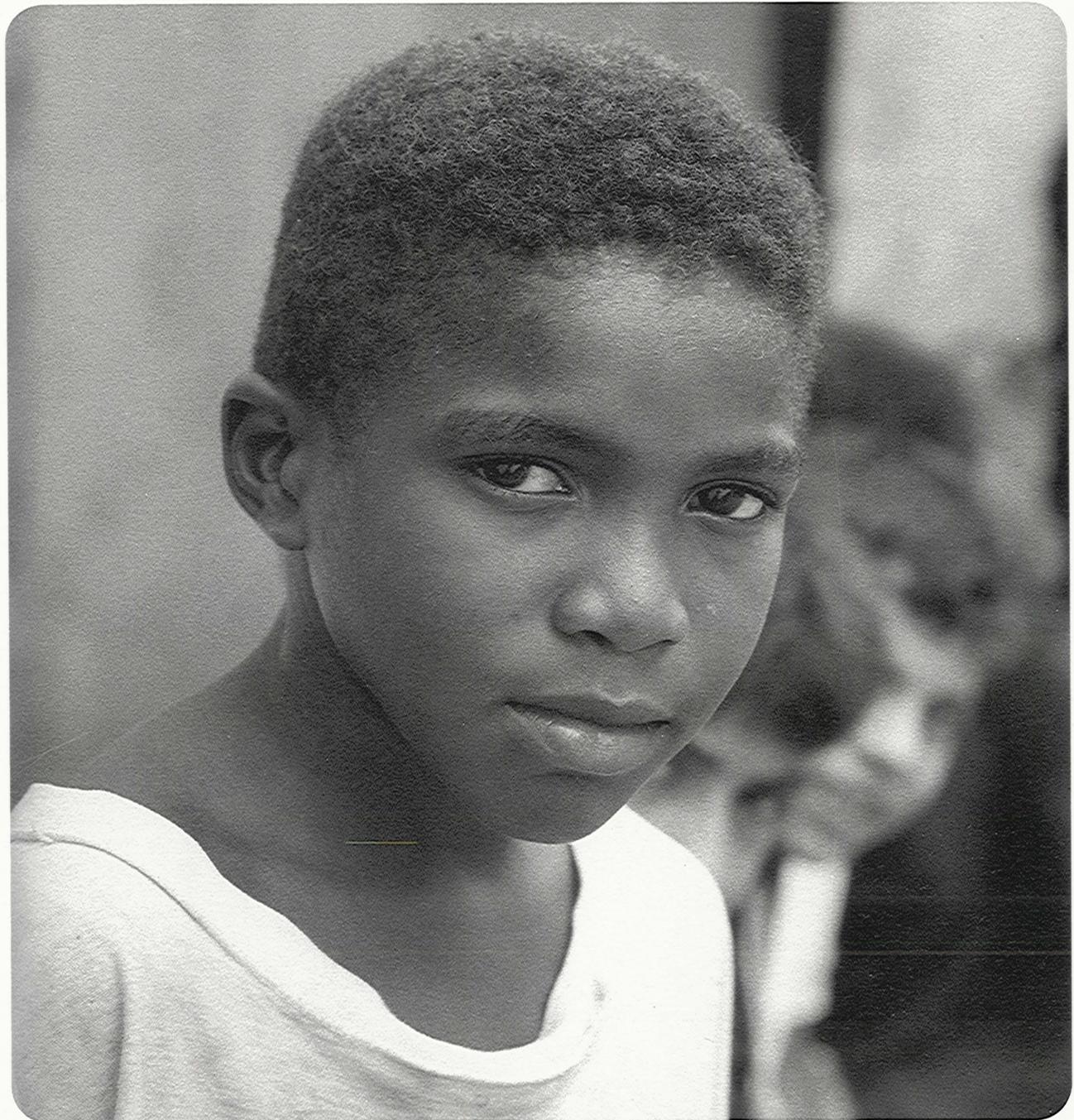


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grassroots development

JOURNAL of the INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION



Ecodevelopment and the View from Rio

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Cover photo: These children from São Luís are among the 30 million Brazilian youth growing up in dire poverty. Did 1992's U.N. Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio, show how their needs can be met without depleting tomorrow's resource base? (See article page 25.) *Opposite page:* A beekeeper trained by the Centro Josué de Castro (CJC) shows his daughter how to use a hand-cranked extractor to separate honey from the comb. Grassroots support organizations like CJC were key at UNCED and are helping Brazil's small-farm families boost incomes without harming soils. (See article page 2.)
Photos by Sean Sprague.

grassroots development

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UNCED and the Greening of Brazilian NGOs



Reuters/Belmann

Above: French oceanographer Jacques Cousteau (left) chats with then-U.S. Senator Albert Gore during a break at the 1992 UNCED conference held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Both delivered speeches to nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders who had gathered at the Global Forum. Background: Visitors stroll through NGO exhibits at the forum, near Flamengo Beach.

John W. Garrison II

Lessons learned in the flowering of Brazil's civil society help set the stage for the appearance of a planetary civil society.

Lourdes M.C. Grzybowski

For two weeks in early June 1992, it seemed that Marshall McLuhan's global village had sprung to life in Rio de Janeiro, bringing together in one place people who lived continents apart in distance and, technologically, centuries apart in time. The occasion was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Its sense of urgency was unmistakable amid the sirens of official motorcades speeding from the airport into the city, and from hotels to convention sites, as an unprecedented number of heads of state and their entourages gathered to negotiate the future of the ailing planet.

UNCED was a quintessential media event. Some 9,000 members of the press were assigned to cover it. Television crews, journalists, and photographers from around the world tried, often in vain, to make sense for audiences back home of the seemingly inexhaustible carnival of images being generated—diplomats wearing designer suits and armed with cellular phones; Amazonian tribal leaders wearing the pin feathers of exotic birds; the Dalai Lama, with disarming simplicity, preaching world unity; “green” technicians displaying solar ovens; Japanese businessmen touting potable water systems for developing countries; celebrities from Jacques Cousteau to Jane Fonda; and the copper-leafed

"tree of life," standing as an environmental beacon for a healthier planet, to which people from North and South brought messages of hope penned in their own languages.

A year later, it is this confusing welter of images that lingers in the minds of many UNCED participants and observers. For people who were not there, the event has already receded in memory, as if nothing, or not much of anything lasting, had happened. Certainly the full story is not told in the official protocols that were signed, amended, or rejected by presidents and prime ministers at the Rio Centro conference center. Nor is it told in the formal, seven-minute speeches each of those leaders delivered to the others and, through the accredited press, to their countries and the world. It can be argued that the real trailblazers in making environmentally sustainable development feasible were to be found among the people crowding the 35 large, green-and-white tents set up along Rio's picturesque Flamengo Beach, at the Global Forum.

The forum was billed as the largest gathering of "planetary civil society" in history, bringing together representatives from more than 9,000 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and social movements, ranging from Amazonian rubbertappers and aboriginal fishermen to environmental activists from North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. For 14 days, these activists met to finalize position papers at open meetings for presentation to government officials at the Rio Centro conference center, some 30 miles away on the outskirts of the city.

The international press generally seemed puzzled by events at the NGO gathering—perhaps understandably so—given the diversity of participants and the fact that decisions were reached, in what must have seemed an ad hoc fashion, after hours of exhausting and impassioned discussion over seemingly arcane details. Yet many observers, including then head of the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency William K. Reilly, could not help noticing that what was happening in "this place is much more interesting than Rio Centro." Wandering among the 600 booths set up by NGOs to inform others of their work or attending the many panels that explored how environmental and developmental issues overlap and interact, even casual visitors could not help being impressed by the energy

opportunity to learn of the vital role NGOs were playing in their own society and a yardstick to measure how much they had grown during the short time of their existence. Charles Reilly's article later in this journal (see page 25) will focus on the key mediating role NGOs are playing throughout the hemisphere in making sustainable development a reality. The remainder of this introductory article will explore beneath the tip of the Global Forum iceberg to try to show the vital role NGOs are playing in the slow yet significant transformation of Brazilian society.

Mapping Brazil's NGO Universe

Three major types of Brazilian NGOs were represented at UNCED: membership organizations (MOs) such as neighborhood associations and trade unions; social movements such as the previously cited rubbertappers' Conselho Nacional de Seringueiros (CNS) and groups associated with the drive for women's rights; and grassroots support organizations (GSOs) that provide training and technical assistance to MOs. Most of the key NGOs involved in planning, organizing, and providing logistical support for the Global Forum were GSOs.

The seeds for this array of NGOs were planted in Brazil during the early 1960s, when the Catholic Church began to respond to the imperatives of Pope John XXIII's call "for Vatican Council II to reformulate the theological and social mission of the Church" (Annis, 1987). Many of Brazil's leading bishops participated in the four-year Council, and joined with activist priests, nuns, and layworkers to encourage the formation of what would become an estimated 100,000 *comunidades eclesiais de base*, or Christian community base groups, to organize the poor. The "pedagogy



Forum participants visit the "tree of life," where citizens of all nations left messages, written in their native languages, expressing their hopes and pledges for creating an ecologically conscious world.

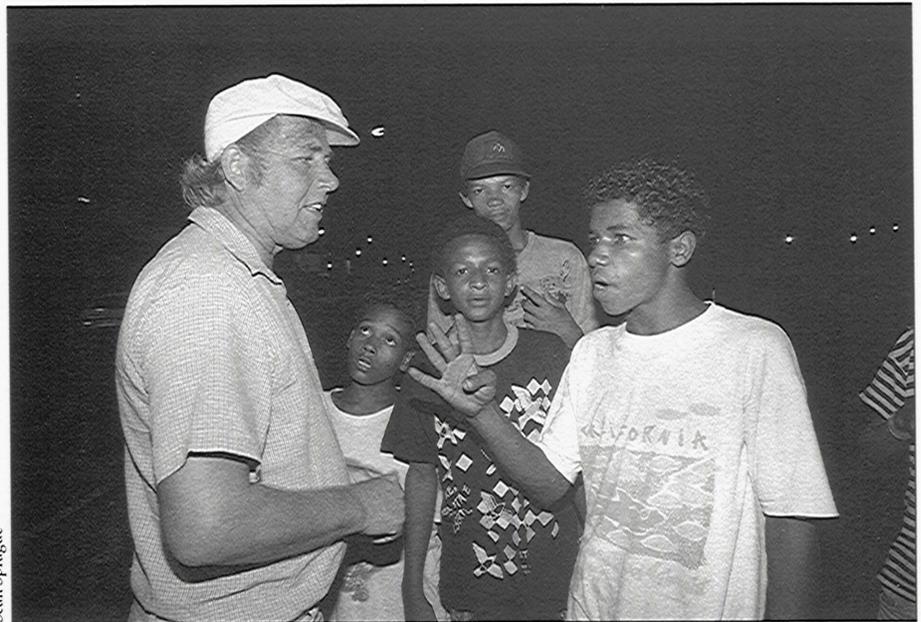
of the participants and the ingenuity with which many of them were tackling problems at the grassroots level.

Most of the media overlooked these events, concentrating on the conflicts and compromises that were being hammered out by states at the official conference and relegating coverage of the Global Forum to filler and color commentary. This was not the case for the Brazilian media, which reported frequently from the Flamengo site, and for good cause since Brazilian NGOs were at the forefront of planning, organizing, and providing logistical support for the forum. In a real sense, UNCED provided the Brazilian people with the

of the oppressed" developed by one of those layworkers, Paulo Freire, a young professor at the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, spawned a literacy training movement for the adult poor. The methodology used group dynamics to awaken *conscientização*, empowering illiterates to examine the society around them and take charge of their own lives. Although the literacy movement was dismantled and the ferment at the grassroots was "contained" by the military coup of 1964, it continued to send out roots in all directions that eventually surfaced in the 1970s.

By the mid-1970s, the first GSOs had emerged to provide the countless small producers' associations, rural cooperatives, and neighborhood associations with specialized training, technical assistance, and pedagogical materials, and to help communities better organize themselves. The widening gap between rich and poor and the military government's inability/unwillingness to address the problems of marginalized populations led other socially concerned professionals and intellectuals to form more-specialized GSOs to help devise alternative methodologies and public policies to replace the top-down, state-centric model of development. The founders of these GSOs were usually charismatic figures who had been community activists protected by the Church during the era of intense military repression; academics who had tired of the bureaucratic constraints and stifling formality of the university; and political party activists who had outgrown ideological orthodoxies and sectarian practices. Many of these activists returned from exile as Brazil's fledgling civil society broadened its wings and the drive for re-democratization gathered momentum. They received core financial support from international donors, including the Inter-American Foundation, that were concerned with getting assistance directly to the poor.

This organizational process accelerated during the early 1980s, when the national economy faltered and the failure of the government to deliver social services and protect jobs and incomes became apparent to a broad cross-section of society. In 1982, the first of a series of transitional elec-



Sean Sprague

Above: A street educator from a grassroots support organization (GSO) in Recife listens to homeless children discuss the perils they face each day living on the streets. Brazil's GSOs have helped pass local and national laws securing children's rights and ensuring citizen participation in policy decisions regarding children's programs. Opposite page: A student in a nonformal education program in Olinda, Pernambuco State, prepares a lesson before class begins. Adult literacy programs have been crucial social laboratories for forging the methodology and commitment of Brazil's GSOs.

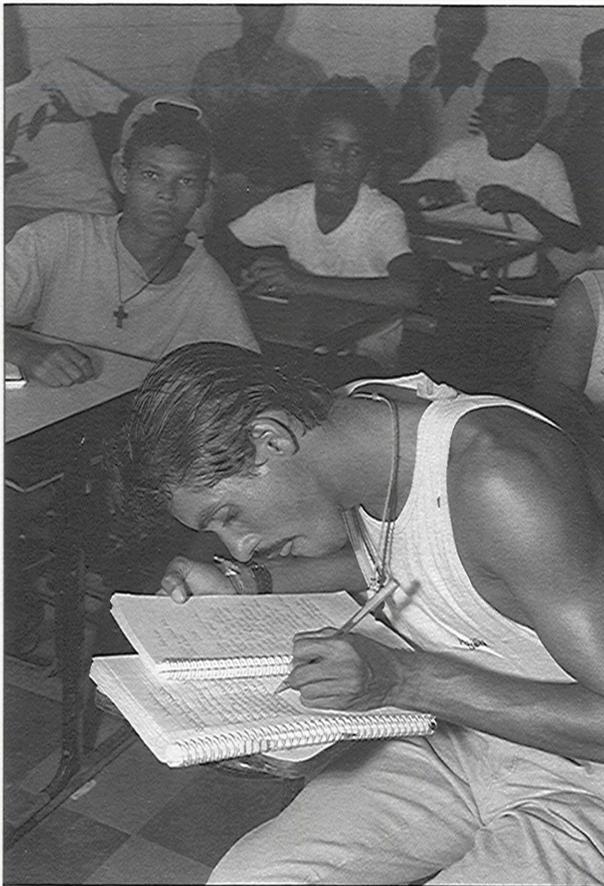
tions for governors was held that would pave the way for renewed civilian rule. As in many other countries throughout Latin America, including Chile (Loveman, 1991), the NGO movement was inextricably intertwined with increased democratization, helping to catalyze the process while acquiring new roots and branches of its own as the tree of civil society grew larger (Breslin, 1991).

Perhaps Brazilian GSOs' most impressive achievement came with the drafting and adoption of the new national Constitution in 1988. GSOs closely monitored the legislative process, provided expert counsel to groups proposing amendments, and educated the local communities they worked with in the intricacies of constituent participation. They played a key role in forming citizen's committees in cities, towns, and urban *favelas* throughout the nation, and in generating 122 grassroots petitions that garnered more than 12 million signatures. They organized bus and truck caravans to bring the previously disenfranchised to the national capital

of Brasília. For the first time in Brazil's history, marginalized minorities such as Afro-Brazilians, street children, rural laborers, indigenous peoples, and housemaids participated in the legislative process by testifying before subcommittees and literally jamming the hallways of Congress. The result was the adoption of unprecedented constitutional provisions and the reform of state and municipal laws to guarantee greater citizen participation in government at all levels of public life.

Two groundbreaking studies published in 1988 and 1992 by the Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER) chart the proliferation of GSOs that had come into existence by the time constitutional democracy was restored. ISER's researchers identified 1,041 GSOs, 85 percent of them created during the previous 15 years.

Reflecting the country's traditional pattern of regional power and influence, most were located in the southern half of the country. The Southeast, alone, accounted for 53 percent, including the vast majority of GSOs



Sean Sprague

with a national programmatic focus, most applied-research institutions, and even most Indian rights organizations. The second largest concentration of GSOs—27 percent—was based in the Northeast.

The social entrepreneurs who had founded these organizations had two things in common: the desire to create an autonomous institutional space that would allow them to provide effective services directly to the poor, and the establishment of core professional skills and innovative methodologies that would lead to new approaches and replicable solutions to the seemingly most intractable community development problems. The 1991 ISER survey of 125 leading GSOs revealed their growing capacity to do just that.

A growing number of them managed an annual budget in excess of \$1 million, although 78 percent of them reported operating revenues under \$500,000. Most of the funds came from international donors, primarily from church agencies, private foundations, and a few government

agencies located in Germany, Holland, the United States, England, and Canada (listed by order of importance in providing aid). Although still dependent on outside funding, surveyed GSOs indicated that their relationships with donors have evolved past the simple flow of resources to include meetings to share strategies and other attempts at institutional partnership. Nearly three-quarters of the sample reported interactive participation with one or more donors, and 86 percent of these found the experiences to be "positive."

The increasing sophistication of GSOs in managing these relationships and designing and carrying out their own development agendas was reflected in their staffing. Most, as previously indicated, had begun as "one-man bands," but now have core staffs that average 21 persons. Nearly all were led by well-educated professionals, with 87 percent having college degrees and 39 percent, graduate degrees.

This increased institutional capability, amplified by the networking efforts described in the next section of this article, has begun to bring Brazilian GSOs to the attention of leading development donors. Even large multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have come to realize that these entities play a key catalytic role in ensuring effective and sustainable development at the local level.

Praxis, Public Policy, and Networking

"GSOs may be small, but they advocate action on far-reaching agendas," proclaims the 1991 ISER study. More

than half the survey sample defined their role as contributing toward implementation of "alternative" development projects, and more than a third were working to expand the scope of grassroots efforts by elaborating "alternative" public policies. This prompted the authors of the report to conclude that, yes, "GSOs are small, private organizations, but they behave as if they were big and public."

What makes them so effective is this unique ability to span the micro-to-macro continuum of local project implementation and public policy advocacy. The key to both skills is the close connection GSOs maintain with the base groups they work with. The ambitious vision of Paulo Freire has not been realized in the fashion he foresaw, but many of his working concepts have become everyday tools for GSO practitioners. Among them is the notion of *praxis*, the belief that development theories are conditional. They are not valid in some abstract sense, but only when firmly grounded in the social reality they seek to change. That is, development methodologies are effective only when they emerge through dialogue with the people and communities who must carry them out. This belief in participation infuses the methodology of even research institutions like ISER, whose studies of and work with marginalized groups such as prostitutes and street children are full of unexpected insights precisely because they do not treat the subjects of their surveys simply as objects.

Years of experience working intently at the grassroots have produced a host of capable GSOs that have gained the legitimacy and expertise needed to design and implement participatory, innovative, and low-cost community development programs. Today, GSOs provide services in many areas, including popular education, community-based health care, legal assistance, environmentally sound agricultural technologies, video production and dissemination, public policy analysis, urban microenterprise assistance, and AIDS education, among others.

Broadly speaking, GSOs implement these services through one or more of a series of six interrelated activities. Examples of successful efforts in each abound, including the following:



Sean Sprague



Sean Sprague

Brazilian GSOs which promote sustainable agriculture increasingly realize that small-scale farmers need ways to boost family incomes without damaging the long-range productivity of their land. Above: A small-scale aquaculturist, who received technical assistance from Centro Josué de Castro (CJC), feeds fish in his hatchery outside Recife. Opposite page: CJC also helped small farmers in this village in Pernambuco start a beekeeping enterprise to produce and market honey. Left: Without such support, and the tenure to reap the future rewards of their hard work, landless farmers like these in Belém cannot afford to worry about tomorrow. They slash and burn rainforest in order to plant crops that will feed their families today.

(1) *Applied Research.* The recent study by the Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas (IBASE) of widespread violence against street children—much of it perpetrated by death squads—has attracted international attention through a collaborative effort with Amnesty International and is sparking corrective government action at the local and national levels.

(2) *Grassroots Organizing.* The Federação de Órgãos de Assistência Social e Educacional (FASE), through 17 offices nationwide, has helped spawn and continues to provide organizational assistance to thousands of com-

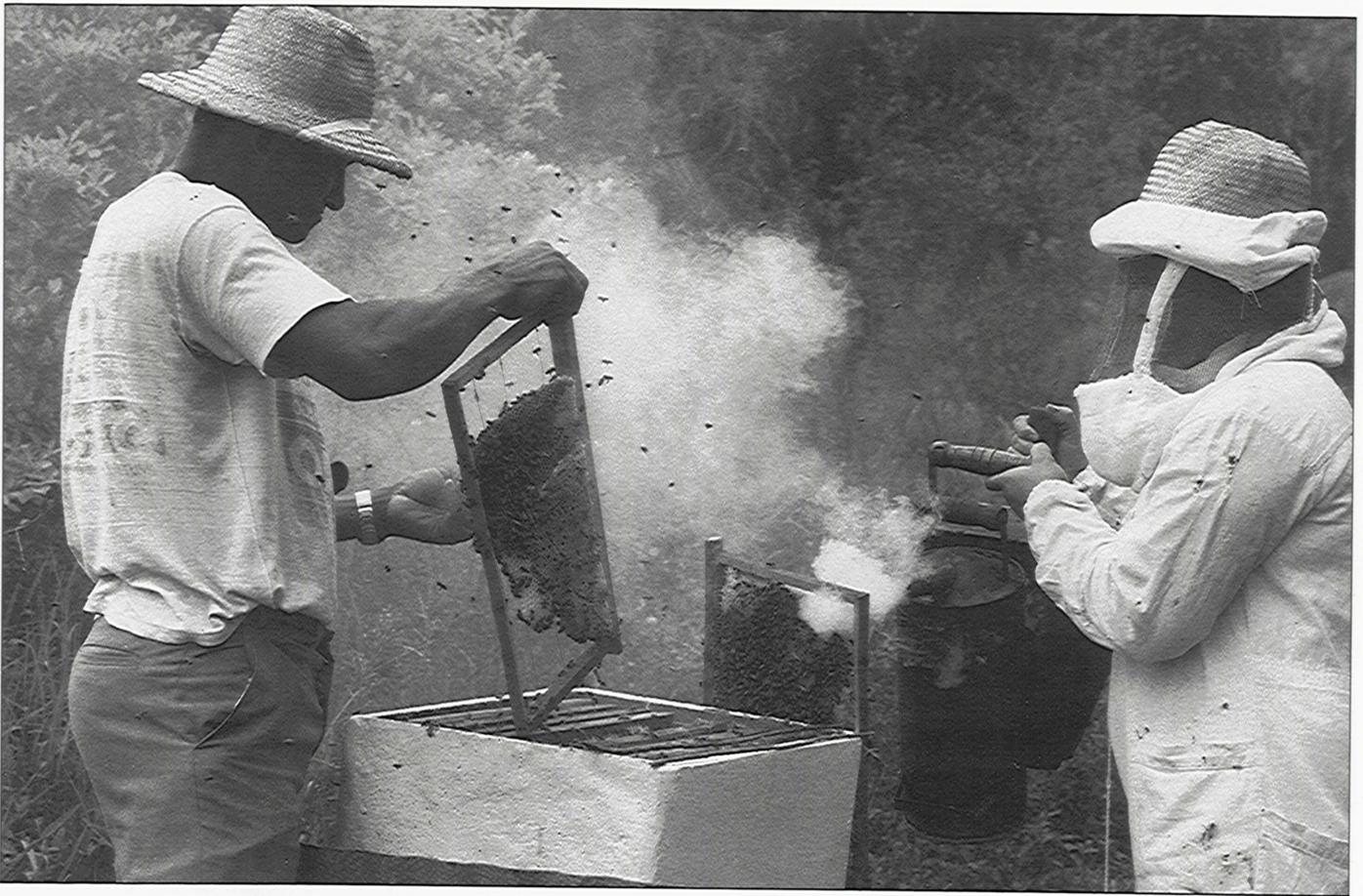
munity organizations such as slum dwellers' associations, rural cooperatives, and women's support groups.

(3) *Training and Technical Assistance.* The 20 GSOs that make up the network Programa de Tecnologia Alternativa (PTA) provide ongoing training and technical assistance to small-scale rural producers' organizations throughout Brazil in such areas as land management, organic fertilizers, biological pest controls, low-cost pig raising techniques, and collective marketing.

(4) *Information Sharing.* The Instituto de Estudos Sócio-Econômicos (INESC)

closely monitors legislative proceedings in the National Congress and reports its findings regularly to a nationwide network of hundreds of NGOs on such topics as agricultural policies, human rights, and the environment.

(5) *Public Policy Advocacy.* The national campaign led by the Associação Brasileira Interdisciplinar da AIDS (ABIA) to inform the public about the high incidence of AIDS among hemophiliacs who received transfusions spurred the Brazilian Congress to enact legislation abolishing the retail trade in blood and its derivatives and regulating existing blood banks



(Daniel and Ramos, 1989). These measures have resulted in a marked decrease in the spread of the HIV virus through the blood supply.

(6) *Coalition Building.* Several major GSOs played a key role in organizing and leading the broad-based "Movimento Pela Ética no Política," which contributed decisively to the impeachment of President Fernando Collor de Mello for wide-scale corruption in late 1992. This unprecedented civic campaign, which brought together over 800 NGOs, labor unions, professional associations, and church groups, marked the first time that GSOs flexed their political muscle on the national stage.

What nearly all of these activities have in common is networking—linking base groups and GSOs together to have an impact on regional and national problems. The first networking initiatives appeared at the local and regional levels—especially in the Northeast and Southeast—as GSOs began to sponsor informal meetings and seminars to share experiences and discuss the technical

aspects of their work. The first truly national meeting occurred in 1985, when representatives from nearly 30 prominent GSOs convened in Rio de Janeiro to discuss strategies for networking and the formation of common policy agendas. Since then, several national meetings have been held to assess growing relations with the government; discuss the impact of foreign debt on the poor; and analyze international aid trends now that the end of the Cold War might reduce support for development efforts in the South. Today, many of Brazil's larger cities—such as Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and Porto Alegre—have permanent networks of GSOs called "Forums de ONG" that meet regularly, and permanent national coalitions have formed around thematic areas such as urban development and agrarian policies.

The most important networking effort to date occurred in Rio de Janeiro in August 1991, when 125 leading GSOs joined together to form the Associação Brasileira de ONG (ABONG). ABONG brings together

under one umbrella GSOs and a few social movements that work in such diverse areas as popular education, urban development, human rights, and sustainable agriculture. The founding charter of ABONG expresses its intent to affirm "the common identity of GSOs committed to the democratization of Brazilian society and whose resolve was forged through a tradition of providing support and services to grassroots movements." The principal objectives of the Associação are to promote greater discussion and networking among GSOs around shared development themes and strategies; to inform the Brazilian public of the nature and mission of GSOs; to represent the interests of GSOs before the state; and, finally, to promote greater international cooperation.

This final objective is not an anomaly but reflects a growing trend within the GSO sector. Also in August of 1991 in Rio, nine leading Brazilian nonprofits, under the sponsorship of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), brought together



Louides M. C. Grzybowski

More than 600 booths were set up at the Global Forum, offering videos, tapes, books, and displays that highlighted innovative development and environmental projects designed by grassroots groups from all over the world. Here, representatives from several NGOs pause to discuss the day's activities outside the booth of the Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER), a Brazilian research GSO. ISER was a catalyst in organizing UNCED's closing vigil that brought leaders of 25 religious denominations together to share their common concern for preserving the planet's diversity of life and culture.

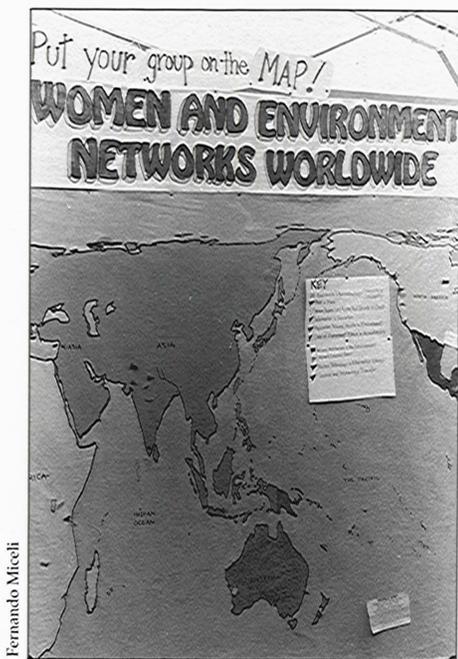
representatives from more than 160 local NGOs, 40 international donor agencies, and 35 NGOs from Latin America, Asia, and Europe. The "1^o Encontro Internacional de ONG e o Sistema de Agências das Nações Unidas" conference was an important milestone in creating awareness among Brazilian GSOs of how their development strategies and problems were mirrored internationally, and gave them the opportunity to engage large multilateral agencies such as UNDP in frank discussions of specific policies and methodologies. A second, current initiative is being undertaken by several leading Brazilian GSOs in partnership with the Brazil Network, a U.S.-based coalition of human rights advocates, church leaders, academics, and environmentalists. The "partnership program" involves a year-long internship for Brazilian GSO staff in

Washington, D.C.; electronic information exchange; and close consultation to develop common strategies on issues such as race relations, violence against street children, and bilateral trade relations.

Both of these international networking initiatives also carried potential long-term benefits. Brazilian GSOs, unlike some of their counterparts in Chile who forged close ties with the new democratic government of President Aylwin, have jealously guarded their institutional autonomy vis-à-vis the state in order to pursue the activist social agendas they formed in partnership with community-based movements. GSOs in Brazil promote grassroots democracy by teaching citizenship and encouraging the poor to exercise their rights as full citizens. As a result, they have become effective watchmen for civil

society, monitoring government actions and mobilizing public opinion to ensure public-sector accountability. With the specter of authoritarian rule continuing to shadow the country while structural economic problems threaten fragile democratic institutions, maintaining the vitality and energy of civil society provides the best hope for Brazil's future. Ties with the Brazil Network will allow Brazilian GSOs to share parallel experiences with community-based movements in the United States, the birthplace, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed in the 1830s, of the world's first national civil society.

As for the UNDP conference in 1991, the experience that was gathered there helped set the stage for the role Brazilian GSOs would play at UNCED the following year.



Fernando Miceli

Above: This poster affirming the importance of women's participation in ecodevelopment was displayed outside the Planeta Fêmea, the tent for women's groups at the Global Forum. Right: A participant from Africa at her booth outside Planeta Fêmea. Women from the North and the South worked together to prepare two groundbreaking treaties that were presented to government leaders during UNCED. The treaties stressed women's rights to control their own lives and demanded equal roles in shaping public policy at the local, national, and international levels.



Fernando Miceli

first assembly in São Paulo. A coordinating body of 26 major GSOs was elected, and an executive committee of 6 NGOs was selected to oversee fundraising, organize planning sessions, and coordinate day-to-day functions. A national office was opened in Rio de Janeiro, and Jean Pierre Leroy from Brazil's oldest and largest GSO, the Federação de Órgãos de Assistência Social e Educacional (FASE), was appointed executive secretary. During the next two years, eight national organization-building assemblies were held, with IAF support, in various regions of the country.

Given the sector's geographic, programmatic, and political diversity, the task of unifying Brazil's NGOs for UNCED was understandably challenging. Friction between the more-established, development-oriented GSOs and the recently created and more-militant environmental groups generated heated debates and often intense jockeying for power. Disputes were complicated not only by attempts to resolve the decades-old conflict between developmental and environmental concerns, but also from competition generated by the allure of scarce development dollars. Gradually, a consensus emerged, which was reflected in the book *Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento: Uma Visão das ONG e*

dos Movimentos Sociais Brasileiros, published on the eve of UNCED. This book was undersigned by all 1,300 NGOs that eventually joined the FORUM. In the process of forging and articulating a grassroots perspective on the state of the environment and development in Brazil, these NGOs confronted and resolved among themselves many of the issues that would arise later at the Global Forum, preparing Brazilian groups for a leading role in many of the international policy debates that followed.

Once UNCED was under way, the FORUM's first task was to help make sure that the logistics for the Global Forum, which was officially recognized and supported by the United Nations and had an operating budget of \$12 million, ran smoothly. Tony Gross of the Centro Ecumênico de Documentação e Informação (CEDI) represented Brazilian NGOs as the Global Forum's cochair. During the 14-day event, some 25,000 NGO representatives—including environmentalists, religious leaders, appropriate-technology entrepreneurs, grassroots community leaders, scientists, and politicians—from 167 countries passed through the street carnival of tents and outdoor arenas set up at Flamengo Beach. They were joined on any given day by an average of

Setting-Up Stage for the Global Forum

In retrospect it seems obvious that the sterling performance of Brazilian GSOs in support of the Global forum at UNCED was made possible by the negotiating skills and wide range of contacts developed during years of national networking. The forum, then, became a benchmark for measuring the maturation of Brazil's GSO sector and a stimulus for promoting a new and higher level of sectoral consolidation.

Realizing the difficulty of the logistical task before them, a core group of several dozen key GSOs organized the Brazilian Forum for UNCED (FORUM) in 1990, and convened its

10,000 citizens from Rio. Over 500 workshops, seminars, press conferences, and exhibitions were held, and music performances were scheduled nightly. Although a budgetary crisis literally threatened to pull the plug on translation services and electronic equipment halfway through the Forum, it was averted, and the general consensus was that the Brazilians had done a remarkable job in assuring a smoothly run operation.

The Brazil FORUM's second leadership task was to host the International NGO Forum, which was the largest NGO gathering within the Global Forum itself. Nearly 3,200 representatives from an estimated 1,200 NGOs participated in this effort by environmental and developmental NGOs to craft common strategies and speak in a unified voice before the official United Nations conference. During the 14 days in Rio, international NGOs hammered out 39 "treaties," or consensual documents, in five major areas: global environmental issues, international economic policies, agriculture and food distribution, the situation of indigenous peoples, and NGO cooperation.

Many of the position papers were essentially agreed upon in advance, through negotiations at four UNCED Preparatory Committee Meetings (PREPCOMs) held in Nairobi, Geneva, and New York City during the preceding two years. Although the quality and consistency of these documents vary, depending on the complexity of the problems and the progress made at the PREPCOMs, they are significant for the wide range of their signatories. The basic frameworks for "Population, Environment, and Development" and the "Treaty of NGO Women in Search of a Healthy and Just Planet," for instance, were drafted by a committee of 55 women leaders, from 31 countries, who had

been appointed during a world congress in Miami in November 1991. A key role throughout this process was played by IBASE. IBASE linked its computer network, AlterNex, with several others overseas to form a temporary international communications system called FreeNet. This vast electronic web connected more than 17,000 groups worldwide through e-mail and teleconferencing during both the preparatory phase of UNCED and the conference itself.

Nairobi, the sessions at the Planeta Fêmea tent in Flamengo Beach generated intense debate and unprecedented consensus on several historically divisive issues. Proceedings were convened under the sponsorship of two GSOs and cochaired by their representatives, Rosiska Darcy de Oliveira of the Instituto de Ação Cultural (IDAC) in Rio and Bella Abzug of the U.S.-based Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). The most important treaty ratified here broke through previous polarizations between North and South and between advocates of population control and poverty alleviation. It recognized that poverty, birth rates, and environmental issues were interrelated; stressed the reproductive rights of women; and called for an increase in preventive and health education programs for women.

The Instituto de Estudos, Formação e Assessoria em Políticas Sociais (PÓLIS) of São Paulo chaired the International Forum on Urban Reform. Six round-table discussions brought together renowned city planners, neighborhood organizers, and union leaders from around the globe to spotlight the fact that although much of the environmental debate has focused on rural issues, many of the most pressing problems are urban generated. The treaty they helped craft makes a clearly reasoned case for replacing the traditional models of development that have produced widespread impoverishment and air, water, and waste pollution in cities worldwide with a new, more-humane, and sustainable model. The 140 NGOs from 29 countries that signed the treaty pledged to work for greater local democratic participation in the formation and implementation of urban development models, and to work together to document and compare common problems, disseminate inno-



Kathryn Smith Pyle

Employees of IBASE at their computer center in Rio. IBASE set up an international computer network during UNCED called FreeNet that allowed groups worldwide to participate in conference activities without being physically present.

The 40 computer terminals set up at the Global Forum and at Rio Centro permitted their 1,000 users to compose treaty amendments, scan issue-specific conferences and databases for pertinent information, and send action alerts to their home offices. Even NGOs physically unrepresented at UNCED were able to critique and sign-on electronically through FreeNet to the various treaties.

During the policy debates themselves, the Brazilian NGOs contributed decisive organizational and conceptual leadership in several specific areas, particularly women's issues, urban development, and the management of tropical rainforests. Described by organizers as the single most important international gathering of women since the 1985 United Nations Women's Conference in

sions brought together renowned city planners, neighborhood organizers, and union leaders from around the globe to spotlight the fact that although much of the environmental debate has focused on rural issues, many of the most pressing problems are urban generated. The treaty they helped craft makes a clearly reasoned case for replacing the traditional models of development that have produced widespread impoverishment and air, water, and waste pollution in cities worldwide with a new, more-humane, and sustainable model. The 140 NGOs from 29 countries that signed the treaty pledged to work for greater local democratic participation in the formation and implementation of urban development models, and to work together to document and compare common problems, disseminate inno-

vative methodologies, and coordinate advocacy of public policy reforms.

Finally, Mary Allegretti, head of the Instituto de Estudos Ambientais e Amazônicos (IEA) and one of the initial recipients of the IAF's Dante B. Fascell Inter-American Fellowship Award, convened a panel that brought together rubeertapper leaders of the CNS, scientists, development specialists, and donor agency representatives to debate the effectiveness of "extractive reserves" in halting destruction of tropical rainforests. The IEA and the rubeertappers have pioneered this concept, which guarantees preservation of pristine forest while allowing the people who live there—Native Americans, rubeertappers, and river dwellers—to market its bountiful harvest of rubber, nuts, fruits, plants, and game.

While agreeing that the model needs to be strengthened through improved marketing arrangements for renewable forest products, the panel acknowledged that final judgment did not rest on short-term economics alone, since the reserves help protect fragile ecological systems vital to the long-term welfare of the region, the nation, and perhaps even the world. The discussion of how IEA and CNS have collaborated to build strong local organizations, acquire technical expertise, forge strategic institutional alliances domestically and internationally, and persuade the government to establish 14 reserves covering 3.1 million hectares and benefiting 9,000 poor rural families showed that development and the environment could complement one another. It also reinforced ISER's conclusion that Brazil's GSOs are singularly positioned to forge strategic alliances across institutional and ideological boundaries.

A New Day for Brazil and the Earth?

The closing event of the Global Forum was the Night for the Earth, an interfaith vigil attended by leaders from 25 religious traditions, ranging from Hinduism, Judaism, and Bahai to Afro-Brazilian Spiritism. The Dalai Lama of Tibet shared the stage with the head of the Brazilian Catholic

Bishops' Council and the president of the World Lutheran Federation, among others. An estimated 35,000 people participated, worshipping and celebrating together in a festival of music, dance, and the arts. The vigil was organized by ISER, and the painstaking planning and coordination required to mediate conflicting theological doctrines and religious customs was a tribute to the ability of an independent and autonomous GSO to create a space in which so many different kinds of people could share a common purpose.

The press and filmmakers were on hand to cover it. The visuals were full of pomp and flair, and the presence of so many different sacred symbols was inspiring, conveying a sense of unity rather than the cacophony one might expect from so many varied voices. But what did it mean? Had anything lasting happened?

These, of course, are the same questions that have been asked of UNCED itself. Although it is too early to tell what lasting impact the largest assemblage of governments and NGOs in history will have on the state of our ailing planet and its people, one thing is clear. UNCED was a watershed event for NGOs and particularly Brazilian GSOs. Hosting the Global Forum enabled Brazilian GSOs to hone organizational skills, strengthen the bonds of networking, and achieve deserved recognition among the public at large. UNCED represented a new stage in their development: the much-awaited debut of institutions born under an authoritarian regime and accustomed to playing a backstage role for grassroots movements.

As Herbert de Souza (Betinho), president of IBASE and renowned national civic leader, stated in his essay "NGOs in the Decade of the 1990s": "GSOs face the challenge of emerging from the wings to stand at the forefront and advocate the duty of active citizenship. They must clearly affirm who they are, why they struggle, what they propose as they make the shift from micro to macro, from the private to the public, from resistance to proposal making, from identification of problems to formulation of their solutions."

There is no doubt that Brazilian GSOs are undergoing a historic transi-

tion. They are shifting from small, alternative, social-change entrepreneurs toward consolidation into large, specialized institutions having an increasingly important voice in the formation of national public policy. UNCED not only allowed Brazilian GSOs to demonstrate their new maturity under the glare of an unprecedented international spotlight, but previewed the leading role GSOs will play in the development and further democratization of Brazilian society. ❖

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Making Brazil's Cities Livable



Millard Schisler



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NGOs and the Recycling of Human Waste

**A small nonprofit helps
local government solve
problems by tapping
the resourcefulness
of its citizens.**

Above and left: Young catadores de lixo, or trashpickers, scavenge through the rubble of "O Globo," a mountain of garbage so huge and desolate it suggests the top of the world. More than 500 people collect trash from O Globo, which they sell for pennies. Opposite page: A river in São Paulo clogged with waste from a nearby favela, or slum.

Silvio Caccia Bava and
Laura Mullahy

It is not yet light when Dona Teresa whispers goodbye to her 12-year-old daughter and slips out the door of their ramshackle house, trying not to waken the younger children. She hurries down the steep hillside path, despite the darkness, as if her feet had memorized the way from having set out so many times before sunrise only to make the climb back up after sunset.

Halfway down, Dona Teresa sees the dark mass of a second hill rising toward her and recognizes the all-too-familiar stench, which is not one smell but many. The second hill is a sprawling heap of garbage, and as she follows the path around it, shadowy figures can be seen moving among its folds in the day's first light. Dona Teresa shudders at the thought of the insects and rodents and who knows what other creatures that have come here to feed. But the sound of a *catador de lixo*, or trash-picker, coughing uncontrollably reminds her that the forms she sees

bending and stooping to pick over the debris are people, many of them her neighbors. They too are early risers and have come to see what might be salvaged. Some of them might be looking for *sucata*—scraps of cardboard, strips of corrugated tin and aluminum, or boards from wooden crates—to build a house not unlike her own. Others are here to collect materials that can be sold. A few are looking for food.

Reaching the main road at last, Dona Teresa joins the crowd that is slowly forming, waiting for the bus that will take them into downtown São Paulo. She searches for a familiar face and makes her way to the side of a woman who, like herself, works as a housekeeper for a well-off family. Sitting on the curb, they chat for a while about their own families, their hope that the newly organized neighborhood association can build a playground to keep the children off the garbage pile and away from life on the streets. Finally, looking down the black tarmac steaming in the morning sun, Dona Teresa laughs softly and says that today the lucky ones are

those who overslept or have paused to enjoy the view, such as it is, because there was no need to rush down the hillside. Falling quiet, the two know that the serious waiting has begun.

They might have checked the bus schedule, but none exists. The bus arrives when it will, at random, if it comes at all. And by now they are accustomed to the waiting. Each morning, the fortunate residents of this *favela*, the ones with jobs, pour down the hillsides and wend their way around the towering garbage pile to wait for an overcrowded, overpriced bus that, if they are lucky, will take them within walking distance of their destination and not to another wait for a connecting bus. Each evening the journey is reword.

Dona Teresa is Brazilian, but countless others like her live in the *pueblos jóvenes* around Lima, Peru, or the *poblaciones* of Santiago, Chile, or the *colonias* outside Mexico City. Millions of Latin Americans inhabit the shantytowns that have mushroomed around the hemisphere's urban areas during the past three decades. They live in makeshift shacks, often with-



Millard Schisler

out electricity, potable water, or sewerage. Most eke out livelihoods by making the long commute to the city center, where they might be employed mending clothes, shining shoes, or vending anything from used auto parts to lottery tickets. Many remain behind, picking through garbage dumps for whatever they can glean from other people's trash.

The garbage dump in Dona Teresa's favela is an ecological disaster that endangers the health of the surrounding population and testifies to São Paulo's inability to either generate enough jobs for its citizens or manage their refuse. Yet redemocratization and the decentralization of the state have saddled city officials with responsibility for garbage collection and disposal, public transportation, and a host of other services without providing the revenue to pay for them.

Fortunately the crisis is also a time of opportunity. In some Brazilian municipalities, such as Cambé and Toledo in Paraná State and Lajes in Santa Catarina, reform mayors have forged alliances with community associations to redirect and upgrade public services (Ferguson, 1992). In other municipalities, including the largest urban centers, grassroots support organizations (GSOs) tied to social movements and self-help neighborhood associations are pressuring local governments to reinvent the way services are delivered. One of those GSOs, the Instituto de Estudos, Formação e Assessoria em Políticas Sociais (PÓLIS), is searching for ways cities can recycle their human resources and avoid drowning in their own waste.

PÓLIS and the Recycling of Knowledge

PÓLIS was founded in 1987, on the eve of Brazil's return to full constitutional democracy, by urban planners

who believed that democratic institutions could not survive without a strong civil society and that community participation was vital to mobilizing the resources and ingenuity needed to make the nation's cities more livable. PÓLIS operates as a clearinghouse for applied research,

the city or bring it together. It then identifies strategies for assembling coalitions of diverse groups to improve specific public services.

What makes PÓLIS a special kind of Brazilian GSO is not only its urban focus, but also its conscious effort to work with both municipal governments and the community associations and social movements that are organizing marginalized populations within cities. PÓLIS accomplishes this through activities that fall into four general categories: training courses and seminars, consulting and technical assistance, information collection and analysis, and the dissemination of research findings through publications and conferences. Workshops, forums, and special training courses are conducted to improve the managerial skills of newly elected municipal government officials, their staffs, and the staffs of public agencies. PÓLIS also organizes technical assistance programs for social movements, such as federations of favela associations. Finally, PÓLIS works with other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to share project knowledge and techniques through joint publications and seminars. By setting out to establish itself as a reliable broker of information, PÓLIS is bringing municipal officials together with community leaders to design effective policies that have the public support to be sustained. By networking with other NGOs, it avoids duplication and reaches a broader constituency within

and beyond São Paulo.

PÓLIS publications address a wide variety of issues. During 1991, research studies focused on urban reform and citizens' rights; *cortiços*, or tenement housing; self-help housing construction; and an assortment of urban environmental problems. A new publication series launched that year spotlights "pioneering experiences in democratic municipal management." The document devoted to



Fernando Miceli

A woman in the favela of Rocinha, on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, launders diapers and washes her kitchen pots and pans in water she hauled uphill from a polluted stream. Participatory recycling programs can help reduce water contamination.

training, and technical assistance to tackle a host of urban problems, including unemployment, social marginalization, inadequate transportation, and environmental degradation. By examining the social ecology of metropolitan areas, PÓLIS's multidisciplinary staff of 32 urban planners, sociologists, anthropologists, lawyers, economists, and documentary archivists tries to understand how public policies can splinter

Lajes, in the southeastern state of Santa Catarina, is seminal, chronicling one of Brazil's oldest and most successful experiences in local democratic governance. Beginning in the 1970s, a newly installed reform administration launched a program called *Viva Seu Bairro*, or Celebrate Your Neighborhood, which tied public services to the level of local organization. Associations sprang up across the municipality to work with public agencies to spark construction of low-income housing and community gardens and other urban renewal projects, creating, in the process, a new model for municipally sponsored civic action.

In order to inform city government administrators and councilmen across Brazil about successful ideas being tested by their peers, PÓLIS publishes *Inovação Urbana*, a quarterly magazine. Its first issue spotlighted three efforts by municipal governments to improve the handling of solid waste in favelas such as Dona Teresa's (Muçouçah, 1990).

Rethinking the Problem of Urban Waste

City managers across Latin America face a rising tide of garbage as the pace of urbanization accelerates. Although municipal budgets devote an estimated 30 to 50 percent of their resources to managing urban solid waste, refuse collection and disposal remain inefficient and inequitable (International Cities Management Association, 1992). In fact, it can be argued that some poor neighborhoods are treated as dumping grounds for newly arrived rural migrants and for the city's garbage.

Metropolitan areas in the Third World are generating nearly 25 pounds of solid waste per person daily. By the turn of the century, Latin American cities will be producing 370,000 tons a day, an 80 percent rise above the present level. Only 60 percent of current solid waste is collected, and less than half of that is disposed of in an environmentally sound manner (Campbell, 1989).

Until recently, the staggering volume of refuse produced in metropolitan areas has led local government leaders to contract with private firms

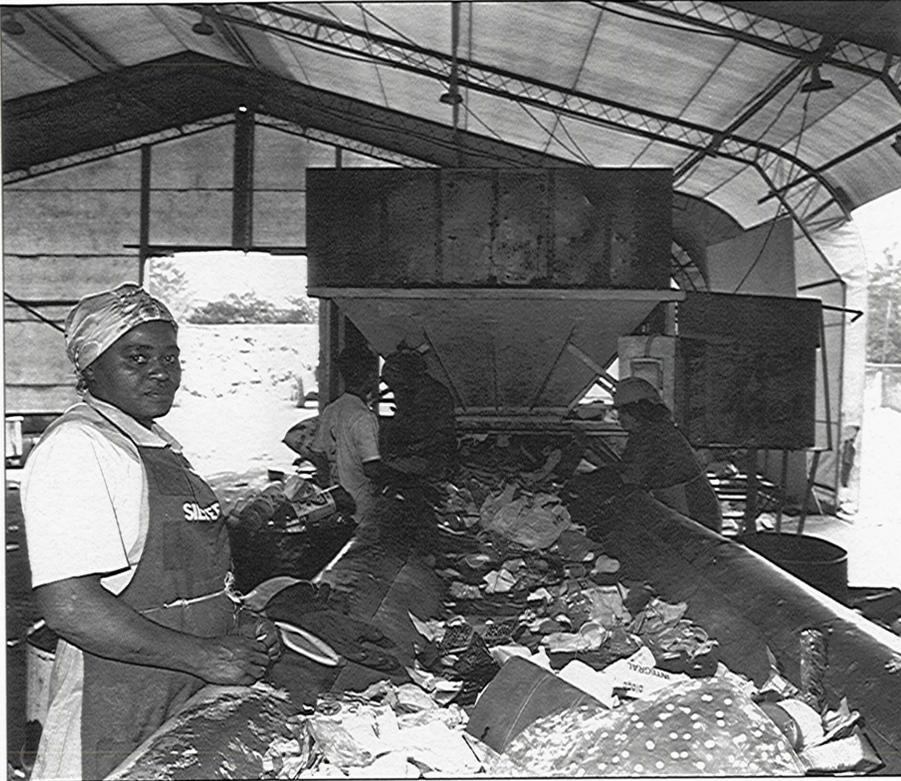


Fernando Mifcell

A woman gazes from the front door of her house in Rocinha in search of her children who are supposed to be playing nearby. The vala negra, or black ditch, formed by broken drains in the middle of the street is a common sight in the favela. To combat illnesses from bacterial infections and to clean up the mountains of garbage that often contain toxic waste, residents of poor neighborhoods like this one are working with grassroots support organizations like PÓLIS to reform public sanitation policies.

for garbage collection rather than rely on municipal employees. In São Paulo, little has worked, and in vacant lots, along streambeds, and interspersed among the city's poor neighborhoods, there is a growing skyline of *lixões*—mountains of

garbage like the one in Dona Teresa's favela. These vast depositories contaminate water supplies, attract rodents and other vermin, and spread bacterial disease. They are also the source of a new kind of illness—that produced by exposure to toxic mate-



Workers at the Centro de Triagem para Reciclagem de Pinheiros hand-sort trash that has been collected and dumped into a long bin, in order to find what can be salvaged. The city of São Paulo, running out of available landfill space for solid waste, is experimenting with alternative solutions such as this neighborhood recycling facility, which also generates jobs for people in the area.

rials. Children have been found playing with radioactive waste discarded from hospital labs; and chemical by-products of industrial production leak from metal drums dumped in *lixões*, leach into the soil, and contaminate groundwater.

Solving the problem of *lixões* is not simply a matter of investing in more infrastructure to handle solid waste, even if the resources to do so somehow become available. Composting plants and incinerators, for instance, can only handle waste that has been preprocessed to meet minimal levels of "purity." Incinerators generate toxic ashes that must still be dumped in the limited supply of landfills. PÓLIS research suggests that solving the problem of human waste requires paying more attention to human resources, building on the organizational capacity that is already available, even in marginalized neighborhoods. Borrowing techniques being used in the United States and some nations of Europe, PÓLIS urges individuals, homeowners, schools,

businesses, and other private associations to become involved with local government in the recycling of waste material, by calling attention to the multiple ecological, economic, social, and political benefits that are generated by citizen participation.

In offering concrete suggestions for municipal and civic leaders to follow, PÓLIS examined three exemplary initiatives in solid-waste treatment: in Curitiba, widely known as "the environmental capital of Brazil"; and in two São Paulo neighborhoods, Vila Madalena and Monte Azul.

Curitiba: Curitiba's mayor, Jaime Lerner, was among the first urban planners to introduce environmental concern and balanced development to the Brazilian public during the early 1960s. During his three terms in office, Lerner has put his philosophy of linking social and environmental policy into practice, moving away from capital intensive investments in highways and subways toward im-

plementation of an efficient bus system that uses express lanes to reduce traffic congestion and auto use. In the late 1980s, Lerner's administration moved to attack another problem.

If steps were not taken, the capital of the southern state of Paraná and the reputed environmental capital of the nation would gradually be buried under the 1,070 tons of garbage it generated each day. Beginning in 1989, the municipal government launched a comprehensive plan for treating solid waste.

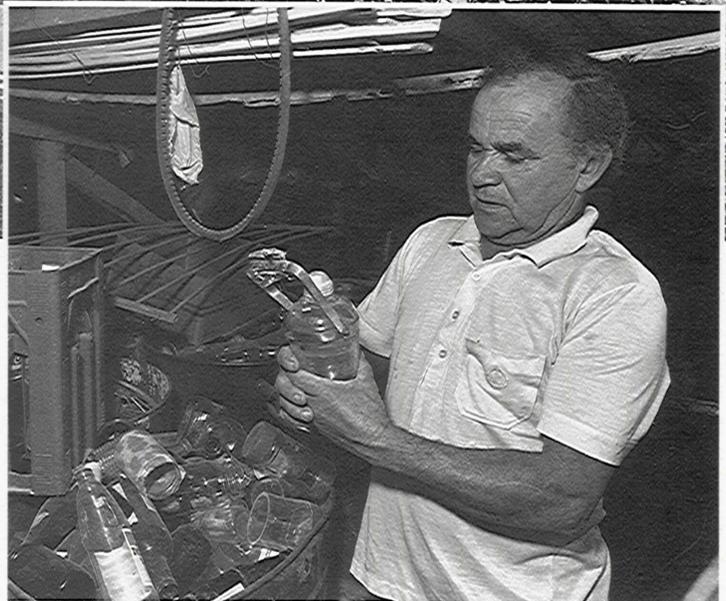
The first step was to invest in infrastructure that would reduce the volume of trash that needed long-term storage. Recycling plants for glass and other reusable materials, compost factories for organic waste, and incinerators for safely combustible inorganic materials were built. Sanitary landfills—lined with clay and sheets of plastic to prevent seepage—were constructed for items that could not be processed. City authorities anticipated that these facilities, if properly used, could lower the volume of garbage left daily at landfills from 700 to 147 tons—a reduction of nearly 80 percent.

The system was unlikely to work, however, if ways were not found to reduce the costs of collecting and sorting the trash, particularly from private households, where advantages of scale do not exist. Two incentive-based systems were put in place. The first was designed for residents of favelas, which had traditionally been outside the reach of municipal collection efforts. The "garbage-purchase project" offered a free bus token for every bag of trash delivered by residents. Within months, more than 16,000 families were participating.

The second program, aimed at pre-sorting recyclable materials, was implemented in stages, beginning with the public schools. Volunteers costumed as trees visited 110 schools to encourage children to become involved and to persuade their families of the advantages of recycling. An illustrated primer, describing the advantages of selective collection, was then distributed in the community. When public awareness had increased, weekly door-to-door collection was instituted, using bright green trucks inscribed with the slogan "Garbage that Isn't Garbage." Fi-



Above: Antônio Nunes Ferreira, who played a key role in making the Projeto de Coleta Seletiva of the favela Monte Azul a success, stands in front of the recycling deposit shed he helped establish. Right: Ferreira inspects a broken container for liquid soap to see if it can be salvaged for some other purpose. He has transformed similar items into napkin holders and cups, which were later sold.



nally, to encourage participation in areas not served by the trucks, recycling bins were installed at supermarkets, where a company "purchased" garbage with vouchers for food.

Today, Curitiba recycles more than 100 tons daily—about two-thirds of the trash that is suitable for such purposes. And more than 70 percent of Curitibaanos are participating in the effort. When this is compared to the 10 to 15 percent rate of participation by New Yorkers in their recycling program (Pedreira and Goodstein, 1992), Curitiba can claim to be a pacesetter for the hemisphere, not just for Brazil.

Vila Madalena: In megacities such as São Paulo, vast urban sprawl has made construction of new sanitary landfills extremely difficult. After a frustrating search for new sites, the city's department of public works undertook a pilot project in 1989 to test the efficacy of selective collection in prolonging the life of existing facilities. The Vila Madalena neighborhood was selected for two reasons. First, the community had a reputation for being environmentally aware. Second, it was near the site of a trash incinerator, on its last legs, that was scheduled for deactivation.

To prepare for the project, municipal officials met with neighborhood

associations to form a selective collection commission, to manage the effort, that would include both civic leaders and city employees. As in Curitiba, the commission's first step was to inform the public of what was being planned, how it would benefit their lives, and how their help was needed for the plan to work. A newsletter was printed in July 1989 and circulated through local organizations, and was followed up by a pamphlet that was distributed to families in each neighborhood.

The residents responded enthusiastically. Over 80 percent of households joined the selective collection effort—a rate comparable to out-

standing environmental programs implemented in Switzerland. Public responsiveness even spilled over to community members living away from established trash collection routes. These residents hand-delivered their own refuse to the recycling center. Some residents even volunteered for the task of sorting out the recyclable materials.

Encouraged by these results, municipal officials have expanded the project to other neighborhoods. The city is now taking an idea tested by some of its residents and using it to design collection and recycling programs for schools, city offices, and commercial districts.

Favela Monte Azul: As long as anyone could remember, there had only been one rusted-out dumpster to serve the 400 households of Monte Azul. And like the twist in the punch line of a good-news, bad-news joke, the dumpster was located far from most of the people who had to use it. Predictably, the streambed that traced the path to the dumpster became the final resting place for all kinds of waste, turning it into a sewer that often clogged, sending the unsavory water over its banks and onto the doorsteps of people's houses.

In February 1989, after hearing of a pioneering collection and recycling project in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, and consulting with its participants, the São Paulo municipal government decided to try a similar effort in Monte Azul. To kick off the project, a fete to clean up the favela was held that brought together members of the community association, government officials, and other interested favela residents. Members of the project team then went door to door, beginning with the 50 residences nearest the collection site, to publicize the program. Before asking anyone to join the effort, canvassers emphasized the importance of hygiene and public sanitation in reducing the incidence of disease in the area and then explained how the proposed project was intended to work.

Households that signed up were given plastic receptacles donated by a pharmaceutical company. Families were to fill these containers with their trash and then take them to a nearby shed, where larger barrels

were supplied for collection. Weekly door-to-door pickup of recyclable materials was scheduled for homes located outside the favela.

The first year brought good results. More than 200 households participated regularly in selective collection. And the landscape was noticeably cleaner. For the first time in recent memory, the stream did not flood during the rainy season. Finally, the project began to spawn other social and environmental activities. Some residents even began to look for ways to turn their trash into a source of income. They created an "Office of Artisan Paper" to recycle the crumpled paper that once littered the area around the dumpster and that some said had made the water of the stream taste like ink.

Recycling the Resourcefulness of the Informal Economy

A common element of all three efforts has been an attempt to incorporate the informal economy, whose growth in Latin America has paralleled the upsurge in rural-to-urban migration during the prolonged recession of the 1980s. The flood of poor people into the favelas around major cities arrived at the same time that the formal economy was shrinking, and they have had to improvise their own sources of income. Many of them have joined the "informal sector," that publicly unregulated stream of production which generates many of the cheap goods and services essential to the economies, businesses, and consumers of the hemisphere's cities.

In most Latin American cities, members of the informal sector have long played a role in trash collection and recycling. Overwhelmed by the multitude of problems confronting them, municipal governments often rank solid-waste disposal low on the list of priorities for improved services. Public-sector default has given private informal-sector operations ample room to collect, sort, recycle, and sell materials salvaged from trash.

Ironically, some of the hemisphere's most marginalized people depend for their survival on the garbage of others, some not much better off than they are. Informal-sector garbage

processing is carried out by microenterprises, often family owned, that are highly competitive with one another. Processors tend to be organized in one of two ways: by turf, the person's reputation and ability to enforce a claim to a particular dump or street, and by the kind of material that is collected for recycling. Control of the market for informal garbage lies in the hands of established buyers of bulk materials who, in effect, set the terms of work for the collectors.

In Brazil, the people who eke out a living from refuse are called *catadores*. Rather than trying to replace them, the municipal environmental projects spotlighted by PÓLIS have tried to include them as part of the solution to solid-waste management.

This has been done in several ways. First, city officials recognize that the new projects can still handle only a portion of the refuse being generated, and that their operations complement rather than eliminate the *catadores*. Vila Madalena has even gone a step farther, by effectively legalizing the profession of *catador*. This unprecedented step has the practical effect of diminishing the possibility of conflict between the *catadores* and municipal garbage workers, since the new program of selective collection produces scrap of superior quality (i.e. more easily recycled than material collected by pickers operating on their own). Municipal officials also moved to defuse potential conflict by steering clear of the local commercial district, implicitly recognizing the *catadores'* claims to primacy in this area and generating the cooperation needed to extend cleanup throughout the favela.

In Curitiba, all materials collected by the "Garbage that Isn't Garbage" project are donated to the Fundação Rural de Educação e Integração (FREI), a municipal agency providing

Right: *Young catadores de lixo pose at a garbage dump on the outskirts of São Paulo. Recycling programs espoused by PÓLIS recognize the job shortage in the urban formal sector and the difficulty of servicing many favelas; many innovative municipal models incorporate rather than replace the catadores.*

social assistance. FREI hires indigent workers to do the sorting, refurbishing, and selling of recyclable materials. FREI's experience shows that Latin American governments trying to emulate the environmentally sound models of waste collection and disposal being used in industrialized countries can find ways to modify them that can lower costs while generating productive opportunities for the poor.

The key is learning how to find the hidden value of what has been traditionally discarded. Lately, in Monte Azul, residents have been using wheat bran, a product whose use was once thought to be limited to feeding animals, to bake a highly nutritious bread that is distributed to participants in the selective collection program. All of these programs, PÓLIS is telling Brazil's municipal officials, are discovering something

similar about the previously overlooked human potential of the nation's *marginalizados*. The degree of enthusiasm and ingenuity displayed by these communities working in partnership with elected officials shows that the future of Brazil's democracy and the health of its cities depends substantially on how the nation chooses to treat its garbage. ❖

SILVIO CACCIA BAVA is the president of PÓLIS. LAURA MULLAHY is the editor of ECOMUNA, published by the Centro de Investigación y Planificación del Medio Ambiente in Santiago, Chile. This article is adapted from a chapter the authors contributed to the forthcoming book, Joint Ventures in Urban Policy: NGO-Local Government Collaboration in Democratizing Latin America, edited by Charles A. Reilly.

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Millard Schisler

RECLAIMING THE LAND



Text by Zander Navarro
Photos by Jofre Masceno

The roots of the urban crisis in much of Latin America can be traced to the lack of economic and social opportunity in the countryside. Despite its size and bounty, Brazil, for instance, suffers a severe shortage of arable fields available to small farmers. Highly skewed landholding patterns date from colonial times, and the country today

Rural Poverty and the Promise of Small Farmers in Brazil

ranks among the highest in the world on the standard Gini scale for measuring the concentration of land ownership. Figures for 1985 rank Brazil at 0.858 on this scale, surpassed only by

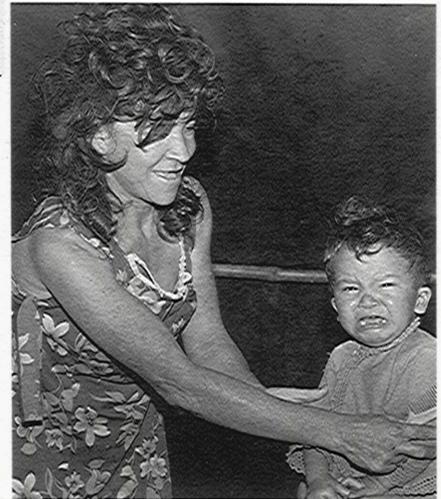
a handful of countries such as South Africa.

Census data support this finding and suggest that the social inequity is economically counterproductive. Ninety percent of all farms in Brazil are under 100 hectares in size. Accounting for only one-fifth of all privately held land in production, they employ 79 percent of the rural work force—including farm families and wage laborers—and generate half of all agricultural production value in subsistence and cash crops. The 9 per-



Left: At daybreak, a displaced farmer pauses for a moment after clearing the compound around his tent. His family is one of 120 from several regions of Brazil who have camped out alongside a major highway into Goiânia, the capital of Goiás State. Rather than join the ranks of the jobless in the city, they have chosen to wait for the Secretariat of Agriculture to provide land. The black plastic sheeting signals to passersby that these are landless farmers waiting for settlement.

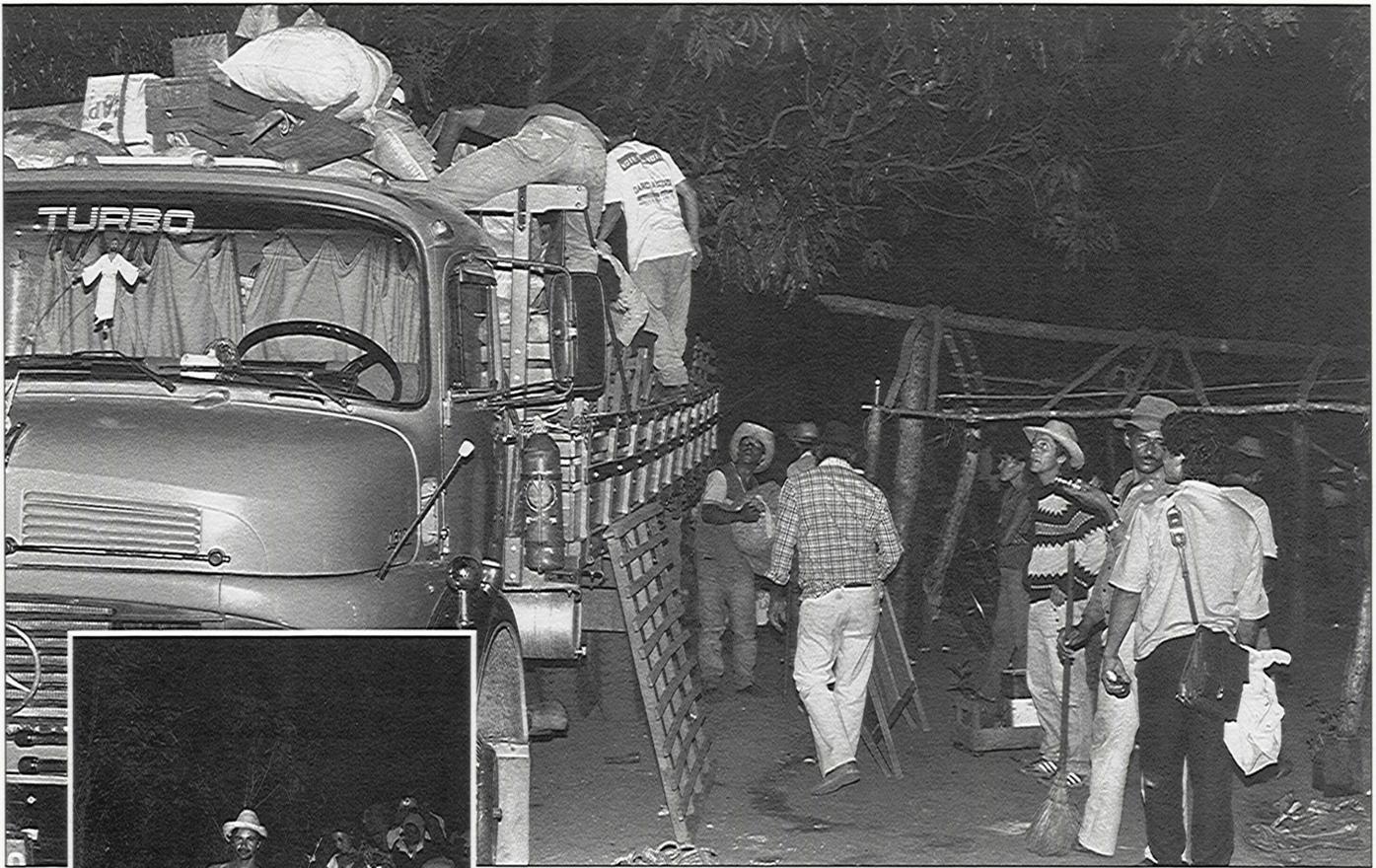
For nine months the boredom of nothing to do is broken only by the uncertainty of living hand to mouth, without electricity, clean water, sanitation, health care, or dependable food supplies. Right: A mother grooms her daughter while warming up her family's meager breakfast from leftovers. Above: Children without access to schools practice writing the alphabet on their own. The compound has little space to play; one of their friends was killed the week before while trying to cross the highway.



cent of farms larger than 1,000 hectares in size control 45 percent of the land, but employ only 4 percent of rural workers and generate only 16 percent of total production value. Vast sections of estate holdings are monocropped, left fallow, or are underutilized. Taken together, the data support the counter-intuitive notion that small-scale farmers can outperform large-scale farmers, undercutting the conventional wisdom that economies of scale and high rates of capitalization are needed for farm efficiency.

Recent trends indicate that the situation is worsening despite the opening of new tracts in the North and West. Expansion of mechanized, capital-intensive commercial agriculture in the South steadily pushes small farmers off the land and reduces the need for day labor, while Amazonian rainforest cleared by slash and burn is rapidly degrading into grasslands suitable only for large ranching enterprises, which are themselves environmentally destructive over the long term. The social costs of

this rural displacement are enormous. Between 1985 and 1992, the Brazilian government has documented an average of two violent land conflicts daily, resulting in the death of 563 community leaders and advisors, the best known of these being rubber tapper and environmentalist Chico Mendes. An estimated seven million rural families are barely eking out a living as squatters, sharecroppers, and *bóias frias*, or migrant workers. Approximately 15,000 families are camped out along roadsides, electing



When an abandoned property of 3,000 hectares is finally found along the Rio Vermelho, or Red River, 35 kilometers from the city of Goiás Velho, only 76 of the families have managed the wait. The rest have lost hope and moved on. Above: Families carefully pack the few belongings they were able to bring

to the camp by the roadside, and load them into rented lorries to make the move in the middle of the night. Left: Arriving just before dawn, the settlers are exhausted but exhilarated. Sleepy children in tow, they trek from the road through scrubland to their new homesites near the banks of the river.

to wait, without amenities, for the government to provide homesteads rather than join the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed pouring into the shantytowns ringing Brazil's overcrowded cities.

Several recent national administrations have enacted agrarian reform policies promising to settle hundreds of thousands of families, but none has come close to its goals. The few

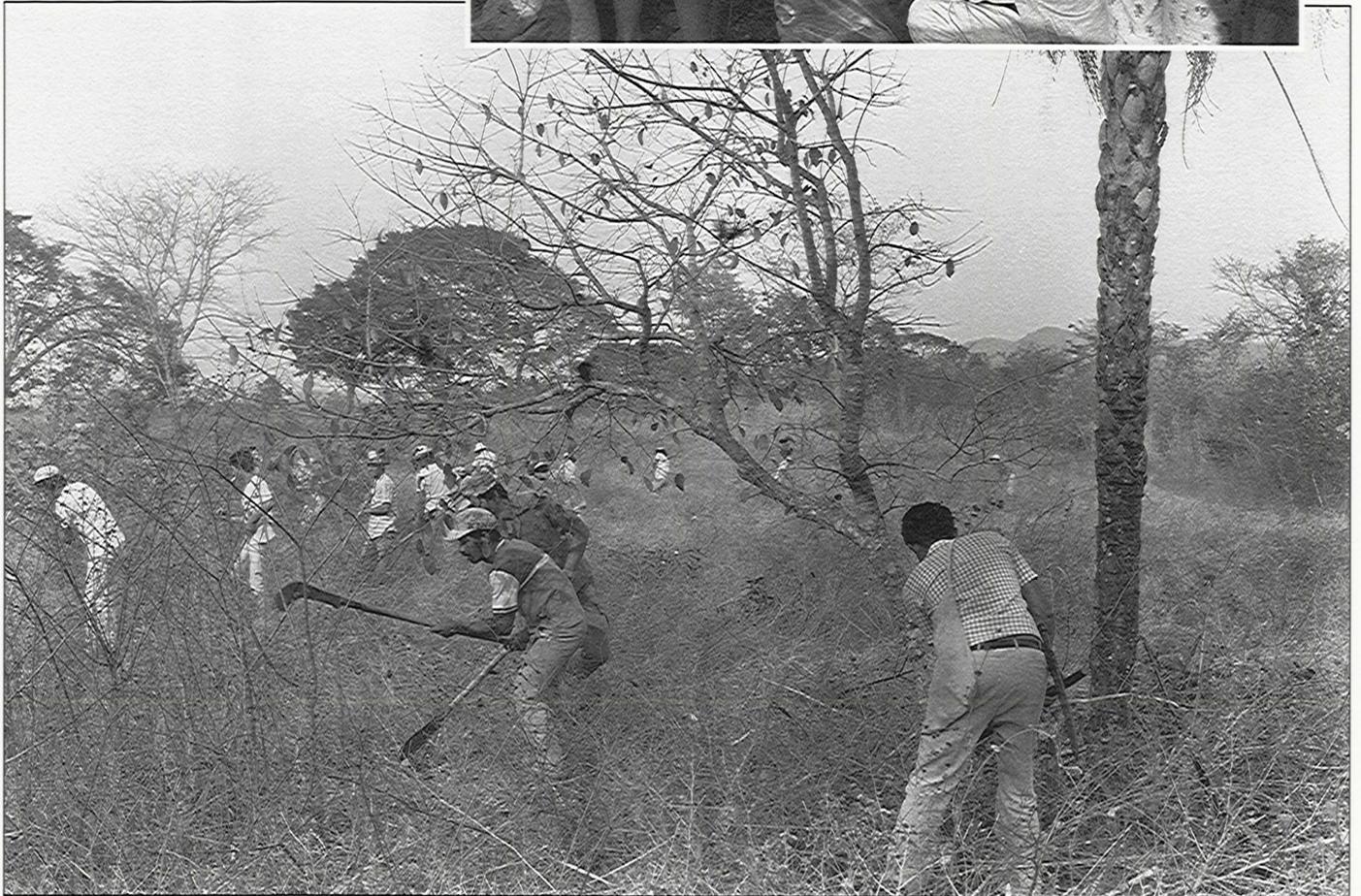
notable exceptions, settlements involving several thousand families, have been largely the result of state governments responding to pressure from an increasingly organized movement of landless workers. The national Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra has offices throughout Brazil and has successfully promoted a strategy of peacefully occupying abandoned tracts, organizing efforts to make them productive, and advocating public policies to support settlers. A variety of private grassroots support organizations (GSOs) are assisting new communities to start schools for their children, open health posts, and boost agricultural yields in ways that are environmentally sustainable.

The photos that follow show the human face of this struggle. They chronicle how a group of determined families in Goiás State (near Brasília, the national capital), with help from the GSO Instituto Brasil Central, are realizing their dream of building a new life together on their own land. ❖

ZANDER NAVARRO is a rural sociologist and associate professor at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. He has worked closely with rural grassroots groups during the past 10 years. JOFRE MASCENO is a photographer and journalist from Goiás State. These photos are from his book Imagem Reflexa.



Clockwise from above: The families awoken in the morning, amid strange surroundings, to find their possessions strewn across a clearing. The first order of the day is to round up provisions and prepare a group breakfast. The meal begins by feeding the children. The next step is to organize work teams and begin clearing the land to plant crops so that families can feed themselves.





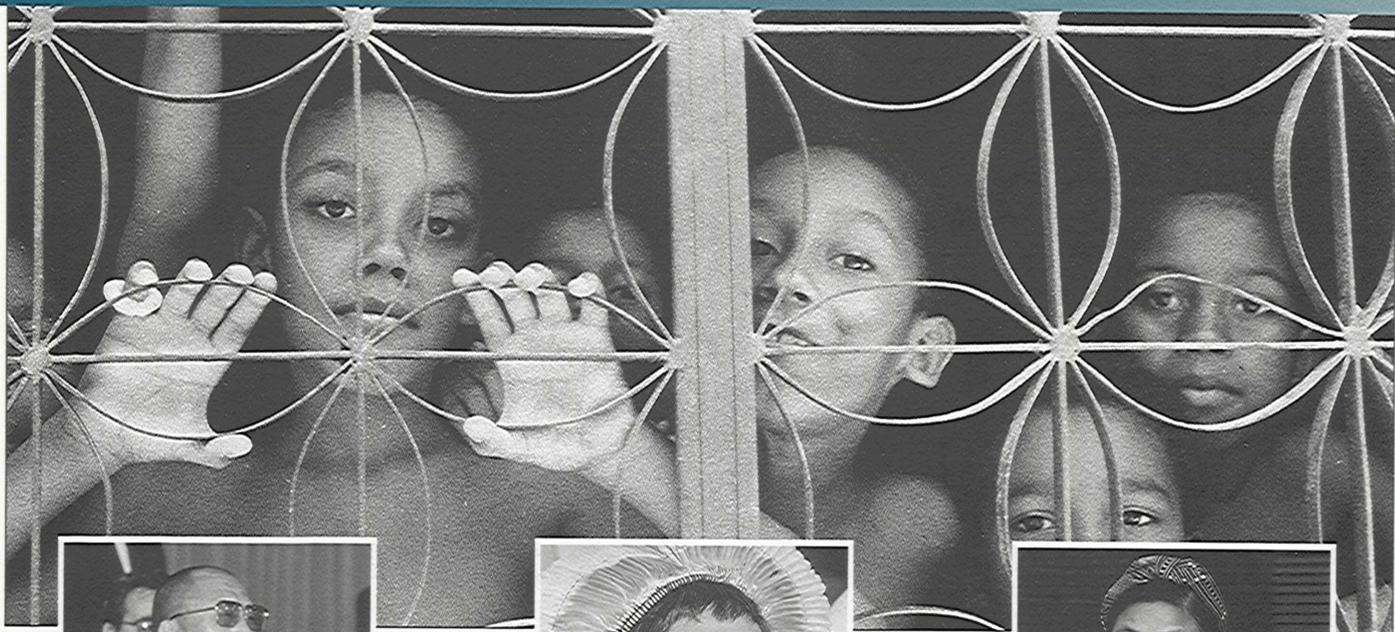
Counterclockwise from above: A farmer carries his second crop of rice to the newly christened village of Fazenda Rio Vermelho for threshing and bagging; he also grows beans and cassava, raises pigs and chickens, and nets fish in the nearby river to enrich his family's diet. With help from the Instituto Brasil Central (IBRACE)—a nonprofit organization of university lawyers, agronomists, and professionals—51 of the settler families have obtained legal title to the land, which has been subdivided into 35-hectare plots, a 340-hectare community garden, and "green areas" of virgin forest. Outside her house, a woman strains cassava flour for cooking. She is a

member of the village's recently established mothers' club, which was founded to promote community projects and is training women to make crafts that can be sold to bring in extra income for their families. One of the club's first priorities was to help start a school for the children. In the yard outside the new school that houses three teachers and sixty students, one child picks a thorn from

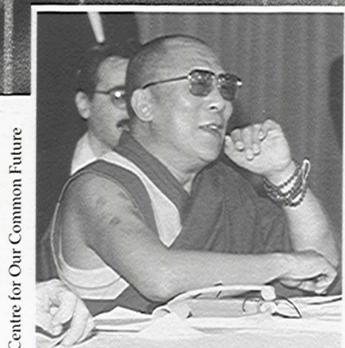


the foot of another during recess. With help from IBRACE, farmers and their families are looking into how they can consolidate their hard-won gains by legally registering their cooperative enterprise as a producer's association.

THE ROAD FROM RIO



Fernando Miceli



Centre for Our Common Future



Centre for Our Common Future



Emma Rodriguez

NGO Policy Makers and the Social Ecology of Development

Charles A. Reilly

Can private associations generate the information and incentives needed to make markets and governments socially and environmentally responsible?

For decades, the terms of debate about development and the environment have been frozen in stereotypes. Economists running the development business have forgotten about citizens, imagining them as the object of, rather than partners in, the enterprise at hand. Preoccupied with the fate of jaguars, butterflies, and orchids, conservationists have often seen the people who live in wilder-

ness areas as intruders on idealized nature rather than an integral part of the ecosystem. The development business has not been eminently successful, while government-managed nature parks in Africa and South America have not slowed the loss of forest cover or endangered species. Fatigue has set in, North and South, just when the environmental challenge confronts humanity with a stark set of choices. The economic re-

Top: Children from the favela Vila Vintém, in Rio de Janeiro, gaze out a window of a center for assisting street youth. Bottom, left to right: Among the legion of leaders from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), religious groups, and social movements who met in Rio at the Global Forum of the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development to debate the planet's future were the Dalai Lama, an Amazonian tribal chief, and Nobel Peace Prize-winner Rigoberta Menchu.

wards that come from the intensified production of industrial society may have reached the point of diminishing returns, threatening to consume the very resource base that stokes its factories and sustains life itself. If the

planetary ecosystem is reaching the threshold of its ability to sustain modern technologies and the social systems that accompany them, who will bear the sacrifice of slower economic growth?

Some propose answering that question in terms of justice and empowerment. Robert Bellah (1991), for instance, says that without justice, broadly defined as "giving what is due to both people and the environment," a sustainable social and natural ecology is impossible, "endangering everything we have received from our ancestors and threaten[ing] to leave nothing but violence and decay [for] our children and grandchildren."

Others, such as economist Deepak Lal (1990), respond that the belief that one can choose between equity and efficiency is "a chimera." Imposition of extraneous values on production retards the economic incentives and the free flow of information needed to generate wealth. A modern economy is too complex to be governed by decree, and markets and privatization are the only feasible alternatives.

Yet when a former economist at the World Bank reasons that "the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage country is impeccable" (*Report on the Americas*, 1993) and that nations in the South might earn needed cash by storing industrial waste generated in the North, one feels a nagging doubt that markets are equipped to adequately measure such a transaction. Is there an alternative to the bleak choice between a cold-eyed state and a blind market?

The question becomes even more complicated when one realizes how environmental issues have eroded conventional notions of sovereignty. Mexican sewage pollutes U.S. beaches. Irrigation of U.S. farms reduces the Colorado River to a salinized trickle by the time it reaches Mexico. The industrialized nations ban dangerous pesticides at home but export them to the South, only to find carcinogens returning on imported fruits and vegetables. Commuters in Dallas, Texas, release chlorofluorocarbons from their auto air conditioners that deplete the ozone layer, while campesinos burning the



Miguel Sayago

Lucho Schmidt (right), administrator of the Cooperativa Campesina Intercomunal Peumo, Ltda. (COOPEUMO) in Chile, explains to co-op members how imported pesticides, banned abroad, can threaten the health of small-scale farmers in Chile and eventually return to their countries of manufacture on imported fruits and vegetables.

Amazon rainforest jeopardize the world's oxygen sink.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro last year was supposed to tackle such questions. This article will briefly examine what happened there and then explore the thesis that the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at the Global Forum, which many treated as a sideshow, may be key to forging the links between environmental and social policy making needed to promote sustainable development.

Breathing Life into Sustainable Development

Developmentalists and environmentalists are joining ranks under the common banner of "sustainable development" as awareness grows that they are pursuing interrelated goals rather than competing in a zero-sum game (Stone, 1992; see Review on page 44 of this journal). Yet both often overlook the missing word—*democratic*—that binds the term's two words together and makes "sustainable [democratic] development" a workable proposition.

UNCED arrived at a pivotal moment in history, when the end of the Cold War and a rising tide of democratization gave birth to calls for a New World Order. Defining the basis for that order, however, has raised difficult questions. If the old ideologies seem outmoded, the conditions that generate social upheaval are not. Can new democracies, and perhaps the idea of democracy itself, survive and flourish if the poor are excluded and protection of the natural resource base is not consolidated and secured for future generations?

As we have seen, the planet has grown very small. The line between North and South has blurred. Elites in developing countries are bridgeheads for the North, and urban explosions such as the one last year in Los Angeles involving racial and ethnic immigrant minorities reflect conditions in the South even when they occur in the heart of the North. The extent to which the poor and the organizations they form are permitted to enter the policy arena, particularly on social and environmental issues, may well determine whether the world becomes livable for its impoverished majority and remains livable for those who are better off.

When UNCED opened in Rio last year, the eyes of much of the world were not directed toward that question but toward matters of state. Would all of the leaders come? Would they agree to a unified position?

To be in Rio, however, was to see and feel something quite different. For nearly two weeks, Rio resembled a Greek city-state in which citizens from around the world tried to interact with and influence their political leaders. Representatives of indigenous peoples—from the Americas to Australia to Asia to Africa—gathered in a park they called Kari'oka (a Tupi Indian word meaning "house of white," which has now become a nickname for the people of Rio de Janeiro). There they built a four-story thatched structure, without metal nails or scaffolding, in which they ate, slept, and discussed their common belief in the sacredness of the Earth and the common threat facing their way of life from the loss of land and habitat. Scientists met at the Federal University to discuss models for measuring the planet's health and what might be done to improve it. German, Japanese, and other businessmen set up shop, at a site near UNCED's "Earth Summit" headquarters, to exhibit the new "green and clean technologies" they had developed for sale. Finally, at the Global Forum, an estimated 25,000 representatives from 9,000 NGOs and citizen movements set up their soapboxes to debate how the need for development could be reconciled with the needs of the environment, and submit petitions for action to the assembly of states at the Earth Summit.

UNCED did not conclude with any grand consensus. As diplomats boarded their planes to fly home, many of the official agreements they had signed seemed hollow. Conventions on climate and biodiversity were ratified by most heads of state, but the United States, the leading energy consumer and biotechnology producer, abstained. Agenda 21, an omnibus workplan for merging envi-

ronmental and developmental action by the international community, was drafted by the UNCED Secretariat and signed by national leaders, although few financial resources were committed to implement its 39 chapters of nonbinding recommendations. A U.N. commission would be

tural adjustment policies remained in place and nations from Honduras to the Philippines were still under pressure to "cash in" their natural resource base to service their international debt.

The state, in fact, seemed everywhere in retreat, unable to implement a grand strategy to promote sustainable development even if one had been hammered out. Governments in the South were downsizing and privatizing, while those in the North were reluctant to fund new initiatives in the midst of a global recession. A new force, however, did emerge in Rio to help fill the vacuum.

Celso Lafer, then Brazil's foreign minister, called attention to this phenomenon on the eve of UNCED. In an interview with *Jornal do Brasil*, he said:

Today... the theme of environment is not in the hands of the state [but] in the hands of society. The whole world is concerned. Besides the Global Forum, NGOs are participating in the Earth Summit itself to a greater degree than in any previous world conference.

Events at UNCED confirmed Lafer's observation. At the Global Forum, NGO delegates avoided the paralysis afflicting the Earth Summit, formally and frankly discussing how issues intertwined. Everything was on the table: how the dangers from overdevelopment and overconsumption parallel those of underdevelopment and population growth, how trade-offs must be made between equity and growth. Panels, seminars,

and informal discussions also allowed participants to share knowledge of how concrete experimentation in grassroots projects around the globe might form the basis for new models of action. It would be an exaggeration to say that a consensus on policy was reached, but there was growing agreement that new thinking was required and that new alliances had to be forged within nations and across national borders to formulate and implement those ideas.

One indication of how such "intermestic" networks might form and



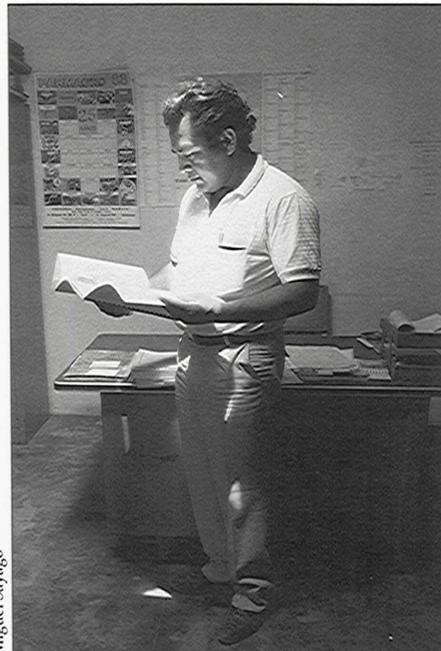
Fernando Miceli

The intertwined fates of North and South were evident in Rio itself, site of the UNCED gathering. Here, the modern highrises of the São Conrado district are seen from the favela Rocinha.

created to promote sustainable development, and the World Bank would continue as steward of the Global Environmental Facility (to the dismay of critics familiar with the Bank's prior history of funding dams and other large projects that adversely affected grassroots populations and the environment). Although the orthodox development strategies of import substitution, fiscal incentives, maximal economic growth, and nontraditional agricultural exports were widely indicted for their environmental costs, struc-



Francisco Arias, a small-scale farmer in Peru's Lurín Valley picks tomatoes, the new cash crop he has planted with aid from the Instituto Tecnológico Agrario Proterra (PROTERRA). PROTERRA has brought a campesino federation, college scientists, development and environmental NGOs, and state agencies together to create a green belt around Lima to protect the city's water supply and boost rural incomes. Grassroots support organizations (GSOs) are often founded by visionaries, and PROTERRA's Antonio Andaluz—a poet, lawyer, and IAF Dante Fascell Fellow—is no exception.



PROTERRA official Dionisio Calagua examines land-survey records that will help campesinos in the Lurín Valley obtain land titles and justify their investments in organic farming.

function within and across the boundaries of national civil societies was evident in the democratization of information taking place at Rio. NGOs there were linked through fax machines, computer networks, and other alternative media to wider social movements at home and around the globe. An electronic nervous system was wiring civil societies together in a host of unpredictable ways, creating the possibility for new flexibility in socially based problem-solving that could resolve the seemingly irreconcilable concerns of both Robert Bellah and Deepak Lal.

Sizing Up the Potential of NGO "Supercitizens"

The myriad private associations of civil society have blossomed throughout Latin America and the Caribbean during the past two decades to fill the social space opened by the democratization of the state they have helped bring about. NGOs range from base groups in villages and barrios; to grassroots support organizations

(GSOs) that provide training and technical assistance to community-managed projects; to membership organizations (MOs) that draw upon local, regional, national, and even international constituencies; to specialized developmental institutions that focus on thematic, advocacy, research, or fiduciary activities.

As the web of civil society has spread and thickened, it has become impossible to fully map the interrelationships of its constituent strands. There is a need for new analytic tools to describe the dynamics of how development energy released in one strand can ripple through others or be muffled, and to evaluate the effectiveness of specific institutional actors, their methodologies, and their programs in promoting bottom-up development. We do know that GSOs, MOs, and specialized NGOs have become linked, singly and in combination, to wider social movements that they often anchor or lead in campaigns to establish democratic, developmental, or environmental reforms. Like the agrarian populists and the suffragettes in the United

States at the turn of this century, NGOs and social movements are having a profound structural and policy impact on the political systems of Latin America and the Caribbean, even when that does not translate directly into public office.

NGOs have taken the lead in creating innovative projects in nonformal education for adults and children, microenterprise credit for the informal sector, agricultural extension, community-based primary health care, self-help housing, cooperative marketing schemes, the defense of human rights, and other areas. Most of these projects have occurred at the margins of society, among the poor and other disadvantaged populations who receive inadequate public social services or none at all.

These projects are often more effective than the government programs that are available, because they are user-friendly. Most NGOs have consciously adopted methodologies designed to break the "passivity of the poor" and to replace the patron-client relationships that have traditionally dominated Latin American society.

They seek to mobilize local resources for community development by encouraging self-help initiatives. Effective MOs and GSOs routinely assure participation, accountability, and access to decision making by their memberships and beneficiaries. There is minimal red tape because there is minimal bureaucracy separating managers from people in the field.

This creates several comparative advantages for NGOs in designing effective projects in sustainable development. First, recognizing and rectifying mistakes is easier when the learning loop is short—when planners and implementers are the same people. In Guatemala, for instance, ALTERTEC has pioneered the introduction of “regenerative agriculture” to small-scale farmers. The GSO project enlists a few farmers with strategically located plots who are willing to test organic techniques for enriching soils, controlling insects and fungi, diversifying food and cash crops, and cultivating medicinal plants. As participants bring in higher

yields than their neighbors at lower costs for inputs, others join. Involving farmers in the agricultural research process produces knowledge of how harvests can be increased or sustained in particular microclimates and eco-niches without endangering water supplies or wildlife through unnecessary application of agrochemicals, provides a platform for effective agricultural extension through farmer-to-farmer contacts, and is generating a feasible alternative for Guatemalan campesinos leery of the high-risk, nontraditional-export-crop schemes being pushed throughout the country by bilateral and multilateral agencies.

This low-cost, people-intensive model stands in dramatic contrast to the centralized, publicly funded agricultural research stations and extension services whose work is seldom geared to the needs of campesinos and that too often result in lovely demonstration farms from which technology never transfers. It also echoes the findings of other GSOs in

Bolivia, Ecuador, and Chile (Bebington, 1991).

Much of the promise NGOs show for designing effective environmental policies stems from their familiarity with the social ecology of the locality in which they function. The best NGOs often work in a relatively circumscribed locale with a highly specific population. Although NGOs eventually tend to specialize in one task or a set of associated tasks, their close connection to life at the grassroots makes them aware of the integrated nature of development. Their programs and policies are often ambitiously holistic, intended to produce beneficial side effects by attacking interrelated problems simultaneously. This ability to adapt to complex situations and the changing demands of their memberships and beneficiaries can uncover new opportunities and lead to surprising innovations.

The Empresa de Consultoría en Ecotecnología (ECOTEC), also in Guatemala, specializes in environmentally appropriate technologies that meet the needs of the poor. ECOTEC designs prefabricated housing systems that are affordable and earthquake resistant as a result of years of experimentation and tinkering. Its engineers have recently devised a fuel-efficient ceramic oven that is intended to dramatically improve the health of women and children, generate jobs, stretch the budgets of low-income families, and help save tropical forests. Thirty artisans are being trained to produce and market the stoves in five areas of the country. Ovens can be modified for use in either urban or rural households, reducing indoor pollution and eliminating the open-fire cooking that strains women’s backs and causes cataracts and respiratory problems. The \$16 stove pays for itself in three to four months by slashing fuel consumption 39 percent. By the time it reaches its intended beneficiary target population of 60,000 families, the stove will have helped conserve wood supplies equivalent to 600 square kilometers of forest.

While such accomplishments are notable, NGOs remain small entities. Are they adaptable enough to scale up their projects to benefit more people? One clue is provided by the Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (ACJ) in



Sean Sprague

A Guatemala City woman prepares the family dinner on her new ceramic stove, designed by technicians from Empresa de Consultoría en Ecotecnología (ECOTEC). ECOTEC's oven is intended to produce multiple benefits: Its greater fuel efficiency will slash demand for firewood and charcoal, reducing pressure on tropical forests; it will cut indoor pollution, preventing cataract formation and lung ailments in women and children; and it will create jobs for artisans who will produce and market the stoves throughout Guatemala.

Guatemala. ACJ was originally founded to provide "welfare" assistance to 24,000 people relocated after the 1976 earthquake. The Asociación eventually used the legitimacy it had acquired from years of work in the barrios around Guatemala City to start an ambitious program to improve public sanitation and halt soil erosion that threatened the area with mudslides and contaminated water supplies. Using seedlings obtained from the government, ACJ mobilized its membership and conducted a public education campaign that resulted in the reforestation of several *barrancas*, or gulches, around the municipality. To see barren and garbage-strewn gullies become green again is visually satisfying, and the transformation is environmentally beneficial, but Guatemala City has at least 50 more *barrancas* waiting to be reclaimed.

Public Laboratories or Shadow Governments?

As development-oriented NGOs have demonstrated their efficiency, flexibility, and innovativeness, some analysts and donor agencies have begun to wonder if they might eventually replace the state in providing certain public services. What makes such speculation tempting is the formation of regional and national NGO networks and consortia throughout the hemisphere at the same time that resource-strapped governments are cutting services and privatizing many of their functions.

Such speculation seems unfounded. First, NGOs are not manufactured robotically. They are handcrafted by individuals and groups responding to their own life experiences and the problems of their communities. Although many NGOs are led by social entrepreneurs who instinctively seek to build coalitions, others are more encapsulated, concentrating on delivering services locally.

Second, the extent of NGO networks and the development strategies they pursue varies by country, affecting their ability to muster resources and coordinate policies. Some networks have evolved along sectoral lines, others are more territorial. In Central America, consortia appeared in the early 1980s, often in-

duced by outside funders. In South America, NGO associations have gradually evolved in tandem with democratizing states, both of them shaped by the constricting reality of structural adjustment and fiscal austerity. Mexico's NGOs and social movements are characterized by their uneasy coexistence with the neopopulist programs of the government, such as the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad.

Finally, NGO resources fall far short of the demand for public services. A recent survey of more than 100 of Brazil's largest NGOs, accounting for about 10 percent of the sector, revealed a combined annual budget of some \$28 million and a total staff of 2,660—hardly a surrogate for the nation state and perhaps not even for the country's largest metropolitan governments.

If NGOs are unlikely to swallow the state, will the state swallow them? In Brazil and Chile, where NGO sectoral integration is well-advanced, the government has established agencies whose stated purpose is to "coordinate" public and private sociodevelopment efforts. Domestic oversight is obviously a prerogative of national government, and the large volume of funds from the North being brokered to the South through NGOs—estimated by the World Bank to exceed \$4 billion annually—cannot help but spark public sector interest.

Yet if oversight becomes an attempt to manage public and private development efforts from the top, there is a danger of "instrumentalizing" NGOs. That is, NGOs would become service delivery vehicles for state policies or would be used as an insurance policy to fill in the gaps opened by structural adjustment. In Chile, many NGOs are already being hired by regional and municipal governments to provide services like primary health care or skills training—raising questions about whether nonprofit contractors dependent on state funding can continue to voice the grievances of the poor.

Privatization of inefficient state enterprises makes eminent sense; abrogation by the state of its primary social and environmental obligations would be cavalier. NGOs alone cannot make up the social and environmental deficits, and it would be a

waste for them to try doing so since their primary strength is not in administration but in innovation. They are social laboratories for inventing and testing new policy ideas for solving previously intractable problems. The test NGOs face is not their ability to replicate projects exponentially, but their ability to help transfer and refine project models into public programs.

That is, NGO networking can play a role not only in sharing information within the sector, but also in forming coalitions and mobilizing public opinion to make government agencies work better, alone or in partnership. This has become increasingly important with environmental issues. Environmental NGOs have been multiplying throughout the hemisphere in recent years, but, with some exceptions like the CLADES or IFOAM-LA networks, they have been reluctant to join established networks or form their own. In May 1993, Fundación Natura of Ecuador hosted a meeting of 40 NGO representatives from Latin America, Africa, and Asia to discuss NGOs and international decision making. As a result of contacts made at the Global Forum and UNCED, assimilation of environmental and developmental NGOs into larger networks seems likely to accelerate.

This is significant since the climate for social and environmental policy making in Latin America is undergoing a sea change. State-woven safety nets have never worked for a majority of the hemisphere's people, and they increasingly fail the middle classes as well. Radical retooling, joint ventures, and self-provisioning are becoming the order of the day. National government is decentralizing, spinning off responsibilities to provinces and municipalities. Democratization has opened up bargaining space for both the middle and lower levels of the social pyramid. Social and environmental policy will increasingly emerge from negotiated pacts that reflect issue-specific coalitions of differing interests and values—much of it carried out for the first time in public view. Incremental and pragmatic, diversified and decentralized, it will reflect democracy's progress and hasten its consolidation. State influenced but not state monopolized, the policy process will be fluid and, like life itself, full of contradictions.

Forest, Countryside, City

The mechanics whereby NGOs help make and implement policy to promote sustainable development vary from nation to nation, and increasingly within states as governments decentralize. What can be said is that an all-or-nothing approach has traditionally prevailed as elites and revolutionaries have struggled to possess the state—with continuity being neither the rule nor the expectation in the public policy cycle. NGOs that are committed to serving marginalized groups and to protecting the environment tend to be much more persistent in pursuing reforms than the regimes they try to influence, ensuring that the pursuit of sustainable development becomes rooted in society itself and survives for the long haul.

One way to better understand the promise and pitfalls of this process is to examine how innovative NGO projects have sparked policy reforms in three ecosocial zones: forest, farmland, and the city.

Forest: Among the most promising models for helping preserve tropical forests are the extractive reserves pioneered by the Conselho Nacional de Seringueiros (CNS) and the Instituto de Estudos Amazônicos e Ambientais (IEA) in Brazil. The reserves are recently established, but their roots stretch back to 1978, when a young research anthropologist named Mary Allegretti first visited Acre State on a field trip. Shocked by the poverty of the people she met, Allegretti left her university post to start a school to help Amazonian rubbertappers improve their conditions. It soon became apparent that their struggle was inseparable from the struggle to save the ecosystem around them, which was unraveling under the onslaught of clear-cut logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, and cattle ranching that followed accelerated colonization of the area.

As rubbertappers organized themselves to break the hold of local creditors, set up independent marketing channels, and secure their traditional access to the forest and protect it from outsiders, they created CNS and elected Chico Mendes as their leader. Allegretti founded IEA in 1986 to provide technical support



Miguel Sayago

Two members of the Federación Hondureña de Cooperativas Agro-Forestal (FEHCAFOR) pour pine sap they have collected from trees around Villa Santa, Honduras, into barrels for shipment to a processing plant in Tegucigalpa. Communities organize to protect forest land when they can earn money from its renewable resources.

and to inform the public, in Brazil and overseas, of the rubbertappers' plight. Mendes became an international symbol of efforts to defend the rainforest. When he was murdered by a cattle rancher in 1988, IEA helped CNS mobilize its membership

and join with international environmental NGOs, concerned Brazilians, and national legislators to legally establish 14 extractive reserves, covering some 3 million hectares.

These reserves make rubbertappers, indigenous natives, and river



Concern for the world's forests has overshadowed the accelerating environmental degradation in Third World cities. The problems interact to increase the danger of global warming. Above: PÓLIS, an urban NGO, is helping Brazil's municipalities upgrade bus systems to reduce fossil-fuel emissions. PÓLIS helps local leaders craft policies that promote sustainable urban growth so that Brazil need not cash in its forests to finance the needs of its cities. Opposite page: A regional association of small-scale farmers in the Dominican Republic has started a tree nursery to reforest barren slopes, reducing local soil erosion and adding to the world's oxygen sink.

people stewards of the rainforest, giving them an economic stake in the preservation of habitat through the harvesting of renewable products. To diversify their income base, rubber-tappers now pick and shell Brazil nuts, which are being used in Curitiba to manufacture CHONK—the country's first environmentally supportive candy bar. Markets for "trail mixes," high-energy foods for backpackers and other outdoor enthusiasts, are also being opened up by socially concerned entrepreneurs in the United States and Europe.

To ensure that technical support remains available to Amazonian groups in the future, IEA has streamlined its administrative management to cut overhead and is broadening its domestic fundraising base to reduce dependence on international donors. To ensure that its message is firmly

rooted among policy makers and the Brazilian public, IEA has moved its main office to Brasília while maintaining three field offices in the Amazon region; publishes an ecodevelopment newsletter; and regularly contributes to "Rede Verde," an environmental radio program aired on 104 stations throughout the region.

Key to establishing the extractive reserves has been IEA's ability not only to mobilize international and domestic support for the rubber-tappers, but to apply it at the level of local, regional, or national government where it has greatest leverage. Today, the Instituto not only maintains ties with Northern and other Brazilian environmental NGOs, but is a member of the NGO monitoring committee for the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility and monitors UNCED's Protocol on

Forests and other Atlantic rainforest agreements.

Numerous other efforts are under way in the hemisphere to assemble coalitions to preserve woodlands. Several lessons can be gleaned from comparing these experiences. First, the people who inhabit a forested area must be organized to speak with one voice in managing it. Efforts to save the pine forests of the Sierra Juárez in Oaxaca, Mexico, were hampered when environmental NGOs from the North sponsored, perhaps with the best of intentions, conflicting programs in the same region, awakening animosities between and within local communities and making it more difficult to establish pristine wilderness preserves or to create sustainable community forestry enterprises (Bray, 1991). With support from the IAF and the World Wildlife

Federation, local GSOs have played a key role in mediating the conflicts and strengthening community-based sawmills that are learning to use selective logging and value-added processing to boost family incomes without disrupting the area's unique ecosystem.

The experience of resin-tapper cooperatives in Honduras underlines the notion that strong community organizations acting as gatekeepers to the forest are a prerequisite for sustainable social forestry enterprises (Stanley, 1990). The efforts of babassu palm-nut gatherers, many of them tenant or subsistence farmers, to organize production and marketing MOs which maintain access to wild palm groves in Maranhão State, Brazil, suggests that the extractive model is applicable to secondary tropical woodlands as well (see Review on page 45 of this journal). If the Sociedade Maranhense de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos and other peasant MOs succeed in showing that the rural poor of the state can combine sustainable subsistence agriculture with babassu harvesting to prosper in the transitional areas they inhabit, small farmers will be less likely to push on into the virgin Amazonian forest beyond.

Farmland: Earlier in this article, NGO models for promoting regenerative agriculture in Guatemala were discussed. Because these organic methodologies are labor intensive and the benefits from composting and terracing accumulate with successive harvests, campesinos must have secure land tenure to see the rewards of their investments. Land tenure has also been a key variable in the emergence of a *cinturón ecológico*,

or greenbelt, around Lima, Peru. This promising new model views the metropolis and its surrounding countryside as a single socioecological system, whose survival and health depend on policies that recognize the

lands and improved access to government credit. PROTERRA helped draft new national legislation to reform and simplify the land-titling process, and inspired formation of a national organization to represent the interests of peasant families.

This experience convinced Andaluz that the government was underutilizing its resources and that organizations working with the poor needed to coordinate their efforts for maximum results. PROTERRA launched *Operación Tábano*, or Operation Gadfly, to build a coalition of interests among campesino MOs, GSOs, research-oriented NGOs, university scientists, and government agencies to maximize Peru's potential for sustainable agriculture. *Operación Tábano* was instrumental in crafting new legislation to create the *cinturón ecológico* around Lima. The bundle of policies enacted into law is designed to improve farmers' access to credit and markets, protect Lima's endangered water supply, and provide a greenspace around the city to reduce air pollution, while helping to stem the flow of rural migrants into a city already unable to generate enough jobs and basic social infrastructure for the poor barrios mushrooming around its periphery.

In catalyzing these policy reforms, PROTERRA helped spur formation of Red Ambiental, an environmental network of 77 organizations responsible for devising a national conservation strategy. Last year, Antonio Andaluz attended UNCED as part of Peru's delegation to the "Earth Summit" and shared PROTERRA's experience with colleagues at the Global Forum.

City: Perhaps one of the most important developments at the Global Forum was the spotlight thrown on



Michaele Cozzi

interdependence of its rural and urban residents and the need for environmental conservation.

The origin of this idea can be traced to poet and environmentalist Antonio Andaluz, who founded the Instituto Tecnológico Agrario Protterra (PROTERRA) in 1983 to help rural communities develop through careful management of their natural resources. PROTERRA began work in the Lurín Valley south of Lima, and soon realized that for small-scale farmers to adopt organic technologies they would need title to agrarian reform

urban environmental problems. Many countries in the South are now more urbanized than those in the North, and their populations are more affected by inadequate sewerage and water systems, the lack of landfills for solid and industrial wastes, and rising levels of air pollution from smokestacks, wood stoves, and the internal combustion engine than by disappearing forests.

In fact, these are not separate concerns. Saving woodlands and controlling urban-generated air pollution are interrelated factors in reducing the danger of global warming since plant life removes carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere by the burning of fossil fuels. The Instituto de Estudos, Formação e Assessoria em Políticas Sociais (PÓLIS) has helped introduce a new policy reform that is enabling several of Brazil's cities to address the first side of that equation by upgrading their mass transportation infrastructure.

Rapid urbanization during the past two decades has brought 75 percent of Brazil's population into urban areas, outstripping available public transportation. Automobiles and buses carry 85 percent of the load, and emissions of gasoline, gasohol, and diesel fumes are choking many of the nation's cities. Bus fares barely cover operating costs despite high riderships and ticket prices (following the onset of the national recession in 1987, round-trip tickets equaled up to 35 percent of the daily minimum wage, and in São Paulo, jammed buses carried an average of 13 people per square meter during peak traffic hours). Subsidies from municipalities have had to pick up the slack since constitutional reform in 1988 decentralized state authority, making transportation a responsibility of municipalities.

PÓLIS, a research NGO specializing in urban issues, has helped devise a new way for cash-strapped city governments to finance improved transportation systems. To take advantage of their new authority to raise revenues locally, PÓLIS proposes that municipalities enact a transportation tax on commercial, industrial, and service enterprises. The tax, which adapts features of the *versement transport* initiated by the French to overhaul the Paris transport

system in the early 1970s, is designed to be flexible. Before a municipality adopts the tax and sets rates, PÓLIS conducts preliminary socioeconomic studies to determine the level of investment needed and the ability of the local private sector to finance it. Firms with fewer than 10 employees are exempted to minimize the burden on small firms and to reduce the costs of administering the fee. Discounts of up to 20 percent are offered to firms that stagger work hours to help cut rush-hour traffic, and to firms that provide employees with housing at or near their work sites.

All funds are earmarked for investments in transportation infrastructure, such as roads, traffic signals, new buses, terminals, and garages; in planning and management of the system, including programs to conserve fuel; and in maintenance and inspection. As investments in infrastructure decline in importance, fees can be diverted to subsidize ticket fares.

Disbursement of funds is controlled by a municipal transportation council comprised of mayoral appointees, public transportation workers and owners, and local business people. The council is designed to ensure that democratization takes root at the local level and that present and future municipal administrators will consult with agents of civil society in planning and monitoring transportation services.

The system is up and running in Diadema and under judicial review in Campinas, two important cities in São Paulo State, and is being considered by several other municipalities. PÓLIS is promoting the plan through meetings with local authorities, industrial and business leaders, labor unions, and federations of neighborhood associations throughout Brazil, initiating dialogues to refine the proposal and to see how improved transportation services can raise economic productivity, increase access to jobs for residents of low-income *favelas*, and make cities more livable.

Democracy and Sustainable Development

The Irish poet Seamus Heaney says that the public task of a poet is to "summon the energy of words." Icon-

oclastic development economist Albert Hirschman (1970) affirms the importance of "voice" in allowing all sectors of society to participate in their own governance and in the formation of policies that determine the quality of their lives. NGOs and social movements are inspiring poor communities throughout the hemisphere to become more self-reliant and productive. Secondary citizenship in private associations is becoming convertible into primary citizenship that makes governments, particularly at the local level, more responsive and creative.

As antagonisms between the state and NGOs ebb, development donors will have to explore how the dwindling supply of aid can best be channeled. The environmental arena offers considerable promise, both for energizing the normative energy latent in Latin America and in tempering the harshness of neoliberal orthodoxy.

Words of caution, however, are in order. Among the many NGOs that gathered in Rio were a fair number of "NGO-lites," hastily formed environmental organizations with no proven constituency or track record, whose primary purpose seemed to be cashing in on a new development fad. Donors and environmental NGOs from the North would be well advised to heed the experience of the social forestry enterprises in Oaxaca discussed earlier in this article, and seek partners in the South that have strong local ties and are committed to forming self-reliant community organizations and networks. It should also be remembered that investments in nonformal health programs, women's programs, and even self-help housing technologies, such as ECOTEC's in Guatemala, can have spin-off effects that help protect the environment.

The United States government recently ratified the treaty on biodiversity on the first anniversary of UNCED. Biodiversity and sociocultural diversity are codependent, and the distribution of economic benefits derived from the former must be reflected in the latter. Indigenous peoples in Central America and in the Amazon region of South America are organizing to register their claims to ancestral forests that they have inhabited for centuries. Sometimes, as in the extractive reserves of Brazil or the nature park established by the

Kuna Indians of Panama, society must recognize that conservation is best served when it is managed by marginalized populations. Income-generating projects there will not always pay for themselves in the short term because they require long-term investments in organization building and market development.

Of course our challenge is not just to achieve greater equity among the present generation, but to achieve democracy across generations. To paraphrase World Bank economist Herman Daly, environmental issues have dealt the future into the distributional equation. The state will not wither away, and markets must not be allowed to recognize the long-term costs of production only when scarcity is irreversible. The NGO pol-

icy inventors that have been discussed in this article have one thing in common: They have shown the ability to forge multiclass alliances domestically and internationally in ways that bring the poor to the bargaining table and into the marketplace. In doing so, they help ensure that the needs of everyone's children and grandchildren will be heard as well. ❖

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Courtesy Fundación Natura

Small-scale farmers in Colombia's central Andean range prepare to transport seedlings as part of a plan catalyzed by Fundación Natura to protect the region's watershed. Fundación Natura is a partner of the Nature Conservancy and reflects the growing movement among NGOs to network across national borders and forge alliances with local communities to make them effective stewards of their own resources.

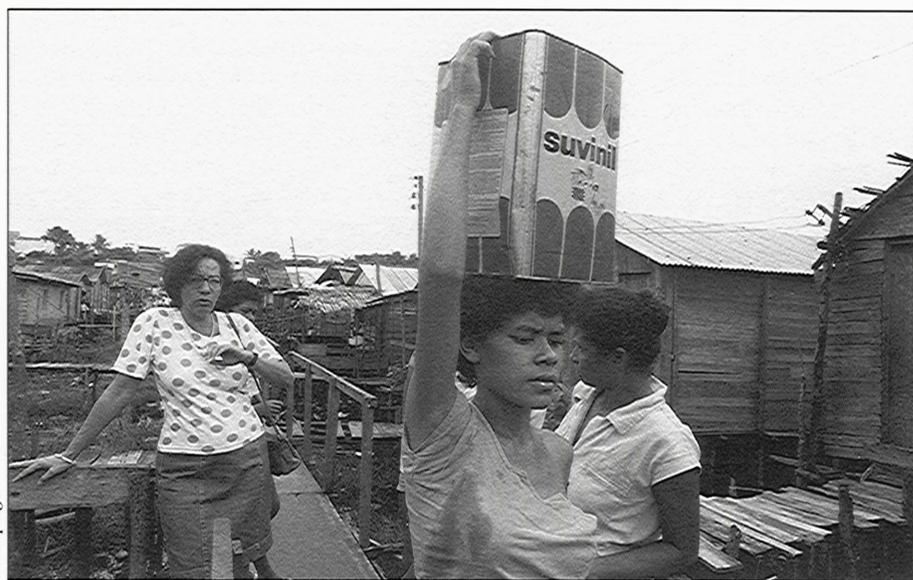
Can NGOs Help Stitch Together a Safety Net for Brazil's Poor?

Leilah Landim

If the Brazilian poet who called happiness the ultimate litmus test is correct, the nation's recent moments of incredulous joy may be more than passing euphoria. A solution to Brazil's socioeconomic crisis is not in sight, but the peaceful transition of power following the impeachment of President Collor de Mello demonstrates the depth of popular support for constitutional democracy, which is a prerequisite for finding answers to our impasse. The army stayed in its barracks, and the fragile institutions of an evolving civil society displayed a new confidence and maturity in their ability to mobilize, engage in dialogue, and reach consensus across divergent lines of interest.

Yet the public's jubilation will prove short-lived if it obscures the limits of what has been accomplished. Putting an end to over two decades of authoritarian rule is only the first step in creating a methodology for democratic development. Meeting that challenge will require moving beyond the strategies of the past.

State policies in the 1960s and 1970s helped create a society in which increased modernity was accompanied by growing marginalization and misery among large segments of the population. When the economy stalled during "the lost decade" of the 1980s, democracy again took root and began to thrive. The vitality of this drive was most evident near the bottom of the social ladder, where grassroots initiatives, movements, and civic organization



Sean Sprague

A woman totes drinking water to her home in a favela of São Luís, Maranhão. Brazil's NGOs are searching for new alliances to weave an indigenous safety net for the poor, improve public services, and fulfill the promise of redemocratization.

proliferated to empower the urban and rural poor. Posterity may well show that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), supported primarily by resources from international donors, were the yeast of this process, especially the grassroots support organizations (GSOs) that worked alongside community groups and movements to promote greater local autonomy and pluralism while creating a national model for active citizenship.

Justifiably proud of their role in strengthening civil society, NGO activists can feel vindicated by recent events. But many must also wonder at the limits of their accomplishment. GSOs tend to be "nonrepre-

sentative" institutions staffed by professionals; their primary strategy in the struggle against an authoritarian state was to amplify the voice of autonomous grassroots organizations that would demand public policy reforms. GSOs supported self-help projects among the poor not to replace the state, but to devise models for more-effective government services. Now that a democratically elected government is in place, GSOs and the community groups they assist find that the state is paralyzed by neoliberal structural adjustment policies.

The growing marginalization, violence, and tearing of the social fabric that accompany the deepening crisis

of the state are prompting some GSOs to take a second look at the informal safety nets that Brazilians already have woven. According to data from the Receita Federal, there are 55,369 religious, charitable, or social assistance agencies in the country, accounting for nearly 30 percent of all registered nonprofit organizations. Little is known about this vast universe, including the extent of their material and human resources or the specific values guiding their actions. We do know that philanthropy in Brazil is different than that in the United States, where

survival strategy of the poor. For centuries, they have been the only alternative to feeble or nonexistent public social policies.

The end of the Cold War and the rising tide of democracy have blurred old ideological cleavages, making new kinds of alliances possible and necessary. The downsizing of the state and the shrinking pool of international aid requires the agents of civil society to devise complementary strategies that maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of their diversity. Like-minded GSOs have already proved

specializing in multicultural issues, is undertaking a study in metropolitan Rio de Janeiro to explore the hidden world of Brazilian philanthropy, bring its many players together in small seminars, and see if frameworks can be devised for greater cooperation.

Real democracy inevitably brings greater diversity, and the trick Brazilians now face in a time of acute economic and social stress is finding common issues and agreed-upon methods to assemble coalitions for change. The exploration of philanthropy is not just an effort to generate more local resources, but to broaden the alliance of groups at the base of society. Not everyone agrees that such a dialogue can bear fruit, nor is it possible to predict what kind of fruitful actions might follow. But if GSOs are able to share their expertise with social service agencies that have direct access to otherwise unorganized populations, such partnerships can help ensure that existing resources for the poor are used more wisely and help create new models of inclusion that strengthen Brazil's fragile democracy by making it work for all of its citizens. ❖

The attempt to expand philanthropy is not just an effort to generate more local resources, but to broaden the alliance of groups at the base of society.

the spirit of volunteerism and liberal values helped create a delivery base of institutionalized private social services. Social philanthropy in Brazil more closely resembles the "submerged and marginalized society" of the poor themselves. Rooted in the ethos of their religious and popular cultures, it values charity based on personalized relationships.

GSOs have tended to dismiss this part of civil society because it was thought to perpetuate dependency rather than self-reliance and to foster the clientelism and misuse of public funds that have long plagued the nation. Yet these "invisible initiatives," which are often organized through religiously affiliated networks of Catholics, Spiritists, and Protestants, are part of the organic

themselves adept at forging networks, and efforts are under way to build bridges among a multiplicity of citizenship groups concerned with the environment, women's rights, Afro-Brazilian consciousness, and other issues. Can these GSOs now help facilitate a mutually productive dialogue with other private social-service agencies?

The arena for dialogue has expanded as Brazilians of all stripes have begun to improvise local strategies for surviving the country's socioeconomic crisis. New sources of private funding are also being mobilized, including corporate philanthropy, which seems to be on the rise and rethinking its traditional model of action. The Instituto de Estudos da Religião, a GSO

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

Development Notes

Assembling Coalitions for Democratic Urban Development

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and foreign donors have long been involved in projects to alleviate poverty in Brazil's cities, but the nation's return to democracy at the end of the 1980s has made it possible to consider a more systematic approach to urban grassroots development. Constitutional, legislative, and administrative reforms have opened a window of opportunity for a new partnership between local governments, NGOs, and civic movements to revitalize cities by involving rather than excluding the poor.

Realizing this opportunity requires rethinking what cities are and the roles various social actors can play in designing and implementing effective and fair urban policies and programs. To meet that challenge, representatives from nine NGOs on the cutting edge of urban development, including ARRUAR, CIDADE, FASE, and PÓLIS, met in late 1991 to draw lessons from their experiences working with the poor and to plan a strategy for the future.

Participants quickly agreed that democratization had changed the social context for urban development. Traditional conceptions of city life had simplistically mirrored the polarization of society under a military regime: On one side were the state and its allied economic elites, on the other were an assortment of urban popular movements that galvanized around specific issues—such as health care and housing—and were organized locally. Defending their right to organize to improve their neighborhoods was the glue that bound community groups from the *favelas*, or shantytowns, and the NGOs that worked with them, to other marginalized



Millard Schisler

Residents of a São Paulo favela pick through trash for items to sell. An NGO consortium has formed to design public policies that generate jobs and make cities more livable.

groups such as trade unions and political parties into a broad coalition opposed to military rule.

With the collapse of authoritarian rule, that coalition has lost some of its focus. The city, which once reflected a society split into two camps, now mirrors the complexity of an evolving civil society. Urban popular movements must learn to identify other actors that share their interests in order to form coalitions able to shape public policy.

Dialogue at the meeting centered around the difficulty of that task. Many urban popular movements were little more than informal alliances of disparate groups that did not share the same organizational structures, access to information, or even overall goals. Without greater internal consensus, it was hard to see how these movements could work effectively with each other or with the state.

There was, however, a silver lining. Despite their diversity, cities continued to shape the social life of all citizens and bound them with common problems that made new kinds of alliances possible. Much of

the next several years has been devoted to the consolidation of popular movement/NGO networks in which innovative project ideas could be shared and a common agenda forged. One of those initiatives is the Forum Nacional de Reforma Urbana, a broad coalition of more than 40 membership organizations, popular movements, and NGOs.

During the 1992 UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro, the Forum used the occasion to offer to other NGOs a set of policy proposals for dealing with the urban crisis. More than

1,000 representatives from 600 organizations refined those proposals into a treaty that they cosigned, along with members of Habitat International (representing 70 nations) and Frente Continental de Organizaciones Comunes (representing several urban popular movements in Latin America).

Among proposals now emerging from the Forum and other networks are advocacy of a new federal law on urban development that calls for greater democracy in municipal administration and the creation of a national fund to support self-help housing construction and renovation. Several NGO networks are now working closely with local governments to reform municipal budget making, plan sanitation programs, and improve the quality of urban life. New policy ideas, combined with the practical experience of working with municipal authorities to give them life, show that popular movements and the NGOs that support them are vital players in Brazil's civil society and essential to building the democratic city of the future.

—Lúcia Peixoto Calil

Giving Brazil's Street Children a Voice

Brazil often is portrayed as a "paradise," but life for most of its children is far from heavenly. Over half of the country's 60 million youth live in dire poverty. Many of these young people find themselves living on the streets of Brazil's cities and are increasingly perceived as a menace to society. Between 1988 and 1990, 4,611 of them were assassinated by vigilantes, police, and organized death squads. The abuse and murder of street children has become alarmingly routine. Government efforts to address the roots of the problem have been ineffective and intermittent, so local community groups have formed to find alternative solutions.

In 1985, a variety of children's service organizations joined with interested citizens to create the Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua (MNMMR). This new, broad-based movement would defend the human rights of Brazil's street children by educating the public about their plight and mobilizing the resources of civil society to end state-sanctioned coercion and make public policy more responsive.

What makes MNMMR unique is its inclusion of street children, who participate actively in the decision making designed to improve their situation. To carry out this mandate, the Movimento believes that effec-

tive work must be undertaken on the streets, among the youth, rather than within the walls of institutional facilities.

To bring the voice of Brazil's street children to the attention of the public, MNMMR has sponsored regular national conventions of youth representatives and concerned adults. The first meeting, in 1986, brought together 500 children from all over the nation to clarify their situation and declare their needs and expectations, setting the stage for drafting an Estatuto da Criança e o Adolescente (ECA) to codify the rights of youth and define the responsibilities of adults and the state.

Some 700 Brazilian youth, 10 children from other Latin American countries, as well as pediatricians, government officials, and representatives from local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) attended the second conference, in 1989. During the three-day session, the street children presented documentation to presidential candidates, local authorities, and the Justice Ministry confirming the homicides of over a thousand children, and then marched to the Na-

tional Congress to ratify symbolically the ECA, which was pending on the floor of the legislature. This conference was key to consolidating MNMMR, leading to the establishment of a nationwide network to place street children at the forefront of the social agenda. This concern has resulted in the inclusion of two articles in the new Brazilian Constitution that protect the rights of youth, the adoption of similar platforms in state constitutions, and the passage of the ECA.

The third convention, in November 1992, was attended by 700 Brazilian street children and 200 educators, NGO representatives, and children from Holland, Canada, Uruguay, and Peru. Workshops focused on implementation of the ECA, and ideas for improving the conditions of youth in education, housing, transportation, health, and the job market that could form the basis for new public policies.

Today, MNMMR no longer speaks in isolation. The voices of Brazil's street children have become audible and are registering on public opinion, spurring efforts by a growing civic movement to create a society in which children can be children.

For further information, contact the MNMMR, SDN/CNB 3 Andar, 3a Etapa, Sala L-403, Brasília, 70070, Brazil (phone: 61-226-9634; fax: 61-225-1577).

—Betina Moreira



Fernando Miceli

The Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua is mobilizing public opinion to aid street youth and promote policies to keep other poor children from lives on the street.

Helping Children Survive the World's Mean Streets

The Segundo Encontro Internacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua convened in September 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, a city renowned for its friendly people and natural beauty. Yet it takes only a short walk near scenic Copacabana Beach to find graphic evidence of the problems

presented at the conference. More than half of Rio's and Brazil's populations live below the poverty line. And an estimated 10 million of Brazil's 60 million children and adolescents lives on the streets of the nation's cities.

The conference focused on the health crisis facing Brazil's and the world's street children. Issues explored included AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, drugs, violence, and the role of the government, media, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in crafting effective policies to provide better care.

Reports from NGOs working in the front-lines of the struggle revealed the immensity of the challenge and how some innovative projects are having a local impact. One of the most pressing problems is the AIDS epidemic. According to the World Health Organization, 10 million children around the globe will be HIV positive by the turn of the century, and another 10 million will be orphaned. Cultural, social, and religious taboos concerning human sexuality make it extremely difficult to fashion the means for stemming the epidemic, and several workshops emphasized the need for more comprehensive sexual education programs, including efforts to overcome the fear and prejudice that ostracize youth already infected with the virus.

Violence against street children was also on the agenda. To survive, these children often resort to illegal or antisocial behavior that communities find threatening, prompting calls for stricter law enforcement. Rio de Janeiro was discussed as a case study of what too often happens. The city depends heavily on its tourism, and local authorities often use force to keep children away from tourist areas where they have been known to beg and steal. A group of teenagers who had been abused and tortured attended the conference to denounce the police. Upon returning

to the streets, two of these youth were soon reported missing, and the others sought protection after receiving death threats.

Once again, everyone's worst fears were confirmed. It might have been better if the children had been enabled to present their message more creatively. Theater, poetry, dance, and the other arts can be, and have been, used to effectively break down the barriers that separate street youth from the community. When they are allowed to show their human face, society can better see the cost it incurs in undermining the potential of so many of its younger generation.

The second international conference on street children did highlight the successes of several organizations from around the world and helped reveal the gravity of the crisis confronting youth. Participants returned home safely to continue their work. Perhaps the next conference will include more of the children participants talked about, and show what they can accomplish, given the chance, in creating a life beyond the streets.

—Leonardo Escobar

Bringing Indigenous Culture to Schools

The Smithsonian's Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian and a team of teachers and curriculum specialists, is developing instructional materials for middle- and secondary-school students and teachers. These efforts emerged from the Smithsonian's 1991 Festival of American Folklife program, "Land in Native American Cultures."

This Quincentenary event featured the cultural traditions of 13 indigenous communities. Among them were the Taquileños of Peru; the Ay-

mara and Jalq'a of Bolivia; the Shuar and Achuar of Ecuador; the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian of Alaska; the Mayans, Zapotecs, and Ikooods of Mexico; and the Hopi of Arizona.

Festival researchers and presenters are now collaborating with the Smithsonian on the follow-up project to create learning materials for secondary schools. Anthropologists Verónica Cereceda, Tomás Huanca, Gabriel Martínez, and Elayne Zorn, archaeologists Oswaldo Rivera and Alan Kolata, and IAF Representative Kevin Healy will serve as advisors in this interdisciplinary effort to communicate the complexity and richness of Native American cultures and the contributions they have made to life in the Americas. Curriculum specialists, and teachers in particular, have expressed a strong need for information about contemporary Native American communities, and this project will help close that gap.

A classroom packet will be designed that includes an instruction guide, slides, photographs, audio-cassettes, videotapes, and a crafts kit. Course contents can be adapted for use in a number of subjects, including geography, social studies, the arts, science, English as a second language, and environmental education. The materials are currently being tested in a pilot program to supplement curricula for approximately 45,000 Washington D.C.-area students, as well as 15,000 students in the Native American communities that participated in the Quincentenary festival. Feedback from students and teachers will be used to refine the methodology, and complete packets will be ready for wider distribution by the autumn of 1994. For more information on these educational materials or the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, please call 202-287-3541.

—Vivien T. Y. Chen

Husbanding Resources and Empowering People

Set in the landscape that inspired some of Georgia O'Keefe's most magical paintings, Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico, is a place where ideas and technologies for a better world are nurtured and tested. The ranch is a center for national conferences, for community and cultural events, for regional resource sharing, and for appropriate technology research, as well as a working model of high-desert agriculture, land management, and recycling. "Only at Ghost Ranch" is a phrase commonly heard among visitors trying to explain how the setting seems to naturally inspire people to open their minds and expand their horizons to match the endless vistas around them.

One of those "only at Ghost Ranch" events took place at the ranch's conference center in October 1992. The unusual pairing of the twentieth anniversary of the New Mexico Solar Energy Association and the sixth annual Peter Von Dresser Village Development Workshop brought together scientists, architects, engineers, inventors, Native American tribal leaders, Hispanic community organizers, representatives of international funding agencies, and state and federal government officials. People unlikely to cross paths in their everyday lives spent two-and-a-half days grappling with the social and technological changes needed if humanity is to live sustainably in the world.

This was not a forum for academic position papers on sustainable development. Participants provided hands-on techniques for heating and cooling buildings with solar energy, for turning waste water into wetlands, for tailoring economies to the local environment

and culture, and for strengthening the fabric of community, civic, and advocacy organizations that translate ideas into programs and programs into policy.

The theme "Twenty Years of Progress" was significant. Most presenters had started their careers in the headier days of the late 1960s when all things seemed possible. Economic and political reality tempered that idealism during the next two decades, but the original concepts have proved resilient. Sustainability requires humanity to reduce energy waste, become more tolerant of cultural diversity, and pay more attention to the long-term impact of

policies and actions rather than the short-term bottom line.

A spotlight was thrown on technologies for cutting energy costs and fossil fuel use, for reducing and sensibly disposing of solid wastes, and for constructing affordable housing. Participants also pointed out the need for local organizations and community-based networks to channel technologies and maintain programs over time. All agreed that the rules of the game—the incentives, disincentives, and norms—governing today's world must change if sustainable development is to become a reality.

—Marion Ritchey Vance ❖

IAF GRANTEES IN THE NEWS

Semana magazine highlighted **Fundación Natura** for their efforts in launching a national campaign promoting more active participation by Colombian citizens in halting ecological deterioration. • Rosiska Darcy de Oliveira of the **Instituto de Ação Cultural (IDAC)** in Brazil was one of 1,500 women participating at the 1992 UNCED conference. As reported by *Terraviva*, a daily newspaper published during the Earth Summit, women representatives at the Global Forum called for an equal voice in questions affecting population control and reproductive rights, and gender equality in public policy decision making at all levels. • The work of the **Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas** in Uruguay received broad coverage surrounding the federation's seventh annual assembly. Articles

in Uruguayan newspapers such as *El País*, *La Mañana*, *La República*, and *El Observador Agropecuario* reported on events there, how small farmers were affected by the international market and differential income-yield capacities, and the future role of and plans to modernize agricultural cooperatives. • In an extensive article on how to measure poverty, the Argentine newspaper *Clarín* quoted a study from the **Centro de Investigaciones sobre Pobreza y Políticas Sociales en la Argentina (CIPPA)**. This study noted that poverty dramatically worsened during the last half of the 1970s—when the ratio of poor households in greater Buenos Aires doubled from 6 to 13 percent. ❖

—Compiled by Maria Barry

Inside IAF

Grassroots Development Results—Widening the Lens

Marion Ritchey Vance

Today the term “sustainable development” rolls off the tongue almost as a single word—so facily that one tends to forget the marriage of the two notions is not long-standing. A quarter century ago, when the Inter-American Foundation was created, the question of sustainability—in ecological or social terms—was not a prevailing concern in the development world. Solving poverty was a question of accelerating national economic growth.

The IAF was conceived as an experiment in investing in projects that would address social concerns and build on the creativity and skills of the poor. Its founding premise was that by approaching the problems of poverty from the grassroots up, the impetus, momentum, and staying power of development efforts would come from the people themselves.

Now, as the Foundation nears its twenty-fifth anniversary, global attention has swung from macroeconomic models of development to the needs and potential at the grassroots. The IAF is redoubling its efforts to communicate insights it has gained through grants to some 3,500 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Latin America and the Caribbean. These NGOs include community-based grassroots groups as well as the support organizations that provide them with training, technical assistance, and credit.

The grassroots development framework (known in-house as “the cone”) is a new conceptual tool for illustrating, simply and graphically, the broad range of results achieved by such organizations, and how these results are linked to sustainability.

The framework (figure A) is based on the Foundation’s observa-

tion that viable grassroots development requires conscious attention on three levels: 1) improving immediate conditions for participants and their families; 2) strengthening community organizations and local support networks; and 3) influencing public policies, practices, and attitudes to confront the causes of poverty rather than merely alleviating its symptoms.

Benefits to individuals and families at the first level of the framework are important and direct results of projects. At the second and third levels, the effects of any given project are less direct (indicated by the lighter shading on the graphic). However, as the widening of the cone is intended to suggest, grassroots development programs can have impact on numbers of people well beyond the direct beneficiaries through strengthening NGOs, promoting linkages, and influencing policies and attitudes. The framework also reflects grantees’ experience that the less-tangible gains—in self-respect, tolerance, leverage, accountability, and vision—are as important to long-term success as the material improvements in production, housing, or income. It demonstrates the pivotal position of NGOs as a vital link between people and policy.

As figure B suggests, it is the dynamic interplay between social gains and material progress that drives the grassroots development process. Interaction among all three levels of the framework helps sustain that process. Patterns of relationship among the levels and the relative importance of each level will vary according to the context of a particular country or region.

Regional Indian federations in Ecuador provide an example of the

framework. Some tangible (first level) results of grants are basic bookkeeping skills and increased income through agricultural production and community enterprises, such as bakeries. In the process of administering grants, the federations themselves have gained experience, confidence, strategic planning capability, and membership. The overall impact of increased capacity and legitimacy on the part of the federations is a new kind of relationship between the indigenous community and the state, which has resulted in settlement of land rights questions and protection for natural resources.

The concepts underlying the framework are not new. Empowerment, institution building, and sustainable processes have been at the heart of the Foundation’s approach since its inception. Over the intervening years, these terms have become common currency in the development lexicon—so common that they have come to mean all things to all people.

The framework is an attempt to get beyond generalized abstractions; to break concepts down into components that are easier to identify. Empowerment, for example, derives from the complex interplay of improved self-esteem and status in society; of skills and jobs and income; of changes in prevailing policies and attitudes; of dissolving stereotypes and invisible barriers. Sustainability of the grassroots development process requires a comfortable fit with the local culture; administrative and long-range planning skills; space to function within the political system; and linkages among citizens’ organizations, local government, and the private sector.

In short, grassroots development in the 1990s is far more complex

Results of Grassroots Development

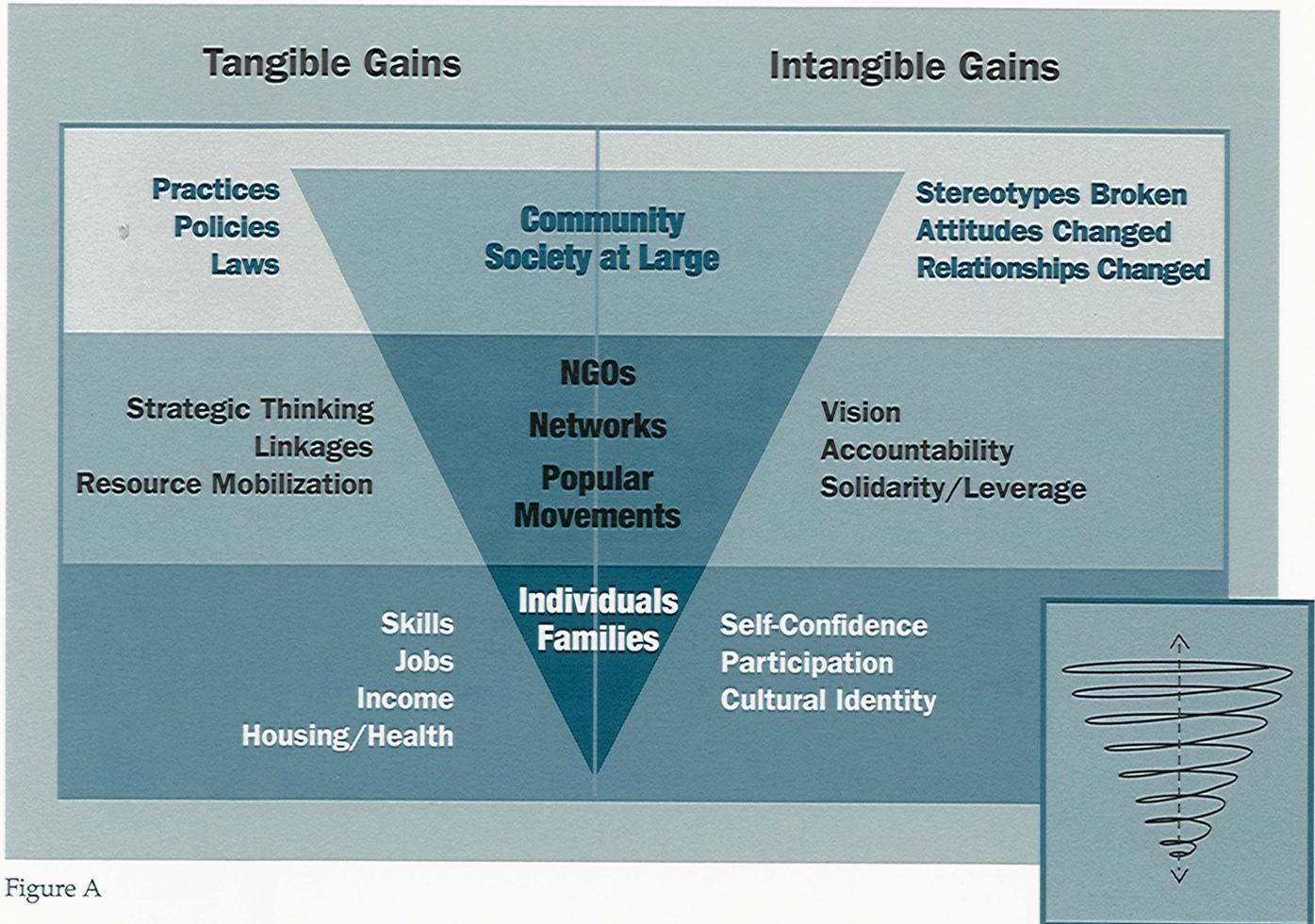


Figure A

Figure B

than summing up the tangible results of individual projects. Achievements are increasingly defined by linkages and networks among NGOs whose vision and capacity have been shaped by years of implementing projects. Small successes in changing laws, modifying policies, or transforming relationships to give the disenfranchised a say in decisions that affect their lives are beginning to have a cumulative impact.

As are other funding agencies, the IAF is grappling with ways to measure or document the results of this multilevel process. The framework is an attempt to widen the lens through which we look at grassroots development to capture the full range of results and discern patterns across a variety of projects. As illustrated here, it is a rough draft—a work-in-progress being modified through exchange of ideas among Foundation staff, in-country teams,

and third parties. During the coming year, informal field-testing will be carried out to test the validity of the basic concepts and continue the quest for credible indicators of achievement. ❖

MARION RITCHEY VANCE is the Foundation's regional learning officer and author of the book The Art of Association: NGOs and Civil Society in Colombia, which is available free of charge from the IAF.

Reviews

THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT, by Roger D. Stone. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1992.

David Barton Bray

Roger Stone's book could not have been more timely. Published shortly before the "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro last year, *The Nature of Development* provides a highly readable and compelling rationale for one of the conference's major conclusions: Environmentalists must address poverty and human needs with the same urgency they devote to monarch butterflies. As Stone deftly demonstrates, the idea that conservation and development are interrelated rather than opposing dynamics is not new and has been steadily gathering force for two decades among practitioners and organizations in both areas.

A meeting in Founex, Switzerland, in 1971, on the eve of the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, outlined "how to use the development process to overcome environmental problems and reduce poverty." The Stockholm gathering itself was unable to reach a consensus, with debate tending to polarize environmental and developmental priorities. Nonetheless, as Stone notes, seeds of future cooperation were planted. The term "ecodevelopment" was coined in Stockholm, and the dialogue there presaged the publication in 1973 of the benchmark book *Ecological Principles for Economic Development*, by Dasmann, Milton, and Freeman.

From this early, brief flirtation, Stone charts how conservation and development went their separate ways for most of the next two decades. Conservationists "ambled down the Franciscan byways, self-limited to the orthodoxies of species preservation and habitat manage-

ment," while development agencies continued sending cattle into the rainforest. Only with skyrocketing concerns about global warming and tropical deforestation in the late 1980s, and growing awareness that the rural poor were being forced to consume their marginal resource base in order to survive, were the two sides forced to reconsider their habit of mutual disdain.

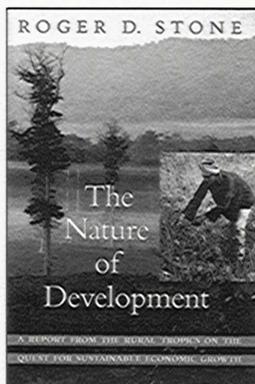
To document this burgeoning relationship, Stone undertook a global tour of conservation and development projects to examine the state of the art of "sustainable development." He found many compelling case studies: composting on the boundaries of the Khao Yai National Park in Thailand, butterfly ranching in the Arfak Mountains of Indonesia, sea-moss farming in St. Lucia, reforestation in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica, forest management in the Kilum mountains of northwest Cameroon, wildlife management in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park. The common thread Stone found was that successful projects begin small, build up slowly, and combine traditional knowledge and modern innovations. Projects work because local organizations and communities have appropriated them as their own.

Stone is well aware of how fragile these experiments are, how easily they are disrupted by personality conflicts, the overwhelming poverty they are designed to combat, shortsighted government policies, and market cycles. Yet there is no other

choice. Long after the last agronomist and engineer have headed home from most of the world's ecologically sensitive areas, the local people will have to manage the natural resource base. As Stone notes, "Decades of grassroots experience have demonstrated, and early returns from the ecodevelopment sector have confirmed, [that] progress is most likely if local citizens are full partners."

Only the most retrograde environmentalist or development practitioner has not absorbed this lesson at the rhetorical level. Yet daunting sociopolitical and technological challenges retard actual implementation of conservation and development through local training and management. National governments tend to be leery of empowering their most powerless citizens, and as Stone notes, the economic side of foreign policy in the 1990s "has precious little to do with the needs of the poor in developing countries, let alone the health of their environments."

Stone acknowledges the path-breaking work of the IAF in funding NGOs and communities in Latin America. Citing the debate on "scaling-up" in *Grassroots Development* Vol. 14, No. 1, he agrees that the real challenge is applying lessons learned in innovative small projects to regional and national programs. His conviction is that space must be opened and resources allocated to allow private organizations to work more effectively. Although believing that large agencies should relinquish most field activities to the new clusters of smaller national and international organizations that are emerging, Stone cautions that this rural development strategy "is not without its dangers, for no rule prevents these organizations from atrophying as they 'mature,' taking on the very rigidities their designers founded them to correct."



Stone's book is an invaluable guide to sustainable grassroots development as it is being practiced today, often unnoticed, around the globe. Stone has given a face and a voice to the people who are on the cutting edge of this movement, which, though still small, is crucial to our common fate. As the eminent historian Jan de Vos says in an article published in *Lacandonia*, a seminal examination of Mexico's Lacandón Rainforest: "The destruction of the environment and the destitution of the people... can't be cured unless both illnesses are attacked at the same time and with equal energy... To find rapid and appropriate solutions to this double problem is the challenge facing those who have the scientific vision, the technical capacity, and the political power to be players in the game." ❖

DAVID BARTON BRAY is an IAF representative for Mexico. His coauthored article on tropical forest management in the Mayan zone of Quintana Roo recently appeared in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*.

THE SUBSIDY FROM NATURE: PALM FORESTS, PEASANTRY, AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE AMAZON FRONTIER, by Anthony B. Anderson, Peter H. May, and Michael J. Balick. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

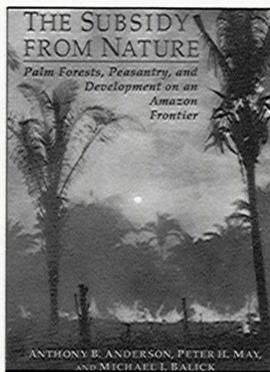
Kathryn Smith Pyle

Early in what first appears to be a dry treatise on palm forest ecology, the authors of *The Subsidy from Nature* broaden the context of their research by calling attention to the crucial role humans play in the environment. The book focuses on the babassu palm and is chock full of botanical details, but this knowledge is used as a lens for viewing

social systems. The resulting "case study of a forest resource and its role in the landscape of people's lives" becomes an interdisciplinary venture that moves easily between biology and community, from the micro- to the macrolevel. In the process, the reader is shown how understanding these interrelationships can help shape solutions that save forests while benefiting the people who inhabit them.

The babassu forests developed following the destruction of the rainforests in the southern and eastern regions of the Brazilian Amazon. About half of this territory is in the northeastern state of Maranhão, where 300,000 poor families gather the hard-shelled fruit of the babassu to extract nuts for sale to oil processors. The palm is a cornucopia for the poor: Nearly every part of it has a use as charcoal, animal feed, construction materials, medicine, mulch, soap, or food for the family table. Sale or trade of these by-products accounts for nearly 25 percent of household income among the rural poor and contributes "about \$85 million annually in direct benefits to the Maranhão economy."

Even though the palm is vital to the state's economy and most of its people, public policies affecting it are driven by an "agrarian oligarchy" and a staggering foreign debt. As in the rest of Brazil, the historic pattern of concentrated land ownership lies at the heart of these



issues. In 1980 in Maranhão, the Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística reported in *Censo Agropecuário* that:

Fifty-five percent of agricultural land was controlled by 1 percent of the farms on private estates over 500 hectares in size. At the same time, 85 percent of the farms were held through rental, sharecropping, or squatting on land belonging to others or to the state, constituting altogether only 9 percent of the total area in agriculture.

Agricultural policies and the threat of land redistribution through agrarian reform laws have encouraged the rapid expansion of cattle pastures into areas formerly used by small farmers, forcing them to move on. Cleared land—whether for crops or pasture—often means cutting and burning babassu. And despite its characteristic tenacity, the palm is being steadily eradicated. By the mid-1980s, Peter May reported in *A Modern Tragedy of the Non-Commons: Agro-Industrial Change and Equity in Brazil's Babaçu Palm Zone* that an estimated 15 percent of all babassu stands in Maranhão had been clearcut to form planted pasture.

The authors note that, simultaneously, "in an attempt to counter Brazil's foreign debt crisis, regional development in the eastern Amazon has been redirected toward establishing industrial infrastructure, while agricultural and extractive activities based on babassu have been relegated to a secondary priority."

By understanding the qualities of the babassu and by including forest peoples in the planning process, society can develop better policies. The authors' research, for example, found that the palm's first leaves only appear aboveground 50 years after germination—an initial clue to its hardiness and adaptability to various ecological configurations, including the ability to conform to the demands of basically landless peo-

Resources

ple forced to practice "swidden agriculture," the practice of clearing unclaimed areas, planting crops, depleting the soil, and moving on to permit the area to regenerate naturally. Natural forest management—selective clearing and thinning of babassu—fits well with this practice, benefits ranchers by providing shade for animals and thicker undergrowth for fodder and protection of the soils, and improves access to and the quality of the palm's fruit. Support of experimentation in appropriate technology for community-based, palm-oil processing and for the formation of cooperatives would extend the benefits of natural forest management.

The authors support both measures. Yet they also offer a cautionary note:

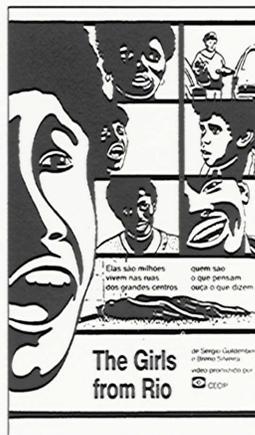
Resolution of the problems associated with babassu ultimately depends on political and economic—rather than purely technical—solutions. Technical fixes such as management of the natural stands or appropriate scaling of processing technology are only partial solutions to these problems. Improving returns to the peasantry, however, requires that they obtain greater control over both the resource base and the processing and marketing of [babassu] products.

Although *The Subsidy from Nature* succeeds as a case study, this handsomely illustrated volume has a broader appeal. It is an important contribution to our understanding of extractive reserves. More importantly, it offers a model for development that benefits the environment and the rural poor: Effective strategies must be knowledge-based, inclusive, and connected to the social context. ❖

KATHRYN SMITH PYLE is an IAF representative for Brazil.

The following materials have been produced by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Brazil, Argentina, and the United States. The materials from Brazil illustrate how NGOs can take a leading role in defining a social problem and mobilizing the resources of civil society to devise solutions and direct public policy. These videos and publications spotlight the plight of Brazilian street children, share information among groups working with them, and inform the public of how to become involved. The resources from Argentina provide a core sample documenting the impact in one country of a hemispheric phenomenon—the emergence of grassroots support organizations (GSOs) staffed by concerned professionals and paraprofessionals who provide technical assistance and training to community groups interested in self-help development.

The Girls from Rio is a 50-minute video of youth, aged 9 to 20, recounting their struggles to survive on the mean streets of the city.



Filmed in August 1990 at a meeting organized by educators, these girls and young women candidly and movingly discuss the conditions in their families that forced them to a life on the streets, and the difficulties they found there in finding food

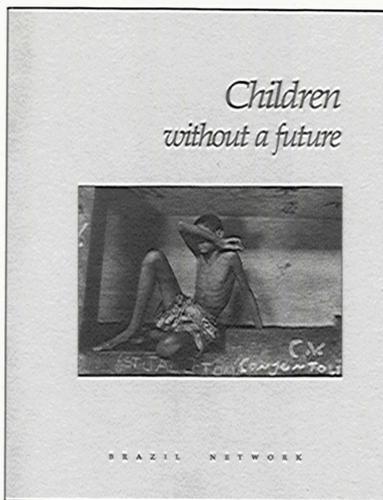
and safe places to sleep and bathe. The film captures their beliefs, hopes, and dreams, which have persisted despite the indifference of society and the violence and abuse they have witnessed and experienced. The girls talk about what it is like to grow up under these conditions, the relationships they have made with peers and lovers, and the resolve and grit that is required to make it through each day into an uncertain future.

Produced by the Centro Brasileiro de Defesa dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente, this video, in Portuguese with English subtitles, can be purchased from CECIP, Rua Senador Dantas 80, Sala 201, 20031 Rio de Janeiro, R.J., Brazil (phone: 21-533-0772).

A second video, **Meu Nome é João**, shows three vignettes in the life of a boy struggling to survive with dignity and build an identity grounded in self-respect. The viewer follows João as he discovers his best friend featured in the crime section of the newspaper, befriends a girl trying to escape life on the streets, and encounters the indifference and hostility of adults. By looking through João's eyes, the viewer catches a glimpse of the world of tenuousness and danger that is the daily reality of millions of other children like him. Context is provided for understanding the causes of that reality and what might be done to change them.

The video, in Portuguese with English subtitles, was produced by the Associação Beneficente São Martinho and the Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas (IBASE). It can be ordered, for a fee, from IBASE VIDEO, Rua Vicente de Souza 29, Botafogo, 22251-070 Rio de Janeiro, R.J., Brazil (phone: 21-286-6161).

Children Without a Future is a seminal study of the phenomenon of street children in Brazil. Its first section shows the staggering size of the problem facing the country, its regions, and its cities. The second section provides a wealth of data to profile the regional, racial, and economic inequalities and the other major factors driving children onto the streets. The concluding section describes the activities being carried out by NGOs and concerned citizens to defend children's rights, and



how these efforts have given birth to a social movement capable of imprinting its vision in Brazil's new Constitution and influencing public policy at the state and municipal levels. The report is a useful compendium for citizens and public and private agencies interested in tackling this problem in their own communities or in supporting the efforts of others.

This study was conducted by the Brazil Network and can be purchased from the network at 815 15th Street, N.W. #426, Washington, D.C. 20005 (phone: 202-783-5293; fax: 202-783-5644).

Using a comic-book format, **Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente** is a cleverly designed and executed pamphlet for informing children and adults with basic literacy skills about the legal rights of Brazilian



youth under recently enacted legislation designed to help children living on the streets and forestall others from joining them. Pen-and-ink drawings of a talking book and a dog instructing two children convey information about the stages of life, access to health care, the training needed for personal and social development, and special programs to assist young people. While providing a general overview of legal rights and the kinds of public resources provided by the Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente (ECA), the booklet does not offer readers or educators leading group discussions specific information about how these rights are applied and how resources can be accessed locally. Focus groups might be used to determine levels of practical comprehension so that supplementary materials can be included as needed to help young people determine whom to contact for help and where it can be found.

The booklet is coproduced by the Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua and the Centro de Formação e Apoio aos Educadores, Polo II-Região Norte. Copies are

available from Comissão Estadual, Dr. Lopes de Almeida, 164 (Vila Mariana), 04120-070 São Paulo, S.P., Brazil (phone: 11-571-0817).

Greater detail about the ECA is provided in **Cadernos Populares**, a series of six booklets prepared by the Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Entidades de Assistência ao Menor e à Família (SITRAEMFA). Each booklet is written by a specialist in a specific aspect of the legislation, and gives educators, social workers, NGO practitioners, and interested citizens a better context for understanding the potentials and pitfalls of implementing the law.

ECA e a Questão Educacional analyzes how Brazil's educational system has reinforced socioeconomic and cultural disparities and undermined student self-reliance, and suggests how educators can instill the critical skills needed to navigate the turbulent waters of a market society. *ECA e a Participação da Sociedade* explains how parents, community organizations, and citizens interact in the Rights Council and Guardian Council that were established to protect the welfare of infants and young children. *ECA e a Questão do Delito* encourages a reexamination, especially by those working in the field, of how juvenile delinquents are handled, recommending individual—rather than proscriptive—remedies that take into account personal histories and use short-term needs to pave the way for reaching medium- and long-term goals. *ECA e os Trabalhadores da Área da Menoridade* helps practitioners understand how the legislation affects their jobs, how it can build their professional standing with the public, and how it can be used to nurture the creativity of both instructors and youth. *ECA e a Questão da Municipalização* examines the crucial role local government and

its administrative agencies play in meeting the needs of youth. *ECA e a Justiça da Infância e da Juventude* relates in plain language how the law is to be applied by various agencies in Brazil's legal system, and how justice must be administered in ways that protect children and adolescents.

The booklets can be obtained by contacting SITRAEMFA at Avenida Celso Garcia 4323, Tatuape, 03063 São Paulo, S.P., Brazil (phone: 11-294-6544).

Two sets of practical, user-friendly booklets on nonformal education for children are now available from the Associação Movimento de Educação Popular Integral Paulo Englert (AMEPPE), an applied research NGO in Minas Gerais State. **Serie Subsídios: Creche** chronicles the history of the day-care movement in metropolitan Belo Horizonte, presents the lessons learned by educators, and concludes with a comic-book-style pamphlet that illustrates pedagogical activities used in preschools. The various community day-care centers have now linked into an association and will guide composition of forthcoming publications about this topic.

Coleção: A Palavra é Sua is a series of booklets for use by educators and community groups in primary schools. They examine the stages of child growth and development, pose questions to help parents and teachers evaluate how classrooms are geared to meet the needs of each developmental stage, suggest activities that encourage children to participate in their own education, identify how play can be a pedagogical tool for transforming ideas into action, and sketch out how adults can carry out work plans on their own to support the education of their children.

Both sets can be obtained from AMEPPE at Avenida Amazonas, 641-Conj. 5C, 30180 Belo Horizonte, M.G., Brazil (phone: 31-201-5434).

The Directorio de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Promoción y Desarrollo de Argentina, published in 1992, charts the growth of Argentine GSOs and provides information of use to donors, base groups in need of assistance, and NGOs interested in networking. The directory, prepared by Grupo de Análisis y Desarrollo Institucional (GADIS), contains information on 226 Argentine GSOs, at least 151 of which have been founded since 1970. Brief profiles detail the programs, goals, staff, computer capacity, publications, and funding of the 172 GSOs that responded to GADIS's questionnaire, and are supplemented by the names and addresses of another 54 organizations. Entries are indexed by region and theme. Appendices describe 31 databases and 46 periodicals, both within and outside Argentina. The directory can be purchased from GADIS, Paraguay 1307, Piso 8, Of. 70, 1057 Buenos Aires, Argentina (phone/fax: 814-2841 or 812-9439).

El País de los Excluidos, Crecimiento y Heterogeneidad de la Pobreza en el Conurbano Bonaerense explores what GSOs can do to address poverty in Argentina. This book, published in late 1991 by the Centro de Investigaciones sobre Pobreza y Políticas Sociales en la Argentina (CIPPA), uses government figures to chart how the collapse of the economy during the 1980s created new classes of the poor in the 19 counties surrounding Buenos Aires. Excerpted interviews with the people who make up these new

groups bring to life the reality behind those statistics. After providing the reader with an overview of how this new poverty has overwhelmed available public resources, the book examines problems associated with employment, education, health care, and housing. Each chapter concludes with stimulating questions about how GSOs can make a difference. The publication can be purchased from CIPPA, Maipu 26, Piso 14, Dpto. E., Buenos Aires, Argentina (phone: 343-9789).

The final resource included from Argentina provides a methodology for evaluating "habitat projects," whose goal is upgraded housing for low-income people who participate actively in construction and rehabilitation efforts. The methodology was designed by the Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales (CEUR) and uses weighted indicators of social and material improvements to judge project success. Examples of social gains include the existence of one or more informal, single-issue community groups; and the formation of a sustainable local organization with the capacity to survive leadership transitions and resolve its own problems. Indicators of material gains include the use of masonry or wood for construction, installation of indoor plumbing, land ownership, and access to hospitals and schools. **Habitat y Desarrollo de Base: Un Nuevo Enfoque Metodológico para Evaluar Proyectos**, by Beatriz Cuenya, María Di Loreto, and Carlos Fidel, can be purchased from CEUR, Corrientes 2835, Piso 7, Depto. B, Cuerpo B, 1193 Buenos Aires, Argentina (phone: 961-0309/2268; fax: 961-1854). ❖

—Thelma Leifert, Diane Edwards
La Voy, and Elba Noemi Luna

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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
901 N. Stuart Street, 10th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22203, USA

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