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FOCUS: Native Americans and the Quincentenary

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Cover photo: Mayan boy from Chaquijyá, Sololá stands in the field once farmed by his slain father. More than half the highland village's population were widowed or orphaned by the rural violence that devastated Guatemala's indigenous organizations in the 1980s. (See article page 2.) Photo by Mitchell Denburg. Opposite page: A Jalq'a woman and her child attend a festival in Potolo, Bolivia. ASUR is helping more than 400 Jalq'a women and their families revive their culture and devise a microregional model of indigenous development. (See article page 22.) Photo by Sean Sprague.

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THE VIEW FROM THE SHORE

Central America's Indians Encounter the Quincentenary



Philip Decker

Preserving the New World's remaining tropical forests depends on rediscovering its indigenous inhabitants.

Mac Chapin

Above: A young Carib Indian from Dominica carries banana trees to a reserve for planting. In one, non-Indian Quincentenary celebration, the Caribs were commissioned to construct and paddle a 60-foot war canoe to Santo Domingo in order to reenact Columbus's first encounter in the "New World."

On the evening of October 11, 1492, after nearly three months at sea, Christopher Columbus was standing on the deck of the *Pinta* when, in the distance, he discerned what seemed to be a light. A couple of hours after midnight, land was sighted and the following morning a party went ashore on an island, somewhere (the exact location is still debated) on the outer rim of the Caribbean Sea. The event itself—the arrival of three small Spanish ships in what would be called the New World—was a mere pinpoint in the flow of global history, yet it had profound consequences for all involved, especially for all who followed. No one at the time could have known that this landing would signal the end of control of the hemisphere by its aboriginal inhabitants, and

usher in European domination. And surely no one could have predicted the onset of a 500-year, contorted and twisted process of *mestizaje*, or how this crossbreeding along biological, cultural, and political lines would place a decisive stamp on successive generations of Americans.

Underlining the Quincentenary's importance as an intellectual and spiritual event is the wealth of material that is accumulating as 1992 nears its end. Already there is a rich array of images and ideas in the form of scholarly articles, essays, and inspirational tomes written by historians, geographers, ethnobotanists, philosophers, poets, novelists, and diplomats in various guises.

However, beyond a bit of sporadic protest, little of this activity involves Indians. They have written few of the articles being published, and little has



B. Nietschmann



V. Murphy

Left: Miskito Indians beach recently captured sea turtles off the coast of Nicaragua to be used as food for their village. Below: A Miskito spearfisher in Honduras shows off his catch. Although indigenous peoples may not be "perfect" conservationists, they are concerned about the destruction of the forests they live in and their own survival as peoples.

appeared in print from any quarter that attempts to ask, much less answer, the range of questions the Quincentenary evokes from the perspective of contemporary Indians (as opposed to historical Indians, who are amply represented). A cursory review of the announcements of financial assistance for all manner of projects related to the Quincentenary reveals few activities involving living Indians. Most of these are being organized for Indians by non-Indians. For example, someone has sponsored the Caribs of Dominica to build a 60-foot war canoe and paddle it nearly 1,000 kilometers to Santo Domingo, where they will meet up with replicas of the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa María*. Of course there are no living descendants of the original inhabitants of the Dominican Republic, and this reconstruction of an imagined historical event is not

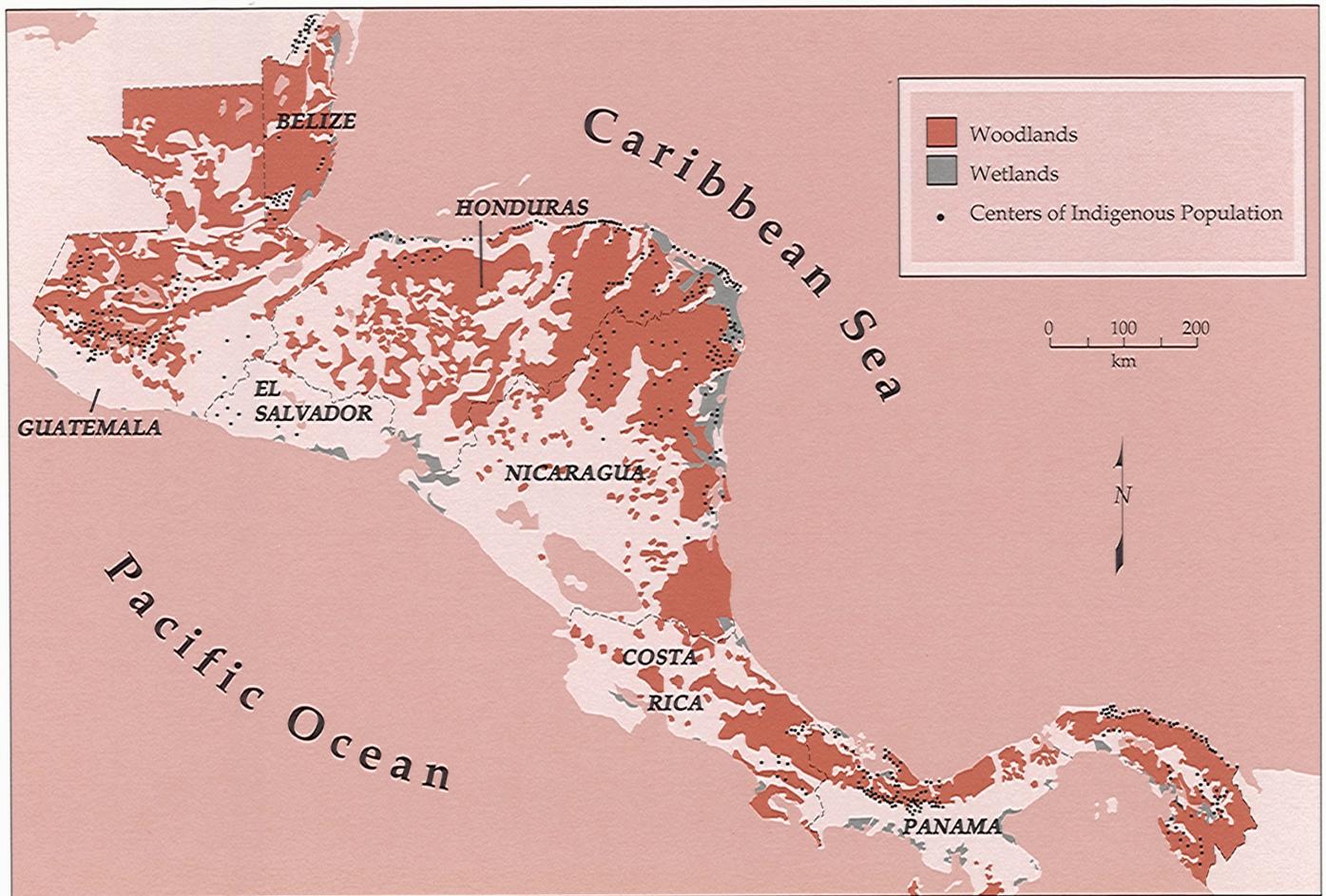
being authored by their stand-ins. If, indeed, Columbus's arrival was "an encounter of two worlds," it seems only fair that a few words about its meaning should be heard from today's Indian world—in order to obtain, as an Indian friend phrases it, "the view from the shore."

As might be expected, many Native Americans are deeply ambivalent about the Quincentenary of Columbus's arrival, and most would not, if they had any notion that a commemorative ceremony was in the air, see cause for celebration. After all, whatever euphemisms might be chosen to describe that first historic landing, what followed was decidedly a swift and devastating conquest. Within the short span of a few decades, large segments of the native population were overwhelmed and placed under the yoke of invaders. Those who escaped subjugation either lived in inaccessible places or fled to remote, and generally inhospitable, locations beyond the reach or interest of the intruders. What occurred in the areas of immediate contact during the first years was utter havoc.

Although the brutality of the conquistadors was clearly a contributing factor to early death tolls, the most implacable enemies of the natives appeared in the form of epidemics (Crosby, 1972; McNeill, 1976). Indians everywhere were blind sided by small-pox, chicken pox, measles, tuberculo-

sis, malaria, yellow fever—diseases that were relatively benign in Europe but lethal to the inhabitants of the Americas, whose geographical isolation left them without immunities from prior exposure. The core of the Mexico, or Aztec, Empire in the Valley of Mexico was reduced from as many as 3 million inhabitants at the time of Cortez's arrival to an estimated 70,000 by the end of the seventeenth century. Epidemic diseases formed what historian Murdo MacLeod (1973) has called the "shock troops of the conquest," moving with the Spaniards as they made their way down the Central American isthmus, everywhere leaving behind a shroud of death and destruction. With the exception of minuscule enclaves in Dominica and Cuba, the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, the islanders Columbus first encountered, have vanished. In the 100 years after that meeting of two worlds, the indigenous populations of the South were largely broken, demoralized, and confused; their political institutions were shattered; and their agricultural systems were abandoned. The ragged remnants quite literally did not know what had hit them.

Most of this story has been well documented by historians, and the occasion of the Quincentenary will give it full play; and from their side, Indian activists from various corners of the hemisphere have raised their collective voice in protest and to cry out for redress. While all of this is appropriate and important, what reverberates is the silence about the condition of contemporary Indian peoples, the apparent lack of interest in the situation of the living descendants of the region's original inhabitants. These are the people who managed to survive centuries of pestilence and violence, slavery and forced labor, and sustained programs of cultural



Adapted from *Indigenous Peoples and the Natural Environment*, published by the National Geographic Society and Cultural Survival. For more information on this map, see "Resources," on page 47 of this edition of *Grassroots Development*.

assimilation. Today they embody a large portion of the richness and diversity of life in the Americas, yet most of us know next to nothing about who they are or how they go about organizing their lives. Many of these groups are quite small, but they are beginning to join together to revitalize their traditional cultures and defend their rights to land. Since that land includes much of the world's remaining tropical forests, their success is of vital importance to all the children of Columbus and perhaps to the fate of life on the planet as well.

The Unknown Indian of Latin America

In Latin America alone there are an estimated 40 million people who identify themselves as Indians, and after centuries of decline, their num-

bers have been growing steadily during the last few decades. In some countries, such as Guatemala, Peru, and Bolivia, they make up as much as half the population; at the other extreme, less than 1 percent of the population in Brazil and Costa Rica is considered indigenous. Yet everywhere in the region, whether they are found in large groups or tiny minorities, Indians tend to lead quiet, unobtrusive, and often isolated lives. Those who live on the fringes of cities in great numbers, drifting in and out of the urban landscape, are seldom noticed. Even those who are visually striking—the painted inhabitants of the Amazon forest and the colorfully dressed women of the Guatemalan highlands—seldom register as more than surface images. We know little about the way they live and have scant access to their thoughts. Like the black protagonist in Ralph Elli-

son's novel set in the United States, the original inhabitants of the Americas have become invisible.

Many Indians in Latin America have chosen their exile, while others have been pushed into the rural backlands by hostile forces. The latter groups are generally found in areas aptly termed "regions of refuge" by Mexican anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán (1967): living in small communities hugging desolate mountain slopes; dispersed across rugged, trackless deserts; or tucked away in the folds of thick tropical rainforests. Subsistence in these environments is difficult, hardship and deprivation are the rule. Roads, schools, health care, and electricity are substandard or absent. Even those Indians who have migrated to cities and towns in search of jobs in recent years tend to remain isolated, squatting along the periph-

ery of urban society, eking out a tenuous existence through occasional manual labor.

Nowhere has this isolation been more apparent than in Central America. The entire region was largely unknown to the outside world until 1979, when the Sandinistas overthrew Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua and a coup in El Salvador sparked a decade-long civil war that has recently ended, in stalemate, because both sides are too exhausted to continue fighting. Throughout the 1980s, all of the countries in Central America have turned up repeatedly on television screens around the globe, and many of the region's military and political figures have become familiar faces. Numerous books have been published, and much has been written in newspapers and magazines. Understanding of the region has increased exponentially, and the composite picture that has emerged—of death and violence and economic disintegration—is, unfortunately, entirely real, as those living in the region can attest. Yet very few people—including Central Americans themselves—are able to say much about the region's indigenous peoples.

There is much to say. Central America is a region of considerable cultural diversity, with an indigenous population of between 4 and 5.5 million people spread out among 43 different ethnic/linguistic groups. Whichever estimate is the more accurate, two complementary facts



P. Herlihy

Above: A Tawahka Indian family in Honduras plants beans in a jungle clearing. The burning termite nest serves as an insecticide. Below: An Emberá hunter and his son from Darién, Panama, pose with the wild peccaries they killed. In 1983, the Panamanian government granted the Emberá and Wounaan Indians a joint comarca, or semi-autonomous region under federal jurisdiction, of more than 4,000 square kilometers.

stand out. First, Indians account for between 16 and 22 percent of the region's total population of 25 million inhabitants. And second, the absolute number of Indian peoples has been growing in almost every country during the last few decades.

The map on page 4 shows that the majority of Central America's Indians

reside in two discrete and difficult-to-reach areas: the jagged volcanic highlands of Guatemala and the densely forested Caribbean coastal plain, which stretches from Belize down through Panama to the Colombian border. Indians fled into these refuge areas in colonial times to maintain their autonomy and ways of life. Over the centuries, they were gradually pushed back and displaced, forced into ever-tighter circles across the densely populated highlands of Guatemala or still deeper into the humid jungles of the Caribbean littoral. These hideouts had remained relatively inviolate to outside incursion until only recently, when the forces set loose by national and international market economies combined with the impact of new technologies to mount an assault against the region's remaining base of untouched natural resources. Now the last stands of tropical rainforest, and the way of life of the Indians who inhabit them, are threatened by advancing loggers, cattle ranchers, and landless peasants.

The largest bloc of indigenous peoples in Central America is concentrated in the highlands and along the northern lowland strip of Guatemala,



P. Herlihy

where as many as 4.5 million Indians are divided among 22 different Mayan language groups. They are culturally diverse and have been studied extensively by anthropologists, geographers, historians, biologists, and other researchers. Tourists in search of colorful weavings have also been frequent visitors to highland markets for decades. Accounts of the violence and brutal massacres visited upon the country's Indians in recent years have been widely portrayed in books, articles, and documentaries. It must be said that we know something about these people and their struggles.

But what is to be said of the remaining Indian groups of Central America? The small amount of data that exists is scattered in obscure journals and reports of limited circulation. Consequently, most of these groups are not well known even in their own countries. With the excep-

tion of the Miskito, who have gained some notoriety through their skirmishes with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and the Kuna of Panama, who have long been studied by anthropologists and photographed by tourists for their colorful native dress, the other Indians of Central America generally draw a blank. Among them are the Rama, the Sumu, and the Garífuna of Nicaragua. In Panama, the Kuna are simply the most prosperous and well-organized tribe of six, including the Guaymí, the Teribe (Térraba), the Bribri, the Emberá, and the Wounaan.

In Belize, the Yucatec Maya occupy the northern tip of the country contiguous to Mexico. Two other Mayan groups, the Kekchí and the Mopán, live in semi-isolation in the southernmost district of Toledo. The Garífuna, a racial and cultural fusion of Caribs and escaped African slaves who speak an Arawak Indian language,

inhabit a string of five fishing villages and one major city, Dangriga, along the country's southern coast. The Garífuna, in fact, are found all along the shoreline of Central America, from Belize through Guatemala and Honduras, as far as Nicaragua.

Most of Honduras's indigenous population reside in the northeast territory known as the Mosquitia. Following the pattern set in other parts of Central America, more than 80,000 Garífuna live dispersed along the Caribbean littoral. Toward the Nicaraguan border, the Miskito have their territory, while inland, along the major river basins, are the Pesch and the Tawahka Sumu peoples. Two branches of the Xicaque (Tol) tribe live to the west, occupying the hilly uplands of Yoro Department and the more isolated Montaña de la Flor region, while the Chortí, a heavily acculturated group, are near the Guatemalan border. To the south, near El Salvador, the dispersed Lenca have lost their language but maintain many of their cultural traditions.

Salvadorans commonly deny categorically that any Indians still exist among them—although as many as 500,000 people who call themselves Indian live there. Once the sole owners of the territory that now comprises the nation, the *naturales*, as they are called, have been stripped of virtually all they possessed before the Conquest. They have lost their land, and with it their native languages, much of their traditional culture, their autonomy, and even their self-esteem. Today most scrape by, supplementing the subsistence crops they grow on tiny parcels of rented land with wages from seasonal labor on coffee or sugarcane estates. The only vestige of the old pattern of communal landholding is a single plot of approximately eight hectares held by the Indian population of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, a town in the western end of the country. Each year, community authorities subdivide the plot among more than 100 farmers judged to be the town's neediest, so that they can plant food crops to supplement their meager diets.

Costa Rica's diverse indigenous population of slightly over 30,000 is dispersed about the countryside in small pockets, into which they have been driven inexorably since the time

A Tawahka Sumu Indian hunts game for his family in the "Tawahka Biosphere Reserve." Ownership of the Reserve, located along the Patuca River in Honduras, was recently granted to the Indians through presidential decree.



V. Murphy

of the Conquest. They receive limited protection in 21 circumscribed reservations, and several government agencies maintain small, underfunded programs for them. Yet the Indians are largely ignored by Costa Rican society, making a cameo appearance as pre-Hispanic savages, for instance, in history textbooks and then dropping out of sight as if they no longer existed.

Most of these Central American Indian groups are chronically impoverished and lack basic social services, such as health care and education. Illiteracy is widespread, and even where schools exist, the quality of teaching and materials is generally dismal. In Costa Rica, which leads the region with a national literacy rate above 80 percent, the Indian population has an estimated functional literacy rate of just over 20 percent. Many Central American Indians now speak Spanish as their mother tongue, but frequently only haltingly. A surprising number of them are limited to their own tongue, and therefore seldom leave the radius of their remote communities.

Incipient Indian Organizations

These difficult conditions notwithstanding, a number of Central American groups, as part of a larger trend affecting the entire hemisphere during the past 20 years, have begun organizing themselves to defend their interests before the outside world. Significantly, this incipient movement has gained impetus from grassroots activity during the 1980s. In Belize, the Garífuna have formed the National Garífuna Council, and the Kekchí and Mopán Maya have set up the Toledo Maya Cultural Council. These councils, in turn, have helped create the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP), which also includes newly formed groups from Dominica, St. Vincent, and Guyana.

The Cabécar and Bribri peoples of Costa Rica are reviving the tradition of *consejos de awapa*, or councils of elders, as a means to build community cohesion, strengthen cultural values, and defend tribal rights vis-à-vis outsiders.

The Kuna of Panama, who enjoy a long tradition of strong political organization, began serving as advisors to the Emberá, the Wounaan, and the Guaymí in the early 1970s. The out-

growth of this collaboration has seen each group create a *congreso general*, a representative governing body after the Kuna model.

Even in the difficult environment of El Salvador, faint murmurs have been heard from long-dormant indigenous populations who went underground following a savage massacre in 1932. At that time, in the western department of Sonsonate, soldiers rounded up and shot, in the space of a few days, as many as 30,000 people with "Indian" racial features and dress, including women and children. It is only recently, in the midst of the country's civil war, that the Asociación Nacional Indígena Salvadoreña has emerged; and Indian promoters have begun to work, albeit cautiously, with small-scale development projects in the rural communities of Sonsonate.

Honduras is home to several indigenous federations. They include the Organización Fraternal de Negros de Honduras started by the Garífuna, the Federación de Tribus Xicaques de Yoro, the Federación Indígena Tawahka de Honduras, the Federación de Tribus Indígenas Pesch de Honduras, the Organización Nacional Indígena Lenca de Honduras, and Mosquitia Asla Takanka, which represents the Miskito people.

Guatemala presents a far more complex and tragic picture. After tens of thousands of Indians lost their lives in the raw violence that gripped the country from the late 1970s through the early 1980s, community leadership in the highlands was either snuffed out or forced into exile. The violence abated for awhile, but escalated anew at the end of the decade. Many highland areas are still heavily militarized, and brutal killings of indigenous peoples have erupted openly again during the past two years. Understandably, the prevalent atmosphere of tension and uncertainty has severely curtailed the organization of Indians around social or political issues or even for community development.

Land and Natural Resources

The tropical forest belt running along the Atlantic Coast of Central America forms a bridge linking the massive continental ecosystems of North and

South America. According to a recent assessment of the region:

In terms of sheer numbers of species, the relatively tiny tropical forest areas of Central America are among the richest habitats on earth. Altogether, Honduras lists at least 700 birds, 112 mammals, and 196 reptiles and amphibians. Similarly, Guatemala's rich fauna is said to include 600 bird species, 250 species of mammals (including 28 types of game animals), and 200 species of reptiles and amphibians. The most recent list of Costa Rican birds includes 848 species, while Panama's tops 880—more than are found in the entire area of the Western Hemisphere north of the Tropic of Cancer. Belize, roughly the size of the state of Delaware, has approximately 533 bird species despite the fact that it has few montane species [Leonard, 1987].

Unfortunately, this rich natural endowment is rapidly disappearing. Only a threadbare mantle of the once thickly forested cover remains. Most alarming is the speed of this deforestation. At least two-thirds of the forest area first settled by aboriginal peoples 10,000 years ago has been cleared since 1950; and the pace of destruction has accelerated every decade during the past 40 years. Exponential population growth, business schemes using new technologies, and advances in public health and the control of insects have combined to open these formerly inhospitable zones to settlement by ranchers and landless campesinos. Overseas companies, with little regard for the sustainable use of the region's natural environment and the livelihood of its native inhabitants, are extending their reach into the last remaining hinterlands in search of cheap timber, oil, and precious minerals. As all of these forces advance, the Indian populations find themselves trapped.

Until recently, the region had considerable unclaimed forest into which tribal populations could expand or seek shelter. However, the population of Central America has grown from approximately 3.7 million at the turn of the century to more than 25 million today; if current trends continue, that number will double by 2010. The point has been reached where most of the remaining wilderness has run out, and there are no backlands into which indigenous groups can retreat to avoid outsiders. With their living spaces shrinking



M. Chapin



M. Chapin

Top: *Slash-and-burn agriculture by non-Indians has caused severe soil erosion on this land just outside the Kuna Indian Preserve in Panama.*
 Bottom: *Within the Preserve, flora and fauna are abundant. Here Kuna rangers patrol the nature park to prevent encroachment by landless settlers.*

and their escape routes blocked, they face increasingly difficult odds in their fight for survival.

Confronted with these pressures, Indians throughout the region have begun to stand fast and organize themselves. The Indians of El Salvador have been campaigning, with partial success, for communal lands at the community level, working through the national agrarian reform program. In Honduras, a handful of federations—most of them recently formed—have been working together with a support organization called MOPAWI (a Moskito acronym meaning “development of Mosquitia”) to secure legal title to their lands and forestall a rising tide of colonization. Within this program, the Tawahka Sumu have recently been granted the “Tawahka Biosphere Reserve,” through presidential decree, along the Patuca River. Similarly, the Miskito along Nicaragua’s northern Atlantic Coast have formed an organization called Miskito Kupia (MIKUPIA), or Heart of the Miskito, to push for an Indian-managed reserve encompassing the entire Miskito Cays area. The Kekchí and Mopán Maya of Belize

are campaigning for a homeland of some 200,000 hectares in the heart of their traditional territory.

In Panama, the Kuna, the Emberá, and the Wounaan have had relative success negotiating with the state to establish *comarcas*, semi-autonomous homelands under federal jurisdiction. The Kuna received legal rights to their homeland, the Comarca de San Blas, in 1938, yet have found it necessary during the past decade to carry out formal surveys and patrol their borders to prevent incursions by cattle ranchers and peasant farmers. The Emberá and Wounaan were granted, in 1983, a joint territory of more than 4,000 square kilometers in the Darién region, and are now working to consolidate their political control there. The Guaymí in the provinces of Chiriquí, Bocas del Toro, and Veraguas have not fared so well. They live in remote settlements dispersed throughout the hills and valleys of northwestern Panama and are politically fragmented. Their efforts to secure a legally recognized homeland have thus far been blocked by private and government forces with economic interests in the area.

As the various indigenous groups begin to organize, an incipient communications network is bringing them together to discuss common problems and possible survival strategies. In September 1989, the Kuna organized the first Interamerican Indigenous Congress on Natural Resources and the Environment. More than 70 Indian representatives from 17 nation states, ranging from Canada to Argentina, met to explore the connections between land rights and natural resource management. For many participants, it was the first time they had left their countries.

A second congress was held in San Ignacio de Moxos in Bolivia during December 1991, and several notable indigenous conferences and workshops have followed to deepen the discussion and adapt local strategies. In September 1992, for instance, Indian groups of Mosquitia, assisted by MOPAWI, came together to explore strategies for blocking outside colonization and unsustainable economic development.

This flurry of activity is a promising beginning. Yet the movement of Indians to organize around the issue of land protection thus far has not received the outside support it needs to be effective. This is part of a deeply entrenched pattern of neglect that has many roots. First, unlike the United States where a majority of the indigenous population is urban, Indians in Latin America frequently live in remote places without roads, such as the Mosquitia and the Darién. The arduous trek of several days to reach them by small plane, canoe, horse, and/or foot discourages most representatives of assistance agencies, government or private, from making the effort.

Second, the legacy of subjugation, humiliation, and discrimination from the Conquest persists today. Indians tend to be viewed as impediments to economic and social progress rather than beneficiaries of, or participants in, the development process. Where they have not been killed or driven off their lands, they have often been treated like foreigners—indeed, several Latin American countries place Indians under the authority of their ministries of foreign relations. This difficult history, which varies by country but seldom happily, has under-

standably left Indian groups deeply suspicious of outsiders. They often lack the self-confidence to defend their rights, and they tend to hold back from seeking outside assistance. Coupled with this, the chronic lack of schools and adequate education makes it hard to meet the exacting standards set by donor agencies for project proposals and management.

While this is changing, as more Indians begin to obtain education and learn how to deal with the larger society in its own terms, they still lag far behind other marginalized groups that tend to reap the bulk of available aid.

An Ecology of Mutual Interest

During the past five years, alarm has steadily grown about the fate of the planet's remaining tropical forests, and the imminence of their loss has become a popular theme in worldwide media. Biological diversity, a concept once restricted to scientific discourse, is now a term of common usage at all levels of society. As awareness and concern have grown, ever-increasing amounts of money are being channeled by environmental organizations and nation states into the creation and maintenance of protected wilderness areas and wildlife refuges.

Good intentions abound. The problem is that the rapid scurrying for strategies to halt deforestation has produced solutions that fall short of their mark. Forests continue to fall despite the creation of biosphere reserves and national parks, and the training of guards to patrol their perimeters. This has helped spark a heated discussion about a question of crucial importance in the Third World: conservation for whom? In a sense, this discussion is bringing the search for solutions back to where it should have begun.

As people in the industrialized world have become serious about halting the destruction of tropical forests and preserving some degree of biodiversity, they have often overlooked the indigenous peoples who inhabit the wilderness and have similar aims. The Indians of Central America are not primarily motivated by the deteriorating state of the global environment, but they are intensely concerned about the fate of the land around them and their

own survival as peoples. Since both groups have overlapping interests, is it possible for them to forge an alliance and work toward common goals?

There are several reasons why a collaborative effort to promote conservation would benefit both parties. Because indigenous peoples living in tropical forests have often coevolved with specific microecologies for centuries, they have developed ways of life and systems of tapping resources that tend to maintain the integrity of the forest. They manage their surrounding environment in a manner as close to sustainable as mankind has reached. Appraising the possible disappearance of these indigenous groups across the globe, the World Commission on Environment and Development stated in *Our Common Future*:

These communities are the repositories of vast accumulations of traditional knowledge and experience that link humanity with its common origins. Their disappearance is a loss for the larger society, which could learn a great deal from their traditional skills in sustainably managing very complex ecological systems. It is a terrible irony that as formal development reaches more deeply into rain forests, deserts, and other isolated environments, it tends to destroy the only cultures that have proved able to thrive . . . [there].

Critics argue that indigenous peoples are inherently no more "ecologically noble stewards" than others, that if given the chance and means, they are perfectly capable of wreaking havoc on the environment. Some even suggest that accrediting Indians as, in some sense, innate conservationists is a cynical attempt by both Indians and their supporters to play a "trump card in the current world of conservation sensitivities" (Redford, 1990).

To establish a workable strategy for protecting tropical forests, it is vital to clarify the terms of debate. Clearly, indigenous peoples are not a "magic wand" for restoring nature to a pristine state. Central American Indians, given the opportunity, will generally shoot and eat species, such as macaws and quetzal birds, prized by environmentalists (and of course the feathers are prized by indigenous peoples for ceremonial purposes). Indians also clear forest to plant crops, gather materials to build houses, and take down large trees to carve

dugout canoes. They exploit their environment because that is how they survive. They are not *perfect* conservationists, but then, who is?

The hard fact is that human beings live within the boundaries of virtually every forest on the planet. In the scheme of things, indigenous peoples are doubtlessly the most effective and caring resource managers available. In Central America they are, by far, a better bet than the loggers, ranchers, and peasant farmers seeking entry into the forests.

It is not simply a question of the cultural and technical systems Indians have developed to ensure rational use of the forest that sets them apart. Rather it is in how they view the land itself. To them it is not "property" that can be bought and sold as a commodity, but something sacred, a living entity whose bounty is conditional. The Earth must be cared for and treated with respect.

At the base of this belief among all the indigenous groups in Central America is the notion of communal territory. This orientation engenders a sense of responsibility for the conservation of resources for the common good of the tribe. They are concerned, as a community, about the abundance of game for food, palm fronds for roofing, medicinal herbs for curing; and they make collective decisions and collectively act to protect scarce resources and preserve the environment for the benefit of the group.

The Kuna of San Blas in Panama, for example, strictly regulate game hunting in their comarca. Hunters are cautioned to restrict the number of animals of a single species killed on each trip; the sale of game animals is forbidden; and large animals are shared by the whole community. Faced with growing scarcities, the Kuna recently legislated a lobster-catching season and prohibited the collection of sea turtle eggs. Such regulations are common among indigenous peoples but lacking among the colonists pushing into Indian lands. It is here that Indians most resemble conservationists—in their ability to view land and resources as bounties provided by the same Earth to which the community also belongs, and not as things to be taken for personal gain.

Clearly, conservation schemes can function well only if they are closely

coordinated with the local population. In the case of Central America's largest intact forest areas—the Mosquitia/Miskito coastal region of Honduras and Nicaragua, the Valle de Estrella/Talamanca region of Costa Rica and Panama, and the Bayano and Darién region of eastern Panama—the population is overwhelmingly Indian. These people have a stake in these forests over the long haul and are willing to protect them, if given the chance.

Indian Peoples and the Quincentenary

As the activities of the Quincentenary have unfolded, there has been considerable talk of the richness and diversity of Native American culture. This is indeed true. Aboriginal cultures have contributed more to the variegated patchwork of national and regional identities in the Americas than is commonly realized, and the surviving Indian cultures continue to provide variety and richness to mankind as a whole, as well as security, beauty, and meaning to the individual groups that created them. Yet many of these cultures are extremely vulnerable to the advance of the modern world.

In recent years, scientists have been telling us about the need to maintain the planet's biodiversity. Cultural diversity is no less important, and as the previous section of this article suggests, the two are inextricably linked. As forests vanish across the tropics, so do the cultural groups who inhabit them. We are losing biodiversity and cultural diversity in a single swoop.

This need not happen. Recently, Indian organizations have begun to appear at the local, regional, and national levels. As individual tribes seek organizational skills, they are joining into federations of tribal groups, often overcoming centuries of mutual antagonism. Their cohesion comes from the shared need for land and natural resource protection. They require our help—and we require theirs. Only if we work together to solve common problems can we salvage what remains of the planet's endowment.

The occasion of the Quincentenary brings with it the opportunity to reflect on the present condition of peo-

ples who have tenaciously endured 500 years of colonization. The first step should be the long overdue task of discovering who these people are and what they think about this world we inhabit together. They must be given the opportunity to express their vision of how their own lands and resources should be managed. They must be supported in their efforts to organize and protect what is rightfully theirs. They need to be given the freedom to determine the course of their lives and to maintain their own cultural configurations. Above all, they need to be accorded the status of equals.

Only when some of these things come to pass will the Indians of the Americas perhaps be able to view the "encounter of two worlds" in a less tragic light. ❖

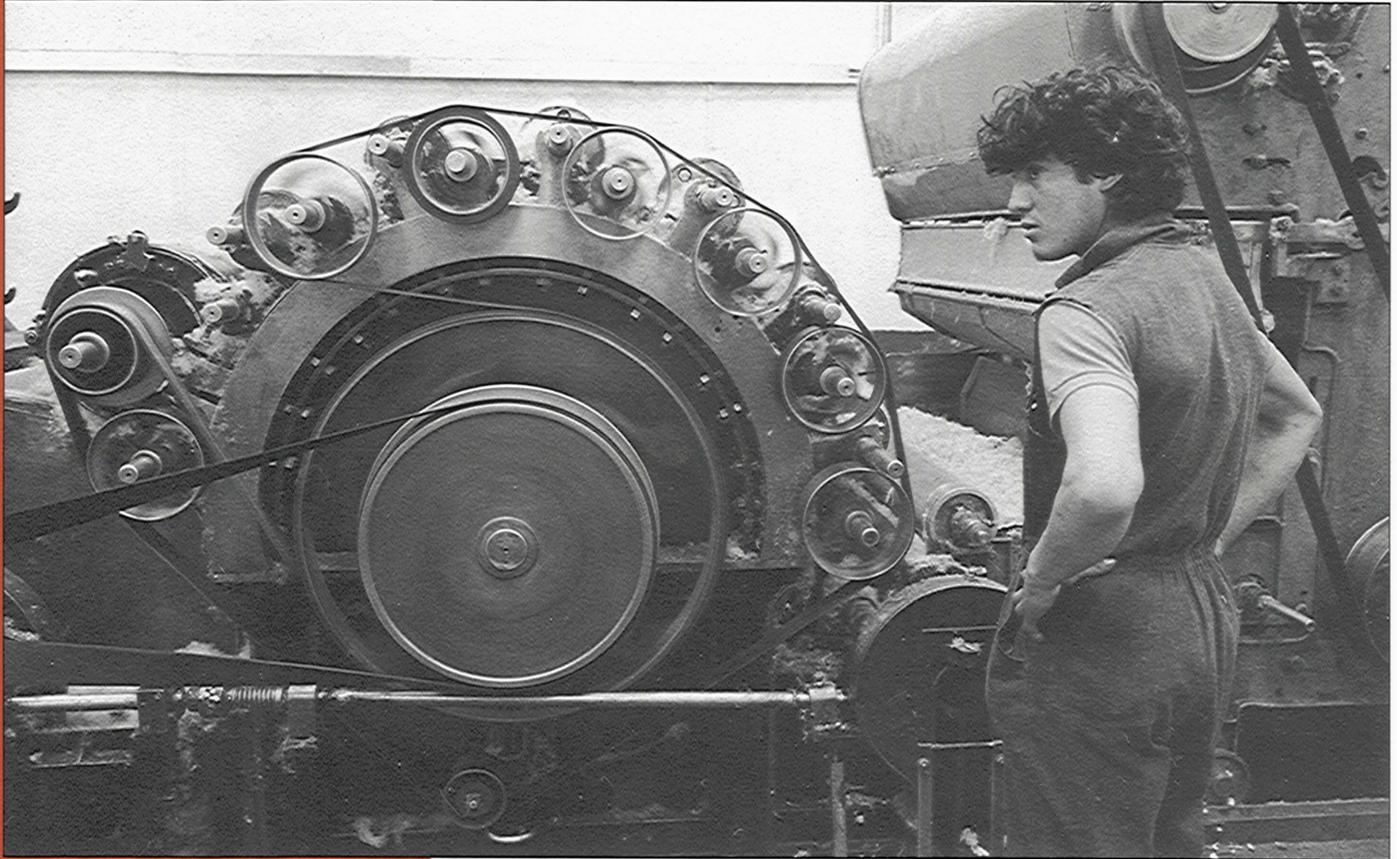
MAC CHAPIN is the director of the Central America Program for Cultural Survival, a private nonprofit organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The program, supported by the Regional Office for Central America Programs of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Pew Charitable Trusts, assists indigenous groups to strengthen their organizations and protect and manage their lands and natural resources. The author wishes to thank José Barreira for the article title, which comes from his edited volume "View from the Shore: American Indian Perspectives on the Quincentenary," Northeast Indian Quarterly, Fall 1990, Vol. 7, No. 3.

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**From Protest
to Productivity:**

The Evolution of Indigenous Federations in Ecuador



Miguel Sayago

***Organizations that
have successfully
invested in human
capital are poised to
galvanize local and
regional markets.***

**Anthony Bebbington,
Hernán Carrasco,
Lourdes Peralbo,
Galo Ramón,
Víctor Hugo Torres, and
Jorge Trujillo**

During the past three decades, a broad grassroots movement of Native American organizations has coalesced in Ecuador around the struggle for land, civil rights, and cultural identity. The signs of their success are increasingly visible. It can be seen in

the titling of communal land claims, the proliferation of bilingual education and literacy programs, and the reclamation of native musical and art forms. More significantly, it can be seen in the determination of indigenous peoples to exercise their rights as citizens within Ecuadorian society.

Perhaps the most striking indication of this occurred in 1990, when the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE), an umbrella coalition of regional and local organizations, called for a non-violent rural mobilization to publicize the government's failure to fulfill its past commitments to Indian



Federations that formed a multicultural confederation to defend common rights also promote local income-generating projects. Preceding page: A worker processes wool at a Fundación de Organizaciones de Salinas (FUNORSAL) factory in Salinas, Bolívar. Above: Young indigenous women from Napo Province clear a field for planting.

communities. This unprecedented event, which became known as the "first national indigenous uprising," shut down major transportation arteries throughout the countryside and received broad coverage from the print and electronic media.

The uprising of June 1990, produced few immediate results beyond a vague agreement by the government to negotiate a list of service improvements and general principles. Yet even as images of the various marches and demonstrations faded from television screens, their power lingered. The dignity and determination displayed by participants underlined the growing self-confidence of peoples who were actively reclaiming their heritage, and with it their voice. The intricate web of organizations involved in the event also car-

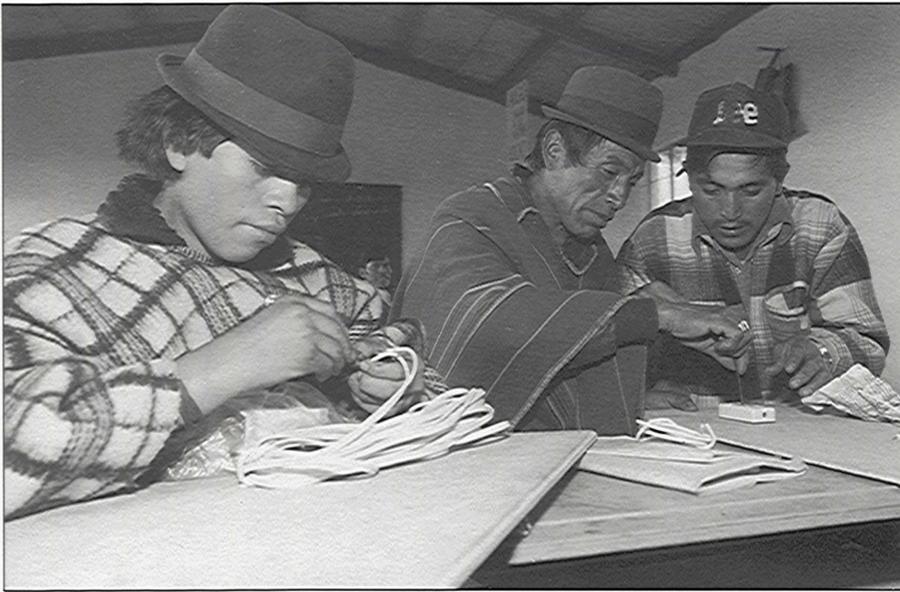
ried a message. Over the years, more and more Indian communities, as CONAIE official Ampam Karakras, puts it, had decided to take their fate into their own hands; they were no longer willing to sit back and quietly accept "the avalanche of [outside] development models from which they have suffered in the past."

The taste of empowerment afforded by the 1990 uprising has created new demands. Many indigenous Ecuadorians now want more from their organizations, believing that their agenda should move beyond cultural revitalization and the leveraging of better services from the state. Above all, members want their organizations to help address their most pressing need: the generation and maintenance of secure family incomes during a time of national eco-

nomics crisis, structural adjustment, and declining public sector support. In short, indigenous organizations are being asked to become development organizations.

Karakras believes that meeting this challenge will define the future of Ecuador's Indian movement. "It isn't that what we have done so far is bad," he says. "In fact, it is good and necessary. But we have yet to come up with responses to the economic problem, and now is the moment to do so. By increasing their economic power, our organizations will be better able to make their voices heard politically."

Can Ecuador's indigenous federations harness their organizational capacity and the renewed sense of ethnic identity to devise income generating projects that will benefit the country's substantial population



Above: Members of an UOCACI affiliate are trained as electricians. Below: Two members of Comuna Cacha Chuyug Panadero unroll cable to power a new pottery workshop.

of Indian citizens? To help answer that question, this article will explore how existing federations have evolved, in order to uncover the economic roles they seem best suited to play.

Planting the Seeds of the Modern Indian Movement

The urgency of the economic demand should not be interpreted as a sign that indigenous organizations in Ecuador have had negligible influence or are about to crumble. In fact, the strength and importance of the Indian movement has steadily waxed during the past three decades at the local, regional, and national levels. The foundations for this growth were laid earlier this century with national legislation that authorized formation of base organizations—including communities; cooperatives; associations; and, in the Amazonian region, centers. Indian peoples have made increasing use of these entities to organize themselves locally and obtain resources from the state. Between 1974 and 1990, the number of registered communities increased by more than 50 percent, from 1,530 to 2,236, and the process is not yet complete.

But base organizations by themselves came to be seen as insufficient. Sometimes they were too small to press for more thorough land reform

or to persuade the state to deliver mandated rural services; and they had little effect on the prices Indian farmers received for their crops or paid for seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs. In the Amazonian region, they were also too weak to prevent the loss of land to colonists, oil and timber concerns, and government agencies. To overcome these barriers, indigenous peoples—usually in conjunction with non-Indian clergy and grassroots support organizations (GSOs), a type of nongovernmental organization (NGO) that specializes in strengthening the capacity of local civic institutions—began to create federations of communities to



defend common rights and negotiate improved services. The state itself often contributed to this consolidation by promoting federations to ease the implementation of rural development projects. The nonformal education work of the national literacy program also played a prominent role in organizing indigenous populations in Chimborazo Province and elsewhere. By 1990, 126 federations, also known as second-level organizations, had been legally constituted.

Simultaneous with the growth of these federations, provincial and national Indian organizations were emerging to defend their constituents' interests in policy debates on land, education, public administration, and constitutional reform. In the eastern lowlands, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana (CONFENIAE) grew out of an organization founded in 1980 to defend the interests of the region's dispersed Indian peoples. In the highlands, Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui (ECUARUNARI) was formed in 1974 to represent the Indians of the altiplano. The zenith of this movement toward national cohesion came in 1986 with the creation of CONAIE as an umbrella group of confederations.

If most Ecuadorians were unaware of this process, they awoke to see it displayed, in full flowering, on their televisions during the uprising of June 1990. They heard CONAIE demand genuine access by indigenous peoples to the fruits of economic development and recognition of their cultural and political rights as citizens within a country of multiple nationalities. Above all, CONAIE criticized the lack of alternatives to neo-liberal economic policies that were undermining the viability of Indian communities. The demands struck a chord among Ecuador's indigenous population, and as federations, communities, and families turned out to block roads, activity in large parts of the highlands ground to a halt. The Panamerican Highway south of Riobamba, capital of Chimborazo Province, was closed, and nearly 5,000 Indians marched through the streets and filled the public squares of Guaranda, provincial capital of Bolívar Department.

The uprising proved that Indian organizations could mobilize to bring their concerns into the national political arena. But will historians one day identify this event as the launching pad for an authentic Indian model of development in Ecuador, or will it be seen as the moment when the strength of Indian organizations peaked? The final judgment may well depend, ironically, on the ability of indigenous organizations to meet the very demands they made on the state—the economic agenda that mobilized so many families at the grassroots. As Fernando Rosero, a social analyst with close links to many of those organizations, comments: The “indigenous campesino is interested not only in land but also in economic proposals that will stand the test of time. . . . [Therefore, Indian] leaders must propose solutions as well as make protests.”

The Need for an Indian Model of Development

The search for viable economic proposals at the federation level begins with an understanding of how mar-

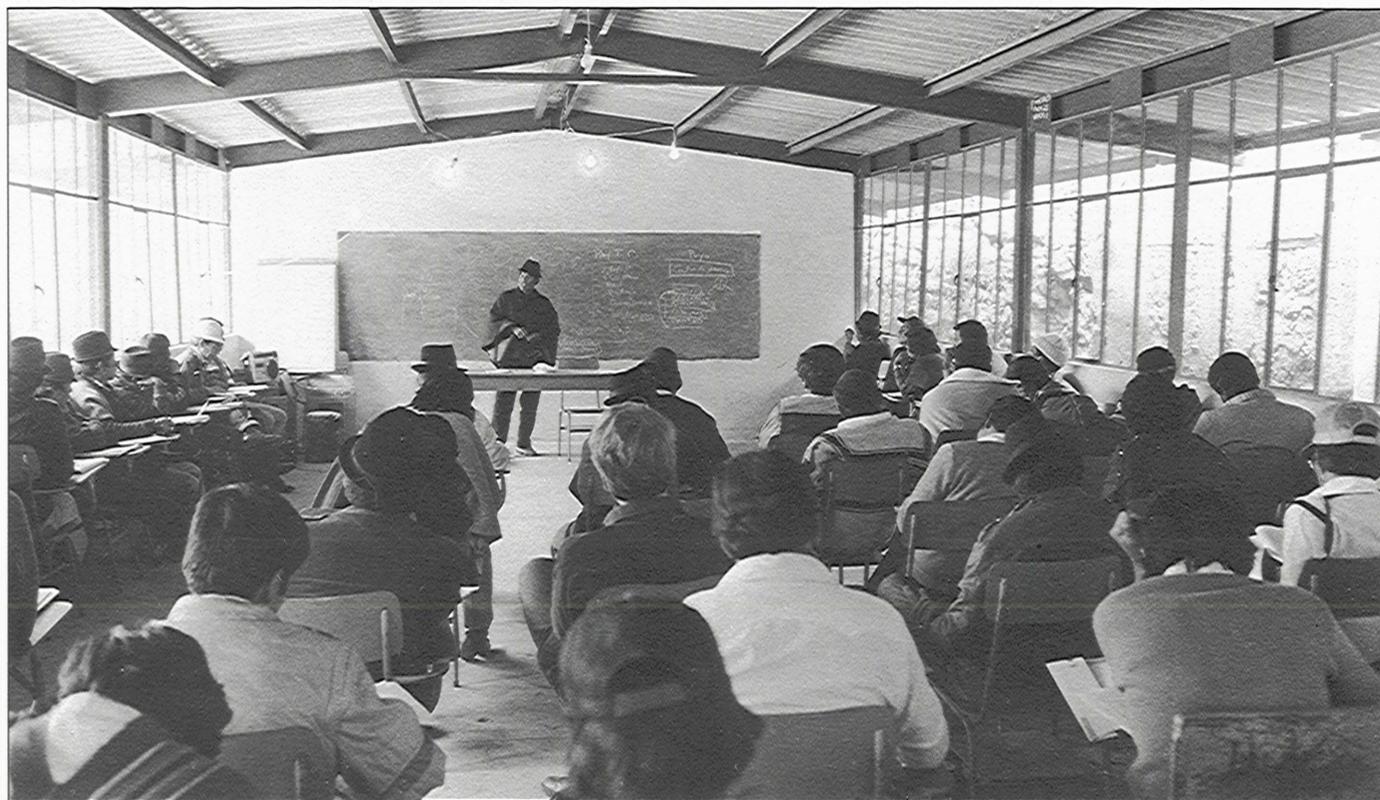
kets can be used to increase member families' cash income. “An organization that revolves around productive concerns and puts money in the family purse will survive,” argues Patricio Camacho, an economist with Maquita Cushunchij (MCCH), a GSO that assists indigenous groups to market their products. Otherwise, he implies, they will wither. That is, the stakes are larger than those suggested by Ampam Karakras's previous call for increased political clout through economic strength. Failure to grow economically could undermine the organizational base that secured the hard-won social gains of the past three decades.

Just as Ecuador's oil income will dry up, observes Edmundo Yumi of the Unión de Cabildos de San Juan, “the same thing could happen with [funds and support] from donors, GSOs, and public institutions. What would we do then?” The prime challenge, he believes, “is to become economically self-sufficient.”

To understand the difficulty of that task, one must consider Karakras's estimate that the country's Indian organizations “have an external financial dependency of almost 90 percent, if

not more.” Karakras also points to the lack of consensus about economic utility and the role of the market, saying that many indigenous organizations “shy away from productive activities, calling them ‘capitalist.’” This reluctance is perhaps more cultural than political, reflecting a fear among local groups that a new organizational focus might diminish efforts to reclaim and strengthen ethnic identity.

This is not an idle concern. Many of those efforts have been crucial to the accomplishments of the past three decades. A case in point is the musical activity of Los Yumbos Chaguamangos in the Amazonian province of Napo. This group revived traditional songs and verses, played them at community meetings, and inspired a flourish of cultural activity among other indigenous peoples in the region. Los Yumbos played a role in strengthening organizations among the lowland Quichua that eventually leveraged important rights and services from the state. None of this might have happened if either donors, including the IAF, or local people themselves had used economic criteria as the sole basis for evaluating



Juan García Salazar



Opposite page: Leaders from 17 indigenous Ecuadorian federations attend a meeting sponsored by Comunidec to consolidate their community development programs. Left: Arturo León, a member of a cultural group sponsored by SEV-CH, a grassroots support organization, performs in a skit about the perils of urban migration. The audience in Bazán, Chimborazo, will later be asked how the sociodrama could be resolved in ways that empower the community. Among the projects inspired by this group are literacy training programs, weaving enterprises, and village bakeries.

whether to support the early efforts of Los Yumbos Chaguamangos.

Concern about what might be lost from a reorientation of organizational priorities is understandable, but as we shall see, the economic empowerment of Amazonian peoples depends neither on blind adherence to, nor unthinking rejection of, markets. Rather, the challenge is to adapt market mechanisms to indigenous cultural and ecological norms. A pragmatic approach to markets need not impose the fragmenting individualism of the Western model on communally oriented Indian cultures. Group-based ventures can often thrive in this milieu, and federations hold one of the keys to unlocking that potential by mobilizing local enthusiasm and resources. That is, new models of economic development can be built from below, from Indian organizations themselves.

Jurgen Schüldt, an economist at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Quito, argues that this building up from the local level, from organizations that already exist, is the driving force for *desarrollo autogenerado*. Such "self-generated development," he believes, is not only possible but may be the only way to solve the problems confronted by Andean societies. Schüldt doubts the wisdom of prevailing development

models that concentrate on export markets, which offer few entry points for low-income producers. The best strategy for tackling rural poverty, he believes, emphasizes production for local markets. Harnessing "regional inputs for local development" will generate more local multiplier effects: more jobs, more demand, and finally, better living conditions. Because this strategy is designed to maximize the resources of the poor, and works through federations and other membership organizations, it will incorporate indigenous ideas, forms of cooperation, and cultural traditions. Schüldt offers a vision of integrated grassroots development that is empowering, at once economically vibrant and culturally attuned.

His observations are echoed by some within Ecuador's public sector. "We must look for alternatives [to the neo-liberal model]," says Carlos Jara, manager of the Fondo de Desarrollo Rural Marginal (FODERUMA), a grassroots support program of Ecuador's central bank. He adds, somewhat apocalyptically, "One only has to go to Bolivia [where such policies are in effect] to see that otherwise the future facing us is disastrous."

Jara believes that there is much to be learned from the successful experiences of indigenous organizations, the GSOs that support them, and the pub-

lic sector itself which can form the basis of an alternative policy. His 13 years of experience at FODERUMA have strengthened his conviction that these local initiatives hold the seeds for a more-hopeful future, both for Ecuador's Indians and the nation itself.

What exactly can be learned from the experience of Ecuador's indigenous federations that sheds light on the prospects for self-generated, sustainable, and culturally appropriate development? Finding an answer begins with lessons from the limitations most federations have encountered.

Federations and the Dilemma of Service Delivery

The truth is that progress toward sustainable economic development by most Indian organizations, as Ampam Karakras attests, has been uneven at best. This is understandable since few of them were created to generate family income. The primary formative issues have been sociopolitical and cultural problems, particularly the protection and recuperation of land rights.

Cristóbal Tapuy, drawing on his long experience as ex-president of the Federación de Organizaciones Indígenas de Napo (FOIN), ex-president of CONFENIAE, and president of

CONAIE, believes that this was inevitable. He says, "Greater emphasis on political concerns was needed to get our organizations going." The tendency of the national economy to atomize groups "obliged us [to work at] recovering our history, our language, our culture." In the highlands, where cultural domination was often more intense and land ownership more concentrated, the experience was similar. Local reality stressed the need for organizational strengthening to carry out bilingual literacy training, nonformal education, and cultural revitalization programs.

As a result of this effort, the face of rural life has been transformed. Today, at the provincial level, there is an Indian assertiveness where once there was submission, and a plentitude of organizations where once there were none. Above all, there is a determination not to sit back and "be developed" by someone else.

Yet now that many of the problems of land rights and cultural marginalization have been ameliorated, both sympathetic outside observers and local members wonder increasingly if these organizations are themselves becoming remote from the pressing demands of daily life. One observer from Cultural Survival, a U.S. NGO based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, reported after a mid-1980s visit to FOIN in Napo Province that "understandably [its] members ask themselves 'why should we remain loyal and even interested in an organization that does so little for us?' The communities expect something more from FOIN than the same tired speeches about the need to strengthen the organization."

Reinaldo Cunduri of Sablog Rosa Inés in Guamote in highland Chimborazo Province expands that sentiment. He explains, quite bluntly, that his community left the now-weakened federation Jatun Ayllu Cabildo because there were just too many meetings. Others from throughout the country complain that so much money is spent on assemblies and so much time on critical reflection that far too few of their resources trickle down to the grassroots.

The area where federations have had real material impact is on leveraging and channeling public resources. They have played a vital role

in obtaining improved infrastructure for communities, including the provision of potable water, electricity, roads, and civic centers. They have also increased the speed and effectiveness of public response to natural disasters. In the lowland jungles of Napo, the Asociación de Indígenas Evangélicas del Napo (AIEN) worked with the provincial senator to rapidly survey flood damage suffered by 700 families, and is helping administer a food and housing relief program. And during a recent cholera outbreak in Chimborazo, Indian federations col-



Miguel Sayago

UOCACI members lay pipe for potable water during a minga, or voluntary work day.

laborated with local public health officials in organizing community meetings to teach use of rehydration salts and other basic measures for treating the disease early in order to minimize deaths and the risk of contagion. So successful were these measures that Hernán Chamorro, provincial director for rural health training, believes that "indigenous organizations are the key factor not only in cholera [control] but in all our work. . . . Without their collaboration, our task would be titanic."

At the same time that federations were collaborating with the public health service, they were also valuable conduits of information for each other, passing skills horizontally from campesino to campesino. José Balla, administrator of the Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Cicalpa (UOCACI), believes that the

rapid control of cholera in his region was due to the training that Unión health workers received from health promoters of the neighboring Asociación de Indígenas Evangélicas de Chimborazo.

Although the provision of such services is invaluable, it is not sustainable economic development. Even when federations have embarked on more-ambitious economic projects, most have ended up delivering services. Perhaps the most common examples of this pattern are agricultural development initiatives in which the federation provides seeds, fertilizers, and agrochemicals to members at below-market prices. Often, as in the case of UOCACI, the federation trains Indian agricultural extensionists to assist member families.

The design of these projects is modeled on state-sponsored rural development programs, but implementation tends to be more responsive and effective because it is controlled by Indians themselves. Because extensionists speak the native language and live in the local community rather than the provincial capital, they frequently are able to deliver services to areas unattended by the state. Because they deliver services through the federation rather than community by community, they often attain economies of scale. The final effect sometimes exceeds the planned scope of operation, since problem-solving skills are nurtured within communities, encouraging greater self-reliance and initiative than state-sponsored rural development.

In the end, however, most of these programs have suffered from inherent organizational flaws as well as technical deficiencies. Distributing services when resources are inadequate creates a bitter dilemma. Federations either lend (or worse yet, give) inadequate, almost inconsequential amounts of seed to most of their members; or they provide adequate support for a privileged few. The ineffectiveness of the former and the membership strains caused by the bias of the latter can eventually undermine the federation itself.

In either case, distributing subsidies is the best way to decapitalize an institution quickly. "We speak of self-financing, but what we have achieved is self-bankruptcy," Ampam Karakras



Miguel Sayago

Participants at an accounting workshop in the highlands. FUNORSAL has shown that accurate balance sheets and widespread knowledge of bookkeeping are key to profitable community businesses and organizational cohesion.

observes wryly. Many government projects suffer from the same shortcomings, but to the members of federations these failings seem far worse when they come from their own leadership. Many base groups consequently lose interest and fall away.

Beyond these inherent organizational flaws are the difficulties resulting from inadequate job skills. At the end of their training, many federation extensionists still know little more than the average farmer, whose applied local knowledge is often superior. At the administrative level, lack of expertise in modern accounting methods is perhaps the thorniest problem. While funds have sometimes gone illicitly astray, the more frequent problem has been confused balance sheets that create the appearance of wrongdoing. Accusations feed counteraccusations, which eventually sap organizational cohesion.

If the organizational underpinning for service delivery has been shaky, the technical basis for achieving viable self-generated development has been equally elusive. Ironically, the increased interest of highland communities in economic projects comes at a time when degradation of the resource base has become so severe that little more can be done with

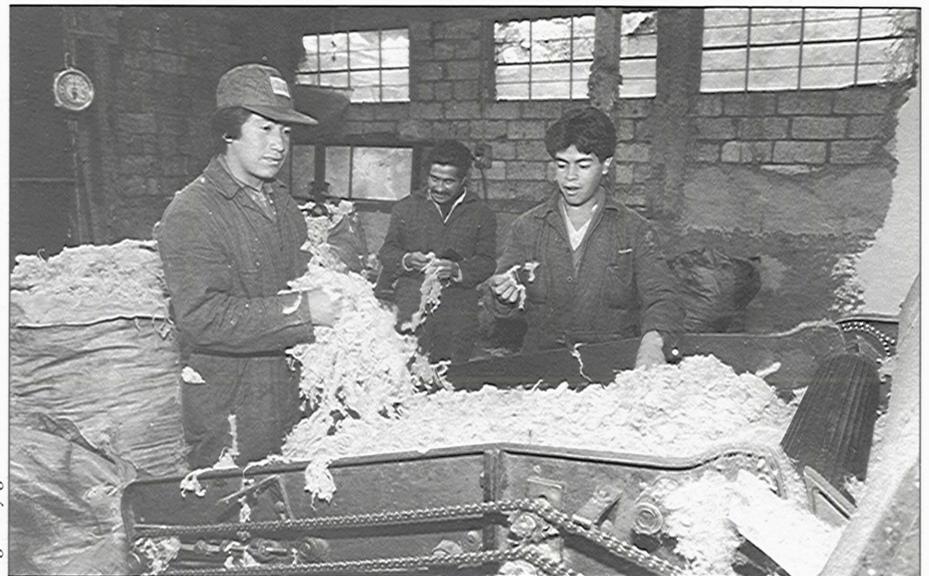
modern techniques to increase yields or even offset declines. "The situation is really very difficult," says Francisco Coro, a leader of the Unión de Asociaciones Agrícolas de Columbe (UNASAC). UNASAC is attempting to use organic techniques to restore soil fertility and prevent erosion, but Coro is concerned that this long-term

investment will not yield benefits quickly enough to attract widespread participation among farmers.

In the lowland forests, Amazonian federations have also encountered difficulties. They have tried to forestall outside colonization by promoting commercial ranching and modern cash-crop agriculture. Aside from the logistical nightmare of trying to administer a technical assistance program in the jungle, these models have often been counterproductive: Soils have degraded, yields have fallen, and intragroup social differentiation has risen. In the case of the Federación de Centros Shuar-Achuar, commercial livestock projects created a handful of wealthy farmers who then pressed for division of communal land rights, making it more difficult to defend the area from outside encroachment.

The social and ecological unsustainability of past efforts is prompting organizations such as FOIN and the Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de Pastaza (OPIP) to look for alternatives. The search for an appropriate development model for the Amazonian region still stands wide open, but awareness is growing among several federations that lasting solutions must be homegrown.

These workers at the FUNORSAL wool-processing factory in Salinas no longer have to migrate to the city in search of jobs.



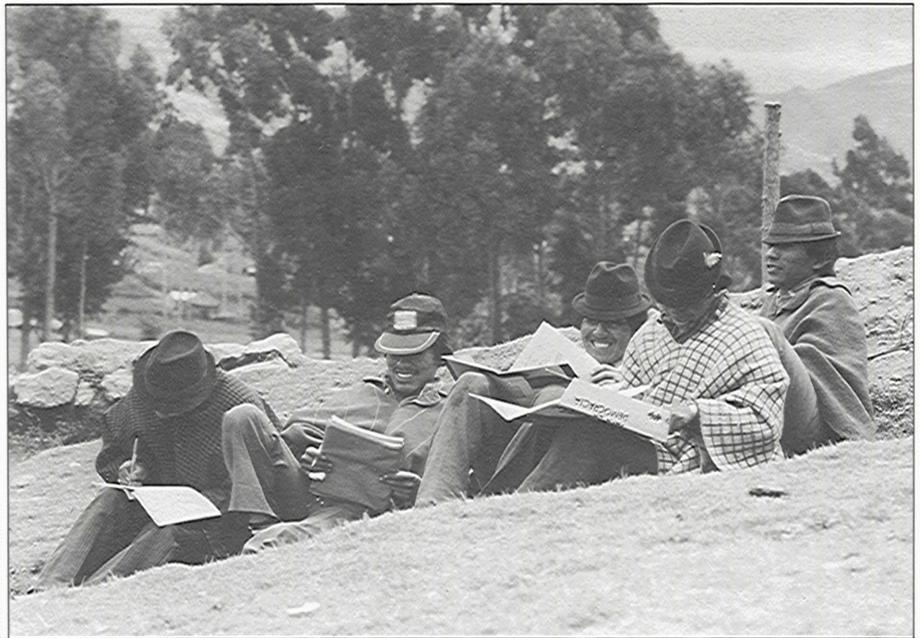
Miguel Sayago

From Service Provision to Vertical Integration

Scattered among the many federation programs that have encountered difficulties are several that offer clues about how to improve income generation. One of the most remarkable is the Fundación de Organizaciones de Salinas (FUNORSAL). From its inception, FUNORSAL has followed the beat of a different drummer, minimizing the sociocultural functions adopted by so many other federations. By concentrating on the development of new economic activities for families in its region, it has sidestepped the contradictions of service distribution. It now administers some 15 cooperative businesses. It has pioneered agroprocessing to add value to the region's agricultural production, coordinated marketing to maximize profits, and knit together a system of savings and loan cooperatives to provide small farmers with timely access to credit.

These activities have allowed FUNORSAL to achieve three things rarely found in other federations. First, it has made itself into a vital resource for small farmers, who have far more to gain economically from participation than by acting alone. The impact goes beyond the 286 new agroprocessing jobs that pay 40 to 80 percent above the national minimum wage. The production facilities have also opened new markets for local families, generating much needed income. Additionally, some of the profits from processing milk into cheese, spinning wool into yarn, drying mushrooms, and other agroindustrial activities are rechanneled into subsidized loans for families to buy dairy cattle or upgrade housing. By distributing profits rather than services, the organization links equity to productivity and builds awareness of the need for reinvestment to sustain benefits and avoid decapitalization.

Second, FUNORSAL's track record has won such a high degree of legitimacy from Salinas's families and from donors and other outside agencies that it has become, for all intents and purposes, the local development corporation. Consequently, it can conceive, plan, and coordinate activities on a regional level.



Juan García Salazar

Participants at a multifederation leadership workshop in Chimborazo study between classes. When they return home, they will train others.

Finally, FUNORSAL's greatest achievement may well be its ability to craft economic alternatives that stem seasonal migration—a phenomenon that causes family disruption and other social problems in villages throughout the highlands. Many migrants have now made the return trek from cities to live and work in Salinas.

These successes have not happened overnight. They represent two decades of hard work and an immense effort to train a cadre of local professionals to manage an intricate network of projects. Above all, FUNORSAL has made impressive strides in building a broad base of expertise in accounting at both the federation and local levels. This has ensured efficient and accountable fund management, and minimized the financial uncertainties and membership strains that typically accompany confused balance sheets.

The FUNORSAL model confirms Jurgen Schüldt's assertion that self-generated development in the highlands rests on expansion of local markets to add value to local resources. It suggests that federations must move beyond service delivery to turn themselves into engines of growth which enable families to reap the rewards of regional economic develop-

ment. However, finding the appropriate organizational role and developing the professional capacity to realize it will not be easy transitions for all federations to make.

FUNORSAL is unlike most other Ecuadorian federations in that its base organizations are cooperatives, not communities. The former begin as economic entities, while the latter are social and political institutions uniting neighboring families. El Ceibo, an exemplary federation of indigenous cacao farmers and processors in neighboring Bolivia, is also built on a cooperative structure (see Healy, *Grassroots Development*, Vols. 11:2, 12:1). El Ceibo and FUNORSAL comprise "self-selected" memberships that have organized themselves around a productive activity. Their growth in membership size and scope of activities has tended to be an organic response to market opportunities. A federation of communities, on the other hand, often faces a double bind in launching an income-generating project.

Market competitiveness may force the federation to target the project to those most capable of implementing it within each community. Unless the activity carries spillover benefits to the community as a whole, the federation may be pressed to sponsor

projects for other groups in order to avoid charges of favoritism that can undermine the base organization, and eventually the federation itself. Trying to meet this demand can transform income-generating projects into service projects and can easily swamp the managerial and funding capacity of the federation.

Indigenous groups in Bolivia have been able to sidestep this dilemma, at least in part, because they have evolved a dual organizational structure. Land reform there came much earlier than in Ecuador and empowered *sindicatos*, forums of local government, as the means for protecting socio political rights. Cooperatives and other associations became the vehicles for increased rural production. FUNORSAL may be the harbinger of a similar development path in Ecuador, but that will depend on the ability of community-based federations to tackle their productive projects without spinning them off.

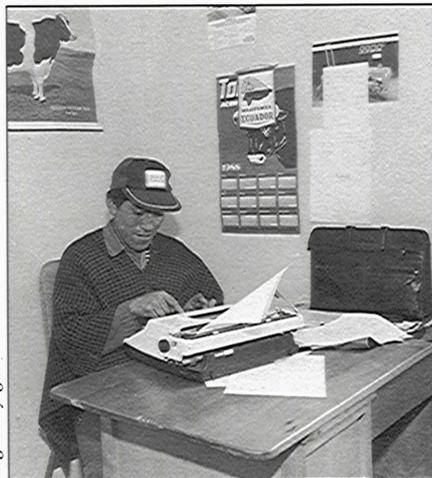
A second caveat also complicates replicability of the FUNORSAL model. From the outset, FUNORSAL has operated with certain advantages not enjoyed by most Ecuadorian federations: relatively convivial inter-ethnic relationships in its region, access to land that had not been excessively subdivided into unproductive plots, strong technical support from Salesian missionaries, and good financial backing. The situation on the eastern side of snowcapped Chimborazo mountain has been far less propitious for indigenous federations such as UOCACI.

Twenty years ago, as Salinas began its development experience, the Indians of Chimborazo Province were struggling for access to land on large estates that were controlled by non-Indians. José Balla of UOCACI says, "We did not get involved in agroindustry immediately because we had other problems to solve first... now that we have solved them, we are taking a look at how value can be added to production so that all of the base groups can benefit."

The situation in the Amazonian province of Napo is similar. Former FOIN President Nelson Chimbo says it was only recently, after 90 percent of the federation's land disputes were substantially resolved, that economic projects could become a top priority.

He quickly adds, however, that, as in much of the rest of Ecuador, the organization must still remain vigilant and fight hard to protect members' land rights from outside pressures.

When such federations do begin to explore income-generating projects of their own, they may find that the FUNORSAL model suffers from some of the same ecological and social problems that have arisen in Amazonia. The expansion of pastures to raise livestock for the production of milk and wool has accelerated deforestation around Salinas, necessitating forestry projects to halt soil erosion and ensure adequate future



Miguel Savago

An UOCACI official types a schedule for a community forestation project.

supplies of fuel and building materials. The shift to livestock production has also led to a fall in food-crop production as fields are opened for grazing. Increased reliance on goods and staples purchased from outside Salinas may one day undermine regional and family food security.

Finally, the fact that FUNORSAL has not had to articulate a cultural agenda in order to defend its interests from outside pressures may increase its vulnerability over the long term. Thus far, it has been able to sustain "traditional" Andean practices, such as communal and cooperative forms of organization, the integration of a range of ecological tiers for productive activities, and the redistribution of surpluses. However, its intense modernization and market

orientation have begun to increase social stratification and unravel people's ties to their ancestral heritage. Even sympathetic observers worry that FUNORSAL's cohesion may not survive the fragmentation or loss of cultural identity.

Economic Development and Cultural Revitalization

The challenge facing federations is to identify economically viable development models that offer them a comparative market advantage without sacrificing the cultural gains of the past. Indeed, models are now being crafted by several federations that address the apparent limitations of FUNORSAL's approach. "We are [beginning] to realize," says Edmundo Yumi of the Unión de Cabildos de San Juan in highland Chimborazo Province, that "techniques [for intensified commercial production] coming from the outside don't fit our reality." Increasingly, new models focus on the ability of federations to transform indigenous knowledge into a commercially powerful engine of growth.

In the Amazonian region, these efforts hinge on management of the tropical forest. Innumerable modern medicines derive from the flora and fauna of the tropics, but few profits have made their way back to the people who first discovered the curative value of these properties. OPIP, in the province of Pastaza, is trying to rectify that by linking its indigenous members' knowledge about medicinal plants to the technical and marketing expertise of a European company interested in extracting the active compounds for overseas sales. The project will adapt traditional gathering practices and give them monetary value, while providing a framework for regulating the collection of plants to prevent over-harvesting.

If the plans are realized, OPIP would manage the processing and the negotiations with the European firm. It would also negotiate to protect indigenous peoples' intellectual property rights. Without such protection (which is beyond the means of individual families to accomplish), the financial sustainability of the project would soon be short-lived.

Other Amazonian federations are also searching for sustainable alternatives. FOIN, for instance, is starting a community forestry project. Local communities will harvest timber selectively to avoid clear-cutting, and the federation will manage processing facilities and marketing. OPIP, FOIN, and other groups are all seeking concrete methods that increase family incomes and curb destruction of the rainforest through the husbanding of its renewable resources.

In the highlands, the challenge is greater. These ecosystems lack the rich biodiversity of the Amazonian region, but FUNORSAL shows that markets can be developed and harnessed. In Chimborazo, the Unión de Comunidades de Guamote is working closely with government research agronomists to promote production of *quinoa*, a traditional Andean grain, and process it for the national market. According to Carlos Nieto, a researcher with the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agropecuarias, processing and marketing will be handled through the federation, which will channel profits back to member families. Since quinoa is protein rich, part of the payment will be in the processed grain itself in order to improve the nutritional quality of family diets.

Other highland organizations are exploring the potential of a pre-Columbian variety of terracing to intensify yields of subsistence crops for better food security, and cash crops, such as garlic, onions, and carrots, for regional and national marketing to boost family incomes.

All of these efforts to transform traditional technologies build on the earlier organizational and cultural achievements of nonmarket-oriented projects. The income these new activities produce will, in turn, help solidify the federations and their ability to support a multifaceted program structure. Even the federations' previous focus on service provision can be tapped in this integrative process. Getting income-generating projects off the ground requires technical assistance. Federations can broker this transaction and potentially become a potent force for multiplying its effect. Organizations in Chimborazo, for instance, have visited FUNORSAL to learn from its operations, and



Juan García Salazar

Above: Indigenous workers from Napo Province build dugout canoes as part of their training for a woodworking enterprise to add value to local timber. Opposite page: Federations are inventing regional strategies that will create jobs for the next generation of indigenous Andean youth, such as these from Chimborazo.

FUNORSAL itself has received advice on textile production from weavers in Otavalo. Carlos Moreno of Comunidec, a GSO that works closely with indigenous groups, believes that such Indian-to-Indian training is crucial, and can build on the same methods that have made farmer-to-farmer programs highly effective providers of agricultural extension in countries throughout the hemisphere. Comu-

nidec facilitates such horizontal exchanges wherever possible.

In other cases, federations are beginning to use consultants, just as other successful businesses do. The previously cited example of El Ceibo in Bolivia shows how federations can use outside specialists not only to solve specific problems, but to train indigenous experts to solve future problems. Even when technical assis-

tance is provided by a sensitive GSO, it should be linked to training so that the federation can eventually stand on its own feet and implement its own development model. In the end, as in Salinas, the federation must work diligently to increase the modern skills of its base groups and their member families to raise productivity and keep the program on track. "An economy of mutual aid," notes Fernando Rosero, "demands both participation and efficiency."

Finding a workable balance between the need to professionalize and modernize and the need to strengthen and protect ethnic cultural identity is not easy. The revalidation of traditional knowledge cannot be prejudged solely on the basis of its economic or ecological potential. Yet if federations can dynamize Indian resource management practices to generate new income while preserving their cultural significance, then the challenge of uniting development and culture to enhance the economic security of member families will have been met. Models of development that are con-

ceived from within, that are culturally empowering, will give families and their organizations the means with which to limit the negative side effects from, and maximize the opportunities afforded by, a growing national and world market economy during the coming decade.

The challenge confronting indigenous federations must also be met by Ecuador itself and the other Andean countries, all of which are charged with building a multicultural development model under dire economic circumstances. Many commentators echo Jurgen Schüldt's doubts about the orthodox macroeconomic policies presently being pursued. Yet Schüldt's call for locally based, self-generated development should not be interpreted as a demand for protectionism and generalized import substitution. Rather it is a call for helping rural communities creatively maximize their resource base in order to reduce the flood of migration to the continent's already over-burdened cities; it is a call for people at all levels of society to become active partners in shaping the

nation's future; it is, in short, a call for systematic grassroots development. This path would make ethnic diversity an enabling resource rather than a crippling problem, which it could so easily become if entire groups are excluded a priori. Local organizations and the federations they form offer an institutional framework for realizing this vision in Ecuador and elsewhere. If they succeed, they will help make this a more inclusive, human-centered decade of development throughout the hemisphere. ❖

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Beryl Goldberg

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Ethnodevelopment Among the Jalq'a of Bolivia

Kevin Healy



Few outsiders ever reach the hamlet of Qarawiri in the rugged mountains of south-central Bolivia, and those who have not come to visit a relative would, at first glance, find little reason to stop. There is no electricity and no evident source of potable water for the handful of adobe houses, with their thatched roofs and dirt floors. The only signs of any

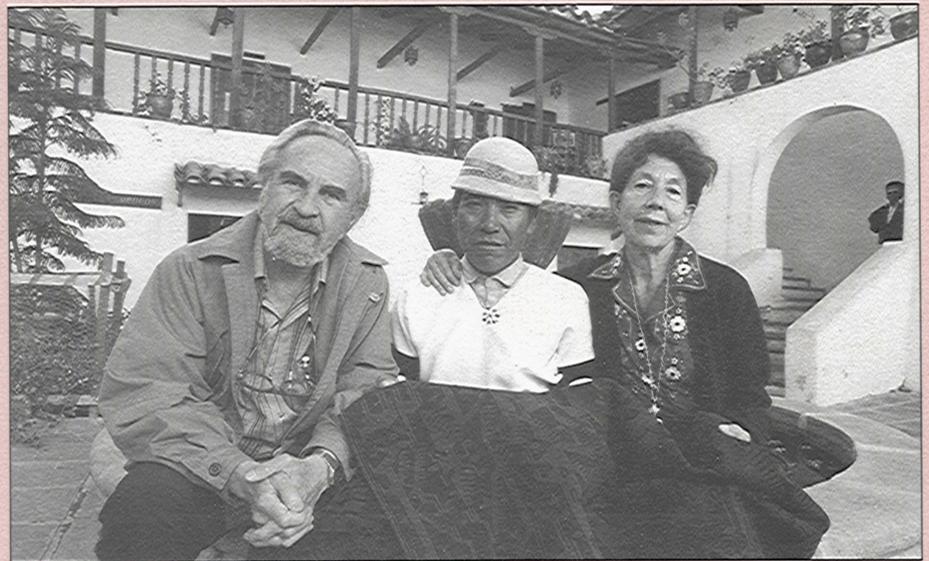
amenity are the weather-stained sheets of opaque plastic that cover the few small windows chiseled in the walls of each dwelling.

Between the piercing blue, mid-day Andean sky and the brown, barren earth is one splash of color. A woman of indeterminate age, draped in a tattered black tunic and wearing a white, bowl-shaped hat, sits before a horizontal loom braced against the wall of her house. On



An encounter between two worlds restores a dying weaving tradition and gives birth to an indigenous model of microregional development.

that loom she is opening a window into another world. Fire-red condors, dragons, foxes, monkeys, cows, and other strange, nameless animals float, upside down, stretched out sideways, acrobatically swinging in a pitch-black sea. In this dream-world, eyes pop out in odd places, necks stretch and twist with improbable elasticity, and tails become arrows shooting out between serrated rows of catlike teeth.



Opposite page: Close-up of an axsu, or overskirt design that depicts khurus, exotically stylized animals, in free fall. Above, top and bottom: Martina Llampa Montaño from Qarawiri weaves one of her first axsus, which will be sold a few weeks later in Sucre for a sum that matches the average annual income for area families. ASUR founders Gabriel Martínez (left) and Verónica Cereceda (right) sit in the courtyard of the Sucre museum sales shop with Genaro Quispe, president of a textile workshop in Majada.

Finally, the woman's gnarled hands stop moving. She slowly rises, steps back to a proper distance, cocks her head slightly, and watches the world of flux resolve into an intricately patterned world of order. Her mouth widens into a thin, toothless smile of contentment. After two months of attentive labor, she has finished weaving an *axsu*, a traditional overskirt worn by the women of the area. Although the weaver has never traveled far from the place of her birth, she knows that her *axsus* will. It will be sold at a shop that people from her community help manage in Sucre, or if its quality is as good as she believes, it might even wind up in an exhibition in Paris or Washington, D.C.

Neither possibility could have been imagined seven years ago. The textile traditions of the Chuquisaca area had seemingly vanished into obscurity decades before, along with knowledge of the people who had created them. This article tells the improbable story of how several Chilean anthropologists and their Bolivian colleagues helped the Jalq'a people recapture those traditions and craft them into a model for microregional development.

On a crisp September morning in 1985, two anthropologists in their mid-fifties, Spanish-born Gabriel Martínez and his Chilean wife Verónica Cereceda, set out in their Jeep from Bolivia's colonial capital of Sucre on a quest to resolve a mystery that had long puzzled them. Joined by Bolivian ethnologist Ramiro Molina, they were determined to trace the origins of a number of weavings that years before were being passed off as antiques in tourist shops in La Paz and other Bolivian cities. Although the weavings were esteemed by collectors for their uniqueness, and their fabulist designs

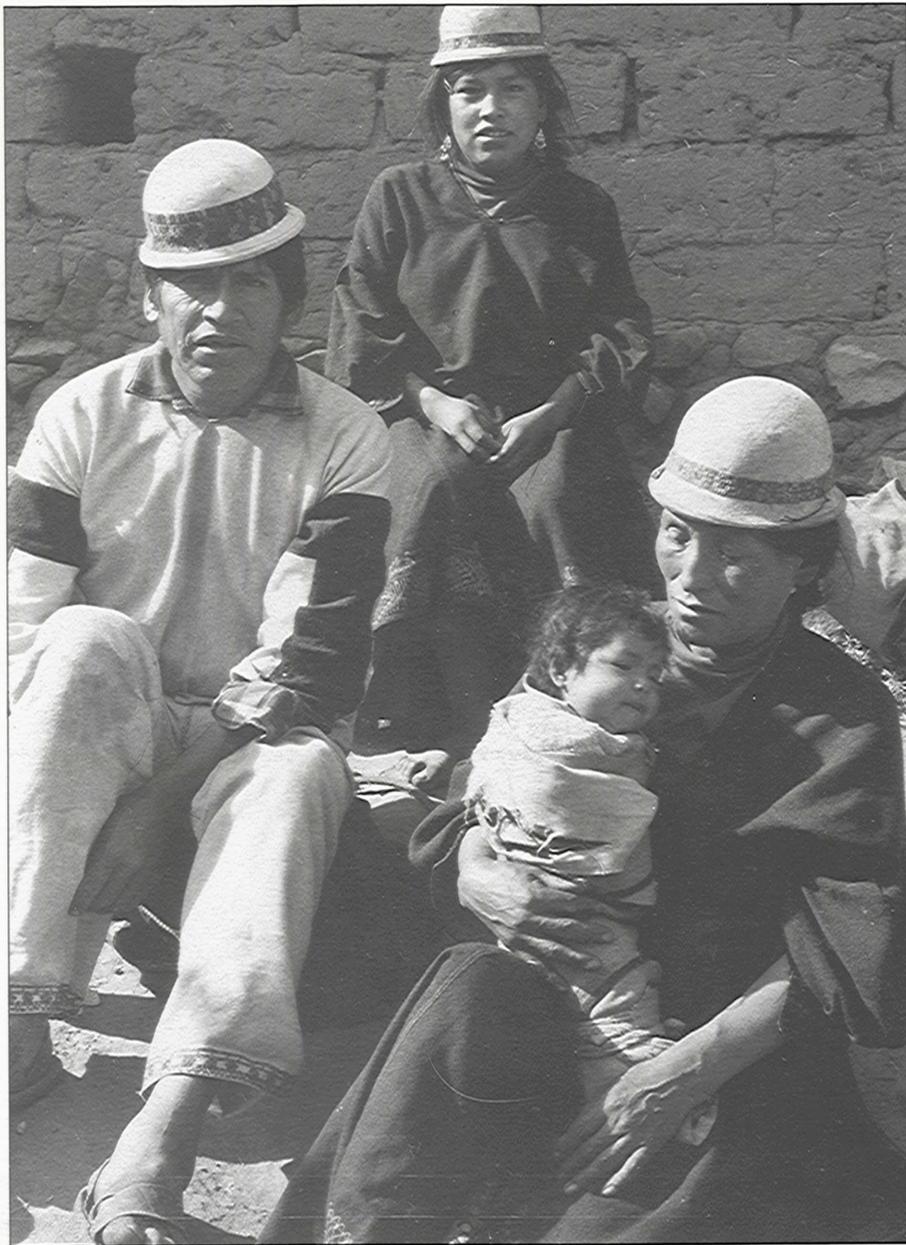


Eugenia Serrano measures chemicals for dyeing wool at the ASUR center in Irupampa. The Jalq'a are monitoring their own tests to improve the color-fixing process and add new tints.

were reproduced on postcards, magazine covers, and posters and had inspired university-trained painters in La Paz, surprisingly little was known about their creators. Collectors and merchants referred to the weavings as "Potolo pieces," after the largest town (comprising some 600 families) in the area of their origin, 50 kilometers northeast of Sucre. No ethnographic studies of the culture or people responsible for the weavings could be found.

For several months, Martínez, Cereceda, and Molina combed the steep valleys of Chuquisaca, visiting dozens of scattered communities by Jeep and on foot. Much of what they found was disturbing but unsurprising.

The area was inhabited by a group of nearly 25,000 people who called themselves Jalq'a. They were severely impoverished, with an infant mortality rate on a par with Africa's and average family incomes of \$100 per year. Their parched potato fields and small



The Llampa family of Qarawiri. Weavers' incomes and new microenterprise jobs for men are reducing the need for migration and strengthening the Jalq'a family unit.

flocks of scrawny sheep and goats showed the effects of a longstanding drought. Villages lacked clean water, electric power, and often health clinics; and no tin roofs or bikes—common signs of minimal affluence among Andean campesinos—were to be found. People seemed generally dispirited and disorganized.

The three visitors were pleased to see that most villagers still wore traditional ethnic dress. But the axsus worn by the women were pale reflections of the garments that had in-

spired the team's quest. The subtle color combinations were gone, the large decorative panels called pallas had shrunken in size, and the motif of exotic animals in free fall had been replaced by repetitive rows of stock figures. The adoption of geometric designs and colors used by a neighboring ethnic group was gradually erasing the tenuous connections to the past that remained. The young women, perhaps influenced by urban values penetrating the countryside, had turned away from the exacting

standards maintained by their mothers and grandmothers.

Indeed, as Martínez and Cereceda talked with villagers, they began to see that the decline in textiles was symptomatic of a deeper problem. The community's cultural structure was unraveling from changes in the regional economy. The drought had crippled subsistence production, and rising demand among the Jalq'a for noodles, candles, cooking oil, medicines, and other consumer staples had increased the need for cash.

Beginning in the 1960s and accelerating through the mid-1970s, a ready source for that cash became available. A growing market for Andean textiles among tourists and overseas dealers had spawned a horde of itinerant traders who scoured the countryside for ponchos, shawls, axsus, belts, bags, and even grain sacks. Items with Jalq'a motifs were in heavy demand, and traders, some of them expatriates, frequented local fairs and festivals to persuade campesinos, often through badgering or trickery, to relinquish their finest textiles. The Jalq'a never learned the true market value of these items, which steadily appreciated as they grew rarer.

One day the boom was over, and the Jalq'a awoke to find the core of their weaving inheritance—their ritual costumes, wedding garments, and family heirlooms—gone. Without models to inspire a new generation of weavers, and the connection between weaving and ceremonial life frayed, the Jalq'a tradition seemed virtually extinct, victim of the same forces that had undermined indigenous textile arts throughout the Andes during the second half of the twentieth century.

Yet there was a bright spot. Martínez and Cereceda had received a small grant from the IAF to explore the possibility of reviving weaving in this depressed region, and whenever they visited a village, they sounded out the level of local interest. The community of Irupampa was exuberant. After several visits by the couple, a village leader confidently announced: "If you really want to start a textile workshop in Chuquisaca, put it here. Not only is the community committed to this idea, but several of our women were once highly skilled weavers and, given the chance, they will be again!"



Left: A young woman from Maragua prepares wool remnants for stuffing mattresses at a newly opened microenterprise. Above: Epifanio Mamani tests a new electrical wool-spinning machine in Irupampa.

Cereceda and Martínez learned that they were not the first outsiders to bring the idea of a crafts project to the region. Other private development agencies had sent technicians who were well-versed in feasibility studies, who were optimistic about targeting markets for standardized weavings, and who were accompanied by mestizo promoters to drum up local support. None of these efforts took root; all of them withered in the atmosphere of mutual incomprehension that prevailed between project managers and potential beneficiaries.

It helped that Martínez was fluent in Quechua, the language spoken by the Jalq'a, and that Cereceda was an internationally renowned authority on Andean textiles, having been a curator for numerous museum exhibits and written pathbreaking articles for scholarly publications. But their greatest asset was also perhaps the most unlikely: a life of varied experience that made them more interested in the Jalq'a as a people than as arti-

sans who could be trained to be economically productive.

Martínez and Cereceda, as a young married couple with two young children, had left their teaching jobs in the drama department of a Chilean university during the 1960s to form a traveling popular theater. Performing in a tent to diverse audiences throughout the country, their repertory troupe of poets, singers, storytellers, and actors was inspired by the "magical realism" that Gabriel García Márquez, the young Mario Vargas Llosa, and other writers were inventing to explore how indigenous, European, and African cultures had intermingled to shape a distinctively Latin American experience. The troupe stood at the forefront of a broad movement to break down barriers between performers and audiences and use theater as an interactive medium for social analysis and democratic community action. Nobel Prize winner Pablo Neruda, who composed *Alturas de Macchu Picchu*, an epic poem about the continent's Incan heritage, was among the guest artists

who sometimes dropped in to perform their work.

By the early 1970s, Martínez's and Cereceda's restless curiosity about the roots of Latin American identity had led them to teaching jobs at a university in the Bolivian altiplano. They soon shocked their somewhat stuffy colleagues by taking theater workshops out of the classroom and into Native American communities in the mountain valley of Charazani. Martínez and Cereceda were entranced by the area's breathtaking beauty, its rich pre-Columbian heritage and vibrant textiles. Although the community-based theater group they organized gradually developed a repertoire that is still remembered fondly by Bolivian practitioners of popular drama, Martínez and Cereceda felt nagging doubts. The performances were given in Quechua, but the uneasy silence or burst of unexpected laughter that the words sometimes provoked caused Martínez and Cereceda to wonder at the undiscovered depths of the language they



Three Jalq'a girls from Potolo demonstrate the traditional drop-spindle method of spinning thread for weaving. ASUR is searching for faster methods so weavers can add value to their labor at the loom.

were using, to wonder if real communication was occurring and if there had been any lasting impact.

To learn how to speak the community's language fluently, it would be necessary to become immersed in its culture. Martínez and Cereceda embarked on a new voyage of discovery to acquire the tools they needed to ac-

complish that task. They left the theater in their mid-forties to study anthropology, at first in Peru and then at the Sorbonne in Paris. There they steeped themselves in the rich literature documenting Andean traditions, learning how to use scientific knowledge as an entryway into the dynamics of contemporary community life.

Textiles proved to be essential to decoding a civilization without written texts. Textiles were more than objects of dress or adornment. Cereceda had discovered how selection of striped color combinations on small bags carried symbolic importance. Her work suggested that the variations in spatial relationships and figurative designs could serve as a kind of Rosetta stone for deciphering how the threads of pre-Columbian culture evolved over time and were woven into present-day life.

It was this realization that first attracted Martínez and Cereceda to the Jalq'a weavings when the couple returned to Bolivia. The bizarre animals depicted on the axsus might be *chulpas*, creatures that, according to Andean oral traditions, "lived before the dawn of time, in dimly lit spaces, before the first sun rose over mother Earth." Chulpas were associated with creation myths that embodied the dualism in Andean thought between paired opposites of light and darkness, the spirit and the body, the world of nature and the world of man. Their power was simultaneously life-giving and menacing, capable of spreading sickness as well as reward. Here, perhaps, in the life of the people who made these weavings, was a window into the distant past of the first Andeans whose reality seemed as inscrutable as the mountain burial grounds where legend said their remains uneasily rested.

To facilitate the revival of Jalq'a weaving, Martínez and Cereceda started a grassroots support organization (GSO) called Antropólogos del Sur Andino (ASUR). ASUR, from its inception, was grounded in the belief that economic development could not be isolated from its cultural matrix. For a weaving workshop to thrive, it would have to be securely rooted in the life of the community. The project in Irupampa was therefore founded in close consultation with the local peasant organization, and would proceed at a pace determined by its participants.

The first task was not to train a few women for commercial production, but to create a space in which the entire community could explore the cultural roots that gave the Jalq'a their identity and that had inspired the master weavings of the past. Martínez, who had re-

searched a book devoted to unraveling the meanings of a widespread Andean ritual known as "the burning of the tables," believed that little could be accomplished until the Jalq'a had made the project their own. To inaugurate the workshop, an *aysiri*, or shaman, was asked to conduct a ritual ceremony consulting traditional mountain deities called *Mallkus*.

Martínez cannot help smiling when he recalls the event. "The room was small," he says, squeezing his hands together, "and it seemed even smaller because it was packed with people from the community. A corner had been cleared, where the *aysiri* and his assistant carefully placed a bundle of textiles. After all the lamps were extinguished, the

"About midnight, a ritual meal of meat and corn was served. The people were permitted to take what was not eaten home with them, but the bones were carefully put aside as an offering.

"At sunrise, we went to the site where the workshop would be built. Where one of the building's corners would rest, the *aysiri* burned the bones, and buried the heads of several sheep. The ashes were carefully read, and the signs were favorable.

"I was moved," Martínez concludes, his deep baritone voice dropping to a whisper. "The community had opened itself to us, invited us to witness their dialogue with the sacred. It was a gift of trust we were determined to keep."

The women still knew how to weave, but they did not recall the many strange animals that had been the hallmark of Jalq'a designs.

aysiri called upon the *Mallkus* to enter the pitch-dark room. You could hear people's shallow breathing, their bodies nervously shifting, as they waited for the response.

"One by one the *Mallkus* announced themselves through the person of the *aysiri*, who took on the mannerisms of a condor and various other animals and spoke with the voices of several different women. These presences began to conduct a conversation among themselves and then with the audience. The shaman vanished into these personae seamlessly, in a drama of several acts that engrossed everyone for several hours. At the end it was clear that the *Mallkus* agreed the project was good. A consensus had formed that the Jalq'a must conserve the gifts they had been given—their language and culture, and textiles and traditional dress—if the world was to have meaning. People had been called to work hard and cooperate with one another and remember their common purpose on the Earth.

During the years that would follow, ASUR would assiduously encourage the strengthening of ritual life among the Jalq'a communities in which it was invited to work. New workshops would be "blessed" in a manner similar to the one in Irupampa; offerings of coca, confetti, small candies, and libations would be made to mountain spirits to commemorate important occasions; and attention would be paid to recovering traditional songs and dances that had been fading from community life. ASUR would organize dance classes in Irupampa, encourage people to wear traditional dress at community meetings, and help people to resurrect old festival costumes that had fallen into disuse, such as the insect with huge wings that was worn by male dancers. The daughter of Martínez and Cereceda, who as a child had joined in the tent performances in Chile and the theater troupe in Charazani, would grow up to become a professional ethnomusicologist and record Jalq'a songs for a tape to be sold in Sucre

and La Paz. All of these efforts built enthusiasm that would be channeled into the revival of weaving.

Looking back, the process of that revival might seem to flow inevitably from that first benediction by the *Mallkus* in Irupampa, when ASUR wisely allowed the Jalq'a to place themselves at the center of the project. Verónica Cereceda remembers otherwise.

The first workshop was constructed with community labor; several experienced women weavers whom Cereceda and Martínez had met during their travels in Chuquisaca were recruited as teachers; and IAF funding was used to stockpile alpaca and sheep wool for spinning yarns. Everyone was anxious to begin, but one hurdle seemed insurmountable. The women still knew how to weave, but they did not recall the many strange animals, called *khurus*, that had been the hallmark of Jalq'a designs. Many of these were reputed to have originated in the dreams of ancestors, or from cave drawings lost in antiquity. Without a stock of traditional textiles to guide them, the Jalq'a seemed unlikely to ever recreate the *khurus*, much less shape their world of chaotic free fall into a semblance of order.

Cereceda's solution was to contact the collectors and dealers she knew, in Bolivia and overseas, to get photographs of the Jalq'a weavings they owned. Soon a photographic archive of more than 300 traditional motifs was assembled. Enlargements were printed and mounted on the workshop walls to guide teenage apprentices; others were hung in the patios of households so that mothers and their daughters could use them as models for their weaving. Eventually, photo albums and slide shows were assembled to circulate in communities outside Irupampa as word spread of the textile revival that was under way.

Cereceda still recalls the enthusiasm among the Jalq'a women when they first glimpsed the photos. She explains that it was not a question of anticipating the imminence of monetary reward. Nothing had yet been woven, and there was no assurance anything would be sold. Rather it was like a lost child returning home. The photographs allowed the women to bring *khurus* that had



been forgotten back to life and figure out how they fit together in a world of unexpectedly rich colors.

That enthusiasm was invaluable because the work itself was physically exacting. To produce the tight, thin textiles favored by the Jalq'a requires the weaver to repeatedly beat the weft with a llama bone until the threads are taut. Interlacing the warp and weft to create a free-fall motif of khurus without ordered bands requires intense concentration. Even the young women complained of back and eye strain, headaches, and sore shoulders. One apprentice spoke for many when she remarked, "Little by little we are getting accustomed to the work, but the way my shoulders ache at the loom tells me how it is to feel old."

For two years the women weavers of Irupampa practiced their art. Their textiles improved as new suppliers of wool for spinning thread were found outside the area. This was a time-consuming but vital task since the quality of spinning had declined and



Top: ASUR technical advisor Santiago Porcel (right) supervises Ramosa Mamani, while her mother Libertada Saywa (foreground) weaves an axsu in the courtyard of her home in Maragua. Bottom: Saywa demonstrates a pick-up weaving technique that Ann Rowe of the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., says is unique to the Jalq'a. The reversible designs allow each piece to be displayed on either side.

local herds had been decimated during the years of drought.

A second deficiency was more difficult to overcome. The photographs Cereceda had collected showed how many shades had disappeared from the Jalq'a palette of colors. A handful of women were found who still remembered how to dye yarns, but transferring that knowledge and adapting it to provide weavers with ample supplies would not be easy. One elderly woman from Irupampa explained that "the generation which followed mine wove only in three colors. My grandmother told me that our ancestors used two primary colors, but in the center of each textile was a rainbow of designs in pink, green, yellow, and maroon. Preparing these colors correctly and dyeing the yarn was hard work, and messy, so it is no wonder the skill gradually died out. The men here never learned to do it, but now some of them have joined the young women to learn how."

Finally, Cereceda decided that it was time to inform the outside world of what had been accomplished. Having curated exhibits of Andean weavings in both Chile and France, she decided to do so again in Bolivia. ASUR collected the best of the new textiles and arranged to showcase them inside a public building in Sucre that had once been a Catholic church.

During the next three weeks, more than 10,000 people filed through the makeshift gallery. Javier Velasco, director of the largest nongovernmental organization (NGO) in the area, still remembers how people's eyes were opened by the exhibit. He explained that most middle-class residents of this city famous for its colonial architecture and Spanish legacy had probably never given any thought to the Jalq'a before, finding them indistinguishable from the horde of other rural migrants popu-



lating the poorest barrios. "Viewing this work in a museum setting was a turning point," Velasco emphasized. "It created a new respect among many city dwellers not only for the Jalq'a, but for the other ethnic groups in the region." The strange costumes that once signaled the uniform backwardness of their wearers, now revealed to the informed and curious eye a startling variety of color and design and the richness of the area's indigenous heritage.

This exhibition was followed by an even more impressive one at the Museo Nacional de Arte, located in the central plaza of La Paz across from the Presidential Palace and the national Congress. It was the first time indigenous textiles had been displayed at the Museo, and a delegation of Jalq'a men and women journeyed to the capital for the opening reception. Timoteo Mamani, one of the Irupampa workshop leaders, was well aware of the watershed importance this event held for his people when he addressed the crowd of dignitaries, including representatives

of the national media. "For as long as we can remember," Mamani said, "whenever our people have traveled to La Paz or Sucre, they have been greeted with ridicule. People we did not know would shout: 'Who are you people, where do you come from, why do you dress like Indians, why don't you go back where you belong?' Now we stand here and watch people of this great city admire our textiles. This is a great day, a day we will long remember for the great change taking place in our lives."

A great change was also taking place in their fortunes. Cereceda had used ASUR funds to buy a core of the best weavings for teaching and curatorial purposes, and the exhibitions she organized became a marketing tool to sell other work. Without knowing it, ASUR was following a path that Native American artisans in North America had also adopted, using museum exhibits to familiarize the general public with Jalq'a art and museum shops to sell it.



Opposite page: Juana Serrano (right) brings her *axsu* to the Sucre store for pricing by size and quality. The Jalq'a now co-manage this quality control system. Above: Vivid displays such as this one in the Sucre museum have inspired other indigenous weavers in the area to emulate the Jalq'a and start their own projects.

During the past four years, the Jalq'a exhibit has been honed into perhaps the finest display of Bolivian ethnography now available. It includes superb examples of contemporary *axsus*, mannequins outfitted in daily dress and spectacular ritual costumes, photographs of earlier weavings, maps of the Jalq'a universe, and charts that discuss the history of the group and describe the iconography of their textiles. The exhibition has traveled to Paris, Geneva, and to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. In La Paz, the United Nations has organized a smaller version for display in the lobby of its building to promote sales to visiting international development consultants. A credit fund has also been set up to allow Bolivian U.N. staff to purchase weavings.

But the primary marketing source is located in Sucre, at a museum and ethnic art shop set up in a renovated colonial convent. The government has made the permanent exhibition a must-see stop for foreign dignitaries visiting the colonial capital, and it at-

tracts a steady stream of tourists and curious Bolivians. Some 3,900 people passed through its doors during the first six months of 1992.

Sales have been brisk, \$20,000 worth of Jalq'a textiles in the first half of 1992 alone, and the average price keeps rising. One reason has been the steady improvement in the quality of the weaving. For example, Juana Rodríguez from the community of Maragua is now completing her eighth *axsu*. Each successive weaving has featured more sharply outlined *khurus*, softer textures, and more intricate compositions. Each has also commanded a higher price than its predecessor.

Like many weavers in the ASUR program, Rodríguez no longer relies on photographs of other weavings to inspire her own. Another woman, from Irupampa, described the growing proficiency among her peers this way: "It is better that the designs come out of our heads rather than from pictures because it allows the threads to sing. We have greater free-

dom to create large *khurus* of all kinds. It is like suddenly being able to read with amazing clarity."

Cereceda welcomes this fluency because it signals that the Jalq'a are back in touch with the same cultural sources that inspired their ancestors to create the exquisite weavings that were lost nearly two decades ago. Only this time the Jalq'a understand the market value of their work and can produce new textiles to meet outside demand without selling off their inheritance.

Cereceda is more circumspect when it comes to explaining the allure of Jalq'a textiles.

She says that unlike the rigid patterns and symmetries which characterize most Andean textiles and make them easier to decode through comparison, the Jalq'a seem to be in touch with a primal space "that is dark, haunting, and subterranean, a region inside the earth where life is gestating, creation is ongoing, and possibility is boundless." When human figures appear, they are small and marginal, dwarfed by a universe of strange creatures. In curating the exhibit she has been careful to emphasize that the Jalq'a are our contemporaries—who are managing to stay afloat in the modern world—without diminishing the mystery of the ancestral world that informs their culture.

Pressed to say more, she defers to the Jalq'a, who offer information grudgingly. Perhaps they are right to do so. The Chilean writer Ariel Dorfman visited the Mataco people of northern Argentina several years ago and wondered why they were so reluctant to teach outsiders, even the handful who were interested, their language. Dorfman finally decided that the Mataco were holding on to their last sanctuary, the core of identity that allowed them to survive the incursions of the modern world.

Elayne Zorn, a North American anthropologist and an authority on An-

dean textiles, thinks that outsiders' questions are often misframed, having more to do with the universalizing rationalism of Western industrial society than with a desire to understand the world view of an agrarian people with markedly different cultural roots. She says that weaving is a conceptual activity like literature or painting that communicates a way of experiencing the world, not explaining it.

Martínez and Cereceda realized that the revival of Jalq'a weaving depended on the renewal of Jalq'a culture, but they also knew that the revival would not long survive unless it became eco-

incur costs, which thus far women have willingly paid. "Our ancestors wove only to make their own clothing," she says, "not to earn money. Each year they probably produced a single axsu, in an exceptional year, two. Last year I made four. Our needs are different now, we need cash to get by. But the pace of the work can break you, and trying to fit it in between our responsibilities to our children and our other tasks, especially during planting and harvesting seasons, can leave you no time at all."

One wonders if the commercialization of weaving will eventually erode its place in the traditional culture, perhaps even introduce strains that

choosing instead to stay home with their children and weave. And their husbands are also staying home.

One man from Potolo explained that the married men there no longer migrate for several months a year to Chapare, one of the world's largest zones of coca-leaf production, in order to support their families. "Around here," he said, "men have begun to take on some of the cooking, to spend more time looking after the children and pasturing the animals. Some are even spinning wool so that their wives will have more time for weaving." He acknowledged that single men must still leave to earn cash but thought they now had more reason than ever to return home to find a wife and raise a family. "The single women here, even those without land who barely got by selling eggs or *chicha* [a corn beer], are also taking up weaving."

The changing economic role of women is also broadening their social role. A few months ago a weaver from Irupampa visited relatives in another village, which was not participating in the ASUR program. During a meeting of the *sindicato*, the forum of local government, she was struck by the verbosity of the men and the silence of the women. "I saw," she said, "that my village had once been the same. But after our workshops started, the men got behind us, telling us they were not the only ones with mouths. Now we have the courage to talk about what bothers us, about our own obligations and the obligations of others. Whatever the topic, we find something to say. Yes, it seems we have learned to use our mouths for talking!"

Thanks to financial assistance from the International Labor Organization of the United Nations and from COTESU, the development-aid arm of the Swiss government, ASUR workshops have spread to five additional Jalq'a communities, benefiting 400 weavers and their families. Like the woman quoted above, these women are confident that their accomplishments are not transient.

Cereceda and Martínez realize that a promising beginning may still go awry. Many other communities are clamoring to join, and a number of adept weavers have set up their own workshop in Sucre for 25 artisans and

The changing economic role of women is also broadening their social role.

nominically viable. Because the goal was to revive the axsu and market it as ethnic art, it was necessary to establish a differential system of grading and pricing. Over time, the project has evolved a six-tier system, ranging from "extra" at the upper end to "D" at the lower end. The "C" and "D" categories typically represent the work of teenage girls just learning their art. They have completed a weeklong course on khurus designs taught by ASUR's corps of 20 master weavers, and completed their axsus under their mothers' supervision at home.

The professional pride that comes from producing higher-quality weavings is reinforced by the higher earnings they bring. Axsus in the Sucre store generally range in price from \$100 to \$200 apiece. Exceptional ones have been sold for as much as \$300. After deductions for wool, dye, the communal enterprise fund, and the store's overhead, the best weavers often net as much as \$100.

The ability to match the area's average annual family income in two or three months makes weavers highly motivated to intensify production. Yet, as one workshop leader in Irupampa indicates, the new benefits

crack Jalq'a society apart. Early signs suggest the opposite. ASUR has been careful to root quality control standards not only in technical merit, but in fidelity to the spirit of the best weavings of the past. The significant economic benefits flowing from this system reinforce the legitimacy of its dual demands. Renewed pride in Jalq'a culture has been accompanied by a boomlet in purchases of transistor radios, gas stoves, homespun dresses, rice and noodles, and for at least one family, a piece of land in the city. One woman was able to afford emergency care for her husband after he suffered second-degree burns in an accident; another could afford to finance her daughter's wedding party.

Incomes do vary, depending on skill and effort, but the impulse toward individuation and social fragmentation is checked by mutual recognition that expanded future earnings depend on successful community management.

The economic gains from the project have also strengthened Jalq'a family life and set in process a dynamic for expanding active community involvement. Young women in several villages have stopped working as live-in domestic servants in Sucre,



When Martínez and Cereceda first visited the Potolo region, they found universal poverty and despair. Today, Irupampa is the home of several microenterprises that are becoming engines for microregional development.

110 spinners. The tourist market in Bolivia may soon become saturated, so ASUR has been exploring the possibilities overseas. But even if the Jalq'a textiles prove popular there, the lack of copyright protection for "folk" art designs may make it impossible to compete with well-capitalized enterprises capable of mass-producing imitations.

The Jalq'a effort to reach highly selective markets for authentic ethnic art rather than the souvenir trade is calculated to avoid those dangers. And the experiences of the Navajo of the southwestern United States and the Mayan Sna Jolobil of Mexico show that it is possible to maintain high aesthetic standards for textiles, promote the work through museum and gallery exhibitions, and market it through museum shops while sparking a locally based revival of indigenous culture.

Making the transition to international marketing will require a new level of sophistication, and Martínez and Cereceda have spent the past five

years gearing up to help the Jalq'a acquire the tools they will need. ASUR has grown from a mom-and-pop operation, run out of the back of a Jeep, to a nationally known organization with 20 employees specializing in sales, exhibitions, microenterprise development, accounting, and training. It will soon become a legally registered cultural foundation, the first of its kind in Bolivia.

ASUR is constantly working with the Jalq'a to seek ways to add value and cut costs. Microenterprises for spinning and dyeing have been established in Irupampa to guarantee ample supplies of low-cost, high-quality yarn to area weavers. The experimental spinning enterprise, which uses locally devised, low-tech machinery to increase production, is generating new jobs for men as well as women. It will also allow weavers to maximize the value of their labor. The time freed from using drop spindles to make their own thread can

now be devoted to weaving axsus, potentially doubling artisan incomes.

Recently microenterprises were started to use leftover material from the wool-spinning business to make hats and mattresses. Commercial design consultants are also exploring how this material can be used to make tapestries. A mini hydroelectric system is now being built in Irupampa to replace the diesel motor that is presently the only source of power in the area. The new system will provide a reliable and nearly free source of power to increase future production.

ASUR understands that if this complex of microenterprises in Irupampa is ever to become a hub for a thriving local rural economy, the Jalq'a must be able to manage their interests effectively. The prospects for that did not look promising at first. The Jalq'a weavers had no formal schooling, could not add or subtract, and could barely write their own names. The men had no more than a

primary school education, and most were functionally illiterate. Everyone, however, proved to have a great appetite for learning.

The literacy training ASUR inaugurated was followed by courses in accounting and management taught by specialists from La Paz. Today, night classes in Irupampa are crowded with men and women punching the keys of their pocket calculators and practicing their penmanship. Graduates of these classes are keeping project records on everything from inventories of lumber and other construction materials to the results of spinning and dyeing experiments to improve the quality of yarns. They are managing workshop funds, calculating costs, distributing wool, and refining and implementing the quality control system for textile marketing at the Sucre store. They staff, on a rotating basis, the seven *Jatun Comités* that participating Jalq'a communities have set up to oversee the workshops and microenterprises. The president of the Jatun Comité in Irupampa is the first Jalq'a to become computer literate.

But perhaps the clearest sign of Jalq'a ownership over their own enterprise comes from the decision by 72 of Irupampa's 76 families to buy stock in the village's microenterprises.

Not surprisingly, the Jalq'a experience is opening influential eyes throughout Bolivia. The Fondo de Inversión Social (FIS), an agency of the Bolivian government funded by the World Bank to support NGOs, and the Fundación Quipus, which is launching one of the country's first folk art museums, have both expressed great interest. Javier Medina, an official of FIS and the author of the recently published book *Repensar Bolivia*, believes that "the Jalq'a model of ethnodevelopment can be spread throughout the country." He argues that Bolivia must reinvent its own solutions because rural models of community development imported from the industrialized West have failed to take root in the Andes.

Cereceda and Martínez have shown that their methodology does work elsewhere in the southern Chuquisaca region. When an international development agency's effort to promote a crafts program among the people of Tarabuco began floundering several

years ago, ASUR was asked to step in. The Tarabuqueños, resplendent in their black, conquistador-like helmets, long, brightly striped ponchos, and richly detailed axsus, had not yet lost their native dress or weaving tradition, but the introduction of acrylic yarns, the declining quality of production, and the increased rate of seasonal migration by men in search of work showed that their way of life was under duress.

ASUR began working with more than 300 Tarabuco women from seven communities to reverse this decline. Using the methodology trailblazed among the Jalq'a, ASUR helped organize communal workshops staffed by master weavers, reinforced local ritual life, reintroduced natural yarns and streamlined the dyeing process, and mounted axsus for wall hangings that could be exhibited in museums and marketed at the Sucre store. Using a palette of some 25 colors, weavers compose representations of rainbows, fruits, flowers, animals, rivers, and even an Andean altar, the *Pukara*, into their axsus. The symmetrically patterned textiles with polychrome bands are far from the Jalq'a motif of khurus in free fall, but they have proven to be equally popular. Today, the Tarabuco weavings match the Jalq'a in sales at the Sucre store.

Now that the project has taken root, ASUR is bringing the Tarabuqueños and the Jalq'a together for joint meetings, training programs in self-management, and workshop inaugurations in order to set the stage for an indigenous federation to manage microregional development.

When Martínez and Cereceda set out on their quest to the Jalq'a seven years ago, they had hoped to discover the descendants of the first Andeans. Living in proximity to the Jalq'a, listening to their stories, they learned that the Jalq'a did not consider themselves to be the special progeny of the chulpas, whom they consider to be the forebearers of all humans.

Last year, in Washington, D.C., at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival's celebration of indigenous peoples 500 years after Columbus "discovered" America, Martínez accompanied several Jalq'a weavers on a tour of the dinosaur exhibit at the Museum of

Natural History. The Jalq'a were so taken with the exhibit that discussions arose about including dinosaurs among the khurus populating their axsus. Martínez was not surprised, because the Jalq'a have long been open to change. ASUR ethnohistorian Rossana Barragón has pored over Spanish texts dating between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries without finding any mention of the Jalq'a. She now thinks that bands of highland and lowland indigenous peoples joined together at the end of the nineteenth century to reinvent themselves as the Jalq'a.

When Martínez and Cereceda are asked if their quest for the first Andeans has been a failure, they smile enigmatically. Perhaps they are recalling memories of two recent visits. Early in the year, Peruvian weavers from the island of Taquile in Lake Titicaca, who are descended from the Incan Empire encountered by Pizarro's men in the sixteenth century, journeyed to Irupampa to study the Jalq'a experience, to learn about their spinning machines, quality control system, and marketing strategy. Soon after, a delegation of Calcheños from the Potosí region of Bolivia made the same journey to revive their once formidable weaving tradition.

Ethnohistorian John Murra has described the attachment of pre-Columbian Andean peoples to textiles as nothing less than an obsession. Weavings have been used to commemorate key moments of the life cycle, and daily dress still visually demarcates the boundaries of ethnic identities. He emphasizes that Andean culture is dynamic rather than static. If the Jalq'a help inspire a revival of weaving throughout the Andes, they may yet prove to be the first Andeans of the next century. And if the Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes is correct that Columbus did not discover "America" but signaled the beginning of its invention, then the Jalq'a and their Chilean and Bolivian navigators from ASUR are also charting a voyage of discovery into what it means to be an authentic Latin American. ❖

KEVIN HEALY is the IAF representative for Bolivia. Enrique Aguilar and Ruth Flores provided valuable research for this article.

Food Security and Development in Haiti

On a sweltering day in August 1987, 315 small farmers, members of the Oganizasyon Agrikol pou Developman (OGAD), gathered in Haiti's Artibonite Valley to celebrate the realization of a long-held dream. They were inaugurating their own *estokaj*, or food-storage enterprise. Pooling their savings with a \$10,000 grant from the IAF, they had purchased building materials and erected a four-chambered, cinder-block silo designed to hold nearly 50 tons of locally grown corn, sorghum, rice, and beans. A \$1,200 revolving credit fund was set up to buy members' crops at harvest, when supplies would be abundant and prices depressed. Crops would be stored until market values rose, or until farmers needed food for their tables or seed to plant their fields. Each of these benefits from the *estokaj* promised to loosen members' bondage to *speki-latè*, or middlemen, who had controlled local market prices through their virtual stranglehold on credit to buy staples and farm supplies.

Three months later this promising start seemed at a dead end. Near midnight on November 24, eight weeks after the corn harvest and a few days before the first national elections were scheduled under a newly ratified Constitution, a band of nearly three dozen masked men swept out of the darkness, firing weapons into the air around the silo. Rumors of impending assault had been circulating through the valley for weeks, and a small group of unarmed farmers had organized a vigil, hoping their presence would protect the building. It did not.

Forced to flee to a safe distance, the farmers heard orders barked out to haul off bags of corn, spread kerosene over the rest, and torch the building. They watched as the marauders, eerily backlit by billowing flames, swarmed



Robert Maguire

OGAD leaders stand before the burnt-out shell of their silo.

around the burning silo like an army of shadows, shouting threats and firing gunbursts into the air before finally vanishing back into the night.

Word of the attack spread quickly throughout the valley and into the surrounding foothills. By dawn, OGAD's families and their friends and supporters had gathered to survey the still-smoldering ruins. In addition to the silo, nearly 6,000 *marmites* of corn, approximately 16.5 tons, valued at \$4,800, had been lost. Also lost was the seed stock for the next planting. All prospects for recapitalizing the credit fund, which included each member's hard-earned share of one dollar, had vanished. The only good news was that no one had been killed.

Later that day, OGAD's treasurer sounded a defiant note during an interview with a radio reporter. "Since we are motivated and hopeful," he said, "we will not abandon this project. We will begin meeting as soon as possible to see how to get our grain storage program back on track. The

estokaj is crucial for our survival as peasant farmers."

Progress was slow, despite the determined words. In the valley it was impossible for the marauders to keep all their identities secret. Easiest to unmask were the ringleaders since rumors of the attack could be traced back to them. Seven were named: two local sheriffs who were members of the Haitian army; and five *gwo neg*, or big shots, who had been officials of the deposed Duvalier regime and were founding members of a newly formed paramilitary gang, the *gwoup san maman*, or motherless ones. Among the ringleaders was one of the area's largest moneylenders and *speki-latè*, who employed a network of agents, called *sekretè*, to scour the countryside and secure farmers' crops at cut-rate prices.

None of these men was ever officially charged. Indeed, the only arrests were of OGAD administrators following the radio interview. Rapid intervention by several Haitian and international human-rights and non-governmental organizations saved them from harm, but a message had been delivered. Eighteen months after the arson, active participation was down in many of the community groups of eight to fifteen members that formed the core of OGAD, and there was no movement to rebuild the silo. A supplemental IAF grant enabled OGAD to replace its seed stock and recover members' shares in the revolving fund, but marketing was still controlled by *speki-latè*.

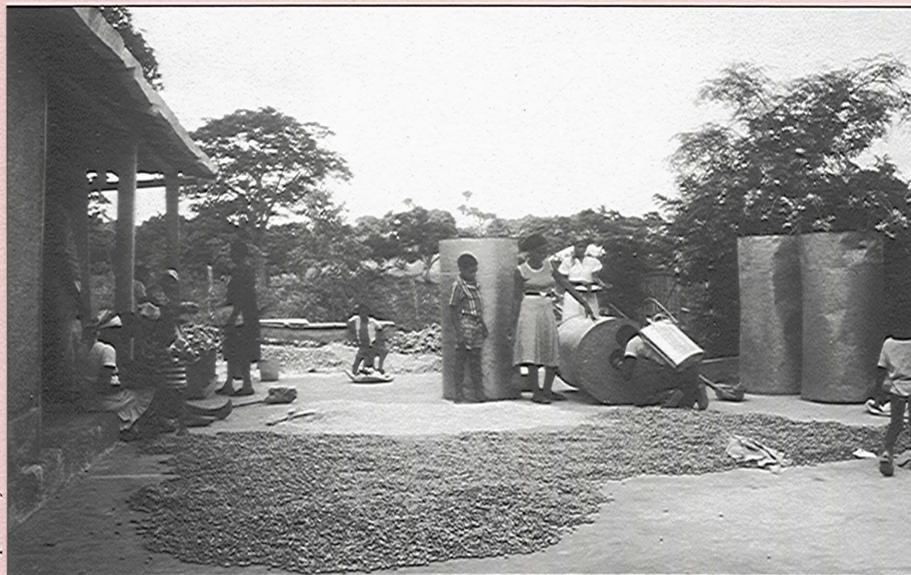
Believing that the silo's shell could be salvaged for later use, OGAD's leaders recommended in mid-1988 that it be taken apart, block by block. Unexpectedly, the members balked, offering a haunting reason. As one of them put it, "This wreck must be left here so our children will never forget what *they* have done to us."

A year later OGAD had decided to revitalize its estokaj. With support from the IAF, the Oganizasyon began to construct four smaller, decentralized silos and resumed training members to manage the units when they opened in mid-1990. To evaluate that effort and the prospects for extending the estokaj mechanism to other interested groups of small farmers, the IAF commissioned its Haitian In-Country Service team in 1991 to study three of the fourteen active grants supporting food storage and marketing. A summary of the findings follows.

Project Objectives

A review of available literature and interviews with project participants from OGAD, the Asosyasyon Animatè Kot Sid (AAKS), and the Asosyasyon Peyizan ak Atizan Bonbad (APAB) underlines the importance of estokaj programs for the small-farm families that make up nearly 70 percent of the country's population. All three projects share four broad objectives. The first goal is guaranteeing food security in a nation where hunger is widespread and UNICEF reports that 75 percent of rural children are malnourished.

Even villages that produce ample yields of food crops can develop shortfalls. Traditional methods of storing harvests—whether hung braided from trees or posts (*gwan-n*), in sacks woven from latanier leaves (*djakout-sak*), or in raised sheds of wood and thatch (*kolonbye*)—rely on individual families and have limited capacities. Farm families often exhaust their supplies between harvests, and since there is usually no community backstop, they must buy food from regional middlemen at high prices. By allowing farmers to store more of their harvests safely, the estokaj creates a local “food-savings bank” members can tap as the need arises.



Ralph Boncy

A member of the Cooperative Artisanal et Caisse Populaire de Surprendre-Mare Rouge fumigates an estokaj, or food-storage enterprise, before storing the sun-dried grains. Proper pesticide use was one of the challenges undertaken by area farmers.

The second objective is to ensure that farmers have access at the beginning of each growing season to low-cost seeds, resistant to the rigors of the local environment. That is, community storage programs act as community “seed-savings banks.” Without the estokaj, peasants can be forced, in effect, to buy back at a premium the same grains for planting that they sold to *spekilatè* months before, when prices were at their post-harvest low.

The third objective is to boost family incomes. Community grain storage allows farmers to sell their harvests throughout the post-harvest period and wait for the right price. Since prices fluctuate as much as 400 percent between harvests, depending on the commodity and the accessibility of a given geographical zone to suppliers, the potential for higher earnings is considerable. Increased profit margins are vital not only as a source of seed capital for community development, but also for allowing families to save the cash they need to school their children and ride out medical emergencies or poor future harvests.

Presently, unorganized farmers often must either sell off part of the food set aside to tide them over until the next harvest and hope they can squeeze by, or borrow from a *monyèlender*. Monthly interest rates usually begin at 20 percent. Since the lender is also often the grain-marketing middleman, farmers are easily ensnared in a tightening web of debt, mortgaging the next crop to pay for the shortfalls of the last one. By improving food security in the countryside and providing abundant stocks that can be released to meet demand, the estokaj dampens the psychology of scarcity. This can help stabilize prices in regional markets, providing spillover benefits to townspeople as well.

Finally, these programs generate the human and financial capital needed to spark development in rural communities. By strengthening local organizations and freeing local initiative, the estokaj paves the way for other efforts to provide potable water, conduct literacy campaigns, enrich soils, improve farming techniques, and reclaim deforested hillsides.

Learning to Operate Silos and Manage Credit

The primary start-up costs for estokaj programs involve building adequate storage facilities and providing loans so that farmers can afford to use them. Technical assistance and training in enterprise management are important if the estokaj is to become sustainable. All three projects in the study provided counterpart contributions of labor and some cash; but construction materials, rotating credit funds, training programs, and initial operating capital to operate the silos largely came from outside these very poor communities. The IAF provided grants of \$16,931 to OGAD, \$12,138 to APAB, and \$15,810 to AAKS.

Each project chose its own storage technology. OGAD built four double-chambered, cinder-block silos in the hamlets of Martineau, Morisseau, Charrier, and Drice, and focused on two crops—corn and sorghum. In a pilot program that was designed to generate the baseline data for expanding service to all 1,250 of its members, AAKS built two double-chambered silos and one single-chambered silo out of cinder block in the hamlets of Fiereville and Saint Alba and the village of Tiburon, and handled a variety of crops. APAB chose not to invest significant resources in centrally located physical infrastructure to support its 255 small farmers living in and around the town of Bombardopolis. Instead, several latanier-woven djakout-sak, capable of holding 40–50 marmites (220–275 pounds) of grain apiece, were distributed to each of 16 affiliated subgroups. At the time of evaluation, the OGAD estokaj had been operating for nine months, AAKS for eighteen months, and APAB for six months.

While each estokaj focuses exclusively on locally grown food crops, there are differences in crop selection, suppliers, ratio of storage for con-

sumption and marketing, and methods of implementation. OGAD's silos have only been used to store corn and sorghum produced by members. Nearly 60 percent of the sorghum is held for members' subsistence needs, while the remainder and all of the corn is marketed by the organization. AAKS stores members' peanuts and beans as well as corn and sorghum, but it does not engage in marketing. Members decide which portion of their individually stored harvests to reserve for food and seed, and they market the rest themselves. APAB purchases sorghum, peanuts, beans, and rice from local suppliers, including nonmembers when yields have been low, and then stores the crops for eventual resale as food or seed to members, or for eventual sale in local markets, dividing the earnings among members.

Each of the three organizations has also chosen its own storage system. OGAD fills its silos in bulk, without separating the crops from the cement floors. AAKS fills its silos by storing crops in sacks, which are then stacked on wooden planking above the concrete floors. APAB's 16 groups store their grain in djakout-sak in the houses of designated members. The woven sacks rest on boards above the earthen floors of these rustic structures.

Examination of storage methods and management at various sites in the three programs revealed lessons for other groups wanting to establish an estokaj. All three organizations have experienced rodent damage to their stored grain. It is not enough to simply build a solid structure; the building must be vigilantly maintained and managed. The AAKS silos at Tiburon and Rendel, for example, reveal the importance of properly fitting doors to their frames and filling cracks that form between door jambs and walls as new buildings settle. In all three projects, it was demonstrated that ventilation apertures in silos or the gaps left between roofs

and the walls of houses have to be secured by screening devices. Rodent traps should be set out near these openings as a back-up measure, or to minimize damage if the community cannot afford screening. Finally, the use of natural predators, that is, cats, should be considered.

Varied experiences with damage from humidity also offer insights. The preliminary evidence from AAKS in Tiburon and OGAD in Desarmes suggests the need to modify bulk-storage techniques, since dampness rising from the floors at these sites has caused grains at the bottom to harden. Damage from mildew has also been reported. At AAKS and APAB facilities where grains are bagged and stored on wooden planking this problem has been avoided, suggesting a low-cost remedy without the expense of installing concrete flooring.

Problems with insect control were also observed. Some structures were not thoroughly fumigated before crops were stored in them. In the OGAD silos at Desarmes and the APAB sites in Bombardopolis, grains received insecticide doses that were either too high, posing dangerous health hazards, or too low to be effective. Overall, insufficient attention was paid to the need for precise treatments. Program evaluators observed that silo staff either do not understand, or do not systematically use, proper application techniques.

This is symptomatic of a broader failing among group leaders, silo managers, and farmers to master how actions and plans intended to ensure optimum program efficiency, safety, and success are interrelated. To some extent, this can be attributed to the relative newness of the programs. Each silo has had only a few harvests to provide the baseline for comparison the groups need to pinpoint problems and identify solutions. Political turmoil at the national level, and throughout the countryside, has also made it difficult for groups to reflect



Robert Maguire

An In-Country Service staff member advises small farmers about their grain-storage techniques.

on past experiences when the immediate challenge is survival itself. Nevertheless, the lack of comprehension about basic measures that are vital to long-term success underlines the need to provide for training and technical assistance in future grants, and suggests that projects must devise some mechanism for silo managers and organization leaders and members to exchange experiences, identify problems, and test solutions.

Despite these difficulties, overall grain losses during the evaluation period were minimal, and all three enterprises have generated much-needed revenues. OGAD's losses have been zero for sorghum, which accounts for 85 percent of its storage, and 10 percent for corn. Three reasons for the loss can be listed: the previously cited problems with pest control and humidity, and spillage from defective grain-chute enclosures at one of the silos. AAKS's losses have been less than 1 percent for sorghum and peanuts, which account for 15 percent of crop storage, and 3 percent for corn and beans, which make up the rest. APAB reports losses for all crops of nearly 8.5 percent, which were caused by previously cited problems with mildew and rodents and a theft at one of its dispersed and relatively unsecured household storage sites.

The three programs had total net earnings of 20,643 gourdes, or approx-

imately \$3,000, at the time of the evaluation. AAKS accounted for over 80 percent of that total, OGAD 13 percent, and APAB the rest. Prorated annual percentages of earnings to start-up rotating funds and membership shares were 35.2 for AAKS, 42.9 for OGAD, and 9.2 for

APAB. AAKS distributed 66 percent of its profits to members, OGAD 60 percent, and APAB 5 percent. Remaining earnings were channeled into rotating and reserve funds, to various committee treasuries, and to cover overhead and administrative costs. The relative weakness of APAB's program, which was at an earlier stage of implementation than the other two, was primarily due to the decision by managers to focus not on short-term economic maximization, but on the long-term benefits from allowing all 16 groups to make their own management decisions and learn administrative skills through the trial and error of firsthand experience. Periodic workshops to bring group representatives together with project promoters and leaders were planned to identify common problems and possible solutions. (Unfortunately, as will be seen later, this process has been short-circuited.)

The key to whether these three programs can maintain themselves and expand over the long term is the size and solvency of their rotating funds. Although OGAD has been able to expand its fund by 15.6 percent, start-up capital was only \$250 per silo. The decision to begin the program far short of the level of local demand was based on several factors. Given the prior ransacking by night raiders, the organization wished to avoid a show

of wealth that might precipitate another attack. Project leaders also thought that the small scale would allow silo managers to obtain needed experience, laying the foundation for them to run operations whose resource base was expected to grow at least four times in size. Members had chosen silo managers who were highly respected and trustworthy, but several were also illiterate, and this underscored the need to start slowly so that training and technical assistance could be attuned to the growth process. The short-term result of this strategy, however, was that OGAD's silos stood only half full during the first storage cycle.

The Asosyasyon Animatè Kot Sid expanded its fund by 6.6 percent, despite losing \$1,010 of its \$6,000 revolving fund when thieves broke into the organization's office and cracked its safe. Persistent entreaties to local officials authorized to investigate the loss resulted in a recuperation of only \$100.

With its credit program based on simple repayment of loans, APAB did not channel any additional revenue back into its revolving fund. This arouses concern that its program, while technically innovative and strongly decentralized in terms of management and participation, is in danger of decapitalizing its loan fund because of inflation or tardy repayment by even a few borrowers. Moreover, APAB, unlike OGAD and AAKS, does not charge members a management or handling fee that can be used to offset decapitalization.

Piracy or Development?

A well-known axiom says that everyone's boat, whether rich or poor, large or small, is lifted by a rising tide of development. Associations of peasant farmers in Haiti face the same kinds of challenges as rural cooperatives throughout the hemisphere in learning to thrive in a market economy.

Developing such organizational capacity in Haiti, however, is particularly difficult since the rural economy has been so systematically strangled by the predation of the gwo neg and their allies. For generations, ruling elites have been more concerned with managing an economy of scarcity than reinvesting local resources to spur productivity and growth.

Haitians equate this systematic extraction with a locally sold Popsicle called *pese-souse*, which means "squeeze and suck." The plastic wrap holding the "ice" is opened at the top and squeezed at the bottom until it is sucked dry.

One difficulty with the estokaj, as the story of OGAD's first silo demonstrates, is that it can offer an inviting target to organized predators in a society in which law enforcers are above the law. While OGAD's decision to decentralize storage facilities is designed to reduce the risk of pillaging and infrastructure loss, recent experience suggests that serendipitous timing may be all that protects the silos.

Immediately following the September 30, 1991, coup d'état that deposed the democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the gwoup san maman returned to raid OGAD's silos. Fortunately, the association's grain coffers were empty since the coup occurred just before the harvests began. Moreover, silo managers were able to strip the buildings of useful equipment and hide it before the raiders arrived. They then opened the silo chambers for "inspection," and went into hiding themselves. The armed band left the empty chambers alone, but they remain idle today, and OGAD itself has been unable to function.

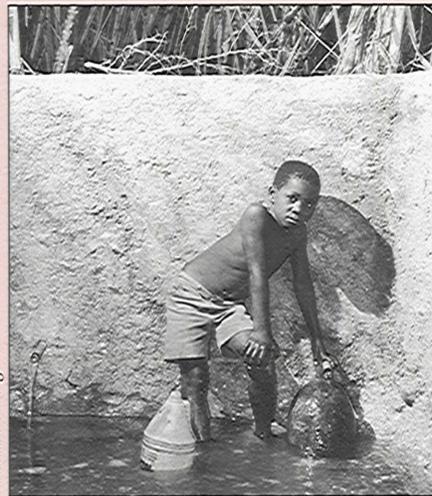
APAB's strategy of using rustic storage facilities that are widely dispersed in members' homes now seems oddly anticipatory. Thus far there has not been significant infrastructure loss, and Bombardopolis's version of the "motherless ones" has

not yet raided individual homes for their grain supplies. The generalized reign of terror, however, has made it impossible for democratically organized farmers' groups to function, and APAB is also in hiding. In retrospect, then, some of the more puzzling evaluation findings about APAB and its methodology seem clarified.

In better times, its radically decentralized estokaj appeared inefficient, posing special challenges to administration and management that helped explain why crop losses were higher than in the other two programs. Increasing the number of sites multiplies the cost and complicates the task of training and technical assistance. And over the long term, the complexity of coordinating transportation and marketing for so many sites may well have operated as an invisible ceiling to future growth. Indeed, a system such as APAB's seems better suited to addressing the widespread need for food security than for increasing the return for cash crops.

Even the decision by APAB's members not to reinvest early profits in the rotating credit fund now seems

With the capital generated from estokaj projects, rural communities have access to basic necessities, such as potable water.



Mitchell Denburg

less a symptom of inexperience with managing a sustainable business than wariness of the lingering power of the *pese-souse* system. The daily struggle for life at the margins makes it difficult enough to save for tomorrow. But when the threat of systematic predation is a daily fact of life, it makes sense for small farmers to conclude that the only secure investment is in consumption.

The small farmers of OGAD, APAB, and AAKS, their families, and their cohorts in hundreds of villages throughout the rugged Haitian countryside have tasted the sweet fruit of organizing themselves to exert greater control over their lives. Today, that taste is a memory.

Yet there is also a sliver of hope. Before the coup, plans were underway for the estokaj projects to convene a forum where they could evaluate their progress, share their lessons, and refine their methodologies. Those plans still exist in the minds and hearts of the conference organizers. And one must presume that the idea of the estokaj, which emerged from the need of Haiti's small farmers and is firmly rooted in their reality, also exists, like a dormant seed, among them. These are people, after all, who have survived some of the bleakest conditions the hemisphere has to offer. And among them are those who, like the members of OGAD who refused to raze the ruins of their first estokaj, are determined not to forget. Today the silos of OGAD's second estokaj may stand empty, but they are standing, waiting to be filled tomorrow. ❖

ROBERT MAGUIRE is the Foundation representative for Haiti, Jamaica, and Guyana. NORIAC DATHIS, an agronomist, is a member of the IAF's Haitian In-Country Service system, which monitors active grants and facilitates technical assistance and other services. JOSEPH-BERTRAND DÈROUILLÈRES is an agronomist in the Department of Plant Ecology at the Haitian State University.

The Voice of the Ecuadorian Amazon

Miguel Puwainchir

We live in the Amazon rainforest, the lungs of the world. Our culture is very old, and although it has survived the Conquest, it is threatened by the advances of modern Western society. Our people are struggling to restore, revalidate, our sense of self-worth.

For us, the life of our culture is language, which cannot be understood apart from the land. When the forest is leveled, the land destroyed, we cease being Shuar and Achuar people. For three decades we have been organizing to declare our presence in the forest, and we wish to strengthen our ties with outsiders to preserve this area. Our survival is linked to the planet's survival.

To understand the seriousness of our commitment, you must know that for us there are three Earth spaces: underground, where a Shuar community resides; here, in the forest, where we live; and above, where yet another Shuar community resides. This is the teaching of our ancestors. We defend all three spaces because that is where our family—past, present, and future—dwells.

So for us, the land is not a commodity to be bought and sold for a price. It is what sustains us. The moment our land is lost, we are no longer Shuar and Achuar. When we cultivate the land, we honor its bounty, give it worth. We protect it because we have no place else to go. Outsiders often do not understand this. They see land as something a person can own and cash in. For us the land is part of our family, and because we are all one family here, we hold the land in common. This is why we have organized a federation.

We are all brothers and sisters. From the time of our ancestors, our

warrior parents, the Shuar woman has been a source of strength. She implored the gods to protect the warrior, encouraged him to go to the waterfalls in search of the *arutam* spirit who would give him strength and courage. The Shuar woman, then, has always been fundamental to our survival as a people. Today, our federation helps women participate in community life, accumulate savings, and get credit to cultivate their lands and raise their animals. We fight for real change in our community and equality between men and women.

Because our time is ours, we depend on no one. We are a community and prepare for the future through our children, whom we educate in our own land, in our own language as well as in Spanish. We prepare them so that when they leave for specialized training they will want to return home. It is a luxury and a privilege to be in New York, Frankfurt, or Paris; and other peoples, who also live in remote places, have lost their sons and daughters when they became professionals. But returning home to defend the rights of one's people, their very existence, is a luxury beyond compare. The sense of purpose it gives cannot be purchased or obtained elsewhere. That is why we come home.

The Federación de Centros Shuar-Achuar has promoted regional unity, and we are cofounders of the national confederation of indigenous organizations. We must join together to defend our rights to the land and to obtain the resources our people need to survive. We hope to resolve our land claims litigation within three years, but we also need to expand our other development programs.

There is much confusion about this because the government provides little support, and potential

friends overseas do not always see the people who live in the rainforests they are trying to save. Most of us are not university graduates, but our people have lived in these forests for uncounted thousands of years. We know their beauty and richness well. We know how to survive here, and those who would seek to protect the forest's animals and trees or develop its oil and mineral wealth must know that none of these aims can be sustained if investments are not made in the people who live here.

We do not want handouts of rice, old clothing, or corrugated roofs. We need training for our people and the support to strengthen Federación programs in aviation, education, topography, civil registry, health, and other areas so that we can be productive and save the land for future generations. We ask the government: What will you do about the pollution of our rivers, about the destruction of our forests? The reforestation program is ambiguous, political, too little, and perhaps too late. We are here now, and we will defend our position, the sanctity of this land, with the courage of our ancestors. ❖

MIGUEL PUWAINCHIR is president of the Federación de Centros Shuar-Achuar, a regional organization of 330 indigenous communities located in the Amazonian rainforest of eastern Ecuador. This forum has been adapted from an article published in the Smithsonian Institution's guide to the 1991 Festival of American Folklife.

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

Hemispheric *Encuentro* on Cultural Pluralism

In an impressive display of their commitment to preserve their unique cultural heritage, 1,500 delegates from 400 Native American and African-American communities gathered last April in Mexico City from every corner of the hemisphere to celebrate the strength of their diversity. The event, billed as the first hemispheric *encuentro*, or coming together, on cultural pluralism, grew out of the annual *Festivales de Música y Danzas Indígenas* and was organized by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista de México (INI), in collaboration with the Departamento del Distrito Federal y Sociocultural.

Among those attending the gathering were indigenous participants from the Smithsonian Institution's 1991 Festival of American Folklife whom INI members had met in Washington, D.C. The *encuentro* on cultural pluralism in Mexico City allowed them to renew contacts and deepen their dialogue on the problems confronting indigenous peoples.

To break down barriers and facilitate dialogue among peoples who were meeting for the first time, the INI anthropologists who coordinated the three-day *encuentro* invited participants to publicly perform traditional dances and create an atmosphere of cultural exchange and common resolve. In the process, a forum for sharing ideas and strategies became a festival of music and dance and traditional ceremonies.

The *encuentro's* opening ceremony took place on the outskirts of the city, with the commemorative lighting of a new fire on Cerro de la Estrella, a symbolic site representing the Indian cultures that flourished in Mexico before the Conquest. This was followed by a gala performance of music and dance at the Palacio de



Ron Weber

*Alejandro Flores Huatta from Taquile, Peru, displays a kipu, or Incan calendar, to visitors at the 1991 Festival of American Folklife. Huatta also participated in the *encuentro* on cultural pluralism held in Mexico City.*

Minería and performances for the general public at seven locations around the capital.

In between performances, participants gathered for formal discussions at which they shared experiences and ideas for defending their land and developing their communities. A congress of group leaders met on the second day to issue a manifesto reaffirming the importance of their separate cultural identities and traditions and their common determination to protect the future of their peoples. They also demanded respect for the autonomy of ethnic groups by the general society and rejected the reductionist thrust of the Quincentenary celebration of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. The three-day event concluded with a march in support of cultural plurality that wound through the downtown area, ending at the Zócolo, Mexico City's central plaza.

Asked to comment on what was accomplished, José del Val, an ethnologist and the director of INI's

cultural research and promotion department, pointed to the past as well as the future. "For these participants," he said, "the fact of being invited to another country to attend a conference confirms the importance of their previous work. It is as important to them as it would be to an intellectual attending an academic congress. They have established contacts, shared experiences, become more enlightened and determined. Nourished by the contact with other cultures and ways of thinking, they take what they have learned home with them to enrich their communities."

—Olivia Cadaval

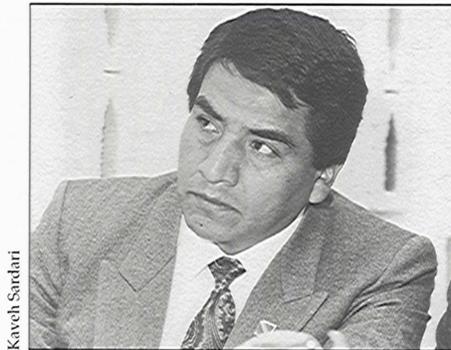
Giving the Community a Voice

"Freedom of the press is confined to those who can afford to own one," remarked Jay Ruby, a visual anthropologist from Temple University, in his opening statement at a recent conference on the media and development held at the Johns Hopkins

School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Ruby was not arguing for censorship, but for increased access to resources so that communities can discover and tell their own stories. Industrialized nations may have pioneered technologically advanced forms of media, but that does not mean that they automatically express what the developing world wants or needs to hear. What emerged at the daylong seminar were examples of how people develop not by mimicking other cultures, but by borrowing inventions and making them their own.

The conference, entitled "The Media as a Forum for Community Building," examined seven case studies from around the world that show what can be achieved when a community is able to speak its mind and make itself heard. The case studies documented print, radio, and video projects from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and North America. All were locally inspired and produced.

Teresa Smith de Cherif from the Africa Bureau Information Center of the Academy for Educational Development described how the Sahrawi people invented their own "wall newspapers" while exiled to southwest Algeria. Although the group had been banished from its homeland and lacked the financing, technology, and paper for publishing, several Sahrawi students devised the clever idea of converting the walls of dwellings into newspapers. They used whatever scraps were on hand—cardboard, tin, or cloth—to write articles about current events, health care, science, politics, and more and posted them on walls throughout the village. Literacy rates increased dramatically as people yearned to join the dialogue. This dialogue improved public health as information spread about proper hygiene and water treatment



Kaveh Sardari

Aymara social communications expert Enrique Aguilar participates in a conference on media as a forum for community-building held in Washington, D.C.

and boosted community morale as people became convinced they could solve some of their own problems, despite living in exile.

Radio as a development tool was discussed by Enrique Aguilar from La Paz, Bolivia. Aguilar explained how the station Radio San Gabriel has evolved over the past 36 years from Spanish-language programming to broadcasts aired primarily in Aymara, reaching listeners in Peru, Chile, and Bolivia. It was the Aymara people themselves who helped transform the station. They sent in letters with stories they wanted to hear, dropped by personally to express opinions, or brought in their own tapes. Today, programming routinely incorporates input from over 14,000 Aymara listeners on issues important to their communities. In helping spark a revival of indigenous values and culture, the station has become the authentic voice of its listeners.

The final case studies examined video communication. Often development agencies produce videos that showcase their efforts to help poor people rather than using the

medium as a tool for inspiring communities to mobilize their own resources. Studies from India and Indonesia put camcorders in the hands of local people to see how that might affect prospects for development. Producing videos helped people see their situation more clearly and discover solutions to problems. For instance, scavengers squatting near heaps of garbage in sanitary landfills in Indonesia used street theater and video to explore their situation. By organizing their experience to articulate accurately, community members developed the self-confidence to organize production cooperatives and stop evictions by local authorities.

Habid Mowlana, professor in the School of International Service at The American University in Washington, D.C., ended the conference by presenting 11 questions for further reflection. He underlined the importance of speaking the community's language and honoring its customs when implementing development projects of any kind. The best way to do that is obvious, he said. "The media can be an organizer, a mobilizer, or a source of information," he explained, "but none of this will happen if the community has no voice."

A written transcript of this conference is offered for a fee from the Social Change and Development Program, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1983 (phone: 202-663-5691).

—Maria E. Barry

Visions of a Multicultural Americas

In early June 1992, scholars and community leaders from throughout the hemisphere traveled to the University of California, Davis, to compare experiences of multicult-

turalism in the Americas. Entitled "Beyond the Legacy of 1492," the conference examined how official histories, discourse, and policies have stigmatized marginalized peoples, and it explored alternatives that promote cultural equality and empowerment. Awareness of the recent racial violence in south Los Angeles gave these themes a note of particular urgency. African-American essayist and poet June Jordan made this connection explicit in her inaugural address.

The discussions that followed during the next two days pursued three separate lines of examination and dialogue. First, drawing on the innovative work of the Native American Studies Department at U.C. Davis, the conference encouraged analysis of how common issues affected indigenous peoples throughout the hemisphere, using the comparative process to build bridges between North and South. Presentations ranged from deconstruction of "Columbus myths," to analysis of the juridical and ideological roots of discrimination against Native Americans in the United States, to Tomás Huanca's account of how the oral histories of Aymara Indians catalyzed early twentieth-century uprisings in highland Bolivia.

Second, the conference promoted interchange between Native Americans and other groups affected by the legacy of 1492, especially Chicanos, African Americans, and Asian Americans. These discussions primarily revolved around presentations by Alvina Quintana, Brackette Williams, and Dana Takagi on the U.S. experience. While criticizing the premises of forced assimilation, they also candidly explored the intragroup tensions that often arise in movements based on minority culture solidarity. Among the problems

cited were persistent gender inequality and how some notions of identity suppress native diversity in the name of political unity.

Finally, the conference promoted dialogue between community leaders and scholars in order to encourage intellectually rigorous research that engaged the real needs of marginalized groups. Among those who successfully balanced these

two goals was José Avilés, a Quichua Indian and vice-president of CONAIE, Ecuador's indigenous national confederation. His sophisticated and witty analysis of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement prompted other Native American representatives, such as Hazel Law of Nicaragua and Raymundo Cas Tzub of Guatemala—both of whom are political leaders and analysts—

IAF GRANTEES IN THE NEWS

La Opinión de Trenque Lauquen of Buenos Aires reported that María del Carmen Feijóo from the **Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES)** was named undersecretary of education for Buenos Aires Province. • *Zero Hora* of Pôrto Alegre, Brazil, reported results from a study by the **Centro de Tecnologías Alternativas Populares (CETAP)** that showed organic farming methods out-performed conventional pesticides and a combination of pesticides and organic applications, improving corn yields by up to 66 percent. • In *The Tico Times*, world-renowned psychologist Lenore Walker praised the work of **Fundación Ser y Crecer (FUNCRESER)**, a Costa Rican nonprofit organization, for its work in assisting victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. The United Nations is currently searching for funds to build the first battered women's shelter in Costa Rica. • Mary Allegretti, founder and current president of the **Instituto de Estudios Amazóni-**

cos, appeared on the cover of *Veja Paraná*, a weekly magazine from Paraná State in Brazil. The article highlighted Allegretti's work with the indigenous populations of the Amazon rainforest • **Servicio Universitario Mundial's** training courses and workshops for women staffing community-based day care centers were highlighted in *Página 12* of Buenos Aires, calling attention to the growing need for responsible care of children of working parents. • *La República* of Montevideo announced the release of the film *Arrinconados*, produced by **Imágenes** for the **Centro de Participación Popular (CPP)**. In vividly documenting the environmental degradation afflicting more than 20,000 citizens of the suburb Rincón de la Bolsa, the film shows how pollution is a problem that transcends borders, gender, and race. ❖

—Compiled by Maria E. Barry

Reviews

to offer eloquent, insightful accounts of indigenous politics in their countries.

Some participants from the South seemed to find presentations of representatives from the North unduly theoretical. To them, the conference was probably most valuable for the South-South dialogue it facilitated. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui did much to bridge the divide between community leaders and scholars by offering conclusions from her study of *mestizaje*, or crossbreeding, in Bolivia. Her study breaks new theoretical ground while attempting to “decolonize” mestizo identity in ways that might enhance Indian-mestizo cooperation. Cosponsorship of the conference by the South and Meso-American Indigenous Information Center of Oakland, California, also helped overcome the gap. A member of its board of directors, anthropologist Guillermo Delgado of Bolivia, closed the conference with a speech outlining the Pan-American Indian movement’s response to official Quincentenary celebrations, emphasizing the concrete actions that are being organized.

In addition to providing a forum for airing alternative visions of post-Columbian history, the conference sparked the formation of a U.C. Davis Hemispheric Studies Program to continue the process.

Copies of the conference materials or further information may be obtained by contacting Jack Forbes or Stefano Varese of the Native American Studies Department, and Charles Hale or Carol Smith of the Anthropology Department, University of California, Davis, Davis, California 95616 (E-Mail: CRHale@UCDavis.EDU).

—Charles R. Hale ❖

WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1992: DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

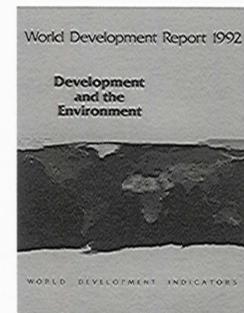
Diane B. Bendahmane

For the past 15 years, the World Bank has published a yearly report on the progress of world development—focused on, but not limited to, developing countries. Half of each volume is taken up with tables measuring progress by a number of indicators: production, consumption, government revenues and expenditures, imports and exports, external finance, and urbanization—to name a few.

From these we can learn, for example, that in Bolivia 33 percent of household income is spent on food (versus 11 percent in Canada and 64 percent in Tanzania); that Peru’s central government spent 0.1 percent of its revenue in 1990 on housing, amenities, social security, and welfare, including water and sanitation (compared to 55.9 percent for Sweden and 33.9 percent for Chile); or that 31 percent of Venezuela’s total land area is protected from development.

In the other half of each volume, World Bank experts discuss development trends, issues, and programs with the confidence and authority conveyed by a \$20 billion per year funding authority. Without a doubt, the Bank is a premier-class organization. It attracts highly qualified people and treats them to bankers’ perks. The very gloss and sheen of this yearly report proclaim the Bank’s status. It has, most people believe, the last word about how development should be done. In fact, the Bank is able to dictate to developing countries the “conditions” under which it will issue them a loan.

Knowing how much clout the bank has, many small development organizations attempt to “lobby” it, to influence its thinking. And they are gratified when the Bank appears to come around. For example, when the World Bank published its *List of World Bank-Financed Projects with Potential for NGO Involvement*, a catalog of operations that welcomes non-



governmental organization (NGO) participation, many observers in the development community took it as a sign that the Bank had finally recognized the importance of

small, local organizations and had come down a few rungs from its macro-development heights.

The Bank’s latest *Report* extends and consolidates that thinking. In his foreword to the volume, World Bank President Lewis T. Preston states that the 1990–92 editions constitute a “trilogy on the goals and means of development.” The 1990 *Report* focused on poverty, arguing that it could be sharply reduced if developing countries pursued economic growth patterns that made the most use of “the poor’s most abundant asset—labor” and if they provided education, health care, and family planning services so that the poor would be capable of taking advantage of economic opportunities. The 1991 *Report* drew lessons from the Bank’s 40 years of development experience, emphasizing that “success in promoting economic growth and poverty reduction is most likely when governments complement markets” and that “dramatic failures result when they conflict.” The 1992 *Report* explores the

link between economic development and the environment.

To avoid "appalling environmental conditions" in the next 40 years, when "the world's population will grow by 3.7 billion, demand for food will almost double, and industrial output and energy use will probably triple worldwide and increase sixfold in developing countries," the *Report* calls for fundamental changes in orientation. Above all, the Bank constantly holds before the reader the proposition that "environment versus development" is a false dichotomy. We can choose both, but to do so we must make better decisions, and to do that we must increase our knowledge, make our institutions more responsive, and involve local people.

The down-to-earth message that I found so attractive in this *Report*—particularly as read against the background of the "Earth Summit" in Rio—is that the current environmental debate has paid "too little attention" to how air and water pollution and severe land degradation "directly affect the welfare of large numbers of people." These are immediate problems that cause illness and death on an enormous scale, the greatest being two million deaths per year from diarrheal disease caused by contaminated water.

The *Report* is also down to earth in its support for "more participatory decisionmaking" to solve these problems. It underlines the importance of community involvement in extending water and sanitation services to the one-third of the world that still lacks them, stating that "external agencies and governments alike have become aware that in rural areas involvement of the users is essential if water supplies are to be sustained."

Likewise, the *Report* devotes a whole section to resource management by communities. "Governments

need to recognize," the *Report* asserts, "that smaller organizational units, such as villages or pastoral associations, are better equipped to manage their own resources than are large authorities." It adds that "popular participation at the village level . . . may usefully be fostered by NGOs and grass-roots organizations."

The chapter entitled "Making Better Decisions" states that many environmental problems cannot be solved without "the active participation of local people." It cites several instances in which local values, knowledge, and experience were ignored with drastic results. One example is Quechua forest management in South America. Traditional Quechua methods are "technology simple," but they allow the forest to regenerate so that the harvested areas are "hard to distinguish from undisturbed mature rainforest." Encouraging local participation not only informs planners about given locales and local practices, it also wins backing for projects and helps resolve conflicts over resources.

The Bank's strong support for public participation, community initiative, and NGOs is a trend that bears watching, and the *Report*, as a whole, deserves careful reading. Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute believes that we are on the verge of an environmental revolution, an upheaval that will be as far-reaching as the industrial revolution. This new era, he states, "will be driven primarily by the restructuring of the global economy so that it does not destroy its natural support system." Let's hope that the Bank keeps tuned to this issue in future *World Development Reports*. ❖

DIANE B. BENDAHMANE is an editor/writer for the *Water and Sanitation for Health Project*.

NEW FROM THE IAF AND KUMARIAN PRESS

Readers of *Grassroots Development* and those interested in the role nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play in development will find a valuable resource in *Intermediary NGOs: The Supporting Link in Grassroots Development* by Thomas F. Carroll. The book examines the catalytic role intermediary NGOs play in grassroots capacity building, and proves that sympathetic outside aid can strengthen self-reliant organizational and local initiative. The study contributes to our understanding of the development process by separating and comparing the two main types of intermediaries, identified by Carroll as grassroots support organizations and membership support organizations.

Intermediary NGOs is based on an in-depth examination of 30 highly rated support organizations in a dozen Latin American and Caribbean countries. Previously, little was known about the diverse cluster of NGOs that works directly with grassroots groups, and this IAF-sponsored study helps fill the gap by providing a set of criteria to assess NGO performance.

Copies of *Intermediary NGOs: The Supporting Link in Grassroots Development* may be ordered at cost from Kumarian Press, 630 Oakwood Avenue, Suite 119, West Hartford, Connecticut 06110-1529 (phone: 203-953-0214).

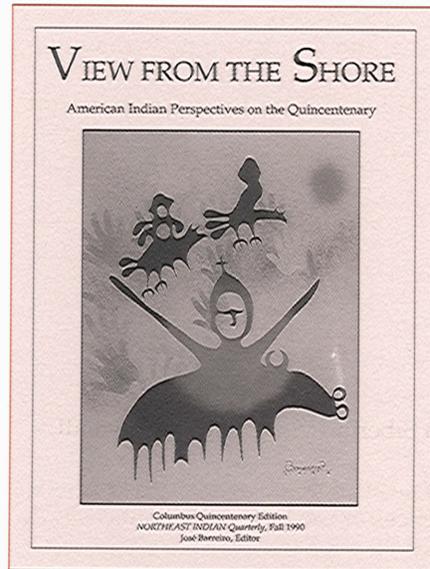
Resources

In the midst of international celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in this hemisphere, a new voice is making itself heard: the voice of those whose ancestors stood on the shore. It calls us to take a hard look at the indigenous peoples of today who, despite their growing numbers, are often invisible. The following publications answer that summons by reexamining our knowledge of history since Columbus and shedding new light on the living conditions of indigenous peoples.

The 1992 commemorations provide a benchmark for assessing the process of reflection, organization, and action underway among Native Americans. Two directories described below list some of the hundreds of organizations Indians have founded to conserve their cultures, preserve their lands, and improve their standards of living. Their grassroots efforts are laying the groundwork for a brighter future by giving indigenous Americans greater control over their own destinies—500 years after the encounter of two hemispheres signaled an impending loss of autonomy.

Akwe:kon Press, formerly the *North-east Indian Quarterly*, is a new Native American press housed at Cornell University. The press publishes **Akwe:kon Journal**, a multidisciplinary scholarly magazine that combines academic research and commentary on American Indian knowledge, tradition, and culture. "View from the Shore," a special Quincentenary edition published in Fall 1990, uses articles, interviews, and essays to explore the effects of Columbus's arrival on indigenous peoples.

In the lead article, editor José Barreiro describes 20 years of public and private plans for Quincentennial celebrations and how Indians have responded in North America, Latin America, and Spain. The article is accompanied by testimonies



from six prominent Native American leaders who appraise the future of their peoples.

The 100-page journal also contains informative articles about literature at the time of the encounter, human rights and indigenous peoples, and a photo essay of the Carib Indians of Dominica.

Another publication from Akwe:kon Press, *The 1992 Directory: American Indian and Related Resources for the Columbus Quincentennial*, comprehensively compiles addresses, phone numbers, and descriptions of approximately 200 networks, media, theaters, institutes, and educational resources from Europe and the Americas. The directory is an important source of information on the wide variety of efforts undertaken by Native Americans and others to ensure that native voices are heard during and after the Quincentenary.

Akwe:kon Press also organized a conference entitled "The State of Indian America: Prospects for the Next 500 Years" in conjunction with the American Indian Program at Cornell University. The conference

was held October 8–10, 1992, at Cornell. For more information about the conference or available publications, contact Akwe:kon Press, American Indian Program, Cornell University, 300 Caldwell Hall, Ithaca, New York 14853 (phone: 607-255-0214).

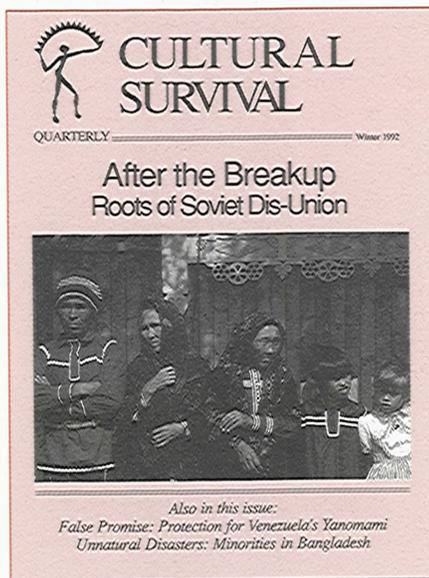
The North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1966 to research the political economy of the Americas, published a four-part series on the Quincentenary in its four-volume **Report on the Americas**. Like *Redescubriendo América* described later, the series seeks to rediscover the encounter in 1492. The third installment, entitled "The First Nations," attempts to illuminate the complex heritage and identities of the hemisphere's indigenous peoples. Writer Stefano Varese believes such a reexamination is overdue, since commonly held beliefs about Indians "... simply do not describe a Quechua from the Andes who works on a computer, a Shuar from the Ecuadorian Amazon with a doctorate in pedagogy, a Kuna from Panama who is a doctor, a Tukano from Brazil with a pilot's license, [or] an Aymara or a Zapotec who writes books on sociology and history."

The first issue of the Quincentenary series, "Inventing America" (Vol. XXIV, No. 4), asserts that the invention of America by Europeans obscured indigenous technologies and communal traditions that must now be recovered to solve the continent's problems. "The Conquest of Nature" (Vol. XXV, No. 2) examines the environmental side effects of European settlement. "The Black Americas" (Vol. XXV, No. 4) explores the experiences of Latin Afro-Americans, including accounts of black grassroots movements in Brazil, maroon communities in the Caribbean, and how the new

Colombian Constitution will affect the 10 to 30 percent of the citizenry who are black.

For more information, contact the North American Congress on Latin America, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 454, New York, New York 10115 (phone: 212-870-3146).

Cultural Survival Quarterly is published by Cultural Survival, a non-profit organization founded in 1972 to help indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities worldwide defend their interests. It is a valuable resource for current and historical information about native peoples



and their cultures. Recent thematic issues addressed intellectual property rights, the indigenous peoples of western Oceania, and land and resources.

The Winter 1992 issue was titled "After the Breakup: Roots of Soviet Dis-Union." Through 16 short articles, the quarterly described the conditions faced by hundreds of ethnic peoples of the former Soviet Union—their forced resettlement,

their limited rights under Soviet rule, and their struggle to maintain their identities. An article by Vladimir Sorin describes the plight of the ancient Tofa people, whose millennia-old, hunter-gatherer culture, dependent upon reindeer for transportation and milk, may not survive its contact with Soviet culture, which collectivized reindeer herds and introduced vodka.

Another article, by Asen Balikci and Mark Badger, describes a 1991 video-ethnography seminar held in a Siberian village among a small group of native cultural activists. The authors describe the experiences of the ten participants as they learned to use ethnographic field methods and observational cinema to help preserve their heritage.

Cultural Survival Quarterly is available from Cultural Survival, Inc., 215 First Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142 (phone: 617-621-3818).

The National Geographic Society, in collaboration with Cultural Survival, has published **The Coexistence of Indigenous Peoples and the Natural Environment**, a two-sided poster vividly documenting the intertwined fates of the Central American tropical forests and the Native Americans who have inhabited them for nearly ten millennia.

On one side of the poster, Mac Chapin, director of Cultural Survival's Central America program, briefly describes the region's geography and profiles the region's indigenous population—covering all seven nations. He emphasizes that "until recently these groups had lived in isolation, largely protected from the outside world by the thick forest, the heavy rainfall, and the generally inhospitable environment." Now all that has changed.

The bilingual text, in English and Spanish, wraps around ten stunning

color photographs of the quality one expects from National Geographic. Eight photos illustrate how the rhythms of indigenous life are seamlessly tied to the natural environment. Two of the photographs—a logger felling trees and a hillside blazing in the night from a fire set by campesino colonists clearing land for planting—show why that way of life is endangered.

The poster's flip side contains five six-color maps that dramatically document the accelerating pace of deforestation during the past 40 years, when nearly two-thirds of the forest cover has been lost. Color keys show the retrenchment of various habitats, such as coastal wetlands and pine forests, over time, and a large map shows how remaining wilderness areas are almost entirely confined to the homelands of the region's indigenous peoples.

Population figures are provided for the region and for indigenous groups by country. The population curve and the shrinking forest reserves suggest that one day during the second decade of the next century the entire isthmus will be one vast pastureland, and relentless desertification will have set in. Fortunately, Chapin holds the prospect that aroused worldwide concern for the global ecology will provide indigenous groups in the region with some of the support they will need to protect their forest and the way of life it supports.

The poster is a supplement to *Research & Exploration*, a scholarly publication of the National Geographic Society. To obtain the poster, contact the National Geographic Society, P.O. Box 1111, Washington, D.C. 20013-9990 (phone: 800-638-4077); or contact Cultural Survival, Inc., 215 First Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142 (phone: 617-621-3818).

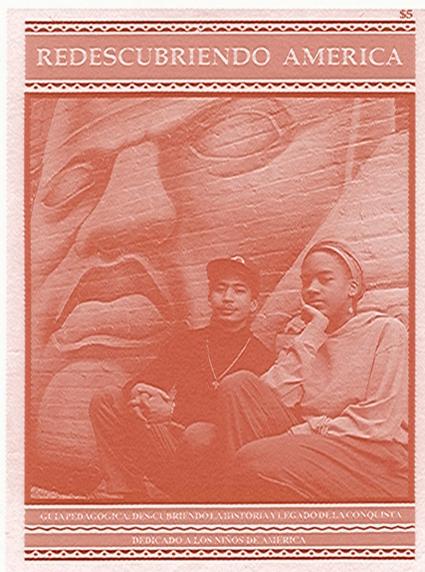
Redescubriendo América, published by the Network of Educators on Central America (NECA), is an innovative teaching guide that seeks to “uncover” the reality of the encounter between Europeans and Native Americans. According to NECA: “In this process children may begin to lose Columbus and other ‘explorers’ and ‘leaders’ as heroes. But in exchange they may gain a much richer sense of their own history.”

Poems, stories, and essays by prominent Latin American writers, such as Claribel Alegría and Rubén Darío, are complemented by historical texts, Indian legends, and articles about the role of contemporary indigenous movements in grassroots development. A U.S. high school teacher explains his method of inspiring students to read history critically, and a story written by a high school student tells of the decimation of the Tainos of Hispaniola after the arrival of Columbus.

Redescubriendo América's five chapters, teaching guide, and resource section are primarily written in Spanish, but several pieces appear in English or both English and Spanish. The text is clearly written and is illustrated with drawings and motifs from Indian cultures, as well as with photographs.

A companion piece, *Rethinking Columbus*, is published in English and focuses largely on North America's native peoples. *Rethinking Columbus* is a special edition of *Rethinking Schools*, published in collaboration with the Network of Educators on Central America. Both guides are troves of information for those seeking to learn or teach about the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Redescubriendo América and *Rethinking Columbus* are available from NECA, 1118 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037 (phone: 202-429-0137); or *Rethinking Schools*, 1001 E. Keefe Avenue, Mil-



waukee, Wisconsin 53212 (phone: 414-964-9646).

The 1992 Alliance was organized in the United States in 1990 to coordinate a response by indigenous peoples to the Quincentenary. The Alliance has used “the occasion of the Quincentenary to continue Native peoples’ efforts to educate others about our philosophies and perspectives, in order to better protect our lands and cultures from further colonization and environmental degradation.”

Alliance National Coordinator Suzan Shown Harjo (also president and executive director of The Morning Star Foundation, the sponsoring organization for the Alliance) was special assistant to the office of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior in the late 1970s. She has joined a broad spectrum of prominent Native Americans to present the Alliance’s viewpoint on the Quincentenary through newspaper interviews and articles across the country.

Additional efforts at public education have included a speaker’s bureau, a calendar of events, and

the publication of an organizer’s guide to planning local activities. The Alliance also organized a nationwide campaign to serve foods of native peoples during the week of October 12, 1992. The Project to Promote Native Foods and Feed the Hungry worked with soup kitchens and other food providers to gather recipes, develop menus, solicit food donations, and recruit volunteers.

That same week, some 120 leading Native American thinkers came together to discuss their ideas, visions, and plans for the development and protection of their peoples and the environment during the next 500 years. A two-hour video about the conference is being produced for broadcast on national television.

Questions about the 1992 Alliance can be directed to The 1992 Alliance, The Morning Star Foundation, 403 Tenth Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 (phone: 202-547-5531).

The **Directorio de Organizaciones Indígenas de América**, published by the Comisión Quinto Centenario of Spain, gathers into one publication information about 26 indigenous organizations from the Americas. The Comisión sent questionnaires to hundreds of organizations. Their responses to 25 survey questions were used to provide an in-depth look at their goals and activities. The *Directorio* also offers detailed information about the demographics of the areas in which organizations work, the languages spoken, and the major problems that must be faced. The directory is published in Spanish and also includes summary views about the Quincentenary. For more information, contact the Comisión Quinto Centenario, Avenida Reyes Católicos, 4, 28040 Madrid, Spain (phone: 243 04 28). ❖

—Anna M. DeNicolo and
Lawrance Binda

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The Foundation has created four fellowship programs to support development practitioners and researchers from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States whose research and career interests concern development activities among the poor. Two of these programs support field research in Latin America and the Caribbean at the master's and doctoral levels; another brings Latin American and Caribbean scholars and practitioners to the United States for advanced training; a new program, the Dante B. Fascell Inter-American Fellowship, supports grassroots development dissemination activities of distinguished Latin American and Caribbean leaders.

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

Applications and inquiries should be directed to:

IAF Fellowship Program—Dept. 111
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