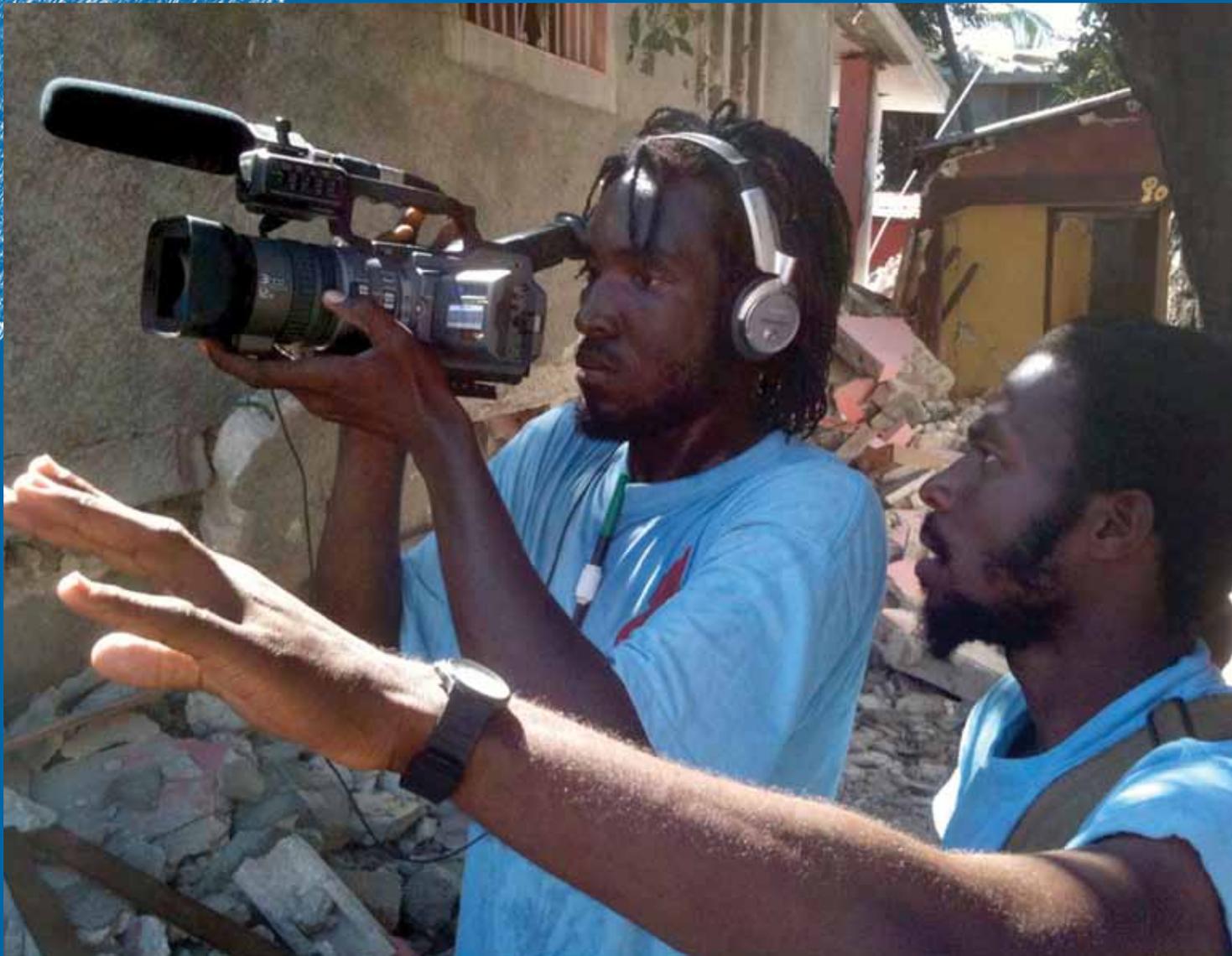


Grassroots Development

Journal of the Inter-American Foundation



Haiti: The Grassroots Response

VOLUME 31

NUMBER 1

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Double Feature:
The IAF in
Chiapas

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent foreign assistance agency of the United States government, was created in 1969 to promote self-help development by awarding grants directly to organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its 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.

Cover: The earthquake that thrashed Haiti in January devastated the colonial city of Jacmel, including the physical plant of Ciné Institute, a program of IAF grantee Fondation Festival Film Jakmèl (FFFJ) that trains filmmakers. But within two days, the students had dug enough equipment from the rubble of their classrooms (opposite page, before and after) to document conditions and, with sporadic power from a generator, upload their video reports to www.cineinstitute.com for the world to see. Cover photo: Zach Niles.



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Andrew Bigosinski

Letters from Our Readers

Congratulations on the anniversary issue of the journal! I just read it cover to cover, magnificent.

Jonathan Fox

Professor

University of California, Santa Cruz

I have just read the most interesting issue of *Grassroots Development*, celebrating IAF's 40th anniversary. For the record, I wanted to note that as far as I know the first proposal for what became the IAF was in an article I wrote for *Foreign Affairs* quarterly (July, 1969) titled "U.S. Aid to Latin America: Funding Radical Change." I called it the "American Foundation" but Dante Fascell wisely changed the name. Bill Dyal's creation of the IAF turned out to be somewhat different from what the article suggested but nevertheless the purpose remained the same, and as vice-chairman of the board for many years I was privileged to be a part of his endeavor.

George Lodge

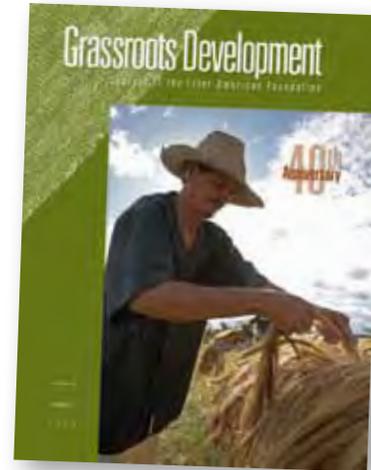
Professor Emeritus

Harvard University

George Lodge's contribution to the creation of the IAF is referenced on page 53 of this issue. For more on his work, see "Questions and Answers: George Lodge" in Grassroots Development 2002.—ED.

When we heard that the Inter-American Foundation was celebrating its 40th anniversary, our first thought was of the impact that this agency has had on ground-breaking projects all over Latin America. Our second thought was that during more than half its lifetime, the IAF has supported projects in our area, community museums.

Today there are initiatives in 12 countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. Representatives of each have been working since 2000 to develop the Network of Community



Museums of America, whose sixth meeting was held in Costa Rica in May. The network's training program has included four international workshops for facilitators in Oaxaca, Mexico, and 16 regional and local workshops in participating countries. The Rockefeller Foundation, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and UNESCO have contributed to this process, but the IAF funded the first international meeting. (See "Mobilizing Community Museum Networks in Mexico—and Beyond" by Kevin Benito Healy, *Grassroots Development* 2003.)

However, IAF support for community museums goes back even further. In 1987 Susan Pezullo guided us through a first proposal to form a network of three museums in the state of Oaxaca. IAF-supported projects that developed out of this first proposal included an exhibit that traveled in Mexico and to the U.S., a community tourism initiative and the creation of a training center in Oaxaca. This laid the groundwork for an IAF-funded Mexican association of community museums in 1994, which strengthened grassroots cultural projects in 10 states and involved artisans in a network of museum stores.

IAF's support also made possible the expansion of the Community Museum of Rabinal Achi in Guatemala, a network of three community museums in the Comarca Kuna Yala of Panama, and the

Ecomuseum of Chorotega Ceramics in San Vicente de Nicoya, Costa Rica. In collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian and the network of community museums in Oaxaca, the IAF funded the Community Museum of Pisac, in Cuzco, Peru, which opened in September 2009. It celebrates the extraordinary textile tradition and archaeological heritage of this Andean community.

The approach of the IAF has been outstanding in that it has been willing to take risks with projects that might not conform to conventional criteria, and that it has turned toward the communities themselves for the characteristics that define a successful project. Significantly, IAF support over a number of years has made possible the continuity and growth that bring community-based efforts to fruition. It is distinguished as well in its deep appreciation for the connection between culture and development.

The last point I would like to touch on is more personal. The IAF has offered some of us the opportunity to meet truly extraordinary colleagues. The insight, integrity, commitment and sense of humor of individuals such as David Bray, Charles Kley Meyer and Kevin Healy have made our long relationship additionally rewarding.

Teresa Morales and Cuauhtémoc Camarena

Consultants

Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca

We welcome your reactions to the articles published in *Grassroots Development*. We also encourage organizations and publishers to submit new resources for review.

The Inter-American Foundation is pleased to provide subscriptions to *Grassroots Development* free of charge. We request you inform us immediately when your address has changed by e-mailing info@iaf.gov.



Haiti: The Grassroots Response

By Jenny Petrow

On January 12, Chavanes Casséus, coordinator of *Mouvement Paysan 3ème Section Camp-Perrin* (MP3K), was in the capital to purchase materials to put the finishing touches on a processing center built with MP3K's IAF grant. When the earthquake struck, he had just pulled into a space in a Port-au-Prince garage. Thirty seconds later the pickup truck was flattened. Casséus survived but mourns the loss of his daughter, 16, who was attending school in Port-au-Prince.



Rebecca James

Fabienne Saint Clair, left, an active member of *Mouvman Peyizan pou Developman Petyon Vil* (MOPDEP), a farmers' association high above the capital in Bellevue la Montaigne, lost her home when it pancaked during the earthquake. Now the family sleeps under its tent-like pitched roof. Residents can see Port-au-Prince from these hilltops, but on February 28, when this photo was taken, not a single aid worker had reached Bellevue la Montaigne.

The IAF is not a relief organization, so stories like this can make us feel helpless. But once our Haitian grantees were accounted for, we looked to them for guidance on how to proceed. With decades of experience addressing shortages of food and water, inadequate educational and medical facilities, and hurricane damage, these farmer movements, women's associations and local NGOs form the networks that experts recommend aid agencies tap into to reach those most in need. They understand the context, they are trusted and they can mobilize people quickly.

Post-earthquake, the IAF's Haitian grantees fall into two groups: those located at or near the epicenter when the disaster struck, whose staff and members may be among the 1.3 million it left homeless; and those farther away who must now attend to the more than 500,000 Haitians seeking refuge in *sections communales*, or rural areas. With emergency aid worth billions of dollars concentrated in Port-au-Prince, these grantees in the countryside find themselves stretching their already meager resources to care for the displaced. The households they originally served have expanded and can no

longer depend on the infusions of cash that they used to receive from relatives in the capital.

Regardless of the grantees' location, their initial needs were strikingly similar: food, clean water, products for personal hygiene, cooking supplies, seeds, fertilizer and the means to put displaced children in school and offer psychological support. The IAF's immediate response took the form of emergency grant supplements; longer-term funding and reprogramming will be considered down the line.

Obviously this modest assistance does not address the full magnitude of the devastation, but the additional funds can help Haiti's organized poor feel in control again. As one Jacmel resident observed after receiving food and cooking utensils from an IAF grantee, "*Se pa anpil la ki enpotan, men se jes la, ki fèt nan respè youn pou lòt. Nou malerez men nou gen dignite.*" [It is not the amount that is important, but the gesture of mutual respect. We're unhappy, but we have our dignity.] Funding grassroots efforts not only restores dignity to individuals enduring deplorable conditions but to organizations, especially those that have felt left out of the relief effort. The IAF will continue to track the grantees described here and support their recovery.



Fabienne Saint Clair's home in 2008, with its view of the capital.



Jean Phelix of MOPDEP is standing on a fallen wall of his damaged home outside the temporary shelter he built and then dignified with decorative plants.

Adapting to the devastation

Through its two business incubators in Port-au-Prince, *Haitian Partners for Christian Development* (HPCD) had provided assistance, mentoring, space and services to entrepreneurs. With its facilities in Varreux severely damaged, right, HPCD moved some of these entrepreneurs to its second location in Martissant to help them build back their businesses. Before the quake, HPCD had partnered with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to extend its services to women entrepreneurs from the marginalized neighborhoods of Cité Soleil and Martissant, but the entire team collaborating with HPCD died when the U.N. headquarters were flattened. HPCD sees its program as a longer-term alternative to cash-for-work projects that play a big role in reconstruction. The IAF will continue to work with HPCD as it gets its operations up and running again.



Courtesy HPCD

Courtesy HPCD



Among the successful businesses that HPCD helped launch was ENERSA, a manufacturer of solar panels and solar-powered lighting systems. Founded by Jean-Ronel Noël and Alex Georges, who had returned to Haiti after a decade in Canada, ENERSA had several well-paid employees, whom Noël and Georges had trained from scratch. The business had “graduated” out of HPCD’s space into its own, pictured, right, before the earthquake and, above, after.



Rebecca Janes

First responders

The Dominican Republic was quick to come to the aid of its neighbor. Among these first responders was IAF grantee *Movimiento Socio-Cultural para los Trabajadores Haitianos* (MOSCTHA), made up primarily of Haitian-Dominicans and serving Haitian-Dominican communities. MOSCTHA's mobile clinics, physicians and health aides brought medical care, food, water and psychological support into camps in Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Petit-Goâve and Léogâne. Other donors that have come to appreciate the linguistic and cultural skills of MOSCTHA's members include the USAID mission in the Dominican Republic, which partnered with MOSCTHA to distribute kits for personal hygiene in border communities.



Courtesy MOSCTHA





All photos this spread by Keriah Jean

Working with proactive women

Based in Port-au-Prince, *Fonds International de Développement Économique et Social* (FIDES) supports rural organizations in the Sud-Est, Ouest, Artibonite and Nord-Ouest regions. FIDES used its IAF supplement to purchase locally grown beans, yams and other staples for distribution to quake victims by grassroots partners such as the women's organizations *Fanm Deside* in Jacmel and *Òganizasyon Fanm Peyizan Mònabrilè* in Morne-à-Brûler. By buying locally, FIDES stimulates the economy.

FIDES food distribution in Jacmel.



Women carrying away food distributed by FIDES through *Òganizasyon Fanm Peyizan Mònabrilè* in Morne-à-Brûler.



Overwhelmed with grief at the loss of her father and small son, Nadège Joachin, 33, fled Port-au-Prince. Rezo Fanm members accompanied her to the Nativity Hospital in Belladère, where she gave birth. She, her husband and baby daughter now live in Lascahobas with Alda Joseph of Rezo Fanm.

Rezo Fanm Frontyè Ba Plato (Rezo Fanm) is a network of women’s groups in the lower Central Plateau near the Dominican border, which quickly became inundated with refugees. Residents report that more than 3,000 people with no ties to the area were rounded up in the capital and shuttled in buses to the border town of Lascahobas. While most have since found their way to friends and family, some still live in makeshift dorms that Rezo Fanm mem-

bers arranged for them with the help of Diaspora donations. Every day dozens of pregnant women pass through hoping to reach medical facilities in the Dominican Republic. Rezo Fanm is trying to connect them with local midwives, clinics and hospitals. It is using its IAF supplement to assemble kits for pre-and post-natal care and to offer scholarships to the many displaced children not in school and therefore more vulnerable to traffickers.



Rezo Fanm’s dormitory for men.

Courtesy KOFAKAD



IAF's supplemental grant to *Kombit Fanm Kaskad-Dubreuil* (KOFAKAD), in the Sud region, allowed 80 homeless or orphaned children to finish the school year and another 20 to attend computer classes at the new training center built with KOFAKAD's original award. The women's organization offers film screenings for children and psychological support to victims of all ages.

Stretching resources in the South

Leaders of *Mouvement Paysan 3ème Section Camp-Perrin* (MP3K), on Haiti's southern tip, estimate that 1,000 refugees, including 200 children, have settled in their *section communale*, expanding each household by at least three inhabitants. Before the earthquake, MP3K's experiment with a new technique for growing yams had resulted in more seedlings and larger yields. A month after the quake, with the rainy season upon them, MP3K's farmers were ready to plant again. They included displaced families in their activities and will make seedlings, training and credit available to them in the future. Although this means stretching scarce resources and slowing the pace of expansion, MP3K hopes to provide a reliable food supply and a source of income to families in need. It is using its IAF supplement to bring even more farmers into its program and offer victims food and scholarships.



Keziah Jean

MP3K's scholarship students, displaced from their homes, outside the MP3K dispensary.



Courtesy MP3K

MP3K yam farmers.



Keziiah Jean



MP3K's distribution of food parcels containing rice, oil, sugar, powdered milk and beans.

Tenacity in Jacmel

Through sheer tenacity, the staff and students at the Ciné Institute of *Fondation Festival Film Jakmel* (FFFJ) have shown the world their post-earthquake reality in reports featured in *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and Canada's *Globe and Mail* and on CNN, AOL News, PBS, CBC and Grit TV. Once a colonial gem, the port city of Jacmel lost many of its historic buildings to the disaster, including those that housed FFFJ's film school. But Ciné Institute's young filmmakers dug their cameras from the rubble and immediately started drawing attention to the plight of Jacmeliens, resulting in much needed aid.

Operating out of a temporary space, Ciné Institute was the only school in the southeast in session throughout the state of emergency. The result was a crash course in reporting and documentary

film for the students, and also in relief work as they helped victims obtain medical care, assisted in distributing food, medicine, water filters, tents, blankets and generators. The exposure brought Cine Institute such an outpouring of support from the international film industry and other donors that it was able to lease more permanent space outside the city. "Our students have referred to this post-quake period as their ultimate master class in journalism and civic duty," said David Bell, FFFJ director.

Jenny Petrow is IAF representative for Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the English-speaking Caribbean. Rebecca Janes is a professional photographer based in Indiana. Keziah Jean, opposite page, lower photo, far right, studies at Ciné Institute.

Zach Niles





Zach Niles

Andrew Bigosinski



Chet Thomas: In Honduras for the Long Haul

By Patrick Breslin

All photos by Patrick Breslin



Chet Thomas, founder of Proyecto Aldea Global, with farmer Jeramías Vásquez and his son.

The international development business suffers from a kind of attention deficit disorder. Its attention span is short—two- or three-year projects are ubiquitous, practically sacrosanct. It usually doesn't listen much to its supposed beneficiaries. It impulsively changes direction, lurching from one magic bullet to another.

For an antidote, consider the life and work of Chester (Chet) Thomas, a soft-spoken, graying, but still cherubic-looking, expatriate from the United States who founded Proyecto Aldea Global (PAG) in Honduras in 1983 and has directed it ever since. PAG works with thousands of families in far-flung areas and its projects rank among the more ambitious and successful grassroots efforts anywhere. But its recipe for success would challenge most donors. Simply stated, PAG's timeline runs way beyond the three-year framework. "In two or three years, you're just warming up, just getting started," Thomas explained. "If you are talking about change, you need a long time. If you're not committing to eight years minimum, you're not serious."

Thomas' own commitment to Honduras began when he arrived in 1974 to coordinate relief efforts for the U.S.-based National Council of Churches after Hurricane Fifi. Like so many community organizers, technical advisers and development experts, he was a foreigner in the place where he worked. Regardless of the good intentions and desire to bridge gaps, one piece of paper usually separates outsiders from the people they seek to help—the plane ticket out that lets them fly away from poverty at any moment. Chet Thomas decided to stay. His profile in *Grassroots Development* is one in a series investigating the experiences that shaped successful grassroots leaders in Latin America and the visions they have distilled from those experiences.

Thomas' story starts in the hills of Somerset County in southwestern Pennsylvania, farming and coal mining country back when he was born in 1944. His father's family was Pennsylvania Dutch and his grandfather ran a self-sufficient farm in a place called Gobbler's Hollow. "There was a sawmill on the farm, run by a steam engine, the first in that area," Thomas recalled. "All the kids worked. They plowed the hillsides with horses, grew grain there, sold their produce, and raised hogs and beef for home

consumption. Come spring, they would make maple syrup, at least 50 gallons a year, all they needed to sweeten their food. There were deer and turkeys and bears in the woods. Neighbors would help each other, whether it was a barn-raising or harvesting crops. They were good people, with good work values and ethics. It was a great area."

In school, Thomas said, "there were kids from many ethnic backgrounds, Italians, Poles, Russians, people from all the Slavic countries, most of them from mining families. There were all kinds of cultural festivals. So I got to appreciate the richness that was there." His own family raised turkeys. "I had plenty of experience with poultry. For Thanksgiving and Christmas we slaughtered turkeys, 5,000 of them. I always remember the way their wings slapped your face. We would take the feathers off and clean them in the bitter cold and the snow, then deliver them to my father's customers. My brothers and I would almost dread Thanksgiving and Christmas." But the Thomas farm, like family farms around the United States, was being overwhelmed as markets turned to bigger producers offering lower prices. Thomas' father found work with state programs to extend macadam roads in farming areas and later became a county supervisor for road maintenance. Roads for farmers would become a recurrent theme in Chet Thomas' development career.

After high school, Thomas hauled coal for neighbors in his father's truck and then worked in supermarkets. Going to college seemed like a better idea and he started classes at the University of Pittsburgh. Recruiters for President John Kennedy's Peace Corps were on college campuses in the early 1960s, and Thomas was drawn. "I wanted to go for something a little bigger," he explained. "I looked around at a lot of people and I didn't see them going anywhere and I didn't want that. I think it was also a response to my religious upbringing, because I came out of the Church of the Brethren, people that were very dedicated to serving others." Early Peace Corps volunteers were typically liberal arts graduates, first introduced to farm tools during training. His farm background and varied work experience made Thomas the kind of skilled, hands-on young American the Peace Corps was looking for and he was assigned to a rural area in Antioquia, Colombia.



Thomas in the Cerro Azul Meambar.

"I wanted to do something significant," he recalled. "I was helping a few farmers improve their chickens with Rhode Island Reds, and I noticed eggs were scarce around town. So I started a project with a local guy and a thousand 'peeps.' Eventually we had 20,000 chickens. That municipality was a good place for them. Cool nights and good food is what chickens need. We formed a growers' association to market eggs. The milk truck would pick up the eggs at roadside in the morning, drop them at a store in Medellín, and kids on bicycle carts would deliver them to the customers. In the afternoon, a bus would pick up chicken feed, anything else the farmers needed, and drop it back on the roadside near their houses. We bought freezers so we could sell the meat for soup after the chickens stopped laying." The marketing system worked like a clock; Peace Corps officials considered the project a model. But the farmers didn't like it, and Thomas learned his first lesson about promoting development. "They wanted to sell the eggs themselves," he said. "They really wanted to go to the city, get their money and party. After I left, the chicken project continued, but they stopped using the store."

Thomas extended his service a year to work in Manizales, helping farmers move away from dependence on coffee by introducing cacao, another project that went well. He also worked in a town in the north of Caldas known for weaving quality Panama hats and the fiber wrappings for the famous Ron de Caldas. There he learned another lesson. "This community was really poor and the people got paid a dollar a day," he explained. "'A dollar a day?' I said. 'We're going to get these people organized and we're going to demand five dollars a day.' So we tried and it created big problems. And this Colombian guy who worked in cooperative development came out and said, 'Look, these people are making a dollar a day. We know it's not enough to live on, but it's a job. Right now we're trying to create employment here, not a high level of income. Once we get everyone working, then we can organize them and demand a better wage, but don't rock the boat at this point.' That stayed with me for years. When someone doesn't have a job and is desperate and sees no way out, he has lost a sense of dignity. Even if you're working for a dollar a day, at least you're making

something with your hands, you're busy and you've got something to shoot for in terms of improving your life."

When his third year was up, the Peace Corps offered Thomas a job training fresh volunteers in Escondido, California. While there, he met one of his cousins, a famous circus juggler. Soon Thomas was teaching school subjects to the children of a traveling troupe, his home on the road a converted ice-cream truck. Then he left to study social and economic development in Latin America at the University of Pittsburgh. His thesis for a master's degree in public and international affairs was on rural "penetration roads" in Colombia and the social benefit of building them with manual labor instead of high-priced machinery. After graduate school, he entered a program for young professionals at the World Bank. "I was working in a little cubicle with hundreds of other people in other little cubicles," he recalled. "I thought, 'What am I doing here?' I was losing my personality. A Colombian friend told me to get out."

Soon Thomas was back in California, promoting the Big John Strong Circus along the central coast and through the San Joaquin Valley. That led to a career producing top music acts as well as circuses in Chicago and to branching out into advertising and real estate as head of his own company. "I was making money," he said, "but I didn't really like much of what I was doing. And then, out of the blue, I got a call from the National Council of Churches. Someone had suggested me, and the Council wanted to know if I would go to Honduras to take over the relief effort it was mounting after Hurricane Fifi. When I flew into San Pedro Sula, the Sula Valley was still under water. People were living on the dikes. I was 28 years old. I thought it was time to make a life change. I went back to Chicago, sold my company, put my furniture in storage and moved to Honduras."

Over the next few years, Thomas worked on programs that provided housing, water systems, new wells and help restarting agriculture. His commitment grew. "I felt at home here. I made a lot of friends," he said. "I also thought this was a country with the potential to break out of poverty. There were a lot of natural resources that, if everyone had access,

'If I'm going to do anything significant, I'd have to stay in one place for a long period of time.'

would make a major difference. And I thought, 'If I'm going to do anything significant, I'd have to stay in one place for a long period of time.'" Intending to raise cattle, he bought 800 acres. Honduran law required that he clear the brush covering the land in four months. When he couldn't, the land reform agency took away 300 acres. Nonetheless Thomas' commitment to Honduras survived.

Then came the earthquake in Guatemala and Church World Services sent Thomas to run the relief effort there. For the next few years, his connection to Honduras was limited to trips back every month or so to oversee his farm and each time he felt like he was home. Meanwhile, the work in Guatemala grew more demanding; by 1979 Thomas was burned out. When Church World Services asked him to work in the Dominican Republic, he recalled, "I said 'No, I am committed to Honduras.' I basically bought into this country and all that it has, good and bad." Deciding to stay permanently was another life change. Thomas had knocked around the United States and Latin America for two decades. Now he was a proponent of staying put, of sinking roots "You can't go home again" is bitter American wisdom, distilled from constant upheaval, movement and change in the name of progress. The grandfather's farm Thomas lovingly recalls from his childhood had become a housing subdivision.

His work for International Volunteer Services, advising Honduran groups on how to do community health projects, set up cooperatives, introduce appropriate technology and put in wells and gravity water systems, pushed Thomas to found his own development organization. He named it Proyecto Aldea Global because, he said, "we all live in a global village now." He eventually sold his farm—too much to take care of along with his development work. He and his Honduran wife of more than 20 years, a bilingual teacher, raised five children and now live in a small town just outside Tegucigalpa. Today PAG has about 160 staff members. They work out of two offices in Tegucigalpa, one serving slum neighborhoods with programs helping youths stay out of gangs, and five

regional offices. PAG reaches into 400 communities in 30 of the 270 Honduran municipalities. Besides its work in rural areas, it runs a scholarship program endowed by a benefactor in Chicago and the Deborah program offering legal services to poor women. Despite PAG's reach, the budget ranges between \$2 million and \$2.5 million—not very big in Thomas' estimation.

But PAG takes on big projects, including one in Cerro Azul Meambar, Honduras' major national park and the source of a fifth of the water flowing into the reservoir behind El Cajón, Honduras' largest hydroelectric dam, which generates more than 80 percent of the country's electricity. Some 20 years ago, the Honduran government worried about the deteriorating environment in the park. Erosion, caused in part by unrestricted land clearing, would inevitably threaten the reservoir. In 1992, the government's forestry department turned to PAG to manage the park and protect the watershed. PAG had been working with communities in the area and had the credibility necessary to sell a new approach emphasizing environmental stewardship and the ingenuity to come up with a plan to make that approach feasible in economic development terms.

Cerro Azul is a biosphere reserve where the use of land is subject to restrictions. No human habitation is permitted in either the core, meaning the higher elevations that rise to 6,716 feet, or in the area designated for "special use." Resource exploitation is also forbidden in the core and is very limited in the special zone; it is permitted, but regulated, in the buffer zone, where almost 20,000 people, mainly farming families, live in some 40 communities. The entrance to the park is just a few kilometers from the country's main highway that links Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. PAG's staff understood that the reserve's attractions and prime location could draw visitors, which would generate jobs and income. They also reasoned that the people living in the communities of the buffer zone, once they understood that their livelihoods were linked to preservation of the ecosystem, would be the best guardians of the reserve.

With support from the IAF, PAG trained residents of the buffer zone as forest rangers and guides and pushed environmental awareness. It later opened a large restaurant on the highway, creating more jobs as well as outlets for agricultural production and handicrafts. Additional employment opportunities resulted from reforestation programs, supplied with seedlings by tree nurseries developed in the reserve, and from clearing and maintaining miles of hiking trails that let visitors appreciate idyllic vistas of waterfalls tumbling out of walls of tropical vegetation into pristine pools ringed with jumbled boulders. Los Pinos, an environmental center inside the reserve, offers bed-and-breakfast lodging for tourists who increasingly come from the U.S. and Europe. A center was recently installed where university students research plant and animal life in the park.

Other PAG efforts in the reserve focused on farming methods that increased yields and were compatible with the responsible use of the environment.

Fruit production was particularly encouraged and a fruit-processing plant was opened. Roads now connect the communities and facilitate the transport of goods to market. The huge El Cajón reservoir separated several of the communities, so, using donated materials, PAG built two ingeniously-designed ferry-boats. Workers tied 24 large empty propane gas tanks together with a steel I-beam structure and converted a hay binder, a common piece of farm machinery, into a drive unit linked to a hydraulic system that turns big paddle wheels mounted on each side. Each ferry resembles a giant version of a raft kids would cobble together, but it carries trucks and people smoothly and remains stable even in the violent thunderstorms that sometimes explode over the reservoir. In 2008, the national forestry agency ranked Cerro Azul Meambar the second-best managed park in Honduras, out of 32 protected areas, and signed its fourth consecutive five-year management agreement with PAG.

PAG's ingeniously designed ferry.



PAG's other big projects include its work in Belén Gualcho, a municipality in the Celaque mountains rising 9,000 feet above sea level, which Thomas first saw from horseback during his relief work in 1974. The population is primarily Lenca Indians, long among the poorest and most isolated people in Honduras. "When I first went there, the local people were migrant labor for everyone else," Thomas said. "They were only getting one corn crop a year; they had to look for work so they could feed themselves. I thought I'd like to see the little guy win one every once in a while." Years later, he returned with PAG. "We started with soil conservation and improvement, later, health care and literacy," he continued. "We added pieces as we went along. One day, we found some old peach trees with tiny, hard fruit. We thought, 'If they could grow, we could get other peach trees. And if peaches could grow, then apples could.' We bought 1,500 apple trees from Florida to experiment. Three years later, they began to produce

fruit. 'Holy Cow,' I thought. 'This could be a business here.' The IAF gave us the first real support. Peaches were more of a problem. We tried several varieties but nothing worked until we grafted budwood onto the local root stock. Bang! It took off."

Part of IAF's funding was to finance the planting of 50,000 apple trees, but the project blew right past that target and in just a few years 250,000 trees covered the slopes and valleys. Working with APROCEL, the Celaque Producers' Association that it helped create, PAG built packing centers in several communities; cold storage and processing plants to produce juice, cider and preserves; a network of roads to transport the products; and a distribution center on the Pan American Highway that links Honduras with El Salvador and Guatemala. Farmers suffered a devastating blow in 1998 when Hurricane Mitch wiped out both orchards and roads. PAG helped many replant, and production is back up to several hundred tons of both fruits each year, but still below



Jesus Vásquez's apple orchard, Belén Gualcho.

what was hoped for. Using its own heavy equipment, PAG also rebuilt 120 kilometers of farm-to-market roads in seven months so that farmers could get their fruit out again to the middlemen who sell it in San Pedro Sula and country towns through western Honduras.

The experience convinced PAG to avoid dependence on one cash crop. The storage and distribution infrastructure already in place and the acquisition of three large refrigerated trucks enabled a move into large-scale vegetable production. That shift required another major infrastructure effort—an extensive irrigation system completed in 2009 that taps water from the mountains. With labor supplied by local residents, PAG built three large dams and 11 community water tanks and laid 89 kilometers of main irrigation lines, over a quarter of it a pipe six inches in diameter, plus supply distribution lines and drip irrigation lines reaching into the farmers' fields. (PAG continues to stretch the distribution and drip lines to additional farmers.) PAG's scaled system calls for each farmer to plant an average of an eighth of an acre with new vegetable crops each week and harvest an eighth of an acre. A computer tracks how much will be harvested each week and where, data that enables APROCEL to market the produce smoothly. Eventually, PAG expects up to 600 farmers to have at least one acre in vegetables. "Some of the earlier farms are now making as much as \$1,000 a month," Thomas said this year. "Just this last month, we sold over 66 tons of vegetables to 10 buyers around the country, including Wal-Mart and the La Colonia supermarket chain. Eventually this area will supply significant food to El Salvador. We've already begun exporting lettuce there and to Guatemala as well."

Despite PAG's long-term commitment to the communities where it works, its staff tries to keep the final handshake in mind. "We've really tried to focus on this in the last 15 years—to plan how we are going to get out before we go in," Thomas said. "Let's figure out some way that the project's going to be standing on its own at a certain time. It may not work out to be exactly the time that we imagined, because we can't know all the variables. But at some point, you want to see the project completely sustainable."



Processing plant developed with PAG's support.

In Belen Gualcho, the irrigation system should continue to support APROCEL long after PAG is gone. Before PAG began work on it, each farmer who would benefit from the system agreed to a monthly user fee of \$7 for every *tarea* (unit measuring 629 square meters) irrigated. With a minimum of 500 farmers cultivating an average of one half-acre of vegetables (some already have six acres in production), that means \$17,500 in user fees paid monthly to APROCEL, which expects to assume full control of the project in three years. The levy finances credit, technical assistance and marketing services. By nature, some projects can't be self-supporting. The legal services program, referenced earlier, was initially funded by the American Jewish World Service. But PAG negotiated with municipalities and con-



Belén Gualcho: Norma Leticia Vásquez, daughter of a farming couple and, opposite page, Adrián Dios and sons Heber and Adrián.

vinced them to cover space and utilities. “For a while, we continued to pay the salaries of the paralegals,” Thomas said. “But now we’ve convinced the municipal governments to put that cost right into their budgets.”

Beyond the goal of institutionalizing projects is the question of PAG’s own future when Thomas eventually steps down. Many major accomplishments have rested on his ability to tap into church networks in the U.S. for funding and on his uncanny sense for where there might be a load of lumber or old vehicles and machinery waiting to be donated. “I know that makes it harder for whoever comes after me, all these personal contacts I have,” he admitted. “But I’ve been working on grooming people who could step in when I leave.” That grooming includes university scholarships as well as Thomas’ own mentoring, and he has committed to four more years at the helm to allow time for a smooth transition.

Whoever steps in, he or she will be taking over an organization that has been shaped by Chet Thomas’ experiences, all the way back to his rural childhood in Western Pennsylvania. Throughout his life, Thomas has thought big without forgetting the gritty details of rural life. PAG’s projects compare in scope and ambition with those of development organizations that work on a large scale. They aim at transforming entire regions. They just recognize that it takes a long time.

Grassroots development is generally seen as an approach constrained by limited amounts of money invested for limited impact with the hope that some improvement will result in lives of people in a community. It is not taken as seriously as the multi-million dollar projects undertaken by the World Bank or USAID to which most development assistance funding goes. PAG projects show the potential of the grassroots approach if applied strategically and patiently. They also make one question why funding agencies, including the Inter-American Foundation, don’t commit to the long haul in the same way. To its credit, the IAF has funded PAG repeatedly over the last 20 years. But it has tended to see each funding decision as discrete and limited to the proposed project. Only in a few situations has the IAF supported a specific development process over the long term, generally because a Foundation representative

was able to grasp the strategic vision of an organization or movement. It may be that the IAF is too prone to play “small ball” as opposed to going for home runs. It may be that the three-year project framework, as common at IAF as anywhere else in the development business, works against support for a strategic vision that grows out of involvement at the grassroots.

Chet Thomas’ work demonstrates the key principle of the grassroots approach—that true development begins at the bottom, with one-on-one encounters with individual human beings. “We’d like to see every farmer growing all the food he needs for himself, plus a cash crop for the market,” he emphasized. To get there, PAG agents sit down with a farmer and hand him a piece of stiff paper. They ask him to draw his house and the fields on his farm. “We’ve done hundreds of these,” Thomas explained the exercise. “You say, ‘OK, here we put the basic grains, corn and beans. On this other part, we’ll put a cash crop, a permanent orchard—apples, peaches, mangoes, avocados, cacao—whatever grows well there.’ We talk to the woman: ‘OK, you want food available to feed your family, like yucca and sweet potatoes, fruit crops, citrus trees, avocados, spice trees, especially a lot of plantains.’ So you draw it in. And then the other areas can be put into fish tanks or goats, chickens, hogs. Pretty soon, you have this whole piece of paper filled up. You don’t do it all at once. Farmers can’t afford to take a big risk. But you say to them, ‘Let’s do a little risk. And if you get good results, then we can do other things over here.’”

PAG calls the outcome of this bottom-up planning the *finca tradicional mejorada*, or improved traditional farm, and it sounds a lot like that farm Thomas fondly remembers in Gobbler’s Hollow, lacking only the snow and the maple syrup.

Patrick Breslin, former IAF vice president for external affairs, retired from the IAF after 22 years. He may be reached at patbreslin@yahoo.com.



La Selva's Cafetaleros and the Big Business of Coffee

By Ellen Contreras Murphy



Café La Selva in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, is the ideal place to consider the growth and development of the Unión de Ejidos de la Selva (La Selva). The coffee could not be more local, fresh or delightful; the ambience is decidedly Mexican; the setting, identical to that of any of the dozen or more such franchises in Mexico or Spain. More to the point, La Selva's Cafés embody how far La Selva's *cafetaleros* have come and what they have accomplished in 30 years. These producers, whose small parcels run between two and five acres each, have realized their dream of selling their organic coffee directly to consumers.

Few have traveled this path and achieved as much. In a business in which income depends on two uncontrollable variables—the weather and the market—La Selva's success is truly amazing, and it has not gone unnoticed. In 2006, La Selva received the Prize for Social Business of the Year from the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, of Geneva, "recognizing social innovation in the pursuit of poverty alleviation, entrepreneurial zeal and the courage to depart from traditional practices." In 2002, the World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C., awarded La Selva its New Ventures Prize for organizations that "promote sustainable growth by accelerating the transfer of capital to businesses deliver[ing] social and environmental benefits at the base of the economic pyramid." The same year, La Selva was a finalist for the United Nations' Equator Prize celebrating outstanding efforts to reduce poverty through the preservation of biodiversity, a reminder of the importance of organic cultivation to our shared environment.

Mark Calcedo

La Selva got its start in the late 1970s, when four farming communities—Cruz del Rosario, Nuevo Momón, Nuevo Monte Cristo and Flor del Río—joined forces and created an umbrella organization to represent their interests: Unión de Ejidos La Selva. Each community held its land as an *ejido*. This form of tenure, dating to pre-Columbian Mexico, was incorporated into legislation passed after the 1910 Revolution that required the Mexican government to cede tracts of land to groups of between 20 and 200 *campesinos* who would take title and possession as a group. For more than 80 years, an *ejidatario* could not rent, sell or mortgage his interest in the land, but he could pass it on to his spouse, children or other relatives. In 1992, these laws changed to allow for private ownership, including by non-*ejidatarios*.

In the early 1990s, David Bray, IAF representative for Mexico, decided to take a chance on La Selva's proposal to help its members grow more and better coffee by applying practices consistent with the responsible use of natural resources. The plan was to train 1,000 member-producers in organic methods that they would introduce on 1,000 hectares, or 2,470 acres, of *cafetales*, plots of land where coffee is cultivated. The expectation was that the technology adopted would add value to the beans because the coffee would be certified as organic and would

qualify for a more lucrative niche in the international market. When entry into the organic market didn't bring in quite the income anticipated, La Selva focused on adding more value through stricter quality control and by roasting the beans sold locally. Enter the Cafés, whose owners agree to sell La Selva's brand exclusively and use its logo. In 2009, they sold more than 873,000 pounds of La Selva's coffee.

Since my first meeting with La Selva's *cafetaleros* in 1990, as special studies officer for the IAF, my travels have often taken me back to Chiapas. Each time, my curiosity gets the better of me and I look up José Juárez Varela, La Selva's planning director. During my visits, we scarcely cover any old territory because there is always something new happening. When I visited in December 2009 to participate in the celebration of La Selva's 30th anniversary, José began by telling me that La Selva would be making some serious adjustments. "Sometime early in 2010 we hope to have a new marketing strategy in place updating the Cafés and improving the products served with the coffee," he said.

Coffee ends up in our cup after passing from grower to middleman to processor to exporter to broker to coffee company to distributor to grocer or café. Except for coffee sold as fair-trade, La Selva has arrived at full vertical integration of its enterprise,

Café La Selva staff flank José Juárez Varela, La Selva's planning director.



eliminating all middlemen and controlling all phases of production, export and roasting. According to José, the new plan includes branching into direct sales to restaurants and specialty stores, food services for hospitals and other institutions, and possibly supermarkets. The hope is that within three years La Selva will have 35 new outlets—kiosks or coffee bars—and that the Cafés will have sharpened their competitive edge in a saturated market.

The road to the 30th anniversary was fraught with obstacles, but La Selva persevered. Membership has remained fairly constant at 1,090, and production has steadily increased, with an average of 1,897 hectares under organic cultivation and average annual sales of more than 1.9 million pounds of coffee. La Selva grosses more than \$2 million per year. But how does this translate for the *cafetaleros*? Coffee brokers in consumer nations refuse to work with the International Coffee Organization to reinstate the controls that would raise prices to reflect the true cost

to the farmer of cultivating organic coffee. Although coffee certified as fair-trade or organic commands a premium, not much is left for the *cafetaleros* once La Selva's operating costs are deducted. But if the income is small, it has been steady, and that is important to La Selva's members.

Life is harsh for *campesinos* in Mexico, and in 2007 the United Nations Development Programme ranked Chiapas last of all 31 Mexican states and the Federal District in terms of life expectancy, educational level and income. However, in two of La Selva's founding communities, Nuevo Momón and Cruz del Rosario, I saw signs of better living conditions compared to 20 years ago. The most striking improvement is the paved road from Las Margaritas to Cruz del Rosario and beyond, reducing a four- or five-hour trip to under an hour. Along the road are reminders of the Zapatista presence. Signs warn that travelers have entered their territory—territory that once belonged to La Selva members, among others



Ellen Contreras Murphy



forced from their homes. Some of those displaced have started over in distant communities while others await return to the land they once nurtured to produce the organic coffee that Zapatistas now harvest for market. The uprising by the Ejército Zapatista de la Liberación Nacional (EZLN) on New Year's Day 1994 did not take La Selva members completely by surprise as it did the rest of the world. What did surprise them were the many neighbors who joined the Zapatistas, a number estimated as high as 50 percent of the residents from the surrounding communities. La Selva endures an uneasy peace with the EZLN. Efforts to maintain a position of neutrality were stretched to the limits as recently as in 2008, when the EZLN called for a boycott of La Selva and its products. La Selva reports no impact, but tensions persist.

In Cruz del Rosario I met with La Selva's founding president, Don Arturo Jiménez, who has served the organization for most of the last 30 years, officially and unofficially, through good times and bad. It was he who had the vision and convinced his fellow *ejidatarios* that together they could market their coffee and improve their lives. It was he, along with a few others, who accompanied the first shipment of coffee to Veracruz. And it was Don Arturo who personally visited each member to explain how part of the shipment had been stolen. Don Arturo's smiling face is etched with the signs of his sacrifices for La Selva. He is the consummate charismatic leader, one of only two I have encountered during my 20 years of work in Mexico. Leading La Selva meant spending most of his life away from his wife and eight children, something for which he can never be adequately

compensated. In this regard, his family sacrificed for the membership too. Don Arturo is the classic raconteur and I was mesmerized by his voice and his words. “I have never been alone. I always had *compañeros* who had faith and trust in me,” he said of his part in La Selva’s long “journey.” That faith and trust are echoed in the relationship between Don Arturo and La Selva’s current leaders. He is quite ready and content to fade into the background and let

them guide La Selva. The new generation is 20 years younger, the sons of *compañeros*. One of Don Arturo’s own sons, José Bersabel Jiménez López, is in charge of quality control and sales. “I remember when people said we were communists because we wanted to come together in solidarity, for the benefit of all our members!” Don Arturo recalled. “At first, it was difficult to make people understand that we could achieve more if we were organized and unified.”

La Selva has, in fact, encountered many challenges over the past 30 years, but none more daunting than the loss of its fair-trade status in 2000, after it failed to provide the coffee required under its contract. Complicating the breach was La Selva’s inability to reimburse the purchaser for payment advanced. Major strife ensued within the organization; key staff and several member communities left. La Selva was back in business by late 2000, but the next two years were difficult. “The coffee community thought we were finished,” said Don Arturo. Still the old solidarity held firm. Long-time members stood by the leadership, recognizing lack of expertise in business and financial management as the cause of the debacle. José Juárez and Don Arturo worked hard and traveled to Germany to develop new partners. The new Fair-Trade Labeling Organization (FLO) that had replaced the Fair Trade Organization was different in many respects from its predecessor, and re-entry was tough. But so was La Selva, which FLO officially reinstated in 2002.

La Selva learned from the ordeal and hired professional managers and specialists in areas where it recognized deficiencies. It took a very big step forward by legally separating its solidarity mission (Unión de Ejidos de La Selva) from its commercial ventures (Unión de Sociedades de La Selva), and it instituted management controls that included independent advisors. Some members and staff who had splintered off developed another coffee organization that now provides broker services. Others used the business acumen they had acquired to start small businesses, generating economic activity and employment opportunities. For staff and members who departed during the crisis of 2000, the memory is still painful. To their credit, they acknowledge how much they gained from their association with La Selva.



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Ernestina López de Jiménez and Arturo Jiménez.

More surprising is that a rupture had not occurred earlier in the organization's development. La Selva's experience perhaps confirms the concept of an optimum level of membership. A fracture might have been a logical consequence of a generational divide, with newer and younger members less tied to old loyalties, notions of solidarity or religious or political affiliation. And while it is not the largest coffee-grower organization in Mexico—a distinction that goes to the Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca (CEPCO)—La Selva is surely one of the most complex. A union of *ejidos* is essentially a hierarchy on top of other hierarchies, each with its own politics. Fortunately, the governing procedures within *ejidos* are uniform, mandated by Agrarian Law.

The crisis of 2000 forced La Selva to re-examine production levels—the most technical aspect of the supply chain. Increasing current organic yields of between eight and 12 *quintales*, or 69-kilo sacks, per hectare would mean replacing many coffee plants that are approaching 30 years of age and past their prime. Each member's *cafetal* is being examined as a basis for developing a plan that will increase production while minimizing losses. Understandably, members are reluctant to begin the replacement process because coffee plants take several years to mature sufficiently to produce an acceptable yield. The crisis



José Bersabel Jiménez López.



also forced La Selva to recognize that communicating the sophisticated methods used to develop pricing, payment schedules, production quotas and contract requirements remains a challenge. Insufficient comprehension of these complicated aspects of the industry gives rise to doubts that inhibit *cafetaleros* from delivering an entire harvest. Basic to operations is that members grasp that if they do not honor their commitment, everyone will feel the impact. But even when they understand that fair-trade and other certification command a better price, a few members still hold on to part of the harvest as a hedge against a financial emergency. And if prices fall, some feel they can neglect their *cafetales* and sell uncertified coffee to a *coyote* if they need to.

Looming even larger in the production equation are the effects of global climate change. Serious changes in weather patterns reported by *cafetaleros* include too many cloudy days that inhibit flowering and at the same time magnify the effects of shade, thereby causing disease; and too much rain falling too late in the season, pummeling the already stressed coffee flowers that precede the beans. On record, too, are severe freezes that kill buds mid-growth in

Ellen Contreras Murphy



Elías Gómez Méndez and José René Hernández Cruz, current president of La Selva.

December. Inga and Chalum shade trees are dying from some as yet unknown cause, an all too familiar story echoing across the pine forests of the Rocky Mountains in the United States. Higher temperatures have their greatest effect on *cafetales* at between 400 and 600 meters above sea level. Many producers in the lowlands have abandoned *cafetales* rendered useless at these altitudes, opting to look for jobs as far away as the United States. The trend can only worsen as temperatures continue to reach the new extremes.

La Selva marked its 30th anniversary by hosting a three-day forum in Comitán. *Café, Salud y Sustentabilidad* [Coffee, Health and Sustainability] brought members together with distinguished speakers and others who have accompanied La Selva over the last 30 years. It was an opportunity to sell members on the new strategy for expansion, and La Selva's leaders had their work cut out for them. Among the restless *campesinos* unaccustomed to sitting so long

was Elías Gómez Méndez whose three-hectare *cafetal* rises 1,400 meters above sea level in Tzajalchén, where some of the highest yields of the best coffee in Chiapas are produced. Elías, who harvests, on average, 40 bags of coffee annually, had clearly declared his faith in La Selva's leadership when we spoke the day before. "We are 35 producers here in this community but not all of us are members of La Selva," he had said in Tzeltal-accented Spanish. "Those who are, have done well. We have seen problems in the organization but nothing exaggerated. The organization offers us advantages. Some belong to other organizations and that is good, too. But we don't argue about these differences because we are not a political party. Work is an individual thing."

The forum provided information that La Selva members must consider and understand for vertical integration to be successful. It updated them on market research and the challenges for small coffee shops and exposed them to the art of "cupping" by which experts judge coffee. It also included information on the health benefits that the beverage can provide as background for the new arrangement with Texas-based Voyava Republic, Ltd., to learn to apply the technology required to fortify coffee with calcium, iron and, someday, folic acid. Last year, under a special licensing agreement with Voyava, La Selva sold 3 million eight-cup packages of vitamin-fortified coffee to the government of Chiapas for distribution to families across the state. The government was eager to partner with La Selva on this novel approach to address the nutritional deficiencies so common in Chiapas. This year's contract is expected to require 9 million packages. Representatives of five other states interested in similar contracts were at the forum, and La Selva has begun discussions with representatives from other countries regarding this product, a promising start in an important new market.

Like other coffee organizations, La Selva was cast adrift when the Mexican government retreated from coordination and control of the coffee industry in the early 1990s. "Shipwrecks in a sea of sharks," Luis Hernandez Navarro described the foundering entities in his 1991 article published in *Cafeteleros: La Construcción de la Autonomía*. But La Selva survived. For 30 years it has done what it had to do to improve the quality of life for its members. La Selva's journey

has taken its leaders all over the world in search of new markets and partners to sell their coffee. In addition to international clients paying more than the going price in Mexico, members have benefited from La Selva's pressure on local authorities for better roads and schools and for training programs. Recently they welcomed the development of a coffee curriculum for secondary schools in Comitán, which could give their children the technical skills and other knowledge needed to improve every aspect of the enterprise and keep La Selva viable. Most importantly, La Selva has provided members, as José Juárez explained, "social representation that gives them a voice, an identity that enables them to work with the government and the rest of society."

La Selva's story may well offer one of the best examples of an organization's struggle to survive. As Don Arturo pointed out, its members have not been alone on this journey. "Crucial to the process

was the vision of advisors like José Juárez, a trained agronomist, who grasped the potential of organic coffee as a catalyst for organizing small producers, and had the patience and skills to make it happen," David Bray wrote in "A Bird in a Cup" (*Orion Afield*, winter, 1999/2000). "José and his team have created a uniquely Mexican model of grassroots sustainable development." Organic coffee has been good for La Selva, and the journey is not over. Like any organism, the Union de Ejidos La Selva must continue to adapt or perish.

Ellen Contreras Murphy is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's coordinator for the North American Wetland Conservation Act Mexico Program. From 1987 to 1996, she worked in the IAF's Office of Learning and Dissemination. Her article "La Selva and the Magnetic Pull of Markets: Organic Coffee-Growing in Mexico" appeared in Grassroots Development in 1995 (Vol. 10/1).



The Zapatista Challenge and the Grassroots

By Kathryn Smith Pyle and Marcy Kelley

The flagstone sidewalks of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, worn smooth from centuries of use, are part of the charm of this colonial city in southern Mexico, but they tell a special tale. They are so narrow in places that if two people meet, one must step into the street, a foot below, to allow the other to continue. For centuries, the rules were clear: Indigenous chiapanecos had to yield the sidewalk to anyone of apparent European descent. The practice was prohibited in the 1970s, but the memory of that daily humiliation has lingered on among the Chole, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Mam and Tojolabal descendants of Chiapas' original Mayan inhabitants, who constitute nearly 30 percent of the state's population.

San Cristóbal de las Casas.



The displacement of indigenous Mexicans from their land and the destruction of their culture began under colonial rule and continued through the late 20th century, compounded by economic and political exploitation. Entire communities were forced farther and farther into less arable highlands, away from roads and markets. Environmental degradation followed as forests were cleared. Land reform programs had mixed results; title secured communal lands but did not address the problem of inferior yields that forced farmers to migrate seasonally in search of work or permanently abandon Chiapas, adding family disintegration to a long list of pressures on its indigenous citizens.

The Indigenous Congress of 1974, an unprecedented event organized by the Catholic Church with IAF support, brought together representatives of indigenous peoples from throughout Chiapas to reflect on their heritage and discuss the land issue. This led to the founding of grassroots and non-governmental organizations working to advance social justice and alleviate poverty. Eventually repressed by the government, many continued to exist underground. But by the 1990s, the idea of inclusion as an essential element of democracy was spreading throughout Mexico, spurring the growth of civil society and validating indigenous aspirations articulated at the Congress.

On Jan. 1, 1994, the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) staged an armed offensive against the Mexican government in Chiapas. Referred to as “Zapatistas” or, more colloquially, “El Zeta,” the EZLN invoked Emiliano Zapata, a hero of the Mexican Revolution, and his insistence on the right of the landless to appropriate property. The Zapatistas, with some 3,000 combatants and a ski-masked leadership that was extensively covered in the international media, called for indigenous rights and an end to discrimination in employment, education and daily life. That New Year’s Day, Zapatistas battled police in San Cristóbal and captured several other towns. The Mexican army counterattacked, forcing the Zapatistas to retreat, and on Jan. 12 the Catholic Church brokered a ceasefire. Sporadic violence continued over the next few years but the conflict became largely a contest along social, political and economic lines, with access to land a key issue.



Mark Catredo

The Zapatistas eventually withdrew to bases around Chiapas, some of them enclaves with schools and other institutions, where followers still live and work. The government has continued to maintain a highly visible military presence in the area. Negotiations between the two sides culminated in 1996 in the San Andreas Accords, named for the Chiapas town in which the agreement was reached. The Accords granted autonomy, recognition and certain rights to indigenous Mexicans. Although its provisions were never fully enforced, from their language, and from government investment in infrastructure in Chiapas, could be inferred satisfaction of the EZLN’s demands, which initially won the Zapatistas popular support. The Accords were also an inspiration to NGOs and grassroots organizations. How they managed their own negotiations with the



Marcy Kelley

Weavers from Pantelho now organized as MUINARPA, an IAF grantee.

Zapatistas and how the IAF responded to the opportunities and obstacles the situation presented is a story that is still developing.

In the years preceding the uprising, Chiapas was a priority for the IAF, partly because of its extreme poverty but also because of the economic potential of the area's superior organic coffee and solid base of cooperatives. The IAF's 1989 grant to Asociación Rural de Intérés Colectivo, Unión de Uniones Histórica (ARIC UUH) illustrates the focus on coffee and the complexities of the context. Based in Ocosingo, a town later seized by the Zapatistas, ARIC UUH had emerged from the Indigenous Congress. It worked with more than 5,000 farmers to improve trees, convert to organic production, process beans and open markets. Given its success, David Bray, then IAF's representative for Mexico, expected an application for a second round of funding. But as the first rumblings of an uprising were felt, ARIC UUH chose not to submit another proposal. However, farmer-members of Unión de Ejidos de la Selva, who had benefited from ARIC UUH's award, wanted technical assistance to continue and in 1993

successfully applied for their own grant. La Selva's remarkable accomplishments are described in the article by Ellen Murphy on page 20.

According to John Burstein, a fluent Tzotzil speaker whom the IAF hired to concentrate on Chiapas from 1992 to 1996, the IAF and its grantees remained in close communication throughout the Zapatista period. But as the ideological debate intensified, grassroots organizations in Chiapas increasingly found their members on opposite sides. Between 1997 and 2007, the IAF concentrated on other areas of Mexico, and funded only one project in Chiapas. During the hiatus, dozens of diverse groups emerged as a direct result of the uprising. Some were pro-Zapatista, some not, but all were touched by the ideals and approach of the Zapatistas, their message of change and the resources that they attracted. "In a sense, '94 stimulated local leaders," said one NGO staff member. "The new organizations gave us the opportunity to develop skills. Now some of us have parlayed those skills into government projects that were designed in response to the Zapatista demands."

In 2007, the IAF took a fresh look at Chiapas. The political situation had become stable; poverty indicators were compelling; and worthwhile proposals from all over the state pointed to an extensive infrastructure of strong organizations. In the two years since, the IAF has funded six new projects, none emphasizing coffee. The new grantees all survived the ambiguous allegiances and changing perceptions of an era when groups emerged, consolidated or painfully broke down. If they are cautious about revealing past affiliations, they take obvious pride in their independence and cultural values. The two grantees profiled here are representative of others that successfully adapted to a dynamic context.

Weavers Take the Initiative

Chiapas' rich weaving tradition has been remarkably influenced by external authorities, beginning with the Catholic Church that centuries ago assigned each ethnic group a design. More recently, the Mexican government's Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) [National Indigenous Institute]

managed marketing for artisan groups. In 2003 the INI was reorganized into the Comisión para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI) [Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples]; its work with craftspeople focuses on training and technical assistance.

Before the Zapatista uprising, the town of Pantelho had an informal association of weavers who had worked together for five years making red and white textiles to fill the INI's orders and sell in the local market. Some supported the Zapatistas early on, inspired by their vision for rights of women and indigenous autonomy, which for some weavers suggested independence from the INI. The political debate over *zapatismo* divided the association, and 52 weavers left to form Mujeres Indígenas Artesanas de Pantelho (MUINARPA) and continue working with the INI. Now the CDI, it turned operations over to the weavers along with the marketing of the pillows, coverlets and blouses fashioned for upscale outlets in Mexico City. The women were interested in expanding their business, and after learning of the IAF



Mark Calcedo

Other Pantelho weavers are affiliated with Jolom Mayatik, which works with IAF grantee K'inal Antsetik.

Verónica Gómez Gonzáles of Jolom Mayaetik.

from a CDI worker whose nieces were members of MUINARPA, they began articulating their needs into a successful proposal. Their first disbursement went toward filing to legally constitute MUINARPA as a nonprofit. The award also provided the capital necessary to increase production and purchase a workshop that brought the weavers indoors in bad weather. Although only one weaver in MUINARPA speaks Spanish and is literate, MUINARPA has been in full compliance with the IAF's reporting requirements. The weavers have increased their production and opened new markets.

The other weavers in Pantelho's original association eventually abandoned their pro-Zapatista stance. They joined Jolom Mayaetik, a cooperative whose weavers had become similarly disillusioned as members of Japas Soloviletik, a cooperative founded in 1984. Japas Soloviletik, 1,000 weavers strong, had initially welcomed the Zapatistas' message of autonomy, self-sufficiency and civil and economic rights. At the Zapatistas' invitation, Japas Soloviletik built a work space in Zapatista-controlled territory. This move led to harassment, including death threats, and the new work space was ransacked, documents were stolen and weavings destroyed. The perpetrators were never identified. In a curious turn of events, some Zapatistas in charge questioned whether the structure had ever been officially authorized and how the cooperative would operate in relation to their hierarchy. Eventually they ordered the cooperative to dismantle the work space, which the weavers did, board by board.

This conflict was key to the rejection of the Zapatista rhetoric by many weavers in Japas Soloviletik. "It's very difficult for a cooperative to be under the auspices of a military structure," one weaver explained. "The aims and operation are completely different, even if the vision was the same: economic development, cultural renewal, land reform and an end to discrimination." In 1995, a handful of weavers took their share of the cooperative's assets and founded Jolom Mayaetik whose membership grew to 240 artisans. They also rebuilt their work space on property owned by IAF grantee K'in al Antsetik, whose name means "land of women" in Tzeltal. K'in al Antsetik is helping several cooperatives develop management skills, market strategies and designs. It works in areas with a history of violence,

discrimination, migration, political and religious conflict, and a strong military presence due to the traffic in drugs, arms and people. Despite these challenges, and the need to navigate communities with a continuing Zapatista presence, K'inál Antsetik is determined to support the cooperatives as they strive to become successful enterprises.

Opting for Organic Farming

The Zapatista's focus on land and indigenous rights resonated in Chiapas. "Farmers had been badly exploited by plantation owners," explained Manuel Cruz Guzmán, who works with Centro de Formación

Integral para Promotores Indígenas (CEFIPI) and whose father had attended the Indigenous Congress in 1974. "They had been evicted from their traditional lands but then recruited to work on those same lands for slave wages." In the months following the rebellion, groups of farmers and activists, taking direction from the Zapatistas, seized hundreds of farms for redistribution in a sometimes violent attempt at redress. CEFIPI had resolved to remain neutral and, in collaboration with the Catholic Church, to help the parties negotiate. Neutrality was difficult, but, recalled Cruz Guzmán, "We worked with the government to facilitate the purchase of the

Manuela Cruz works with IAF grantee CEFIPI.



Mark Caicedo

land.” In 1994 and 1995, 1,200 poor families thus acquired 15,800 hectares—still not enough to provide a decent living, Cruz Guzmán added.

Based in the municipality of Chilón, a three-hour drive north of San Cristobal, and rooted in the Catholic Church, CEFIPI works to advance organic agriculture in 13 Tzeltal and Chole communities spread across the mountains, a region that the Zapatistas had dominated and profoundly affected. After the uprising, the Zapatistas visited frequently, helping residents reconstruct their history, particularly their relationship with the land. “Our people had always lived here,” said a resident of a community that had been caught up in the Zapatista movement. “We felt the land was ours, but we were pushed out, especially from the best land. So when

Organic farming includes vermiculture.



El Zeta talked about land, we listened. Most of them were indigenous, like us, so we identified with them. We thought they could help us.”

Eventually residents found the Zapatista approach too difficult and the expected outcome of doubtful benefit. Explained one, “The church was already here and we preferred to stick with it.” Distancing themselves from the Zapatistas was simple and residents insist they feel no rancor toward the Zapatistas remaining nearby. “El Zeta raised the issue of land and reminded us of its value,” said one woman. “We didn’t participate in the land invasions so we didn’t get better land. But we’re Tzeltal, we’ve lived here forever. We are more concerned with using the land we have. We need to know more about organic techniques, we need training.”

For years, CEFIPI has focused on development that incorporates indigenous culture, experience and knowledge and it has trained more than 300 indigenous *chiapanecos* as “caretakers of the land.” A 2008 IAF grant extended CEFIPI’s program to 3,600 people in seven additional municipalities. Residents of one community proudly note that their territory includes the ruins of the Mayan city-state Palenque and lies within the Corredor Biológico Mesoamericano, the largest tract of virgin forest in the hemisphere outside of the Amazon. CEFIPI expects farmers to improve production and to eventually have access to a new regional market applying fair-trade principles. It is also training women to process the organic grains now grown by the farmers into a nutritional supplement intended for children.

Cruz Guzmán sees the impact of the period that began with the Zapatista uprising as positive. “The NGOs are stronger, but they also have to be better prepared to address the many more complex issues, like migration, that require us to work together,” he observed. “And people know their rights. There’s no longer discrimination on the sidewalks of San Cristóbal. These things were already changing when the Zapatistas arrived. But certainly 1994 reinforced what was happening.”

Kathryn Smith Pyle, formerly of the IAF, is producing a documentary about Salvadoran children who disappeared during the war. Marcy Kelley, formerly IAF representative for Mexico, is now representative for Costa Rica and Panama.



Verónica Fernández de Castro and Esther Cueva of CEFIPI's staff train Angélica Silvano and Rebeca Morales to process organic grains (left) into a nutritional supplement.



Challenging Assumptions: Psychiatric Disabilities and Grassroots Development

By Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías



Miguel Sayago

Among individuals with disabilities, those with psychiatric conditions are perhaps the least understood. Many suffer in silence, fearful of the ostracism, confinement, isolation and wardship associated with being labeled mentally ill. For years, treatment itself has been the subject of controversy and exposés. The social activism of the 1960s included the emergence of an anti-psychiatric movement that decried hospital conditions, involuntary commitments and coercive methods and, in its more extreme manifestation, questioned the validity of psychiatry and its diagnoses.

The IAF has interpreted its mission as calling for the inclusion of the disabled in the development process, and in 1972, within a year of launching its grant program, it made its first such award, funding a conference on disability rights. Since then, grants have supported efforts throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to rehabilitate people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities, train them, encourage their enterprises and educate the public in their abilities and challenges. But examples of grants for people with psychiatric or psychosocial disabilities are much rarer. Poring over four decades of files some years ago, I found one documenting the work of Fundación Granja Taller de Asistencia Colombiana (FUNGRATA), a 1987 grantee that provided an alternative to psychiatric hospitals for indigent Colombians with schizophrenia, which I set aside on my shelf where it remained for some years awaiting further research. Then, in 2006, when IAF funded Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH), which proposed to organize Peruvians with psychosocial disabilities, I decided to learn more about how grassroots development relates to such individuals.

Deconstructing a gilded cage

Dr. Alberto Fergusson is a Colombian psychiatrist who founded FUNGRATA. In November 2009, I sat down with him in his home in Bogota to hear the story of this singular organization. More than 27 years ago, FUNGRATA began to work with the homeless *locos de la calle* who scavenge garbage and beg on Bogota's streets and sidewalks. FUNGRATA's staff and volunteers would engage these potential patients in conversation, evaluate them and encourage them to enter a facility that provided therapy, job training,

employment and recreation toward achieving the maximum possible degree of autonomy. Often several sessions were required to overcome fear of institutionalization, which many believed would leave them languishing in the black hole of state hospitals. The "street beat" staff promised that anyone seeking treatment in FUNGRATA's facility could come and go at will. Some 80 percent chose to stay in the infinitely more comfortable conditions than those offered by the streets of the Colombian capital.

To inform the public of its work, FUNGRATA commissioned a video summarizing its mission and methods. Accustomed to today's digital formats, Dr. Fergusson took a few minutes to figure out how to play the antiquated VHS tape for me. After listening to a younger Dr. Ferguson discuss FUNGRATA on the video, my grayer host enthusiastically explained how the organization was born. Disillusioned with existing treatments, he and several colleagues posited that art and work could be therapeutic for schizophrenics, an idea supported by scientific research of the day and, he insisted, dating back to antiquity. Ancient Egyptians believed physical labor aided in healing mental illness, according to archeological evidence, he said. In 1982, funded by a low-interest loan from the Banco de la República de Colombia, these young psychiatrists purchased a 90-acre farm outside the capital and began using agriculture as occupational therapy. When asked, Dr. Fergusson flatly denied that his negative views of conventional treatment were anti-psychiatric, clarifying that he was "only against certain types of psychiatry."

The IAF was at first reluctant to support a project focused on such a "narrow segment of the population" and questioned its feasibility, but this skepticism was overcome. "The IAF bet on us when it was risky," Dr. Fergusson recalled. "We didn't really have a track record then, only an idea." When FUNGRATA received its IAF grant, only two facilities in the United States offered a similarly enlightened approach to psychiatric treatment. FUNGRATA referred to those in treatment as "students." IAF funding allowed it to include in its occupational therapy a bakery and a laundry staffed by students paid the minimum wage. As workers, they learned to manage their finances and to interact with individuals outside the circle of therapists and other students. Some regularly left the facility to dine out

When FUNGRATA received its IAF grant, only two facilities in the United States offered a similarly enlightened approach to psychiatric treatment.

with friends or go to the movies, further preparation for taking charge of their own life.

IAF's grant, according to Dr. Fergusson, was the vote of confidence FUNGRATA needed to obtain the support from the Inter-American Development Bank and other donors, which allowed it to operate for many years. An independent study of FUNGRATA's methods undertaken by researchers from Yale University in the early 1990s confirmed the value of this treatment for schizophrenia. It didn't cure the students but it helped them to adapt to their condition. Eventually Colombia's lawmakers

Miguel Sayago



passed legislation citing FUNGRATA's treatment as the model to be applied in psychiatric institutions. Unfortunately this legislation was never enforced.

FUNGRATA's laundry and bakery generated sufficient revenue to cover operating costs but not the cost of replacing equipment purchased with IAF funds. Nominal deductions from the students' salaries did not nearly cover their housing and treatment. The shortfall was a factor in a re-evaluation of FUNGRATA's methods. By 2002, Dr. Fergusson and his colleagues had once again begun to question medical assumptions, this time their own. They saw the students as too dependent and FUNGRATA as just another institution, better than a psychiatric ward, but nonetheless a gilded cage.

As difficulties and doubts mounted, they decided to close the facility, liquidate its assets and invest the funds in a new organization, Instituto de Autorehabilitacion Acompañada (IAA). The disappointing outcome of the legislation passed earlier had caused FUNGRATA to all but give up on influencing national policies. Instead, during its transition years, it focused on local authorities. Sopó, the location of FUNGRATA's first farm, is a town of 20,000 inhabitants about 50 kilometers from Bogota. To apply his new vision for treatment, Dr. Ferguson persuaded Sopó's mayor and other municipal officials that people with psychosocial disabilities could, with some help, *autorehabilitarse*, or "rehabilitate themselves," by participating in community life. The entire town of Sopó now serves as a "facility" for more than 300 IAA students, mostly schizophrenics. IAA helps residents understand the importance of integrating the students into their community; students find employers willing to accept them; a team of 20 volunteers provides psychiatric support. IAA is also advising the Colombian government on how to assist individuals traumatized as a result of the violent civil conflict. As FUNGRATA's heir, the new institute continues work begun over two decades ago, but in a contemporary setting that its professionals hope will prove effective in making Colombians with psychosocial disabilities contributing members of their communities.

Laying the foundation for Henry's halfway house

The IAF's history with disability rights in Peru includes its support in 1981 for the *Primer Congreso Peruano por los Derechos del Minusválido*. Considered by Peruvian activists a watershed event, it counted President Fernando Belaunde Terry in attendance. At the time, said the organizers, who had sought funding from Peruvian and international donors, "[O]nly the Inter-American Foundation understood the task we had set before us, committing to financial support and giving us its trust."

Henry, a young Peruvian who lives in San Martín de Porres, a low-income district of Lima, is very likely schizophrenic and he also suffers from bouts of depression. I met him last year at a session for the 20 members of Asociación de Usuarios de Salud Mental (ASUMEN), a grassroots organization for people with psychosocial disabilities formed with support from APRODEH, one of Peru's oldest and most respected human rights organizations. Peruvians seeking treatment have no alternatives to psychiatric wards, but through APRODEH, Henry learned of a halfway house in Buenos Aires and ever since has wanted a simi-

lar facility for Peru. Raised in a family of artists, he has sketched an idyllic place offering employment and recreational opportunities that would include field trips and even a swimming pool. He hopes that ASUMEN will make this a reality.

The IAF became aware of APRODEH's work with people with psychosocial disabilities thanks to Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI), which is based in Washington, D.C. I had connected with MDRI's executive director Eric Rosenthal and Alison Hillman, its coordinator for Latin America, at disability-rights conferences in Washington and New York. MDRI exposes human rights abuses in psychiatric institutions around the world, by documenting on video and in photographs harrowing conditions that include horrific sanitation, gross idleness, overcrowding and misuse of restraints, medication and electroconvulsive therapy. MDRI's 2004 report on Peru's mental hospitals was drafted in collaboration with APRODEH.

APRODEH's application to the IAF for the 2005 grant cycle proposed to address a universe of problems faced by people with psychosocial disabilities, for which it requested significant funding. Given



APRODEH's inexperience with people with disabilities, the IAF suggested it resubmit something more manageable for consideration during the next cycle. The leaner project focused on human rights and the development of new and incipient organizations of users of mental health services in four provinces, which APRODEH envisioned could benefit from the decentralized budget process that gives Peruvians more say over how community resources are used. This revised proposal allowed APRODEH to vaunt its sterling reputation in human rights, specifically as a participant in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's examination of the conflict that had pitted Peru's armed forces against the Shining Path and Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru.

Those credentials notwithstanding, APRODEH's first foray into disability rights did not go smoothly. Most Peruvian groups advocating for those with psychosocial disabilities are led by relatives and were formed by psychiatric hospitals applying a medi-

cal model that often conflicts with a human-rights approach. These potential partners expected the grantee to finance medication and, while well-meaning, they projected paternalism or condescension toward *los enfermitos*. Some individuals in participating communities and hospitals considered the notion of organizing schizophrenics, manic depressives and people with bipolar disorders irresponsible and even dangerous, akin to handing them fire arms. Detractors accused APRODEH of being part of a radical anti-psychiatry movement. The organization, not as adept as Dr. Fergusson, failed to quickly dismiss this claim.

Slowly, APRODEH learned from its mistakes. It hired Ana Núñez, a social worker who aptly transferred her experience with individuals with physical disabilities to those with psychosocial conditions. APRODEH patiently pushed families to allow those diagnosed with a disability to attend its meetings unaccompanied, a goal that took more than two years to reach in Huancayo. It hired community organiz-



Courtesy APRODEH

Henry's drawing created in an APRODEH workshop with ASUMEN.

ers in each geographic area that it served, something not originally envisioned. Of APRODEH's groups, ASUMEN, in Lima, is the most advanced. I witnessed the challenges Ana faces moderating one weekly meeting that included art, dance, team-building exercises and conversation. For the first half of the session, Henry was unresponsive and slouched in his chair, but he cheered up and participated when he was given a chance to describe his halfway house. Others shared their experiences and hopes—for a global organization promoting their rights or simply for a steady job.

Two weeks before I visited, three ASUMEN members had met with representatives of the Disability Rights Fund (DRF), a Boston-based donor that provides grants of up to \$100,000 for the promotion of the rights enumerated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Most applications that DRF receives come from groups representing those with physical or sensory disabilities. At the time ASUMEN was the only applicant from Latin America representing people with psychosocial disabilities and DRF was prepared to take a chance on the new organization. DRF's grant will finance training to improve ASUMEN's management and materials for workshops to raise awareness of the needs of Peruvians with psychosocial disabilities.

As DRF's grantee, ASUMEN was invited to send representatives to a gathering of Peruvians with disabilities in Miraflores, only a 30-minute drive from San Martín de Porres. For ASUMEN's three representatives, the meeting in Miraflores would be an important first opportunity to advocate for their organization. Initially, relatives objected to their traveling alone—even that short distance—and staying overnight, citing potentially dangerous scenarios. But DRF's invitation was restricted to disabled people and, moreover, the donor wanted to encourage independence. None of their relatives' fears materialized during the short stay and no further objections were raised when ASUMEN's leadership attended a follow-up meeting with DRF, which resulted in a second grant. APRODEH is promoting ASUMEN as a model for Peru. Meanwhile APRODEH itself recently began addressing discrimination against Peruvians with physical disabilities in the area of employment. The Colegio de Abogados del Peru, the Peruvian bar asso-

Courtesy DRF



ASUMEN members welcome Catalina Devandas (front row, left) of the Disability Rights Fund.

ciation, has approached APRODEH for guidance on disability rights.

The accomplishments of FUNGRATA and APRODEH exemplify the potential of grassroots initiatives on behalf of people with psychosocial disabilities. FUNGRATA helped nearly 4,000 Colombians over almost two decades and a generation of volunteer psychiatrists and social workers learned the benefit of a dignified approach to treatment. Dr. Fergusson was honored with an Ashoka fellowship and he frequently shares FUNGRATA's experience in lectures at universities and professional forums. He currently advises the government of the District of Columbia on how to address the mental health issues of Washington's indigent residents. His point of departure is the approach he developed with the support of the IAF, which is based in the D.C. metro area, completing a circle begun in 1987. His experiment in Colombia continues to evolve to meet new challenges, the hallmark of a successful grassroots experience. Perhaps APRODEH and ASUMEN will one day boast such a track record.

Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías is the IAF's Web master and contributes as a writer and editor to Grassroots Development.

Disaster and Resolve on Lake Ilopango

By Seth Micah Jesse

All photos by Santiago Salinas



Something improbable happened in January. Fifty representatives of IAF grantees scattered across El Salvador converged at a successful fish farm on Lake Ilopango to gather ideas to take home. Five years earlier, many experts would have closed the book on the lake communities and their development plans. But between 2005 and today, these fisher folk successfully navigated significant challenges, and they are optimistic about their future.

Filling a volcanic crater 30 minutes east of San Salvador, Lake Ilopango is a rich resource for the towns that dot its shores. Agencia de Desarrollo Microregional de los Municipios de Ilopango, Soyapango y San Martín (ADEMISS), a regional organization, confirmed this when a group that it had helped organize began farming fish on the lake. Inspired by that cooperative's success, ADEMISS proposed to replicate the undertaking in five other communities. With a 2001 grant of \$275,600 from the IAF, and the best of intentions, it worked with the residents to launch a fish farm, manage resources responsibly and restore the lake's ecosystem. But over the next decade, the fishermen were sorely tested. Their story of setbacks, recovery and enterprise underlines the complex challenges to grassroots development and the importance of allowing grassroots groups to discover how to overcome them.

Disasters, natural and otherwise

For two years ADEMISS worked as planned, and the results of its efforts were promising. The communities were well on their way to organizing as cooperatives, expanding production and lowering their costs by breeding fingerlings instead of buying them. In March 2004 Salvadoran daily *El Diario de Hoy* reported on the farmers' success raising marketable tilapia in floating cages measuring six meters by eight meters. It also noted the importance of the farmers' organization, collective production and sales and their enthusiasm for this new income stream.

El Salvador, however, is perpetually vulnerable to the forces of nature. As reported in *Grassroots Development* in 2004, flooding in 2003 caused landslides that destroyed the three new tanks ADEMISS had constructed for breeding fingerlings and drastically altered the terrain under them. Equally disastrous, ADEMISS' board of directors had fallen

into disarray over allegations of fraud, which paralyzed all activities. After repeated efforts to help ADEMISS resolve its internal conflicts, the IAF ended up withdrawing all support in March 2005. According to Wilfredo Mancía, an agronomist specialized in aquaculture who has worked on Lake Ilopango since 2001, the ADEMISS failure left the communities unable to maintain their momentum. "The insipient organizations began to splinter as some people became disillusioned and left," he said.

Community resolve

As spectators to the NGO's internal conflict, the participating farmers were stunned to find themselves suddenly without administrative or financial means to work toward their goals. According to Mancía, "The ADEMISS failure was particularly difficult because the fishermen were most directly affected by the conflict but could do nothing about it." Without funds and advice to continue their endeavor, many fisher folk wondered if this venture had been a mistake. "We felt terrible because we ended up twiddling our thumbs," José de Jesús Cruz of the cooperative La Bitinia summed up the groups' plight. Members abandoned the groups in droves, which led to the loss of fish, serious sales problems and difficulties obtaining the fingerlings that were vital to a profitable enterprise. Nonetheless, even with ADEMISS out of the picture, the most dedicated farmers—some 50 residents of Bitinia, Joya Grande, Palo Blanco and Playa El Pegadero—continued to raise tilapia in the 20 floating cages constructed with IAF funds. Four of the five groups that had formed survived. They operated on a limited scale, but production never ceased. To open a local market, the groups conducted tastings at festivals and fairs, and they attracted new clients, including restaurants and cafés. Soon the farmers sensed that together they could lower their costs and produce the volume of fresh fish required to enter the San Salvador market. All four of their groups formalized as cooperatives by late 2005, bringing them closer to that goal.

The cooperatives' resolve, resilience and initiative were not lost on the IAF nor was their collective investment of part of their profits in more cages. In meetings with Kathryn Smith Pyle, IAF's representative for El Salvador at that time, and Rolando

Gutiérrez, the Salvadoran contractor who continues to provide liaison services to potential applicants and active IAF grantees, farmers expressed their desire to build on their technical skills and to reconstruct and manage breeding tanks. For this, they required support, but they were not yet ready to apply to the IAF for a grant, so Smith Pyle and Gutiérrez approached an IAF grantee based nearby, Asociación Cooperativa de Ahorro, Crédito y Agrícola Comunal de Paraíso de Osorio (COPADEO). As a result of this unusually proactive outreach, the IAF amended COPADEO's grant in 2006 with \$100,000 to finance the training in management and accounting for the farmers and the related technical assistance originally contemplated in the ADEMISS proposal as well as replacement tanks, constructed and equipped at an appropriate new site.

Enterprise

In addition to tilapia, the cooperatives now produce fingerlings. Before the breeding tanks were installed, the farmers had purchased fingerlings from a specialized company that trucked them in; many fingerlings

died in transit or when transferred to water to which they were not acclimated. The new tanks use water pumped from the lake, so the fingerlings are better adapted to their environment when they mature and are transferred to the cages anchored in the lake. This has improved and accelerated their growth and has lowered the fingerling mortality rate from nearly 50 percent to 5 percent. Life has changed for the farmers. "Before, I couldn't even throw the cast net and now I feel able to show others what I have learned," said José de Jesús Cruz. "At home we used to eat only beans and rice but tilapia has improved our diet and the income allows us to send our children to school."

The initiative has created jobs as well as increased revenues. While members rotate to tend the breeding tanks, they hire workers to feed the growing tilapia at the cooperatives' floating cages. During the first year of fingerling production in the tanks, monthly profits increased from less than \$500 to \$1,800. This allowed the cooperatives to acquire 20 additional cages, build a retaining wall against landslides and, later, assist local schools, demonstrating that grassroots businesses can spearhead social responsibility in El Salvador. In



Representatives of IAF's Salvadoran grantees visit fish tanks.

2008 *El Diario de Hoy* again reported on the success of the enterprise, noting that the introduction of breeding tanks, the first in Ilopango, benefited hundreds of families. The cooperatives used additional IAF funding that year, channeled through COPADEO, for electrification, a warehouse and septic tank.

Expansion

Members of the cooperatives are aware that maintaining and expanding their enterprise means reaching out to other entities. Toward this end, they formed a coordinating committee that meets regularly to organize efforts among the four cooperatives and identify potential partners. One partner, Salvadoran National Center for Development of Fishing and Aquaculture (CENDEPESCA), has provided the cooperatives technical assistance, contacts, materials and office space. According to Dr. Manuel Ramírez Luna, head of the Aquaculture Health Unit of the Salvadoran Ministry of Agriculture, the cooperatives are managing their production well. "This is unique in the country because the producers own the land and fingerling tanks and have organized well their production, administration and marketing. The primary challenges will be maintaining their organization, opening markets and adopting measures to prevent and control the outbreak of disease among the tilapia," he said.

Improved organizational and administrative skills allowed the cooperatives to obtain funds from the Salvadoran government's Pesca Artesanal Responsable (PESCAR) for improving market access and developing the coordinating committee's ability to manage tank operations, payroll and sales. In 2007 the cooperatives extended their network to include families from other shores of Lake Ilopango by allying themselves with Asociación Acuícola Lago de Ilopango (ASALI), made up of other cooperatives and community groups. "We've grown from a community group to a cooperative; now we form part of ASALI and together produce more," says José Nelson García of the cooperative Palo Grande. ASALI used its 2008 IAF grant to canvass members and lakeside residents about their priorities and the challenges to responsible fish farming in the lake basin. It has shared its analysis of lake water and aquaculture with government officials, civil society groups and the



Visitors enjoy the catch of the day.

community. ASALI is exploring ways to store, process and sell fish on behalf of Lake Ilopango farmers.

The implosion of the intermediary NGO turned out to be an opportunity for the Ilopango cooperatives. Close to collapse in 2004, they adjusted to the changed context, which bodes well for their ability to adapt to future challenges. Nudged into a role they might not otherwise have assumed, the cooperatives assumed responsibility for development of their communities. Had ADEMISS not been torn apart by internal conflicts, would the cooperatives have demonstrated such leadership and independence? The timing was uncanny. In November 2009, Hurricane Ida flooded the Ilopango fishing communities, causing widespread destruction and, for some, weeks of isolation. The cooperatives cleaned, repositioned and anchored cages displaced by the storm and joined in removing debris left by landslides and flooding. Two recently created committees will help lake communities react quickly to future emergencies and mitigate harm to tilapia production. As their January visitors witnessed, these resourceful fishermen once again confirmed their resolve.

Seth Micah Jesse has been IAF representative for El Salvador since 2007.

Cisterns, Sanitation and Progress in Pesqueira

By Amy Kirschenbaum

All photos by Sean Sprague



Farmer Josefa Maria de Oliveira Paes and the community cistern in Laje do Carrapicho.

Centro Diocesano de Apoio ao Pequeno Produtor (CEDAPP), a nongovernmental organization with roots in the Catholic Church, has labored for 19 years to mitigate drought, improve sanitation and diversify income in one of the poorest areas of the Brazilian Northeast.

Today, it can point to progress. How CEDAPP's team changed behavior in the 10 communities participating in the IAF-funded project near the small city of Pesqueira, in the state of Pernambuco, could move even the most skeptical observer. After several failed attempts at capturing residents' attention, CEDAPP developed an interactive, multimedia curriculum to transmit its critical message of resource management and civic participation. From materials tailored to CEDAPP's workshops, *nordestinos* learned to distinguish clean and polluted water as "water of life" and "water of death," and they can now judge when water is suitable only for crops or bathing and when it can be used for cooking and drinking. They also know how long substances take to biodegrade: five years for a cigarette, 100 years for plastics, 400 years for metal and indefinitely for rubber. To minimize contamination, said project coordinator Maria Elisabete Pires, "We teach them only to throw in the water what fish can eat."

Rainfall from the brief wet season in Pesqueira used to last residents only a month, jeopardizing their agriculture and well-being, especially infant health. To introduce cisterns, communities were willing to invest resources totaling 30 percent of the cost and residents were willing to contribute their labor. The cisterns collect enough precious rain water to last the more than eight months between wet seasons. Water storage, said technical advisor Lourdes Viana Vinokur, has taught people about economics, health measures and the value of working together. For women, who traditionally had to carry the water for the household, the cistern has represented a drastic lifestyle change. "One told me, "The cistern was my liberation,"" said Vinokur.

Toilets are even more valued. "I wanted to hug it when I got it, but I settled for caressing it every day," said Arlindo Eduardo da Silva, one proud owner of a new toilet. Before CEDAPP intervened, most of the 33 communities it serves did not have a single home with indoor plumbing. Now small children are reluctant



Arlindo da Silva's daughter in the family's new bathroom.



to invite friends to a home without at least a community bathroom facility nearby. In addition to dignity, cleanliness and convenience, bathrooms at or close to home offer assurance of personal safety, according to da Silva who no longer worries about his young daughters as he did when the family had to resort to open fields. CEDAPP began by installing “basic toilets,” but in some places lack of running water was an enormous obstacle to using a traditional fixture. When CEDAPP representatives met to discuss fair trade with colleagues from another IAF grantee, Centro de Estudos e Promoção da Agricultura de Grupo (CEPAGRO), somehow the subject turned to toilets, specifically “dry toilets,” which require less water to operate than the “basic toilets” and also compost waste.

CEDAPP has since installed 85 “dry toilets” in several communities, although residents initially had reservations. “People were afraid that they would smell bad and they didn’t understand how they could work without water,” Suely Rodrigues, vice-president of a local producers’ association, told the Recife daily *Jornal do Comercio de Comunicação*. “Now I would like one of my own.” Dry toilets are outfitted with an exhaust pipe similar to the one on a septic tank, which takes care of inconvenient odor. Ashes, sawdust or lime is used to dry up waste that can then be safely composted. CEDAPP expects a surefire multiplier effect as groups throughout the Northeast, including the Brazilian government’s ProRural, an agency that provides support to farmers, want to know more about the innovation.

Along with year-round access to clean water and sanitation, CEDAPP engages residents in a variety of activities to boost income. Taking advantage of the particular proclivities, vocations and traditions present in each community, and of geography, CEDAPP helps residents work together as cooperatives that produce what is most suited to their abilities and resources. Members receive training in organization and business administration and learn to optimize market appeal by effectively presenting, packaging and pricing goods ranging from lace and leather to honey, dairy products and fruit pulp for making juices. Thanks to CEDAPP’s agricultural assistance, more food is available from local farms and it costs less than produce that used to be brought from far away. The resulting increase in disposable income has



With CEDAPP’s help, the lace-makers’ cooperative in Nossa Senhora das Graças now markets members’ crafts in its own store located in a shopping center. Hand-embroidered garments and hand-made lace from Pesqueira are prized throughout Brazil and exported. A single doily, table runner, or placemat that takes an entire day to craft earns the artisan \$15 or \$20 and can retail in urban shops for five times as much.



The community center built by CEDAPP in Sítio Tigre de Sertânia, where residents learn to craft leather items from goat hides tanned locally.

Members of nine honey cooperatives use the plant built and equipment installed by CEDAPP in Novo Cajueiro.



In the municipality of Alagoinha, members of the Socorro Agricultural Association process graviola, or soursop, and other tropical fruits.



been credited with slowing migration to cities. People prefer to remain close to their families and neighbors. They are willing to work on the land if they can make a living from it.

Residents take pride in these communities and they now actively participate in their municipal councils. Even young children demonstrate a sense of commitment and responsibility—their school attendance is better than ever. Although they still face

many challenges, by working with CEDAPP these *nordestinos* have resolved some of their most pressing problems. Father Bartholomeo Bergese, the Italian priest who helped found CEDAPP and serves as its director, may have put it best. “What they are doing is working miracles.” For more, visit cedapp.org.

Amy Kirschenbaum is IAF representative for Brazil. Sean Sprague is a professional photographer from Wales.

Goat milk and cheese sell for double the price of products from cow's milk. CEDAPP's training in animal husbandry and feed production helped farmers enter this lucrative market. Now they compete at a popular annual event where a prize is awarded to the most productive goat. For two consecutive years the top honor went to goats raised by Terezinha de Jesus de Melo, pictured here with her favorite kid, Buizinha, from among the 17 produced by one of her winners.



IAF Fellowships: Funding Scholarship at the Grassroots

By Mark Caicedo

Since awarding its first development grant in 1972, the Inter-American Foundation has been known for funding the grassroots efforts of the organized poor in Latin America and the Caribbean. Less well-known is the IAF's support for academic research into grassroots trends and topics, a commitment that dates back almost as far—to IAF's Machado Program that president Bill Dyal launched to fund graduate studies in U.S. universities by "Latin American researchers looking at the same kinds of problems as people who designed projects."

Dyal moved next to fund an initial group of four U.S. doctoral students, then, very briefly, post-doctoral researchers and finally master's degree candidates. IAF president Deborah Szekely instituted the highly selective Dante B. Fascell Inter-American Fellowship that between 1991 and 1995 allowed

a handful of outstanding Latin American and Caribbean grassroots leaders to pursue, anywhere they chose to do so, independent study leading to dissemination of their successful approaches across the hemisphere. Alumni from all programs now total 1,047 individuals; they worked in 35 countries and represent 117 U.S. universities in 36 states. The Machado Program proved so successful that it became the model for the program of Ashoka Fellows.

Between 2000 and 2006 the IAF suspended all Fellowships for budgetary reasons. In 2007, one component was reinstated: support for doctoral dissertation research undertaken by students enrolled in U.S. universities. A major structural change is the administration of the Fellowships by the Institute of International Education. Information and procedures can be found at www.iie.org/iaf; communication via a social networking site brings the program into the digital age.

The 15 Fellows are selected by a committee of scholars, some of them former Fellows, drawn from universities throughout the country. Fellows receive a monthly stipend for up to one year, a research allowance, round-trip travel to the research site and health insurance. The IAF also covers the expenses of their attendance at an annual mid-year conference, a unique feature of IAF's Fellowships that brings the year's cycle of Fellows together for several days. The lively, intense agenda includes presentation of the research, individual meetings with the selection committee, group discussions on issues in grassroots development and time to exchange ideas with each other. Fellows also visit IAF projects. As IAF president from 1984 to 1991, Deborah Szekely always attended the mid-year meetings, which she recalled could be a "mid-term correction," ensuring research projects stayed on track. "A lot of the students are OK," she said, "but a few find changed circumstances on the ground. Yet they have arranged to be away from their universities and are in country, so you work it out."

Mark Caicedo



At the 2010 mid-year conference in Mexico City: Peter Wilshusen, a professor at Bucknell University and a scholar on IAF's Academic Review Committee, was in the last group of Fellows funded before the IAF suspended the Fellowship Program in 1999. Jaime Amparo Alves, a Brazilian student at the University of Texas, conducted research in a favela outside São Paulo as a Fellow in the 2009-2010 cycle.

Szekely valued the exposure of scholars to “a hands-on, three-dimensional experience,” such as Elizabeth Lockwood and Luis Fujiwara, both of the 2008-2009 Fellowship cycle, share in the pages that follow. She also pointed to the impact on higher education, noting the prevalence of former Fellows serving in the leadership of the Latin American Studies Association. The IAF’s roots in academia, in fact, run deep. With his articles in *Foreign Affairs* and his book *The Engines of Change*, Harvard professor George C. Lodge significantly influenced the intellectual climate that led to the founding of the IAF in the late 1960s and he was appointed to the new agency’s founding board of directors. Most notably, Lodge wrote that poverty was the greatest threat to U.S. interests in the Americas. In his 1969 article “U.S. Aid to Latin America: Funding Radical Change,” he urged creation of an “American Foundation [to] find and fund the *engines of change* which work directly to revolutionize Latin American social and political structures.” Research supported with IAF Fellowships examines those engines of change—grassroots and nongovernmental organizations—and the context in which they work, adding to the body of scholarship on social change in the hemisphere and introducing a practical focus.

Among the first four students whose doctoral dissertation research the IAF funded was Kevin Healy, now IAF representative for Bolivia, an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and a member of the committee that selects IAF Fellows. Healy’s study of the resistance to Bolivian government’s land reforms of the 1950s, undertaken as a Fellow, became a best-selling book, a standard text in Bolivian universities, and, more recently, the subject of an interview with the author televised in Bolivia in connection with the land reform law passed in 2008. The ongoing relevance of his dissertation is one reason for Healy’s reputation as a leading expert on Bolivian development and indigenous movements in Latin America.

Among other Fellows who have influenced generations of students as well as institutions and public policy, including development assistance policy, are Jonathan Fox, University of California at Santa Cruz; Carl J. Bauer, University of Arizona; Lynn Bolles, University of Maryland; Alika Wali, Field Museum of Chicago; Philip Herr, the Government Accountability

Mark Caicedo



Mid-year conference, 2008: IAF President Larry Palmer, left, supported the revival of IAF’s Fellowships; IAF representative Kevin Healy is on the Academic Review Committee.

Office; James Nations, formerly of Conservation International National and now with the Parks Conservation Association Center for State of the Parks; Michael Painter, World Wildlife Fund; and Tom Reardon, Institute for International Food Policy. Latin Americans who came to the U.S. as Fellows between 1974 and 1999 include Wasar Ari, of the University of Nebraska, the first indigenous Bolivian Aymara to earn a Ph.D.; and Javier Morales González, who served as Nicaragua’s vice minister of commerce; and Tomás Huanca, now a researcher with Centro Boliviano de Desarrollo y de Investigación Socio-Integral (CBIDSI).

The IAF is the only institution that specifically funds research targeting grassroots development in Latin America and the Caribbean. All Fellows are required to have an institutional affiliation, which brings them together with their academic peers and colleagues to discuss and debate contemporary issues related to the grassroots development in the hemisphere. Fellows are also in daily contact with practitioners and the grassroots. In this manner, IAF’s Fellowships complement its development grants in furthering the IAF’s mission to “strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding” in this hemisphere and reinforce an approach that is constantly validated in development literature.

Mark Caicedo, also IAF’s photo editor, has worked with IAF’s Fellowship program since 1994.

Mobilizing the Deaf Community in Uruguay

By Elizabeth M. Lockwood

More than 50 million persons with disabilities live in Latin America and the Caribbean, comprising 15 percent of the population. Eighty percent of those individuals are impoverished, unemployed and socially excluded (Astorga, 2009; Inter-American Development Bank, 2007; The World Bank, 2005). Regardless of apparent need, the disabled population in this region is one of the most neglected in the world. Yet the Deaf* community in Uruguay, totaling less than 1 percent of the country's inhabitants, has successfully organized to push for deaf-focused laws as well as government programs and policies. The consequent benefits to Deaf Uruguayans include bilingual primary education in Uruguayan sign language (LSU) and Spanish; the assignment of interpreters to secondary schools, certain universities and employment interviews; the introduction of relay operators in telecommunications; recognition of LSU as an official language; a 75 percent discount on text messages; close-captioned films; and training in sign language for government employees.

As an Inter-American Foundation Grassroots Development Fellow, I spent 12 months in Uruguay researching why this community is significantly more mobilized than the other Uruguayan disability groups, whose members are more numerous, and than other Deaf communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. An exploratory case study of the Deaf community in Montevideo was my point of departure. I interviewed 14 leaders of the Deaf community, who provided insight into their involvement in collective action. Interviews with a subsample, consisting of 12 other community members, yielded complementary, ground-level perspectives. I also observed approximately 500 community members from throughout Montevideo and reviewed approximately 90 government documents dating from 1902.

In early July 2009, just one month before completing my fieldwork, I received an unexpected invitation from the IAF to present my findings at the

VI *Encuentro Latinoamericano de Sordos* conference in Bogotá. It consisted of three concurrent conferences organized by the Colombian Deaf community: the Sixth National Congress on the Current Situation of Deaf Colombians "Past, Present, and Future," the Sixth Latin American Meeting of the Deaf, and the First Latin American Meeting of Interpreters. Accompanying me were Isabel Pastor, founder of the Uruguayan interpreter-training school, Centro de

Christiana Kasner



Mid-year conference, 2009: Elizabeth Lockwood.

Investigación y Desarrollo para la Persona [Center for Research and Development for the Deaf] (CINDE), whose participation was also funded by the IAF; and, representing the Deaf community, Blanca Macchi, who was funded by the World Federation of the Deaf. Attendance at all three conferences allowed me to reconnect with familiar faces and form new professional alliances—such is the nature of the Deaf world. I collaborate now with a Colombian whom I met at the *Encuentro*.

I shared the successful endeavors of the Uruguayan Deaf community with an audience consisting primarily of Deaf community leaders from various Latin American and Caribbean nations, as well as some hearing allies. Key findings from my research indicate that Deaf Uruguayans prefer to work together toward their objectives rather than follow a single leader. In fact, the Uruguayan Deaf community generally rejects concentrating power and authority in one or several individuals and instead encourages dialogue and collaboration as well as coordination with hearing allies.

Increased access to qualified sign-language interpreters, secondary and post-secondary education via sign language, and media and technology have led to better communication, greater awareness of the surrounding world, and a more informed and cohesive community. The Deaf community in Uruguay does not actively pursue the formation of transnational networks with other Deaf groups in the region or local networks with other Uruguayan disability groups. Instead it targets partnerships with entities of the Uruguayan government, an approach perhaps facilitated by the fluidity and social structure of the Uruguayan political system. Advocacy with these state partners—for equal access to information, the means of communication and public services—is the *sine qua non* of the Deaf community's noteworthy accomplishments.

After my presentation, various Deaf leaders and hearing allies expressed interest in applying the experience of the Deaf Uruguayan community to their respective communities. Representatives from Bolivia and Guatemala were especially receptive since their communities still lack deaf-focused services. Both countries have a well-developed sign language widely

used by Deaf persons, but they lack the services necessary to allow the Deaf community to access information and connect with hearing society. [The IAF has funded efforts to codify the sign language used in Nicaragua and Ecuador.—ED] Other hearing allies, interpreters and community activists at the *Encuentro* also spoke of future collaboration.

The enthusiastic response to my findings reconfirmed the dire need for Deaf-focused development in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially given the pervasive communication and language barriers that result in less accommodation of deaf citizens than of those belonging to other disability groups. I plan to continue to work with and conduct research on Deaf communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this connection, my understanding of the Uruguayan Deaf community will be a valuable resource. I am deeply grateful to this community for its acceptance and collaboration and to the IAF for its support.

Elizabeth Lockwood successfully defended her thesis this spring.

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A Network of Hope

By Luis Fujiwara

As an Inter-American Foundation Grassroots Development Fellow from July 2008 to April 2009, I lived in Dias D'Ávila, a small city on the outskirts of metropolitan Salvador, in the state of Bahia, where horse-drawn wagons still transport food, bricks, sand, cement and people. Most of its 57,000 inhabitants struggle with the same lack of electric, water and sanitation services afflicting rural Brazilians, as well as with the contemporary urban problems associated with drug abuse, crime, crushing unemployment and violence targeting young men.

One hot afternoon in late November 2008, as I was writing up my interviews and observations, I heard a knock on my door. When I answered, I saw four kids with improvised buckets, including the smallest, a five-year-old girl who was carrying a one-

liter oil can on her head. The teenager among them explained that they were siblings looking for water. He spoke without a hint of concern or rage in his voice. In fact, all four children acted as if going door to door asking for water were the most natural thing in the world. I felt awkward, but then I thought of my own difficulty getting water. My neighborhood in Dias D'Ávila was served by old and damaged pipelines, most of them illegal connections called *gatos*; water flowed only two or three days a week, usually in a thin trickle. I helped the kids with their chore, and, buckets full, they said good-bye and went happily on their way. Later, I met their mother who said they simply needed enough water to drink, to cook a meal and, occasionally, to bathe. I was living in the midst of families like this one, but until that knock on the



Luis Fujiwara

door it had not occurred to me how hard life was for them. Powerful experiences such as this change our lives and beliefs in unexpected ways.

The subject of my research for the dissertation I would defend as a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas at Austin was the effectiveness of health services for mothers and children, including proper monitoring of pregnancies and child development, offered by Pastoral da Criança, an ecumenical, faith-based program. Pastoral uses a strategy pioneered by the Catholic Church, and its “working method” incorporates the “GOBI” priorities set by UNICEF in the early 1980s: growth monitoring (G), oral rehydration therapy to counter diarrhea (O), the promotion of breastfeeding (B), and childhood immunizations (I). Complementary components include voluntarism, gender-oriented programs, collective advocacy, microcredit, employment-generation, and a monitoring and communications system that promotes both accountability and the rapid identification of epidemics.

Pastoral works with desperately poor Brazilians and is credited with saving thousands of young lives. Its activities began in 1983 with a pilot in Florestópolis in rural Southern Brazil. Within a year, the infant mortality rate in participating communities had declined 77 percent. Pastoral now reaches more than 70 percent of Brazil’s municipalities; in any given month, some 2 million children and 100,000 pregnant women receive treatment through the Pastoral network. Its method has been adopted by the Brazilian government and is applied in 20 developing countries. I could see the need for primary health care for children and pregnant women almost everywhere I went in Brazil, but most visibly in Bahia where poverty and inequality are so widespread. Observing the Pastoral program operating there provided me a clear picture of the power of bottom-up development. The program is simple in its design, cost-effective, far-reaching and participatory, given the importance and impact of volunteers and the emphasis on the autonomy, development and organization of their communities.

My research included 30 interviews with young mothers and pregnant women in communities with and without Pastoral’s services and support. Those

residing where Pastoral was active seemed more informed and more hopeful. Pastoral communities also seemed more organized in pursuing their needs, including with the municipal government; they engaged in more collective activities; their leadership took a more active role in local politics. Interestingly, one young mother shared the local impression of me as a “foreigner.” I am Brazilian, but I quickly understood the distance created by social and economic status and lack of opportunities. The young woman also told me that I brought hope for better days ahead because no one from a place as remote to her and her neighbors as Texas had ever demonstrated such keen interest in the lives and the welfare of the people in her community.

Not long ago, I learned that Dr. Zilda Arns, the pediatrician who founded Pastoral and was its international coordinator, had died on Jan. 12 in the earthquake that destroyed most of Haiti. She was there on a humanitarian mission to promote Pastoral’s services for children and the elderly. She is mourned in Brazil and around the world; President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva and presidential candidates Dilma Roussef and José Serra attended her funeral. Dr. Arns once told me that Pastoral was not about providing primary health care but was above all a network to enable communities to take care of themselves. The loss of Dr. Arns shocked me for a moment and then brought back the time I had spent in the field as a witness to the results of her work on the ground and her hope for the people in those communities.

The daily realities of developing regions are richer than academic theories and offer tremendous opportunities to learn. In the future I might not remember every detail of my experience in Dias D’Ávila, but the smile on the faces of those kids carrying buckets of water will always be with me, a social footprint to remind me that development is about people and nothing matters more to them than being treated like human beings.

Luis Fujiwara works for the United Nations Development Programme in Brazil. His dissertation defense is scheduled for summer 2010.

Conservation Advance

IAF grantee Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN) has been working with communities in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, in the high Andes of the Cusco region, to obtain recognition of their indigenous territory as protected reserves. On May 6, 2010, community representatives and ECOAN staff traveled to Lima for the signing ceremony during which Peru's minister for the environment Antonio Brack officially designated three new *Áreas de Conservación Privada (ACP)*, or conservation areas, in the territory. This important milestone will help ECOAN and local residents protect biodiversity and ensure the responsible use of natural resources on more than 3,400 hectares of community land for at least the next 10 years. The ACP designation is renewable.—*Miriam Brandão, IAF representative for Peru*



Courtesy PIDECAFE

Jeffrey A. Wright



ECOAN's conservation efforts include the installation of more fuel-efficient stoves that burn less wood.

PIDECAFE's Sublime Cacao

Pierre Marcolini, the renowned Belgian *chocolatier*, travels the world in search of prime ingredients for the pricey bonbons and truffles savored by the discriminating patrons of his boutiques in Paris, London, Tokyo, Kuwait and New York. Early this year, his quest took him to Piura, Peru, with a film crew from Antena 3-Francia in tow. There he met with the farmers of recent IAF grantee Programa Integral para el Desarrollo del Café (PIDECAFE), who grow a rare and exquisite variety of cacao known as *porcelana*, or porcelain, because of its white seeds. PIDECAFE's sublime beans will be featured in a documentary on the world's best chocolate along with Marcolini. "White seeds are very difficult to find," he clarifies on camera, visibly moved at having obtained them, according to a report in the May 7 Peruvian daily *El Comercio*. "At home in Brussels, the result will be exceptional chocolate." PIDECAFE used its IAF grant to work with some 750 farmers in eight municipalities of Piura and Tumbes, in northern Peru, toward organic certification of their sugar and cacao crops and to develop their market abroad. For more, visit pidecafe.org and marcolini.be.

Duque: Exemplary Colombian

Cecilia Duque Duque, former director of Asociación Colombiana para la Promoción Artesanal (ACPA), an early IAF grantee, was among 18 individuals and organizations awarded the Premio El Colombiano Ejemplar in February by *El Colombiano*, Antioquia's leading daily. Duque was recognized for her tireless efforts to promote Colombian crafts. A 1977 grant from IAF helped ACPA to reach out to artisans and rescue their endangered traditions (see *Grassroots Development* Vol. 30, 1). President Alvaro Uribe attended the ceremony at the Teatro Metropolitano and praised the honorees' accomplishments in science and technology, culture, business, sports and tourism. The circle of winners included rock star Shakira, as well as composer Blas Emilio Atehortúa and the Colombian Paralympics Committee. For more on the Premio El Colombiano Ejemplar and the 2009 winners, visit elcolombiano.com/ce2009.asp.

Business Networks

The January/February 2010 issue of Central America's business magazine *Microempresas & Microfinanzas* reported that IAF grantee Instituto Hondureño de Desarrollo Alternativo y Sostenible (IHDEAS) had formalized an agreement with Jovenes Industriales (JOVIN) to create a permanent network of experienced individuals willing to mentor aspiring entrepreneurs. IHDEAS uses its 2008 IAF award to support the businesses of young people in Tegucigalpa with loans and technical assistance.

Also noted was the agreement between Asociación de Organizaciones de Microfinanzas (ASOMI), a network of 11 microfinance institutions serving some 65,000 Salvadorans, and Asociación de Bancos Cooperativos y Sociedades de Ahorro y Crédito (ASIFBAN) to standardize practices and push for an overhaul of El Salvador's regulatory system to reflect the importance of alternative financial services. ASOMI's 2003 IAF award allowed the network to grow its membership, develop its microfinance services and increase small loans to small- and medium-sized businesses. For more on ASOMI, visit asomi.org.sv.

Cecilia Duque (left) and craftswoman Omayra Manrique.



Sebastian Alcott

Prepared for Service

Three Panamanian news outlets, *La Critica*, *Dia a Dia* and *Panama America*, hailed the December launch of "Girl Guides in Action, Defying Stigma and Discrimination," an IAF-sponsored initiative by Asociación Muchachas Guías Panamá (AMGP), a chapter of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, AMGP. More than 1,000 Girl Guides, ages 15-21, will work throughout Panama to instruct some 3,000 neighbors, teachers and parents in community organizing, and public health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Some of the girls will learn to start their own small businesses. *La Critica* particularly praised the Guides' efforts to fight discrimination targeting those with HIV/AIDS.

A Heritage Remembered

According to the Oct. 23, 2009, *Los Angeles Times*, the civil war in El Salvador that lasted from 1980 until 1992 “not only claimed tens of thousands of lives and razed entire villages. It also ravaged the country’s heritage, fostering widespread amnesia about Salvadoran literature, music, indigenous culture and the performing arts.” A multimedia week-long program *Preservación de la Memoria Histórica Salvadoreña* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center reminded the U.S. city with largest community of expatriate Salvadorans about some of that past.

The event included presentations by Carlos Henriquez Consalvi (whose *nom de guerre* was Santiago), who helped create the rebel underground Radio Venceremos and founded Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (MUPI), a San Salvador museum with an extensive archive of extremely rare manuscripts, photos, films and audio recordings documenting recent Salvadoran history. In May 2010, the Organization of Ibero-American States announced that MUPI had placed second, out of some 100 competitors, in its first “Premio Iberoamericano Educación y Museos.” The citation referred to MUPI’s IAF-funded exhibits that travel to Salvadoran schools and rural communities. For more on MUPI, see *Grassroots Development 2009* or visit museo.com.sv. For more on the award, visit ibermuseos.org.

Pisac museum

Twelve *ayllus*, or indigenous communities, in the Sacred Valley of the Incas donated artifacts to the community museum administered by IAF grantee Asociación Museo Comunitario de Piscac (AMUCOP), *El Comercio*, Peru’s leading daily, reported Oct. 2, 2009. AMUCOP’s staff worked closely with the residents, painstakingly inventorying nearly forgotten family heirlooms and unearthed treasures—mummies, textiles, traditional tools and toys—that now make up most of the displays. The museum also offers patrons demonstrations by weavers and other craftspeople who recreate pre-Columbian techniques and by brewers of *chicha de jora*, a traditional beverage made from fermented corn that Andean peoples have enjoyed for millennia.

“For all these years we didn’t show an interest in our own culture, and stood by as outsiders admired it,” museum president Francisco Rojas told *El Comercio*. “With the museum, I think we will begin to value it.” AMUCOP is using its IAF grant to oversee the completion of the facilities and train the museum staff and volunteers. The Smithsonian Institution will offer technical assistance toward preserving a rich Andean heritage, as will Mexican community museums. (See the letter from Teresa Morales and Cuauhtémoc Camarena in this issue.)



Jeffrey A. Wright

Museo Comunitario de Piscac.

Afrolatin@ Experience

As part of its 40th anniversary celebration, Inter-American Foundation sponsored *The Afrolatin@ Experience: An Exploration of Identity in the Americas*, held April 7-13 in New York City. The event brought Karen Vargas of the Honduran Ethnic Community Development Organization (ODECO) and Paola Ortíz Murillo of the Americas Afrodescendent Youth Circle, together with members of the New York-based afrolatin@ forum to discuss Afro-Latino invisibility and marginalization. In a series of public programs at venues throughout the city, the young activists from Honduras, Colombia and the United States shared their perspectives and articulated the need for social justice.

Each event focused on an aspect of the Black Latino experience. The series began at Borough of Manhattan Community College with a discussion of the crucial need for positive images, a concern of Afro-Latino activism everywhere. Vargas and Ortiz were joined by Guesnerth Josué Perea, a member of the afrolatin@ forum and co-founder of AfroColombia NY, which highlights the contributions of Afro-Colombians to Colombian identity. Panelists exchanged views next at Hostos Community College in the Bronx, a City University campus whose African Disapora student body is among the most diverse in the country. After a warm welcome from college president Felix Matos Rodríguez and Rita DiMartino, of the IAF's Advisory Council, the panelists discussed the importance of census data for quantifying the poor living conditions of the vast majority of African descendants. Among the challenges to collecting reliable information is the reluctance of many individuals surveyed to identify as of African descent.

Visibility and identity were the themes at El Museo del Barrio, the premiere Latino cultural institution in New York City. Vargas and Ortíz were joined by Panamanian-American anthropologist Maritza Straughn-Williams and activist José Francisco Ávila, of the Garifuna Coalition, in a conversation highlighting particularities of their respective com-

munities. Ávila, who arrived in the United States in the mid-1960s, stressed the significance of the Civil Rights movement to the development of his own awareness. A community dialogue gave way to a rousing performance by the dancers and musicians of Hechu Garinagu, a troupe that is among the best Garifuna cultural ensembles on the East Coast.

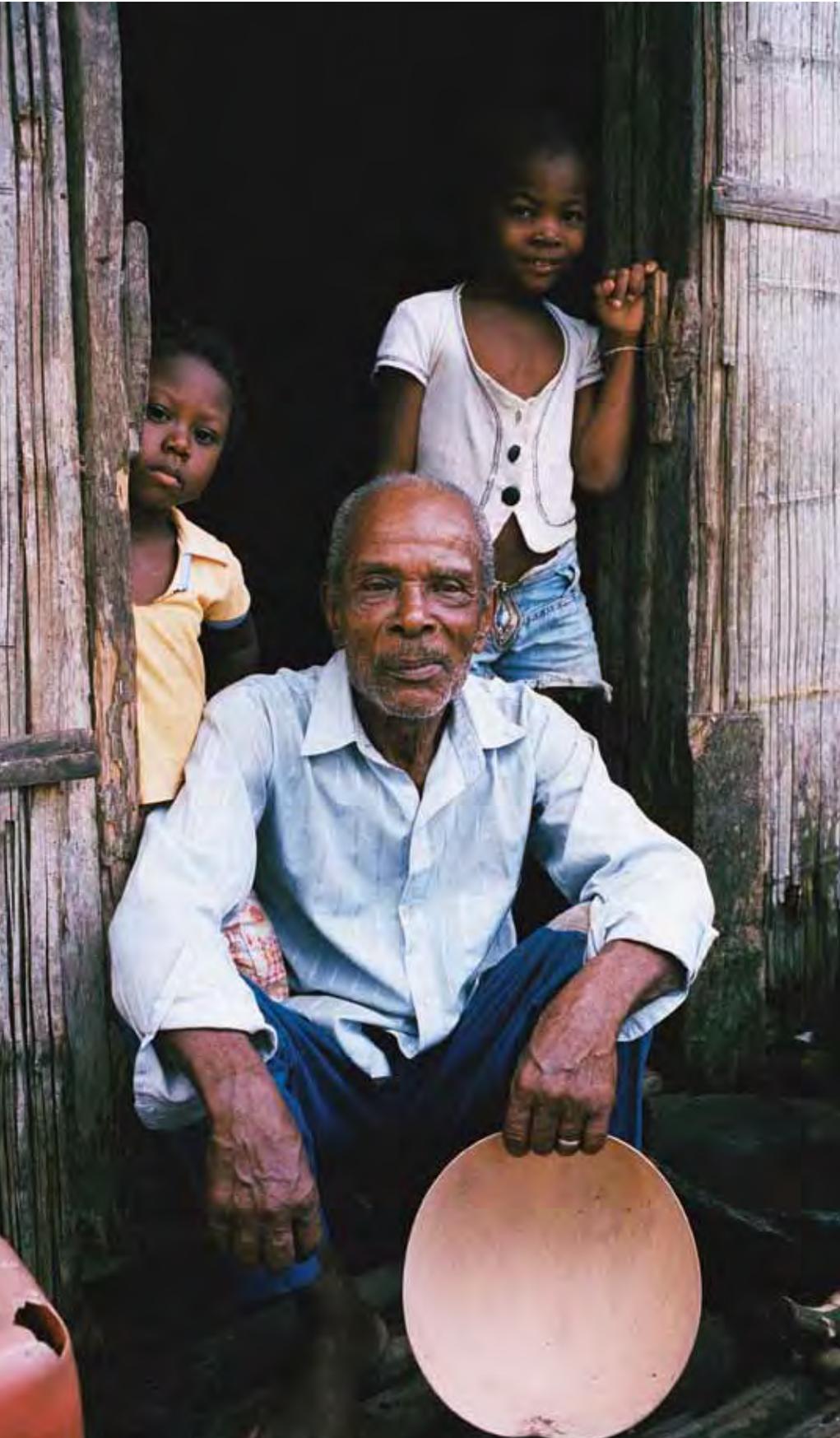
At the Caribbean Cultural Center Ortíz and Vargas spoke of their community activism. The series closed with a panel on educational issues held at New York University's Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. This international exchange provided a rich opportunity for all involved and confirmed the important role of grassroots organizers throughout the Americas. "Toward Full Inclusion: The Inter-American Foundation and the Hemisphere's African Descendants," an accompanying photo exhibit, traveled to Hostos to remain through May.
—Miriam Jiménez, founder of afrolatin@ forum

Linda B. Kolko



Paula Ortiz (left) and Karen Vargas

Patrick Breslin



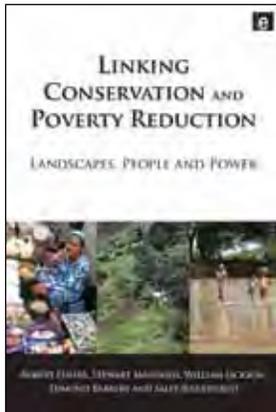
40th Anniversary Exhibit

Photography is central to the publications of the Inter-American Foundation. Over the years our contributors have included skilled and sensitive artists whose work has eloquently documented the dignity and achievements of our grantees. In celebration of the 40th anniversary of the IAF's mandate to support grassroots development throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, we have culled between 30 and 40 photos from our archive of more than 12,000 for display in public venues across the United States.

Since September 2009, IAF's exhibits have traveled to the Library of Congress, the University of Texas and the City University of New York. This photo of Benildo Torres Riasco, a composer of *décimas*, the complex form of medieval Spanish poetry that took root in the Afro-Ecuadorian community centuries ago, was included in the collection that we adapted to accompany CUNY's week-long series of events on Latin Americans of African descent. To arrange to host an exhibit adapted to the needs of your institution, contact mcaicedo@iaf.gov. Upon request the IAF can provide speakers.

A Whole Lot of Linking Going On: Conservation and Development in Tropical Forests

By David Barton Bray



Linking Conservation and Poverty Reduction: Landscapes, People and Power

By Robert Fisher, Stewart Maginnis, William Jackson, Edmund Barrow and Sally Jeanrenaud.

Earthscan: Sterling, Va., and London, 2008



At Loggerheads? Agricultural Expansion, Poverty Reduction, and Environment in Tropical Forests

By Kenneth M. Chomitz

The World Bank:
Washington, D.C., 2007

Linking Conservation and Poverty Reduction: Landscapes, People and Power, the first of the two books reviewed here, links conservation with poverty reduction; the second book, *At Loggerheads? Agricultural Expansion, Poverty Reduction, and Environment in Tropical Forests* links agriculture, poverty reduction and the environment (meaning forest cover processes of all kinds, from deforestation to recovery). This is a whole lot of linking of very complex concepts and realities, but to what end? Tropical forests continue to disappear at a rapid clip, at about 5 percent a decade according to Kenneth Chomitz' book, although there remain high degrees of uncertainty in these figures. Many people directly responsible for this deforestation are not getting any richer from the process, although some clearly are.

Both books attempt to address the wickedly inter-related problems of human and ecological welfare but have different takes on them. *Linking Conservation and Poverty Reduction* is a revision of a book originally published in 2005 as *Poverty and Conservation*. It addresses the long-running debate about whether those who promote conservation through protected public areas, or "parks," have any responsibility or even ability to address problems of poverty. This

ongoing debate is manifested in a bitter polemic in the journal *Conservation and Society* over the degree to which the designation of protected areas in Africa has resulted in the expulsion of the residents, further impoverishing them, and in the publication of journalist Mark Dowie's *Conservation Refugees*. Dowie's book traces a 100-year history, beginning with our own iconic Yellowstone National Park, where native peoples were brutally forced off traditional territories and their presence was erased from the official record in favor of representations of unchanging wilderness.

The authors of *Linking Conservation and Poverty Reduction*, most of them associated with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), come down strongly for addressing and redressing this history. They argue that conservationists have an ethical imperative to address poverty and that biodiversity conservation cannot be pursued as a goal independent of other social concerns. They suggest that conservationists should strive to ensure that their initiatives do not make the poor poorer and to make conservation efforts contribute to poverty alleviation whenever possible. Their six case studies are intended to illustrate some of the issues arising when poverty reduction is combined with conservation.

Their book presents no new data and is thus a synthesis of the existing literature and a marshalling of arguments. It is a useful reference as a compendium of arguments for the integration of poverty reduction and conservation. Perhaps because of its multiple authors, it is muddled in its use of concepts. For example, an “ecosystem approach,” which involves multiple stakeholders and large landscapes, is not clearly distinguished from a “landscape approach,” which seems to involve the same things. Governance, property rights and collective action, possibly more relevant ideas, are not explored at all.

Chomitz’s book introduces a wealth of new data in sharply presented and compelling graphs and maps. It takes on five “unreliable generalizations about deforestation and poverty:”

- Poverty causes deforestation (but prosperous people deforest too, as in big soybean fields steamrolling the Amazon).
- Deforestation causes poverty (but some poor people do benefit from deforestation).
- Highly forested areas tend to be very poor (but small groups of poor people with access to forest resources can prosper).
- Deforestation causes floods and reduces dry season flows (but hydrologists are not in agreement on this; it depends on a lot of factors).
- High timber prices promote forest conservation (but only if they result in sustainable logging rather than “mining of forests”).

Chomitz begins by disaggregating the concept of “forest” into three different types: “mosaiclands” of forest fragments interspersed with crops, to which tenure is well defined; “frontier and disputed areas,” where agricultural expansion meets existing forests and lawlessness frequently prevails; and, beyond there, mature, intact forests. In the first chapters he evaluates the incentives and constraints that shape forest outcomes and examines the spatial distribution of damage from deforestation and the degree to which poverty in forests originates in remoteness and lack of rights. In the second half of the book, he considers the importance of governance and property rights. Weak governance institutions in many tropical countries result in ineffective law enforcement and rampant corruption that drive deforestation and obstruct efforts at conservation. Chomitz suggests

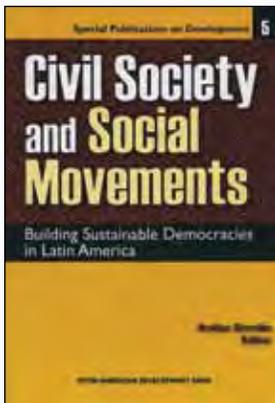
that new institutions and technologies for transparency, monitoring and a restructuring of incentives can go far toward addressing these challenges.

Former IAF grantee Association of Forest Communities of the Petén, (ACOFOP), an association of 12 forest communities with logging concessions in the tropical forest of northern Guatemala, is one of the case studies included in *Linking Conservation and Poverty Reduction* and it is mentioned in Chomitz’s book. The ACOFOP communities are located in a protected area around the Maya Biosphere Reserve. This belt consists of 10 parks, a heavily deforested buffer zone and a multiple use zone (MUZ) in which the 12 communities were, between 1994 and 2002, granted rights to timber and all other forest products. The concessions constituted an attempt to slow down deforestation.

As noted in the case study by Peter Leigh Taylor, Peter Cronkelton, and Deborah Barry, “Twenty-five-year renewable forest management concession contracts were granted to six communities in the MUZ, to six bordering the MUZ and to two local forest industries. The community concession system was an important innovation in the Petén, as it clearly laid out rights of land and resource access, extraction, use, exclusion and even management for participating communities. Over a relatively short period of time, communities were given use and decision-making rights over large forest areas.” Recent research suggests that the concessions have been highly successful at increasing household income but are pressured by ongoing colonization. The rising role of community-managed forests in conservation policy is also made clear in the Chomitz book, which presents community management, including the Petén community concessions, as an effective alternative to public parks.

These books suggest that an emerging consensus holds that conservation is not just something that takes place in parks, and that all social institutions, even those dedicated to biodiversity conservation, must also address the needs of human welfare.

David Bray is professor and associate chair of the Department of Earth and Environment at Florida International University in Miami. Between 1986 and 1997 he was an IAF representative working mainly in Mexico.



Civil Society and Social Movements: Building Sustainable Democracies in Latin America

Edited by Arthur Domike

Inter-American Development Bank: Washington, D.C., 2008

Civil Society and Social Movements: Building Sustainable Democracies in Latin America is a collection of 13 essays on the role of a hodgepodge of vibrant organizations in spreading democratic ideals and practices throughout the hemisphere. Though at times dry, the essays effectively argue that the future trajectory of democracy hinges on the adaptation of these organizations to political change, and they suggest how they can remain relevant.

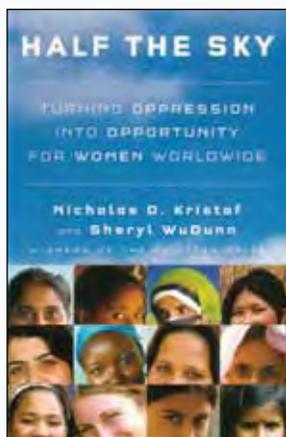
Arthur Domike groups the essays into three sections that treat civil society's contribution toward achieving, consolidating and deepening the impact of democracy. A cross-cutting theme is that oppression or a catastrophe often catalyzes an organized, bottom-up response. The two essays in first section examine the transition to democratic rule in countries where brutal dictatorships had spurred grassroots movements to demand social justice. Rosa María Cruz López's meandering "Human Rights Organizations in Guatemala: An Evolution" includes a helpful table summarizing the social movements responding to various authoritative regimes. Cruz uses a timely example of a catalyzing event: an earthquake that struck in 1976. According to her, the public perception of official indifference to the quake's consequences caused Guatemalans to organize and demand the authorities address the suffering. (Not mentioned is another quake that hit

Mexico City in 1985 and galvanized Mexican organizations to join forces and pressure their government for relief.)

The two essays in the middle section discuss the role of "progressive" movements that push for putting democratic ideals into practice. Sergio Aguayo chronicles the development of Mexico's democracy and the role of its Civic Alliance, an agglomeration of left-of-center organizations, in ending a history of one-party rule. Mexican civil society has proved resilient, learning from setbacks, and Aguayo insists that the political left needs to similarly retool to be effective. Benjamin Reames describes engaged citizens who organize around a common cause as the "spark" that ignites movements. Often skilled at advocacy, they channel the concerns of ordinary people into campaigns that have led, for example, to greater participation in public processes and to more transparency and accountability.

The final essays explore civil society's part in assuring that everyone is included in the benefits of democracy. In the most interesting chapter in the entire volume, Charles Kleymeyer, a former IAF representative, vividly describes how indigenous Latin Americans have organized to overcome the practices and prejudices preventing their full participation in political life. Kleymeyer illustrates his analysis with accounts of a young indigenous Ecuadorian woman who protected a road blockade by stepping in front of a bulldozer, and of Mariano Curicama, identified as Latin America's first elected mayor of indigenous descent.

Although some essays suffer under the weight of excessive jargon that too often bogs down such writing, each should be judged on its own merits. With Domike's introduction and conclusion tying the spectrum together, *Civil Society and Social Movements* makes the case that lasting change begins with organized individuals working at the grassroots.—*Jason Frost, IAF intern*



Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

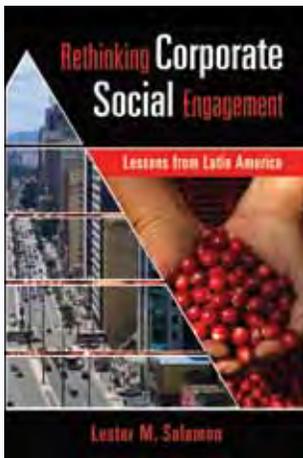
Alfred A. Knopf: New York City, 2009

The development community has been focused on programs for women since the 1970s. First we had an approach called “women in development,” or WID, which took women into account, in essence adding them into projects. Then came “gender and development,” also known as GAD; it recognized the roles women already played as agents of change and their potential to take on new roles. More recently, “gender mainstreaming” emphasizes the involvement of women in all aspects of development, including decisions.

The appearance of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, by Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalists Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, coincides with an attempt to forge yet another approach to improving the lives of women. The book suggests a more encompassing effort that recognizes the power individual women have to change their own lives. Kristof and WuDunn take their title from Mao Zedong’s declaration that “women hold up half the sky,” a reminder of abilities and essential contributions that are too often denied or ignored. Their book highlights the repression and suffering of women and girls in Africa and Asia. The abuses described outrage and shock: sex trafficking, forced prostitution, gender-based violence and preventable maternal mortality. The authors admit that the data can become numbing, but recognize that some readers want hard numbers. More persuasive, though, is the message conveyed via the harrowing stories of women who eventually overcame adversity to live in safety and find a way to help others.

Kristof and WuDunn are clearly excited by the “social entrepreneurs” they interviewed for their book, including some recent Ashoka Fellows, but it is the triumphs of more humble people that take center stage. Kidnapped at 8 or 9 and forced into prostitution at puberty, Meena, a Indian activist, not only escaped the brothel but, with the help of an anti-slavery group, rescued her children from the certainty of a similar fate and today her daughter studies to be a teacher. Another young woman, Woineshet, refused to wed the man who had kidnapped and violated her, which galvanized advocacy groups to demand a change to the Ethiopian law that exonerated a rapist who married his victim. The successes that Kristof and WuDunn document emerge from the grassroots efforts of locally-driven, bottom-up organizations in the countryside, where the poor live. Many of the brave women benefiting from such help eventually founded other organizations.

Recommendations in *Half the Sky* to educate girls, iodize salt so children grow properly, eradicate practices that result in obstetric fistula and to restore the health and dignity of the women who suffer from it, will come as no surprise to regular readers of Kristof’s column in *The New York Times*, nor will the entreaty to young people to venture overseas on their own to help out. (But should they, I wonder, when there are structured programs such as the Peace Corps?) *Half the Sky* discusses fighting poverty “by unlocking women’s power as economic catalysts.” Although most development practitioners and donors already recognize the value of women’s contributions, the inference drawn from the point made in the book is that decision-makers in some countries have not yet been sold on the idea. And while the stories told took place in Asia and Africa, violence against women also occurs in Latin America, as has been documented by Amnesty International, the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women’s Rights and the Washington Office on Latin America. The globalization of such abuse makes *Half the Sky* a necessary book and a wake-up call.—Rosemarie Moreken, IAF analysis and evaluation specialist



Rethinking Corporate Social Engagement: Lessons from Latin America

By Lester M. Salamon

Kumerian Press: Sterling, Va., 2010

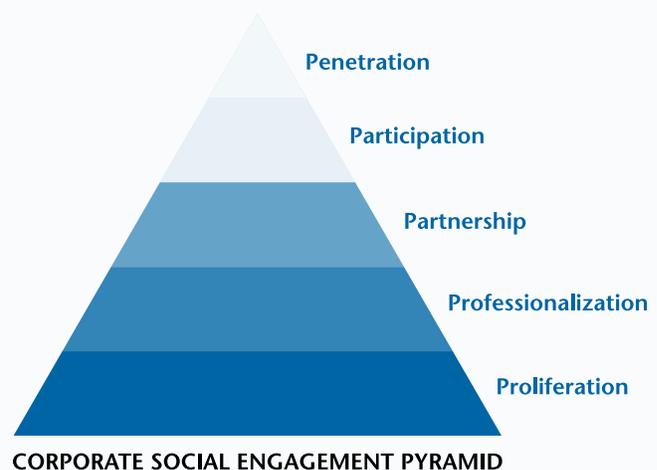
First, full disclosure: Some years ago, the Inter-American Foundation asked Lester Salamon, director of the Center for Civil Society Studies at Johns Hopkins University, to research corporate social responsibility in Latin America. Upon completing the project, Salamon condensed the vast body of information collected into an article, “Business Social Engagement in Latin America: The New Alliance for Progress,” which appeared in *Grassroots Development* 2008.

Since then, Salamon has drawn on more of his material to produce *Rethinking Corporate Social Engagement: Lessons from Latin America*, a cohesive, lively, one-of-a-kind, book-length narrative documenting the gradual change over the last few decades in the way businesses and their foundations work in their exercise of social responsibility. According to Salamon, paternalism and charity are giving way to two trends. What he calls “the MBA approach,” puts businessmen and their advisors in charge and is focused ultimately on assuring an environment in which the business can function without any setbacks. The other, managed by professionals, encourages the involvement of the recipients of corporate largesse in the programs expected to lead to better conditions.

In the past 25 years, Salamon maintains, companies have become increasingly convinced of the effectiveness of the latter approach. To examine this tendency, he has devised “the corporate social

engagement pyramid” consisting of five levels of adherence that he dubs “the five Ps”: *proliferation*, referring to the spread of the approach, which is usually followed by *professionalism* of staff, *participation* of the stakeholders in the design of activities, *partnership* with government and civil society, and, ideally, full *penetration* of the principles into core business operations. The pyramid narrows toward the apex, reflecting the programs that have fully evolved to include all the Ps, and it is at the upper levels where the difference with the MBA approach is most striking.

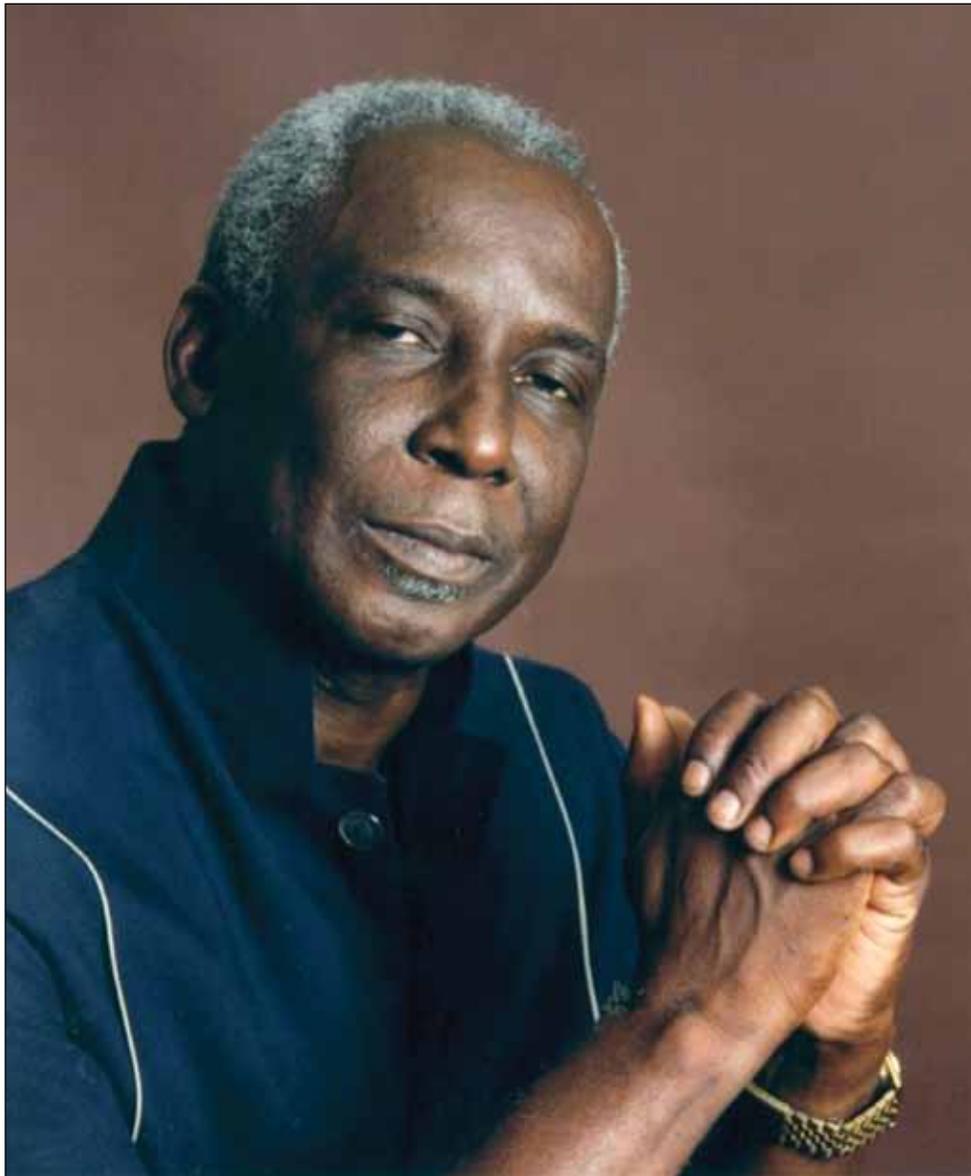
Research into these different stages took Salamon to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, where the businesses and foundations he visited included many that have collaborated with the IAF. He is generous with crediting the IAF for initiating these partnerships that he suggests were instrumental in the development of new attitudes and more effective practices. But credit goes to the businesses, too. Impacted by such uncontrollable factors as guerilla movements, the embrace of neoliberalism and fierce competition from globalization, the most far-sighted have reexamined their social commitment to the disadvantaged. While the MBA approach does not seem likely to disappear any time soon, Salamon seems to see a more enlightened approach gaining ground in Latin America.—Miguel Cuevas, *analysis and evaluation specialist*



Rex Nettleford: A Life in Full



1933-2010



Courtesy of the University of the West Indies

Rex Nettleford: Rhodes scholar, dancer, educator, author.

By Steve Vetter

Rex Nettleford, a Jamaican cultural authority and educator who advised the Inter-American Foundation during the 1970s and 1980s, died on Feb. 3 after suffering a heart attack in his hotel room in Washington, D.C. His death occurred just before he was to travel to New York City to attend a fundraising event for the University of the West Indies where he had been the driving force behind the extramural program that offered Caribbean students unprecedented educational opportunities.

Rex significantly influenced the IAF's early grant-making with his simple recommendation to invest in three areas: the role of women in development, the enrichment of cultural identity and the ideas that help the poor toward economic security. Political leaders he advised included Jamaican prime ministers Norman Manley, Michael Manley, Edward Seaga and those who followed. Prime Minister Bruce Golding called Nettleford "an intellectual and creative genius" for his "contribution to shaping and projecting the cultural landscape of the entire Caribbean region."

Those contributions included reframing the Rastafari movement that helped pave the way for the worldwide explosion of reggae music in the 1970s. Rex founded the Jamaican Cultural Training Centre and the Jamaica Trade Union Institute but is best known for creating the National Dance Theater Company of Jamaica in 1962, the year his country gained independence from Britain. The troupe's choreographer as well as its principal dancer, he drew from the African and European influences that had blended into West Indian kumina, ska and reggae. A few weeks after his death, *The New Yorker* announced the company's return to the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts: "The program features works inspired by the people, rituals and music of the Caribbean, many created by Nettleford in a style that fuses West Indian dance forms with a more abstract modern-dance idiom."

Born in the rural town of Falmouth in the parish of Trelawny, Rex attended the UWI in Kingston, and as a Rhodes Scholar he studied political science at Oxford University. Shortly after his return from



Peter Ramsay

Rex Nettleford founded the National Dance Theater Company of Jamaica and was its director, choreographer and lead dancer.

Oxford, Prime Minister Norman Manley asked him to undertake a study of the increasingly vocal Rastafari movement that had taken root in the slums of West Kingston. Jamaican society considered the Rastas dangerous, but Rex's report, published in 1961, credited the movement with helping reconnect Jamaica with its African roots, calling it "a revitalizing force, albeit a discomfiting and disturbing one." The report became instrumental in winning legitimacy and

Steve Vetter



IAF president Bill Dyal, IAF congressional liaison Larry Bruce, and members of the youth group of IAF grantee Matthews Lane United Rasta, outside a small business started by the group.

appreciation for the Rastafarian religious movement and helping young reggae artists such as Bob Marley and Peter Tosh develop their music for a growing international audience.

I first learned of Rex's importance in 1975, when I was invited to occupy "the Rex Nettleford Chair" housed at the community center of the Mystic Revelations of Rastafari (MRR), a well known music group, in Kingston's rough and dangerous Wareika Hills. The Chair was actually a large, rough stone set in concrete on the very spot in the center's small library where Rex would come to "reason" with the elders of the MRR. While Oxford would take many years to appreciate Rex's work on their behalf, the MRR leaders knew immediately that their status and standing in society had risen dramatically because of Rex's intervention. Establishing the equivalent of a university chair in his honor seemed the least they could do.

Bill Dyal, the founding president of the IAF, admired Rex for his creative approach to development and for this willingness to bring innovative organizations to our attention. One of these was the Mystic Revelations of Rastafari, whose "O Caroline" was perhaps the first song with the reggae beat. The group had sold it for \$15 and it quickly soared to the top of the charts, making the distributor a small fortune. The MRR wanted a recording studio so it could reap the future rewards of such creativity and reinvest them in the community. Its community center then housed a library, a children's cafeteria and nutritional program, and a meeting room/rehearsal space, but was missing a roof and the requisite recording equipment. Prime Minister Michael Manley and Edward Seaga, leader of the opposition party, were both vocal in their support of the MRR's work as were Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, both unknown to international audiences at the time. Rex's wise and helpful advice won over the U.S. ambassador, who had initially urged the IAF to withdraw its offer of a grant. While the studio did not yield the results hoped for, the MRR pressed its rights to income from "O Caroline" and other songs before the Privy Council in London and was awarded retroactive royalties some 30 years later.

Rex's research among the Rastas informed his work with his dance troupe as well as *Mirror Mirror*, his seminal 1969 study of Caribbean identity. Once

Bob Marley topped the charts, Rex took delight in recounting that the Rastas were, through their music and “cultural identity,” bringing more foreign exchange to Jamaica than the tourism and bauxite industries combined. Rex’s guidance also resulted in IAF awards to the SISTREN Theater Company, comprised of former women prisoners; the United Sugar Workers Cooperative Council; the Jamaica Council for the Blind; a small business undertaken by the youth group of Matthews Lane United Rasta; and the Jamaican Cultural Centre’s program that brought dance into poorer districts of the island. A final grant to the Centre underwrote publication of Rex’s *Caribbean Cultural Identity*, a sequel to *Mirror Mirror*.

It was through Rex’s engagement with staff that the IAF’s Cultural Committee formed to consider awards to cultural organizations in Brazil, Colombia, Chile and the Dominican Republic. Juan Luis Guerra of the music group 4-40 had participated in programs of IAF grantee Casa de Teatro in Santo Domingo in the early 1970s, and when Guerra won the first Latin Grammy Award 25 years later, I called to thank Rex for his early guidance. He was delighted, but reminded me that it would be difficult for anyone to match the impact of Bob Marley. Further documentation of

Rex’s legacy can be found in *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development: Cases from Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by the IAF’s Chuck Kleymeyer (Lynne Rienner Publishers: 1994). This book, a direct offshoot of the Cultural Committee, describes more than 700 IAF-funded projects in which traditional culture played a role, sometimes the entire role.

While Rex found his true love and life’s work at the University of the West Indies and in the Jamaican National Dance Company, he also had a special place in his heart for his education at Oxford and the university always reciprocated, nurturing his interests over a lifetime. In 2003, Rex was one of four alumni presented honorary degrees in celebration of the centenary of the Rhodes Scholarships. The Rhodes Trust funds the Rex Nettleford Fellowship in Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies. I’m certain that he enjoyed these honors almost as much as he cherished his Chair at the Mystic Revelations of Rastafari community center in Wareika Hills.

Steve Vetter is president of Partners of the Americas. Between 1975 and 1995, he served the IAF in various positions, including vice president for programs and interim president.



Mitchell Denburg

SISTREN Theater Company, a 1981 IAF grantee.



The Jamaica Society for the Blind used its 1981 IAF grant to develop one of the first loan funds in the hemisphere for blind microentrepreneurs. Since then, it has reached more than 20,000 visually-impaired Jamaicans with training, rehabilitation and counseling.

Mitchell Denburg





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