Grassroots Development

Journal of the Inter-American Foundation

Focus: Native Americans and Their Resources

Double Feature: IAF Fellows' Findings

VOLUME 33

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Inter-American Foundation
1331 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 1200 North
Washington, D.C. 20004

The purpose of this journal is to share grassroots experiences in development 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 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: Glarimelia Morales and her nephew, Juan Manuel Díaz, live on the island of Carti in Comarca Kuna Yala, Panama, a vast expanse of land and ocean rich in resources. Photo: Mark Caicedo.

Opposite page: Above, making Kuna leggings; below, harvesting Salvadoran indigo.

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Managing Editor: Paula Durbin
Contributing Editor: Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías
Photo Editor: Mark Caicedo
Foreign Language Editions: João Bezzera, Darío Elías, Anna Greenston, Francisco Pereira
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Mark Caicedo

Seth Jesse

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The IAF and Indigenous Latin Americans

Some 45 million Latin Americans identify as indigenous, an identity whose definition is rarely the same from one country to the next and often depends as much on context and culture as on genetics. Descendants of the hemisphere's first inhabitants come from over 400 ethnic groups, but, for all their immense diversity, they struggle almost everywhere to overcome a legacy of displacement, exploitation and exclusion that reduced this population to desperate poverty. They are disproportionately represented at the bottom of every indicator of well-being.

The IAF began operations in the early 1970s, just as indigenous peoples in many parts of the world were rediscovering their roots and rallying around their identity. New organizations in Latin America were determined to stand up for a way of life, demand social justice and produce change, and the IAF responded with critical support. With the return to democracy, mobilization accelerated. The most immediate result has been greater visibility and legitimacy. Internationally, the rights of indigenous peoples are recognized. Governments throughout the Americas have acted to bring constitutions and legislation in line with these standards. Where the seeds of early activism took root, indigenous citizens are participating in civic and political processes as never before.

Congress has charged the Inter-American Foundation with stimulating "ever wider participation in the development process," which we interpret as a specific call for the inclusion of historically marginalized groups, including Native Americans. Over the past 40 years, the IAF has funded many of their initiatives. A review of the active portfolio reveals that IAF grants serve indigenous communities in 14 countries and account for more than 40 percent of the IAF's current investment in grassroots development. In Bolivia, Guatemala, Belize, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador and Honduras, they account for 50 percent or more of total IAF funding. The projects that the IAF funds benefit Latin Americans identifying with more than 50 ethnic groups and support a remarkably diverse range of priorities, including bilingual education, community mapping, conservation, health care, land titling, microcredit, ecotourism, enterprise development and agriculture, often involving native crops and livestock.

Not long ago, when I bought a chocolate bar in the bakery downstairs from our former IAF offices, I was reminded of how rich in development resources the heritage of indigenous peoples has proved. That chocolate bore the label of El Ceibo, a federation of 40 cooperatives representing some 1,200 indigenous Aymara, Quechua and Moseten cacao growers in Bolivia's Alto Beni. In the 1970s, when El Ceibo was founded, these farmers, who had migrated from the highlands, were still fairly new to cacao. To realize

Kevin Healy

Robin Bowman

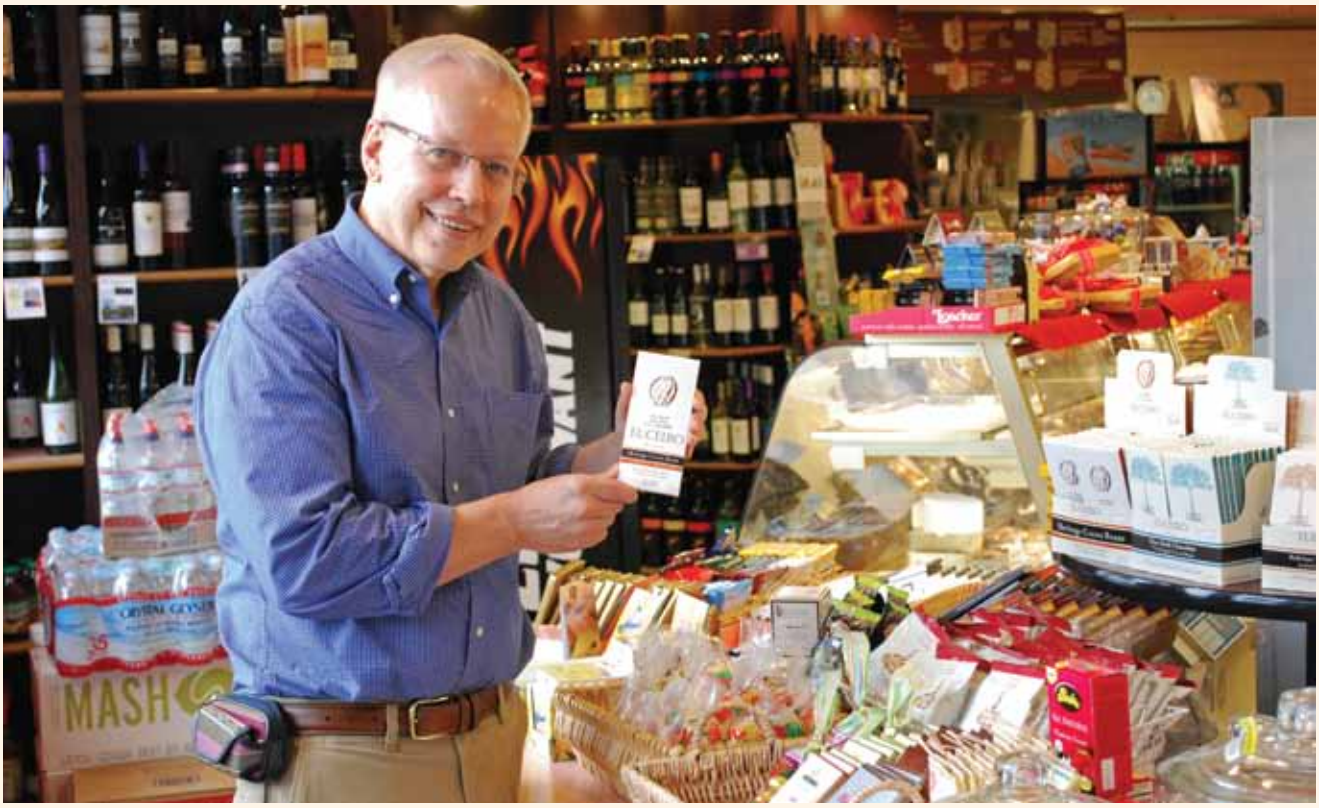
Bolivian farmers working with cacao and chocolate relied on their indigenous organizing principles to launch El Ceibo.

their vision for this crop, they turned to traditional indigenous principles of organization and management that included, for example, equal pay for all workers, skilled and unskilled, and a rotating leadership that changed annually. I doubt such practices would ever be taught in a course in business administration in any university, but they worked for these farmers and launched El Ceibo as a shining example of a grassroots enterprise that evolved into a renowned exporter of cacao and chocolate. Their tremendous pride in this accomplishment is proclaimed on the packaging: "From the trees to the chocolate, we do not collaborate with the producers, we are the producers."

This issue of *Grassroots Development* celebrates the IAF's long and productive history with the indigenous peoples of the Americas by focusing on how some of them use the resources of their heritage to move away from poverty and powerlessness. These resources can be as tangible as the territory mapped by the Kuna of Panama and as intangible as the trust upon which the Coya of Argentina built an effective microcredit structure. Skills from an ancient Andean civilization can catalyze a cultural renaissance along with a textile industry. And systems that evolved over centuries to supply the labor vital to collective well-being and economic survival, such as *tequio* in Mexico and *ayni* in Bolivia, can address today's globalized challenges. Such examples illustrate the place of time-tested values in the modern world, and how they often bring out the best in grassroots development and help communities thrive.

Robert N. Kaplan
President
Inter-American Foundation

Manuel Núñez



Kevin Healy, IAF representative for Bolivia, with an El Ceibo chocolate bar purchased from Tivoli, a bakery in Arlington, Va.

Mapping Kuna Yala

By Mac Chapin

From early 2001 through the end of 2003, the Kuna Indians of Panama worked on a detailed set of maps of their territory, the Comarca of Kuna Yala.[1] The Comarca runs in a gentle arc along the northeast coast from the Golfo de San Blas to the Colombian border and covers an area of roughly 5,400 square kilometers, divided almost equally between land and sea. The terrestrial portion contains the entire northern watershed of the Continental Divide, the Cordillera de San Blas. Its upper reaches are covered with cloud forest. Dense vegetation spills across the foothills to the coastal plain, where the forests give way to the subsistence farms and coconut plantations of the Kuna. This is an area of low-lying wetlands and estuaries lined with mangroves. Extending out to sea, it encompasses numerous small coral islands and reefs.

Approximately 40,000 to 50,000 Kuna make their home in 51 villages, including 41 on islands just off the coast and 10 on the mainland. All are strategically located for access to the ocean, where residents harvest marine resources, and to the mainland, where they farm, obtain fresh water, firewood and building materials.

Until recently, no roads connected the Comarca to the rest of Panama. Travel was by boat, by small plane to tiny community airports or overland on foot. Historically, the Kuna have been relatively successful in keeping outsiders at bay. Over the past few years, however, the western end of the Comarca has been invaded by *mestizo* farmers from interior provinces, and the first all-weather road has served to penetrate the insularity with a rapidly increasing flow of bus and truck traffic. At the eastern end,

Mark Caicedo

Three hours from the high-rises, traffic jams and pollution of Panama City, in the vast protected wilderness of Kuna Yala, women make colorful molas, men farm and fish, and children benefit from bilingual, bicultural education.

Historically, the region in which the Kuna live has been known as San Blas. Their autonomous region was called Comarca de San Blas when it was created in 1938. In recent years, however, the Kuna have "officially" changed the name to Comarca Kuna Yala, meaning Kuna territory.

Colombian gold miners and drug traffickers have been entering the territory, bringing with them violence and corruption. By no means is this the first time the Kuna have been threatened by the outside world. A resilient people, through the centuries they have maintained their political independence and their cultural identity intact, meeting the constant challenges to their survival by adapting rapidly and aggressively. The mapping project is yet another example of a Kuna strategy designed to protect their lands, natural resources and way of life.

Kuna history

Before contact with Europeans in the early 16th century, the area occupied by the Kuna extended from the Caribbean across the isthmus into the Darien region, in eastern Panama. In 1510, the Kuna's world changed, drastically and irrevocably. A fleet of Spanish ships captained by Vasco Núñez de Balboa appeared along the coast searching for gold and other riches. Balboa and his men made their way ashore and across the Continental Divide, and on the far side they "discovered" the Pacific Ocean. By the standards of the day, there was apparently little bloodshed during their encounters with locals, at least initially. The calm was shattered with the arrival of a new Spanish administrator for the Isthmus, the infamous Pedrarias Dávila. One of his first accomplishments was the execution of Balboa; then he unleashed a campaign of terror on the natives.

The violence was accompanied by an even more ferocious enemy: a cargo of European diseases against which native inhabitants had no resistance. Deadly epidemics broke out and spread, not only in Panama but throughout the Americas, decimating between 80 percent and 95 percent of the native population during the first century after contact. "In terms of the number of people who died," writes historian Noble David Cook, "[it] was the greatest human catastrophe in history, far exceeding even the disaster of the Black Death in medieval Europe."

With their numbers drastically reduced and their communities in disarray, the few Kuna fortunate to survive retreated into densely forested mountain passes and along remote river basins to the north. Potentially hostile forces were appearing with ever greater frequency on both sides of the isthmus. The treasures looted from the Inca Empire to the south and silver from the mines of Potosí, in Alto Perú (now Bolivia), passed through Panama, and they attracted

legions of pirates, Spanish soldiers and traders. The Spaniards erected outposts along the coast and brought in Catholic missionaries; colonies of Scots and Frenchmen took brief root before withering or being driven out. The Kuna entered into alliances and switched sides as they considered their best interests. And they survived.

By the end of the 19th century the lawlessness had abated and the Kuna began moving onto the coastal plain. Several villages relocated on islands near the shore, tentatively at first. Eventually the majority of the Kuna population settled on islands that were relatively free of insects and disease. By then the Kuna had become citizens of the newly independent Republic of Colombia. Residing in the remote state of Panama, they had minimal contact with the central government in Bogotá. Then in 1903, the United States, which was in difficult negotiations with the Colombians on a route for a canal across the Isthmus, supported the state of Panama in its bid for independence. The Kuna were now under a new authority, the Republic of Panama.

Mark Caicedo

The sign welcoming visitors to Kuna Yala also advises that the entrance fee is $6.

During its first years, the young republic sought to establish a national identity. Part of its program was aimed at "the reduction to civilized life of the barbarous, semibarbarous, and savage tribes" within its boundaries, and, more specifically, "incorporating San Blas and civilizing the Kuna." The government set up police posts on some of the islands, launched a campaign to dress the women in Western clothes, and had plans to open Kuna lands for colonization and exploitation. The Kuna resisted, engaging in foot-dragging and passivity to subvert the unwanted reforms, and hired a Panamanian lawyer to argue their case in the capital. The government responded with tighter control. Violence erupted: a village was burned to the ground; several policemen died in skirmishes.

As the confrontations unfolded, some Americans passing through San Blas became sympathetic to the Kuna's plight. Through them, the Kuna were able to make yet another strategic alliance, this time with the U.S. government. The tension with Panama came to a head in February 1925. Taking advantage of distractions during the annual Carnival festivities, Kuna from several villages mounted a synchronized attack on Panamanian guardsmen and their Kuna collaborators, killing as many as 30. When a boatload of armed policemen was sent to retaliate, it was met by the cruiser *USS Cleveland* at what is now the western entrance to the Comarca. Arms were put aside and the three parties—Kuna, Panamanians, Americans—worked out a treaty enabling the Kuna to control their territory. In 1938 they received the designation of Comarca, with provision for a semi-autonomous government.

Cartography

"As much as guns and warships," noted the geographer J. Harley, "maps have been the weapons of imperialism." This principle was demonstrated at the turn of the 15th century when, with a distant treaty and a few strokes of the cartographer's stylus, South America was quietly partitioned into Portuguese and Spanish "possessions." Nations and empires are not

natural features of the landscape; they are human constructs imposed to convert large tracts of the world into real estate. Cartography has been called "the science of princes," used throughout history by elites to legitimize claims to land and resources. In an updated environment, multinational corporations wield maps to gain concessions in regions with minerals, oil and natural gas, and to rope off (and deforest) vast expanses for the cultivation of sugar cane, soybeans and oil palm.

In recent years, however, indigenous peoples have turned the tables by using the tools of cartography to produce their own maps. Many have progressed beyond the use of geographical information systems (GIS), remote sensing and aerial photography, to amass detailed ground-level information on the significant features of the lands they occupy and use. Their maps, cartographically accurate *and* rich in local knowledge, possess the authority to help them defend their lands against encroachment by outsiders, strengthen political organization and cultural identity, and focus attention on crucial environmental issues and economic development. The process of producing maps on their own terms is itself a source of power.

The need to map

When the Kuna set their project in motion, Panama's official mapping agency, the Instituto Geográfico Nacional "Tommy Guardia," had an incomplete inventory of maps of the Comarca, at a scale of 1:50,000. By the agency's own admission, what it had was not very reliable. Drafted from aerial photographs taken in the 1960s, the maps lacked detail and contained numerous errors and misrepresentations. Even the contours of the coastline were inaccurate. Maps of mainland areas showed only the major rivers; some rivers were misplaced and the few that had names were labeled using an odd mixture of Spanish and mangled Kuna. A river the Kuna called Akwadi, or Rock River, (from the words *awka* and *di*, meaning "rock" and "river") became Río Agua, or Water River. While rivers regularly change course in the tropics, in this case the cartographers, who could not see through the dense forest canopy shown in photos, had relied on their imagination. Nautical charts produced by the British Admiralty and the U.S. National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) between 1917 and 1919 (and retouched in 2001) showed islands inexplicably named Isla Gertie and Isla George.

The Kuna set out to correct such distortions by viewing the landscape from their own perspective. This venture involved the Kuna General Congress, the maximum authority of the Kuna people; the Instituto Geográfico; and the Center for the Support of Native Lands (Native Lands), a nongovernmental organization based in Arlington, Va., that works with indigenous peoples in Latin America. The Congress organized and managed the project from start to finish; it selected the mapping team, handled contacts with government, and arranged financing and logistics. Native Lands provided the mapping methodology and technical oversight. A cartographer from the Instituto Geográfico worked with the mapping team; the Instituto's technical unit drafted and printed the final maps. The Inter-American Foundation and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI), the Spanish government's foreign-assistance agency, provided funding.

The project differed from traditional cartographic endeavors in several ways. The mapping team of more than 30 village researchers and field coordinators, a technical unit of four cartographers and two administrative personnel, was entirely Kuna except for one cartographer from the Instituto Geográfico. Villagers from the Comarca's 51 communities worked with the researchers to assemble data by pooling their knowledge of the region. This information was recorded on maps sketched in the communities and then plotted onto revised base maps informed by aerial photographs, satellite images and other available cartographic resources. Denis Fuentes, the Instituto's director, called the resulting hybrid of standard cartography combined with field data, "by far the most detailed and accurate maps we have of any rural area of Panama." He added: "It is a model to be emulated."

The methodology

The methodology applied had developed from a collaboration on a series of projects begun in 1992 involving Native Lands and indigenous peoples of

Central and South America, Africa and Southeast Asia. It consists of an initial ground preparation period to brief the communities and government agencies, followed by three workshops that alternate with two field periods, and, finally, production of the completed maps This process can take up to 18 months or more, depending on the complexity of the area mapped and other factors. The methodology is conceptually simple, but its application can be complicated by unforeseen twists and turns. This was the case with the Kuna's project.

Given the logistics required to work with 51 villages, the Kuna began by dividing their project into two phases. Communication and travel are precarious under the best of circumstances for the more remote communities, and workshops with too many participants risk becoming unmanageable. So Phase 1 encompassed 32 communities in the western half of the Comarca, and Phase 2 included 19 communities to the east. This extended the project an additional year. And along the way the team had to hack through several bureaucratic and political thickets, which caused further delays and stretched the project out close to three years.

The first workshop took place in June 2001 on the island of Gaigirgordub (or El Porvenir), at the far western end of the Comarca. In his inaugural speech, Gilberto Arias, one of the three Saila Dummagan, or Big Chiefs, of the General Congress, encouraged the 20 researchers in Phase 1. Project director Valerio Núñez, the coordinators and the cartographers then went about preparing them to select from three categories the features they would place on their maps: (1) significant physical features, natural and man-made, including rivers, trails, mountains, islands and coral reefs, and their names; (2) land use areas for farming, fishing and gathering; and (3) sites of cultural and historical importance. The mapping team, after much discussion, chose areas where the Kuna cultivate coconuts and harvest the leaves of the weruk palm, used for roof thatch; patches of sea grass in shallow areas off-shore; cemeteries, most of which are found inland, along rivers; and *galugan*, or spirit domains, often located in the mountains. Then the team chose symbols to signify the various areas. Hunting areas, for example, would be indicated by a tapir, the Kuna's most prized game animal.

The cartographers demonstrated basic mapping concepts, such as scale, orientation and representation. They covered how to identify the best informants, and how to transcribe their information onto sketch maps. Hunters and medicine men, for example, who travel widely into the mountains, know the most remote regions well. Women, whose work confines them to their communities, have little knowledge of the bush beyond a narrow radius from their home. It is more effective to work with three or four informants at a time than with large groups. Finally, the researchers broke into small teams and drew "practice" maps, working with the knowledge already in their heads and critiquing each other's product, one by one.

At the end of the four-day workshop, the researchers returned to their communities to begin the process of drawing sketch maps of the environment used for subsistence. Here they ran into their first significant snag, one that is fairly common. The donors worked independently of each other and disbursements were not synchronized. This caused short-falls in key areas. Materials essential to the field-research period were not available when needed—sheets of white paper, pens, sets of colored pencils, rulers, liquid eraser, map tubes, compasses. Project leaders managed to borrow money and make the purchases, but several weeks were lost in the process.

Additionally, funds for travel were not disbursed in time for the cartographers and the coordinators to visit researchers in the field and provide support. As a stop-gap measure, the more adept researchers found ways to bring tentative colleagues up to speed. When funds for professional salaries were not disbursed as expected, one of the coordinators commented, "the director's intestines are in shreds from the tension." But the importance of the maps was clear, so everyone forged on. In mid-July the researchers traveled to Panama City for the second workshop, the most critical stage of the mapping project, when they and the cartographers began the process of transcribing the information from the communities onto new, geo-referenced maps. Full of enthusiasm, the researchers arrived clutching their sketch maps, and everyone set to work.

The sketch maps were of uneven quality. A couple combined artistry and precise detail. Several were aesthetically beautiful but of dubious scientific value. (One showed rivers crossing each other, which rivers don't do). Another was almost surrealistic in its confusion of scale and geographic orientation, with farms located in swamps and on mountain tops. Some were technically correct but offered sparse information. The inconsistency could be partly attributed to the lack of close supervision in the field, but the simple fact was that some researchers caught on more rapidly than others and produced better maps. Fortunately, all of them had more information in their heads than was evident from their maps, and the cartographers teased it out during transcription. By chance, one Kuna cartographer, an employee of Panama's Office of the Treasury Inspector (Contraloría de la República), came up with some recent maps his division had made of the Comarca, which proved more accurate than the maps from the Instituto Geográfico. The cartographers spent a few days cleaning them up, erasing their contour lines so they could transcribe the village data onto a clean open space.

As everyone became more comfortable with the methodology, transcription fell into a rhythm and advanced at an increasingly productive pace. Small groups of researchers from contiguous communities worked with individual cartographers. They matched rivers on the sketch maps to those in aerial photos and satellite images. They placed coral reefs in the open sea and named them. They realigned islands and gave them their proper shape and their Kuna names. (Isla George and Isla Gertie were eliminated). They defined subsistence areas. They sketched in cemeteries and sacred sites. Gradually, as if by magic, the maps of the Comarca began to fill and take on a thoroughly Kuna character.

The work was intense, but satisfying, as researchers, coordinators and cartographers worked to cross-reference sketch maps, aerial photos, satellite images and government maps. Using stereoscopes, they viewed aerial photos in 3-D. When the researchers became stuck, they were encouraged to make a

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Mac Chapin

Kuna mapping team.

Courtesy Mac Chapin

Sketch map drawn by Roberto Martinez, a member of the mapping team. The symbols, legible in the full-scale sketch map, indicate landmarks and resources.

Mark Caicedo

Above: Traditional Kuna home.

Right: "The mapping project was good for the Kuna," recalled Gilberto Arias, 82, a cacique *in the Kuna General Congress from 1999 to 2010. "For example, we were able to name the rivers. It's important that the world know the rivers by their Kuna names. In Spanish there is a river named Doctor Flaco [Doctor Skinny] and we gave it its Kuna name. The map can't just sit in an office, it must be taught in schools to younger generations."*

Mark Caicedo

Above, right: Molas made by using a traditional draw-cut-baste-sew method.

Below: In elementary school, Kuna children learn both Kuna and Spanish as mandated by Panamanian law.

Mark Caicedo

fresh start and "undertake an imaginary journey" through the forest, which often jogged their memory and made the images flow. When the draft maps became too messy with erasures and white-outs, the cartographers made clean copies. They marked gaps and confused areas on the drafts; these were recorded in the researchers' notebooks for clarification during the second field period. The process of constantly questioning, revising, erasing and adding was reiterative and tedious, but also creative and exciting, and participants had a strong sense that they were engaged in the production of a unique and important document for their people.

A poster in the Museum of the Kuna Nation cautions visitors: "In Kuna Yala, it is strictly prohibited to capture marine turtles of any species, whether for sale or consumption."

Evenings were devoted to discussions. The researchers had learned the history of their communities in long sessions with elders, and they were eager to pass on stories of village relocations, natural disasters, and significant events and leaders. The Comarca's deteriorating environment was a specific concern. Many reefs suffering from "submarine deforestation," they noted, had been looted for fill to expand island communities. Profligate dumping of plastic bags and bottles, metal cans and other contemporary refuse in the waters surrounding inhabited islands—a recent occurrence—has caused serious contamination. Turtles and lobsters, once abundant, are nearly extinct through over-exploitation. One researcher noted that when a company arrived in the Comarca several years back to buy exotic fish for aquariums, Kuna divers worked to fill the demand until the General Congress called a halt.

The second workshop lasted two weeks. The relatively good set of draft maps produced rewarded the participants with a sense of accomplishment. The researchers returned to their communities with their maps so the villagers could verify them, add information and answer the cartographers' questions. By this time, all funds had been disbursed and tensions eased. Coordinators and cartographers could travel to check sites that had not been clear in the aerial photographs—areas of sea grass, for example, and features hidden beneath the forest canopy—and lend support to the researchers. After six weeks in the field, the researchers returned to Panama City for the third workshop, held in early 2002. The team worked hard, fine-tuning their maps and preparing final drafts for the Instutito's cartographers. Within a week they had finished.

Politics intervene

The Kuna Congress and the Instituto Geográfico had agreed that the Instituto's cartographers would take charge of the final production of two sets of maps that would become the property of the Congress. One would consist of an overview of the Comarca in two sheets, which eventually had a scale of 1:143,000; the second would be a series of eight larger maps in greater detail at a scale of 1:50,000. The budget included funds to pay the Instituto cartographers some compensation above their noto-

riously low government salaries for their work on the maps, which was in addition to their normal duties. The bonus was also to serve as an incentive to advance production at a good clip. The Instituto had no GIS capability, and all of its maps were produced by hand using a technique called scribing. This demanding process requires the cartographer to work over a light table with clear plastic sheets coated with a semi-opaque substance. Lines are cut in the soft coating with a stylus to define land features; lettering and special symbols are individually affixed to or stenciled on the sheets. Each color on the map requires a separate sheet; all are combined to produce the final prints.

Circumstances conspired against the bonus. During much of 2001 and extending into 2002, Panamanian newspapers were reporting illicit contracts, bribes and under-the-table deals in government agencies. Whatever the validity of the accusations, rumors were circulating along with the fear that any agency could be tarred by scandal. The Instituto's director felt that the proposed additional compensation could be distorted as another example of government corruption. Attempts to structure an acceptable payment mechanism were unsuccessful and the cartographers wound up without their incentive. They understood the circumstances and appreciated the efforts on their behalf but were nonetheless disgruntled and their work slowed to a sluggish pace.

Phase II

Meanwhile, the second phase of the project got underway in the eastern half of the Comarca in January 2002. Experienced and more confident, the mapping team breezed through its orientation of the new squad of researchers. The eastern region is much more isolated than the western half of the Comarca and much more traditional and inaccessible to outsiders. The Instituto's maps of the area were spotty and extremely unreliable, and the few aerial photographs in its possession were dated. To compensate for this deficiency, the team approached a private GIS company in Panama City that had what was needed at a reasonable price. Then, that very afternoon, the news broke that the company was involved in a lawsuit and that the Panamanian government was on the verge of intervening. Two weeks later it was shut down and the owner was on the lam. The mapping project seemed surrounded by scandal on all sides. Fortunately Native Lands was finalizing a map of Central America and southern Mexico in collaboration with the National Geographic Society, which provided the satellite information required and the team moved on.

From then on, it was smooth sailing—except for one last glitch. Heavily involved in running the workshops and supervising the researchers in the field, the Kuna cartographic unit had little time to work with the Instituto's staff as they prepared the final maps. The Kuna wrongly assumed that the Instituto's professionals, who were unfamiliar with the region and the language, could transfer the data from the draft maps to the final maps without their assistance. This miscalculation was compounded when the Kuna failed to review the finalized maps carefully before printing. The printed maps, riddled with errors, had to be thoroughly revised and reprinted, resulting in additional expense and a delay of several months.

Finally the field activities came to an end, giving the Kuna cartographers more time to supervise the work at the Instituto. They checked for omissions, the spelling of Kuna words, symbolism, consistency and the placement of physical features. They were now taking a greater interest in the maps as they confirmed the quality of the information they contained. Scribing is methodical and labor-intensive, and it was progressing slowly but smoothly. After undergoing extreme scrutiny, all of the maps were ready. The last map rolled off the press in January 2004.

The outcome

The team presented the maps in a general assembly of the Kuna Congress attended by delegates from throughout the Comarca, Panama City and Colón. Those in attendance judged them nicely put together, accurate and most certainly the best maps of the Comarca ever produced, duly noting that they were the work of a Kuna team, with technical assistance from the Instituto Geográfico Nacional, and that at the heart of the project were the 51 communities that had supplied the core information. There was a strong sense of collective ownership. The elders, however, had a more subdued reaction, reserving judgment until the practical benefits were clear. This,

Mark Caicedo

Tourism has increased exponentially in Kuna Yala and the maps have been essential to managing this influx. Tourists especially appreciate the detail and accuracy, which help them navigate potentially treacherous reefs.

Mark Caicedo

The Kuna expect their islands to be underwater as a result of climate change and have begun to plan their move to the mainland. "New maps will have to be drawn," said Arias.

of course, is the key question. What has been the outcome of all this work, and was it worth the effort?

The most obvious benefit is the set of detailed and accurate maps of Kuna territory, produced to the Kuna's specifications. The overview of the Comarca includes an inventory of cultural sites and natural resources, together with boundaries and areas of potential conflict. Less obvious are the skills the project team and residents of the Comarca acquired: how to read and interpret maps and how to use them. While the technicians on the team already had a basic knowledge of cartography, they had never developed a map from scratch. The others on the team had no experience whatsoever with maps except for those found in school textbooks. The process of gathering raw data in the field and then working with cartographers to transcribe the information onto georeferenced maps changed everything. Many participants in the project have become "map literate." The process served to make them aware of issues to which few had previously given much thought.

The Kuna can now wield the maps to pinpoint problems, such as the intrusion of nonindigenous farmers into the Comarca to the west and of Colombian gold miners to the east, and develop strategies for addressing them. They can signal predatory moves by foreign mining companies in their territory and negotiate specific projects with the government, corporations and international donors. And they can address environmental issues such as deterioration of coral reefs, overfishing, and pollution as more than abstractions.

The western end of the Comarca is an area of special concern as its boundary was originally drawn arbitrarily in a straight line, hugging the coast. Nearby island communities have traditionally ranged far inland to undertake subsistence activities on untitled land in remote areas that is considered, officially at least, government property. Until recently this had not been a problem, as no one had claimed it. In the last few decades, however, mestizo subsistence farmers and cattle ranchers have begun moving into the region that the Kuna had been trying, unsuccessfully, to incorporate into the Comarca, and the result has been conflict. The new maps document Kuna land use and because they are "official" government maps produced by the Instituto, the Kuna Congress is using them to argue its case of long-term use and occupancy through political and legal channels.

Maps are merely tools. Their effectiveness depends on how they are used, and this only becomes apparent with the passage of time. The Kuna are astute and tenacious. They have prevailed in the past by retreating when necessary, strategically choosing their allies and exploiting opportunities as they arise. They overcame a series of obstacles to produce what everyone, Kuna and non-Kuna, considers highly accurate and detailed maps of their territory. There is no doubt that they will put them to good use over the coming years.

Mac Chapin is an anthropologist who has worked with the Kuna since the mid-1960s. Between 1982 and 1984 he was IAF representative for Panama and Honduras. He currently directs the Center for the Support of Native Lands and lives in Boulder, Colo.

Farmers in the rugged sierra of Oaxaca work with Servicios Ambientales to maximize the capture of carbon in the forests owned and managed by their indigenous communities. They still harvest timber but leave the largest trees, known as padres, *to reseed wooded areas.*

Carbon and Community Development: An Experiment in Oaxaca

By David Barton Bray

Environmental Services of Oaxaca (SAO), a small Mexican nongovernmental organization, has had some pretty good years recently. In 2008 it pioneered the opening of the "voluntary" carbon market in Mexico, selling carbon credits from 10 rural communities to corporations and other Mexican buyers. Mexico's National Forest Commission (CONAFOR) highlighted SAO's accomplishments at the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Cancun. As a result of that Fundación Coca Cola later delivered SAO a check for some $150,000, representing the cost of planting trees to offset the carbon generated by the jets transporting delegates from around the world to Mexico. To the five NGOs and community organizations who had founded SAO and invested years of work in it, all this meant that their bet had paid off. Poor coffee farmers and community logging operations had become players in sophisticated markets for forest carbon, and were recognized for doing their part to capture emissions that were heating up the atmosphere. But getting to this point has not been easy, and many complexities still lie ahead.

SAO was legally incorporated in 2000, a good time to jump into carbon markets, it seemed. The Kyoto Protocol signed three years earlier appeared to

Patrick Breslin

Antonio Santiago Ruiz prunes a young pine in a reforested section of La Trinidad, Oaxaca.

have opened the door through its Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The idea was to allow contaminating industries in the developed countries to decide on the most cost-effective method of reducing their carbon emissions by, for example, investing in alternative energy sources (such as wind or solar) or by paying a party in a developing country to offset their emissions through activities such as planting trees, resulting in the "carbon credits" mentioned above. The exotic notion of carbon credits is rooted in the need to address global warming. Scientists don't commonly agree on much but the vast majority of climate scientists project that if emissions continue at current rates, global temperatures could increase between 2 and 11 degrees by 2100, the seas could rise by between 3 and 18 feet, and massive droughts will become even more frequent than they already are. Polar ice caps are in fact melting faster and extreme weather events are occurring earlier than projected, suggesting the scientists have been conservative.

Elementary science classes teach how plants, through photosynthesis, convert carbon dioxide into organic compounds that build the plant. About half of the biomass of plants is carbon. This uptake of carbon from the atmosphere is an "environmental service" that helps stabilize global climate. As trees are felled and burned to create space for agriculture, the carbon stored in them via photosynthesis is released into the atmosphere. Deforestation is estimated to be the source of some 20 percent of all global carbon emissions. This points to the urgency to create incentives to preserve forests and to plant more trees. Thus has been launched a slow, painful effort to create markets for forest carbon—both "compliance" markets per the CDM, and so-called voluntary markets, where standards are more flexible. The new global initiative called REDD + (Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation *plus* conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of carbon stocks) contemplates a compliance market, strictly regulated by internationally agreed-upon protocols. The architects of REDD+ are looking at the massive multiplication of models like SAO for capturing carbon.

SAO's founders had experience capturing carbon, although until 2000 only in connection with shade-grown coffee plants and the production of timber. Several founders worked as advisors and staff with the State Coordination of Coffee Producers of Oaxaca (CEPCO) and the timber producers of the Zapotec-Chinantec Union (UZACHI), both of which had received support from the Inter-American Foundation. So it seemed a logical next step to explore the possibility of income from another product of their farms and forests. The Ford Foundation quickly bought into this novel idea and gave SAO modest support to organize an office and begin educating communities on this odd and vaporous commodity captured by the forest: metric tons of carbon dioxide. Other donors followed suit, and SAO held workshops in communities served by CEPCO and UZACHI to recruit volunteers for the new initiative. The unusual proposal met with suspicion; assemblies of the community members, who held legal title to the territory, often feared it involved an elaborate plot to take away their lands. Finally, during 2002 and 2003, 10 communities stepped forward, ready to take the risk. Their residents, who lived from coffee or timber production, were mostly poor and of indigenous descent. They spoke Zapotec, Chinantec and Mixe and had a lot to learn about the language of international carbon markets.

Initial benefits finally started to flow in 2003 and 2004, when CONAFOR began priming the pump for forest-carbon projects by funding organizations, such as SAO, that provided technical assistance and subsidized community tree-planting. Then, uncertainty in international carbon markets caused CONAFOR to tighten requirements and by 2008 the program had ended. NGOs offering technical assistance were encouraged to find buyers on their own, which was not easy. "SAO was designed to reach out to the international market but on the road we found that it was extremely complicated under the CDM. So we realized that wasn't the way for us," noted Carlos Marcelo Pérez González, one of SAO's founders and its coordinator since 2003. Thus began the quest to stimulate a Mexican voluntary market, a national clientele interested in SAO's blend of traditional community conservation and development that also yielded measurable carbon offsets.

The IAF entered the picture in 2006, enabling SAO to expand its support to the 10 communities.

Developing the ability to maximize the capture of carbon included improving the communities' capacity to manage forests both for carbon and other uses. This meant time-consuming participatory processes of zoning land for agriculture and forests, drafting rules, creating nurseries and using hand-held geographic position systems to mark forest boundaries in remote images. Through multiple workshops, community members with a grade-school education learned about the carbon cycle and the concept of payment for planting trees and protecting forests.

The communities, with tongue-twisting names like Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec and San Miguel Malinaltepec, are in the rugged sierra of Oaxaca. They figure among the thousands of communities, indigenous and nonindigenous, that own some 60 percent of Mexico's forests. Their strong governance institutions are rooted in ancient tradition and contemporary agrarian law. Ownership of their territories, secured by clear title granted under the Mexican Constitution, is a defining aspect of their lives, assuring their identity and their place in the world. Powerful norms of cooperation are reinforced through sometimes strict rules promulgated by community assemblies and elected authorities. These Mexicans are also distinguished by a tradition of obligatory service, known as *tequio*, which provides the labor to maintain community infrastructure. In recent years, as a consequence of becoming more aware of the importance of environmental stewardship in the contemporary context, they have incorporated practices leading to the certification of their coffee as organic and their logging practices as well-managed.

SAO's staff knew from its experience with coffee and timber that working with the communities requires careful attention to their governance institutions. When trees are planted on community land, the entire general assembly of all legal residents must understand and approve the activity. And while coffee is grown on plots assigned to specific families, most of the communities have cooperatives whose producer-members had to be educated and consulted.

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Reforestation site in La Trinidad.

New practices for storing carbon had to be mastered for each ecosystem; saplings had to be planted in degraded areas and forests had to be thinned and managed for more rapid accumulation of carbon, but without jeopardizing biodiversity. In systems of coffee agroforestry, SAO had to work with individual farmers on enriching shade with fruit trees that removed carbon from the air and added diversity to diets, and on planting living fences to check soil erosion. In timber-producing communities, like La Trinidad, calculating the harvest rotation to accumulate carbon required close consultation with the community forest managers. SAO also did broader development work, such as organizing women's groups to sell tree resins. Offering the intensive training required to build knowledge and develop institutions for producing carbon credits, incurs a cost not covered in the market price. Biodiversity and educational and organizational advances associated with a carbon project are known as "co-benefits", in addition to the main business of producing carbon. While buyers may appreciate these co-benefits, they are not necessarily willing to pay for them.

Because of the costs and challenges of working with communities, only a minority of carbon projects involve them, as the Ecosystem Marketplace noted in its 2011 report, *State of the Forest Carbon Markets*. But the complexities of working with communities paled in comparison with what SAO found as it tested the rigors of the compliance market and then the turbulence of the voluntary markets. Forest carbon had largely been left out of the CDM. Very few projects involving forest carbon have survived the CDM's approval process because of concerns about permanence—forests can burn down—and "leakage," a reference to what happens when conservation in one wooded area prompts farmers to deforest another. In contrast, an alternative energy source for a factory implies a permanent ongoing reduction of carbon emissions. Thus, most of the action with forest carbon has not been in the compliance market created by the CDM, but in the voluntary market. Forest carbon was rescued from near oblivion at the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bali in 2007, when representatives for Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea made a dramatic plea for the inclusion of forests in the negotiations, given their importance in many developing countries. This gave rise to the ongoing international talks involving REDD+, mentioned above.

Given that forest carbon is a commodity invisible to consumers, extraordinary effort, with high transaction costs, goes into creating a paper trail designed to reassure investors. First, the seller who wants to trade in the international marketplace needs to choose from among a confusing array of standards for quantifying forest carbon. Each standard involves a particular methodology that guides the calculation of a pre-existing baseline carbon stock, projections of a counterfactual "business-as-usual" scenario (i.e., what would happen if there were no project), measuring and monitoring changes in carbon stocks, and assessment of leakage, among other technically demanding tasks. The Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), the most widely used, includes a range of methodologies applicable to specific scenarios, from which a prospective seller must choose. Other standards provide greater or lesser flexibility that allow developers to fashion their own methodologies subject to technical review and approval by auditors. In order to demonstrate that the project planned conforms to both the standard and the methodology, the seller must produce a detailed "Project Document" (PD). An accredited auditor must review the document, conduct a field visit to confirm the activities described and issue an opinion to "validate" the project—paid for by the proponent. The Sierra Gorda Ecological Group, a Mexican NGO working with farmers in the state of Queretaro, required three years to obtain validation under the VCS and, for the social and environmental co-benefits, under the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) standards. Validation qualifies a project to be registered with a clearinghouse, which provides a legal platform for the exchange between buyer and seller.

But you are not done! Under some standards, the actual production of carbon credit must be "verified" through "MRV," or ongoing internal monitoring, reporting and verification, and then an audit that includes a site visit approximately every five years for the duration of the project. Protocols proposed for

the "compliance" market demand 100 years of monitoring *after* the period during which credits have been issued. Standards for "voluntary" markets typically require MRV last between 30 and 50 years. In addition to the carbon, some buyers want co-benefits validated and verified, as in the case of Sierra Gorda and pay a premium for the additional documentation and ongoing MRV.

All this and more has led The Munden Project, a group that has extensively analyzed the development of carbon markets, to conclude that "forest-carbon trading is unworkable as currently constructed" and that "the commodity-based approach is at loggerheads with the development benefits REDD is expected to generate." Even when the market works, communities that capture small volumes of carbon will fare the same as producers who sell small amounts of any agricultural commodity in markets dominated by intermediaries. They receive a minute portion of the final price, and little remains to invest in community development.

So how has a little NGO like SAO been able to survive in the face of this complexity? By being in the vanguard of experimentation with the methods and institutional arrangements leading to the creation of a voluntary market in Mexico, and by blurring the line between traditional community conservation and development and projects focused on forest-carbon offsets. Walking this line has enabled SAO, at least for now, to avoid the paralyzing and costly complexity of international markets that might as well be labeled "this site under construction." The design of its baseline inventory, for example, uses a method that J. Antonio Benjamín Ordóñez Díaz, who now works for the NGO Pronatura Mexico, derived from standards developed by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (as are most standards). "It took me five years to develop the model," Ordóñez explained recently, "but then we realized it was too difficult for the average person. So I adapted it to a simple Excel sheet. Now a community member can measure the diameter, the height and the carbon content of the trees, and if he knows the growth per hectare he can calculate the carbon capture. The calculation tables are very simple and training takes place in the indigenous language of the community." Ordóñez's method has not yet been validated or verified by an independent authority as international standards require. It's only recognition comes from CONAFOR, which is well aware of the conflict presented by its interest in SAO's success. So for now a more flexible and quicker mechanism has been created, but one not ready for international markets.

However, with work by Ordoñez and Pronatura, the method was sufficiently valid for acceptance in opening the Mexican voluntary market for SAO's carbon producers. After SAO and Pronatura's assiduous courtship of the business sector in 2008 and 2009, three large corporations—Televisa, Gamesa (a large bakery) and Chinoin Pharmaceuticals—as well as the Office of the President of Mexico and several individuals, purchased carbon bonds. SAO's first big sale, in May 2008, moved more than 15,000 metric tons at $10 a ton, (when the going rate averaged around $3.80 a ton). As of the end of 2011, SAO had sold 104,842 metric tons of carbon for a total of almost $647,000. SAO and Pronatura each retain 10 percent of the revenue, which does not cover overhead, while the communities receive 80 percent. For fiscal reasons, Mexican corporations buy only a year's volume of carbon at a time, although they have made informal commitments for longer periods. Thus, the current practice does not obligate the communities to protect the forest beyond one year. So what is the risk that they would just cut them down in coming years if they need the land for corn?

In January, I visited the community of San Bartolomé Loxicha, a SAO partner in the Sierra Sur of Oaxaca, a few hours from the city of Oaxaca to explore this question. I traveled off the main highway over rough dirt roads toward the Pacific coast through a rugged mountain landscape with broad swaths of degraded agricultural lands where coffee agroforests provide much of the surviving cover. San Bartolomé is an indigenous Zapotec community of some 2,500 inhabitants, whose title to its land dates from 1712 and whose possession goes back centuries before that. Almost everyone in the village makes a living the hard way, by farming corn and coffee. Often the harvests don't provide support for a full year, so income from family members who have

emigrated to northern Mexico and the United States makes up the shortfall.

Despite its material poverty, San Bartolomé is wealthy in community and territory. Community members are immensely proud of their nearly 42,000 acres of river valleys, sweeping slopes and ridge tops, and well aware of the centuries of occupation. Ancient indigenous traditions combine with governing institutions provided for under Mexican agrarian law make the assembly of all legal residents of San Bartolomé a powerful vehicle for cohesion. It can demand strict compliance with norms and newly drafted bylaws in exchange for individual rights to resources from the territory. Another robust institution is the *tequio*, referenced earlier, that, according to a 2005 planning document, "strengthens us, links us socially and is the expression of the will to be a part of our community."

When I visited, Amadeo Cruz Antonio, chair of the Oversight Council, one of the governing entities elected by San Bartolomé's assembly, met us with traditional courtesy in the modest office of the community's leadership. Later that day and the next, he and others conducted a tour of the 2,052 acres of forests and coffee farms now being managed for carbon accumulation. He explained how new attention to the forests and farms was stimulated by the carbon sales. "After Hurricane Paulina knocked most of the forest down," Amadeo explained, referring to the devastation wreaked in 1997, "the pine came back but we replanted too, and this is all protected now. The forest gives us life, gives us oxygen and cleans the contamination from factories. SAO has helped us understand this and we explain this to our people. But even if we weren't doing this with SAO, this is our communal forest, and according to our bylaws, we can't cut it down."

As we visited several parcels under management for carbon capture, Amadeo explained how the community has used its revenue from carbon sales: 70 percent is reinvested in the forest, 20 percent is invested in community projects and 10 percent covers the expenses incurred by the community authorities. But there are no giveaways here; people have to work to get the benefits. The carbon project relies on the normally unpaid *tequio* for the considerable planting and maintenance of the forest required to assure the most rapid accumulation of biomass. But for the substantial additional labor needed, community members receive $12 a day, the going wage for farm work, modest income that lets some remain in San Bartolomé rather than emigrate. Assignments rotate so that every one of the community's 500 legal members has the opportunity to work and be compensated in cash a few weeks a year.

Different practices are required in the coffee fields. The leaders of the coffee-farmers' organization, grandly called Café del Milenio, took us to visit the sites where members produce coffee certified as organic and now also trees that capture carbon. "Conservation zones," Israel Cruz García, 37, president of Café del Milenio, proudly called the areas comprised of parcels planted with the shade trees important to biodiversity in landscapes otherwise characterized by isolated patches of forest. "Before, in our grandfather's time, they had rules" he explained as he stood next to one of the organization's new tree nurseries. "Then they stopped, they burned wherever, they cut down trees everywhere. But with

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A sign announces Café El Milenio's sale of carbon credits to Gamesa, a large Mexican bakery.

SAO we took back those rules and drafted our communal bylaws. We have a culture of conservation now. Nobody can enter a parcel to hunt or remove a green tree. Permission is required even to remove dead wood for fuel. It suits us because we now have an organic culture. We do this because we love our children. The children are going to suffer if we mess things up and finish off the deer, the birds, the forest. Tomorrow it won't rain and there won't be water. We'll be gone, and who is going to suffer but our children? That's why we take care of our coffee parcels and the forest."

SAO has many admirers. "I think SAO's work is excellent," commented David Ross, an advisor to the Sierra Gorda Ecologic Group, after his first visit. "I was very impressed with the way it works with entire communities, the way that its technicians come from those indigenous communities, that the existing community organization takes charge of the project." The new culture of conservation promoted by SAO undergirds permanence beyond that which would be required in the contracts for international markets for forest carbon. Mexican buyers are convinced that the communities will not be cutting down the forests for corn, and are willing to invest in the "co-benefits" of that culture. SAO must still find its way through a thicket of complications in order to survive, to continue supporting its 10 collaborating communities, and to expand its influence. Thus far, Mexican markets have functioned based on a high degree of trust. Representatives of SAO's Mexican corporate clients have visited SAO and the communities, have seen the forests and the shade trees in coffee fields, and have witnessed the multiple co-benefits of their investment. CONAFOR's current arrangements with Pronatura Mexico and SAO have also evolved in an atmosphere of trust.

But for the Mexican market to grow, its framework must depend on more than trust. Aspects of this experimental phase would raise conflicts of interest in international markets, and these must all be sorted out and clarified. CONAFOR is currently working on a framework for validation and verification for the Mexican market that could also be acceptable internationally, as well as a transparent national registry. It is also adapting international standards for a national "solidarity" market characterized by flexibility and trust. SAO's own role in the market needs to be better defined. It now acts as the seller of the carbon credits, while disclaiming "ownership." Plans are afoot to organize SAO's partner communities into a single entity that can legally sell the carbon credits, with SAO in the role of verifier for the Mexican market.

With considerable understatement, the Ecosystem Marketplace has noted that "the future shape, size and scope of the global forest-carbon marketplace remain highly uncertain." Given this uncertainty, the report notes "a trend towards regions buying credits from their own backyards." It is in that backyard that SAO has been tinkering with how carbon markets can serve community development. By trying to link community conservation and development and the demands of international carbon markets, SAO has sharpened the focus of the discussion about how carbon markets can serve the poor. As a small NGO it has become, along with the Sierra Gorda Ecologic Group, a pioneer in developing a Mexican market that can become an important model for other developing countries with substantial private sectors, such as Brazil and China. The REDD+ plans being developed in global forums are focused strict compliance protocols and assume that markets alone can reduce deforestation and channel benefits to poor communities. SAO's experience suggests that markets can also be localized and built on commitments of the Mexican public and private sectors to rural development compatible with the responsible use of forests. Nonetheless, SAO has not given up on international markets. "We are working on both lines, developing Mexican and international markets," said Pérez González, SAO's coordinator. "Our project is about carbon, but for us carbon is sparking community development."

David Barton Bray, a former IAF representative, is a professor in the Department of Earth and Environment at Florida International University. *He thanks Leticia Gutiérrez Lorandi, Bryan Foster, J. Antonio Benjamin Ordoñez Díaz and David Ross for their contributions to this article.*

Indigo and Indigeneity in El Salvador

By Seth Micah Jesse

Indigo figures prominently in the heritage of the indigenous peoples of El Salvador. "Our ancestors worked this crop and processed this dye," said Francisca Amalia Matamoros, an indigenous Salvadoran who belongs to Añil Cielo Azul, a cooperative located in Cuisnahuat in the western department of Sonsonate, home to communities that trace their origins to Nahua Pipil migrants who left Northern Mexico between the 10th and 14th centuries. Cuisnahuat is one of the poorest municipalities in El Salvador: 75 percent of homes lack electricity or any connection to a sewer system and few families receive remittances. The surrounding area is dense with references to the history of its indigenous residents. In 1932 Sonsonate became the site of one of the last indigenous revolts in the hemisphere, and just over the hills from Añil Cielo Azul's indigo fields, in Izalco, the Indian leader of the uprising, Feliciano Ama, was hanged from a ceiba tree.

Añil Cielo Azul is collaborating with IAF grantee partner Asociación El Bálsamo on a plan to revive the production of indigo, also known as *xiquilite*, a name derived from the Nahuatl word meaning blue herb. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the inhabitants of this corner of Meso-America extracted colorant from the plant to decorate ceramics and textiles and

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used the tear-drop shaped leaves to treat respiratory, skin and gastrointestinal ailments. Conquest, and the mercantilism that followed, drastically altered the place of indigo in Salvadoran life just as they tragically precipitated the devastation and dispersion of the native population.

Land and labor exploited

The Spaniards found rich deposits of precious ores in the Viceroyalty of Peru and in parts of the Viceroyalty of New Spain that today comprise Mexico and Central America north of the isthmus of Panama. But the region encompassing modern-day El Salvador offered only volcanic soil well suited to indigo. In contrast to their treatment of other native crops elsewhere in the Americas, the invaders did not discourage the production of *xiquilite* but were bent on harnessing it and exploiting indigo as a commodity. According to David Browning (1971), by the mid-1500s, Spanish authorities had organized cultivation in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala to compete with indigo from Asia that was imported for the European market by dealers in Portugal, Holland and England. Indigenous Salvadorans were forced to cultivate the herb and process the dye, and for 300 years their indigo buttressed the European textile industry.

The demand continued decades after 1821, when El Salvador won independence from Spain, an event that did nothing to improve the lot of the diminishing native population. As it had during the colonial regime, the landed elite that continued to profit from indigo strategically located haciendas close to communities of the Indians to be exploited as near-slave labor or, according to Arnoldo Sermeño (2006), induced migrations from distant indigenous villages. A reminder of the grueling and dangerous work required to produce dye are the vestiges of the mills where barefoot Indians stamped macerated leaves to move the oxygenation process along, opening wounds susceptible to infection in the extremely unsanitary conditions. But by the early 1900s, indigo had nearly disappeared as a commodity, displaced by cheaper synthetics. Coffee overtook cotton and cacao as El Salvador's principal export, a place it occupies to this day. For the indigenous Salvadorans struggling to eke out a living as day laborers or tenant farmers, the 20th century was a time of horrendous suffering. As the depression of the late 1920s took hold, the price of coffee plummeted and workers lost their jobs. In 1932 social unrest in Sonsonate swelled into the violent uprising against wealthy land owners mentioned above. The government reacted by killing tens of thousands of indigenous citizens and persecuting their survivors. The brutal civil war of the 1980s that resulted in 70,000 casualties and the displacement of a quarter of El Salvador's population, disproportionately impacted the rural poor, including the indigenous.

A shifting context for organizing

Twenty years ago, in his article "The View from the Shore" in the 1992 issue of *Grassroots Development* focused on Native Americans and the Quincentenary, anthropologist Mac Chapin noted the emergence of a single organization of indigenous Salvadorans cautiously working to improve conditions in Sonsonate while the civil war was still raging. The Peace Accords that ended 10 years of hostilities that same year signaled the beginning of a post-conflict era in which civil society could operate more effectively. Since then, more indigenous Salvadorans have organized to work toward goals that include visibility, social justice and economic development. As part of its program to promote public awareness of El Salvador's indigenous population, Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (MUPI) (see page 65) documented the uprising in Sonsonate and its tragic consequences in the film *1932, Cicatriz de la memoria*, and in its publication *Trasmallo*. The programs of Consejo Coordinador Nacional Indígena Salvadoreño (CCNIS) develop the cultural identity and leadership of Nahuat, Lenca and Cacawira Salvadorans and awareness of their rights. In the western department of Ahuachapán, Fundación para el Desarrollo Socioeconómico y Restauración Ambiental (FUNDESYRAM) invests in economic initiatives launched by indigenous women; and Instituto para el Rescate Ancestral Indígena Salvadoreño (RAIS) helps communities value their shared history, revitalize craft traditions and market the products, including by organizing visits by tourists.

Founded two years before hostilities ceased, Asociación El Bálsamo has supported self-help

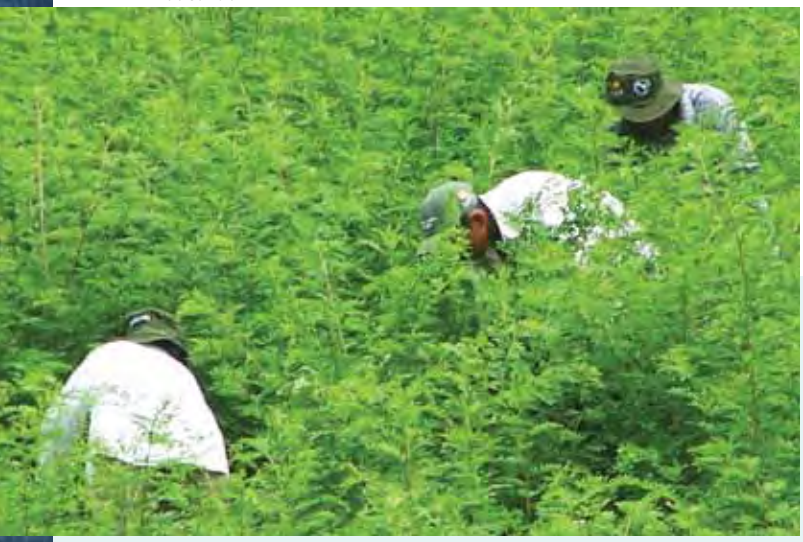
projects undertaken over the past two decades by Salvadorans displaced by the civil war. It emphasizes organic production, access to credit and the identification of markets for organic crops, including indigo, which it reintroduced in the hills of Cuisnahuat in 2007 via a pilot project. Little rain falls in Cuisnahuat, but El Bálsamo's experiment proved that some species of indigo thrive in its arid climate. The farmers involved in the pilot quickly organized as Añil Cielo Azul, piquing interest and attracting more members.

The new relationship with indigo

Although indigo was almost irrelevant to the Salvadoran economy until recently, production had never disappeared entirely. Generations of Salvadorans continued to use indigo in medicines and to soak and ferment indigo leaves into a paste that they milled into dye for their own use. Beginning in the 1990s, demand for dye from the indigo plant increased in the United States, Europe and beyond, reflecting the preference of environmentally- and socially-conscious consumers for products perceived as "natural." This trend coincided with efforts of the Salvadoran Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y El Arte (CONCULTURA) to revitalize indigo, which were bolstered by Japanese and German development aid. Norma Pereira, director of Asociación El Bálsamo, laid the groundwork for the pilot project by stoking these efforts and exploring the role this native crop could play in poor rural locales. In partnership with universities, other NGOs and government agencies, El Bálsamo, under Pereira's leadership, confirmed the commercial viability of cultivating indigo and processing it into dye. Currently international demand for Salvadoran indigo outpaces production and there is a growing domestic market.

The 50 farmers in Añil Cielo Azul still grow corn and beans as family staples but they are aware that indigo is well suited to their small plots and they are banking on it as a development resource. Through

Luis González



Harvesting and transporting añil.

El Bálsamo they learned to plan their crop, prune it and prevent blight and to avoid the mistakes of the colonial era that left soils overwrought. They use fertilizers and pesticides made from byproducts generated when indigo is processed, which is cost-effective and improves the soil. The excess fertilizer and pesticide is marketed and the revenue is invested in the cooperative enterprise. Many of their new skills are transferable to other crops.

Plant material is transported to the mill via rental vehicles. Farmers are mastering the process of making dye with the precision required for consistently high quality, without the unevenness that variations in humidity and oxygenation time can produce. But processing dye can still be hazardous, and El Bálsamo assures that the members of Añil Cielo Azul take appropriate precautions. Indigo dye bricks, for example, are milled into powder in such a way that the dust is sequestered from workers who further protect themselves from respiratory problems by using gloves and masks. Not all Salvadoran producers submit their dye for testing, but those in Añil Cielo Azul routinely take samples to a specialized lab in San Salvador where the indigotine count, or amount of coloring matter, is determined. The higher the count, the better the dye holds to textiles. A dye batch with an indigotine count of 40 percent or below is marketable domestically for between $20 and $50 per kilo; a count greater than 40 percent can command between $50 and $80 per kilo. In 2011, Añil Cielo Azul's dye registered more than 50 percent indigotine and sold for $60 to $70 per kilo. María Delmy Linares, a member of Cooperativa de Mujeres San Luís Los Rodeos, said that her cooperative used to have a hard time obtaining enough indigo dye of sufficient quality for its textiles, clothing and crafts. But as a client of Añil Cielo Azul, the cooperative has been able to increase production. "We're rescuing something that is ours and the organic dye from Añil Cielo Azul adds value," added Linares. "We can guarantee that our products are made with natural dyes."

Farmers in the cooperative currently produce two indigo crops a year but hope irrigating their fields will yield a third harvest in the dry summer months when dye is scarce and prices are high. If they are able to produce in the summer, said Silas Cornelio Trigueros, president of Añil Cielo Azul, "people would not have to leave the community to cut sugar cane." A supplemental IAF grant awarded in 2012 is helping the cooperative introduce irrigation and move up the value chain to produce the indigo-based textiles and other crafts that are

Left: Filtering dye from the indigo plant.

Above: Silas Cornelio Trigueros, Añil Cielo Azul president.

Megan Fletcher

Seth Micah Jesse

The dyeing process and its products.

Megan Fletcher

popular in El Salvador and could boost household income.

Indigo has a loaded past and a promising future. Reclaiming the precolonial relationship with the plant makes more than just economic sense to the farmers in Añil Cielo Azul. "When we cultivate and process indigo, we are transported to another time," Trigueros said. As a school boy, he had an instructor who dedicated an hour each day to teaching 40 young Salvadorans Nahuatl, the language of their ancestors. As an adult, Trigueros had not thought seriously about Nahuatl—until he became involved with El Bálsamo's IAF-funded project and was reminded of his people's connection with indigo. Inspired, he got out his Nahuatl workbooks and began to brush up on the language.

Seth Micah Jesse is IAF representative for El Salvador.

Indigenous in El Salvador

Ethnicity is notoriously difficult to define and descriptions tend to rely on observable indicators. This might work in Guatemala where 6 million individuals speak one or more of the country's 20-plus recognized Indian languages, dress in distinctive clothing and otherwise observe colorful traditions that permeate daily life. But the ancestors of contemporary indigenous Salvadorans lived less isolated from Westernizing influences and were thus less able to protect and pass on much of their cultural heritage. The massacre of 1932 all but obliterated what remained and survivors avoided practices that would give them away as Indians. Without obvious markers, the definition of who is indigenous in El Salvador today is frustratingly oblique and the very existence of this population is easily denied. As Mac Chapin noted in his 1989 article in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, aptly titled "The 500,000 Invisible Indians of El Salvador," the identity of indigenous Salvadorans may be welded together more by a shared history of exploitation, injustice and desperate need.

Five centuries of displacement and subjugation have in fact pushed these people to the precarious periphery of society. Some 61 percent live in poverty compared with 26 percent of other Salvadorans; 57 percent lack electricity; 76 percent have no land title. The principal groups are the Nahua Pipil in western and central El Salvador and the Lenca Indians who live in eastern and northeastern departments. Authorities have put their numbers at anywhere from 6 percent of the population in 1930 (the Salvadoran census) to 10 percent in 1975 (anthropologist Alejandro Marroquín) and 1989 (Chapin) to 11 percent in 1999, or 660,000 individuals (the Pan-American Health Organization). These figures, which are disputed, are well above the 2 percent reported in the Salvadoran government's 2007 census, the first since 1930 to include a question on ethnicity—which indigenous groups allege was intentionally worded to skew results downward. Betty Elisa Pérez of Consejo Coordinador Nacional Indígena Salvadoreño (CCNIS) called the exercise "technical ethnocide."

The same year that the census took place, the Salvadoran government voted in favor of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which calls for cultural identity and development on their own terms. The administration of President Mauricio Funes, who took office in 2009, has introduced programs designed to address poverty and inequality, which Pérez believes indicates an openness to considering the plight of indigenous Salvadorans. As this issue of *Grassroots Development* was in production, she called our attention to the recent introduction of a motion before the Salvadoran Legislature to revise the Constitution to formally recognize the country's indigenous peoples. The motion must still be voted on by the full Legislature, but Pérez views its introduction as an important step toward the articulation of rights for indigenous Salvadorans. "Finally, we did it," she wrote.—*S.M.J.*

A Peruvian Textile Tradition and the Challenges of the Marketplace

By Janelle Conaway

Photos by Judith Conaway

Chinchero, Peru, sits on a broad plateau against a backdrop of snowcapped peaks—a postcard-perfect village of pre-Columbian walls, red-tile roofs and a colonial church, surrounded by gently terraced fields. It is a stopover for many tourists traveling from Cusco to the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Believed by the ancients to be the birthplace of the rainbow, Chinchero nowadays produces a full palette of hand-dyed fibers, woven into designs that have been passed down through generations.

For more than 30 years, Nilda Callañaupa has made it her mission to revitalize the area's rich textile tradition. Today, she heads the Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco (CTTC), a nonprofit organization that provides a modest but dependable income for close to 700 weavers in 10 communities. A recipient of IAF grants for two multi-year periods, CTTC has spurred an outpouring of creativity and helped raise the quality of local textiles to new levels. From Andean hats and ponchos to table runners and shawls, *cusqueño* weavings are still produced on backstrap or four-stake looms, in a complex, labor-intensive process that dates to pre-Inca times. Most CTTC textiles feature the design on both sides, and they incorporate iconography and patterns distinctive to each community. All are made from natural fibers—alpaca, llama or sheep—and use natural dyes made from insects, seeds, flowers, leaves, roots or minerals. "I have learned that each and every piece of cloth embodies the spirit, skill, and personal history of an individual weaver," Callañaupa wrote in her book *Weaving in the Peruvian Highlands: Dreaming Patterns, Weaving Memories*. "Weaving is a living art, an expression of culture, geography, and history. It ties together with an endless thread the emotional life of my people."

It also presents practical challenges. The economics of producing handwoven textiles from handspun fiber are "formidable," said Ann P. Rowe, research associate of Western Hemisphere textiles at The Textile Museum in Washington, D.C. "Outsiders are not usually willing to pay what the amount of labor involved is worth, in part because they simply cannot comprehend the enormous amount of time that the handwork takes," she said. "There is a reason that the industrial revolution began with textile technology." According to Rowe, who first met Callañaupa in 1990 when she gave a demonstration at the museum, individuals attempting to market indigenous textiles may not themselves fully understand the economics of the effort that goes into them or the value of preserving an aesthetic. "CTTC stands out as an organization actually run by an indigenous weaver who knows perfectly well about the labor involved but who also really cares about the quality of the work," she said.

Born in 1960, Nilda Callañaupa started spinning wool at age 6 and within a year was weaving alongside her mother, Guadalupe Álvarez, now in her mid-80s, who had learned the craft from her own mother, the renowned artisan Cipriana Valenzuela. But for Nilda's age group, it was no longer a given that such skills would be passed on. Elders were still weaving, but for most young people this was no way to make a living. Meanwhile, the use of synthetic fibers and dyes was undermining the quality of locally produced textiles. Callañaupa, a university graduate who had some background in business, put together an informal cooperative with the goal of reintroducing and documenting traditional textile designs and uses, expanding the community of weavers and reviving a high level of quality. The explosion of tourism to Machu Picchu and Cusco

brought buyers for the kind of painstakingly handmade textiles her ancestors had produced. Over the years, the cooperative became well-known in Cusco and beyond, garnering support from anthropologists, collectors, foundations and nonprofit organizations. CTTC was formally created in 1996 with help from the Boston-based Cultural Survival.

The IAF began to work with CTTC in 2004; the second of its two grants was amended with additional funds in 2011. "We were convinced that CTTC could, working with the communities, revitalize weaving as a viable economic activity. And they've been able to do it," said Wilbur Wright, who recently retired from the IAF as its regional director for South America and the Caribbean. Wright had been impressed by CTTC's Cusco staff, which includes several young professionals, and by the enthusiasm for weaving that he had witnessed in the participating communities, along with a steady improvement in the quality and variety of their output. Because weaving is an activity that requires many steps, from shearing to marketing, it can involve different members of the family and yield income without selling a farm animal. "It's a source that complements the economics of the household," Callañaupa explained. The income a CTTC weaver can earn might not seem like much—between $3 and $13 day—but it makes a huge difference in the life of the artisan, she said, and the weavers are able to stay on their communal lands, with their families, speak their indigenous language and maintain their cultural traditions.

CTTC has worked for several years in nine Quechua-speaking communities: Accha Alta, Acopia, Chahuaytire, Chinchero, Chumbivilcas, Mahuaypampa, Patabamba, Pitumarca and Santa Cruz de Sallac. Recently it added another, Huacatinco, a remote village with a strong knitting tradition. Most, but not all, of CTTC's weavers are women. Although they work with traditional designs, they make artistic decisions related to color, style and technique. Every piece carries a tag with the weaver's photo, name, age and community. Each CTTC community has an autonomous entity, similar to a weavers' guild, with its own elected board.

Central plaza, Chinchero.

Communities set their own standards for quality and prices, establishing different categories and devising formulas to determine how much the weaver will be paid per square centimeter produced. CTTC buys a minimum number of pieces from each community every month, then works to sell the items.

The economic model is clearly not perfect. From a supply and demand perspective, Wright said, one complication is the commitment CTTC has made to the weavers: "Improve your quality, do good work, and we'll buy and sell your product." When the economy is weak and sales drop, inventory increases. Although CTTC sold some 19,000 items last year, it still has a few thousand pieces stored—and, per its commitments, it continues to buy more stock every month. In recent years, CTTC has sought to broaden

Right: Yarn from alpacas, llamas or sheep and containers of ground insects, seeds, flowers, leaves, roots and minerals used to make dye.

Below: Backstrap looms date to pre-Inca civilizations.

its appeal to contemporary consumers by adding such products as placemats, cushion covers and handbags of all sizes. The balancing act, according to Callañaupa, is to adapt to the marketplace without altering the organization's central aim. "We have to be very careful. Otherwise we could lose our plan, which is to keep traditional textiles alive," she said.

Retail prices vary considerably; a woven bag may cost between $20 and $100, depending on its size, quality and complexity. A large piece, such as a bedspread, could sell for more than $1,000.

A constant goal is to get as much money as possible into the hands of the weavers while keeping up with taxes and expenses and handling competition. One source of competition is old textiles that can still be found for sale in the area; another is new pieces made by non-CTTC weavers. With overstock already a problem, CTTC cannot enter into commitments with every community in the area, and some have started their own ventures. While the entry of more weavers into the market means more people can benefit, it also puts downward pressure on the price of all textiles. As CTTC must make good on agreements entered into with weavers, it can't lower its prices. That means its solvency depends on buyers who recognize top quality and are willing to pay for it.

One client impressed with the consistent high quality is Annie Hurlbut, chief executive officer of

Nilda Callañaupa.

Peruvian Connection. In the last five years, the U.S.-based retail chain has carried several CTTC items, mostly cushion covers and bags of various sizes, in its stores and catalogs. Hurlbut, who has been collecting antique textiles from the Andes for more than 30 years, said the older pieces have a finer feel—which she attributes to different spinning techniques—but that CTTC produces a very comparable look. "The skill level required for Andean textiles is just amazing," she said, noting that the region's characteristic "warp-faced" style, in which the pattern emerges from the lengthwise threads, requires expertise and meticulous planning. Hurlbut calls CTTC "an amazing feat of organization and love and skill."

CTTC sells through a number of other U.S. venues, including museum shops and the annual Santa Fe International Folk Art Market in New Mexico. But most buyers are tourists who visit the Cusco headquarters or one of the communities and observe the artisans at work, dressed in the costumes distinctive to their villages. "For us, the local market is much more profitable and easier to manage," Callañaupa said. CTTC regularly schedules weaving classes and demonstrations, and offers room and board on site for groups of village artisans who rotate through headquarters for a week at a time. Each community also has its own center, with the largest in Chinchero.

CTTC items are also sold in retail outlets in Cusco and are displayed in several local hotels as a way of publicizing the center. CTTC's Web site, www.textilescusco.org, features some items for sale, but a full catalog is not practicable because most pieces are one-of-a-kind. Placemats are an exception, as each set is cut from a single large weaving. According to Elizabeth Catunta, who manages the CTTC's educational efforts and its inventory, in the eight years since she started working at the center in Cusco, she's seen the development of a greater public appreciation for weaving. More education is needed, she added, so that more people recognize its value and gravitate to high quality, not just low prices. If tourism is the center's lifeline, it can also have a downside. Plans are underway to build an international airport just outside Chinchero, which would benefit the local economy but could permanently and negatively alter the communal way of life and its tradition of respect for Mother Earth.

Mark Caicedo

Cushion covers designed by CTTC on display at Peruvian Connection's flagship store in Washington, D.C.

Callañaupa dreams about someday building a major museum in Cusco to showcase the richness of textiles from the region and beyond, but even she questions the feasibility of such an enormous project. Meanwhile, she participates in museum exhibitions, lectures on weaving and is working on a series of books to document the designs of each CTTC community. In 2010, with IAF assistance, CTTC hosted a conference that brought together 400 weavers from nine countries in the Americas to compare experiences and talk about issues such as quality and marketing. As the person who started all this because of her love for her craft, Callañaupa regrets that her many responsibilities limit her time at a loom. "It's what I miss now, that I don't have much time to weave."

Janelle Conaway is a freelance writer, editor and translator based in New Mexico.

A Multi-Faceted Strategy to Rescue Inca Forests

By Wilbur Wright

Among the predictions of doom and chaos that greeted the new millennium a decade or so ago were forecasts of the kind of environmental disaster that had already become a reality for a small group of young indigenous Peruvian conservationists. The loss of native forest around their Andean highland communities and the resulting degradation of the ecosystem were beyond dispute. Local forests consisting primarily of polylepis trees, which are among the rare species occurring at high elevations. These were being cut down at an alarming rate for lumber, firewood and to make room for pastures. Their destruction was inflicting a direct detrimental impact on the habitat of animals, including birds, and on a primary source of water and fuel for surrounding communities.

The conservationists decided to organize formally as Asociación de Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN) and collaborate with more than 20 indigenous communities of the Vilcanota region of the Andean highlands, located above the Inca capital of Cusco. ECOAN's program called for each community to identify a wooded, or formerly wooded, area, petition the Peruvian government for its designation as a privately-held nature reserve, and then create formal mechanisms to protect the forest or to reforest land that had once been timbered.

Working to the communities' advantage was their proximity to the famous Inca Trail, a pathway over which thousands of tourists hike each year from Cusco to the ruins of Machu Picchu. Trekkers have included avid bird watchers familiar with the surrounding mountains through study and aware of the harmful effects of deforestation on the unique flora and fauna along the trail. Some brought the devastation to the attention of international conservation organizations and launched campaigns to save the polylepis forests.

Given the congruence of interests, ECOAN and the international groups began to discuss a partnership directed at reclaiming or saving the forests. ECOAN would manage the initiative with the highland communities and the American Bird Conservatory (ABC) would contribute technical assistance and mobilize material and financial support from other international organizations. For the effort to work, the communities had to address the economic and social needs at the root of the problem and identify alternative sources of income, fuel, construction materials and forage. ECOAN's discussions with residents and a representative of ABC yielded a multi-faceted strategy to change perceptions of the value of the forest and to protect this fragile resource. Components included conservation, community organization and economic development based most significantly on tourism in the forested areas. The challenge then became financing and ECOAN approached the Inter-American Foundation. With funding from the IAF, the project got underway.

Juan Carlos Rheineck

Fast-growing eucalyptus groves have been planted for harvest as firewood and lumber, so that native trees flourish and reestablish forests. ECOAN and the participating communities also developed nurseries producing polylepis and other trees for reforesting and have formulated procedures and regulations related to tourism.

Jefry Andrés Wright

ECOAN took steps to reduce the need to burn wood. Many homes received fuel-efficient clay stoves that use less wood to cook meals of corn, potatoes, quinoa, *cuy* (guinea pigs) and *chuyo* (a type of freeze-dried potato). *Cuy* are raised inside the homes and they need some smoke to thrive, as ECOAN's technicians discovered when they installed the first stoves that generated none. Subsequent stoves were retooled to enable homeowners to continue to raise *cuyes*. Solar panels installed in local schools produce electricity for lighting and hot water for the children's showers.

Jefry Andrés Wright

Juan Carlos Rheineck

Jefry Andrés Wright

Some components of ECOAN's program are geared to make farming more productive. The introduction of practices to improve pastures has increased forage for livestock, reducing the need to clear forested lands. Greenhouses to extend the growing season for herbs and vegetables have improved nutrition. The participating communities invested IAF resources in the restoration of an abandoned fish hatchery where residents raise protein-rich trout.

Juan Carlos Rheineck

Jefry Andrés Wright

Access to ECOAN's resources has helped weavers improve textiles made from alpaca fiber and wool and market them in additional outlets in Peru and abroad.

Juan Carlos Rheineck

Juan Carlos Rheineck

Visitor center.

More than 8,000 residents in the 21 participating communities have benefited from logistical support, advocacy and training focused on preparing young people as conservation specialists, tour guides, firefighters and providers of other emergency assistance. Seven designated conservation areas include more than 15,000 acres of land on which some half-million additional native trees now grow. The seven communities managing these areas formed the Vilcanota Reserve Network and opened a visitor center at Abra Malaga Thastayoc, the crossroads where the Inca Trail and the highways to the Amazon lowlands intersect. Visitors to the forests and archeological sites of the region can enrich their experience by lodging with local families who have renovated or expanded their homes to accommodate them.

These achievements have generated kudos for ECOAN internationally and have opened channels to additional resources. Most impressively, on June 30, 2011, Fondo de las Américas (FONDAM) and the Global Conservation Fund of Conservation International (CI) awarded ECOAN $2 million toward an endowment, the first of its kind in Peru, supporting the creation of additional privately-held conservation areas. (FONDAM is the publicly-financed United States-Peruvian debt reduction framework that promotes locally-managed projects focused on conservation, child protection and social services for local citizens. CI is a prominent non-profit organization focused on the restoration and preservation of endangered habitats.) According to Constantino Aucca, ECOAN's president, interest generated by the endowment will enable continued expansion of community-owned reserves and their incorporation into the Vilcanota Network.

The work remaining to recover native forests is still daunting. However the commitment and enthusiasm of those involved and, now, the availability of more resources, might actually halt the degradation and turn the dream of a few young indigenous conservationists into thriving woodlands for the benefit of both wildlife and humanity.

Wilbur Wright retired in 2011 as the IAF's regional director for South America and the Caribbean. Jefry Andrés Wright is a professional photographer residing in Las Vegas. Juan Carlos Rheineck is the IAF's liason in Peru.

Juan Carlos Rheineck

Tour guides in training.

A home improved to lodge tourists.

Jefry Andrés Wright

"The polylepis forests are the highest in the world. Our commitment is to preserve them."

The Persevering Woman:
Rosario Quispe's Dreams for the Puna

By Patrick Breslin

The landscape through which Rosario Quispe moves is measured in geologic time but she's in more of a hurry. Her pickup truck rooster-tailing dust, she careens across the arid Argentine puna, an immense plateau that was once ancient sea bed before tectonic plates collided and hurled it more than 11,000 feet into the sky while the peaks of the Andes, surging another mile or two higher, took shape around it. Millions of years of weathering followed, eroding mountains, sculpting stone and soil into weirdly twisted columns, evaporating inland seas into great salt beds, exposing mineral ores in phantasmagorical bands of color on the slopes. At first sight, the puna seems as inhospitable as the moon. Yet across its vast loneliness, hundreds of scattered adobe villages shelter thousands of families of Coyas, Argentina's largest indigenous group. For almost two decades now, Quispe and the organization she founded, Warmi Sayajsunqo (WARMI), have breathed new life into those communities with a uniquely indigenous vision of development.

Patrick Breslin

Rosario Andrada de Quispe, Jujuy, Argentina.

Quispe is a familiar figure in the villages, immediately recognizable under the broad-brimmed hat shading her cinnamon skin and dark eyes from the relentless, unfiltered sun, coal black hair twisted in a rope-like braid, dark trousers and moccasin-style boots, a pastel blouse under a wool shawl or poncho pulled close against the puna's penetrating chill after the sun sinks into Chile. Her frequent circuits of puna communities can cover up to 400 kilometers a day on potholed and washboard-rippled roads. To ride along with her is to see what development on indigenous terms looks like. For five centuries, the native peoples of Latin America were impoverished, exploited and ignored. In more recent times, they became the object of assistance plans conceived by "experts" in Latin or foreign capitals. WARMI, though, was a 100 percent indigenous response to an economic crisis on the puna. As it grew, it received initial support from the Avina Foundation of Switzerland and later the Inter-American Foundation, both donors willing to fund WARMI's ideas, not impose their own. Those ideas include a deep skepticism about the value of non-Coya experts and insist instead on indigenous control of the process and reliance on knowledge drawn from the Coyas' 8,000-year history on the puna. They fuse with contemporary approaches to development, such as microcredit that is helping realize Quispe's vision of at least one profitable enterprise in every community, an idea that comes straight from her childhood memories of life on the puna.

She was born Rosario Andrada in 1959 in Puesto del Marqués, just 50 kilometers south of Bolivia. Chile starts at the tips of the mountains visible to the west. This far corner of Argentina, the province of Jujuy, is home to most of the country's estimated 200,000 Coyas. It is also one of the poorest Argentine provinces. Yet Quispe tells you proudly that her grandfather, Serapio Cussi, "had 300 cows, 800 sheep and fields of alfalfa and maize. He never had a salary, but who says we were poor?" Memories of his ranch, the sustenance and security there, would eventually provide the-back-to-the-future approach that drives her work. Her story is one in a series of profiles for *Grassroots Development* investigating the experiences that shaped successful grassroots leaders in Latin America and the visions they have distilled from those experiences. Quispe's life and vision suggest the power and potential of the indigenous peoples of Latin America to overcome a half-millennium of subjection and build their own future.

Patrick Breslin

Coya communities served by WARMI.

Leaders, like mountains, emerge when tectonic forces shift. In Quispe's lifetime, puna society has changed dramatically. Her grandfather's world, so vivid in her memory, was based on patient exploitation of the puna's resources and far-flung trade. For millennia, trading routes snaked, tendril-like, through the mountains and across the puna, anchoring themselves in the occasional oasis where clear water bubbled to the surface. Along those routes, the Coyas exchanged their animals and hides, grains and fruits, salt, textiles and precious stones between climatic zones. The Spanish conquest added new products to the trade, wheat, for example, and mules. Long packtrains moved minerals and other goods to colonial ports in Lima and Buenos Aires. The Coyas adopted the mules for their own month-long trading trips and kept the network intact. Not until the railroad arrived late in the 19th century did true upheaval come.

The railroad had less need of oases; many communities that had been hubs of traditional trade were bypassed and declined. Others, like Abra Pampa, rose beside the tracks to become a gateway to the puna. The main reason for the railroad was to open industrial-scale mining of lead, silver, zinc, copper, gold, tin and lithium. Mines offered salaried jobs and Coya men were drawn from their lands and their flocks to rip mineral-rich rock from the mountains. Large-scale agriculture in the subtropical valleys drew more Coyas to seasonal harvests of sugar cane and tobacco. For much of the 20th century, the puna economy was based on the migration of men to mines or plantations. Similar changes were taking place in many parts of the Americas, indeed throughout the world. The generations that came of age in the middle decades of the 20th century saw the economies of their grandparents disappear. Those economies, usually based on agriculture, largely self-sufficient, supporting large families, withered as capitalist investment spurred growth and concentration in mining, manufacturing and agribusiness. The family farm declined, the people who had worked the land became wage earners, often far from home.

Quispe was eight when her family moved to Minas Pirquitas and her father went into the mines. In school she took part in sports programs organized by the parish priest, Pedro Olmedo, a Spanish Claretian. At 19, she married Alfredo Quispe, a mineworker, like her father. Over the next several years she bore seven children and earned money as a domestic. In the mid-1980s, more tectonic changes came to puna society. Latin America had gone deeply into debt to finance its import-substitution economy, which it could no longer afford. Mexico defaulted in 1982, the region stagnated. Factories, mines and construction closed down, jobs melted away in the hundreds of thousands. Alfredo Quispe lost his job in 1988.

Rosario Quispe had been working since 1984 with the Claretian Organization for Development (OCLADE) headed by now-Monsignor Olmedo. Its goal was to organize the people of the puna to improve their situation. Quispe was assigned to a project encouraging women to participate. OCLADE's key staff were experts from outside Jujuy, but the initiative was eventually to be turned over to local people. Since OCLADE reached into some 200 communities, Quispe's work gave her a perspective on the region. On her regular visits she witnessed how communities that had become dependent on the salaries their men earned fell into real poverty when the salaries stopped. In 1993, when the last train chugged down the steel rails that had brought so much change, and vanished into history, the puna was emptier and poorer than when the railroad had arrived. What remained were the Coya women who stayed behind, taking care of houses, animals, pastures, when men left home for salaried work. With the crisis, the world the men had learned to navigate tumbled down around them. When they returned to the puna, without jobs and suddenly dependent on the work the women did, traditional male dominance weakened. Despite their customary reticence, women increasingly took on more initiatives in their communities.

OCLADE was changing as well, but not in the direction Quispe wanted to go. Thanks in part to its training, new leaders had emerged, but influential staff resisted ceding authority. Fundamental splits appeared and widened. By 1990, Quispe and others had been forced out of OCLADE. These included economist Raul Llobet and Agustina Roca, an anthropologist and a founder of the organization. "Rosario was left in the street," recalled Roca. "but she already had the idea of what she wanted, a process led by the Coyas themselves."

The break with OCLADE crystallized Quispe's thinking. "We had to do something different," she wrote in a short autobiography. "If we continued the way we were, we would all die of hunger." She and her husband moved to Abra Pampa, a town of some 12,000 inhabitants, and there, in 1995, she invited a group of 10 other women to meet in her home. "We decided to work together, to come up with our own solution, not wait for someone to save us," Quispe recalled. The Quechua name chosen for their organization—which means persevering women—captured both the past and their intended future. In a few months, it had 320 members. Two problems defined their first activities: the need for income and an alarming health situation. They began by working with traditional skills, spinning and knitting wool, and built a small headquarters on the outskirts of Abra Pampa, with space for a shop where they could sell the yarn and garments they produced. At the same time, they struggled to understand what seemed an unusually high rate of cervical cancer from which many women were dying.

By 1997, the Geneva-based Women's World Summit Foundation had awarded Quispe its prize for "women's creativity in rural life," recognition that helped draw attention from the Avina Foundation and others to the problems of poverty and health on the puna. International medical organizations showed up, but a wary Quispe thought they might be more interested in publicizing their presence than in getting services to the communities. One organization gave her a stack of its posters. "I'll distribute the posters when you've done something," she replied. She contacted Jorge Gronda, an Argentine doctor who became interested in her reports of cancer among women in the region. Eventually he opened a medical center in Jujuy and he credits Quispe's guidance for its success.

Quispe realized that financing for WARMI's economic plans might also be available but that WARMI would need help to apply for it. "I was tired of the *técnicos* who came to the puna," she said. "We disagreed with their solutions. We wanted to decide ourselves how to improve out lives. So I looked for people who would respect us and listen to us." She turned to Roca and Llobet. "I'd seen them work, I had confidence in them. They helped us turn our dreams into proposals for funding," she explained.

Everything would depend, Quispe knew, on the strength of WARMI's connections with the Coya communities. She had to visit them, explain WARMI's hopes and goals, listen to problems, needs and aspirations, and weave it all into ambitious proposals. Those early efforts to extend WARMI's reach into far-flung hamlets were a whirlwind, Roca recalled. "When she said we would go to 50 communities, I thought we would cover 50 in a year. You see, we had never traveled with her before. And she said, 'No, we'll do this in a month. I'll go ahead in the pickup and get people together, and you arrive the next day and start working with them.'"

Quispe's charisma was obvious during those visits. "Women would bring out cassettes that they'd carefully saved of Rosario speaking to them back when she'd worked with OCLADE." Roca said. I had a chance to see that charisma at work when I volunteered to drive her to Moroco, a tiny town in Bolivia. A few weeks before, Angel Gutiérrez, a local leader there, had visited Abra Pampa and invited Quispe to go to Moroco and meet spinners who might sell their wool yarn in WARMI's shop. The border between Argentina and Bolivia is marked only by a sign—no guards, no passport check. As we drove past, Quispe didn't spare the sign a glance. Originally just a line between the provinces of Alto Peru and Argentina on a Spanish colonial map, the border was later adjusted in distant capitals by treaties and arbitration agreements. None involved the Coyas.

We wound up and over a mountain range on a narrow dirt road, the bald tires of my rental car sliding on loose gravel as I hugged the cliff face into which the road was cut because vertigo was the only response to the sheer drop on the other side. After four or five hours, we skidded to a stop before a whitewashed adobe meeting hall in Moroco. Angel Gutiérrez was waiting, along with a handful of men and some 30 Coya women dressed in voluminous skirts, pastel blouses, woolen sweaters and shawls and a variety of hat styles. We moved inside for a discussion of Moroco's poverty and isolation and the need for a market for the women's wool and weavings. It was interrupted briefly for a meal of hot stew, served in enameled bowls. Quispe outlined WARMI's goals and accomplishments, then sat on benches with the women, who studied her intently with sidelong glances.

After the discussion, she moved to a scale hanging in a corner of the large room and one by one the women emptied black plastic bags full of wool that Quispe weighed. The seller's name and the weight and value of the wool were noted. No one disputed the price Quispe offered. In fact, the women seemed quite pleased. When all the wool had been packed into larger bags and the numbers had been totaled, Quispe took from her purse a sheaf of bills to be apportioned. Then, instead of leaving, she picked up the bags of wool and returned to a table in the center of the room. "I don't want you to be deceived," she began, as the women gathered around her. "I arrived here in a hurry, we weighed the wool, I paid for it, not because I'm a fool or because I don't know better. I paid you because I want you to be enthusiastic, to continue working. But next time, wool like this will not be accepted in Abra Pampa."

The women were listening in total silence. Quispe reached into a bag, extracted two skeins of wool and stretched one between her hands. "Ladies, this is very poorly made. If we don't do something to it, the cloth will turn out terrible. This one, however," she said, picking up the second skein, "this is top quality. You take this to Abra Pampa and without a word we'll pay you 50 pesos. And if you ask 60, and we need it, we'll pay you 60. Why? Because we don't have to pick through this wool to separate out different colors, wash it again, dry it, discard some of it. So, if you want to sell, this is the quality you have to produce. Here. Look at it. Touch it. Then touch the other, so you learn."

The women stared at her, shocked by her frankness.

"I'm taking this wool with me," Quispe continued, because I don't want you to be discouraged and

Patrick Breslin

Quispe demonstrates the difference in wool quality.

stop spinning. But today is the only time I'll take it. Otherwise, I'd be deceiving you, letting you think it's good quality when it's not. That would harm you as well as us."

She chuckled, her tone changing. "It's like husbands," she said. "If they deceive you at the beginning and you let them get away with it, you'll never have a good life together." Smiles broke out around the room and the women nodded and clustered around Quispe to talk as she walked back to the car, then stood together waving on the dusty street as we pulled away.

Encounters like the one in Moroco, repeated hundreds of times in Jujuy in the last 17 years, help explain the geometric growth in WARMI's membership from the initial 10 to some 3,600 in more than 80 communities. Quispe is an inspiring symbol of success, internationally recognized yet as rooted in the puna as any woman listening to her. "I'm the same as you," she often says in meetings. "I never got past the seventh grade. I raise my llamas just like you do."

In Quispe's vision the Coyas should live from small businesses, not from subsidies or a salary. "It meant entering the market as an entrepreneur," explained Llobet, the economist who worked with WARMI until recently, "as someone who owns his or her means of production. We had to introduce the market, but also caution the Coyas about its traps and temptations: greed, selfishness, damage to the environment, the loss of solidarity. The challenge was to give them the tools to enter the market without losing the values that sustain their culture."

The main tool is microcredit based on cultural as well as economic considerations. Llobet explained: "Microcredit programs generally have an economic focus. But there's a human side as well. The word credit, after all, comes from the same root as belief, trust. Rural microcredit systems are often not sustainable because overhead costs are high, mainly from lack of trust. Lenders want their money back, so they develop systems of evaluation, of risk analysis, all based on the assumption that the borrower can't be trusted. We went to communities where systems of trust already existed and built on those systems. Because if there's trust, any credit program can function, quite cheaply.

"In our meetings, we passed a couple of bills from hand to hand and asked, 'if a person gives you money, how does he know that afterwards you won't deny you received it?' And they said, 'we trust in a person's word.'

"'Ok, you do. But our world doesn't. You have to put a piece of paper in the middle. At every step there has to be a receipt. The one who receives the money signs it. Until it reaches the community, where perhaps the paper's not needed, because a person's word is enough.' And they learned the whole system of record keeping, then designed their own ledgers, based on the physical movement of the money." In the communities, credit funds are controlled by two *kipus*, or treasurers, one of whom must be a woman. *Markas*, regional units equipped with computers, gather financial data from five or six surrounding funds for the headquarters in Abra Pampa.

A three-year grant of $369,000 awarded by the IAF in 2001, followed in 2006 by another $100,000, allowed the program to expand. WARMI secured additional funding from the Avina Foundation, from Argentina's Social Development Ministry and its National Institute of Indian Affairs, and, for health programs, from Médicos del Mundo, an offshoot of the French Médecins du Monde. The regional gas company gave Quispe plastic sheeting and other materials to build hot houses for growing fruit and vegetables next to schools on the puna. Radios from another local business accelerated communication among WARMI affiliates. Several Argentine foundations have supported WARMI activities, as has OCLADE, the organization that once pushed Quispe out, and Bishop Olmedo, her old mentor.

The lending program began with lines of credit for raising animals for food and fiber, for agriculture and for handicrafts. Loans for as little as $11 were available for medical or other personal emergencies. Production loans could run as high as $1,900. Later, WARMI added credit for housing and education. Out of those loans came fish tanks full of trout for sale to hotels, associations of wool spinners and knitters, tightly stretched wire fencing to safeguard sheep and llamas and chickens, home improvements, shops. The goal, Quispe says, is for Coya borrowers to think like business owners. "Once someone buys, say, a

Patrick Breslin

WARMI extended a loan to place salt at the center of a communal enterprise for the hamlets surrounding the puna's blinding white flats where men had to labor all day in thin air to produce a ton of raw salt that sold for about $3. Ramiro Lamas, above, and Vicente Alancay, below, now package processed salt that commands 13 times as much and they spend at least part of the day in less harsh conditions.

sewing machine," she urges, "she must think, 'I'm the boss, not an employee.'"

Somewhat larger loans helped launch more ambitious enterprises. In Cerro Negro, where the only resource was the nearby salt flat, men from the village used to earn $3 a day shoveling one ton of raw salt from brackish ponds at 12,000 feet. A $9,000 loan and training in business skills enabled 12 of them set up a small factory with simple processing machinery, package the salt in one-kilo bags emblazoned with their own brand—Sal Puna—and sell it for $40 a ton. WARMI now sells yarn and knitted garments to a fair-trade style outlet in downtown Buenos Aires. Its gas station and restaurant serve *abrapampeños* as well as international traffic on Route 9. But not everything worked out as hoped. A chinchilla ranch, once the biggest in Argentina, had to scale back because the domestic demand wasn't there; the pelts are exported to Croatia. WARMI abandoned a wool depot when prices dropped too low and a tannery because of the toxic chemicals required. Its cybercafé opened Abra Pampa to the Internet but was undercut when multinational competition appeared. An agile WARMI successfully recycled the space into a center that offers training in computer skills through an arrangement with the university in the neighboring province of Santiago del Estero.

Tourism is an industry, Quispe argues, that the Coyas should develop and control, offering adventurous travelers the unearthly beauty of the landscape and the tranquility of the Coya way of life. The Valle of Humahuaca, a UNESCO-certified World Heritage Site through which Route 9 passes as it climbs to Abra Pampa, draws visitors from around the world. Beyond Abra Pampa, the views become even more spectacular, especially in the Valle de la Luna [Valley of the Moon] just short of the Bolivian border. Some communities, like San Francisco de Alfarcito, have already built attractive white-washed adobe cottages to house tourists making the circuit of indigenous Andean villages that WARMI is promoting.

With the multiple economic activities, and the promise of more to come, young Coyas are increasingly choosing to stay in puna communities, rather than migrating in search of jobs. In less than two decades, WARMI has moved closer to Quispe's vision

Patrick Breslin

WARMI's gas station in Abra Pampa

WARMI's computer center.

Trout farm developed with a loan from WARMI.

In March, an emotional community celebrated the arrival of Centro Universitario Warmi Huasi Yachana in Abra Pampa, a joint initiative undertaken by WARMI, la Red Solidaria and la Universidad Siglo 21 with private-sector support. Rosario Quispe welcomed the 26 new students, left, who will study law, economics and technical subjects.

Photos: Courtesy Gabriela Sbarre

of self-sufficiency, and gained clout as well. The world doesn't climb up to Abra Pampa just because of a leader's personality but because she speaks for thousands of people on the puna. "The importance of WARMI is the organization that we have built." Quispe said, "to discuss and negotiate with the big companies, with the government, with the municipal commissions." An Argentine journalist in Abra Pampa to write about WARMI described overhearing a heated phone conversation with a Buenos Aires official in which Quispe opposed a government plan to move lead tailings from the town to another community that also participates in WARMI. Two days later, the journalist reported, carloads of officials from the Argentine Ministry of the Environment were in WARMI's offices to work out a solution.

With WARMI's growth, a Coya organization now speaks for the Coyas, and it has begun to get results.

That visit was one of many signs of how WARMI is changing power relationships that date back centuries. "For 500 years someone else always acted on their behalf," Raul Llobet said of the Coyas, "the *curaca*, or community representative, who negotiated with the conquering Inca then with the Spanish; the *capataz*, or foreman, in the mines or on the plantations; the political intermediary who negotiates with the government." With WARMI's growth, a Coya organization now speaks for the Coyas, and it has begun to get results. A number of communities have recovered title to their lands and more cases are wending through the courts. Some of the lead tailings that sat in Abra Pampa for 20 years after the smelting company that put them there closed down have finally been trucked away, although not before doing irreparable harm. A recent study by Human Rights Clinic of the University of Texas School of Law documented signs of lead poisoning in 80 percent of the town's children. One of Quispe's sons has a mental disability she blames on the lead.

But thanks to WARMI's unrelenting pressure on behalf of women's health, a maternity wing has been added to the hospital in Abra Pampa. WARMI has gained increased government cooperation on preventative programs. The medical center that Dr. Gronda opened has evolved from its initial focus on cervical cancer into a healthcare system with a network of providers serving 70,000 patients in Jujuy and across Argentina. High volume offsets lower fees; a year's membership costs as little as $10. Quispe recently announced that 72 young Coyas were studying medicine, one more step toward self-sufficiency. Another of Quispe's dreams came true in March when a university center called WARMI Huasi Yachana opened its doors in Abra Pampa. "We lose many intelligent young people who must go away to study," Quispe emphasized. "We want to train them here to manage our resources." Many entering students stressed their intention to stay on the puna during the extended coverage of the inauguration televised nationwide.

One after the other, the pieces of Quispe's vision are materializing, many seemingly willed into existence by the sheer force of her tremendous energy. She urges everyone in WARMI to work hard and she sets the example. "Mami, I've never known another person in my life who works 36 hours out of every 24," one of her sons once told her. But even Quispe needs down time. "About once a month," she said, "I escape for a while. I go to see my llamas." And there this woman whose name and image pop up instantly on Google and Facebook, TED and YouTube around the world, can be seen talking softly to the llamas grazing within the radius of her voice, the earth tones of her clothing and their fleece blending as woman and animals fade together at twilight into the vast landscape.

Patrick Breslin, former IAF vice president for external affairs, retired after 22 years of service. He can be reached at patbreslin1@gmail.com. Gabriela Sbarra of IAF liaison services in Argentina and Paula Durbin contributed to this article.

A Forum for Fellows' Findings

Last year *Grassroots Development* introduced a new section of the journal featuring short articles by IAF Fellows that have been juried by a subcommittee of the scholars who screen the applicants to IAF's program of Grassroots Development Fellowships.

The IAF is the only donor that specifically funds academic research targeting grassroots development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 1974, our Fellowships have supported doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers, master's degree candidates and a handful of outstanding grassroots leaders conducting independent study. The IAF's program currently consists of a single component: support for doctoral dissertation research undertaken by students in U.S. universities who have advanced to Ph.D. candidacy.

In the fall of 2011, the IAF again invited all Fellows in the cycles since 2007 to submit their manuscripts for judging. The peer review resulted in the selection of two for publication in this issue. Coincidentally, the winning writers, Ellen Sharp and Marygold Walsh-Dilly, offer further perspectives on the strengths and tensions in indigenous communities as they reconcile their traditions with their contemporary context. We remain excited about our new feature, most obviously because it brings some of the benefit of the Fellowship Program to a broader audience and because it represents another credential for the authors whose work appears here. But the competition has value even for those whose manuscripts were not selected because of the thoughtful feedback that the reviewers communicate, through the IAF, to each contestant. *Grassroots Development* thanks everyone who contributed to the success of this competition. We will be announcing another round very soon. For more information on the IAF's Fellowships, visit www.iie.org/iaf.— P.D.

Between Justice and Vigilantism:
Organizing to Confront Crime in Post-War Guatemala

By Ellen Sharp

It was January 2011, the mid-point of my dissertation fieldwork in rural Guatemala, and I'd gone away for the weekend. The second I stepped off the bus back in Todos Santos I could tell something had changed. The central park was packed with people, many more than usual for a Sunday afternoon. The air felt charged. Across the street, the crowd around the jail was so thick that I couldn't see who was behind its bars. I spotted my landlord. "They caught some thieves who stole a lot of money," he informed me, "and they're deciding what to do with them." By "they," he didn't mean the police; he meant the local security committee.

I'd come to Todos Santos to study this self-help organization as an example of a grassroots initiative. La Seguridad, as its members call themselves, represents an effort by the organized poor to guarantee safety in their community in the absence of adequate state protection. Men volunteer on a rotating basis to patrol the streets several nights a week. Every Saturday the board of directors holds court, providing a forum where people can air their grievances in Mam Maya, their native language, and have them resolved the same day.

While the Guatemalan press is filled with accounts of alleged kidnappers and suspected thieves burned alive by angry mobs throughout the predominantly indigenous highlands, there has not been a fatal lynching in Todos Santos since 2000. That year (shortly before La Seguridad came into being), a mob

Ellen Sharp

The central park in Todos Santos.

mistook a Japanese tourist and his Guatemalan driver for satanic baby snatchers and bludgeoned them to death. Many people said that the fallout from this case had turned them against further lynchings. But on that day in early 2011, this seemed about to change.

Peace accords officially ended Guatemala's 36-year civil war in 1996, but violence continues. The homicide rate in 2010 was 43 per 100,000 people (González 2010), one of the highest in Latin America. (According to F.B.I. reports, the United States had 4.3 homicides per 100,000 that same year.) Although they account for fewer than 2 percent of homicides, lynchings are on the rise (Cullinan 2011). In English the word is defined by death, but in Guatemala linchamiento covers fatal and nonfatal mob acts. The United Nations documented 61 lynchings in Guatemala in 2002, with 25 fatalities (MINUGUA 2002). Barely a decade later, the National Police reported 147 lynchings with 49 fatalities; 16 lynchings occurred in Huehuetenango, the predominantly indigenous department that includes Todos Santos (Mendoza 2012). During fieldwork I heard about many more incidents than made it into that year's official tally.

Why is this violent practice becoming more common among indigenous Guatemalans at this particular juncture? Scholars answer that weak state authority sets the stage for lynching. Some emphasize the post-war disintegration of social solidarity in indigenous communities as a precondition (MINUGUA 2000, 2002; Godoy 2002, 2006). Others point to a long history of highly elaborated forms of social organization (Mendoza 2004, 2007; Sandoval 2007). While these explanations appear incompatible, the events in Todos Santos show how both a strained social fabric and the persistence of communitarianism work together to facilitate lynching in post-war indigenous communities.

What to Do with the Thieves

As it turned out, this case was much more complicated than the thefts of chickens or sneakers that La Seguridad had dealt with before. It involved a scam with a slight, soft-spoken young teacher named Carmen at its center. Historically, teachers in Guatemala were non-Maya, but the peace accords changed these demographics by mandating bilingual education. While in the early 1980s there were only a handful of Mam-speaking teachers in Todos Santos, now there are more than 200. As more *todosanteros* graduate from high school, there is fierce competition for scarce unionized teaching positions. Carmen obtained one of these coveted plazas, which meant that she had a regular pay check and benefits that included a guaranteed pension after 25 years of service. While the salary is only about 2,500 *quetzales* ($325) a month, it is deposited without fail to each teacher's BanRural account.

Guatemala's banks have taken notice of this relative solvency and are eager to offer teachers loans. The scam began when Carmen convinced 12 colleagues to give her copies of their identification documents and evidence of their employment. Some she told she needed a cosigner for a loan; others she lured with tales of university scholarship money that would be deposited to their accounts. A crew of accomplices practiced forging the teachers' signatures before taking out loans in their names from banks in nearby towns. In all, Carmen withdrew 380,000 *quetzales* (about $50,000).

One of the duped teachers went to BanRural to withdraw money from his account only to find that his entire paycheck had been applied to service a loan taken out at BanTrab, a bank known for easy credit and high interest rates. BanRural officials, initially unsympathetic, showed him the loan documents with his signature. The teacher quickly discovered others in the same situation, and they all went to the Saturday meeting of La Seguridad. Within hours it apprehended Carmen and questioned her. She confessed that she had a partner, a man from Soloma, a larger, wealthier Kanjobal Maya town over the ridge from Todos Santos. She had handed all of the money over to him, she said, but only because he had threatened to kill her family if she didn't. Soloma has a reputation among *todosanteros*, who regard its inhabitants with a mixture of envy and fear. As one young man said, "They've made a lot of progress, but all from money from illegal activities, like drug-trafficking and kidnapping" (fieldnotes, Jan. 21, 2011). While some saw Carmen as a hapless victim, others thought that she should have known better than to involve herself with this shifty *solomero*.

In a series of calls from her cellphone that night, Carmen convinced the man that she had more

money to give him. When he and his family rolled into town at dawn, La Seguridad had him staked out. A group of 30 volunteers dragged him from his truck and thrashed him. Both Carmen and the *solomero* were thrown in the fountain in the center of town, then taken to the gymnasium where the defrauded teachers were invited to whip them before a large crowd. Some did so enthusiastically.

As people commented to me, crowds that gathered when wrongdoers were captured used to number around 50, not in the hundreds. Modern technology has transformed social mobilization. Until 2004 Todos Santos had only a handful of land lines. Now Guatemala has more cellphones than people and news travels fast.

Sunday night the police tried to take the suspects to the authorities in the department capital. The crowd in the park was so large that a mob overpowered the police, took custody of Carmen and the *solomero*, and installed them on the balcony of the town hall. They would be held there, the fraud victims and their families announced, until restitution arrived from Soloma. No one had any faith that the stolen money could be recovered through the legal system. This display was intended as a warning to anyone even thinking about scamming *todosanteros*. The Guatemalan press termed it a hostage crisis.

Meanwhile, La Seguridad continued to round up Carmen's accomplices and investigate their involvement. One, a taxi driver, said that Carmen had come to his house with a sad story about a sister who'd been detained on the Arizona border and desperately needed help. He was initially reluctant, he explained, but decided to help when his father invoked a Mam saying: "Today it's her, but tomorrow it could be us." He drove Carmen to Soloma, entered the BanTrab branch with someone else's documents and forged the signature. Carmen reportedly paid him less than $80 for his efforts, promising more if her sister got out of jail (fieldnotes, Jan. 22, 2011). La Seguridad fined him and the other forgers 15,000 *quetzales* ($1,950). While some of these accomplices were flogged, this young man, who alleged he had only respected his father's wishes, was not.

An unfortunate coincidence amplified the crisis: Carmen and the solomero's captivity coincided with the disbursements from Guatemala's social welfare program. Some 2,000 families came to town that Monday and Tuesday to pick up their conditional cash transfers. Many stayed to watch the spectacle, filling the square beneath the balcony where the accused were periodically bullied and beaten as their cries and pleas wafted over the crowd. Street vendors turned out to hawk ice cream and fried food, giving the whole event an unnervingly festive air.

On Wednesday morning Juan, one of the leaders of La Seguridad, talked to me about the crisis. We compiled a list of what the crowd was shouting: burn them, beat them, dump them in the fountain again. "How do you handle this?" I asked. "We say, 'Well go ahead, do it and suffer the consequences'," he answered. "Isn't that dangerous?" I asked. Juan just smiled and shrugged. Then his cell phone rang. When no money was forthcoming from Soloma, the mayor of Todos Santos forced Carmen's father to sell some of his land and divide the proceeds among the victims. With the fraud victims placated and the welfare recipients gone, the Guatemalan police had been able to sneak the suspects out of town in the middle of the night and deliver them to the departmental authorities (fieldnotes, Jan. 23, 2011).

Solidarity or Social Trauma?

Given the history of genocide perpetrated on Guatemala's indigenous majority, the fact that most (but certainly not all) lynchings take place in indigenous areas constitutes a delicate subject. The United Nations' first reports avoided mentioning this connection, although when they cited the absence of the state, a history of wartime repression and high rates of poverty as causal factors in lynchings, they were describing conditions in indigenous Guatemala. Political scientist Carlos Mendoza (2004, 2007), who has conducted extensive statistical analyses of Guatemala's data on lynchings, argues that high levels of indigenous population may in fact be one of the leading indicators of what he calls "lynching hazard." He explains this correlation by pointing to Mayans' long history of providing for the common good in their communities.

This strong communitarian tendency characterizes life in Todos Santos. Neighbors regularly come together to donate money and labor to community projects, such as rebuilding the crumbling elemen-

courtesy Ellen Sharp

Ellen Sharp with neighbors.

tary school or paving new roads. In the event of a death, collaboration becomes even more pronounced. After a horrific bus accident in June 2011 killed seven *todosanteros*, five from the same family, the local radio station quickly raised thousands of dollars to cover the victims' medical and funeral expenses. Hundreds of people who attended the multiple wakes brought gifts of cash, corn and sugar. *Todosanteros* consider such generosity reciprocal, and often cite the saying that spared one of Carmen's accomplices a beating: "What's your problem today could be mine tomorrow." La Seguridad itself offers a prime example of communitarianism in action. Its leaders donate hours of their time without compensation because, they say, of their duty, indeed their obligation, to protect the community. Nonetheless, many residents criticize their justice as arbitrary, inconsistent and unnecessarily brutal. The arguments of analysts who assert that lynching signals the absence of social solidarity help explain why grassroots justice is so intensely contested.

Contrary to Mendoza's claims, the MINUGUA reports and sociologist Angelina Snodgrass Godoy argue that lynching results from the damaged social fabric of post-war Mayan communities. Genocide represents an attack on collective life, Godoy points out, and as such produces a long-term social trauma (2002, 646). In the process of killing a generation of community leaders, the army eliminated a long tradition of dispute resolution that called for restitution rather than punishment. Before the war, lynching was unheard of in Mayan communities. But during the war, death from being burned alive was second only to gunshot wounds in the count of the 200,000 casualties (Godoy 2002, 653).

I suspect that widespread criticism of La Seguridad stems from this wartime legacy. Its legitimacy is constantly questioned because traditional forms of conflict resolution and paths to authority no longer exist. Instead La Seguridad represents a hybrid that combines some pre-war practices with the structure of the patrols in which Mayan men were forced to participate during the war. People grumble that its leaders assume positions of power out of self-interest rather than the best interests of the community. The stiff fines that La Seguridad used to levy on those who violated its rules and the lack of any accounting for this money has given credence to these complaints. During the hostage crisis, La Seguridad faced criticism from both supporters and critics. Many thought that the accused should have been killed. Others pointed to the treatment of the *solomero's* wife and small children, who were also imprisoned on the balcony, as unfair and inhumane (fieldnotes, Jan. 17, 2011).

This crisis highlighted another tension connected to post-war social transformations, namely a widespread resentment of teachers. The emergence of this relatively privileged professional class of Mayans gives a face to increasing economic inequality in what were once more uniformly impoverished communities. The victims of the fraud were accused of complicity or at the very least stupidity. Those who believed Carmen's scholarship hoax were accused of thinking they could get something for nothing. "But that's teachers for you," one woman remarked, "they barely work anyway, just collect their salaries" (fieldnotes, Jan. 25, 2011).

Analysts have produced seemingly contradictory accounts in their efforts to explain lynching. Some argue that lynching is indicative of high levels

of communal organization while others see it as symptomatic of a social order so damaged that only collective violence brings people together. Both scenarios help explain certain elements of the messy reality that unfolded in Todos Santos in 2011. The response to the scam revealed an impressive grassroots mobilization, as suspects were apprehended, interrogated and guarded for days on end by rotating groups of volunteers. At the same time, the violent means used in this process represent a wartime legacy. The military often threw suspected subversives in cold water, for example, just as Carmen and the *solomero* were thrown in the fountain before they were beaten.

Whichever argument prevails, the fact remains that lynching cannot happen without a larger crisis of state legitimacy. Murderers in Guatemala usually walk for lack of evidence. Although Todos Santos has a police presence, six officers assigned to police almost 30,000 inhabitants cannot do so effectively. Furthermore, the police are outsiders, monolingual Spanish-speakers and widely regarded as corrupt and untrustworthy. The crisis also revealed a profound lack of confidence that the judiciary would be able or willing to prosecute the accused. However in this case, Carmen committed a crime against a powerful entity. BanTrab reimbursed the defrauded teachers and its representatives are actively pursuing Carmen's prosecution.

The scandal left everyone with lots of questions. How did Carmen fall for this scam? Why did she take the money and then give it all away? Whatever the truth, the *solomero* hired a lawyer, paid 50,000 *quetzales* in bail and disappeared without a trace. Carmen spent eight months in jail while her impoverished parents struggled to raise the money to hire a lawyer who could negotiate a more reasonable bail than the 300,000 *quetzales* initially set for her. More than a year later, Carmen is out on bail and still awaiting trial.

Ellen Sharp is a Ph.D. candidate in sociocultural anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles and was in the 2010-2011 cycle of Fellows.

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Indigenous Reciprocity and Globalization in Rural Bolivia

By Marygold Walsh-Dilley

A decade ago, as a community development volunteer with the United States Peace Corps, I lived in the dusty Bolivian town of San Juan de Rosario on the south-central *altiplano*. I was there to work with this Quechua community on developing a tourism industry, but I became fascinated by the rapid changes taking place as San Juan shifted from an economy of subsistence and out-migration to producing the Andean grain quinoa as a cash crop for export. I was particularly interested in *ayni*, the Quechua term for reciprocity, and I have spent the past 10 years studying how this traditional practice was changing as rural Bolivians became increasingly integrated into global markets.

The most common form of *ayni* still applied in Andean villages today is the reciprocal provision of labor. One farmer works in another's field, creating the obligation to return the favor. The exchanges are for equivalent services, usually a single day's work. These exchanges, which are essential to earning a living, are backed up by a commitment to a shared moral order. Anthropologists consider participation in *ayni* and its attendant etiquette a defining characteristic of the identity of the Quechua, the largest indigenous group in the Andes, and note its importance to rituals and ceremonies. "Reciprocity is like a pump at the heart of Andean life," anthropologist Catherine Allen wrote (2002: 73). It is a central part of an economic system that supported communities and even empires for centuries in the highly challenging mountain landscape

These mountains loom large, and their steep inclines and frigid air pose a formidable challenge to sustaining livelihoods and communities. Ancient

A work party in San Juan de Rosario.

Marygold Walsh-Dilley

Andean people turned these difficulties to their advantage by establishing control over as many ecological niches as possible. Zones differentiated by altitude and a highly variable physical environment have provided the range of resources that enable Andean people to survive. Highland agriculture, for example, yields a variety of tubers and grains; lower valleys offer fruits and vegetables, maize, cotton, guano, coca and wood. Unlike communities in parts of the world where trade and markets ensured access to the necessary variety of consumption goods, communities in the Andes survived through a practice that is often—and appropriately—called "verticality" (Murra 1972). To gain control over the resources available, Andean communities sent "colonists" to different altitudes and shared the products through an elaborate system of reciprocity and redistribution. Murra (1972) suggests that this pattern was pan-Andean, and there is evidence that it has endured from 500 A.D. through today. This "vertical archipelago" relied on mutually beneficial interaction within a community, which, as was noted by Europeans in the early colonial period, allowed Andean people to attain considerable prosperity. Later, as their empire expanded, the Inca ensured social control by mobilizing the Andean commitment to reciprocal interactions between individuals, communities, and the state. While specific practices have shifted over time, there is a high degree of what anthropologist Nathan Wachtel calls "ideological continuity" with respect to reciprocity in the Andes, and it remains a significant factor organizing Andean social experience.

But there are a number of challenges to traditional practices and customs that are increasingly impinging upon rural Andean communities. Contemporary rural spaces are rapidly being incorporated into a global economy that emphasizes the individual over the community. Agricultural practices are evolving as farmers increasingly respond to new market opportunities, technologies, religious affiliations, even development agencies, all of which contribute to a shift away from community commitments. Migration from rural to urban areas, which took off after the land reforms of the 1950s and 1960s ended the *hacienda* system and released many people from rural servitude, also erodes networks and wears at institutions, including *ayni*.

Ripe quinoa.

Quinoa seeds.

courtesy Marygold Walsh-Dilley

Marygold Walsh-Dilley.

Even so, my research confirms that reciprocity remains a vibrant tradition. My fieldwork brought me to three different communities, each with its own history and form of insertion into global and regional markets, religious fragmentation and migration. Though in this paper I focus just on San Juan's recent integration into global quinoa markets, in all of these communities rural Bolivians continue to rely on reciprocal strategies to piece together their livelihoods, even as they become more deeply entrenched in global systems and processes. How these practices are enacted, however, depends on the needs and experiences of each locale. The picture that emerged throughout my research was one of people making use of their long-institutionalized practice of *ayni* as they respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalization. In fact, because these traditional practices have proven to be both ecologically and socially appropriate resources, their use is expanding and adapting to current needs.

In San Juan, residents have only become fully integrated into commodities markets over the past two decades as demand for quinoa developed internationally. While quinoa is superlatively nutritious, during the colonial period it was shunned as an indigenous food in favor of European grains and other products. This culinary colonialism established dietary habits that remain engrained today and quinoa is still considered an inferior food among urban and middle-class Bolivians. There was limited market demand for quinoa until the 1980s, when it came to the attention of consumers in the United States and Europe. This spurred a dramatic increase in production by Bolivian farmers, since the crop can only be grown efficiently under conditions unique to the Andean *altiplano*.

Consumers abroad were responding to research conducted by institutes in the United States and under the auspices of the United Nations and South American governments that identified the nutritional properties of quinoa, including unusually high levels of complete protein. Government offices and donor agencies became interested in promoting quinoa, at first for its potential to improve the inadequate diet of *campesinos* in the high Andes and later as a cash crop to help reduce poverty. For a brief period in the 1960s, government regulations in Peru and Bolivia required that all bakeries use a portion of quinoa flour in bread, which resulted in a temporary increase in production but ultimately failed because of resistance from businesses and urban consumers. Other efforts to support quinoa production have included projects undertaken or funded by the Belgian Catholic mission and the Inter-American Foundation (see Healy 2001). These have benefited communities in the *Salar* region around the Uyuni Salt Flat, the largest salt flat in the world, where the most desired variety of quinoa is principally grown. This zone, where San Juan is located, has become a hot spot for quinoa and residents have shifted from growing potatoes for subsistence to intensifying their production of quinoa for the market and even expanding it onto marginal lands.

Partial mechanization of the process aided the expansion. Access to a tractor through the Belgian mission as early as the 1960s helped farmers clear and prepare fields for quinoa production in a place where little else could grow. Later, community-based organizations formed that significantly increased the availability of mechanizing technologies. But, after years of intensified production, harvests began to fall or fail as land became degraded. In particular, using a tractor to plant quinoa breaks up the soil, causing a loss of the limited moisture in the soil needed to germinate seeds and leading to wind erosion that damages seedlings and reduces yields.

This, in combination with changing climate conditions characterized by less reliable rainfall and more damaging winds, has led farmers to fall back on hand labor to plant the fields that the tractors clear and prepare. Though requiring considerably

more physical effort, hand labor is well suited to local conditions because it relies on site-specific knowledge that minimizes the risks associated with an unpredictable climate, erosion and poor soil. Planting by hand both conserves and makes the most of the limited moisture in the soil and minimizes wind erosion by not breaking up the soil's protective crust—problems that have been exacerbated as quinoa production moved onto increasingly marginalized lands during periods of growing demand.

Given the increased market demand, production is higher and work parties are larger than ever. Because farmers often lack the resources to pay cash wages, they prefer to attract workers by activating *ayni* and incurring the obligation to reciprocate. *Ayni* also enables farmers to access labor with greater certainty when workers are very scarce. This is because, while the obligation to return labor through *ayni* is backed up by a strong shared ethic of reciprocity, the cash wage of roughly US$3 is often not enough to induce already busy producers to work for someone else. Ironically, in San Juan, new technologies and markets have prompted an even greater reliance on reciprocal networks.

In my dissertation I argue that reciprocity has been renegotiated in light of new opportunities and challenges. Contemporary practices look much different from those applied within John Murra's vertical archipelago. While they do reflect continuity with the past, they have been sculpted by the changing social landscape to remain effective and appropriate. For example, in San Juan reciprocal labor sharing used to take place within small tightly-knit groups of five to seven households; these families rotated among fields as a collective. But as quinoa fields—and consequently, work parties—have grown larger, labor sharing involves individual producers from the entire community.

Reciprocity remains relevant in part because it responds both to individual and community needs. While the reciprocal exchange of labor provides individuals an important resource to manage production, it also contributes to community solidarity because it builds networks of trust and friendships. This was especially clear in San Juan, which is something of a darling in development circles. The community is highly successful at attracting funding and the interest and involvement of development agencies. Residents attribute their success to their solidarity and willingness to work together, which they view as central to their ability to progress and develop as a community. Some researchers refer to this cooperation as social capital, considered critical for development, poverty reduction and improved health and well-being (Grootaert and Narayan 2004).

The importance of reciprocity in the development of Bolivia is emphasized by President Evo Morales, the country's first indigenous president. He has made reciprocity, solidarity and community the basis for his vision of a new economic system that he hopes will result in a better future for Bolivia and indeed the rest of the world. Reciprocity works in rural communities as part of the normal interaction among neighbors who engage face-to-face in exchanges according to time-tested rules that govern access to resources. Obviously, it remains to be seen how well such a pattern can be applied at a regional level, country-wide or on an international scale. Overall, in comparison to those concerned about the future of indigenous practices such as *ayni*, I find that reciprocity remains relevant and its contemporary manifestations enable Andean villagers to negotiate the uncertainties of the global marketplace.

Marygold Walsh-Dilley, who was in the 2007-2008 cycle of IAF Fellows, received her Ph.D. in development sociology from Cornell University in 2012.

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Cooking under the Sun

Some 20 years ago, a small group of women on Guatemala's southern coast, most of them of Quiche or Kaqchikel ethnicity, organized as Amigas del Sol (ADS) to confront the daily challenges of rural life. Almost immediately they zeroed in on cooking fires that consume up to 18 percent of the household budget, cause burns, accelerate deforestation and exposes entire families to respiratory diseases that include pneumonia, chronic bronchitis, even lung cancer. Families short on cash often send children to collect firewood when they should be in school.

ADS helps community groups build ovens fueled by a more abundant source of energy—the sun. First developed by Siam Nandwani, a Costa Rican university professor, the design was improved in the late 1980s by Bill Lankford, an American physicist.

Oven construction includes measuring and cutting wooden panels, assembly and painting. The bright red color increases absorption of the sun's rays.

He built a solar oven, confirmed that it worked and founded the Central American Solar Energy Project (CASEP) to promote its use. Word of the invention spread after Lankford built a second oven at the urging of Jan Gregorich, a nun assigned to a parish on Guatemala's southern coast. The success of the device is grounded in a crucial lesson for grassroots development. The first ovens, constructed by expert carpenters, were disregarded by the very people for whom they were intended. The takeaway: Users had to be invested in them, meaning the cooks themselves had to build the ovens.

Women learn about ADS through word of mouth. Those who want to introduce the technology in their communities must convince ADS of their commitment during a mandatory six-month trial period. As a group, they receive an oven on loan and learn to cook with it, confirming in the process that local climate conditions are suitable. Workers from ADS visit unannounced to verify that the oven is being used. The groups that continue with the program spend two weeks building their own ovens. During this time, women master the use of saws, screwdrivers, glass cutters and paint brushes. "Participants learn that they can do the same things that men do," confirmed Miguelina Miranda, who has been with ADS for more than 15 years. Women in the program have tweaked the design, adding a storage compartment, a sliding shelf for their pots, and wheels and handles that let the oven move like a wheelbarrow. They also increased the size to accommodate an entire meal for a typical indigenous family. Lunch breaks from building are used to develop confidence and organizatinal cohesion. After finishing their ovens, one group of carpenter-cooks decided to build furniture for the local community center. Other groups found funding to work together farming poultry, raising small livestock and improving their homes by installing toilets that use minimal water and compost waste.

Use of the ovens, which generate no smoke, operate at no cost and save forests, constitutes a small step toward protecting the environment and has significantly reduced vulnerability to respiratory diseases. And ovens have another important function. On schedule, users in a given community emerge at exactly the same time to adjust their ovens to the position of the sun and to socialize. "It's a chance to learn about each other and stay current with what is going on," said one. The limitation of the ovens is that they can only be used six months out of the year. ADS is considering fuel-efficient stoves as an alternative for cloudy days and the rainy season. Meanwhile, solar ovens make good neighbors.— *José Toasa, IAF representative for Guatemala*

Mark Caicedo

Mark Caicedo

Miguelina Miranda, Clara Pérez, Petrona López and others share chicken stew cooked in a solar oven.

Learning with *Los Izalcos*

Salvadoran children can learn about their country's indigenous communities by playing *Los Izalcos*, a board game developed by the staff of IAF grantee partner Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen [Museum of Word and Image] (MUPI) in collaboration with artists, anthropologists and educators.

The game is named for the indigenous communities of the region known as Los Izalcos in the western part of the country. Developed by a team of anthropologists, artists and educators, it draws heavily for its content on interviews of senior citizens of indigenous descent, and from the observations of travelers such as the Swedish ethnographer Carl Hartman, who visited El Salvador in 1896. Successful players move around a board by correctly answering questions on indigenous legends, handicrafts, dances, music and medicine as well as details on social organization, historical events, agriculture and the relationship of these original Salvadorans to their land.

At the center of the board is an artist's rendition of the sacred fire around which unfold folkways and scenes of daily life in indigenous communities. Players start by spinning a ring depicting the mythical La Cuyancúa, a snake with a pig's head, whose powers make cool, clean water spring from her den.

The player to whom La Cuyancúa's head points draws a question from a deck of 125 cards and, for a correct answer, collects a chip painted with corn or cacao, one used as currency in this part of Meso-America. A manual contains the facts on indigenous culture essential to playing the game, which comes with instructions along with *petates*, traditional mats crafted from a plant known as *tule*, for the players to sit on.

MUPI has been recognized internationally for *Los Izalcos* and other educational products. For its success in preserving and sharing elements of the El Salvador's culture, past and present, it received the Premio Iberoamericano de Educación y Museos [Latin American Education and Museums Award] and the Ford award for cultural heritage preservation and education.— *Carlos Henríquez Consalvi, director, MUPI*

IAF Grantees at Rio+20

Representatives of civil society from around the world rallied during June in Rio de Janeiro to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the 1992 Earth Summit with a host of events running parallel to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, whose purpose was to advance measures to reduce poverty and improve the use of natural resources. Among the organizations participating in the Cúpola do Povo, or People's Summit, under scattered tents in Rio's Aterro do Flamengo Park were nine IAF grantee partners from Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Paraguay.

Brazilian grantee partner Centro de Estudos e Promoção da Agricultura de Grupo (CEPAGRO) was particularly active, holding more than a dozen workshops on its project, "Revolução dos Baldinhos," which involves community members in the collection and composting of household waste. Through a partnership with the Italian-based Slow Food Movement, CEPAGRO also conducted workshops at three organic markets during the same week. Marcus José Abreu, coordinator of CEPAGRO's urban programs, spoke at the session "Finding Synergies in the Economic and Environmental Transition." Subgrantees of IAF partner Centro de Apoio Socio-Ambiental (CASA) shared conservation practices that they apply in the Mata Atlântica habitat and Amazonia region. Fundação Grupo Boticario (FBPN), the corporate foundation of a Brazilian cosmetic manufacturer, organized events on payment for environmental services and the role and impact of public and private social investment.

Fundación para el Etnodesarrollo de los Llanos Orientales de Colombia (ETNOLLANO) represented the Program for the Consolidation of the Colombian Amazon (COAMA), which assists indigenous peoples with preserving their natural environment. Catalino Sosa spoke for Paraguay's indigenous Mbya communities, which are working with support from IAF grantee partner Institución Ecuménica de Promoción Social (OGUASU). At the Forum on Social Entrepreneurship in the New Economy, José Francisco Fonseca, executive director of Corporación Educativa para el Desarrollo Costarricense (CEDECO), spoke on innovative strategies that mitigate the effects of climate change and the proactive efforts of the Costa Rican government to encourage these strategies. The Forum also included plenary sessions with the Brazilian philosopher Leonardo Boff;

Amy Kirschenbaum

The IAF co-sponsored the Forum on Social Entrepreneurship in the New Economy, organized parallel to Rio+20 by the Avina Foundation, Ashoka, Fundação Roberto Marinho and the Skoll Foundation. IAF grantee partner Industrial Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN) collaborated in building the temporary structure housing the Forum.

Colombian intellectual Bernando Toro; Marina da Silva, Brazil's former minister of the environment and a 2011 presidential candidate; and Guilherme Leal, chief executive officer of Natura, another Brazilian cosmetic giant.

In 1992, the Earth Summit, also known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, addressed the use of toxic manufacturing inputs, alternatives to fossil fuels, the reduction of vehicle emissions, urban congestion, the health hazards caused by pollution and the growing scarcity of water, among other issues. The Earth Summit led to the Kyoto Protocol and Agenda 21, whose signatories committed to rethinking economic growth, advancing social equity and ensuring environmental protection, and an acknowledgement of the rights of indigenous peoples. A major theme of the 2012 U.N conference, organized to take stock of progress made since 1992, was the New Economy, or the notion that the global economic system must be restructured if critical social and environmental goals are to be met. Media analyses of the 2012 proceedings reflected disappointment.

In contrast, the dynamism of the People's Summit and myriad related events sparked enthusiasm, affirming that real progress toward the responsible use of the environment and a better quality of life will likely come from the bottom up as communities craft creative solutions to the world's most complex challenges. The involvement of IAF grantee partners in these parallel activities was testament to their ability to effect the positive change that can have far-reaching implications.—*Amy Kirschenbaum, IAF representative for Brazil*

CASA

Participants in the People's Summit demonstrated for the conservation of the rivers of the world.

Reports: Indigenous Grantees Five Years Later

Since 2009, the IAF has visited selected organizations five years after their IAF funding ceased, to assess what worked, what did not, and why. What follows is a snapshot illustrating the relevance of culturally appropriate projects to three indigenous communities, the development of local assets to address social challenges and the influence of context on the outcome of these initiatives:

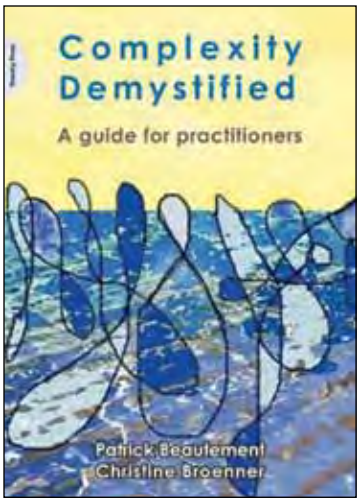
In 2001, Asociación Consejo de Mujeres Mayas de Desarrollo Integral (CMM), comprised of indigenous K'iche women, received IAF support to improve the access of women and children in San Cristóbal, Totonicapán, Guatemala, to health care and to offer nutritional supplements and education on nutrition. At the time, the local maternal mortality rate was 7 per 1,000 live births; infant mortality was 55 per 1,000. Additionally, 150 infants died from diarrhea that year. Over the next five years, CMM used its IAF funding to train midwives in prenatal practices and hygiene, expand and train a network of volunteer

health workers, and introduce home gardens to alleviate chronic malnutrition. By 2010, four years after the IAF's funding ended, CMM reported that the maternal mortality rate had dropped to zero; infant mortality had decreased significantly; and infants no longer died of diarrhea. The network had grown to 155 trained health workers from 45 in 2001. Midwives now charge a standardized fee for delivering a baby, regardless of the baby's sex; and CMM's efforts to raise awareness about domestic violence against women and girls has helped reduce reported cases. Other important spin-off effects include midwives' gaining recognition and respect from other health professionals in the area, and the national health authorities' hiring CMM women to continue delivering public health services to their communities. This case illustrates the importance of supporting solutions rooted in the indigenous communities. Because the indigenous women of CMM were well known and trusted in their communities, they could build on family ties and traditions to secure wide participation and support. Indeed, CMM succeeded in redefining participation in health promotion efforts as a vital part of community citizenship.

Between 1997 and 2001, Grupo de Asesoramiento Multidisciplinario en Medio Ambiente y Agro ecología (GAMMA), a grassroots support organization based in La Paz but dedicated to sustainable agricultural practices on the Bolivian *altiplano*, used its IAF funding to work with Aymara men and women who raised llamas and sheep and with *ayllus*, their local councils, to upgrade pastures, conserve water and improve herds. Training of both the producers and the *ayllus* proved effective. By 2010, the Choquecota community in Oruro had a year-round source of water, better pastures and new breeding centers. In this high-altitude community characterized by acute droughts punctuated by heavy rainfalls, GAMMA's indigenous approach to water conservation and livestock production benefited from the active collaboration of the *ayllus*. By mobilizing the social capital of the *ayllus*, the investments promoted by GAMMA spread throughout the area and continued to be effective a decade after the IAF's funding ended. This example shows that an organization from outside the community can win the trust of its residents and its authorities by building on indigenous approaches and organizational structures.

In 1999, Ayllus Originarios de Quila Quila, a grouping of Aymara councils in Sucre, Bolivia, received an IAF grant to invest in developing agriculture and tourism. Over the next six years, community residents terraced slopes, installed micro irrigation systems, built lodges and a restaurant, and trained as tour guides and workers for archaeological digs. By 2011, however, none of the infrastructure intended for tourism was being used for that purpose, and only the agricultural investments on collective land were still in use. What happened? Eight years earlier, decades of tension between the *ayllus* and a cement company operating a mining concession in the area had escalated, and the municipal government of Sucre revoked the *ayllus'* legal status. The *ayllus* of Quila Quila reacted by redirecting their focus to secure their rights and mobilize resources for this cause. On November 26, 2003, the *ayllus* of Quila Quila declared themselves an Autonomous Indigenous Territory, and over the next several years joined together with other communities to form the Qhara Qhara Indigenous Nation. Ultimately, effective organizing and increased social capital helped them win the support of the municipality and the Bolivian government as well. The project illustrates the dynamic nature of community development and how, when the context requires, the focus on one activity can be redirected to another—in this case land tenure and training a new generation in the skills necessary to exercise their rights as indigenous Bolivians. The *ayllus* ability to set —and re-set—their own priorities proved key to a successful outcome.

For more information e-mail inquiries@iaf.gov.—*Emilia Rodríguez-Stein, IAF director of evaluation*



Complexity Demystified: A Guide for Practitioners

By Patrick Beautement and Christine Broenner

Triarchy Press: Devon, United Kingdom, 2011

In the early 1990s, a spate of popular books heralded new approaches in an area that baffled science—the lack of predictability in complex systems. Traditional science, whose reductionist roots go back to Newton, understands the world by breaking systems into their components and exhaustively studying them, looking for linear cause-and-effect relationships. It sees natural systems as machines to be analyzed and understood, leading to predictability. But when scientific attention turned to questions about systems that couldn't be neatly separated—the human immune system, for example, the weather, the stock market, or how birds swoop and wheel in flocks without crashing into one another—the old paradigm began to creak.

The emerging science of complexity ranged over an enormous field of natural and human activity and produced a number of attractive metaphors. In 2004, this magazine published my article, "Thinking Outside Newton's Box: Metaphors for Grassroots Development," that pointed up the rather neat fit between new metaphors for how the world worked and what the Inter-American Foundation had learned about grassroots development by supporting bottom-up ideas for reducing poverty.

Hard on the heels of the books describing the new science came attempts to apply its insights to business, policy making and foreign assistance, among others. A cottage industry of seminars, workshops and PowerPoint sessions sprang up. *Complexity Demystified* is in that tradition. The book opens with the observation that the world presents us with very different kinds of problems. Some are simple—how to design a supply chain that gets food to supermarkets. Vast investments are required, armies of workers, efficient management. But fundamentally, moving things is a simple problem, capable of linear solutions strung together. You build a machine, its parts are known, its outcomes predictable. Other problems are complex—how to end poverty, for example, or improve education. Here, just getting a handle on all the relevant pieces of the puzzle is a challenge, never mind understanding how they interact. And even if you get it right in one place, there's no guarantee your solution will work somewhere else.

Despite abundant evidence that simple and complex situations are very different, people and institutions generally insist on applying similar analytic tools—mechanistic ones—to both. Frequently, what they get is unintended consequences, if not disasters. To improve the situation, authors Beautement and Broenner offer "a guide for practitioners," including those working in development assistance. They start off well, with perceptive insights into many of the realities that bedevil the best-intentioned efforts. They see that development plans often are of scant relevance to the people they're intended to assist because "[t]oo often the way the problems are described and the objectives are framed cannot accommodate the realities of what enables or hinders change in the specific context." They are dubious as well about carefully drawn plans that set targets toward which progress can be measured. "The change people bring about in complex situations cannot always be isolated and/or measured particularly because change often arises long after the end of a project that envisaged it," they observe.

"The change people bring about in complex situations cannot always be measured because change often arises long after the end of a project that envisaged it"

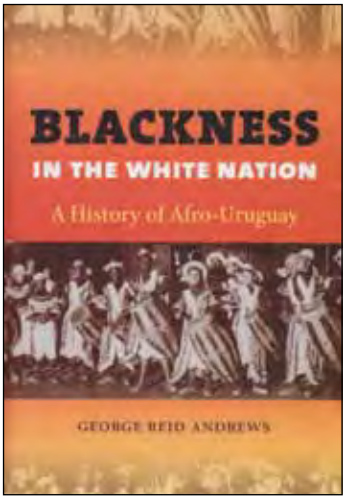
The alternative approach is based on 25 "insights" that the authors derive from complexity science. (Their reassurance to the reader that there's no need to become expert in complexity smacks a bit of "we've read all the books so you don't have to.") That list is arranged into a set of six elements interacting in four "loops," and a "pragmatic explanation of how to employ these in practice." The elements and loops are quite simple: try something, be aware of what's going on, pay attention to the context, reflect on how it's all going so as to correct along the way. But as they proceed, the book turns more and more into an unwieldy array of charts and checklists calling to mind those operating manuals for digital cameras that weigh more than the camera.

The two fundamental problems with the book are present in its title.

One is the authors' main claim to having "demystified complexity." Many of those books that first heralded complexity in the 1990s were popular because they conveyed the intellectual excitement of the new science and speculated about where insights drawn from it could take us. They opened readers' minds, made them see things in different ways. Transforming that enthusiasm into a dense checklist seems to miss the whole point.

A second problem resides in the subtitle. Do "practitioners" really need a guide to complexity? Or is the problem, as the authors themselves say, that "practitioners who work directly with the supposed beneficiaries of development aid programmes find it profoundly difficult to get the message through to the donor organisations about what real life is like and what they have observed and learned in the field This is an important issue because, in the end, the donor organisations are the ones who design projects and programmes. All too often they remain fixed in their ideas."

On that statement alone, it would seem a guide to complexity should be aimed not at workers in the field, but at analysts, administrators, executives and policy-makers. They're the ones who need to consider the implications of complexity for development assistance and adjust accordingly: changing evaluations into useful feedback loops that help projects self-correct in mid-stream; and identifying and funding many more community-level projects.—*Patrick Breslin*



Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay

By George Reid Andrews

The University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill: 2010

George Reid Andrews teaches at the University of Pittsburgh where he holds the rank of distinguished professor, a well-deserved superlative anchored in his contribution to the study of the African diaspora in Latin America. His first major publication, *The Afro-Argentines, 1800-1900* (University of Wisconsin Press; 1980), is considered a seminal work on a people whose very existence had long been ignored or denied. Since its appearance, Andrew's bibliography has featured geographic detours and a highly praised comprehensive history, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (Oxford University Press: 2004). This most recent book, which compresses trends and events over some two centuries, takes him back to the rioplatense region, but to Uruguay, a majority "white" country that, he writes, "opts to define itself, at least in part as culturally 'black.'"

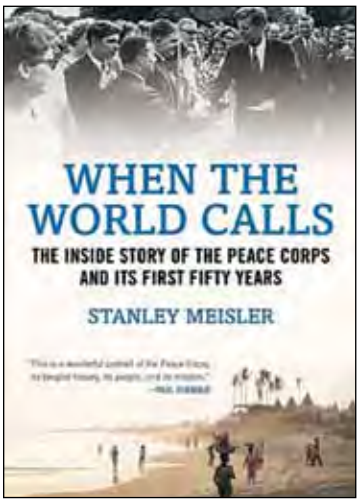
Andrews experienced Uruguay as few foreign academics. Just six lines into the first of this volume's 200-plus pages, he expresses gratitude to Romero Rodríguez, founder of former IAF Uruguayan grantee partner Organizaciones Mundo Afro, who, he says, welcomed him to the civil-rights organization and urged him "to return some day" to research the history of Uruguay's African descendants. When Andrews did go back, he joined Mundo Afro's *comparsa*, or drum corps, and his enthusiasm for drumming comes across in the book. This by no means diminishes its seriousness and does make a good read more fun.

According to the 2010 census, 15 percent of Uruguayans identify as of African descent. Some

of their ancestors arrived as slaves via the ports of Montevideo and Buenos Aires; many more were fugitives from Brazil, drawn to a sanctuary that abolished slavery in 1842. That emancipation happened relatively early, according to Andrews, jibes with Uruguay's reputation as progressive. He acknowledges the country "as Latin America's leading social democracy" and its "strong and long-standing commitment to social inclusion." At odds with this reputation has been slavery's painful legacy—inequality and discrimination that have yet to disappear completely from national life. At perhaps its most extreme, racism post-emancipation accounted for the systematic conscription of black men, most notably to serve as cannon fodder on the front lines in the war with Paraguay (1864 to 1870). That draft ended in 1904, but a pattern of excluding African descendants from social services and economic life persisted through the 20th century. Afro-Uruguayans whom Andrews interviewed cite vivid examples of obstacles to education and to entry into the trades or the professions.

Roughly the same period is also characterized by the white majority's embrace of the music and dance of Afro-Uruguay. African-rooted cultural expressions evolved into distinguishing features of mainstream popular culture: *candombe*, the most uniquely Uruguayan musical genre; the celebration of Carnival to an African beat; the vigorous participation of Uruguayans of all ethnicities in *comparsas*; and even the tango, a patrimony no less Uruguayan for being shared with Argentina. As documented by Andrews, meticulously and at considerable length, the phenomenon reinforced the color line and blacks remained on the fringes of society—a population that, until very recently, was deemed insignificant or nonexistent.

The Afro-Uruguayan struggle for social justice has centered on organization, around their culture, of course, but also around a vibrant and very vocal press. While Andrews seems to bend over backwards to be objective, he terms Mundo Afro "the most visible of Afro-Uruguayan social and civic groups" and credits the energy and effort it has invested since its creation in 1988, in denouncing and exposing discrimination. Its leadership's involvement helped scored a major coup for Uruguay's black population in 1999, when the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination issued a report contradicting the official denial of that population's existence, confirming the practice of discrimination and recommending remedial measures. The accomplishments detailed in the book's final chapter would seem to indicate progress in the decade since then—and that much remains to be done before Afro-Uruguayans enjoy full equality. For more on Mundo Afro and its IAF-supported project, see *Grassroots Development* for 2007.—*David Fleischer, representative for Uruguay and Brazil, and P.D.*



When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and its First 50 Years

By Stanley Meisler

Beacon Press; Boston, 2011

In October 1960, at the ungodly hour of 2 a.m., John F. Kennedy delivered an impromptu talk, lasting a mere three minutes, during a campaign stop at the University of Michigan. There he asked the students who had gathered to hear him if they would be willing to spend two years of their lives assisting people in the developing world. From their reaction, Kennedy realized that, as he told an aide, he had "hit a winning number." He played the number again at his inauguration, in a line that became immortal: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Over the next month, 25,000 Americans deluged the White House with letters asking the president what they in fact could do. Kennedy turned to his brother-in law, Sargent Shriver, who was advised by Kennedy's inner circle to work within the foreign-aid establishment and to start small. Instead, he designed a free-standing agency that started large and had the confidence to send its first contingents of volunteers to Ghana and

to India—"nonaligned" countries headed by fiercely independent leaders.

The rest is history.

Stanley Meisler, the author of this very readable book, served from 1964 to 1967 in the evaluation unit of the Peace Corps. Staffed by journalists who could see beyond statistics, it turned out reports that were hard-hitting and, more importantly, read by Shriver himself. Meisler pulled no punches then (and pulls none in this book). He and his colleagues documented early on that volunteers were often poorly prepared, their roles ill-defined and their contacts with village life minimal. These shortcomings were quickly rectified with an emphasis on training, a preference for practical skills, more thought to placement and the recruitment of older, more experienced volunteers. Immersion in the local context and a deep understanding of the culture came to define the typical tour. As a result, ordinary people around the world bonded with these *"hijos de Kennedy,"* as the volunteers were called in Latin America. "Yankee go home except for Casey," read a sign posted in a community during the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965.

When Shriver left the Peace Corps in 1966 to launch the War on Poverty, volunteers numbered 15,556. Despite steady bi-partisan support in Congress and in the White House, today's budget constraints have reduced that count to roughly 7,500 in the field, and they are spread more thinly as the countries that receive them have been joined by new hosts, including dozens that were once part of the Soviet Union. An alumni of more than 200,000 strong includes two former volunteers elected to the United States Senate, Christopher Dodd who served in the Dominican Republic and the late Paul Tsongas, who served in Ethiopia, where former Senator Harris Wofford was country director; and several members of the U.S. House of Representatives, among them Sam Farr, Mike Honda and Thomas Petri, who served, respectively in Colombia, El Salvador and Somalia.

Another grassroots experiment, the Inter-American Foundation was founded in 1969 just eight years after the Peace Corps. The IAF has been a virtual magnet for former volunteers and staff, who have influenced its approach and affected its work. Among them was Bill Dyal, the IAF's founding president, whose unshakeable confidence in the organized poor and insistence on responsiveness to their ideas guided the IAF from 1969 to 1979 and continue to define it. The current president, Robert N. Kaplan got his start in development as a volunteer in Paraguay. The six presidents and interim presidents preceding him also had a connection to the Peace Corps: Linda Kolko, a volunteer in Belize; Ambassador Larry Palmer, a volunteer in Liberia; David Valenzuela, Peace Corps director in Chile; George Evans, director in Costa Rica; Ambassador William Perrin, director for Belize and the Eastern Caribbean; and Steve Vetter, a volunteer in Colombia. The current staff counts seven former volunteers. (Full disclosure: I served in Panama.) IAF employees who have accepted a position at the Peace Corps are too numerous to count.

When the World Calls is a quick and fruitful read and I highly recommend it.—*Patrick Ahern, IAF representative for Nicaragua*

Awka Liwen

Written and narrated by Osvaldo Bayer

Directed by Mariano Aiello and Kristina Hille

Macunudo Films: 2010

Awka Liwen, or "Rebellion at Dawn" in Mapuche, documents the tragic saga of the Argentines whom Osvaldo Bayer, the driving force behind this film, calls *los pueblos originarios*. A historian and journalist, Bayer became interested in these indigenous citizens in the 1950s; for the past 10 years, he has been deeply involved in their issues—as an academic, an advocate and an activist. *Awka Liwen* is at the center of his all-out effort to set the record straight for a public whose education, he claims, seriously neglected these Native Americans.

Bayer's history lesson weaves contemporary cinematography with primary sources, such as newspapers, archival photos and newsreels; expert testimony; animation bolstered by sound effects; and excerpts from *La Patagonia Rebelde*, the 1974 film whose script he wrote. Steeped in fascinating detail, the narrative opens with Bayer's observation that Argentina's founding fathers gave the Indians the same rights as everyone else and began abolishing slavery in 1813. Within a few years, these principles were betrayed in the quest for territory that culminated in General Julio Argentino Roca's *Conquista del Desierto*—desert a euphemism, Bayer tells us, for a vast expanse that included lushly fertile pampas. Consolidation took time. Friedrich Rauch, the Prussian colonel hired to eradicate the Ranquel Indians, was killed in 1828, apparently by "Arbolito," a young warrior whom the troops mistook for a tree. In the 1870s, Minister of War Adolfo Alsina planned to contain the Indians by digging a trench extending 600 kilometers, which was never completed.

Roca's campaign lasted from 1878 to 1884. By Bayer's count, the *Conquista* claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Indians and fabulously enriched the 600 landowners who had financed Roca's operations. One, José Martínez de Hoz, acquired 2.5 million hectares, roughly the area of El Salvador. The film traces into the present the legacy of concentrated land tenure: a lop-sided tax structure, environmental degradation, social disparities. More immediately, the officially-sanctioned "distribution of Indians" that followed the *Conquista* forced men, women and children to labor in near-slavery on the huge new estates, military projects and the sugar plantations of Tucuman. Subsequent waves of European immigrants further displaced indigenous Argentines, deepening their poverty and their exclusion. They became, says Bayer, *los primeros desaparecidos*, a metaphor from the notorious Dirty War of the 1970s that connotes both their decimation and invisibilization.

The notion that Argentina had no indigenous citizens was once accepted, but today the country is viewed as multiracial and multicultural. Bayer puts Argentines of indigenous descent at 63.1 percent of the population, citing research undertaken by the University of Buenos Aires and the CONICET. He calls constitutional reforms acknowledging the rights of *los pueblos originarios*, "a beginning of change." Off-screen, he told *Grassroots Development* of the mobilization to assert indigenous rights and claim land. His film's footage on the still-unresolved eviction of a Mapuche couple from property owned by the Benetton clothing giant includes a fleeting reference to the activism of Mapuche and other organizations on the couple's behalf, which resulted in international media coverage.

The reception of *Awka Liwen* certainly indicates change is underway. According to one source, some 3,000 Argentines attended the film's premier. Its credits include endorsements by municipalities, provincial governments and the Argentine Ministry of Social Development as well as corporate foundations and NGOs; the Office of the Presidency has declared the film "of national interest." Purchase of the DVD by the Argentine Ministry of Education for classroom use is pending the outcome of a lawsuit filed by descendants of José Martínez de Hoz. Meanwhile Bayer, at 85, soldiers on with nightly speaking engagements, accompanied by a rock band, whose musicians, inspired by one of his lectures, renamed themselves Arbolito.

There is no rebellion in *Rebellion at Dawn*. The title refers to a little Mapuche girl called Awka Liwen whom Bayer came across and never forgot. "This name so profound," he explained to the newspaper *Miradas al Sur*, "those eyes that I will remember forever, are the best interpretation of the spirit of the film."—*Amanda Hess, IAF program staff assistant, with Gabriela Sbarra and P.D.*

Kathryn Pyle

Niños de la Memoria

Produced by Kathryn Smith Pyle and María Teresa Rodríguez

2012

The theft of Argentine children for illegal adoptions, orchestrated by the military men who had kidnapped and murdered the children's' parents during the Dirty War, has been the substance of investigative journalism; documentaries; feature films, including the Oscar-winning *La Historia Oficial*; and even *telenovelas*. As a result, people around the world are aware of the horror of that era and the heart-wrenching searches undertaken by biological families still desperate to be reunited with these children, many now in their thirties.

Less well-known is what went on in El Salvador during the civil war that between 1980 and 1992 claimed some 75,000 lives and caused hundreds of thousands to flee the country. Poverty, inequality and brutal repression pushed legions of Salvadorans to join a growing resistance movement and the government's response was a scorched-earth campaign. Entire communities were massacred, except for some infants and very young toddlers removed by government soldiers and sent for adoption in Europe and the United States. Now the search is on for the adults these children have become. This aspect of the war so captured the interest of Kathryn Smith Pyle, IAF senior representative for El Salvador from 2001 until 2007, that she enlisted Rodríguez to help her bring the story to the screen. They received support from the Sundance Institute, the United States Institute of Peace and the Independent Television Service, among other donors. IAF grantee partners Museo de la Palabra e Imagen and Centro Arte para la Paz provided archival footage and other material.

Their film, *Niños de la Memoria* (Children of Memory), tracks the progress of three individuals toward locating their biological relatives. Margarita Zamora, whose brothers disappeared, is a determined investigator with IAF grantee partner Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niños y Niñas Desaparecidos, a nongovernmental organization founded to reunite families separated during the war. Two of her clients are Jamie Harvey, 31, who was adopted by an American family and hopes to find the Salvadoran relatives she never knew; and Salvador García, a farmer who buried one daughter after a massacre and struggles daily to cope with the disappearance of another. At every turn, Margarita is thwarted by lack of access to military records that could resolve these cases. The searches alternate with a vivid collage chronicling Salvadoran history from the origin of the civil war to the recent election of Mauricio Funes, the first successful presidential candidate from the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional, the insurgent movement that became a political party after hostilities ceased.

While *Niños de la Memoria* leaves the viewer wanting to know more about its protagonists, especially about Margarita and the dozens of cases she has pursued, it does a good job of exposing what happened. In 2009, the Salvadoran government finally acknowledged the disappearance of the children, but there has been no official investigation, no prosecution of the perpetrators, no justice for the victims. To date, Pro-Búsqueda has resolved some 370 cases but hundreds more remain on the books and many may never be resolved. The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo have found only 105 of some 500 Argentine children reported missing, but if they have taught us anything, it is that, in spite of these odds, families will not give up.

The film's premier at the Festival Cine Documental Ambulante in San Salvador in May generated extensive media coverage. The Latin American Studies Association honored *Niños de la Memoria* with its Award of Merit in Film after selecting it for screening at LASA's 2012 Congress held in San Francisco. Visit www.ninosdelamemoria.com for updates on screenings; to learn more about the search for these children, log onto probusqueda.org.sv.—*Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías, IAF Web master*

www.iaf.gov

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