

# Grassroots Development

Journal of the Inter-American Foundation

The IAF in Argentina



VOLUME 24

NUMBER 1

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The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent agency of the United States government, was created in 1969 as an experimental foreign assistance program. The IAF works to promote equitable, responsive and participatory self-help development by awarding grants directly to organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also enters into partnerships with public and private sector entities to mobilize local, national and international resources for grassroots development. The IAF's operating budget consists of congressional appropriations and funds derived through the Social Progress Trust Fund.

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The purpose of this journal is to share grassroots development experiences with a variety of readers. The editor encourages submissions on relevant topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- how the poor in Latin America and the Caribbean organize and work to improve their lives;
- issues and trends in the development community;
- how institutions cooperate to further the development of the region.

Please direct query letters to Paula Durbin at the above address or e-mail [pdurbin@iaf.gov](mailto:pdurbin@iaf.gov).

*Cover photo:* Patrick Breslin. Vicente Alancay, an indigenous Coya, makes his living on the salt flats near Abra Pampa, Argentina. He and his colleague, Roberto Flores, pictured on the contents page, can, in four to five hours, harvest a ton of salt to sell for ten pesos, less than \$3. Rosario Quispe, who leads Warmi Sayajsunqo, an IAF grantee, wants to mechanize the process and put the salt at the center of a communal enterprise for the surrounding Coya hamlets.

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PATRICK BRESLIN

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Antonio Berni, *Demonstration* (1934).

## The IAF's Argentine Grantees:

# Caught in the Crisis

By Paula Durbin

In Argentina solidarity is alive and well.

It is the positive face of the crisis. *La Nación, editorial, Oct. 27, 2002*

The international media began covering Argentina's hard times in December 2001 when its much-touted prosperity crumbled under a massive international debt and an inflated exchange rate, known as convertibility, a euphemism for a peso overvalued at one to the dollar. Newspapers, magazines and television ran stories of the raucous demonstrations that toppled a series of administrations; of desperate Argentines clamoring for their life's savings in bank accounts frozen by government decrees known as the *corralito* and the *corralón*; of malnutrition afflicting children in unheard-of numbers. The bad news has just kept coming, but how good were things before the collapse? Measures intended to curb the hyperinflation of previous decades had exacted a cruel price—bankruptcies, factory closings, spiraling unemployment, an eroded educational system, reduced access to health care and social services. Ask ordinary citizens when the current crisis began, and the dates go as far back as 1985; many have struggled all their lives.

Since the 1970s, the IAF has awarded 210 grants to Argentine organizations working on the problems flowing from poverty. Late last year, we traveled through Argentina to see how the current grantees were faring. They numbered just six, barely a handful, but their impact extended across a wide swath of Argentina.

We started in the far northwestern corner, the stark but stunning highlands the Argentines call the Puna, and continued through the cities into the pampa and Patagonia. By October, our grantees had adjusted to some of the chaotic consequences of default and devaluation, including the maze of *patacones*, *lecops*, *quebrachos*, *bocades* and other currency substitutes cash-strapped federal, provincial and municipal governments had issued to discharge their obligations. According to several journalists interviewed for this feature, the peso's plunge to 3.7 to the dollar and no further, has been a source of some relief, even optimism, in a country terrified of inflation.

Regardless, the social dimensions of the economic crisis remain alarming. In October 2002, 57 percent of the population was officially living below the poverty line, one of the most painful statistics in Argentine history and, at this writing, those numbers have not improved. What we saw on our trip, however, confirmed an observation in the editorial cited above: the greater the need, the more vigorous the mobilization of people and institutions in the face of this suffering. With energy, courage, persistence and creativity, IAF's grantees and other NGOs are rising to the challenge. Could this latest battle, perhaps their toughest ever, prove their finest moment?

## Indigenous Awakening

Photos: Patrick Breslin

Jujuy, in Argentina's northwestern corner, is one of the country's poorest provinces. In August 2002, 63 percent of its population was living in poverty and unemployment in some areas was pegged at 48 percent. Although the statistics resemble those now applicable to other parts of Argentina, they can't be attributed to the current crisis. And they don't say much about Jujuy's people, mostly Coya indigenous to the Puna.

These native Argentines saw their already dire circumstances reduced even further beginning in 1985 when local industries collapsed or downsized. Tobacco and sugar had offered at best only seasonal employment that complemented subsistence, but the closure of the mines, *jujeños* say, was like a bomb exploding.

Many unemployed men tried to find work in the South, leaving families to fend for themselves. By the early 1990s, the legions of jobless remaining felt the pinch enough to protest furiously as *piqueteros*, instituting the notorious roadblocks copied throughout the country as deprivation spread. Currently, state employment rolls are swollen with 40,000 of Jujuy's 630,000 inhabitants and another 60,000 receive a government subsidy. For most, this amounts to 150 pesos a month from the controversial World Bank-funded Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar, a program for unemployed heads of household, on which 2 million Argentines now depend. (It succeeded the Plan Trabajar, a work plan intended, in the heyday of privatization, to tide the downsized over in Argentina's newly globalized service economy.)

The Asociación de Mujeres Warmi Sayajsunqo, meaning persevering women, emerged and has flourished on this bleak landscape under the guidance of Rosario Quispe, whose vision of a better life for the Coya includes a return to the economic independence enjoyed by their ancestors. "My grandfather had 300 cows, 800 sheep and fields of alfalfa and maize," she recalled. "He never had a salary, but who says we were poor?"

Quispe, a miner's daughter, was born on the Puna. After primary



Ernestina Alejo weaves on a traditional loom in her village, San Francisco Alfarcito.



*Rosario Quispe, the charismatic leader of Warmi Sayajsunqo in Abra Pampa, shows vegetables grown in a greenhouse.*

school, she took a job as a babysitter, then married a miner and had seven children. When her husband lost his job in the mid-1980s, she began to prove herself as an organizer working with Catholic grassroots projects. In 1995, with 10 other women, she founded Warmi in Abra Pampa, a parched, windswept town at the Puna's desolate heart.

The goal was to improve income among the Coya by increasing livestock, craft and food production. Community organization, education and health, particularly women's health, also became priorities. Dances and raffles financed Warmi's earliest initiatives—a workshop, knitting equipment and looms, training, home improvements and the distribution of donated food, clothing and medicines. Then, in 1997, Warmi became the first Argentine organization to receive the Women's World Summit prize for creativity in rural life, and the media beat a path to Abra Pampa. The coverage

attracted support from an array of corporate foundations, including the Fundación Bunge y Born and the Ronald McDonald House Charities, and Argentine enterprises such as Transportadora de Gas del Norte (TGN) whose assistance includes greenhouses for vegetables that cannot grow outside on the Puna. "Since 2000, the greenhouse project has permitted us to be part of a high impact social investment," said Taira Peña, TGN's community action coordinator. "Warmi's management model, Rosario Quispe's leadership and our active role lets us forge an alliance that transcends the merely executive aspect of reaching a goal."

Funding from the Avina Foundation allowed Warmi to launch the system of revolving micro-credit whose expansion the IAF supports with a fiscal 2001 grant. The program has made 1,000 loans in 74 Coya communities, enclaves of perhaps 30 families that Quispe visited personally to explain the credit concept

and set the community's fund in motion. Each fund is administered by an association of enthusiastic loan applicants who elect one man and one woman as leaders, a secretary, and treasurer. The association determines the priority for receiving a loan; those on the waiting list are accommodated when previous borrowers have reimbursed the fund, a powerful incentive for prompt payment. Members meet regularly in the sparsely furnished but spotless social halls of tiny rustic churches, some built centuries ago. Papering the walls are charts tracking current loans; repayment runs 100 percent.

The uncertain national economy has caused conscientious Coya to hesitate before taking out a loan now. Nonetheless Raul Llobeta, Warmi's economist, insists the crisis has generally worked in favor of both Warmi and its beneficiaries, first because it put an end to politically-motivated *clientelismo*—in the form of government handouts of cash and food—that kept poor constituencies in their place. "Our NGO allows individuals to have their own dream," he said, "to live from their work with dignity, as their ancestors did, and according to their own cultural norms. Everything goes back to Rosario's memory of her grandfather who didn't need the mines or the state, but lived from his own production."

Furthermore, to these Coya entrepreneurs, who had never handled enough cash to feel much pain from the *corralito*, the *corralón* or the devaluation, the end of dollar-peso parity means the opportunity to compete in the world market. Currently, their most common investments are knitting equipment and the llamas that provide fiber for yarn for scarves, bags and sweaters as well as skins for finely tooled leather. Warmi is emphasizing quality products for export. "With the one-to-one [dollar to peso exchange rate], it made no sense to try to market the knitwear internationally," said Llobeta. "Now it's in the project." Still he's cautiously optimistic. Warmi's

arrangement to export llama meat to Germany fell apart because of a disease prevalent among Argentina's camelids, and Llobeta faults lack of an official priority on a vaccine "The excuse was," he said, "'We never imagined the Coya would be exporting anything'."

Interestingly, in 1994 the Argentine Constitution was reformed to acknowledge the country's indigenous peoples and their possession of the land they occupy, perhaps putting to rest the myth of Argentina as a country without Indians. Now Quispe wants title to pass to Coya communities, and she has a powerful ally. Argentina's Catholic bishops, including Quispe's mentor, Pedro Olmedo, prelate of Humahuaca, recently went on record calling for the government "to accelerate indigenous peoples' land rights." According to Quispe, Coya patrimony includes vast expanses rich in minerals, among them salt flats extending over the Puna as far as the eye can see.

"This is the hardest work I have seen in my life," she said at a site where two Coya men with a pick and shovel had spent five hours harvesting a ton of salt to sell for 10 pesos. When the sun shines on the flats, the dazzle is blinding; when the temperature plunges below freezing in July, the salt can't be harvested and yields no income. Quispe claims there is a market for 1,000 tons a month and envisions a communal enterprise, with the process mechanized, for the surrounding hamlets. She is also thinking through a program of larger loans enabling Coya families to purchase equipment to pan gold on other land.

"The struggle for title will be long," Quispe warned a rapt community to which Warmi was sending an administrator and an accountant to help start the salt enterprise. "This will be the big business. Gold will be too." The provinces of Jujuy and Salta currently administer the lands in question, she added, and she is tired of seeing them manipulated in favor of special interests. Quispe also blames the system for the

toxic waste spewed by industries, who, she claims, pay no user fees. She insists the pollutants cause the alarming rate of cervical cancer among Coya women—of 1,800 surveyed recently, 480 required cryosurgery and several had full-blown cases. Although famously apolitical, Quispe sees justice, both social and environmental, as a matter to be resolved between the Coya and the Argentine nation. “I’ve told the governor,” she continued, “You can’t say this isn’t ours. The Puna is ours.”

Early in 2003, Warmi was recognized with the Dubai International Award for Best Practices by the United Nations Human Settlements Program and the municipality of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, for its improvement of the

environment. Just months before, Warmi’s charismatic leader was profiled in *Rosario Quispe, una mujer perseverante*, a one-hour documentary televised as part of the series *Visionario*. The Buenos Aires daily *Página Doce* announced the broadcast with a substantial article earlier the same day. Also testifying to her and Warmi’s effectiveness is the growing confidence of the people on the Puna. “They had been accustomed to thinking of themselves as incompetent,” explained Augustina Roca, an anthropologist associated with Warmi. “Now they handle money, make decisions and go on to bigger challenges. They feel they can take control of their destiny. I think that’s Rosario’s strongest achievement.”



Rosario Quispe, left, meets with members of a loan association in the small community of Tres Pozos.

## Self-Help and the Cities

“The most obscene poverty,” is how Griselda Meng describes the ravages of Argentina’s crisis in greater Buenos Aires. The phrase applies to much of urban Argentina, home to the 20.8 million Argentines who, by the end of last year, could not afford basic necessities, according to the government’s National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC). Official figures reflect nearly one-quarter of the country’s work force out of a job as of the austral spring of 2001; in urban

Meng is a university student assigned as part of her curriculum to Fundación Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (FUNAS). Operating from a new campus located in one of the metro Buenos Aires’ poorest neighborhoods, FUNAS’ local development program has, since 1998, served a clientele ranging from struggling blue collar homeowners to destitute squatters on parcels known as *villas miseria*. The focus has always been the alleviation of poverty through legal aid, health, housing, cultural and other programs, and when local joblessness tripled from 20 percent to 60 percent FUNAS’ work took on an unexpected urgency.

### San Miguel

“The situation is incomparably worse,” said FUNAS coordinator Adriana Rofman of San Miguel, a suburb not far from the campus. “Most people don’t have a steady income.” Anyone driving through San Miguel sees formerly employed residents trying to make ends meet by firing up the family grill or by hiring out as drivers. Everywhere signs announce used clothing sales at rock bottom prices and the *trueque*, a coping event where neighbors



PATRICK BRESLIN

On Saturdays, children in San Miguel learn chess strategy from master Jorge Olivera.

barrios an estimated 60 percent live below the poverty line. The crisis reduces different classes of poor to the same desperation and drags them to the doorsteps of the better-off, mainly as *cartoneros*, or scavengers, who start picking through refuse at dusk.

short on cash get together to barter.

La Unión de Familias Obreras has functioned as a community center since the 1950s, when San Miguel’s needs were sidewalks and a kindergarten. “Insecurity, unemployment—the needs are more urgent now,” said Lidia Escalante, whose mother had enrolled her in La

Union's first kindergarten class in 1966. Under the leadership of another second-generation member, Francisco Arrua, a telephone company employee, La Unión has joined forces with FUNAS, the Catholic Church, the parents' association of a local school and another center nearby to keep up a program that does no longer cover. "We get together as neighbors, and people see that together we can find answers," Arrua said. In addition to rummage sales and *trueque* days, members have organized a cooperative that buys cleaning products wholesale. Courses and workshops teach adults new skills, build confidence, offer social contact and structure excessive down time.

Children in the center's two kindergartens, tutoring program and after-school classes are treated to daily snacks and a biweekly movie. Saturday sessions with dance teacher Daniel Álvarez and chessmaster Jorge Olivera are a special privilege. Olivera, a retired naval officer who donates his services, has taken some of his players to tournaments but he is more interested in what chess does for their minds. "They learn to think, to analyze before acting, to slow down," he explained. The crisis has taught people about solidarity, he said, adding, "It's important that they know they haven't lost value as human beings just because we are a little lost as a country."

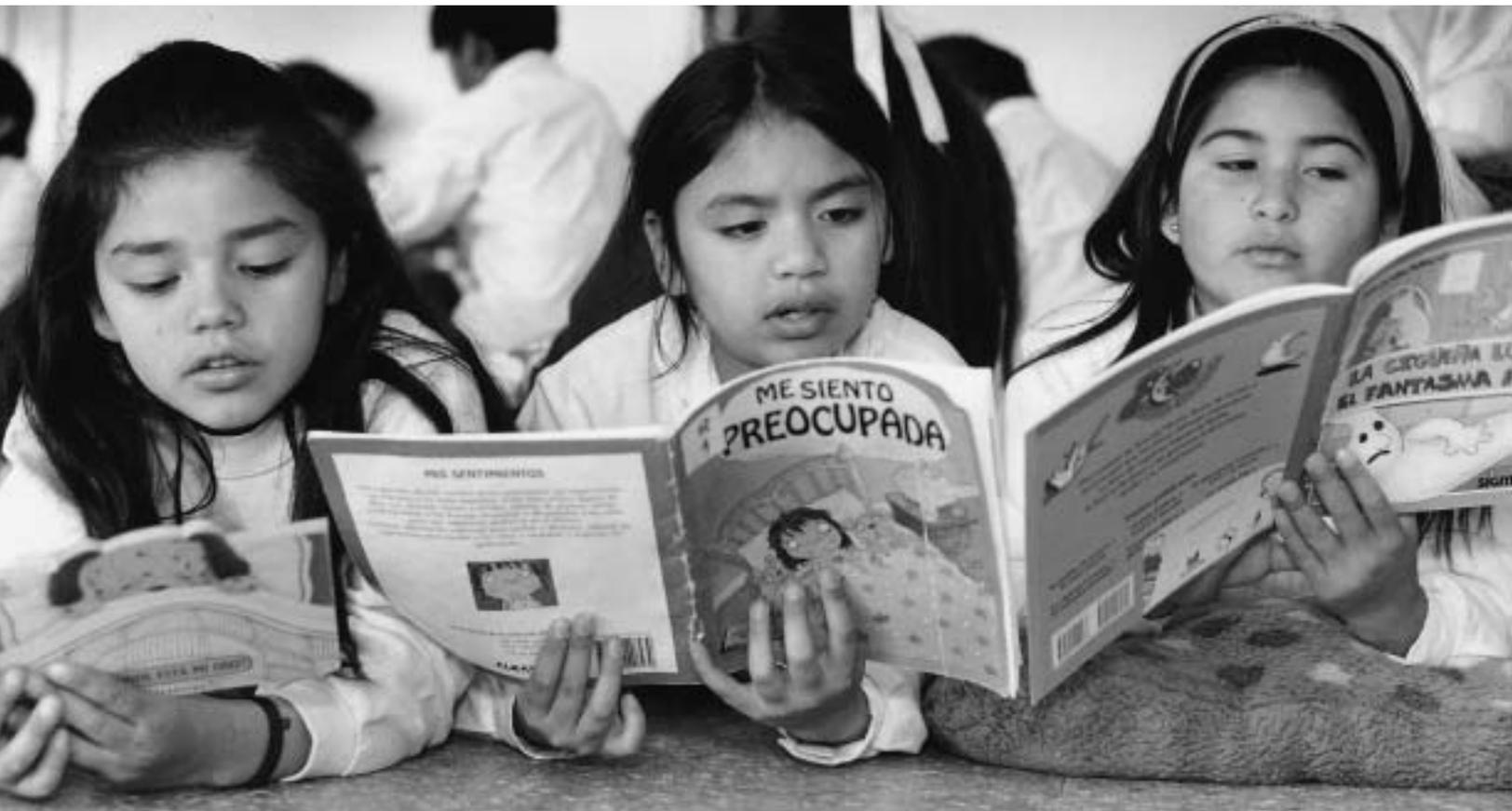
### Santa Fe

Everywhere grantees invest in training and education. The crisis first struck Santa Fe, an old city on the Paraná River in Argentina's traditional heartland, back in the 1980s when a Fiat plant shut down and some 14,000 jobs vanished. Thousands of others were lost to privatization. One response, Los Sin Techo, beneficiary of an IAF grant awarded in the 1990s, was inspired by a forceful priest, Father Atilio Rosso. For people who were literally losing the roofs over their heads, Sin Techo offered self-help housing projects, pre-school education programs, and mother and infant health programs



Natalia González studies Argentine dances at the Unión de Familias Obreras.

that track 2,500 children individually each year. For older youth, the program provides training in a variety of skills, from baking to computer repair. Recently, Sin Techo's food distribution has become much more important, but those who staff Sin Techo insist on the value of the training. Raul Mingardi, a volunteer, coordinates Sin Techo's computer classes. "People ask me why we teach computers when these people need food," he said. "But to provide just food would be to condemn them to permanent poverty. I have a lot of faith in these kids."



Fundación Leer promotes reading throughout Patagonia.



Sin Techo's child care center.

DORA CELTON

### Trelew and Puerto Madryn

With IAF support, FUNAS channels resources to shore up underfunded and overloaded schools in poor barrios; so do Fundación Leer and Fundación Minetti. Of the three, Leer has best managed to adhere to its original plan for promoting literacy throughout Patagonia. This is one area in which statistics say the poor don't constitute the majority, but that's not the way it looks in the schools where Leer's Libro Abierto (Open Book) project tries to help children develop the habit of reading. Many factories in Trelew and Puerto Madryn have closed; fishing and construction work have declined; and small children know the consequences. One teacher described a spelling exercise on words ending in *ción*. The students suggested

*desocupación* (unemployment), *preocupación* (worry), *corrupción* (corruption).

As in the rest of Argentina, schools in Patagonia have precious few resources for anything beyond the basics. The nearby Chubut coastline is one of the world's important breeding grounds for the right whale, and field trips to the Valdés Peninsula reserve for sea mammals used to be part of the primary curriculum. Not now. Some children in these schools have only seen whales on television. Even school meals are inadequately funded. Trelew's Centenario School has a monthly budget of 1,300 pesos to feed 150 students. "How can you feed kids on that?" one teacher demanded. "You spend 400 to 500 pesos a month just for bread." In this poignant context, Fundación Leer's "reading corners," areas set aside for children to choose books and read them, are oases of tranquility and vibrant color. Leer's program offers its beneficiaries reading sessions, lending libraries geared to all ages, and fairs where children select books to keep. Parents, especially fathers, are encouraged to read to their children and many have written thank-you notes. Said one mother, "Imagination, fantasy—this is what books transmit. My daughter was timorous. Now she can express herself."

## Córdoba

Fundación Minetti in Córdoba, Argentina's second largest city, has had to make some hard choices. The philanthropic arm of a family-owned cement conglomerate whose commitment to the community goes back some 15 years, Minetti receives IAF funding under a cooperative agreement signed in 1999 that makes it more a partner than a grantee. But its main source of funds remains a business tied to the national economy. The crisis prompted Minetti, whose primary thrust is education, to channel emergency aid to soup kitchens, food distribution programs and community gardens and to forge a partnership with another Argentine pioneer in corporate philanthropy,



*Sin Techo's classes in baking.*

Fundación Arcor. It also scaled down. "We have had to resign ourselves and revise our budgets," said Andrea Schettini, director of projects.

Surviving the cuts were Radio Sur's lively classes for fifth graders in Córdoba's Villa El Libertador, where some 40,000 people live packed 6.2 per square meter and unemployment began to surge five years ago. Students in Escuela San José Obrero spend Thursday afternoons refining their verbal skills as they prepare for the live broadcast they will eventually produce.

"I'm learning all about the radio," confided Marcelo Farías, one of 22 exuberant junior announcers, "reading, writing, listening and speaking into the microphone." Like the chess lessons in San Miguel, these classes push painlessly with the kind of creative stimulus one would expect to find in a privileged setting—which, despite a modest infrastructure, San José



PAULA DURBIN

*Escuela No. 21 pupils find their parents learning new skills in the cafeteria.*

is. The poorest private school in the province, charging 10 pesos a month tuition, it was founded by an NGO and families united in the need for more schools in their underserved neighborhood. San José is filled with learning and laughter, but according to Radio Sur coordinator Judith Gerbaldo, the surrounding crisis seeps in via scenes of hunger and violence in the children's original scripts. However, she insists, the situation is far worse in the public schools on Radio Sur's scholastic circuit.

### José C. Paz

For many urban Argentines, the neighborhood school is the only public institution functioning and the demands on it are enormous. "Every day is a ferocious struggle," said Nora Guzmán, principal of Escuela No. 21, a participant in FUNAS' program in José C. Paz, a Buenos Aires suburb notorious for its assaults, shacks and lack of sidewalks. "We are constantly busy with people who are hungry, who need a doctor, medicine or crutches, who don't have

shoes or school supplies, who don't know about the *Plan*, who have no one to listen to them."

School lunches are the only meals for many children in José C. Paz, and Guzmán makes tough decisions daily about food delivered for 655 when 1,470 need to eat. She has seen unemployed parents take first-graders to beg with them house to house and older children sneak off to scavenge food or, in hopes of supporting their families, recyclables. She has heard the spontaneous confessions of pre-teens who have ripped metal out of the school walls to sell and the righteous indignation of a mother who defended her son's vandalism with the retort that "everyone does it." The faculty at Escuela No. 21 is exhausted from social work functions performed to the detriment of their teaching, and Guzmán worries that students may graduate semi-literate. Even if they learn a trade, she says, they may not find work. More troubling is the potential disintegration of a system of values.

But the values that drive Guzmán and her staff are still in place. To accommodate all the neighborhood's children, Guzmán has set up classes in the halls. Most surprising is a conspicuous adult presence. A tour of the plant was interrupted so Guzmán could orient Carlos Chirino and José Ferraro, both of the parents cooperative; armed with tool boxes, they show up regularly after work to do repairs. *Plan* participants are everywhere, of course. When lunch is over, they and others crowd the empty cafeteria for courses in basic literacy, baking and handi-crafts, all facilitated by FUNAS. Later, children hover nearby, careful not to disrupt. The safe, structured afternoon might extend into evening if Guzmán succeeds in opening the cafeteria to the neighborhood as a soup kitchen. "The situation in this community is very serious," she said. "We can't do everything. We just bring our grain of sand, to this society and this country."

## The Dividends of Disaster

When Asociación Civil Nortesur, a 1998 IAF grantee, entered into its pioneering consortium with Instituto Internacional de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo–América Latina (IIED-AL) and Centro de Estudios de Población, it took a big risk. First, there was little precedent for such cooperation in Argentina where NGOs were considered notoriously territorial. Furthermore, the consortium's goal was to facilitate partnerships between civil society and municipal governments in Jujuy and Entreríos just as Argentina's 1,900 municipalities were taking their first uncertain steps in the decentralization process.

Nortesur had almost exhausted its IAF funding when the economic crisis hit, injecting new variables into the equation. Initially, inflation had lagged behind the peso's devaluation, producing a windfall when dollars were exchanged for local currency. The favorable rate made possible an additional year of activity, but the advantage to the consortium was soon offset. As federal funds and local tax revenues dried up, municipal partners began to flounder and counterpart threatened to vanish, seriously jeopardizing work

in progress. For the consortium, the most immediate effect was the instant obsolescence of a comprehensive guide to municipal services, representing months of work, when city offices in Reconquista closed and personnel were dismissed.

Working together, however, the three NGOs had broken new

*With the crisis ongoing, the partners find their constituents more willing than ever to listen.*

ground, and, to everyone's surprise, the context began to validate their efforts. Given its goal of a more equitable distribution of public resources, successes, although hard won, were unqualified: Gualeguay Chú's extension of water and sewage services to disadvantaged neighborhoods, for example, and Reconquista's social programs designed in consultation with representatives of its 12 poorest barrios. With the crisis ongoing, said Graciela Gallo, Nortesur's director, the partners find their constituents more willing than ever to listen and to try alternatives. She also credits creativity of small government entities and base groups, newly aware of their

importance to people whose food programs and subsidies had ended so abruptly, with saving the situation time and again.

"The counterpart was not always what we had agreed upon, but we always reached our objectives," she explained, citing the example of labor promised toward Nortesur's training center and adjoining dormitory. The manpower was to have come from the federally-subsidized *Plan Trabajar*, and when it ceased to exist for lack of funding, the construction appeared doomed. But

the municipality was able to persuade members of an agricultural cooperative beneficiary to volunteer four- and six-hour shifts through completion of the structures.

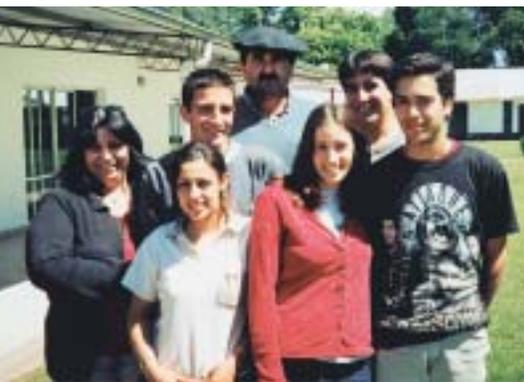
Everywhere, the absolute lack of funds has catalyzed a focus on new ways to mobilize and manage resources. "The municipality that didn't plan, is planning, that didn't work with the community is working with the community, that never had a program with a database, has a reliable database," said Adriana Clemente, who directs IIED-AL. "It's like a value added to what we were accomplishing."

## Storm Clouds and Hope on the Pampa

Less than an hour from Buenos Aires in the district called General Belgrano, Argentina's bounty is gloriously on display. Along the highway that cuts through the lush pampa humeda, Jersey, Guernsey, Holstein and sleek black Aberdeen Angus cattle placidly fatten. Vegetable gardens flourish at a distance, along with citrus trees and the prolific beehives



CEPT teacher Roberto Marsilio with María Cristina Irazú in her vegetable garden.



CEPT teachers and graduating students.

that help make Argentina the world's biggest exporter of honey. Farmers breed pigs and huge speckled chickens for market and home consumption. An exotic variety of wild birds thrive—flamingos, storks, ostriches, herons and species less recognizable—and wild animals dart out of the bushes. But in this panorama of apparent abundance something is out of place: People are fishing in vast pools. Two years of heavy rainfall has 60 percent of General Belgrano submerged, and aquatic life has settled in.

"The flooding has disrupted cycles and made farming difficult.

Kilometers of roads are impassable," said Norberto Gorosito, a local beekeeper. On the pampa, this natural disaster almost outranks the national economic collapse that brought rural residents diluted salaries, unemployment, soaring prices and payment for scarce supplies up front and in cash. The double blow, from rain and recession, has produced some devastating consequences, isolation being

just one. The nearest town and hospital is 100 kilometers away. Some roads can still be used, but a tank of gas costs 90 pesos, a third of many people's monthly income. And the demise of the credit card has almost wiped out the cell phones everyone used to take for granted.

When Gorosito calls the situation serious, he means it, but he is no stranger to crises. In 1989, as galloping inflation gave way to the shock waves from neo-liberal reforms, he became a founding member of the Centro Educativo para la Producción Total, known as CEPT No. 1, a school to prepare young adults for careers in agriculture and to promote development in the surrounding community. "It was very hard," Gorosito said of the initiative pioneered in those turbulent times. "We were betting on a complete unknown and it was a huge gamble. What was the CEPT back then for the families in this area? But it filled a need and today there are 21 CEPTs scattered through Buenos Aires province." The centers form FACEPT, a federation whose reach now extends over 100,000 square kilometers and has deepened since the crisis began. IAF funding has supported this expansion.

Each CEPT accomplishes its education function by recruiting from rural elementary classrooms during the crucial years when parents, usually farm workers, tenant farmers, or independent small-scale growers and ranchers, are wrestling with decisions about secondary school. "It used to be very difficult for rural families who had to send their children to town for a high school education," explained Gorosito. CEPT students, however, alternate residence, spending two weeks at home and one at school throughout the five-year course, and the teachers make frequent visits off campus—no easy job since distances are enormous and many homes are reachable only by four-wheel-drive.

Through the contact with the students and their parents, and sometimes even their landlord, the all-important income-generating project required of graduating seniors is defined. The visits also further the institution's development function, since total production involves everyone. In fact, CEPT staff speak of the enrollment in terms of families, rather than students. "We wouldn't be able to do the projects without the visits," said Norma Eijo, a teacher at the CEPT. "To work with the students' reality, we have to go to the reality and converse with the family for hours to see what they can do to improve their quality of life."

Judging from the visit by teacher Roberto Marsilio to the home of CEPT student Cristián Simón Irazú, the strategy works. Cristián wasn't even there, but Marsilio was engaged by his mother, María Cristina Irazú, in a discussion of the pig-breeding project her son would undertake and of the vegetables she had recently planted, originally with the idea of selling the excess, an option eliminated by the price of gas. Irazú's husband used to make a good income renting out heavy equipment to large farms, but the business began to fail early in the recession, forcing the family to survive on *changas*, or odd jobs in the vernacular of hard times. Now, three years later, they live on an absentee landlord's estate as professional caretakers, typical employment in General Belgrano. "The CEPT has been a big help for us as well, both economically and spiritually," Irazú said of their recovery. "We've had to start over. I think that's what the country is doing, starting over."

Early on, the FACEPT administration suspected the recession that had hit this family so hard could get much worse. "We saw the storm clouds coming," said Daniel Figlioli, the director of CEPT No. 1. Minutes of a board meeting in August 2001, four months before Argentina sank to its knees, confirm this premonition. So does a contemporaneous document warning FACEPT's network of schools and families.

The school system itself depends on the provincial government for teachers' salaries and there was nothing the institution could substitute for that support, 70 percent of which is now paid in *patacones*. But the administration,

staff, students and families immediately stepped up agricultural production on and off site. "We knew we wouldn't get anything more from the government for the cafeteria or for supplies," said Figlioli, "so our center accelerated our self-sufficiency projects—something we had talked about during better times, but hadn't done." Now, after feeding the students and faculty, the CEPT sends 1,500 servings a day to the community kitchens that sprang up in General Belgrano's urbanized sectors with the collapse. Additionally, the faculty offers technical assistance to the government's agricultural projects employing heads of households. In partnership with the municipality, the CEPT's administration is working to bring to the district a branch of a frozen food plant which CEPT families will supply with produce. Recently, the center reopened its own on-site cheese and *dulce de leche* factory, originally intended as an alternative to a large manufacturer whose technical conditions small producers could not meet.

Self-sufficiency became FACEPT's mantra in its appeal to the community where salaries average between 280 and 300 pesos a month. "Our job was to convince the kids' families to add to that amount through small projects," Figlioli continued, "to convince them how important even 50 pesos more would be, although it might not seem like much in boom times. The idea was for them to produce for self-sufficiency first and eventually for sale. Improving production



PAULA DURBIN

Rubén Loinaz with son Daniel, wife Aurora and daughters Nadia and Lucina.



was key—through genetic exchanges, group purchases, partnering to grow corn to feed their animals, to standardize products and pool them to create the volume required for a better price. We were able to mitigate the effects of the crisis, although they have been devastating in some cases.

But if we hadn't planned we couldn't have done these things."

Any discussion of self-sufficiency invariably leads back to the CEPT's education function. "Statistics bear out the number of graduates who have stayed to work in the rural sector and those who have gone on to university studies oriented toward rural activities," said Gorosito. "The essential thing is that the students learn to do the work, that they can go home and set something up that is really productive." In October, five graduating seniors were involved in projects as diverse as harvesting and marketing virgin beeswax and advising a neighboring farmer on how to make an inundated parcel profitable. If the young people were apprehensive about the future, it didn't show. Lucrecia Gelli was helping her mother expand her mozzarella production and the family looked forward to the independence the additional business would bring. Marcelo Ferreyra anticipated a tenfold increase in his beehives over the next five years and had already researched the competition.

"We have 100 beekeepers in the district," said Eijo.

"With me, 101," Ferreyra corrected her. To build on what he started in school, he was applying to FACEPT for a post-graduation loan, a new feature of the program sorely needed in a country devoid of credit. Fabián González, a 2000 CEPT graduate beekeeper, received such a loan and brought his father into his business.

It's impossible not to admire these young people and their parents—their enthusiasm, their work ethic, their belief in the promise of the land and their willingness to endure its hardships. Rubén Loinaz, whose family dairy produces a tangy Parmesan, has owned his 100-hectar farm for more than a decade and only last year began to enjoy electric power. "We were used to doing without it," he shrugged off the inconvenience, but he admits life is easier now. Better access to markets would make an even bigger difference. The rain has made the dirt road to his farm impassible, but even in good weather there is no convenient way in or out.

"There's always been crisis," he said. "The climate treats us badly, the country lost interest in agriculture, but in drought or *la mucha agua* rural people produce. That's what we know how to do." Although many Argentines see agricultural production as key to a better future, Loinaz doubts his road will improve any time soon. He is concerned about the price of imports and that small proprietors like him can't be heard. Nonetheless he wants a future on the land for his sons Daniel and Emanuel whom he accompanies on horseback some 30 kilometers to the car that transports them to school. "Kids in town leave school with no expectations. I don't have words to thank the CEPT," he said of the options the education offers.

"We are one of the few places where any hope is left, because we are a training center and we have technology and human resources at the service of the land," explained Figlioli. "In a way, we took this crisis as an opportunity to grow, to redefine our role as a center that is not confined to classrooms but serves the community. We have faith in what we are doing. We are going to get through the crisis."

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# Mobilizing Community Museum Networks in Mexico—and Beyond

By Kevin Healy

*A spreading community-based approach bolsters indigenous cultural rights in the hemisphere.*

On April 10, 1985, the villagers of Santa Ana del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico, were remodeling the central plaza when their picks and shovels hit upon burial remains from the oldest known culture in the area. Excited, they continued digging and gradually exposed a woman's deformed cranium and several ceramic pieces erotically suggestive of fertility rites. Next they uncovered the bones of a child, a dog's skeleton and a bracelet with more than 200 shells, apparently a religious offering.

This startling archeological discovery triggered a wave of emergency assemblies where townspeople animatedly discussed these treasures. At issue was whether the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) would, according to procedure, appropriate the artifacts, ship them to its laboratories for analysis and never return them. At stake for Santa Ana was not only the community's control over its precious cultural patrimony but also a potential flow of tourist dollars. Intense deliberations led to the conclusion that Santa Ana del Valle should have its own museum on the main plaza, the Museo Shan-Dany, Zapotec for "at the foothills." Based on this decision, Santa Ana del Valle's artisans, youth, peasants, schoolteachers and town employees—Zapoteca and mestizo, male and female—took their first steps in a bottom-up community museum networking process that has,



*San José de Mogote's stunning effigy brazier, dating from between 500 and 100 B.C., is popularly known as el diablo enchilado because of its chili color and angry expression.*

over the past 17 years, spread through Oaxaca's central valleys, western Sierra Misteca and Pacific coast to 17 Mexican states and to far-flung sites in Central and South America and the southwestern United States.

The *museo comunitario* process offers an interesting story to development institutions striving to mobilize social capital, empower the rural poor, enhance the role of local government, create durable partnerships between the state and civil society, and implant local defenses against the homogenizing forces of cultural

globalization. Moreover, it flourished in a depressed rural setting marked by a legacy of discrimination toward indigenous peoples, massive migration to the United States and a dynamic regional tourist economy whose benefits seldom reached broad sectors of the population. Although this narrative involves an array of individuals and public and private organizations acting in concert, at its heart are two determined and talented anthropologists whose vision of grassroots development turned on revitalizing the indigenous cultural heritage.

## Funding a path of cultural development

Two years after the founding of Museo Shan-Dany, Susan Pezzullo, the IAF's representative for



SEAN SPRAGUE

Teresa Morales and Fausto García Martínez, a Zapotec leader, at the entrance of Oaxaca's pioneering museum founded in 1985 in Santa Ana del Valle.

Mexico, obtained \$36,000 to fund a modest two-year grant supporting three community museums in Oaxaca. The award would cover salaries of three cultural promoters, training workshops, transport expenses, and production and dissemination of brochures and posters. The objective, stated in IAF's agreement with the Asociación para el Desarrollo Cultural de Comunidades Indígenas de Oaxaca, was "to test a methodology to unify indigenous communities through cultural expression and preservation, simple historical research, and crafts production."

ADCCIO intended to reverse Western cultural colonization by mobilizing communities behind the *museo comunitario* and linking them into an autonomous force for broad-based cultural development. The museum of Santa Ana del Valle, ADCCIO wrote in its application to the IAF, "captures and makes vivid the community's own history, offering varied traditions in demonstrative tangible ways. The exhibits publicly affirm the value of life experiences passed down through generations, which had been hidden from the outside world in the confines of the home. The *museo comunitario* can serve to create

awareness about one's heritage, bringing its concerns into the open, creating new spaces for vital cultural activities, and opening a path for carrying community traditions into the future." Through supplemental grants to expand the network, IAF's support between 1987 and 2000 totaled \$482,000.

### Origins of a movement

When the idea for the Santa Ana museum surfaced, Teresa Morales Lersch and Cuauhtémoc Camarena, two anthropologists married to each other, were teaching in a special degree program for public school teachers at the INAH. The teachers' commitment to bilingual education, in Spanish and the respective indigenous language, deepened the couple's appreciation for Oaxaca's cultural diversity. INAH's willing support sent Morales and Camarena at the head of a steady procession of technical assistance to the Museo Shan-Dany—conservators, exhibit designers, carpenters and archeologists specialized in Oaxaca's pre-Columbian cultures.

Although Morales and Camarena's experience with museums was limited to participation in a photo exhibit in Mexico City, they were savvy and self-confident. The daughter of a Spanish father and a North American mother, Morales had grown up in Mexico

City, graduated from Dartmouth College and received a Fulbright grant for advanced anthropology studies in Mexico where she met her husband. From her father, a noted translator and editor, she inherited a tendency toward meticulous planning, disciplined writing and skill as an educator. Camarena, whose easy smile and frequent laughter reflect an outgoing personality, had grown up in Colinas and Puebla as well as Mexico City. Strong social values seem a family trait; one brother studied to become a Jesuit priest and another teaches oral history methods to indigenous communities.

Both anthropologists are quietly passionate about reversing the rampant cultural Westernization in Oaxaca. Professionally, they were excited by the challenges of organizing and empowering indigenous and mestizo communities. Since embarking on their careers in the mid-1970s, they had opted to work side by side learning state-of-the-art approaches to mobilizing rural Mexicans toward social development. During the late 1970s, in a Jesuit-led organization, the Fomento Cultural y Educativo, in the state of Hidalgo, they were immersed in adult education. By effectively encouraging broad consumer and marketing cooperatives and similar associations, Fomento was dramatically recasting indigenous peasants from passive targets of government largesse, with its overbearing clientelism, to protagonists in social change.

Morales and Camarena emerged with a rich menu of methodologies for engaging the poor. This powerful formation got them off to a running start deploying a pragmatic “people-to-people” approach to the Museo Shan-Dany project. “Our primary effort was to spend time with the community, talking to the municipal authorities about the concept of *museos comunitarios* and the themes they wanted, helping organize a contest to encourage local historical narratives, working closely with the young people who had shaped the museum model—which led to our involvement with everything from community

research and silk screening to electrical installations,” Morales said recently. She and Camarena were impressed with the Santa Ana municipal assembly’s decision to anchor this new institution in its *cargo* system. Unremunerated appointments, or *cargos*, to committees overseeing everything from public schools to health posts to festivals to road-maintenance are an organic part of Oaxaca’s governing structure. The *cargo* system has been shaped by evolving indigenous, Spanish and other influences. Morales and Camarena knew a museum committee



The community museum in Santiago Suchilquitongo exhibits artifacts recently discovered in a tomb.

CARLOS HEINZE

added to this array would give the *museos comunitarios* a legitimacy and staying power otherwise difficult to transfer to a new cultural institution.

In effect, this strategy of community-based organization also offered INAH an alternative to its misdirected community museum program operating in five other Mexican states, where, Morales and Camarena found, a top-down leadership and management style left community members on the outside looking in rather than vice versa. The *cargo* system established a dynamic between the museum and rural Oaxaca citizens which was missing from the INAH’s previous program. While the INAH was not looking for a model, according to Nelly Robles of INAH’s Oaxaca staff, INAH regional directors were driven by a desire to defuse tensions between their agency and rural

communities over the control of local cultural patrimony. “The credibility of government agencies, such as ours, was at a low point because communities were questioning our work in the countryside. By supporting the *museos comunitarios* working in this more participatory fashion in Oaxaca, we felt we could help reconcile these grievances.”

Working with INAH specialists and community representatives, Morales and Camarena completed the Museo Shan-Dany in eight months. During this time, San José de Mogote, a mestizo town, learned of Shan-Dany from Santa Ana musicians performing in a community festival. San José de Mogote already had a tiny archeological museum, thanks to help from a U.S. academic and to an archeological site located on the beaten tourist path. Nonetheless a delegation to Museo Shan-Dany was impressed by its archeological inventory and its smartly designed and mounted exhibition halls. Launched soon thereafter, San José de Mogote’s own *museo comunitario* project absorbed townspeople in piecing together a history of the land conflicts that had led to the town’s founding. *Intercambios*, or exchanges, were conducted with Santa Ana’s museum committees, and visiting INAH specialists offered the new museum technical support. During 1986, five other Oaxaca towns solicited INAH’s assistance with *museos comunitarios*. All wanted to create and safeguard an archeological collection for its income-generating potential. Once on board they learned that the *museo comunitario* was a vehicle for a broader cultural agenda.

Important to realizing a multi-faceted vision was improved operational flexibility along with fundraising through the formation of ADCCIO, a small NGO facilitated by Morales and Camarena while they retained their INAH positions. Thus began a curious balancing act which continues to this day as a stable partnership between the Mexican government and the civil society organizations at the center of this cultural revitalization program. ADCCIO’s purpose was to nurture and consolidate a *museo comunitario* network that would evolve

into a vigorous self-governing body capable of executing regional projects. IAF’s salary support for cultural promoters enabled ADCCIO’s tiny staff to expand and deepen its impact on a development strategy for Oaxaca. The cultural promoters coordinated work within and among the various museum committees, providing direct assistance for tasks such as devising work plans. The social intermediaries who became ADCCIO’s linchpins with community processes were anthropology students from Mexico City and public school teachers from indigenous communities; later they were recruited exclusively from the museum committees.

### A network takes flight

ADCCIO’s *intercambios* became institutionalized through lively bimonthly meetings where committee delegates from each museum compared notes on management challenges, shared cultural expressions



Cuahtémoc Camarena held a workshop in Sucre, Bolivia, in 2001.

and conducted training. By 1991, this ad hoc structure blossomed into the official assembly of the new Unión de Museos Comunitarios de Oaxaca (UMCO), a full-fledged federation with an elected rotating leadership council. UMCO’s meetings broadened the network’s membership to include representatives from each *museo*, even those in the planning stages, and from participating municipal governments. By the end of the 1990s, these regular regional meetings counted 77 representatives.

This social process of “federating” is common to grassroots development but not to cultural projects. Jonathan Fox, a political scientist at the University of California at Santa Cruz who has researched the proliferation of autonomous cooperative and other types of small farmers associations in rural Mexico during the 1970s, refers to it as “scaling up social capital.” ADCCIO had been slowly preparing UMCO to take the helm and steer the *museo comunitario* networks on a course of continued expansion and consolidation, in which, during the 1990’s, IAF was investing an annual average of \$34,500 (while the average annual cost of a given *museo comunitario* amounted to \$40,000, excluding the value of the property). By 1998, funding for infrastructure from local Mexican sources was reported to the IAF at \$780,000 for 12 *museos comunitarios*. (By 2002, *museos* open to the public had increased to 15.)

The constant need to mobilize resources made fundraising an important skill and each museum committee and municipal government tailored its strategy to its situation. Renovation, equipment and exhibit material were underwritten by local capital, and museum committees learned to identify funding sources for cultural programs. INAH’s regional warehouse became a popular site for scavenging recyclables such as furniture, glass cases, stands, panels and platforms. Municipalities learned to use the *museo comunitario*, and the commitment to cultural patrimony it represented, to distinguish themselves in the competition for scarce government resources. Nonetheless, fundraising was an onerous task and a museum committee striving to get its project off the ground could expect to spend from three to five years just securing financial support, Morales says. Otherwise, projects simply petered out.

Additionally, training workshops were geared to committee requests, some prompted by member turnover due to expired terms and outmigration. Departures, in fact, could imperil exciting projects. Migration, for example, caused the collapse of a 40-



The first workshops in the territory of Panama’s indigenous Kuna peoples were held on the island of Tigre, Comarca Kuna Yala, in 2001.

member troupe revived by Santa Ana’s museum committee for its *Danza de la Pluma*, reenacting the conquest of Tenochtitlán. Morales and Camarena transferred training and organizing functions to cultural promoters, museum committee members and UMCO leaders. Cultural promoters taught workshops on oral history research techniques and basic museum organizing. IAF’s direct support for UMCO, beginning in 1997, acknowledged the organization’s human capital and its maturity as a self-managed grassroots federation capable of formulating and executing the projects desired by affiliated *museos*. UMCO, advised by Morales and Camarena, assumed many of their roles in *museo comunitario* organization and network expansion.

Core workshop topics included photography, oral history research methods, cultural patrimony law, development, community relations and tourist services as well as project formulation, planning, design and mounting. Morales and Camarena crafted courses, lasting a day to a week, and constantly revised, upgraded and made them more practical through trial and error. By the end of 1997, UMCO’s now formal training center offered a coherent, sequenced cultural development curriculum that met high professional standards. It attracted other NGOs working in grassroots development in Oaxaca, who

## Community Museums of Oaxaca



contributed their own expertise and learned from UMCO's experience. Initially geared to youth and adults, by the late 1990s the workshops included children. Short courses in archeology, medicinal plants and mural painting were incorporated.

Camarena recently indicated that skills development and organizational networking in low-income communities were shaping "a greater sense of collective ownership of the respective *museos comunitarios* and a common vision affirming cultural heritage as a foundation for development of these Oaxaca towns." Rufino Guzmán Ramírez, treasurer of the museum committee of San Miguel de Progreso, put his finger on how the *museo comunitario* movement instilled dignity. "Because of my experience with the *museo comunitario* network, my cultural roots have become more important to me," he said. "Before, I had a vague notion of them and felt ashamed. When I would go to the city to find work, I encountered humiliating insults—'Indian' or similar slurs. Now my knowledge of and pride in my cultural origins have given me an empowering sense of cultural identity." Other leaders

emerging from the *museo comunitario* movement also experienced this change in consciousness.

Román Bautista Sánchez, a Zapotec weaver from Santa Ana del Valle, participated in the first *museo* discussions. After non-stop attendance at training activities, meetings and *intercambios* with different *museo* sites, he is a committed cultural activist. His term as president of Santa Ana's museum committee led to the UMCO's presidency; at national meetings he stands out as a pioneer in Oaxaca's *museo* movement. Remittances from his grown children in Los Angeles help underwrite his service, but he is aghast at how powerful forces of change from the United States impose new ways of speaking, eating and dressing on Mexican villages. "It denigrates who we are as peoples," he said. "Our Zapotec language is disappearing. We are bombarded in our homes by television images which take advantage of our low levels of schooling and beliefs that we are inferior, often leaving us ashamed of our culture. The *museos comunitarios* have become a counterforce, educating us anew, stimulating pride and interest in our traditions and

history. Acquiring this awareness is an expression of genuine cultural development for our communities.”

The *museo comunitario*-led cultural revitalization imbued a marginal community infrastructure with purpose and put it center stage in small towns of between 300 and 10,000 inhabitants. Various structures in provincial Oaxaca were refurbished—municipal buildings, old schools and market places, a 16<sup>th</sup> century *cacique*'s home, and an abandoned hacienda. Oaxaca's museum committees and municipal authorities learned to use discarded items, such as old photographs and documents, in displays with contemporary baskets, stone carvings and weavings. Themes dramatized historical events and cultural institutions: the cycle of a gold mine, power struggles with haciendas and intense conflicts among neighboring communities over boundaries. Shan-Dany's exhibit on the Mexican revolution drew material from eyewitness accounts of combat veterans and other observers. Exhibits on Zapotec and Mistec wedding traditions, town festivals and methods of healing celebrated cherished dimensions of local life. Each *museo comunitario* housed a unique archeological exhibit as a collective cultural patrimony. Occasionally these collections included veritable jewels from the earliest cultures of Oaxaca, such as San José de Mogote's *diablo enchilado*, a stunning orange horned head with intense protruding eyes.

Through appeals to the community, museum committees also collected artifacts and other material for exhibit. Individuals stepping forward with donations enjoyed a moment in the spotlight. While their exhibited contributions were not identified by donor, at the opening each received a certificate of appreciation from the mayor. Santa Ana once again set the precedent for individual recognition as way of preventing too few families from reaping too much glory within a framework intended to be egalitarian. However, the donation campaigns were not problem-free; INAH archeologists discarded some “pre-Columbian” items spotted as fakes.

### From regional to national

The *museos comunitarios* movement expanded beyond the boundaries of Oaxaca in 1992, the quincentennial of Columbus' landing in the Americas and of the beginning of the demise of native cultures.

Morales and Camarena, now seasoned social entrepreneurs and ever alert to opportunities, responded to a call from the federal Dirección General de Culturas Populares whose director was interested in the Oaxaca model as an influence in other states. At his request, they drew up a proposal for responding to community initiatives rather than selling an idea. Their diagnostic study identified 75 communities which had created or needed support for museums. Of these, 12 had been part of INAH's misdirected program mentioned above. Between 1993 and 1995, Morales and Camarena coordinated this national program under a new arrangement with INAH.

While they were still involved in ADCCIO and UMCO, strong support structures in Oaxaca allowed them to devote time outside the region where they applied their trademark methodology—basic workshops and *intercambios* within a state-wide museum federation. Additionally, they brought the federations together in Oaxaca. Out of this first national meeting, attended by 143 community representatives from 82 towns in 16 states, emerged a new organization, the

For other perspectives on the *museo comunitario* movement, *Grassroots Development* suggests the following:

“So My Children Can Stay in the Pueblo, Indigenous Community Museums and Self-Determination in Oaxaca, Mexico.” Patricia Pierce Erikson. *Museum Anthropology* 20, no. 1 (1996).

“From Oaxaca to Washington D.C.: Community Museums as a Cultural and Economic Resource.” Carlisle Levine. *Grassroots Development* 20, no. 1 (1996).

“Patrimonio cultural y museos comunitarios: La experiencia de Santa Ana del Valle, Oaxaca.” Gonzalo Vásquez Rojas. Thesis, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1993.

“Los museos comunitarios: Una experiencia social.” *Museo Mexicanos*, abril-mayo 1995.

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Unión Nacional de Museos Comunitarios y Eco-Museos (UNMCE). Oaxaca's experience remained in the forefront of their organizing flurry. The publication of a series of guides helped disseminate in this new network community-driven methodologies honed in Oaxaca's mountain provinces. A directory of cases from different states was distributed through the ranks. Morales and Camarena also set in motion *intercambios* for first-hand appreciation of the Oaxaca model. Citizen involvement escalated, creating a social momentum beyond that of any official program. In 1996, when Morales and Camarena left their coordinating roles, UNMCE proved that it could move on without government sponsorship. At recent meetings, an active contingent representing UMCO, as well as Morales and Camarena, remained highly visible throughout the discussions, training and planning exercises in this forum now embracing 94 *museos comunitarios* in 17 states.

It would be a mistake to view these national meetings as a conduit for transplanting a pure Oaxacan-style form of grassroots democracy. The museum groups represented have heterogeneous origins, internal dynamics, structures, expectations and goals that diverge from those of Oaxaca's municipal-based institutions. Morales and Camarena have had to adapt their materials and strategies to organizations without *usos y costumbres*, or indigenous governing practices functioning like by-laws. These organizations have had to find other sources of "social capital" within civil society. Another drawback to working on this national stage was the strong pull of partisan politics; federations would have to struggle to keep their programs free from government manipulation.

### Reaching for transnational networks

Thus far, this story has emphasized gains in "cultural development" for participating communities. Yet, when IAF funding commenced in 1987, project objectives included an economic development dimension—craft promotion and sales—as another expression of the *museos comunitarios'* forward march. Funding subsequently became available for a network of museum stores and traveling exhibits. By 1992, however, there was little evidence that this effort to tap Mexico's huge tourist market had made many inroads.

After deliberating long and hard, UMCO leaders, together with Morales and Camarena, opted to commission a feasibility study on how museum-based towns might access the region's tourist economy. From this assessment, yet another innovative organization was born within Oaxaca's *museo comunitario* framework: the Cooperativa de Museos Comunitarios de Oaxaca, an independent business cooperatively organized to implement a tourism development strategy. Its comparative advantage was its small scale and earthy appeal to hardy and adventuresome tourists looking for mountain outposts off the beaten track. The governing structure involved museum committee members and municipal authorities in the movement's bimonthly assembly. A separate office with a small staff was set up and travel packages assembled targeting consumers interested in cultural tourism and community experiences. Morales and Camarena's personal contacts helped with marketing. Outreach included university students, professors and alumni associations interested in archeological, historic and natural sites as well as personal encounters with crafts producers and traditional healers. The cooperative trained tour guides and cooks, helped finance small lodges and produced promotional materials on local attractions. The Mexican government's tourist agency distributed colorful brochures on the *museo comunitario* tourist network.

Between 1996 and 2001, these tour packages brought some 4,740 tourists, 60 percent of them U.S. students, who have spent an estimated \$600,000 on lodging, transportation (often bicycle and horse rentals) and artisan products, all of which was pocketed by villagers on the circuit. While admittedly a mere blip on the screen in comparison to the economic forces pushing migration to the United States, this hints at the potential for development through *museos comunitarios* on a people-to-people basis.

Another transnational linkage for the *museo comunitario* network has been forged with migrant communities from Oaxaca living on the West Coast of the United States. In 1993, when UMCO began flexing its federation muscles to engage in "regional projects" on behalf of affiliated *museos comunitarios*, one of its first efforts was to send traveling handicraft exhibits to San Diego's Centro Cultural de la Raza, La Plaza de la Raza in Los Angeles and to Fresno. In part, these efforts



CUAUHTÉMOC CAMARENA

*The gallery of the Rabinal Achi Community Museum in Guatemala commemorates community members massacred between 1980 and 1983.*

were viewed in Oaxaca as an expression of reciprocity for donations migrants had personally made to *museos comunitarios* in their home towns. As anthropologist Patricia Erickson commented in 1996, “One of the reasons for sending a traveling exhibit to Los Angeles in the summer of 1993 was so that those on the ‘other side’ would not forget their *pueblo*. Santa Ana residents often mention those children and young adults who return to the *pueblo* annually for a patron saint festival or family event but who know little of Santa Ana’s history. They are encouraged to attend the museum and indeed, the largest percentage of annual museum attendance occurs during these periods.”

Long before shifting political winds curtailed their national promotional roles, Morales and Camarena were already fixing their gaze internationally on a network similar to Oaxaca’s in the U.S. Southwest and in Central and South America. Via correspondence and field visits they checked out contacts provided by the Smithsonian’s Office of Folklife and Cultural Studies, the Museum of the American Indian, the IAF and Partners of the Americas. They also assembled a list of groups to be networked into a process of

mutual aid, learning and community-based institution building. They found the Museo de Perquín, memorializing El Salvador’s wrenching conflict, and a Costa Rican museum organized by the Teribe, an indigenous people. Nicaraguan contacts opened up relations with the Miskitos and other indigenous groups, thanks to the innovative University of the Autonomous Region of the Caribbean Coast.

Through the IAF, they contacted the ASUR Foundation, celebrated for its successful weaving revivals among Bolivia’s Jalká and Tarabuco peoples, which is moving toward *museos comunitarios* in its promotion of eco-tourism in weaving communities. Through Partners of the Americas and the Arizona Commission on the Arts, several fruitful exchanges were organized between tribal museums in Arizona and Oaxaca’s *museos*. The couple also contacted the Kuna peoples inhabiting numerous tiny islets and mountain reserves in Panama. The Kunas have been the envy of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas for the political and cultural autonomy won from the Panamanian government for their territory, Comarca Kuna Yala. Their governing and religious

leaders and cultural activists from the Instituto de Koskun Kalu are keenly interested in museum promotion. However, only when several participated in a Oaxaca workshop and then brought Camarena to the island of Porvenir did the professional know-how come within their reach. As an official response to this pathbreaking preparation, the Kuna Congress recently elaborated plans for mounting three *museos comunitarios* on separate islands over the next two years.

Under Morales and Camarena's guidance, UMCO's first meeting of *museos comunitarios* of the Americas, in Santa Ana in August 2000, attracted some 50 representatives from 10 Latin American countries. This meeting offered participants introductory training on the basics of *museos comunitarios*, both local institution-building and broader networking, and a forum for sharing experiences from around the hemisphere. After constituting themselves as a coordinating body for the Americas and obtaining funding from UNESCO and the Rockefeller Foundation, the representatives began their own *intercambios* to reach out further to like-minded groups. Once again, Oaxaca and the *museos comunitarios* of UMCO became the hub for expanding the network.

Perhaps the most poignant chapter in this saga involves the Mayan-Achi peoples from Rabinal in Guatemala's central highlands. Mayan-Achi leader Carlos Chen Osorio, a human rights activist, received a tip through a North American friend about an interesting experiment in promoting indigenous cultures through *museos comunitarios* in Oaxaca. "I was searching for some permanent way of keeping alive the memory of my extended family, friends and fellow community members that had perished in the terrible massacres perpetrated by the Guatemalan military between 1980 and 1983," Chen Osorio told me. "In the communities surrounding Rabinal, homes were burned to the ground, our livestock stolen and, out of 22,000 inhabitants, 3,000 to 4,000 were massacred. We had experimented in local markets with some itinerant exhibits of our crafts and the images of the violence that devastated our communities, but the idea of a permanent site such as we find in the network of *museos comunitarios* in Oaxaca greatly intrigued me as no such institutions exist for the Mayan peoples of Guatemala."

In 1998, Chen and nine other Maya-Achi boarded a bus and traveled to Oaxaca to establish contact with UMCO and glimpse the *museo comunitario* network. All stayed in private homes during their intensive introductory training. Back in Rabinal, they began applying the Oaxaca-minted methodology to their own *museo comunitario*, and Morales joined them for another hands-on workshop. Adjacent to their exhibit of local gourd carvings, richly detailed in testimony to the artisans' skill, is a room exhibiting, wall-to-wall, enlargements of photos from municipal records of hundreds of holocaust victims. This *museo comunitario* dignifies these Mayan-Ache women, men, youth and children whose lives were brutally ended. The gallery made a powerful collective statement against violence, past and future, in their communities and country.

Carlos Chen and his cohorts attended the first international encounter of the *museos comunitarios* in Santa Ana, and, in 2002, hosted the second four-day meeting of what has become an international coordinating body. The event featured, of course, presentations on oral history research methodology and other specialized topics by INAH professionals, including Morales and Camarena. One evening was set aside for a gathering at a cemetery where a Mayan priest made offerings and said prayers around a large bonfire while the locals and foreign visitors held candles to commemorate the Mayans killed. The following day these participants from all over the hemisphere attended the final workshop sessions held at the Museo Comunitario Rabinal Achi. Small teams formed, each assigned to analyze the design, spatial organization, and cultural and historic presentation of the exhibits. Practical suggestions for improvement were graciously accepted and immediately applied. It was a fitting finale to the solidarity, professionalism, imagination and community spirit that has pervaded the *museo comunitario* movement since its inception in Santa Ana del Valle in 1985.

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*Kevin Healy, IAF's representative for Honduras and Panama, is an internationally recognized scholar on indigenous peoples in development and author of Llamas, Weavings and Organic Chocolate (Notre Dame Press, 2001).*



*Yolanda Tesen Cuc learns to weave from her mother, Juliana Cuc Gil, who belongs to Grupo Nueva Esperanza, a beneficiary of IAF grantee AFEDES.*

## Development and Gender in Guatemala

*By Rosamaría Cruz*

*Photos: Rebecca Janes*

*Women are overcoming the obstacles and taking the helm of grassroots organizations.*

Women in Guatemala have known a long history of exclusion from economic, political, social and cultural life. Rural Mayan women have suffered even more fundamental disadvantages: illiteracy, limited access to basic services, particularly healthcare, and lack of respect for their abilities and contributions as workers. In recent decades though, Guatemalan women have been trying hard to transform this harsh reality.

The Inter-American Foundation's local liaison staff in Guatemala has witnessed these efforts and, to document their richness, interviewed some of the women active in the self-help groups, volunteer networks and NGOs whose projects IAF funds. Ranging in age from 25 to 60, these leaders share the same enthusiasm for their work, the same sense of responsibility to their communities and the same will to overcome discrimination, whether directed at

women, at Mayans or at the poor. Generally though, the decision to dedicate their lives to community service was not easy.

While each woman came to appreciate her worth as an individual—thanks to the support and respect of someone at home, in school, in the community or in the workplace—of those interviewed for this article, only one was consistently encouraged in her aspirations. Most had to overcome opposition within their own families or church. For many, rising at 4 a.m. or earlier for a crushing round of household chores remains the price of a day free for development work. At considerable sacrifice, they often underwrite the expenses of their involvement. Yet they persist, confident that their efforts will translate into significant changes. Their determination, as articulated here in their own words, gives reason to hope for a more equitable future for Guatemalan women.

## Rxiin Tnamet



**Leticia Toj**, a nurse and mother of two, directs Rxiin Tnamet which offers health services in the area surrounding Lake Atitlán.

*From the time I was a child I have always asked myself why the separation of indigenous people and Ladinos? Why was there a school for Ladinos and a school for indigenous people? Even today there are churches for Ladinos and churches for indigenous people, cemeteries for indigenous dead and for Ladino dead. I went to a primary school for indigenous people that strongly promoted indigenous participation. When I started, my mother said, "Studying is not for women; studying is for men." But my father's strong encouragement allowed me to continue. At first, he did not permit me to speak Kaqchikel. He did not want me to be discriminated against as a woman and also as an indigenous person. "Learn to speak Spanish well," he would say. "I want to see you interact among different types of people." But I wanted to learn Kaqchikel to connect with my roots.*

*In the capital, where I attended secondary school, the Ladino and the indigenous personas sort of came together, but I was sure of what I carried inside. "Here you need to remove your native dress and wear a uniform," I remember being told, but another woman and I convinced the principal to allow our native dress. I made my case in nursing school as well, and of the 55 nurses who graduated, I was the only one in native dress.*

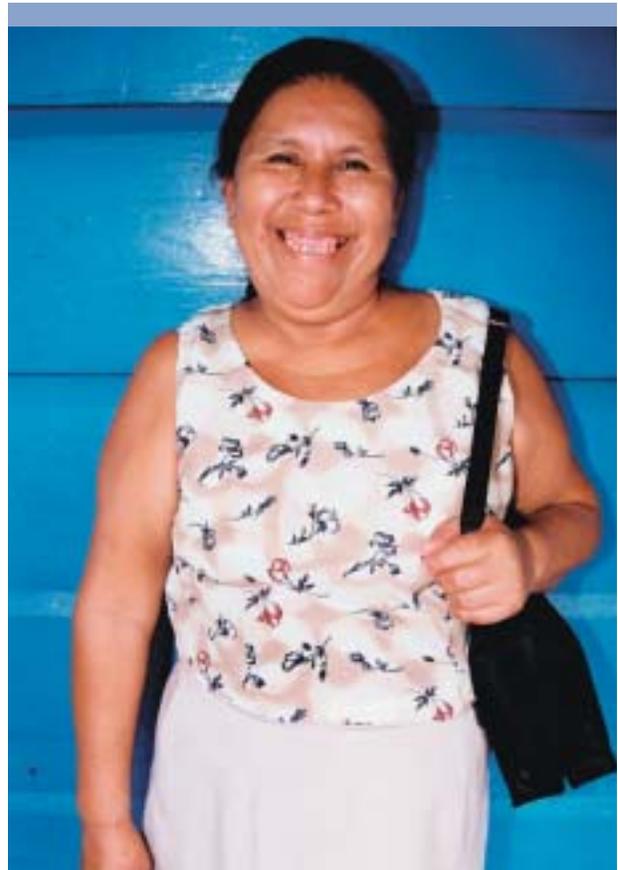
*My dream as a student was to help communities without access to services and my profession helped me secure what I wanted. In Santiago Atitlán, I realized that these communities had been forgotten and that motivated me. Support from North American and other consultants made me feel valued as a human being and as a professional. It also allowed me to grow, to go abroad, to represent indigenous women. The greatest challenge in this work is discrimination on a public policy level. Until more individuals from our ethnic groups are trained to make decisions, things will not change. We need to improve ourselves, but education as well as health programs must be adapted to our cultural systems.*

## Asociación Primero de Septiembre



**Magdalena Chavajay** is responsible for Rxiiin Tnamet's network of 80 volunteer health workers, which has, among other accomplishments in the Lake Atitlán area, reduced a high rate of maternal mortality to zero.

*Women are taking better care of children from zero to five, bringing them for vaccinations and detecting their illnesses.*



**María Leonor Granados de Ordóñez**, of Ladino descent, was born in San Felipe Retalhuleu. Mother of five and grandmother of 10, she began her 29-year involvement in community work by washing clothes for a health center. Currently, she serves on the board of directors of Asociación Primero de Septiembre which administers loans to senior citizens for establishing and improving micro-enterprises.

*When I was a child, we suffered a lot because we were very poor. We never were able to study, and, yes, we needed to, we wanted to. I work with a Catholic Church committee; a pro-development committee for the municipality of Santa Cruz Mulua; a Habitat committee, because so many people do not have houses; a public health center committee; and the one for the Telethon. I also collaborate with the school committee to review the children's needs and bring the mayor up to date. All of our efforts have been successful.*



## Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Tineco



**María Sajché López**, an indigenous Mam born in Quetzaltenango, is on the board of directors of the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Tineco, or ADIT, which works to improve production, income, and health and education levels among men and women farmers and artisans. She founded and heads ADIT's Las Maravillas, a project that extends loans for productive enterprises to organized groups of 10 to 30 women whose only collateral is their word. Doña María's own loan funded her livestock business.

*I experienced discrimination in my own family. My mother used to say women were not worth anything. When the inheritance was distributed, she gave more to her sons, a common practice here. Women did not participate; we were not able to work; we did not have any capital.*

*My husband abandoned me when my children were very young. I was illiterate and I did not want that for my children. They both studied, the man and the woman. I supported them so they could get ahead. When my daughter finished the sixth grade, I said, "Listen child, swear to me that you are going to continue until you complete your studies." Later she forced me to make her keep her promise.*

*I suffered when my daughter was studying, I had to struggle as a farm hand for a daily wage. I used to get up at 3:30 a.m. because I had to be at work at 6 a.m. on the dot, and in hard times we weren't paid. Now I see the results. My daughter*

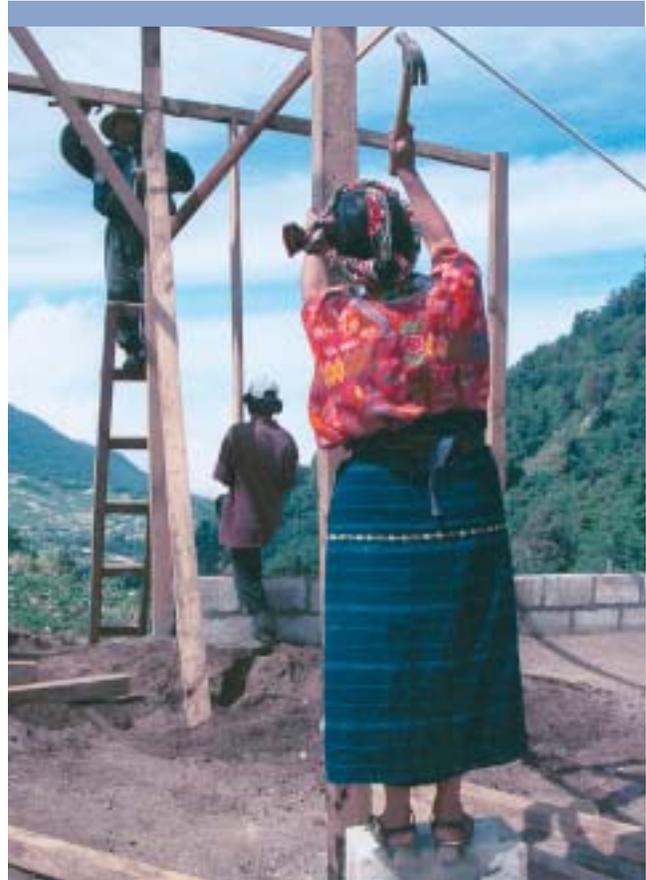
*helped me build a house and we have a roof over our heads. As the saying goes, The roots are bitter but the fruit is sweet." I tell my neighbors, "Do not take the right to study away from women. They must have the opportunity, because if a husband turns out bad, the women can support the family, not like us."*

*I did not have experience participating in a group but ADIT trusted me. On the board of directors, I developed and began to lose my fear. My presence began to matter to others. Before, only the men mattered, but something has changed. Women can now participate in a group; they can even be the president. I want to keep on participating, for my country, for the women who took us into account, for my children.*



Claudia Maribel Miranda Sajché, María Sajché's daughter, is in charge of ADIT's training for women. She was admitted to medical school but couldn't afford the years of study. Instead she graduated as a teacher and is now studying social work.

*With ADIT's support and my family's, I found a space where I can help other people.*



María Gómez of ADIT's Grupo Amanecer in the small community of Toj Alic helps with a greenhouse.



The women of Mam Tenaco, coordinated by Claudia Sajché, meet three times a week to sew linens and clothing for market.

## Consejo de Mujeres Mayas



**Santos Gregoria Canastuj Gutiérrez**, an indigenous Quiché, has 12 children. According to the Mayan world view, each person has a destiny; hers was to become a midwife and serve her community as a training facilitator with the Consejo de Mujeres Mayas which focuses on the health needs of rural women and children around San Cristóbal, Totonicapán.

*In my community, there are no women who can read or write. I am the only one, but not that well. I only completed two years of elementary school; I could not continue because I am a woman. But when a nurse from the local health post was trying to find someone who could read and write, people said, “Doña Chos’ daughter-in-law. She knows. You can tell the kid is smart.” So I was asked to come to the health post and that made my mother-in-law very touchy. The next day I showed up and the nurse asked me if I was willing to be trained as a midwife. “I don’t know,” I said. “I have to let my husband and my mother-in-law know.”*

*So I did, but they told me I wasn’t going, and I returned to the health post to say thank you, but no. Then I became sick for 17 months. I am not going to say that my husband was worried, but he did take me to the doctor. One day my father arrived to tell me that my illness was not an illness. He told my husband that I had a destiny and that was what was bothering me. I didn’t believe it, but I told my husband, “It could be that I have to be a midwife. I am going to tell them that I will take the course.”*

*That is how I was trained as a midwife at 21 years of age. My mother-in-law was angry and she told me off. “Assert yourself,” she would say to my husband. “She goes out at night and men bring her home. At her age, that kind of work is not appropriate.” But my husband realized that I had become ill. “Work,” he told me. Then my father appeared with a Mayan priest and the gentleman said it was my destiny to graduate as a midwife, so I just trusted in God. Later, I was invited to train in natural medicine and I began to negotiate with my husband.*

*“Realize that we women have rights like you,” I told him. “You go out, you say you’ll be back in a while, and I stay behind. Now I am learning, and I will be going out more often.”*

*“You can’t,” he told me. “You are a married woman.”*



*Quiche and Mam women meet at a Consejo workshop to brainstorm with volunteers on ways to improve women’s lives. Here the exercise includes dividing into groups, writing down ideas and reading them after reassembling. Most center on discrimination.*

*“But what does it matter that I am married? That’s even better, because we both can go out.”*

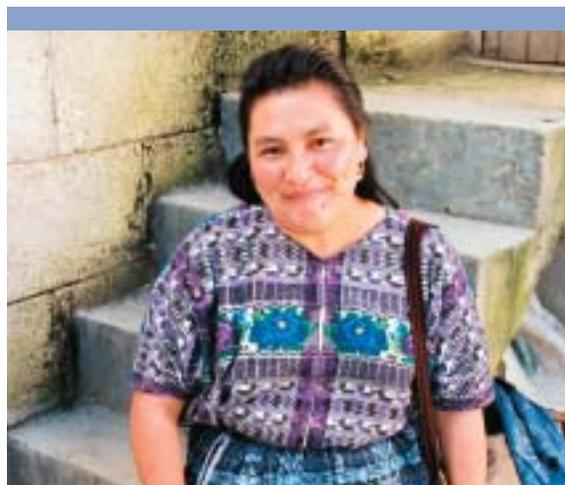
*“No, I don’t like it because people make fun of me. I have already been told that I am not a man because I can’t control you.”*

*Finally he accepted. When he calmed his doubts, he saw the results of the work that I was doing. Now I share the housework. I had to teach my husband, my children how to scramble or fry eggs, how to heat the tamales, so I could have time. I know that if my husband is home, he takes the children to school and he prepares lunch. My two little boys will get the water and do the dishes. My daughter will dry them and put them away. So when I go out to work, I don’t think about my house. With the responsibility I have, I just concentrate on my job.*



**Julia Ixcoy Juárez** directs the Consejo de Mujeres Mayas which she helped found after an outbreak of cholera. She began working as a very young girl in a clinic run by Canadian nuns and eventually trained in community health in Guatemala and the United States. At every stage of her professional development, she asked for her father’s permission; he always gave it.

## CADISOGUA

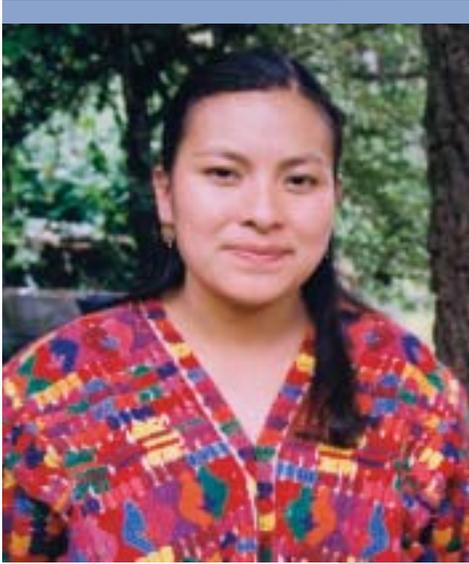


**Dolores Chaclán**, an indigenous Quiché, oversees a women’s program of credit, training and technical assistance for Coordinadora de Asociaciones de Desarrollo Integral del Sur de Guatemala, CADISOGUA, in Quetzaltenango. A bilingual secretary by training, she has her sights set on a political career.

*I have not experienced discrimination, thank God, but I have lived among women who have. When credit was extended to the communities of San Miguel Ixtahuacán, for example, and several groups of women with accounts in the local bank went to cash their checks, the clerks began asking why those Indians were able to cash all those checks and saying they did not deserve to do so—because they were indigenous, because they wore sandals, because they carried their children on their backs. That upset me so that I complained to the management. Ethnicity and social class should not matter to a bank providing services. The manager apologized.*

*My parents always encouraged me with, “You can do it.” In school, and later in the organizations where I have worked, I have taken advantage of the doors open to developing as a person. CADISOGUA has supported my participation in national and international events. Many individuals have encouraged me, telling me I should keep going, that, yes, I can do it, that, yes, I have the ability. I think anything can be achieved if one’s self-esteem is very high. Women who have distinguished themselves in the political arena, for example, Rosalina Tuyu and Manuela Alvarado, are good role models. They allow us to say, “If they can do it, why can’t I?”*

## Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez



**Maria Angelina Aspuac**, an indigenous Kaqchikel, was born in Santiago Sacatepéquez in Guatemala's rural highlands. A farmer, a trained secretary and mother of two, she manages the Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez (AFEDES) whose program assists women in developing small businesses in weaving, agriculture and livestock. She was recently elected to Sacatepéquez' Departmental Council for Urban and Regional Development.

*I believe that we are all equal, but some think that indigenous women do not have feelings. They do not respect or value us sufficiently. Some treat us like Indians, which is very humiliating. Technical experts have tried to intimidate us. They insinuate that they can do better and make us doubt our own abilities. But we have a sensitive heart and a mind to think. So we read books, we do research, because that is how you learn.*

*In AFEDES I attended several training sessions where I learned our value as women. I believe that if there were no women, there would be no development. Women's participation, the work that they do, has never been taken into account, but it has been fundamental to the development we seek. We women represent more than half the population. We are very quick, very capable of realizing our dreams. We have given a lot and we are going to contribute much more, but we must have the opportunity to demonstrate our ability. Perhaps we cannot change our husbands, our grandfathers, but we are not going to teach our children the same way. With the work that we are doing, we are going to have a fairer and more just society.*



**Margarita Sactic Socorec**, mother of seven, is a weaver.

*My parents told my sisters and me that we women go to school to bring back laziness. I asked them let me learn how to weave, but I had to take care of my little sisters. At 19, I got married. Here it is customary for the bride to pay the costs of the wedding, and so I stayed four years with my mother-in-law, paying for the marriage. Then I began participating in a weaving group and heard that AFEDES offered opportunities and provided training. After a year with AFEDES, I became a delegate, then a mediator, and now I am the president.*

*Rosamaría Cruz provides local liaison and advisory services for the IAF in Guatemala.*

## Encuentro in Sacatepéquez

Intricately embroidered Mayan dress and crisp PowerPoint presentations framed the Encuentro de Donatarias de la Fundación Interamericana hosted Nov. 22 by IAF grantee AFEDES in Santiago Sacatepéquez. The 70-some participants represented six language groups and various IAF grantees, all dedicated to overcoming conditions their communities have endured for centuries.

Worldwide, domination and displacement have threatened to destroy indigenous ways and wipe out entire ethnicities, but since the 1970s, native peoples throughout the Americas have begun to assert themselves. Nonetheless, even though their ranks now boast a cabinet minister, a national deputy and a Nobel laureate, Rigoberta Menchu, whose campaign to end the country's 36-year civil war won her the peace prize in 1992, many Mayan women still feel undervalued. "In my village," said one, "midwives are paid more if they deliver a boy."

The discussion in the gelid town hall centered on how women could contribute to a better world. Many of those present could trace back several decades their commitment to solving the problems flowing from desperate poverty. Leaders on the agenda included AFEDES' Angelina Aspuac; Dolores Chaclán of CADISOGUA; Rxiin Tnamet's Magdalena Chavajay; Julia Ixcoy of Consejo de Mujeres Mayas; Glenda Sis from Plan de Acción Forestal Maya (IIDEMAYA), an NGO concerned with credit and the environment; and special guest

Josefa Moncada from ADEMISS, an IAF-supported NGO in El Salvador.

First to speak was Chavajay whose work promotes preventive measures such as vaccinations, Pap tests, midwife training and a system that has a volunteer monitor for every 25 women in the community. The audience broke into applause when conference organizer Rosamaría Cruz pointed out that in the area around Lake Atitlán, Rxiin Tnamet, had reduced a high rate of maternal mortality to zero. All of the speakers could vouch for their organizations' effectiveness with specific evidence—statistics on children treated, jobs created, and business and home loans extended.

But rather than dwell on their successes, the speakers concentrated on what remained to be done. According to Glenda Sis, 66 percent of the women in her province of Alta Verapaz are illiterate; 44 percent of mothers are under 20; and the average woman has seven children. Obstacles to women's involvement in their communities are not limited, however, to poor schooling, family obligations and a desperate lack of money. A ferociously machista culture was constantly cited as the biggest hurdle. A *escondidas*—in secret—is how some got started on development projects, including AFEDES' own president. Little by little, Aspuac said, husbands are beginning to understand the benefits of their wives' activities. Consequently, she added, membership in AFEDES has increased from 135 members to 300.

Julia Ixcoy insisted gender equity, self-respect and a voice for women in decisions are central to an effective

development strategy. Josefa Moncada shared a similar message as she described ADEMISS' efforts to reduce pollution in the densely populated communities around El Salvador's Lake Ilopango, where women make up more than half the population but have had to struggle to be heard. She urged more women to join the boards of development organizations. "But only as president, vice president or treasurer," she cautioned. "Don't accept a position as secretary or as a board member without an office."

Moncada's suggestion for a second *encuentro* open to participation from throughout Central America drew another enthusiastic round of applause. Then the women in the audience took up gender issues. Everyone agreed on the urgency for more women's involvement in the fight against poverty.



Rxiin Tnamet's Magdalena Chavajay, left, with the IAF's Rosamaría Cruz.

## Remittance Forum



This second article in *Grassroots Development's* ongoing discussion of initiatives that have deepened the impact of remittances in development, shares insights into the dynamism of organized Salvadorans abroad in improving their home communities.

Author Salvador Sanabria is director of development for El Rescate, which he helped found in 1981, and coordinator of the Transnational Community Remittances and Local Development Program, which provides technical assistance, policy direction and funding for social and productive projects initiated by Salvadoran hometown associations in Southern California. As a member of the Faribundo Martí

*Construction worker Manuel Florentino building the brick factory funded by the hometown association of Salvadorans from Paraíso del Osorio who reside in Los Angeles.*

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# Players and Programs in El Salvador

By Salvador Sanabria

*Salvadorans abroad constitute a transnational community committed to better conditions back home.*

Since 1980, approximately 2 million Salvadorans have become residents of foreign countries, principally the United States. In modern development terms, these immigrants are referred to as the diaspora, defined by Peggy Levitt in her 2001 *Global Networks* article “Transnational Migration: Taking Stock and Future Directions,” as “individuals who have been exiled or displaced by a variety of economic, political, and social forces.”

The displacement of many Salvadorans has been attributed to the armed conflict lasting from 1980 to 1992, but Salvadoran immigration began before the war and continues to this day. The U.S.-based Salvadoran immigrant network represents all levels of Salvadoran and U.S. society, including elected officials—for example, Ana Sol Gutierrez, Maryland assemblywoman, and Victor Tejada, Arlington County (Va.)

councilman. Pre-war U.S. residence is common to the most successful Salvadoran immigrants, while many post-war arrivals are still trying to gain a foothold.

The core of the Salvadoran diaspora network, the community organizers and volunteers, however, arrived in the U.S. during the war with a common desire to change conditions for themselves and for those they left behind. Some work here as teachers, lawyers, doctors, civil rights and labor organizers, and entrepreneurs, but most are the blue-collar laborers who do the grunt work that allows cities like Los Angeles to run smoothly. Driven by family obligations, interest in cultural preservation, a philanthropic spirit and nostalgia, many, even those struggling to survive, maintain an active connection with home. In economic terms, this translates into a contribution whose sheer volume drives El Salvador’s economy and development: last year remittances to El Salvador officially totaled nearly \$2 billion.

Coincidentally with the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, the Salvadoran diaspora of Southern California launched a transnational movement that has since spread to Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Las Vegas, Houston, Chicago, Boston and New York. The launching pad was the Salvadoran community’s hometown associations (HTAs), a feature of the Salvadoran diaspora since the 1980s. The first one, Asociación Migueleña Siglo XXI, was founded in November of 1986 by emigrants from San Miguel, a department located in eastern El Salvador. The focus of most HTAs in the 1980s was preserving cultural identity, but eventually the membership began to contribute relief and humanitarian aid to their communities of origin with funds raised through dances, tours, dinners, picnics, beauty pageants, raffles and

Frente de Liberación Nacional Political and Diplomatic Commission, Sanabria, trained by the Harvard Negotiation Project, participated in the negotiation efforts that brought the U.S. government into the resolution of El Salvador’s civil war. When the Peace Accords were signed at the United Nations’ headquarters in New York at midnight, Dec. 31, 1991, he was present. After the war, he returned to El Salvador and co-founded the Central American Foundation for Human Sustainable Development (FUCAD).

*Grassroots Development* welcomes submissions on related topics for consideration for future issues.

canvassing corporations. On average each event nets \$2,000, meaning the effort required of the determined community volunteers who do the hard work has been relentless.

The momentum of this Salvadoran transnational assistance movement has grown steadily over the last decade. In 1994, nine California-based Salvadoran hometown associations founded Communities United for Direct Aid to El Salvador (COMUNIDADES); within three years its membership more

which subsequently formed the United Salvadoran Communities (CUS).

In June 2001, COMUNIDADES and El Rescate joined forces with the Central American Foundation for Sustainable Human Development (FUCAD) to seek support from municipal governments in El Salvador for the HTAs' initiative toward collectively funding economic and social development projects. As a result of their outreach, the Corporation of Municipalities of the Republic of El Salvador

(COMURES), representing the country's 262 mayors, invited a delegation of HTA leaders from Los Angeles to participate in the XVII National Congress of Municipalities held in October 2001. During that historical event, a resolution was passed that led to the mayors' unanimous approval of the Program for Permanent Support to Municipalities of Origin, an agreement signed by both COMURES and COMUNIDADES.

In response to this innovative agreement with the mayors, in February 2002 the Salvadoran government, through the Office of the Vice President and the Social Investment for Local



COURTESY: KATHRYN SMITH PYLE

*Left to right, Juan Carlos Cristales, director of El Rescate; Miguel Brizuela, president, Comité de La Laguna Chalatenango en Los Angeles; Salvador Sanabria; Salvador Reyes López, secretary Chalatecos Unidos de Los Angeles.*

Development Fund (FISDL), created a framework for cooperation with citizens abroad. The idea was to facilitate selected social development projects with matching funds. El Rescate and COMUNIDADES immediately invited Vice President Carlos Quintanilla and Miguel Siman, FISDL's president, to El Rescate's Los Angeles office, where the government's delegation officially presented the program's vision and objectives to leaders of 18 Salvadoran associations and announced the opportunity to compete for \$114,000 in the pilot program. The California HTAs received \$51,000 from the government and raised \$24,999 in matching contributions for a brick factory in Paraíso de Osorio, the first project to benefit from the FISDL. The commercial enterprise, owned by both sides of the transnational community, will donate

than quadrupled to 37 associations. COMUNIDADES receives support, including technical assistance, from El Rescate, a legal and humanitarian services agency founded to serve Central Americans. El Rescate was established in 1981 by Salvadoran refugees and the Southern California Ecumenical Council to provide counsel on immigration and labor problems and economic development as well as training in information technology and leadership. (Interestingly, 30 percent of El Rescate's clients are not from Central America. Most asylum seekers are African; Armenians dominate the credit program.) Currently, El Rescate's records reflect the existence of 62 hometown associations in Southern California, 12 in the San Francisco area, four in Las Vegas, nine in Houston and 19 associations in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area,



Fundraising activities by members of *Fundación Arcense* include making and enjoying pupusas, El Salvador's national dish.

COURTESY: KATHRYN SMITH PYLE



some of its brick production and profits to low-income families affected by the 2001 earthquakes.

Since that initial bid for government funds in March 2002, three more solicitations for bids have generated \$3,704,611 in direct matching funds for investment in development projects involving Salvadoran associations in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Houston. Of this amount, the associations have contributed \$825,869, the municipal governments \$931,587 and the FISDL \$1,905,955.00. The Salvadoran government finances its program with funds from an Inter-American Development Bank loan.

Currently, El Rescate, COMUNIDADES, the counterpart organizations in El Salvador, FUCAD, FISDL and the United Nation's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are working to promote social and productive projects. The participating Southern California HTAs represent 11 Salvadoran towns: Paraíso de Osorio, San Juan Tepezontes, San Miguel Tepezontes, Cacaopera, Suchitoto, San Isidro, Cojutepeque, La Laguna, Tejutla, Sesori and La Labor San Sebastián. The relationship forged with IFAD demonstrates the potential of Salvadoran HTAs to contribute to international and transnational development policies. In May 2002, Salvadoran HTA leaders from Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia and New York, along with representatives of COMUNIDADES and El Rescate, discussed possible cooperation on projects promoted by IFAD. In October 2002, some 35 associations from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Houston participated in follow-up work-

shops organized in California by El Rescate and IFAD with the cooperation of COMUNIDADES and FUCAD. The resulting agreements have already been applied in communities in the Salvadoran departments of San Vicente and Morazán.

The positive impact of family and collective community remittances on the Salvadoran economy and society cannot be disputed. However, we need to know more about how remittances are used, whether for consumption or for productive investment, and the extent of El Salvador's macro-economic dependence on remittances. It should be noted here that, according to the North American Integration and Development (NAID) Center of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), the full multiplier effect of \$2 billion remitted to El Salvador last year, constituting some 13 percent of the gross domestic product, has yet to be calculated. Furthermore, the figure of \$2 billion does not include family and collective remittances *not* captured by intermediary financial institutions; the actual amount of remittances to El Salvador may be even higher.

Additionally, we need to identify reliable and replicable models for the productive uses of remittances that contribute to stimulate local economies with jobs and investment opportunities, offering alternatives to emigration.

In an effort to provide some of this information, the California HTAs, their counterparts in El Salvador, El Rescate and FUCAD have been working since September 2001 with NAID on a three-year pilot program combining academic research with projects underway in Paraíso de Osorio, Cacaopera and several other communities. Recently the Inter-American Foundation began supporting the project with a grant to FUCAD. The Rockefeller Foundation soon followed with a grant to El Rescate to assist the same project.

Paraíso de Osorio, the smallest of these communities, suffered extensive damage from the earthquakes of 2001, which the Committee of Paraíso de Osorio Residing in Los Angeles, an HTA, is addressing with its counterpart in El Salvador, Paraíso de Osorio's municipal government, El Rescate, FUCAD and FISDL. To date, the participants' investment totals some \$100,000 in funds, equipment, land and technical assistance, administered by FUCAD, which is also coordinating and supervising construction. A similar investment is required to train future workers; design accounting, inventory, quality control and industrial safety programs; develop a marketing plan; and provide the working capital to launch the factory's operations. The board of directors of the new enterprise will include representatives from all participants except FISDL.

In Cacaopera, the Salvadoran Institute for Professional Training (INSAFORP) has prepared 22 young women for jobs with micro-enterprises in the garment sector. The Committee for Peace and the Reconstruction of Cacaopera, an HTA in Los Angeles formed in 1992 by Salvadorans from Morazán, another department in eastern El Salvador, donated sewing machines and material to the INSAFORP vocational program and, with El Rescate's support, secured funding for the first training course. So far this combined investment totals \$10,000. To launch a manufacturing plant, another \$100,000 is needed for working capital, the purchase of machinery and equipment, technical assistance, and organizational training. As a result of a series of meetings held in April 2003 among

the El Rescate-NAID collaborative, IFAD officials and the IDB's Multilateral Investment Fund representative, funding for this and other productive projects is being considered. If approved, the Cacaopera plant will be the first IFAD-IDB project funded since 1994.

In addition to these activities, several projects are being considered for development in Suchitoto, designated a Global Heritage Preservation Site by UNESCO. The community is represented by the Associated Suchitotenses of Los Angeles (SALA), an HTA recognized as a nonprofit organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). The project selected will also be studied.

The NAID Center, headed by Professor Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda, is a leading U.S. academic institution dealing with family and collective remittances in the economic and social development of Mexico and El Salvador. In connection with its program in El Salvador, experts in international migration, remittances and human development will document the practices of the HTAs, Salvadoran government and nongovernmental organizations, and international funding institutions with the goal of sharing the lessons learned and identifying best practices as well as practices to be avoided. However the main objective is to empower emigrant communities and their hometown associations. Already the success of the Salvadoran immigrants in organizing, lobbying and mobilizing in the transnational space in a relatively brief period of time makes them important actors in contemporary transnational development.

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*Pedro Mojica-Piñeda contributed to this article. He is a researcher with UCLA's North American Integration and Development Center and directs research for El Rescate's Transnational Community Remittances and Local Development Program.*

*Salvadorans Associated of Maryland delivered 1,000 packets of school supplies to students in the hometowns of San Agustín and San Marcos Lempa on Dec. 27.*

## Remittances and the IAF

"We go to the airport," reads a common classified advertisement in San Salvador's newspapers. Outside the capital, the same notice hand-written on placards, might advise, "Ask for Nacho." Both promotions point to the impact of El Salvador's diaspora on daily life. Nacho owns his vehicle thanks to remittances from his youngest daughter in the United States. And, nowadays, the airport is a popular destination for Salvadorans from all walks of life, not just the wealthy few; in high season—Holy Week, August, Christmas and New Year's—it is crowded with individuals waiting for relatives arriving for the holidays, most from the United States. The travelers have opened up a new business opportunity for Salvadorans and remittances provide the capital.

Although the U.S. Census Bureau's count in 2000 showed 655,000 Salvadorans in the United States, El Salvador's Ministry of External Relations estimates that the total might exceed 2,000,000. According to one 1999 survey by Juan José García, the average annual influx into the U.S. is 72,000 individuals; 16 percent of all households have relatives abroad. Salvadoran emigration is driven by poverty and the disparities between the city and the countryside. The rural areas of the poorest departments are those with the most emigration: 29.8 percent of families living in La Unión (77 percent rural), 28.2 percent in Morazán (67 percent rural) and 23.9 percent in Cabañas (62 percent rural) have at least one member abroad.

Remittances to El Salvador, according to experts, have been increasing by 12 percent a year, from less than \$30 million in the mid-1970s to more than \$1.9 billion in 2002—a figure that does not include funds sent via couriers, estimated at not less than \$200 million. Per family, this translates into between \$1,200 and \$2,400 annually.



DANIEL MARTÍNEZ

Approximately 80 percent of this money (\$1.5 billion) goes to satisfy basic household needs: food, medical care, studies, clothing, and, very rarely, because many people who receive remittances are no longer in their productive years, leasing land and cultivating it. Just 1.5 percent of this amount is invested in establishing or strengthening micro-enterprises. In her publication *Migración internacional y desarrollo microempresarial en El Salvador* [International Immigration and Micro-enterprise Development in El Salvador], Sonia Baires says some 20 percent of these micro-enterprises, such as Nacho's, mentioned above, offer transportation services in vehicles acquired in the United States.

Collective remittances, funded by associations of emigrants, have supported a variety of projects in the emigrants' home communities: humanitarian aid; improvements to roads and highways; the introduction of potable water; the installation of electricity; school, home and community center construction; small bridges; the purchase and shipment of ambulances; and the distribution of food, clothing, school supplies and toys for poor children. Such associations are estimated at more than 200 throughout the United States. In connection with this growing grassroots development effort, the IAF recently commissioned a study of the impact of remittances on the projects it supports in El Salvador. The findings indicated that the IAF supports projects in 19 Salvadoran localities which receive remittances. Of the IAF grantees surveyed, half felt remittances not only enhanced their beneficiaries' buying power and the repayment of loans extended for productive investment but also generated micro-enterprises. The others were concerned that remittances encouraged the departure of individuals trained through their projects, fostered dependency and discouraged the recipients from engaging in productive activities.

In a follow-up workshop, professionals associated with the study helped participating grantees understand the opportunities for linking remittances to local development. They encouraged participants to locate associations of Salvadorans abroad, particularly in the United States; to establish contact with institutions or organizations in El Salvador associated with development in the communities of origin; to promote better use of collective or community remittances in organizations that issue or receive them; and to identify projects of interest for investment purposes and develop proposals for coordination and mutual support. Several grantees have already taken such action in their communities.—*Rolando Gutiérrez, IAF consultant, El Salvador*

# Development of the Dairy Industry in the Peruvian Andes

By Alipio Montes Urday

Photos: Courtesy of CEDER

*Rapid replication of a successful milk-processing enterprise brings benefits—and challenges.*



Over the last 13 years, the Center for Regional Development Studies (CEDER) has experimented with developing the dairy industry in the high Andean regions of southern Peru. This experiment was begun thanks to the Inter-American Foundation's initial support of CEDER's Comprehensive Peasant Training Project in the province of Condesuyos between 1986 and 1991. Since 1992, CEDER's experiment, supported by the Peru-Canada Counterpart Fund and, later, the National Fund for Job Training and Employment Promotion (FONDOEMPLEO), has expanded into the province of General Sánchez Cerro (department of Moquegua) and the province of Castilla (department of Arequipa).

## Conditions leading to intervention

The provinces of Condesuyos, Castilla and General Sánchez Cerro, located on the western flank of the Andes in southern Peru at an altitude of 2,500 to 3,500 meters above sea level, share similar agro-ecological and socio-economic characteristics. In this area, 80 percent of the residents make their living from agriculture and livestock, in particular from cattle breeding in association with alfalfa cultivation. The small-scale, independent farmers each own an average of six head of cattle and 2.3 hectares of irrigated, cultivated land broken into several parcels. Until CEDER's intervention, they were highly dependent on the region's only milk purchaser, Gloria S.A., which imposed extremely unfavorable

prices and conditions that the individual farmers could not dispute because each produced such small quantities of milk, averaging just 30 liters a day. Eventually their resentment prompted a search for alternatives.

## The experiment

CEDER's intervention is part of a broader rural development program begun in Condesuyos in 1986, in General Sánchez Cerro in 1992, and in Castilla in 2000, in conjunction with the Comprehensive Peasant Training project, mentioned above. One of its basic components has been the development of a small-scale industry for the production of cheese, yogurt and butter. This initially had two objectives: first, to increase the milk producers' income through the value added from making these dairy products; second, to help diversify the local economy by encouraging a new activity. At the time of the initial intervention, the entire local economic system was so totally lacking in diversity that even small commercial and service activities depended on the vitality of agriculture and livestock.

The rural development program has also targeted improvement of the irrigation infrastructure through building reservoirs, channels and sluices; development of dairy herds through the production of animal forage, genetic enhancement (using artificial insemination and selective breeding), better livestock health, and feeding and herd management practices; the introduction of new alternative crops (aromatics); and loan services. In all, the program benefits approximately 1,300 farm families in the participating areas.

## Strategies and practices

Two pilot milk-processing plants, one in Chuquibamba, Condesuyos, and the other in the district of Puquina, in General Sánchez Cerro, were intended as demonstration and training centers. The assumption was that the plants would set an example and encourage other such installations. The physical infrastructure of both was built through consultation with the respective groups of producers targeted. Our program provided the necessary building materials unavailable locally, including cement, corrugated iron, brick and majolica, as well as skilled labor and technical assistance. The producers contributed local materials, mainly aggregates and wood, unskilled labor, and land.

In designing the infrastructure, care was taken to ensure that the materials used, as well as the layout, were the most appropriate for the physical and socio-economic environment so that other interested groups would find the project easy to replicate. Each site included a reception and processing area, a maturing area, an administrative area, and a space for loading and unloading milk. Both plants had the necessary processing equipment (an evaporator, molding tables, stampers, "lira," scaffolding, burners, mixers, clock, scales) and laboratory equipment



*Cheese from CEDER's project on exhibit at a fair.*

(lactodensimeter, acidometer, hygrometer, burettes, reagents). The Puquina plant also received equipment for yogurt production on a small scale. All of this was totally financed by the program with no requirement of reimbursement. To operate each plant, the program trained the technical personnel, selected from among the producer associates, who would be in charge of administering each plant and making cheese, yogurt and butter. Those selected visited various companies in the region at whose

plants they received training in managing all aspects of the technology for production. A skeleton staff of six was assembled to start up and run the plants.

## Organizations and operations

Within the framework of multiple workshops the Condesuyos plant was organized as a cooperative of 23 small-scale cattle breeders and wage-earning farm workers, called Cooperativa de Producción Especial La Campiña. The Puquina plant was organized as a corporation comprised of 27 partners, all small-scale cattle breeders, who chose the corporate form because of doubts as to the viability of cooperatives. Condesuyos had also



*Produced through CEDER's project in the Peruvian Andes, this cheese is ready for sale.*

experienced many problems arising out of some confusion over the rights of the associates and management of the enterprise.

But the biggest challenge was opening up the market for the products, especially in Condesuyos where the farmers were the least experienced. At first, the members and directors of the cooperative tried door-to-door sales in Arequipa. As they became more knowledgeable, a clientele developed and the cheese became strongly positioned in the Arequipa market to

*The emphasis was on improving the quality of the product, diversification with other varieties of cheese, such as Andino, Paria and Edam, and more efficient management.*

which many marketers from the Chuquibamba area were attracted. The task was easier in Puquina, since the players knew the market and clients were relatively easy to find. Different types of promotion were used, such as free samples and discounts for buying in volume and paying promptly or in cash. The pilot plant strategy lent itself to resolving problems in connection with plant design, technological processes, business management and opening up new markets for the product. In other words, it enabled us to create favorable conditions for the rapid replicability of the experiment.

To further ensure the experiment's success and replicability, once the achievements of the Chuquibamba pilot plant were apparent, the project emphasized training in making dairy products and in the technological and commercial development of this activity. Approximately 40 cheese makers were trained at the Chuquibamba pilot plant; some would go on to establish their own milk processing companies. In a second phase, as the experiment was being replicated, the project provided technical assistance and training services for the new plants and for other interested individuals. The emphasis was on improving the quality of the product, diversification with other varieties of cheese, such as Andino, Paria and Edam, and more efficient management. To standardize the products so they would be readily identifiable

by origin and suitable for the highest-end markets in Peru, and to coordinate the purchase of milk supplies, the project encouraged the dairy producers to organize. Unfortunately, personal rivalries destroyed any such possibility of association.

## Replication

Within six months of beginning operations in July 1989, the Condesuyos pilot had reached its maximum processing capacity of 400 liters of milk a day and had to be resized to process nearly four times as much. Very soon its product was well positioned in the regional and Lima markets, and demand for Chuquibamba cheese exceeded supply. Approximately 18 months after the plant became operational, the experiment began to be replicated by individual producers associated with the plant either as technicians or as marketers, with technical and financial assistance from the project. Eventually 18 micro-plants had sprung up to process a total of 8,000 liters of milk every day.

CEDER's Puquina pilot plant proved successful as well and began to be emulated. Seven micro-plants eventually resulted, each with a processing capacity of between 300 and 1,200 liters a day, or, currently, a daily total of 5,000 liters. Although the Puquina plant acquired a significant clientele, conflicts among the associates, who put personal interests ahead of the company's, caused it to cease operating in 1997. Now under lease to a private producer, it processes approximately 900 liters of milk a day.

In 1995, with appropriate training support and technical assistance from CEDER, the Condesuyos experiment expanded to Pampacolca, a neighboring locality. Two trained technicians, a former project worker and a Pampacolca beneficiary, each installed a cheese plant there, using the same technological and administrative procedures developed for Condesuyos and supplying the same market. Twelve other privately-owned micro-plants later installed in that area collectively process 6,500 liters of milk daily. Currently, the three areas count 37 small and micro-plants owned by 55 families processing a daily total of 19,500 liters of milk. In all three areas, loans provided the working capital and some of the equipment, but the infrastructure and other equipment were financed with the micro-entrepreneurs own funds.

To date the Chuquibamba cheese micro-enterprises have attained the highest technological levels. They produce mainly ripe cheeses such as Tilsset, Andino, mozzarella and Edam, and some green cheeses. Elsewhere, the plants have concentrated on green cheeses and have only recently introduced ripe cheeses.

### Principal accomplishments

The development of the small-scale dairy industry has increased employment and income levels for the rural population. The production of 37 micro- and small industrial enterprises processing 7,117 tons of milk into cheese, yogurt and butter has a gross value of \$2,033,571 annually, which translates into \$5,165 in profits for each of 60 families that own the plants. The plants have generated 100 production and

*The experiment has given rise to a nucleus of micro- and small entrepreneurs prepared to reinvest their surplus funds locally, a principal factor in the area's more vigorous economy.*

administrative jobs paying an average annual salary of \$1,542. Some 50 percent of those are held by family members, but other plant employees earn twice the pay of wage-earning agricultural workers. The plants have also created 120 new jobs in marketing paying an average annual salary of \$1,582.

Additionally, since the cheese producers pay a little more per liter of milk than Gloria S.A., approximately 800 families of small milk producers have increased their yearly income by \$356. Small businesses have been revitalized through the increase in grocery sales and the sale of cheese and yogurt. The use of waste products from the dairy industry (whey) has led to the development of hog breeding for market, an activity benefiting approximately 100 families. Finally, the experiment has given rise to a nucleus of micro- and small entrepreneurs prepared to reinvest their surplus funds locally, a principal factor the area's more vigorous economy.

### New challenges

The proliferation of cheese micro-enterprises has raised challenges that must be confronted. One is the largest plants' growing dependence on a single marketer. Another is the control of most of the market in Arequipa by two or three marketers who began by selling small amounts of cheese produced in the first plants and are now in a position to impose prices and conditions highly unfavorable to the micro-entrepreneurs. Given the rapid growth of the cheese industry, saturation has also become a problem, especially in Arequipa, further reducing prices as well as the potential for additional development of the industry. In this connection, through improving product quality, organizing the micro-entrepreneurs into major producing entities, such as Mozzarellas Arequipa y Laive, and participating in fairs in Lima, CEDER's current involvement is directed toward creating a marketing system more favorable to the micro-entrepreneur and toward opening up new, high-end markets.

*Alipio Montes Urday is director of CEDER.*

### Lessons Learned from CEDER's Project

- Infrastructure and processes appropriate to the local environmental and socio-economic context are conducive to replication.
- Technical development of human resources is basic to making a good product.
- The benefits of the project must be clear so that all parties can readily endorse it.
- Micro-entrepreneurs are more firmly committed when they have invested their own funds in the project; subsidies should cover only the costs that the small producer simply cannot manage.
- Essential to success is support for the micro-entrepreneurs during their efforts to secure their position in the market.
- The individualism and personal interests of small producers can prevent their partnering to undertake the larger operation necessary to produce and market cheeses for high-end consumption with greater added value.

# Payment *for* Preservation of Forests and High Mountain Grasslands

By Roberto Yaguache O.

Photos: Courtesy of CEDERENA

## Conservation has a price worth paying.

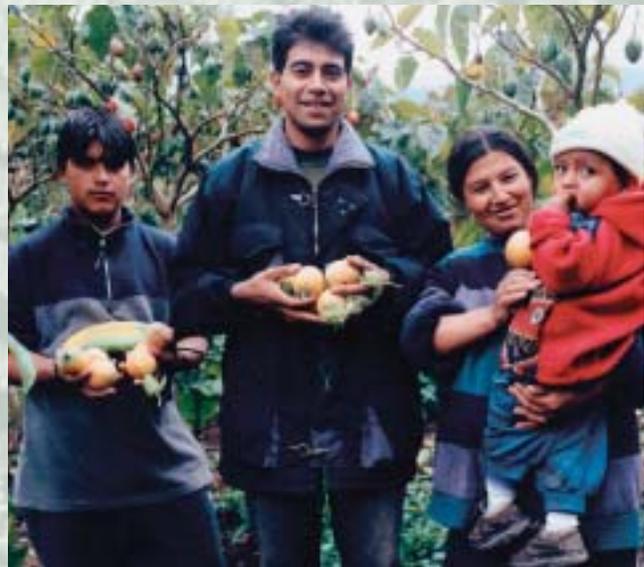
**P**imampiro, Imbabura, is an Ecuadorian canton wealthy in many natural resources but whose urban population receives water service just four hours a day. To address this scarcity, the Nueva América Association, the municipio of Pimampiro and the Corporación Ecológica para el Desarrollo de los Recursos Naturales Renovables (CEDERENA) undertook an experiment in encouraging the conservation of forests and high mountain grasslands, where significant water sources originate, through financial incentives to the families that own them. Based on a relatively new concept for Ecuador—payment for environmental services—this experiment was part of a project to maintain water quantity and quality begun in August 1999 with financial support from the Inter-American Foundation.

The 27 families comprising the Nueva América Association collectively own 638 hectares of which more than 550 hectares are classified as high mountain grassland and forests at an altitude of between 2,800 and 3,700 meters above sea level in the foothills of the eastern Andes, approximately 30 kilometers southeast of the city of Pimampiro. Of the remaining land, most is devoted to agriculture and cattle; a few hectares are degraded. The ecosystems of Nueva América's forests and high mountain grasslands have always been threatened by the constantly increasing pressure of agriculture and cattle, which the owners, in their struggle to better their living conditions, have considered the only profitable use of their land.

Pimampiro's municipal ordinance providing for a "fund for payment of environmental services to protect and preserve forests and high mountain grasslands for water regulation" was drafted and approved in January 2001. Under it, 1,331 families using city

drinking water must pay an additional 20 percent surcharge for their water consumption. The families using the water resources are willing to do so to preserve the watershed, which is vital to the local economy. The surcharge goes toward a fund for environmental services that compensates the owners of high mountain grasslands and forests, the source of 60 liters of water per second for human consumption and irrigation. The amount of compensation is based on classification of the hectares owned. Untouched forest and grasslands are compensated at the highest rate; land that is farmed, grazed or degraded earns nothing at all. The benefit to the owners of maintaining their hectares in their pristine state is obvious.

The *municipio* has signed an individual agreement with each owner, establishing a quarterly payment schedule and specifying the owner's responsibilities regarding conservation. From September through



Fruit produced without encroaching on the forests.

*Training is essential to maintaining the water supply and avoiding erosion and desertification.*

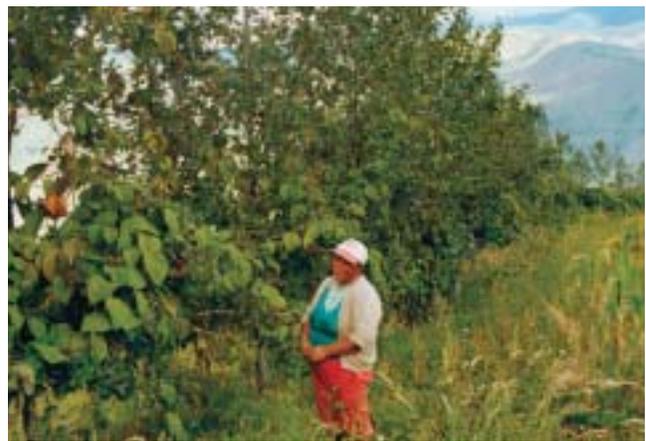
December 2001, fees collected totaled \$1,300, but they can reasonably be expected to exceed the yearly disbursement to 20 Nueva América families currently set at \$4,271. The fund thus appears economically sustainable and, as the balance accumulates, the payment can be increased.

Essential to the success of the Nueva América experience were several factors: the peasant families' willingness to participate in this innovative process; the Pimampiro *municipio's* political decision to strengthen environmental management in the canton with two ordinances establishing the Unidad de Medio Ambiente y Turismo and the fund to pay for environmental services; and the strong support of CEDERENA and the project Desarrollo Forestal Comunal, who extended basic technical assistance throughout the process.

Alternative sources of funding would have to be found if the proposal were to be extended to other forests. The amount paid for the different categories of land was established with the community. It lacks a more scientific basis, but a study has been initiated to assess the value of water in the Pimampiro irrigation channel for the purpose of a methodological proposal. At this point, an environmental education campaign should be directed at city residents to familiarize them with what is going on between the urban population and the families that own the forests.



*Without damaging the ecosystem, owner families deep in the forest collect medicinal plants to market.*



*At the edge of the forest, land is cultivated efficiently, so that the primary forest is not touched.*

The process unfolding in Pimampiro is a pilot that has not been without its errors. Its example is not offered as a formula, but as a pioneering first step on the way to forest conservation in Ecuador. Its replication would require the support of various public and private authorities. Every *municipio* has its own human and biophysical characteristics that can add value to its natural resources. Decentralization will allow those interested to adopt appropriate policies and ordinances and adjust this experiment to their particular context.

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*Robert Yaguache O. is an agronomist and CEDERENA representative in Imbabura, Ecuador.*

# The Challenge of Sustainability

By Edward Hoyt

*A study of 27 IAF-sponsored organizations sheds light on what sustainability requires.*

## Putting San Martín on the map

“We exist now. We’re on the map,” said Don Anacris, mayor of San Martín de León Cortés, a community high in the mountains of southern Costa Rica. Indeed, his fellow villagers noted with pride that they preferred to stay in San Martín, rather than leave to find work elsewhere. Judging from the neatly kept, comfortable homes, the number of vehicles on the dirt roads and the street lights, San Martín is certainly a pleasant place to stay. Traditionally, most villagers used to work in nearby *fincas* as well as in San José and on coffee plantations farther afield, since locally grown coffee cannot compete with output from other areas. But weak international prices in the 1990s reduced even outside opportunities and forced San Martín residents and others in the region to seek alternatives.

Ironically, the basis for San Martín’s now solid economy was there all along. The blackberries that

leave San Martín for packaging and daily shipment to the United States, Canada and Europe have always lined the roads and trails traversing the ridge where the village is perched. But villagers never thought that the berries, which thrive without fertilizers and extensive cultivation, could provide more than a little extra cash from sales at farmers’ markets. Now, a family can earn as much from blackberries as from other sources.

The idea for the Asociación de Productores/ Exportadores de Mora y Frutales de Altura (APROCAM) came to Bernardo Rojas during a USAID-sponsored study visit to the U.S. in 1988. “When I saw a half-pint basket of berries from Chile selling for \$1.50 in supermarkets in Washington, D.C.,” said Rojas, an agronomist and president of APROCAM. “I knew we could do the same with the berries from the mountains at home.”

### SUMMARY RESULTS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY STUDY Sustainability by Organization Type

	Sustainable		Not Sustainable		Total
	Strong	Weak	Dormant	Defunct	
Productive	2	1	1	0	4
Micro-finance	4	0	0	0	4
Services	3	3	0	0	6
Productive/ Micro-finance	3	0	0	0	3
Productive/ Services	2	1	0	1	4
Micro-finance/ Services	3	1	0	0	4
Productive/Micro-finance/Services	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Totals*</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>

Source: “Sustainability of Grassroots Development Organizations and Projects in Latin America.”

\*In the study, two organizations are grouped together as one, hence the total of 26.

## Assessing sustainability

The story of how blackberries from Costa Rica reach U.S. and European consumers and wind up in a popular line of fruit drinks in Costa Rica is ultimately all about the *sustainability* of grassroots development organizations, projects and the communities they help. As a recent IAF-supported study shows, sustainability means continuity, and this requires organizations to accumulate a mix of financial, social and even environmental capital. Achieving growth in each of these areas is vital to ensuring that an organization—and its beneficiary communities—can weather fluctuating markets, variable funding sources, leadership turnover, internal conflict, fluid political environments and other unpredictable challenges. Effective projects can provide beneficiaries the economic and social capital for achieving sustainability themselves. Inevitably, the circumstances that prompted the creation of the organization will change, at which point the organization may adapt its mission or even close down.

The IAF recently commissioned Econergy International Corporation to locate 27 grant recipients in three countries and find out what transpired after their funding agreements expired. The organizations selected by the IAF in rural and urban areas of Brazil, Costa Rica and Mexico offered a representative cross-section of productive, social services and micro-finance projects at various stages of development. Productive projects involved activities dedicated to the manufacture, processing or growing of finished goods, raw materials or commodities, such as carpets, recycled materials or coffee. Social services involve counseling, support groups and educational activities intended to counteract the effects of destructive

behaviors (such as spouse or child abuse) and enable individuals to recover their lives and become productive members of society. Micro-finance projects involve the provision of small loans to facilitate investment in productive capacity by individuals and communities that cannot access bank financing. Often an organization might engage in a multi-faceted project involving activities in more than one



*In San Martín, Costa Rica, IAF grantee APROCAM produces blackberries for export.*

DANIEL CIMBA

category. The projects were implemented over the course of more than a decade; six grants were slated to conclude in 2002, another six had concluded five or more years ago, and the balance had concluded between 1996 and 2001.

Econergy's team observed that organizations exhibit sustainability at one of two levels: *strong sustainability*, characterized by sufficient build-up of financial, social and environmental capital to ensure continuation without significant negative change for a year; or *weak sustainability*, where continuation over the next year is open to question. Occasionally, an organization has stopped operating either because it is either dormant or defunct, but the underlying projects continue nonetheless, benefiting the community. The Econergy team found individuals involved in every one of the 27 organizations, and that all but

four organizations are still active. Of the four, only one was truly defunct. Based on interviews, site visits and documentary analysis, Econergy assigned 17 organizations the rating of strong sustainability.

Questionnaires, focus group sessions and interviews also showed a distinction between strong and weak sustainability at the beneficiary level. Of the 26 evaluations (two organizations were considered as one), the programs benefited individuals directly in 22 cases, and in four cases organizations were the beneficiaries. The team could assess the status of beneficiaries (both organizations and individuals) in all but two cases due to data collection limitations. The results of this aspect of the fieldwork are similarly encouraging. The sustainability of the communities or the beneficiary organizations seemed threatened (characterized as weak sustainability) in only six cases.

Attributes of sustainability observed included strong leadership, sound management, community support, strategies to diversify funding or revenue sources, protection from price volatility, responding to competition and preventing defectors from the project, and management of political and cultural issues. The stories behind all the organizations provided examples of how the IAF has operated like a venture capitalist for social capital formation, betting on promising ideas and the visions of dedicated social entrepreneurs throughout Latin America—with exciting results. In the increasingly competitive domestic economic environments of Latin America, and the fast-paced global economy, the sustainability of organizations supported by the IAF and other donors will depend on how well they can incorporate these attributes.

Many of the same attributes apply to individuals. In instances where beneficiary sustainability was threatened, challenges in the areas of fostering communication and dialogue, diversifying household incomes, managing political conflict or building up capacity with the community had all impeded development. Where both beneficiaries and organization have registered strong sustainability, efforts to invest in the communities' productive and management capacities proved crucial.

## Learning from the market

Initially, APROCAM encountered enormous obstacles. With little experience in international trade, few contacts and limited infrastructure to transport, package and chill the berries for shipment, APROCAM's venture seemed destined to fail, not only because of buyer concerns about quality, timeliness and reliability, but also because of competition. But in 1993, it received an IAF grant of \$228,000 for equipment, training and working capital for needs such as rentals of more modern trucks. APROCAM needed support for transportation costs which were an obstacle to improving deliveries, both in terms of rapidity as well as damage to fruit. Improved deliveries helped support growth in APROCAM's sales, and APROCAM was able to attract additional international support to sustain expansion and help the communities finance their production infrastructure. Now, 12 communities have their own collection centers, where fruit is inspected, washed, packed and then chilled before shipment. APROCAM's organizational model has devolved responsibility for quality, timeliness and reliability to the communities. The villagers have succeeded, although Rojas noted it took time for APROCAM's insistence on hygiene and quality control procedures to yield results.

## Projects and beneficiaries outlive organizations

In numerous instances, new organizations face changing macro-economic conditions, declining prices and political challenges as they grow. Those that are equipped to weather these and other challenges are more likely to demonstrate strong sustainability in the long term. Others may move from strong sustainability to weak sustainability, and may slip further or recover. Servicios de Educación de Adultos A.C. (SEDAC), and the subsequently formed Union de Comunidades del Valle A.C. (COVAC), offer an example of how organizations can slip. COVAC achieved successes among the poor indigenous communities of central Mexico's Hidalgo state. IAF's assistance to SEDAC, and then COVAC, over 10 years beginning in 1987, totaled some \$425,000, and helped support a series of productive and micro-finance enterprises, including a livestock program, a homebuilding and loan program, and other activities.

The peso crash of December 1994 triggered a financial crisis in COVAC's home loan program in 1995, and a leadership struggle developed. By early 1996, this resulted in the ouster of Salvador García, SEDAC's founder and the designer of COVAC's diverse programs. A dissident faction within COVAC called for an embargo on payments by beneficiaries of a housing loan program, seized COVAC assets, and even threatened the lives of García and his wife and collaborator, Oralia. As of mid-2002, neither SEDAC nor COVAC had any full-time staff; the budget totaled just \$15,000 provided by a government agency for courses on indigenous cultural issues. Despite the sharp decline, the legacy of García's visionary work in Ixmiquilpan remains. Juan González, COVAC's secretary and a dissident in the 1995-1996 crisis, said he would like to see COVAC recover some of its former glory "because COVAC did a lot of good for the community, but a lot more needs to be done."

A similar experience has played itself out deep in Brazil's Mato Grosso state. In the Reserva Xavante Pimentel Barbosa, an area set aside for the state's indigenous Xavante residents, the native mato forest cover suffered from indiscriminate land conversion for farming and ranching. In the 1970s, white ranchers invaded lands set aside for the Xavante. Warriors from the tribe eventually drove the ranchers out, but the damage to Barbosa reservation's 330,000 hectares had been substantial. In the following years, villagers near the cleared areas noticed a decrease in the wildlife species they traditionally hunt. In 1990, the IAF, working in conjunction with the Brazil office of the World Wildlife Fund, supported the Associação Xavante de Pimentel Barbosa with \$175,000 toward restoring the deforested areas and enhancing the Xavantes' ability to hunt and gather as they have for centuries. Another project component involved the production of dried fruit harvested from the forest for sale locally and nationally.

In seven years, the reforested areas have grown substantially, and the mato is knitting itself into the seamless carpet that once covered this entire region. According to Supitó Xavante, the young leader of the Pimentel Barbosa village, which, with a population of 500 is the largest in the reservation of about 1,500 inhabitants, the results are apparent. "There is more

fruit and game," said Supitó in fluent Portuguese, "and the Xavante earned the respect of the *gauchos* in Agua Boa [the closest major town]." But the idea of selling dried fruit, he said, "while a good one, was before its time." That aspect of the project fell apart after only a few months, providing a lesson about effective oversight and the need for communication. After a few shipments of fruit to markets, many villagers lost interest because the lack of information suggested the effort was a failure.

## Managing changing environments

In the cases of COVAC and the Associação Xavantes, the decline of well established organizations was triggered by factors including leadership transition, weak management, poor communication, insufficient community support, competition and decreased revenue. The extent to which organizations implemented mitigation mechanisms influenced their sustainability.

Among organizations exhibiting strong sustainability, diversification of funding has been an important strategy. APROCAM has moved from targeting international markets, where there is demonstrated demand, to building up sales in the domestic market, where blackberries were not traditionally available. The association has also sought ways to exploit fruit not of export quality. Through alliances with major companies, APROCAM has found a market for a larger volume of fruit as raw material for juice. This sales mix positions APROCAM to withstand variations in demand, pricing and import restrictions due to quality or even hygiene issues. Failure to ensure consistent quality with respect to the latter criterion could be disastrous. Rojas cited the example of Guatemalan fruit that had flunked a phytosanitary inspection, triggering a multi-year ban on its sale in U.S. markets which caused significant economic damage.

Diversification is an imperative for any rural development organization that depends on a single product, since low prices can be disastrous. The benefits of diversification, and the challenge it poses in certain settings, are especially clear in the case of the Cooperativa de Caficultores de Tilarán (COOPETILA), in Guanacaste, Costa Rica. Despite the success of a project to diversify COOPETILA's output with

macadamia nuts for export, funded with \$50,000 from IAF between 1994 to 1997, the organization's financial situation has deteriorated. The problem, said members of COOPETILA's board, has been a combination of weak management since 1997 and the failure of the macadamia project to offset continuing coffee losses.

Elsewhere, the Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas (IBASE) received \$550,000 over seven years beginning in 1991 for a variety of projects, including micro-finance and efforts to organize executives from Brazil's public sector to promote community development initiatives. The challenge to sustainability that IBASE faced was one of leadership transition. IBASE's charismatic founder, Herbert de Souza, was closely identified with the organization. Could it ever survive his departure? IBASE was forced to answer this question when de Souza disclosed he was terminally ill in 1997.

De Souza prepared IBASE for an orderly transition in the months before his death. His successor, Cândido Grzybowski, led a "rebranding" process that made the organization the continuing embodiment of de Souza's persona, ideals and vision. IBASE also took steps to diversify revenue sources and reduce its size. It sold off two productive ventures; it diversified its sources of institutional support with a membership program to collect public donations; it built up its fee-for-services activities; and it expanded its domestic funding base of government agencies, corporations and access to credit. Consequently, international cooperation as a share of total revenue declined in the period from 1997 to 2000, though, at 40 percent, it is still important. Such efforts are increasingly important to international donors concerned with dependence.

Grantees are aware that the IAF's awards are for a finite period. In the case of the Centro de Apoyo al Movimiento Popular de Oaxaca (CAMPO), for example, the prospect of an end to IAF support "has been good for us, because it has forced [us] to find new ways to generate revenues," said Eduardo Torres, CAMPO's president. Although CAMPO had always done some work on a fee-for-service basis, since 2000, it has boosted non-grant revenues by developing goat ranches to produce meat, milk and hides, and worm composting projects to produce worms and organic

fertilizer, said César Morales, CAMPO's director for sustainable development.

### The challenge of the global market

The pressing need for effective management in beneficiary enterprises, as opposed to the grantee organizations themselves, has been the focus of efforts undertaken by Asesoría Técnica de Comunidades Oaxaqueñas (ASETECO), one of several IAF-supported agencies that have worked with rural communities in Oaxaca, one of Mexico's poorest states. Under the direction of Rodolfo López, ASETECO has played a significant role in the development and professionalization of management at the community forest enterprises (CFEs), businesses collectively owned by communities to manage the cutting, milling and commercialization of forest resources on their lands.

The CFEs are diversified companies. Among their core forest-products businesses are sawmills, drying kilns and furniture. Other divisions feature sustainably harvested non-timber forest products, such as bottled spring water and mushrooms, and even ecotourism or adventure travel services. A study conducted by ASETECO in 1998 reported that 33 communities in the association of community forest enterprises reported profits of \$1.8 million, yielding dividend income of \$130 per capita over and above the income from jobs generated by the CFEs and the infrastructure development they finance.

Since 1989, ASETECO has served as a sort of management consultancy to the CFEs and other ventures. IAF grants in the early 1990s were instrumental in establishing the basis for ASETECO's activities with the CFEs. Among other achievements, ASETECO assisted in the formation of a CFE association which successfully argued for the reimbursement of certain federal taxes to the CFEs that financed the same sorts of public works in their communities that the tax money would ostensibly fund. A second IAF grant of \$356,000, from 1997 to 2000, supported ASETECO's continuing work on other issues related to the forest sector and assisted enterprises in areas other than forest products, such as a cooperative to produce chocolate.

As the forest products sector in Mexico and other major export markets becomes increasingly competi-



MARCELO DE OLIVEIRA

*IBASE's legendary leader Herbert de Souza, affectionately known throughout Brazil as Betinho, provided for an orderly transition to new leadership when he discovered he was terminally ill, thereby securing the organization's sustainability.*

tive, the CFEs need all the assistance they can get to enhance efficiency, develop markets and increase valued added. The challenge for the communities, however, has been to balance the need for professional management with the deeply engrained notion that all able-bodied residents should have a chance to hold jobs in the community enterprises. While this system of "rotation" has certainly increased the need for training provided by ASETECO and other organizations, it has also hindered CFE performance. As donor support has begun to dry up, the CFEs have been increasingly reluctant to pay the full cost of ASETECO's services. Consequently, the hitherto profitable enterprises are less likely to receive the support they need, given their management system, to meet increasingly tougher competition from producers overseas. As for ASETECO, its sustainability has eroded along with that of the CFEs.

Econergy's review of a small segment of the IAF's portfolio demonstrates positive results in terms of

the organizations' sustainability and even more favorable outcomes with regard to the community. The results of the survey underscore the importance of effective management, diversification of revenues and community engagement in project implementation. In the future, globalization promises to pose significant challenges to communities where IAF-supported organizations work, while at the same time offering opportunities. Organizations that are equipped to navigate in the turbulent waters of the global environment, and to attract additional grant and other resources to build up their capabilities and capital bases, will continue to operate well into the future.

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*Edward Hoyt is vice present of Econergy International Corporation, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm specializing in development, energy and environmental issues.*

## Partnership Addresses Poverty along the U.S.–Mexico Border

“As one of nine founding members of the U.S.-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership, the Inter-American Foundation hopes local, regional and national actors will expand their efforts to address poverty and support community foundations along the border,” said David Valenzuela of the new funding coalition whose full complement met in April.

The Partnership includes the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Fundación Gonzalo Río-Arronte, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Houston Endowment, McCune Charitable Foundation, Meadows Foundation and the Mott Foundation as well as 20 community foundations from both sides of the border. The nonprofit Synergos Institute was hired as managing partner of the initiative.

To improve the quality of life of disadvantaged border communities, the Partnership is building and strengthening the leadership, programs and resources of its local community foundation members who have matched the coalition’s \$10 million commitment with \$10 million of their own. The Partnership has already channeled one-third of its funding via direct grants for three-year periods. The goal is to root development efforts in local participation, build social capital and encourage cross-border collaboration.

“This partnership is a historic event,” said Enrique Suárez of Fundación Comunitaria de la Frontera Norte in Ciudad Juárez (across from El Paso, Texas), a Partnership member and an IAF grantee. “Two very different countries come together to address common critical needs through a philanthropic network. Mexico and the U.S. assume shared responsibility.” Six other Mexican foundations are Partnership members: Fundación Comunitaria Matamoros, Fundación Comunitaria Tecate, Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense-Juárez, Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense-Ojinaga, Fundación del Empresariado Sonorense-Nogales (bordering Arizona) and Fundación Internacional de la Comunidad (in Baja California).

Of these, three have been implementing projects with IAF support. Fundación Comunitaria de la Frontera Norte uses its \$315,000 IAF award and \$1,072,100 of its own funds toward development projects designed and managed by community groups and NGOs. With an IAF grant of \$372,500 and \$631,090 of its own resources, Fundación del Empresariado Sonorense assists two projects managed by local NGOs in Hermosillo and Nogales and conducts expanded fund-raising programs. Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense applied its IAF grant of \$272,514 and \$574,147 of its own funding toward a credit program for micro-businesses—85 percent owned by women—throughout the state of Chihuahua.

Participants on the U.S. side of the border include the Arizona Community Foundation, Brownsville Community Foundation, Brush Country and South Texas Foundation/Laredo, Cochise Community Foundation (in southeastern Arizona), El Paso Community Foundation, New Mexico Community Foundation, San Diego Foundation, Santa Cruz Community Foundation (in southwestern Arizona), Texas Valley Communities Foundation, Border Women’s Development Fund and Yuma Community Foundation. Among other U.S.-based organizations in the Partnership are the Mascareñas Foundation (in El Paso) and International Community Foundation (in San Diego). Both direct their grant-making across the border in Mexican communities.

“The collaboration of international, national and regional funders with local community foundations holds great hope for developing and implementing strategic plans for systemic change in the border region. Partnership resources will help create and establish long-term collaboration among private and public organizations, both along and across the U.S.-Mexico border,” said Estelle Wick of the advisory board of the Cochise Community Foundation in Sierra Vista, Arizona.

For more information, log onto [www.borderpartnership.org](http://www.borderpartnership.org).—Robert J. Sogge, senior Foundation representative for Mexico and the Caribbean

## GDF in the Horn of Africa

The *Grassroots Development Framework* (GDF), the IAF's instrument for measuring the tangible and intangible results of its investment, has been widely adopted, most recently by Oxfam Canada in Africa. Oxfam Canada's Raymond Genesse first came across the GDF in November 1997 at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Brighton, England. Genesse, who was on his way to Ethiopia, was at IDS to research ways to fine tune the bilateral Horn of Africa Capacity Building Program (CBP), promoting the emergence of new relationships among citizens, their organizations and governments.

Oxfam's CBP draws on the writings of Goran Hyden, a political science professor at the University of Florida, who is the author of *No Shortcuts to Progress* and, with Michael Bratton, *Governance and Politics in Africa*. Hyden's concept of the civic public realm outlines three interconnected axes: citizen influence, social interactions, and responsive and responsible governments. When they constructively interact, the civic public realm materializes. Oxfam has translated each axis into a menu of skills and attitudes essential for the actualization of the civic public realm.

At the time of the CBP's launching five years ago, staff realized that the indicators formulated to track the program's progress were no match for its theoretical base, hence the need for further research at IDS. A careful review of the GDF suggested that its insights and perspectives provided ground to augment Hyden's concept and to facilitate and monitor its application in the Horn of Africa. Two consultations with IAF's Office of Evaluation provided an opportunity to learn from IAF's experience and research in measuring the unfolding of civil society in Latin America. The GDF, which came out of IAF's 30 years

of funding projects, is configured graphically as a three-leveled cone depicting a framework for the impact of development from the bottom up—on individuals, organizations and society. Connecting the cone's middle and the upper segments, *organizational culture/capacity* and *community norms/policy environment*, to Hyden's three axes significantly enriched CBP's methodology. CBP staff selected and contextualized 15 of IAF's 45 indicators to monitor its six overall results and, with partners across the Horn, for each individual project.

The GDF provided a platform for better informed and more structured dialogue with stakeholders in Africa and in Canada, enabling them to clearly docu-

ment progress or lack thereof. Indicators such as *local resource mobilization, adaptability, organizational relationships, legislative influence* proved effective "eye openers" for many civil society

organizations and stimulated a learning process and behavior changes. Organizations from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan requested photocopies of the IAF's performance indicators and incorporated a number in self-assessment processes. Some local organizations, for example, started monitoring the outcome of their efforts to mobilize local resources by using the indicator *sustainability*.

The synergy created between the concept of civic public realm articulated by Hyden and the GDF developed by IAF was contextualized to the reality of the Horn of Africa. It is now of interest for the work of other international development organizations such as Care International and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction. For more on the GDF, log onto [www.iaf.gov](http://www.iaf.gov).—*Raymond Genesse, HOACBP program manager, Oxfam Canada, and Ephrem Tadesse, graduate student, formerly with Oxfam Canada, Addis Ababa*

*The GDF provided a platform for better informed and more structured dialogue with stakeholders in Africa and in Canada.*

## Network Emphasizes Grassroots

The Corporate Foundation Network of the Americas was launched on September 21 in Miami to raise the visibility of grassroots development and to channel more funding to self-help development projects in the Americas. Drawing from IAF's many partnerships with individual foundations over the past decade, Walter Price, IAF director of corporate outreach, had proposed the concept a year earlier.

Represented at the Miami meeting were 27 foundations with years of experience funding and monitoring grassroots development projects: Fundación Arcor, Fundación Juan Minetti and Fundación Telefónica from Argentina; Fundação Acesita para o Desenvolvimento Social, Fundação Odebrecht, Fundação Otacilio Coser and GIFE from Brazil; Fundación Inti Raymi from Bolivia; Fundación Pehuen, Fundación Prehumana and Fundación Telefónica from Chile; Fundación Corona, Asociación Colombiana de Fundaciones Petroleras, Fundación Restrepo Barco, Fundación EPSA and Fundación Smurfit-Carton from Colombia; Fundación Esquel and Fundación LANN from Ecuador; CEMEFI, Fundación Coca-Cola, Fundación Dibujando un Mañana, Fundación Merced, Fundación Wal-Mart Mexico and Industrias Peñoles from Mexico; the Levi Strauss Foundation and the Avina Foundation from the United States; Fundación ACAC from Uruguay; and Fundación Polar from Venezuela.

At its first meeting, the general assembly elected an 11-member coordinating committee with IAF as a non-voting observer. CEMEFI is currently serving a one-year term as secretariat and is collaborating with Fundación ACAC on designing a Web site; Fundación Corona is spearheading a training program for new members. Per its cooperative agreement with the IAF, Fundación Juan Minetti is preparing a grassroots development paradigm and identifying best practices as part of its learning initiative. The entire network expects to adopt one common system for measuring results of grassroots funding, which will serve as a basis for gauging its members' philanthropic investment throughout the Americas.

## IAF at CSR Conference

Participants in IAF-funded projects represented nearly one-quarter of the panelists at the Americas Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Miami, Florida, Sept. 22-24. The Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States and the World Bank organized the event attended by more than 500 corporate executives as well as representatives from NGOs, corporate foundations and government, including 50 sponsored by the IAF. Audra Jones, IAF representative for Argentina and Venezuela, moderated the panel presenting highlights from IAF's corporate partnering initiatives:

- Vicente Fenoll, director of IAF grantee FinComun, a micro-credit project in Mexico City, and Santiago Mariscal, a project manager at Grupo Bimbo, the world's third largest bread producer, described the partnership that, among other features, lets FinComun loan officers ride



PAULA DURBIN

*Fundación Minetti, founded by a multinational cement corporation in Cordoba, Argentina, participated in the Americas Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility and the launching of the Corporate Foundation Network. Among other projects, the IAF partner supports Radio Sur's Innovative Pedagogical Strategies for Education in Escuela San José Obrero where Rodrigo Aguayo, above, and Marcelo Farías, above right, rehearse for a live broadcast while their classmates wait their turn. For more on Minetti's activities, see page 9.*

along in delivery trucks to reach new clients in low-income neighborhoods.

- Judith Morrison, IAF representative for Brazil and Colombia, and Ceres Lois Bertelli Gabardo of Fundação O Boticario, the philanthropic arm of a Brazilian cosmetic giant, reported on the company's dedication of 1 percent of its gross profits to grassroots projects affecting the environment in the Amazon.
- Andrea Schettini of Fundación Minetti, founded by a multinational cement corporation, explained its subgrants to more than 200 community groups in Cordoba, Argentina.

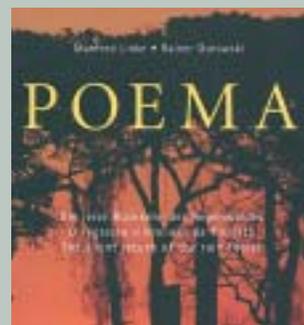


PAULA DURBIN

Other conference panelists associated with IAF's projects included Joachim Zahn, president of DaimlerChrysler in Brazil; Vicky Schreiber of Brazil's Poemar; Jesús Moreno, president of the Dominican Republic's Empresas Bon; Evaydée Pérez of Alianza ONG in the Dominican Republic; Richard Jones of Barbados' Community Tourism Foundation; Felipe Cajiga of the Mexican Center for Philanthropy; Henry Day of Perú 2021; Humberto Rada of the Bolivian mining company Inti Raymi; Ralph Edmond, president of Farmatriz and Haitian Partners for Christian Development; and Helio Mattar, president of Akatu Institute and also affiliated with Brazil's Ethos Institute. Presentations are accessible on [www.csramericas.org](http://www.csramericas.org).

## POEMA in Print

A gala reception at the Brazilian Embassy in Washington on Oct. 25 marked the launching of *The Silent Return of the Forest* by IAF grantee Poverty and Environment in Amazonia (POEMA). Located in Pará, Brazil, POEMA targets poverty reduction through the sound use of biodiversity and natural resources. With photos by Manfred Linke and text by Rainer Osnowski, the book chronicles a decade of POEMA's activities to promote sustainable development in Amazonia, including a key partnership with DaimlerChrysler. Between 2000 and 2002 the Inter-American Foundation committed \$262,208 to POEMA. Additional input from the grantee and its affiliate, the University of Pará, has totaled \$186,000; DaimlerChrysler's contribution has exceeded \$1 million in facilities, equipment and funds.



POEMA's relationship with the automobile manufacturer began with DaimlerChrysler's decision to use a material made of coconut fiber to upholster its cars. POEMA trained local residents in technology, administration and marketing as well as in innovative agroforestry practices resulting in a more than four-fold increase in the coconut yield per tree. POEMA also resolved the challenges of transport and production deadlines. Although DaimlerChrysler remains a prime customer, POEMA's clientele now includes General Motors and Honda, and the venture has translated into 4,000 jobs. To learn more about POEMA and its partnership, log onto [www.iaf.gov](http://www.iaf.gov), then click on grants, corporate outreach and case studies.

## Being Prepared—for Careers in the Printing Industry

Riso, Inc., a major manufacturer of printing systems, has joined the Inter-American Foundation and the Haitian Scouts (Association Nationale des Scouts d'Haïti) in an innovative job-training program.

Now, as part of the program, Scouts from throughout Haiti are learning to maintain and repair Riso equipment. This complements an existing educational effort that has already turned the Scouts' Port-au-Prince headquarters into a professional printing operation capable of producing and selling Scout manuals and basic education texts.

IAF's grant of \$100,300, awarded to the Scouts in 2001, supports instruction in solar energy and informatics as well as printing, which Riso has supplemented by sending specialized trainers to Haiti from its corporate center in Miami. To maximize the benefit of working with the Riso technicians, the IAF

grant also covers the cost of English-Creole interpretation for the courses.

José Fernández, a Riso technical trainer from Miami, spent two weeks in Port-au-Prince in April 2002 covering basic electronic and mechanical principles for the initial class of nine young men and women Scouts. "The students' eagerness and curiosity helped overcome the language barrier, and made for a rewarding training experience," said Fernández. After an internship, the Scout trainees are placed in businesses that maintain and repair printing equipment in five Haitian cities: Port-au-Prince, Port-au-Pays, Les Cayes, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïve and Jacmel.

"Riso sees its participation in this grant as advancing its interest in providing integral technical training and support in the development of its dealers' technical personnel," said Sonia Michel, Riso's senior marketing specialist. She pointed out that Riso's printing systems reliably produce millions of copies using a relatively simple design that the young Scouts can master quickly. The products are free from ozone emissions, toxic fumes, flammable liquids and ultraviolet light, reflecting Riso's strong commitment to the environment as well as to education. Each printer consumes the same amount of electricity as an ordinary household light bulb, an advantage in Haiti where electric power is scarce and expensive.



CARLO DADE

*Haitian Scouts learn to maintain and repair printers from José Fernández of Riso, Inc.*

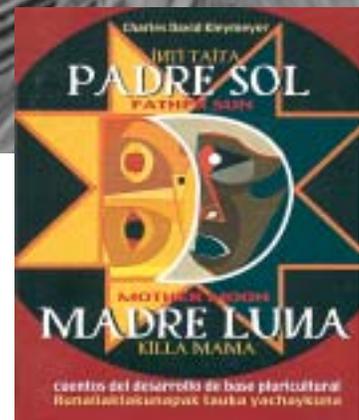


## Father Sun, Mother Moon: Stories of Pluricultural Grassroots Development

By Charles David Kleymeyer

Quito, Ecuador: Abya Yala, 2000

Reviewed by Olivia Cadaval



Writing this review is like continuing an ongoing conversation with Charles Kleymeyer, better known to me as Chuck in the U.S. and Carlos David in Latin America. We first met years ago in Washington, D.C., at gatherings of a local storytelling group. Later I got to know Chuck in his professional capacity as the Inter-American Foundation's representative for Ecuador. In the 1980s, he invited me to participate in an *encuentro*, an exchange of cultural projects among grassroots organizations from Amazonian, highland and coastal Ecuador—the three regions that provide the substance of *Father Sun, Mother Moon*. The *encuentro* focused on the concept that Chuck would

later describe as “cultural energy” in his 1994 book *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development: Cases from Latin America and the Caribbean*:

Cultural energy is a prime motivator of social action among individuals, groups, communities and even nations. It is generated by common people through everyday creative expression, in work and in “entertainment,” which often overlap. It is also galvanized by the concerted efforts of cultural activists who consciously use it as a development tool. They realize that the presence or absence of cultural energy can make the difference in whether a project is launched, sustained, and expanded.



PATRICK BRESLIN

Cultural energy is a powerful force in the creation and reinforcement of group solidarity, organizational efficacy, participation and volunteer spirit—all of which are basic ingredients of successful grassroots development initiatives.

Cultural energy, “generated by common people through everyday creative expression,” colored Chuck’s professional life and also inspired a program on culture and sustainable development at the 1994 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which, together with his IAF colleague Kevin Healy, we organized to celebrate the IAF’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Latin American grassroots organizations participating in the event

displayed the diverse forms of cultural energy that had sustained their development projects.

In his trilingual book *Father Sun, Mother Moon: Stories of Pluricultural Grassroots Development*, Chuck draws on his storytelling skills, social science background and professional apprenticeship in rural Ecuador to offer yet another perspective on cultural energy. *Father Sun* and *Mother Moon* are central figures in the Andean cosmology and their significance is set out in the opening song of this homage to the peoples on Ecuador’s varied cultural landscape. The backbone of this slender volume, which includes riddles and poetry from Ecuador’s oral tradition, is a quartet of stories that draw us into the lives of individuals with whom the author worked and into the legacy of colonialism that they—and he—have faced with dignity, humility and determination.

The first and third stories chronicle the respective struggles of Anselmo Chumbi, an Andean farmer and community leader, and Marcelino Montañas, known as El Toro, an Afro-Ecuadorian fisherman. Chumbi’s tale of family life and agrarian reform unfolds against the harsh mountain environment and the class conflicts that tear at rural Ecuador’s social fabric. El Toro’s takes place on a tropical coast in a context of commercial exploitation.

Details from regional life styles and traditions infuse each story with cultural energy that, as the author explains, “helps people to reach within themselves to find a previously hidden reservoir of strength and resolve. It stirs their imaginations and their longing to transform their lives, and it shores up their confidence and courage to face the challenges that lie ahead.”

In the second story, Carlos David is himself the protagonist. As a representative of the IAF, he is to speak to an agricultural cooperative that has just been awarded a grant to farm the land of a hacienda expropriated by the government’s agrarian reform agency. As he stands looking down on a bullring from the



All Photos: Ecuadorians of indigenous and African descent at the Encuentro Cultural in Quito in 1996.

folklorist Juan Garcia, traveling from the highlands to the Amazonian rainforest of Ecuador. It contains references to the first Amazonian Folklore Festival, the *encuentro* mentioned above; a decade of other festivals, workshops and events highlighting the relationship between cultural revitalization and economic development; the Culture and Development program in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival; and the national festival held in Ecuador in 1996. This narrative effectively celebrates the long journey of both indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities to full participation in a pluricultural society offering “a vision for the future of inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance.”

I can't speak for the Quechua but both English and Spanish are a pleasure to read. I assume the publisher played a critical role in the editing process and this contribution should have been explicitly acknowledged. However, the omission is minor. Chuck Kleymeyer's stories succeed in offering a different vision of Ecuador, but one that is nonetheless understandable to readers

heights of the hacienda's veranda, the repression of the past becomes all too real. Viscerally overcome—“crushed by the weight of history”—he loses his voice. A wise old woman then leads him into the bullring, filled with people from the community assembled to hear him, and he recovers. The woman's energy humbles Carlos David, reversing the all too typical relationship between funder and funded. This story would be first on my reading list for any outside specialist—ethnographer, developer or activist—approaching an unfamiliar community.

The final story, in fact, begins with a trip Carlos David takes with Afro-Ecuadorian storyteller and

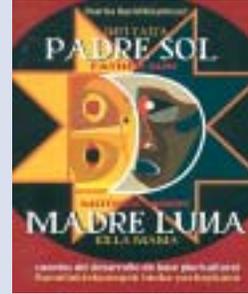
unfamiliar with the country's wealth of ethnic traditions. Moreover this rich collection of material carries a message of deep gratitude and respect to the Ecuadorians who opened their doors to the author and shared their cultural energy.

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*Olivia Cadaval is a program curator and chair of Cultural Research and Education at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. To obtain this book, contact [www.abayayala.org](http://www.abayayala.org) or [atepicabooks@epica.org](mailto:atepicabooks@epica.org).*

## Life or Dignity: Dreams of the Bull

From *Father Sun, Mother Moon* by Charles David Kleymeyer



### El Toro

Just before dawn, Marcelino Montaña slowly sat up in his bed. Staring through the open window of his thatched hut, he could barely see the river through the morning mist. He looked down at his sleeping wife, curled around their new baby, and he decided to try his luck net fishing on the high seas.

Almost no one in the village of El Cuerval—The Crow Rookery—knew him by the name of Marcelino. They all called him “El Toro”—the Bull—on account of his short stature and tremendous broad shoulders and back. He wore his hair in a large Afro and was very soft spoken. His mild, smooth style covered over a firm sense of self. He was proud of being black, the grandson of one man who was born a slave, and another descended from maroons, shipwrecked slaves who escaped into the tropical forests to form their own free communities and survive. To this day, you can travel way back up the River Santiago, and then up the River Onzole, and find people in Afro-Ecuadorian villages who still use African words like *tunda* and *cununo* and *cachimba* and *cotroco* (for evil spirit, drum, pipe and fish trap).

It was always Marcelino—El Toro—whom regional activists like Juan García, also born and raised in El Cuerval, called upon to gather the village fisherfolk together for a meeting. El Toro would go from house to house, quietly talking and talking until each man or woman promised to set aside what they had planned to do and come join the discussion on how to organize the local communities into a force that could effectively fight poverty and injustice in the region. By forming a fishing cooperative. Or building a community store. Or finding a way to save the mangroves from destruction.

### Leaving the house

Marcelino, El Toro, rubbed his face with his hands and lifted himself out of the bamboo platform bed. Outside, he dipped water from the rain barrel with a gourd and drank as much as he could hold, filled a plastic bottle for the day, and took down his nets from the poles where they had been drying since mid-week. Then he pulled a handful of bananas from a large bunch hanging on the porch and dropped them into a woven shoulder bag, for his lunch.

He had no stomach for food right now. He would eat a bowl of plantain soup for breakfast in Limones if there were time. That thought reminded him to take two 1,000-sucre notes—each worth half a U.S. dollar—from the can next to the image of the Virgin of Carmen and stuff them in the pocket of his cut-off shorts. Grabbing a paddle that stood in the corner, he picked up his nets, the water bottle, the shoulder bag and a gourd for bailing water, and he walked down to the riverbank.

The Santiago River is so wide where El Cuerval is located that a person can hardly see the mangrove swamps on the other side. The village is close enough to the sea that the river there reverses direction when the tide rises, and is too salty to boil and use for drinking. When El Toro was young, dolphins would swim up river leaping and diving by his house, but no longer. Once a dying dolphin washed up on the beach in front of El Cuerval, maybe sick from too much oil and gas from the boat motors—who knows? That evening before sunset, a half dozen other dolphins arrived just off shore and swam slowly up and down until nightfall. They never came back.

Just as the rising sun appeared over the distant treetops, El Toro threw his gear into the dugout canoe and pushed it across the damp sandy beach and then



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over the mud and into the river. As the front of the canoe swung around he walked into the water and, throwing one leg over the side, stepped in. Still standing, he leaned and picked up the paddle and began to push the boat out into the current. In an hour he would be in Limones.

### On the way to Limones

It used to be, when he was a boy, El Toro didn't even need to go out in a boat. He could stand on the beach in front of El Cuerval and cast his nets, and in three to four hours he would have enough catch to feed his family for two days with some left over for his grandmother and his four aunts. Then, when all the commercial boats arrived in the area to catch tuna and shrimp and anchovies, there soon weren't enough fish anymore. There's a fellow at the World Wildlife Fund who says that those big boats with their mile-long nets throw away 20 pounds of fish they don't want for every pound of shrimp caught. And no one knows how many dolphins drown in the drag nets of the tuna boats. That's another reason people rarely see dolphins any more.

Because of the commercial boats, the men had to go farther and farther out to sea, as many as five to 10 miles, and fish all day sometimes just to get dinner and breakfast. When it stormed or the seas were too rough or the currents shifted and the fish weren't to be found, the women got in the dugout canoes and paddled through the estuaries, over to the mangrove swamps, to gather crabs and clams and other shellfish. The mangroves were the women's bank accounts—always there for making withdrawals on a rainy day.

But now there were big shrimp-farming companies coming in to raise shrimp and make daily shipments to the United States and Europe. They brought in their great yellow bulldozers and pushed down the centuries-old mangrove trees to make rows and rows of huge, rectangular ponds for their shrimp larvae to grow in. The women had to go farther and farther to find stands of mangrove, and often they ran into women from other communities who had gotten there first.

So that is why Marcelino, El Toro, was forced to go far out on the high seas in search of food for his

family. That day, for example, he had decided to paddle the hour to Limones and then board a steamer bound for the city of Esmeraldas. About a third of the way through the day-long trip, he would signal the captain to stop and lower him over the side in his dugout so he could make his catch and paddle back to El Cuerval as the tide came in.

As he paddled to Limones, he passed mammoth floating rafts of newly felled trees heading to the sawmill and the plywood factories for shipment to Japan. He waved to the men steering the rafts, cooking their breakfast on small earthen-pot fires in front of lean-to huts they had fashioned out of palm fronds. They would live on those rafts for however many days the journey took. He also paddled by Punta Venado, a Chachi Indian burial village, deserted except for the occasional lone woman bringing food to departed souls who lived there under the silent thatched houses on stilts.

Most of the villages this close to the sea were black, but farther up river there were other Indians as well, such as the Awá, who had fled the massacres in Colombia earlier in this century and were still afraid to return. Now, they would never go back, having found a new homeland.

### Boarding the steamer

When he arrived in Limones, El Toro found the steamer he was looking for, walked up the wooden gangplank with his gear and dropped it in a corner. Then he went back down for his dugout canoe, grasped it with both hands on the gunwales, and, heaving it up and over his head, balanced it upside down on his wide shoulders and carried it up the gangplank to set on a stack of barrels.

One of the dock workers told him the captain had yet to arrive, so El Toro went back down the gangplank to the dock and entered a cooperative store run by several local women. There he spooned down a bowl of lukewarm plantain soup that an old white-headed woman dipped out of a pot. She kept stirring and stirring that pot over a dying charcoal fire in a discarded oil drum. "You stay here with me, handsome," she muttered, looking up from her bent position, and she reached out and grabbed the pocket of his cutoffs. "You won't catch nothin' but the *rivié* himself today. And you know he can be worse than the *tunda*."

El Toro smiled and squeezed her shoulder with his free hand. "I'm too smart for the *rivié*, Gran. He



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only carries off fishermen who are lost after dark, right? I won't be fishing late today, Gran. I'll just be a few hours out on the sea."

She stood up, but her back kept its crook. "I know all this," she said, shaking her head. "But that trickster nephew of mine, Brer Rabbit, he told me the *tunda* couldn't find no more boys in the forest, 'cause the forest is done cut down. So, the *tunda*, she taken to swimmin' out to sea, looking for whatever she can find."

"I think Brer Rabbit has turned to tricking *you*, Granny. Maybe he has changed his diet to fish, now that his briar patch is nothin' but one big shrimp pond!" He fished one of the thousand-sucre notes from his pocket and pressed it into her hand.

"No, no, that's too much," she said.

"Not for you, Gran," answered El Toro. "That's for your soup *and* your worry!" He turned and hurried up the gangplank just behind the captain and pushed the 1,000-sucre note into the man's sunburned hand.

### Out at sea

The ship soon left the dock. Within an hour the sky began to darken and the sea grew rough. El Toro stared at the water and the horizon, and he shook his head. By the time they were at the point where he would have to put in, the sea was worse. The captain and crew implored him to go on with them to the city of Esmeraldas.

"I'll send your dugout back to Limones tomorrow," promised the captain, "on the first steamer. And you can pick it up there tomorrow or the next day, and try again. Meanwhile, you can return home tonight by bus."

El Toro stood staring at the deck while they talked. He looked at his bare feet, his cut-off shorts, and his old tee shirt. How could he arrive in Esmeraldas dressed like this? People would think he was a homeless tramp. And with what money would he pay for food and bus fare for the six-hour ride to El Cuerval? But on top of all that, he would arrive home late, without his canoe, without his nets and without food for his family, who for certain would be waiting on the shore, watching. He thanked the captain and crew, but said no. He would fish and



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return home with his catch, even if he had to sit in his canoe to paddle and cast his nets, rather than standing up as usual. Reluctantly, the crew lowered El Toro over the side and onto the rolling waves.

Just before dawn of the following day, Juan García was awakened by a group of village fishermen at his Tía María's house in El Cuerval. "Juan, Juan! *Venga*. Come with us. El Toro is missing!"

For two days they searched for him. Finally they found his body on a remote beach and, a few hundred yards away, his dugout canoe and his fishing nets. In a silent procession, staring down at their feet, friends carried El Toro in his dugout, up the path to the coastal road. Bus after bus refused to take the body in the canoe back to El Cuerval. Finally, they convinced a truck driver, who was looking for fish to buy, to let them ride up top behind the cab.

### The funeral

The next day they held the funeral. There was no priest for miles around, and most of the villagers were only nominally Catholic anyway. So like always, they carried out the burial in their own manner. Only this time, it was the decision of El Toro's friends to send him off with as much as they could remember of the old traditional ways.

The men brought drums and the women brought long-stemmed flowers and banana leaves. When the box he was laid in was lowered into the grave, they filled the hole and mounded it over with earth. Then they covered the hill of soil with leaves and water lily flowers. Finally, the men dragged their drums onto the mound, and deep into the night, while the

women sang, they drummed and drummed—drummed until their hands bled.

The more it hurt, the less *it* hurt.

Finally, old Don Eusebio stood up from the log he was sitting on under an avocado tree. He straightened his white shirt and re-lit his *cachimba*. Don Eusebio was the best black *decimero*—the finest oral poet—in those parts. Sometimes he recited old poems, some of them dating back centuries to Spain and recording ancient events. Others he composed on the spot—to commemorate or critique or lament a local happening. Every *décima* began the same way: a four-line quatrain and then four ten-line stanzas. The people loved them and learned their favorite ones by heart.

Eusebio walked slowly over to the grave and stepped into the circle of drummers and singers. He took the *cachimba* from between his tobacco-stained teeth, pointed the stem at the crowd and, sweeping his arm around in a great arc, he said, “Now all of you listen close, here. I just made up a *décima* for El Toro.” He paused a moment and combed his white beard with the fingers of his free hand. “The title of my *décima* is ‘The Day the Great Bull Died in the Sea’.”

Don Eusebio proceeded to recite his poem in a leathery voice but a voice so strong that the people standing at the back of the crowd could hear perfectly. His *décima* told the whole story, just like it happened: how El Toro went to Limones and why he had to go; how he boarded the steamer and how he had himself lowered over the side onto the rolling waves. And it told why he didn’t pay heed to the captain and crew when they implored him to go on with them to the city of Esmeraldas, why he just couldn’t do that.

And to the best of my memory, this is how the *décima* ended: “Brothers and Sisters, I finish my story, of the day the great bull died in the sea, with this simple question for each one of you, and for me. El Toro lost his life but he kept his dignity. When, in God’s name, will a black man, or a black woman, be able to have *both*? When will we be able to choose life and dignity?”

## Afterward

Now, you want to know something? This story also has a happy ending. From that day on, Juan García says, the people of El Cuerval and the neighboring villages began to change. Stunned by the account of El Toro dying for his self respect—a story which was carried far and wide by Don Eusebio’s *décima*—they began to return to their ancient roots. The young people collected stories and *décimas* and traditional knowledge from the old folks, and they printed them up and handed them out to the local schoolteachers to use in class. And the men who drummed that night? And the women who sang? They formed a group that now travels around the region—playing music and telling stories and *décimas*, teaching people how to prevent cholera and malaria, and convincing them to join together to build bigger, safer boats and to fish cooperatively, with up to six men in each canoe.

A larger group, of men and women from over 20 villages, worked for years writing letters and sending plans to the city of Esmeraldas and to Quito, trying to get a mangrove preserve established on the coast of Esmeraldas province. Finally, in frustration, they piled on buses one afternoon and traveled 12 hours to Quito where they sat down on the floor in the office of the director of the National Forestry Program. Two days and nights they sat there, until he signed a decree to establish the preserve. And although that mangrove preserve will have some fancy name on the official maps, the local people just call it “Sueños de El Toro.” Dreams of the Bull.

And that’s all I have to say about that.

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*Charles David Kleymeyer, a development sociologist and senior fellow at the Center for the Support of Native Lands, worked at the IAF for 21 years as a Foundation representative in six countries, primarily Ecuador, and has written extensively on culture and development. “Vida o Dignidad” first appeared in Southern Indiana Review 6, no. 1 (1999).*



### Capital Social

By Ramón Daubón and  
Alfredo Carrasquillo

Tal Cual: San Juan, 2002

Available in Spanish

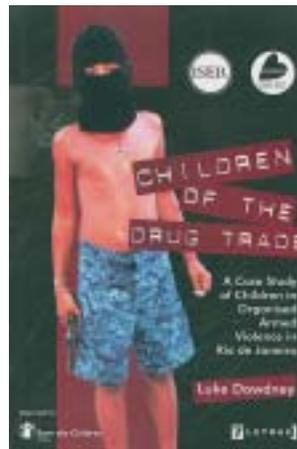
One of the most interesting aspects of *Capital Social* [Social Capital] is that its two essays are written by authors from Puerto Rico

with very different backgrounds: Ramón Daubón, IAF's vice president for programs, is an economist and expert on socio-economic cooperation and development; Alfredo Carrasquillo has a psychoanalyst's worldview, albeit with a long experience in community development. Daubón's essay starts off with a definition of social capital: "a set of understandings that normalize relationships among persons and the institutions they create in order to have dealings with each other and to ensure their smooth interaction." Throughout the text, he enriches this definition, sprinkling theoretical reflection with entertaining examples and comparisons. Carrasquillo, for his part, concentrates on the intrinsic complexity of the concept. Both exercises are highly valuable and will be especially interesting to those who are uncomfortable with the seeming ambiguity of the concept.

The authors present three forms of social capital: *Linkage social capital* refers to the relationships and values that unite us within a community or group but also distinguish us from others; *bridge social capital* is defined as those relationships that unite us with other communities or groups; *access or connection social capital* enables us to associate ourselves with the power structures. Daubón considers the last two key to a society's process of economic and social development. Linkage social capital can be harmful to this process, as Carrasquillo says, and can work against bridge social capital.

Ramón Daubón uses the concept of social capital to analyze the processes of institutional change and

citizen participation and to link the democratization of societies with their socio-economic development. He identifies social capital as the key factor in development processes and is undaunted by the challenge of seeking formulas for building and expanding it. His essay concludes with 13 very direct, very clear, very recommendable appeals to all who are involved in cooperation for development.—*Manuel Lobato Vico, professor, University of Puerto Rico*



### Children of the Drug Trade: A Case Study of Children in Organised Armed Violence in Rio de Janeiro

By Luke Dowdney  
7Letras: Rio de Janeiro,  
2003

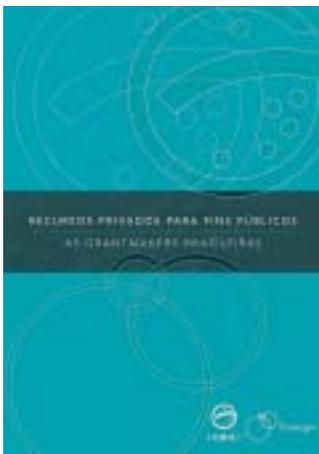
Available in Portuguese,  
English and Spanish

*Children of the Drug Trade: A Case Study on Children in Organised Armed Violence in Rio de Janeiro* focuses on youth involvement in Rio's drug factions in the city's *favelas*, or shantytowns, the location of much of Rio's violent crime, and concludes that firearms are the leading external cause of death among Rio youth under 18 years old. According to research by Brazilian NGOs Viva Rio, an IAF grantee, and ISER, young people are, in fact, more likely to die from gunfire in Rio de Janeiro than in Colombia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Israel/Palestine, regions currently at war. Between 1987 and 2001, for example, firearms-related injuries killed 3,937 young people in Rio, more than eight times the 467 Israeli and Palestinian children killed in the occupied territories during the same period.

In 1997 author Luke Dowdney, a British anthropologist, began working on issues related to youth and violence as a volunteer with Viva Rio. His work in this area over the past five years has given way to

innovative social projects such as Fight for Peace, a *favela*-based boxing club offering adolescents alternatives to involvement in crime and drug faction employment. His book describes the organization and history of Rio's drug trafficking factions and investigates reasons for the growing use of children in armed confrontations between rival factions and with the police. Among these he cites the small arms and light weapons easily handled by children and the growing acceptance of the drug trade as an economic and social alternative for marginalized young people with few other choices.

Research for the report, conducted over one year, included interviews with former drug traffickers, children in Rio's drug trade and residents of *favela* communities. The findings prompted some international organizations to call for a reclassification of children working in Rio's drug factions as "children in organized armed violence," because the terms "criminal delinquents" or "child soldiers" do not accurately reflect their reality. To order, e-mail [monicacavalcanti@vivario.org.br](mailto:monicacavalcanti@vivario.org.br) or [mariana@vivario.org.br](mailto:mariana@vivario.org.br). The full text can be accessed on the [desarme.org](http://desarme.org) site.—  
*Jessica Galeri, coordinator, Desarme.org, a project of Viva Rio*



**Recursos Privados para Fins Públicos: As Grantmakers Brasileiras**

By *Andres Pablo Falconer and Roberto Vilela*  
 Editora Fundação Peirópolis Ltda: São Paulo, 2001

*Available in Portuguese*

*Recursos Privados para Fins Públicos: As Grantmakers Brasileiras* [Private Resources for Public Ends: Brazilian Grantmakers] investigates the origins of Brazil's third sector and, in particular, the grantmaking organizations within it. At the heart of this book is a study

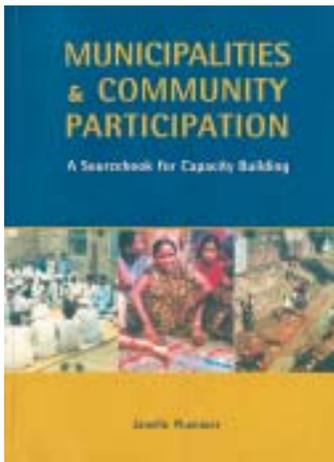
undertaken by the Brazilian nonprofit GIFE (Grupo de Institutos, Fundações e Empresas) and the New York-based Synergos Institute, which the authors analyze in the context of the historical legacy of the Brazilian third sector and the legal environment surrounding it today. (Andres Falconer is a former IAF fellow who worked with Lester Salamon, the leading expert on the third sector.) This bewildering maze is aptly described as "a patchwork quilt of laws from distinct eras, implemented for different motives, created for varied reasons, in constant process of alteration, that constitute an incoherent whole which is incomprehensible and inaccessible to those not well versed in the subject."

Of the 31 organizations studied, 19 claim an affiliation with businesses and the rest identify themselves as nonprofit organizations, families, individuals or religious entities. In profiling the study's participants, the authors highlight insightful statistics and trends. Notably, they have chosen to use the English word grantmaker rather than the Portuguese *doador*, which conjures paternalistic relationships and ineffective social action with unsustainable results.

Interestingly, none of the participants in the study classifies itself as solely a grantmaker: 65 percent claim grantmaking as one of several primary activities and 35 percent state that their grantmaking is not a core objective. Also noteworthy is that 77 percent operate their own projects and programs in addition to awarding grants. Nonetheless this function contributes to the influence of the organizations studied because NGOs and community base groups tend to tailor project proposals to program guidelines in order to maximize their chances of obtaining funding. Keeping the investment priorities of grantmakers in line with community needs and harnessing the social intervention capacity of civil society groups will prove to be two of the greatest challenges and opportunities for the Brazilian third sector as it matures.

The authors candidly address cultural myths surrounding the Brazilian third sector and present thoughtful conclusions regarding the role of corporate foundations, international resources and other

consolidating forces. Most importantly, the fundamental question of sustainability receives considerable treatment. Although *As Grantmakers Brasileiras* analyzes a limited sample of organizations, the book succeeds entirely in its goal of introducing a possible framework for the future study of Brazilian grantmakers. To order, e-mail vendas@editorapeiropolis.com.br.—*Megan Savage, IAF intern*



**Municipalities and  
Community  
Participation: A  
Sourcebook for  
Capacity Building**

*By Janelle Plummer  
Earthscan Publications  
Ltd.: London, 2000*

*Available in English*

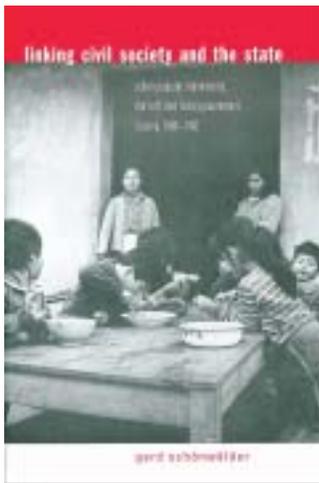
Janelle Plummer's book, *Municipalities & Community Participation: A Sourcebook for Capacity Building*, puts forth a strategic framework through which municipalities can implement participatory processes and establish municipal-community partnerships. But why should municipal units even be concerned with participatory processes? According to Plummer, simply because, coupled with partnerships among municipal organizations, civil society and the private sector, they offer creative and cost-effective solutions to development problems.

Plummer does not underplay the difficulties of introducing participatory processes. She warns that “the development community frequently lacks an appreciation or acknowledgement that the very nature of the conventional municipality is in conflict with the concept of participation and that the whole notion of community-municipal partnerships is somewhat incongruous.” The task at hand is to help municipalities become more responsive, flexible and accountable organizations that work in harmony with

communities. Plummer sees a better quality of life for the poor predicated on strong and sustainable forms of community participation, but she also emphasizes “effective management and leadership [that] will provide the driving force for change, the stimulus for the capacity building process, and will support the implementation initiatives.”

Certainly the IAF would have no argument with this since effective community-municipal partnerships figure prominently in its portfolio. In Ecuador, for example, the Association of Rural Parishes of Cuenca successfully partners with the local municipality in a participatory budgeting process that determines priorities for infrastructure and development projects. In Bolivia, Choquecota's municipality and the Council of *Jilakatas*, or traditional leaders, work together to manage local affairs and improve the community's quality of life. And in El Salvador, Nejapa's municipality takes deliberate steps to bring about changes through good government as well as dialogue and cooperation among a notable collection of former adversaries. The development of these municipalities has proved the importance of giving a voice to their citizens.

Plummer's arguments are also drawn from experience. Her case studies of successful (and unsuccessful) municipal-community partnerships in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Egypt offer those who work with Latin America a glimpse of the process in a different region. This book is a helpful resource for municipal authorities and development professionals interested in incorporating into their work one of the most important components of a good government: a stable, inclusive, participatory engagement between municipalities and their citizens.—*Ana Tenorio, IAF intern*



**Linking Civil Society and the State: Urban Popular Movements, the Left, and Local Government in Peru, 1980–1992**

By Gerd Schönwälder  
 Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, 2002

*Available in English*

In *Linking Civil Society and the State: Urban Popular Movements, the Left, and Local Government in Peru, 1980 – 1992*, Gerd Schönwälder provides a scholastic analysis of urban grassroots organizations: their emergence, development and interaction with central and local authorities. At the center of his analysis lies the ability of these urban movements to shape policies without being co-opted by those they seek to influence. We are left, however, with only a vague sense of the potential for urban movements to strengthen democracy in the process.

Schönwälder's movements emerge in shantytowns and low-income neighborhoods around specific demands addressed to government authorities for housing, infrastructure and other amenities. This means urban movements must forge relations with the state apparatus, usually through alliances with government and political parties or direct political participation by movement leaders—options that must be weighed against the risk of becoming instruments of another's agenda and manipulation by clientelist structures. Independence, although an existing alternative, would limit the group's ability to promote change. A better strategy, Schönwälder suggests, might be coalitions among urban movements, NGOs, political parties and government

authorities, which allow for more autonomy but require great skill.

Schönwälder chronicles Peru's urban movements from the mass emigration to Lima's shantytowns in the 1940s through the attempts by military governments in the 1970's to secure this political base. Eventually, he delves into the relationship between urban movements and leftist local governments during the title decade of decentralization that followed military rule. Citing case studies and interviews with government officials and urban activists, Schönwälder details how shantytown residents adapted participation strategies to achieve their goals in the new political space. Instead of undergoing a teleological evolution though, urban movements shifted back and forth between asserting their independence and responding to the economic decline of the 1980s as *asistencialista* service organizations providing, for example, *comedores populares*, or soup kitchens.

The author's positive but still objective picture of urban movements in Lima is grounded in his research into their successes as well as their failures. As he tells us, imperfect decentralization, cultures of populism and clientelism, and exclusionary political practices reduced the possibility for fostering participatory democracy in urban Peru. Nonetheless Schönwälder draws some hope from the fact that, although weakened, both the urban movement, as a political force, and democracy, as a political ideal, survived the highly centralized (and progressively more corrupt) Fujimori government. He does not suggest ways in which urban movements can force a wider opening now, nor does he provide incentives or conditions that would lead those in power to remove the obstacles to such an opening. Instead, he encourages us to learn from previous events and to continue seeking the conditions that will make full social participation viable.—Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías, IAF program staff assistant



## Gender, Development, and Money

Ed. Caroline Sweetman  
Oxfam GB: Oxford, 2001

Available in English

The nine articles compiled in *Gender, Development, and Money*, part of Oxfam's Focus

on Gender Series, explore various aspects of a key concern within the study of gender and development: the money-power connection and its impact on men and women.

Everyone knows women are less likely than men to possess money. According to the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report*, issued in 1995, women make up 70 percent of the world's poor. How probable is any improvement via the three ways of acquiring wealth legally: inheritance, paid work and loans? Traditional inheritance practices tend to favor men; contemporary gender-blind inheritance laws are easily circumvented. Women's labor has historically been unpaid or underpaid. Lenders are often unwilling to extend credit to women. It is these last two possibilities that *Gender, Development, and Money* goes on to discuss most thoroughly.

Anyone who sees hope for women in the disappearance of smokestack industries should read Daphne Jaysinghe's discussion of factory employees in St. Lucia, Barbados, and Trinidad. As low-cost, labor-intensive assembly line work gives way to highly skilled methods of production, women face dim prospects, Jaysinghe maintains, unless they are offered training, more flexibility in hours and locations, and an unbiased division of labor.

Over the past 20 years, self-employment has been touted as the key to a better life, leading many

development organizations to target women's need for investment capital. Two articles in this collection (one by Joyce B. Endeley, the other by Juliet Hunt and Nalini Kasynathan) address such credit programs as tools for development. Each acknowledges that tangible benefits accrue to women and their families through credit (e.g., more money comes into the home for essential items) but both argue that credit does not automatically empower women. Nothing guarantees that women will control the money acquired or even have a say in its use. Furthermore, where a woman's acquisition of money from an external source can be construed as a challenge to male status and privileges within the family, resentment or even violence may result. More positive on the issue of women entrepreneurs is Lillianne Ploumen's article on the work of Mama Cash, a funding organization founded by a Dutch citizen who put her considerable inheritance to work supporting women's businesses, study and development projects in the Netherlands and abroad. Wealthy individuals, Ploumen concludes, can challenge the gender-biased status quo by similarly investing in social transformation.

Obviously the main economic goal of gender and development researchers and practitioners is ending inequality between the sexes. But is that enough? All of the authors in *Gender, Development, and Money* seem to agree that ultimately women's empowerment is not just about money; it also has political and societal dimensions.—*Marieannette Otero, IAF program staff assistant*

## The Long Trail of a Small Grant

— ELIZABETH MAYER: 1916–2002 —

One never can be sure where the trail of a small grant will lead, especially when the trail is a long one.

At Elizabeth Mayer's funeral in Vilcacoto, Peru, last August, representatives from communities in the Peruvian Sierra praised her unflagging efforts in promoting, passionately and effectively, school libraries and reading activities for poor children in their villages. Mayer's inspiration was *El Mundo de Santiago*, a two-volume book about a young boy written by her daughter Ana, a Peruvian artist and volunteer kindergarten teacher who died of cancer in 1973 at age 24. Several years after Ana's death, Mayer discovered the Inter-American Foundation. In 1979, the IAF awarded the Lima-based Yanapai Group, which Mayer had founded, \$12,000 toward publication of the manuscript Ana had completed just before she died as a gift to children like those she had taught and loved.

Most had migrated from the highlands to urban slums. Ana was fascinated by their experiences and memorialized them in her perceptive portrayal of a child and of rural Andean life. Both the text and Elizabeth Zumbuhl's colorful illustrations depict scenes of Santiago's wonder as, snug in the shawl on his mother's back, he peers out at the world or watches her spin and weave, pasture sheep, and cook in their adobe hut using earthenware pots. Later, Santiago joins his father plowing potato fields, tending llama herds, venturing into a mining camp, crossing rugged Andean terrain on foot and watching life unfold from the window of a bus. As a reader, *El Mundo de Santiago* casts poor Andean children in a much more accurate—and positive—light than the stylized, stereotypical images found in Peruvian children's literature of the late 1970s, including public school texts.

The first edition of the book coincided with the International Year of the Child, which boosted sales and interest. Peru's Ministry of Education quickly

authorized its use as a supplementary language text for second graders. By 1981, the print run of 10,000 had sold out; the seven editions that followed included, early on, versions in Quechua and French. Among the book's promoters is a federation of mine workers' unions. Peruvian NGOs have donated copies of *El Mundo de Santiago* to school libraries too poor to afford them. I once found myself staring at the

UNICEF-sponsored fifth edition on display in a bookstore window in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. More than two decades of such validation obviously invigorated Elizabeth Mayer as she tried to convey to Peru's children the joy of reading.

Mayer arrived with her parents in Buenos Aires in 1940 from Nazi Germany. Her fiancé was waiting in La Paz and, via the Pan American Highway, then barely a path through

the sand, they made their way to Lima where they married. Eventually, the couple opened a hardware store in Huancayo. Vilcacoto is a nearby village on the Shulcas River which flows from the Snow Mountains of Huaytapallan to Huancayo. Its school bears Ana Mayer's name. Before she died, she asked to be buried in the village cemetery which overlooks maize and potato fields, pastures, eucalyptus trees and, farther away, the expansive Mantaro Valley. Elizabeth Mayer's ashes are buried there too, next to the red *kantuta*, the Peruvian national flower native to the Andes, that she had planted to mark the spot where her daughter lies along with the ashes of Ana's father, who died in 1993.

Like Ana's written words, the momentum Mayer sparked lives on, and *El Mundo de Santiago* continues to reach new audiences. The first English-language version was published in India in early 2003. A bilingual Spanish-Quechua edition recently appeared, intended for children in the Huancavelica and Ayacucho region, and an eighth edition in Spanish is scheduled for distribution in Cajamarca. The trail goes on.—Kevin Healy





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