs and promote greater self-sufficiency.

At a time when theorists of all stripes agree that high levels of participation are needed to leverage new development resources and maximize their effectiveness, the linkage between cultural energy and project results can no longer be overlooked. The degree to which culture is integrated into a project can offer funders a vital clue about the level of real participation. The degree to which elements of popular culture are manifest provides a thumbnail measurement of whether or not local people have been allowed to bring themselves to the project.

Understanding the importance of this linkage does not, in itself, constitute a foolproof plan of action. Cultural action projects, despite their frequently charismatic and articulate leadership, confront many of the same challenges that face other grassroots initiatives: overcoming internal conflicts to strengthen their organizational base; developing management, bookkeeping, and marketing skills; and overcoming social or geographic isolation. Some of these can

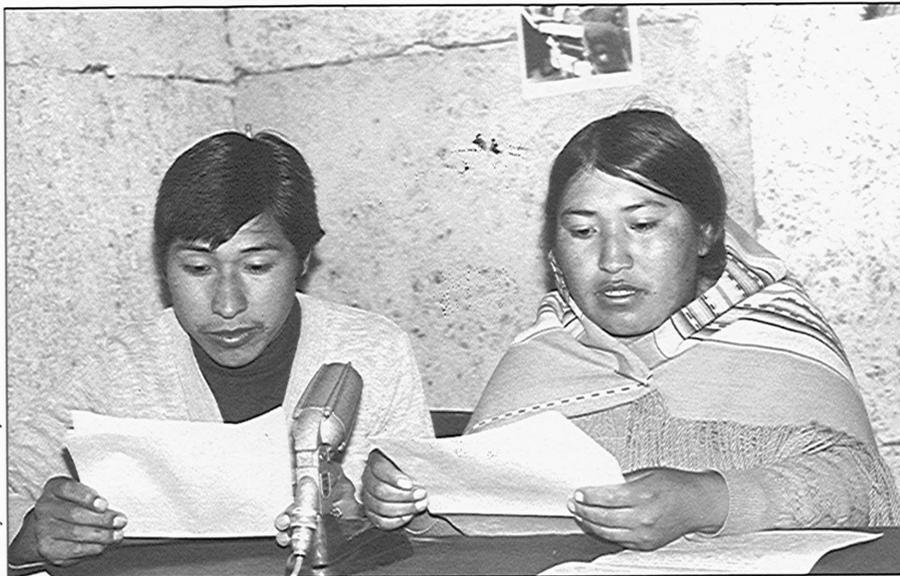
be resolved through training, technical assistance, networking, and the experience that comes from self-management and participatory evaluation. When the problems are systematic ethnic discrimination or governmental oppression, solutions are usually beyond the means of local groups. In this case, international donors can help open valuable social space for local groups to function and coalesce. In doing so, donors must be careful not to replace one dependency with another. Planning and control of projects should be largely entrusted to the local people who know how to mobilize and channel cultural energy best and who have often spent lifetimes refining their craft.

Donors are also well-positioned to assist in certain kinds of second-level investments that can pay future dividends. The IAF, for instance, has supported grants for networking that facilitates cultural exchanges and the transfer of skills among groups. One of these enabled the Kuna Indians to journey south to spend time observing and collaborating in project work with the lowland Quechua-speaking Indians of Ecuador, and a mix of Ecuadorian native peoples to travel north to visit Panama. Workshops, computer networking, and performance tours are other viable mechanisms that require resources not often readily available to financially strapped cultural groups.

Donors can also play useful roles in establishing clearinghouses for fund-raising and in targeting research to find which cultural action techniques are best-suited to meet specific development problems. By promoting and devising mechanisms that protect cultural property rights to crafts, artisanal designs, medicines, and other products, national governments and international agencies can use the world market to leverage new development resources for marginal populations.

The IAF's grant experience with cultural projects confirms the linkage that Mariano López and Juan García postulated between cultural energy and development at the beginning of this article. How shortsighted it will be if donors and governments ignore the search for effective ways to tap that force just as its promise has be-

Members of Centro de Promoción Cultural Campesino "Ayni" broadcast programs in Aymara from Radio San Gabriel in La Paz, Bolivia. The station has helped give dispersed highland communities their own voice.



Courtesy of CPCC "Ayni"

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Miguel Sayago

A member of "La Khochalita" in Bolivia works at her loom. The artisanal group invests some of its profits from overseas sales to boost farm yields by artisans' husbands and sons.

come apparent. In a world of shrinking resources, it is in all our interests not to waste any longer the creative talent and cultural energy of grassroots people who are living the problems that we and they are attempting to solve. As García said while visiting a cultural center in Appalachian Tennessee, "Our oral tradition has a term—*nosotros gente*—which you in the United States have also. 'We the people' is a powerful notion. It has the power to generate enthusiasm, to spark community action. There was a day when we owned our world, when we *were* capable. By learning how to work together, we have the ca-

capacity to restore that vision and fulfill our promise as human beings." ❖

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Harmony with the Earth

A Celebration of Andean Culture

Marion Ritchey Vance and Ron Weber

*Interacting with U.S. citizens in a
"museum without walls,"
indigenous South Americans opened a
new world of possibility
for themselves and others.*

For ten days in July 1991, a small corner of the National Mall in Washington, D.C., was transformed by the sights and sounds of the Andes. Thousands of visitors to the twenty-fifth annual Festival of American Folklife found themselves drawn to the grove of elm trees opposite the National Museum of Natural History by the exotic music of *queñas, sicuris, zampoñas*, and drums, and by the color and pageantry of ceremonial dance. The spirited musicians and dancers performing there were not professionals. They were farmers and weavers and hunters from indigenous communities in the highlands of Peru and Bolivia and the dense jungles of southeastern Ecuador. Invited by the Smithsonian Institution to participate in the portion of the Festival dedicated to Native Americans, they brought the artistry and technology of their thousand-year-old civilizations to life in a village setting within eyesight of the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument.

In doing so, they created what critic Stephen Greenblatt of the University of California at Berkeley has called an "encounter with the marvelous," a meeting-place between people of widely different cultures that opens up a new world of experience rich in unexpected insights. As Smithsonian Assistant Secretary for Public Service James Early expressed eloquently at the Festival's opening ceremony, the presence of these indigenous groups had significance well beyond showcasing the diversity of native traditions. In a time of global environmental threat, they spotlighted the link between cultural heritage and sustainable modes of development.

The stream of visitors to the Native American venue in the days that followed had the chance to learn this message firsthand by interacting with Andean participants. Display boards provided maps, historical sketches, and other information to introduce each featured culture. An array of workshops, performances, ceremonial reenactments, and craft demonstrations were held daily, sometimes

focusing on a particular group, other times on cross-cultural themes. People who lingered to converse through Festival interpreters with musicians, dancers, and artisans learned how events such as a wedding ceremony or the blessing of a new field are not mere spectacle, but inseparable parts of a way of life whose highest value is harmony with the earth.

In selecting "Knowledge and Power—Land in Native American Cultures" as the theme for this part of the 1991 Festival, the Smithsonian consciously anticipated by a year the quincentenary commemoration of Columbus's arrival in the New World. A neutral space was created in which audiences could rediscover the Americas from the perspective of the hemisphere's original inhabitants. Although indigenous stewardship has been steadily reduced to ever more marginal lands since the Conquest, ecological principles and practices remain deeply embedded in the cultures that have endured. The Andean participants were drawn from communities with continuous

ties to the regions they inhabit and with recognizably intact traditional roots. The folklife they enacted on the Mall reflected both a melding with Spanish culture and a tenacious resistance to it.

The enduring relationship to the land was perhaps best exemplified by the Shuar and Achuar from the Amazon basin of Ecuador, who have successfully resisted incursion by outsiders since the rise of the Incan Empire. Booths at the Festival informed visitors of how these peoples continue to live from the bounty of the rainforest without disrupting its delicate ecological balance. Miguel Puwainchir, president of the Federación de Centros Shuar-Achuar, accounted for that success not by singling out specific productive practices but by pointing to a basic belief instilled in them all. "We do not consider ourselves owners of the land," he noted. "The land is our mother, who provides for us and must be honored, not treated as a piece of merchandise to be used up or sold." Puwainchir believes that the best way to protect the rainforest—"the lungs of the world"—is to strengthen the capacity of the people who live there and know it best.

Protecting that resource base today requires new skills, including the ability to master some of the tools of modern Western society in order to negotiate with it on equal terms. The Federación, which was founded in 1964 and now represents some 330 Shuar and Achuar communities and nearly 50,000 people, has led the way. With support from the IAF and numerous other donor and volunteer agencies, it has surveyed much of the territory inhabited by its people, secured land titles, developed income-producing programs to supplement subsistence production, and staffed schools and an educational radio station with indigenous teachers and

Ron Weber



Above: Paula Quispe Cruz stands atop a model of the Pre-Columbian suka kollus, or raised farming beds, being revived to raise yields. Below: Oswaldo Rivera (left) joins Tiwanaku villagers in "blessing the earth" before planting a raised bed.

Emma Rodriguez



programmers who are fluent in both Shuar and Spanish. Cultural preservation and organizational cohesion have gone hand in hand, enabling the Federación to begin negotiating environmentally sound land-use agreements with the Ecuadorian government, which holds usufruct to oil, timber, and minerals in the region.

A second group at the Festival, Aymara-speaking campesinos from the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca whose ancestry stretches back to the ancient state of Tiwanaku, is engaged in an act of cultural recovery that promises to restore marginal cropland. It is one of the hemisphere's enduring mysteries how this barren plateau nearly 13,000 feet above sea level supported a pre-Columbian capital city of 100,000 people, many times the number that eke out a bare subsistence in villages there today.

Six years ago, a group of enterprising peasant farmers launched a bold experiment that may provide an answer. Risking the scorn of their neighbors, they joined a team of anthropologists and archaeologists led by Oswaldo Rivera of the Instituto de Arqueología de Bolivia and Dr. Alan Kolata of the University of Chicago to resurrect part of a Tiwanaku farming system known as *suka kollus*, or raised agricultural beds. The original social system that supported the *suka kollus* no longer exists, so small landowners tapped kinship ties and improvised in-kind arrangements to share the first harvests with those who agreed to work together to restore remnants of the once-immense grid of long, narrow planting areas, interlaced with canals.

The original pre-Incan beds were cleverly engineered designs, with a cobblestone base covered by a layer of clay to prevent seepage of brackish ground water, followed by a layer of coarse sand for drainage, and



Jeff Tinsley, Smithsonian Institution

Above: Miguel Puwainchir (right), president of the Federación de Centros Shuar-Achuar, tells festival visitors that saving the Amazon rainforest means investing in its people. Below: A Shuar participant weaves a net for fishing.

topped with rich soil for planting. River water and runoff from hills was directed into a network of canals to trap solar heat, moderating the temperature extremes of the altiplano, and minimizing damage from killer frosts when the mercury plummeted below freezing during the growing season. While adhering to these basic principles, campesinos restoring the system are also adapting it to take advantage of locally available materials.

With aid from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a small demonstration bed was re-created on the Mall. Archaeologists Kolata and Rivera were on hand to explain how the system worked, and a booth was set up to display samples of the bumper crops being grown back in Bolivia. Initial yields from the raised beds were 42.5 tons per hectare, compared to 2.5 tons per hectare obtained by the same campesinos on surrounding land. And the potatoes, as one of those campesinos proudly noted, were twice the size of those displayed at the U.S. family farm exhibit on the opposite end of the Festival grounds.

Some drop-off in early productivity is likely over time, since much of the land being reconverted to *suka kollus* has lain fallow for years and is a storehouse of accumulated nutrients.



Emma Rodriguez

Small farmers can offset this decline to some degree by using the rich sediments that collect in the canals to replenish soils without resorting to expensive agrochemical fertilizers.

While farmers wait for crop yields to stabilize, the system has already demonstrated its effectiveness in providing food security for families living on the margin. When one of the

hard freezes that occur every few growing seasons recently hit, the restored sites were green oases amid the brown, withered crops of surrounding fields.

Yet the lasting promise of *suka kollus* for the region rests not simply on technical merit, but on their adaptability to local cultures. Agricultural technologies perfected at research stations by agronomists may promise high yields but never be implemented in the field because they rely on capital-intensive inputs, are ill-suited to microecologies, or undermine the strengths of community life. The *suka kollus* cannot be replicated everywhere since they originally evolved to fit tailored environments. They can, however, be revived in many of the areas where they once existed. Initial construction of beds requires an extraordinary deployment of labor, and this provides an incentive to revitalize Andean traditions for mobilizing cooperative effort.

Indeed, as Oswaldo Rivera reports, one reason the initial communities rallied to the *suka kollus* project was the pride they took from reviving the agriculture of their *awichus nayrapacha*, or pre-Columbian ancestors. This sense of reaffirmed identity and relationship to the land was displayed at the Festival by Roberto Cruz Yupanqui of Chukara, whose fields were among the first to be used as a test model five years ago. When he and others from the Tiwanaku region demonstrated raised-bed farming on the Mall, they began with the *ch'alla*, or tribute to Mother Earth, that is offered when the soil is prepared for planting. Other affirmations of kinship with the earth accompanied various stages of the growing cycle, culminating in the harvest celebration of a village feast and dance. Because the ceremonies paralleled beliefs and customs in other Andean communities, Jalq'a participants from Chuquisaca and

Lynette Chewning, Smithsonian Institution



Above: Tiwanaku villagers from the *suka kollus* project reenact a harvest celebration. Below: Panpipe musicians at the fete are taped for playback on U.S. public radio.

Ron Weber





Ron Weber

Two Tiwanaku women take a moment to chat outside the replica of a mud-and-thatch house from the altiplano.

Taquileños from Peru also joined in despite differences in language, ethnicity, and nationality.

At their venues during the Festival, participants from Chuquisaca in southern Bolivia and the island of Taquile in Peru demonstrated how their communities continue to refine their textiles, one of the hemisphere's most venerable means of cultural transmission. Textiles fashioned of natural fibers were the art form, the currency, the status symbol, and often a pictorial record of the history and mythology of the Incan Empire and its predecessors. The Taquileños, Quechua-speaking descendants of the Incas, are adept weavers and knitters. They are one of the few remaining groups around Lake Titicaca whose women and men still wear traditional ethnic dress made from home-spun thread, woven on family looms.

For most of its history, this small, rugged island 13,000 feet above sea level has provided its inhabitants with a marginal living from crops grown on stony hillsides and the fish that could be netted from reed boats plying the deep waters of the lake. Some cash income was earned by occasional textile sales in the city of Puno, eight to twelve hours away by boat on the western shore of Titicaca. The primary source, however, was seasonal labor. As increasing numbers of men migrated to copper mines and cities in search of jobs, Taquile was exposed to the same economic and cultural pressures that have undermined so many rural Andean communities.

Two interrelated strategies have kept that from happening. A Peace Corps-sponsored venture in Cuzco during the late 1960s, opened up a market for weavings by Taquileños, who soon learned theirs were among the finest in Peru. In the mid-1970s, the islanders took advantage of a favorable review in a prominent South



Emma Rodriguez

Above: Two Tiwanaku villagers from Bolivia join the "wedding parade" of Taquileños from across Lake Titicaca in Peru. Below: A Jalq'a villager ritually blesses Taquileño "bride and groom" Cipriano Machaca Quispe and Paula Quispe Cruz.



Eric Long, Smithsonian Institution

American guidebook, touting Taquile's unspoiled charm, to start their own tourist trade. With help from an IAF grant, the island's families banded together to commission suitable vessels from local boatwrights and outfit them with motors and spare parts. Soon the boats were hauling a steady flow of visitors eager to risk a little hardship in exchange for a spectacular view of the lake and a taste of indigenous life. Families earned income by putting tourists up in their spartan homes; fishing co-ops formed to meet the



Ron Weber

Taquileño elder Mariano Quispe Mamani shows how to weave alpaca wool on a treadle loom.



Ron Weber

Above: Anthropologist Elayne Zorn (upper left) narrates while Taquileño women demonstrate belt-weaving on a ground loom. Below: Mariano Quispe Mamani makes a panpipe.



Ron Weber

new demand from several small restaurants; and artisans opened a shop to market crafts, capturing for local reinvestment the profits that once went to outside middlemen.

The miniboom in tourism helped reverse the tide of outmigration, although the influx of visitors to Peru itself has recently slowed to a trickle from fears of cholera and the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas. The success in textile marketing may also be short-lived if the changes it set in motion undermine the "authenticity" of communal life that has made the island so attractive to a new breed of ecotourists. With assistance from anthropologist and IAF fellow Elayne Zorn, the community has established a museum to preserve many of its oldest, most-priceless weavings that can serve as a source of pride and inspiration for a new generation of weavers.

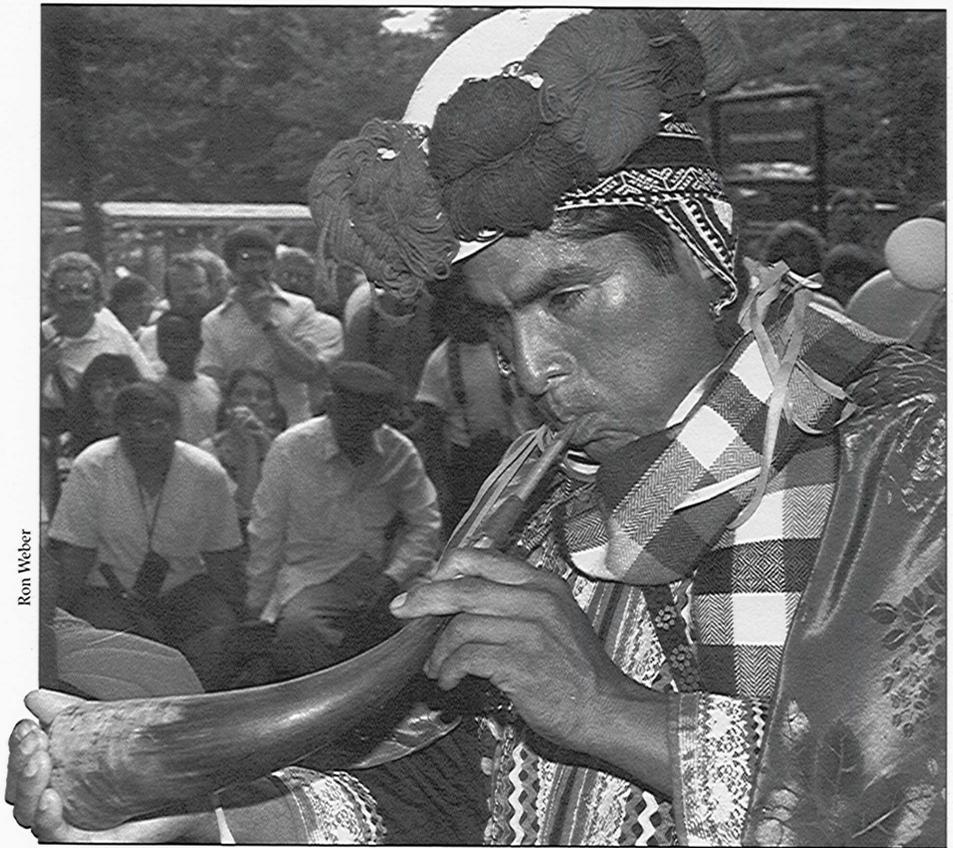
The Taquileños at the Smithsonian's Folklife Festival were living proof of the fruit of that effort. They displayed the wide variety of products normally offered for sale. Zorn provided commentary and acted as

interpreter while women weavers set up horizontal groundlooms for making *chumpis* (belts), *ch'uspas* (bags), and *'unkhunas* (carrying cloths). The men knitted *ch'ullus*, elegant stocking hats like the ones they wore, and used a treadle loom to weave cloth from alpaca and sheep wool for shirts, vests, skirts, and pants.

The final Andean group represented at the Festival was the Jalq'a weavers from the mountainous region of Chuquisaca in south-central Bolivia. The quality of Jalq'a weaving is renowned in Bolivia, but experts believed it was a dying art form. In conjunction with the Festival, a special exhibit of weavings was featured by the Smithsonian in the atrium of the new S. Dillon Ripley Center. Photographs of the finest traditional work, now held in private collections, were hung side by side with contemporary work. What was surprising was the vibrancy of the newest pieces.

This renewal stems from the work of a Chilean husband-and-wife team. Anthropologists Gabriel Martínez and Verónica Cereceda of Antropólogos del Sur Andino (ASUR), a grassroots support organization for the southern Andes, were aware that Chuquisaca had become as notorious for the failure of conventional economic development programs as it had once been famous for its weaving. They decided that the problem was outsiders putting the cart before the horse. Instead of drawing up a detailed and cost-effective strategy that people should follow to increase their incomes, ASUR adopted a long-range approach to gain people's trust and cooperation by building on the area's obvious strength—its rich cultural heritage, which had been neglected and was in danger of being lost.

Today, five years later, there is renewed pride and a new dynamism in the villages of Potolo and Purunquila.



Ron Weber

Above and below: Jalq'a participants, who have rescued a renowned weaving tradition from extinction, perform a ceremonial dance.



Ron Weber

The area is again recognized for the quality and mystical character of its weavings, which depict a world of stylized lions, condors, foxes, and other creatures. The ASUR program

played a key role in documenting these traditional designs and techniques. In the process, some 380 Jalq'a women have joined hands through ASUR to turn revival of traditional art

forms into a source of family income. They have set up small workshops for spinning and dyeing wool, cutting costs and ensuring a steady supply of high-quality yarns.

Although the Jalq'a weavers at the Festival were all master artisans and well-versed in traditional design, they also displayed the keen entrepreneurial sense of their peers in Taquile. Visiting the National Museum of Natural History in the company of Gabriel Martínez, they kept wandering back to one exhibit. "The Jalq'a were overwhelmed by the dinosaur display," Martínez noted, by its mystery and by the power it exerted over visitors of every nationality. They decided to feature dinosaur designs in a new line of marketable textiles that would also commemorate their encounter with the strange new world of Washington, D.C.

This spontaneous exchange of experiences between different worlds is at the heart of the Folklife Festival. It was repeated on a hundred different planes, widening the imagination of what seems possible and deepening one's appreciation of the commonplace back home. It involved the fascination of encountering an escalator for the first time, the shock of Bolivians from the vast altiplano at a concept of space that locates buildings and trains underground and requires payment to park a car. It brought citizens of the quintessential consumer society into direct contact with Taquileños who make nearly everything they wear, and grow or catch most of what they eat. It introduced a utilitarian world to people whose everyday garbs are museum pieces, and who hold ceremonial garments in such reverence that none was shed in deference to the sweltering summer heat.

Perhaps the most interesting encounters were among the participants themselves, emissaries from different



Ron Weber

The Jalq'a proudly wore their ceremonial garb despite the Washington summer heat.

cultures eager to learn from each other. Alejandro Huatta Machaca of Taquile is a weaver who also helps build boats. He was captivated by his visit to the adjoining compound where Indonesian shipwrights were at work constructing a graceful, sturdy craft using wooden dowels in place of nails. He kept returning each afternoon. Soon the Indonesians and Taquileños were sketching diagrams to exchange ideas about boatbuilding. Enlisting Festival staff to communicate from Quechua to Malay via Spanish and English, they developed a growing sense of how fishing and dependence on the water had shaped distant cultures in similar ways. The Indonesians, for their part, seemed impressed by the community organization of the Peruvians, and expressed interest in one day visiting Lake Titicaca to deepen the exchange.

The reach of these encounters extended far beyond the Festival grounds. The National Geographic Society had representatives at the Mall, making arrangements for a program on the suka kollus project to be aired on U.S. cable television in the spring of 1992. "All Things Considered" on National Public Radio (NPR) in the United States featured a report on the same subject. Other technicians from NPR taped performances by the Taquileños for later

broadcast. The Shuar videotaped Jalq'a dancers for their communities to view back in Ecuador.

When they returned home, the Taquileños took solar panels from a North American supplier with them, with the hope of providing a new and reliable source of hot water and electric light for themselves and the tourists who visit their island. The islanders planned to visit the Jalq'a to learn more about their spinning and dyeing operations and the small hydroelectric plant that powers them. The Tiwanaku experience led the Taquileños to wonder if revival of the pre-Columbian terraces on their island would boost the yield of hillside farms. They made tentative plans to visit their neighbors across the lake to organize a follow-up project. Of course, the people of Taquile have lessons of their own to offer. As a result of contacts made at the Festival, they were invited to send a delegation to Mexico City in May 1992, for a hemisphere-wide *encuentro*, or meeting, of Native American organizations.

Not all of these plans will be realized. But already there is clear evidence of the impact the Festival experience has had on individual participants. It is unusual for indigenous Andean women to travel to the outside world, much less report back formally on the experience. When she returned home to Chuquisaca, Juliana Rodríguez stood and forthrightly addressed all of her neighbors at a community meeting. In describing what she had seen, heard, and learned, she was also saying that women had valuable information to offer on a variety of other important topics if people were ready to listen. A Tiwanaku participant, Bonifacia Quispe Fernández, returned to her community of Lahaya Alta brimming with a new self-confidence that has made her a leader of efforts to expand the suka kollus and a local role model for other women in development. Honorato



Ron Weber

Above: Alan Kolata touts *suka kollus* yields to a potato farmer from the U.S. family farm exhibit. Below: Taquileño boatwright Alejandro Huatta Machaca (left) learns how an Indonesian villager builds sturdy craft using wooden dowels.



Ron Weber

Mamani of Chuquisaca commented simply: "When I die, I want my gravestone to read that I was part of the 1991 American Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C."

The self-esteem that comes from validation by the outside world sometimes proves to be an invaluable source of inspiration for the whole community. Anthropologist Elayne Zorn says that it was only after a group of Taquileños was invited to Europe by a West European cultural organization and visited South American exhibits in ethnographic museums that the idea of islanders starting their own museum took hold. Now there is talk that an exhibition of Jalq'a weavings, based on works featured at the Smithsonian's Ripley Center, will be organized to tour the United States. Such a tour would spread the renown of the Jalq'a and promises to widen their access to international markets.

For their part, U.S. audiences had the opportunity to learn from people whose highest value cannot be found on a quarterly statement. The Andean participants had indeed shown a keen eye for business in making and marketing their crafts, but their enterprise was grounded in a deeper sense of purpose. The survival of their societies through 500 years of duress and their recently renewed vitality suggest that development is as much about culture as economics. For them, sustainable progress is inseparable from lasting stewardship of ancestral lands, continuity of language and custom, and the spiritual links forged through shared values. Those among the 1.5 million visitors who paused to read, listen, and question left with something to ponder. ❖

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A Marketing Research Agenda for Microenterprise Development

Harry G. Miller and Ivo Saric

The potential of microenterprise development will remain unrealized unless attention and research are geared to making it a more effective instrument of local and regional development. Among the many constraints that face microenterprise growth, marketing stands front and center. Yet we remain in the dark about how marketing works and fails to work at the microlevel of the economy. Microenterprise development programs tend to emphasize improved production through access to credit and raw materials rather than identifying, expanding, and satisfying consumer demand. Cutting production costs and raising output will not necessarily generate higher profits if goods do not reach the people who want and need them.

For most rural microenterprises, poor market access is typical, limiting their growth and threatening their survival. An accurate analysis of how existing microenterprises fare in specific market settings is imperative to devising a strategy for implementing improvements. A research agenda is needed to guide and set priorities for specific studies. A successful agenda should help ascertain the optimum levels of such support to make microenterprise goods more competitive and enable them to capture a larger share of regional markets.

To guide this research, we propose a set of four questions that need to be urgently answered:

- 1) What marketing channels are presently used by rural-based microenterprises?
- 2) To what extent are these channels determined by limited resources rather than because producers perceive them to be the most effective means of making sales?
- 3) What types and level of local and outside resources are available to improve the marketing of microenterprise goods?
- 4) What kind of learning program for microenterprise training would open the greatest opportunities for market expansion?

Among the existing market channels are outlets such as home-based shops, street stalls, open-air marketplaces, government stores, and cooperatives. Understanding who uses each outlet, and why, will help determine the extent to which enhanced distribution, income, and profit are possible.

Researchers must then identify what resources microenterprises need to overcome specific marketing constraints. Physical infrastructure, available sources of economic information, government policies, and the factors of production are among the important areas that must be appraised to determine how outside support can help producers harness their own assets to maximum effect.

Finally, research into the most appropriate training methods to help microproducers apply what they learn to their daily operations will make assistance programs more effective. In practical terms, the place to begin is by asking microenterprise owners how they perceive their own learning needs. Participation from the outset is vital to the self-improvement process. Those

involved in microbusinesses need to be involved in deciding what is to be learned and what instructional methods should be employed, and in evaluating whether or not real learning has taken place.

Rural-based microenterprises are important primary and secondary sources of income generation among the poor in developing countries. Capitalizing on microenterprise activities to improve the livelihoods of cottage producers and spur local economies will not happen unless there is a concerted effort to expand market capabilities. By assessing the real needs of rural microbusinesses, a more realistic strategy for assisting and implementing change through formal and nonformal training will be possible. It is hoped that the tentative research agenda proposed in this forum will be the first step in generating the studies needed to make microenterprises the marketers of their own destinies. ❖

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Opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the Inter-American Foundation. The editors of *Grassroots Development* invite contributions from readers.

Development Notes

A Worldwide Study to Uproot the Causes of Deforestation

Deforestation in developing countries has been accelerating exponentially during recent decades. The landless poor are pushed to exploit ever more fragile ecosystems, confronting the bitter choice of consuming their resource base in order to survive. At the forefront of efforts to understand how deforestation affects the poor is the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), a small, autonomous research organization based in Geneva.

Recently, UNRISD undertook ambitious research to determine the social causes of deforestation and its impact nationally and regionally on the rural and urban poor. Efforts are underway to identify harmful agricultural and timber-harvesting practices to discover their effects on groups living in proximity to areas losing their forest cover. The research is also zeroing in on how key actors such as the state, international donors, nongovernmental organizations, and various social groups accelerate or retard deforestation. Fieldwork is being conducted in Brazil, Central America, Nepal, and Tanzania.

Last year, UNRISD joined the Regional Soil Conservation Unit of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) to discuss the preliminary findings of the research program. Both parties acknowledged that the policies of governments and international donors to halt or slow down deforestation have usually failed, in part because they overlook the marginalized populations who suffer most, such as forest dwellers, ethnic minorities, women, and children. It was stressed that the only way to magnify the impact of limited outside resources is to give local people



Michaele L. Cozzi

To reverse deforestation and soil erosion, agricultural extensionists plant tree seedlings near Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic.

a stake in protecting the forests they inhabit. Participation is the key to successful forest management.

Results of this deforestation research are being fed into a larger UNRISD study on the environment, sustainable development, and social change. Publications based on this research were submitted to a committee preparing the groundwork for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held this June in Brazil. The coordinator for the deforestation research at UNRISD, Mr. Krishna Ghimire, states: "Our findings will allow officials at UNCED to clarify deforestation issues by providing effective methodology based on reliable documentation. Hopefully, after UNCED, more countries will realize the necessity for reforestation programs and linking forestry with agriculture."

With the help of local scholars, and in collaboration with other United Nations organizations,

UNRISD has strengthened its research capacity, and its analyses have become valuable assets for policymakers worldwide during the past 30 years. Other cutting-edge research programs focus on sustainable development in resource management; women, environment, and population; and population dynamics, environmental change, and development trends. For further information and a list of publications, write to the Reference Centre, UNRISD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland.

—Marnie A. Stokes

Making Government Safe for Democracy

From September 10–12, 1991, nearly two dozen North and South American scholars and development professionals met in Tepoztlán, Morelos, Mexico, to discuss the rising tide of public/private collaboration to deliver urban services in Latin America. Participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States presented case studies of efforts ranging from habitat and health care to urban environmental protection and education. The seminar attracted representatives from leading nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and research institutions as well as donors and government officials interested in understanding and forming links with the still-expanding universe of NGOs throughout the hemisphere.

The workshop's underlying theme was that national development and

democracy cannot flourish without "capillary" interaction between local people and their government to create a healthier, more productive society. Discussion papers focused on discovering what *kind* of grassroots democracy is taking hold and being invented as patterns of conflict, tentative collaboration, and joint ventures emerge in various countries.

Despite radically different starting points and evolutionary patterns in each country examined, most participants were convinced that collaboration between NGOs and local governments would accelerate during the 1990s. Efforts to forecast that progress focused on the age of each country's civil society and the strategies being pursued. Argentina and Mexico, for example, are at a similar stage because of their small and more recently spawned NGO sectors. Brazilian and Chilean NGOs are both emerging from heavy-handed dictatorships, have parallel church origins, rely heavily on foreign support, and have highly diverse programmatic activities. Yet there is one key difference: Chilean NGO leaders have moved rapidly into public office with democratization, while Brazilian NGOs remain firmly planted outside the government.

According to Baltazar Caravedo of Peru, the NGO sector in his country represents a beleaguered "center" trying to coalesce to counteract an impending social meltdown. One sign of hope was a government movement toward regional decentralization, opening opportunities for NGOs associated with Hernando de Soto's informal sector celebrated by the center-right, and those attracted to the self-provisioning Villa El Salvador model favored by the center-left (see Annis and Franks, *Grassroots Development* Vol. 13:1). The performance of NGOs of all stripes in combating the cholera cri-

sis suggested the hope was not misplaced.

The division of strategies among Peruvian NGOs echoed divisions among country experiences. Mexican and Brazilian participants, for instance, insisted that social movements, not NGOs, were the primary catalysts of change, although they acknowledged that collaborative ventures with the state usually included NGO intermediaries. The Mexicans also diluted some of the optimism about cooperation at the municipal level by underlining the problem posed by local *caciques*, or powerbrokers. NGOs and membership organizations, they pointed out, were sometimes forced to seek allies within federal agencies to bypass entrenched local elites. And since state authority remained pervasive at all levels of society, cooperation by NGOs always carried the risk of cooptation.

Yet a case study from Chile—where 36 NGOs now work closely with the Ministry of Health in primary care delivery—showed that cooperation could also spark a new spirit of social invention. Pedro Santana Rodríguez echoed this, documenting how Colombia's movement toward decentralization had sparked collaboration to solve local problems. The example of the Instituto de Estudos Formação e Assessoria em Políticas Sociais, a São Paulo NGO that specializes in providing technical assistance to municipalities seeking greater popular participation, suggested that NGOs have a role to play not only in pioneering service delivery models, but also in training public sector personnel to scale up projects into programs.

Several municipal and central government officials offered their perspective on the movement toward joint ventures. One participant, formerly an NGO director and now a Ministry of Planning official,

explained how her perspective changed when "we" became "them," when the opposition became the government. Officials who were interested in scaling up projects into programs faced the difficulty of dealing with massive numbers of competing claimants, even among the poor. This required new skills from ex-NGO managers used to working with a relatively circumscribed clientele.

Fernando Calderón of the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales summarized the macro-economic overview for Latin America. He somberly stated that the region would play an "insignificant" role in the emerging, technology-driven world economy because most of the poor would be, quite simply, "superfluous." He argued that the best Latin American hope is to begin again, at the local level, whether the emphasis be on the economy or politics, development or democracy. Only by building a more secure foundation would lasting progress occur.

The 13 workshop papers detailing current efforts to lay such a foundation are being translated and edited for a volume to be published in Spanish and English later this year.

—Charles A. Reilly

User-Friendly Agroecology Networks

In Latin America, over 60 percent of the population lives in conditions of rural poverty, many of them small-scale farmers who have little or no access to costly modern agricultural inputs. Agroecology is an emerging scientific discipline whose field-extension methods promote low-cost ways to improve yields while protecting the fragile ecosystems and subsistence base many rural communities depend on. Recent months have brought important



Fundación Natura in Ecuador has promoted agroecology by educating farmers about pesticide hazards and by networking with other institutions to find safe, low-cost alternatives.

communication advances in this field to Latin America.

In the summer of 1991, Latin America's two leading networks dedicated to investigating and promoting agroecology, the Consorcio Latinoamericano sobre Agroecología y Desarrollo (CLADES) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements-Latin America (IFOAM-LA), signed an

agreement of cooperation. This pact will improve coordination between IFOAM-LA's membership of 80-plus nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the 11-member CLADES consortium. The improved information flow promises to bring the latest research findings in agroecology to more of the region's poorest farmers.

In September of 1991, CLADES signed an agreement with ten Latin American universities that will introduce agroecology to the curriculum of major agronomy departments throughout the hemisphere. This historic agreement will help reorient agricultural training from a narrow focus on "green revolution" technologies, generally priced beyond the reach of the continent's smallest farmers, toward inexpensive systems that can improve soil quality, reduce erosion, and limit harmful pesticide use.

For the future, IFOAM-LA is planning an electronic satellite communications system to link its members and provide multiparty con-

ferencing and ready access to the newest information and research findings. IFOAM hopes to raise necessary funds from outside sources and membership counterpart contributions to fully install the system by 1996. CLADES is also planning to establish an electronic communications system.

Finally, the Asociación Dana, an IFOAM-LA member in Mexico, will be publishing, with IAF support, the *Manual de Certificación de Productos Orgánicos para México* to help local farmers market their organically grown crops domestically and abroad. For more information on IFOAM-LA, contact Angela Ecosteguy, c/o Fundação GAIA, Rua Jacinto Gomez 39, 30.040 Pôrto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; for IFOAM-México, Apartado 22-315, 14000 Mexico D.F., Mexico; and for CLADES, Andrés Yurjevic, Secretario Ejecutivo, CLADES, Casilla 16557, Correo 9, Santiago, Chile.

—Jim Adriance ❖

IAF GRANTEES IN THE NEWS

The *Christian Science Monitor* recently highlighted the pre-Incan *suka kollus*, or raised fields, being reconstructed by Bolivia's Aymara Indians from the Lake Titicaca basin. Using research by **Parroquia Tiwanaku**, villagers are adapting this ancient agricultural technology to grow bumper potato crops. One plant will now yield up to 60 or 70 potatoes in one growing season, many of them weighing as much as 3.3 pounds. • Salvador García, founder of the **Servicios de Educación de Adultos (SEDAC)**, which inspired the **Unión de Comunidades del Valle, A.C. (COVAC)** in

the Mezquital Valley of Mexico, was mentioned in the quarterly environmental journal *Earthtreks*. These two organizations promote self-help programs for the Otomí Indians and are affiliated with Habitat for Humanity International, which arranges 10-year, interest-free loans for low-income people interested in building their own homes. • **SEDAC** and **COVAC** were also highlighted in an issue of *Newsweek's* international edition that explored efforts by rural women to improve their communities through adult literacy, housing, and income-generating projects.

• *The IDB*, published by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), announced that the **Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Región Este** of the Dominican Republic will receive

financing to establish revolving credit funds for women micro-entrepreneurs, small-scale farmers, agribusinesses, and craft producers.

• *The IDB* also stated that support from the Bank's Technical Cooperation and Small Projects Swiss Fund expects to help three IAF grantees in Costa Rica set up revolving credit funds and provide technical assistance to benefit 950 women entrepreneurs. The organizations include **Fundación Mujer (FUNMUJER)**, **Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (CEFEMINA)**, and **Asociación CREDIMUJER**. The IDB will also provide technical cooperation grants to strengthen their institutional capacity. ❖

—Compiled by Maria E. Lang

Inside IAF

Mastering the Social Ecology of Development

Anna M. DeNicolo

"We are the catalysts, not the architects of change," says Peruvian Antonio Andaluz, who received one of the three inaugural Dante B. Fascell Inter-American Fellowships awarded by the IAF in 1991. "The task of development professionals," he explains, "is to be tireless gadflies, stimulating creativity in others and helping people work together toward a common goal." The Fascell fellowship program is designed to help successful development innovators such as Andaluz bring their messages to audiences throughout the hemisphere.

Co-fellows Mary Allegretti of Brazil and Arturo García of Mexico share Andaluz's vision of grassroots change. All three are at the forefront of a new generation of development leaders who are working to strengthen the institutions of civil society through vibrant nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and membership organizations. Adept at coalition building, they are creating a new methodology—a social ecology of development. Humanity and the environment, rich and poor, public and private, are all seen as aspects of one system. Understanding how problems are interconnected opens up the possibility for new partnerships to solve them. This lateral thinking bypasses dogma and focuses on analyzing the lessons of direct project experience.

If cooperative effort is the driving force behind an effective ecology of development, the poor are its foundation. Says Arturo García, "One must start at the grassroots by helping people articulate their real needs

and problems. This process uncovers gut issues that bring more and more families together into community organizations that can one day be linked to larger chains at the regional, national, and sometimes even international levels." In tackling their chosen issues, all three Fascell fellows have shown a knack for identifying key actors and their potential interrelationships. Like Andaluz's gadflies, they stimulate people to forge new networks and alliances.

For more than a decade, Mary Allegretti has been an advocate for the rubbertappers of the Brazilian rainforest. "My objective," she says, "is to change the conception of development so that marginalized groups become involved in the process, and the environment becomes the cornerstone for new alternatives to improve their welfare and that of society."

When Allegretti first visited the Amazon region in 1978 to conduct anthropological research, she found "an entire population [of rubbertappers] living in near isolation, in an intimate relationship with the forest." Ignorant of outside economic forces influencing their livelihoods, they were mired in debt to middlemen who controlled access to markets. Shocked by their situation, Allegretti left her university post to start a school to help rubbertappers break the cycle of poverty.

Working alongside local leaders, she discovered how their fate was tied to that of the forest, which was threatened by cattle ranching, logging, and short-sighted agricultural practices. Allegretti also began to recognize that growing public sensitivity to environmental problems created a new opportunity for rubbertappers to solve their own problems. In 1986, she created the Instituto de Estudos Ambientais to assist the rubbertappers and inform

people about the situation in the Amazon. Her efforts helped bring grassroots leader Chico Mendes to worldwide attention, not only as an advocate for raising incomes among his fellow rubbertappers but also as a defender of the rainforest itself.

"One of my roles," Allegretti explains, "was to be a communicator of their ideas, which I translated for a variety of audiences, helping to establish ongoing channels of dialogue. The result has been a new strategy of action, featuring realistic proposals, linkage with national and international environmental groups, and the development of a leadership base capable of seizing the moment when the government was open to new policies."

Mendes was murdered in 1988, but one of his legacies lives on. Allegretti's Instituto has led the way toward national legislation that established over three million hectares in "extractive reserves," protective areas set aside for forest dwellers to harvest renewable resources in a sustainable manner. Meanwhile, the rubbertapper movement Mendes helped create has branched out to process Brazil nuts and other forest products, diversifying the income base of rubbertappers by taking advantage of an emerging "green" market in North America and Europe for consumer goods that help protect the global environment.

Fascell fellow Arturo García attributes his success as a grassroots leader to his ability to "always think in the long term, and to have many films playing at the same time." Born to a family of small farmers in rural Mexico and trained as an agronomist, García speaks the language of the campesinos to whom he has devoted his professional life. His extensive organizational work at the grassroots eventually led him to identify a central problem for

small farmers. "The campesino economy," he explains, "is like a purse full of holes. Historically it has subsidized the rest of society." Mending those holes requires programs that enable small farmers to add value to their production and replace uncompetitive intermediaries with marketing, credit, and consumer goods.

His ten years as an organizer dealing with these problems have sharpened García's lateral vision, teaching him the importance of network building. "Some," he says, "may find this crazy. But one network leads to another. We must continue moving forward, continue organizing ourselves to take advantage of opportunities as they arise." After bringing small coffee growers together in his home state of Guerrero, García played a pivotal role in uniting coffee farmers nationally. He is the director of the Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Cafetaleras (CNOCA), a network of 70 organizations of small growers that has opened new markets in North America and Europe for its Aztec Harvests brand of organically grown coffee.

Ecology met "social ecology" when García identified organic farming as an effective strategy for small producers that also benefited the environment and consumers. Small coffee growers could eliminate the high cost of agrochemicals and earn higher returns from a growing upscale international market, while consumers enjoyed a healthier product. García says, "Our goal is to go beyond reliance on the solidarity of others and produce high-quality coffee for sale directly to consumers."

García's experience at CNOCA has been a springboard for launching the Unión de Pequeños y Medianos Productores de Café de México, Centroamérica, y el Caribe (UPROCAFÉ). UPROCAFÉ is an



Miguel Sayago

Technicians from Proterra survey land in Peru's Lurín Valley. This grassroots support organization, created by Fascell fellow Antonio Andaluz, helps small farmers increase incomes while protecting Lima's water supply.

ambitious effort by small coffee producers in seven countries in the region to obtain market leverage, modernize processing facilities, and provide technical assistance that boosts yields and cuts costs. New initiatives by UPROCAFÉ are underway to gather small farmers from South America, Africa, and Asia under one umbrella and give them a voice at international negotiations to regulate the coffee market.

Lawyer and poet, Fascell fellow Antonio Andaluz is an environmentalist who understands that people depend on the land for their survival. "We must preserve the environment for man," he stresses. "When topsoil erodes, it is the campesino who suffers. Communities must learn to manage natural resources just as carefully as they husband human resources."

Andaluz's recognition of the complex relationship between rural communities and the land led to the creation of the Instituto Tecnológico Agrario Proterra in 1983. Proterra has helped small farmers obtain

land titles, increase output through organic methods and other new technologies, and gain access to government credit. Through this experience, Andaluz became aware of the underutilization of government resources and the lack of coordination among other organizations working with the poor.

This central insight has inspired a pragmatic program called *Operación Tábano*, or Operation Gadfly, that Andaluz has used to persuade communities, universities, NGOs, and government ministries to pull together in order to maximize Peru's sustainable agricultural capacity. *Operación Tábano* was instrumental in Proterra's success in drafting legislation to establish the *cinturón ecológico*, or greenbelt, surrounding metropolitan Lima. This integrated development program views the region as a single living organism, and highlights the interdependence of its rural and urban residents and the need for environmental conservation. It opens access to resources farmers need to feed their families

Reviews

and the city, while reducing air pollution and protecting the regional water supply.

Proterra has also been the catalyst in forming the Red Ambiental Peruana, an environmental network of 77 organizations that is responsible for devising the nation's conservation strategy. Antonio Andaluz will share with colleagues from around the world what he has learned from these experiences when he participates in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in the summer of 1992.

Andaluz and his co-fellows Allegratti and García have each pioneered strategies for development in Latin America and the Caribbean. By harnessing the energy of government agencies and civil society and bringing grassroots issues to an international arena, they have drawn attention to the increasing interdependence of society and the need for cooperation to bring about lasting change.

These three pioneers have set a high standard of achievement for the Dante B. Fascell Inter-American Fellowship Program, which will allow them to reflect on their experiences at the grassroots and conduct workshops, attend conferences, and write publications to share the lessons they have learned with others interested in expanding opportunities for development.

Nominees for the fellowships are screened by a review panel of distinguished Latin Americans and Caribbeans. The panel proposes a list of worthy candidates to the president of the IAF, who makes the final selection. The next competition for the Fascell fellowship will be held in 1993. ❖

ANNA M. DENICOLA, a former IAF master's fellow, is a consultant based in Washington, D.C.

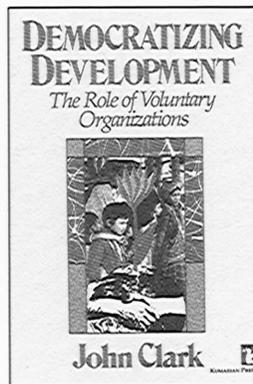
DEMOCRATIZING DEVELOPMENT, by John Clark. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1990.

Wilbur Wright

A timeless axiom holds: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." John Clark, development policy advisor at Oxfam UK, turns the adage on its head by arguing that development efforts in the Third World do not work and need to be fixed.

In *Democratizing Development*, Clark contends that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including his own agency, have helped create this mess and, therefore, are part of the problem. He removes some of the sting by adding that NGOs are at the forefront of finding solutions to the errors committed in the pursuit of development.

Clark's defense of NGOs begins with a brief history of their origins and evolution. Most Northern NGOs active today trace their roots to the refugee relief efforts and other projects involved in rebuilding a Europe torn apart by World War II. Southern NGOs spring from either modern independence struggles or from the arrival of Northern NGO relief efforts in the region. It was not until the 1970s that Southern NGOs began to break the narrow humanitarian molds to introduce new approaches aimed at the *concientización*, or the liberation through self-awareness, of the poor. After initial resistance, most NGOs in the North came on board, and by the 1980s



were designing the array of new programs that have begun to redefine development.

Clark emphasizes that this change in course is not simply the adoption of a new rhetoric. During the past two decades, NGOs have gained a much clearer understanding of poverty, expanding its definition beyond income and assets to include health, education, security, and many other indicators.

This understanding, in turn, has led to a more dynamic conception of development, which is no longer viewed as a commodity given to people but as a process of change undertaken by people, enabling them to acquire the confidence, skills, assets, and freedoms necessary to realize their full potential.

Clark calls this "Just Development" and states that it is a prerequisite for attacking the web of forces causing poverty and social stagnation. He coins the acronym DEPENDS to describe the seven components of this new strategy: development of infrastructure, economic growth, poverty alleviation, equity, natural-resource-base protection, democracy, and social justice.

Understanding the foundations needed for just development should inspire NGOs to take a broader role. Managing successful projects is only the starting point for influencing others to replicate those efforts. Turning projects into programs requires NGOs to foster their own networks to help change the policies and practices of local and national governments and international aid agencies.

The major portion of *Democratizing Development* maps out this new role, highlighting the best routes and the travel gear needed for a successful journey. Clark believes it is essential that an NGO have good leadership, sound project design, and a strong learning component to main-

tain institutional memory and accountability to beneficiaries, other development agencies, academics, and the public. Once these elements are secure, an NGO should prepare to scale up successful project ideas by influencing others through education, lobbying, and advocacy. Scaling-up can bring greater coordination between NGOs in the North and South and effect changes in government development policies so that efforts reinforce rather than cancel each other out at the local level, creating mutual opportunities for learning, support, and motivation.

In the final section of his book, Clark takes dead aim at "structural adjustment," the development remedy prescribed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for the most beleaguered Southern economies. Structural adjustment is the series of measures governments are asked to adopt to correct budgetary and current-account deficits. Clark contends that this approach not only fails to stimulate development but is universally detrimental to people in the countries where the policy is being implemented. He believes it has failed because it tries to fine-tune a deeply flawed economic structure that requires overhauling. Referring back to his *DEPENDS* approach, he calls for a development model that serves people and the planet. To accomplish these goals, national economies must not only be concerned with growth in gross national product but must promote equity, social justice, nature conservancy, and democracy.

The book closes with a call for NGOs to step up to the challenge by changing the way they think, plan, and work, and the way they relate to others. If they resist, they will become insignificant bystanders as the world struggles for its very survival.

Some may call John Clark a purist, naive, one of those religious liberals,

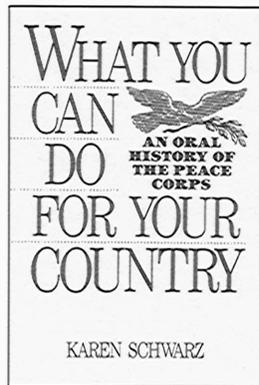
or even a doomsayer, but his argument is persuasive, particularly when measured against the accomplishments of existing development models. For the practitioner, his is a book to be read and pondered. ❖

WILBUR WRIGHT is the Foundation representative for Nicaragua. The book is available from Kumarian Press, Inc., 630 Oakwood Ave., Suite 119, West Hartford, Connecticut 06110-1529 (phone: 203-953-0214).

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE PEACE CORPS, by Karen Schwarz. New York, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991.

Diane B. Bendahmane

Peace Corps veterans have always liked to get together to exchange remembrances about their years of



service. The rigors of training and then of working in an alien culture are highly charged emotional experiences that draw people together. "It was," as

one of my Peace Corps buddies put it, "our war."

What You Can Do for Your Country is a collection of "war stories" by former volunteers and by a few still finishing out their two years of service. Some stories are literally about war, such as the riveting accounts of volunteers pressed into service in hospitals during the 1965 coup in the Dominican Republic, when as one eyewitness says, it was neces-

sary to do "everything from making and folding bandages to carrying the dead down to the morgue."

But most of these reports tell of the more familiar battles volunteers wage, battles against apathy, loneliness, and feelings of futility. A Peace Corps teacher in Honduras, for instance, relates:

A lot of volunteers dropped out because it was so arduous. It would be 95 degrees and you're sweating all over, the sun was going down so you're squinting at the blackboard and the mosquitoes are attacking your ankles. Some Hondurans have learning disabilities or night blindness because of malnourishment so the lessons progress very slowly. Volunteers had visions of working with hundreds of teachers and having a noticeable impact but that was naive.

The stories, collected through interviews by free-lance journalist Karen Schwarz, are arranged chronologically into seven parts corresponding to the seven presidential administrations since the Peace Corps was established in 1961, in accord with President John F. Kennedy's challenge to young Americans: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." The chapters start with short introductions providing historical context for the individual oral histories that follow. Each chapter reiterates Schwarz's basic argument: The Peace Corps ideal of being a nonpartisan broker of people-to-people aid has never been realized.

One set of constraints is imposed by the shifting focus of U.S. foreign policy. During the 1980s, for example, large numbers of volunteers were enlisted for small enterprise development to support the government's Caribbean Basin Initiative. More recently, volunteers have been assigned in Eastern European countries, in keeping with U.S. policy to assist the fragile new democracies emerging there.

Resources

Even when the goals are admirable, this approach has its drawbacks. If the agency becomes a public relations device for responding to the latest crisis, its development mission will suffer. Hasty programming, abbreviated training, and too little staff support for volunteers can often be the order of the day when programs are thrown together to comply with a political timetable. Volunteers may find no real jobs waiting for them when they arrive in country, and, says Schwarz, their complaints are often not taken seriously. Political pressure might be the culprit, but volunteers themselves admit they tend to criticize staff.

Schwarz also cites situations in which the Peace Corps is vulnerable to the push and pull of domestic policies in the countries where it works. The Chinese government, for instance, canceled the program there as "inconvenient" after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Another chapter dwells on AIDS and the alleged failure of the Peace Corps in the 1980s to alert volunteers in Africa to the serious threat posed by the disease. This reflected both the lack of consensus in the United States about how to treat its own AIDS crisis and the reluctance of many host governments to call attention to the extent of the epidemic.

Schwarz's general thesis is hard to refute. The Peace Corps is a government agency, and, in the final analysis, its very existence is in the hands of elected officials. The organization has put down its guard most often when fighting for its life. According to Schwarz, former Peace Corps Director Loret Ruppe unapologetically defends her sensitivity to foreign policy on pragmatic grounds. Ruppe says:

When I came to the Peace Corps, I thought, "My gosh, this is one of the best things our government is doing. Why is our budget still half of one B-1 bomber?" Hopefully,

some day, whoever makes these budget decisions will see that the work of the Peace Corps is the path we should be following. But the budget makers won't see us if we're not visible.

Ruppe's successor, Paul Coverdell, speaks openly of the necessity of keeping "abreast of changing American foreign policy in order to remain vital."

The way to insulate the agency from this pressure is to internationalize it, according to Schwarz, but she admits, "internationalized volunteer service is probably the most idealistic outgrowth of the Peace Corps' founding" and is unlikely to take place.

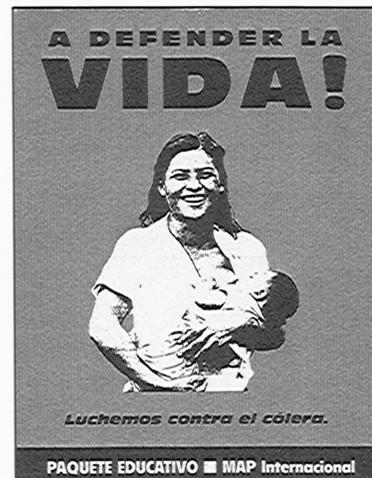
The war stories Schwarz has collected about the Peace Corps are good stories, but they are not the whole story. The subtitle of this book, *An Oral History of the Peace Corps*, overstates what is offered. Schwarz's preference for stories of disaster and disillusionment—combined now and then with a whiff of scandal—may be natural for a journalist out to get the story. Her lack of interest in the development process is evident; almost nothing is said on the subject. Also, readers who look for a balanced picture will be disappointed. In some instances, two or three interviewees provided the "oral histories" for a whole decade of Peace Corps activities. A true history of the Peace Corps has yet to be written. This "slice" of history is a pretty good read, but not very nourishing to those who come to it for a deeper understanding of the continued attractiveness of the Peace Corps ideal. ❖

DIANE B. BENDAHMANE,
editor/writer for the *Water and Sanitation for Health Project*, was a Peace Corps volunteer and staffer in the 1960s.

By the end of 1991, the Pan American Health Organization had reported 38,978 cholera cases in Latin America. Long considered a disease of the poor, cholera threatens areas where potable water is scarce, where sanitation systems are either underdeveloped or nonexistent, and where few basic hygiene measures are practiced—often because the rigors of daily life leave residents with little energy beyond that needed for mere survival.

Despite waning media coverage during recent months, cholera remains a serious threat in several Latin American countries, as do a variety of other debilitating diseases. Community health and development often go hand in hand, and the resources in this issue of the journal focus on steps to prevent and treat disease and upgrade public hygiene.

One such resource, a rich and varied package of community educational materials to combat the cholera epidemic, is now available from MAP Internacional in Quito, Ecuador. **A Defender la Vida** includes in its conveniently boxed packet a user's guide, a short and sobering video, an audio cassette for radio broadcast, an instruction manual entitled *Pautas para el Control de Cólera*, a



teaching poster, trainer and health-promoter manuals, and several illustrated 8½" x 11" sheets that may be duplicated for use as handouts and flyers.

The handouts are particularly eye-catching, using line drawings and straightforward language to explain the causes of cholera, its symptoms, and its treatment. Preventive measures are heavily stressed—hand washing and other sanitary precautions, proper food preparation, and water treatment both at the source and before drinking.

Promoting the advantages of group instruction, the nine-page user's guide sketches out the principles of adult education and then describes several techniques to stimulate effective discussions.

The trainers' manual, probably meant for those who inform health workers and educators, draws upon these principles and techniques to formulate step-by-step guidelines for conducting a three-part workshop on cholera prevention. The manual for health workers, more informal in tone, uses a question-and-answer format to help readers broaden their understanding of the disease. Large print, everyday language, and thoughtful illustrations combine to make this an appealing reference booklet.

Organizations worldwide can obtain the entire package for a fee. Orders and requests should be routed to MAP Internacional, Oficina Regional para América Latina, Casilla 1708-8184, Quito, Ecuador (phone: 452-373; fax: 435-500).

Sturdy illustrated materials ranging from posters to flash cards accompany the *Guía para la Capacitación en el Manejo de las Diarreas*, a community training guide for treatment of diarrhea, available from UNICEF-Mexico and the United



A poster from the *Guía para la Capacitación en el Manejo de las Diarreas*.

Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The training guide, written in colloquial language, is organized into two sections. The first presents basic information, describing how mothers can identify diarrhea and then explaining the concept of dehydration, using a wilted flower as an analogy. Six common symptoms of dehydration are then described, accompanied by illustrations showing an affected infant. The opening section concludes with a definition of oral rehydration therapy and the five steps mothers should take to guard their children against dehydration. One of these steps requires ingestion of oral rehydration salts, and clear instructions for mixing are provided.

Part two of the manual explains the advantages and methods of participatory training. By placing mothers in small groups where they may express their ideas freely, share experiences, and collaborate on the training exercises, the learning process is deepened through mutual trust and support. Clear instructions

for seven training activities are offered, including a participant evaluation of what has been learned.

To stimulate discussion during training, facilitators use the accompanying illustrated cards and posters. These same resources can be used for short, informal presentations to community mothers' clubs.

The package may be ordered from the UNDP/World Bank, Water and Sanitation Program, PROWESS, 1818 H Street, N.W., Room S-11125, Washington, D.C. 20433 (phone: 202-473-1304).

The third resource, created by a network of collaborators, comes from the Dominican Republic. *Manual para el Uso de Plantas Medicinales* is a handy reference book for rural families to consult when treating a relative or neighbor who suffers from stomach distress.

Using a simplified case-study approach, the manual informs readers about prevention and treatment through the anecdotal accounts of four friends living in the countryside. Two-color printing adds punch to lively drawings that appear on every page to illustrate symptoms, prevention strategies, and herbal remedies.



Ten medicinal herbs and horticultural products are featured in the manual. Preparation steps are clearly written in large print, with a drawing to illustrate each stage. Recommended dosages are given for each age group. Cautionary vignettes interspersed throughout the manual show readers which plants to avoid under given circumstances and stress how to identify when home-based herbal therapies should yield to clinical medical treatment.

Several pages are devoted to the symptoms of dehydration in children and to preparing and administering a hydrating liquid composed of boiled water, salt, sugar, and lime (one of the manual's featured ingredients).

This and several other health and hygiene manuals are available from Enda-Caribe, Apartado 21000 Huacal, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (phone: 809-566-8321); and from PROSAIN, Apartado 2739, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (phone: 809-561-4316).

More information about medicinal plants and home remedies can be found in the opening chapter of **Donde No Hay Doctor**, a guide to locally based health care. Now in its fourth edition, Dr. David Werner's manual has addressed rural and village health needs since 1973. Based upon the principles of personal and community responsibility, information sharing, and respect for local knowledge and abilities, this manual helps readers in remote or underserved areas treat basic injuries and illnesses and carry out preventive measures. It stresses how to recognize when a patient's condition requires attention from a health worker or doctor.

The 23 chapters cover a wide range of topics: nutrition; diagnostic techniques; diseases of all kinds, from diarrhea to tuberculosis; first



aid and medication; disease prevention; and family planning, among others. A particularly useful chapter, "Palabras a los Trabajadores de Salud Rural," speaks directly to village health workers, offering thoughtful suggestions on how to choose which health activities to promote and how to become more effective trainers and healers.

Information about specific medicines—uses, dosages, precautions, and side effects—appears at the end of the manual. Although fairly technical, the data is presented clearly and simply. Readers can also consult a ten-page glossary, which defines health and medical terms in easy-to-understand language. A final appendix annotates useful resources and provides the names and addresses of organizations that supply educational materials, both general and health-specific.

The manual, available in Spanish, Portuguese, and English, may be ordered for a fee from the Hesperian Foundation, P.O. Box 1692, Palo Alto, California 94302 (phone: 415-325-9017). For an additional sum, the foundation will ship to overseas destinations.

Given the linkage between hygiene and community health, how can program planners and local health educators maximize their efforts to stretch limited resources? What elements help ensure that hygienic education leads to behavioral change? These questions inspired a study, available from the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project, that

crystallizes the lessons learned from projects in three countries. Although none of these countries is in Latin America and no single hygienic education model is replicable everywhere, many of the insights offered in this document do apply to the Western Hemisphere.

Presenting their findings in WASH Technical Report No. 55, **What Makes Hygiene Education Successful?**, the authors group the essential ingredients for successful water and sanitation projects into five categories: preconditions to start the planning stage; administration and logistics; groundwork; community outreach; and monitoring, evaluation, and midcourse adjustments. Particular emphasis is placed on laying the groundwork—gathering baseline information about existing community knowledge and behaviors, gaining the support of local political leaders, and recruiting the right people as health educators (using local criteria that usually include gender, education, employment status, and place of origin/residence). Community outreach is also heavily stressed, and three appendices provide supporting materials for this and the groundwork activities.

Two companion volumes, also available from WASH, supplement this document: **Guidelines for Designing a Hygiene Education Program in Water Supply and Sanitation for Regional/District-Level Personnel** (Field Report No. 218) and **New Participatory Frameworks for the Design and Management of Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Projects** (Technical Report No. 52).

All three documents are available from the WASH Project, 1611 N. Kent Street, Room 1001, Arlington, Virginia 22209-2111 (phone: 703-243-8200). ❖

—Lynda Edwards

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Applications and inquiries should be directed to:

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