



# NEWS RELEASE

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## IAF Joins AIDS Struggle

**ARLINGTON, Va.** — The 14th International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain, has highlighted the urgency of the worldwide HIV/AIDS epidemic.

According to the United Nations' staggering statistics, 1.4 million Latin Americans suffer from the virus and in the Caribbean more than 420,000 are infected. By the end of 2001, 130,000 Brazilian children were orphaned as a result of AIDS. In Haiti, 30,000 died of HIV/AIDS in 2001.

Since 1989 the Inter-American Foundation has responded to proposals dealing with HIV/AIDS from NGOs and base groups in Haiti and Brazil as well as Venezuela, Colombia and Paraguay. Generally, these groups have stressed HIV/AIDS education, prevention, research and support services. The Associação Brasileira Interdisciplinar de AIDS (ABIA), the first such project to receive a grant, pioneered research that contributed to advocacy material targeting low-income women, slum dwellers and adolescents.

Most recently, the Centro de Formación Popular "Renaciendo Juntos" (CEPOREJUN) in Venezuela received support for its assistance to HIV/AIDS victims forced out of the job market. CEPOREJUN's program allows participants to seek the medical attention necessary to stay healthy and productive and to

benefit from vocational training. The program also targets the stigma associated with employing a worker with HIV/AIDS by educating business leaders on the rights as well as the capabilities of this population. Advocacy is provided through collaboration with another NGO, along with AIDS testing, psychological treatment and lobbying services.

“Since September 2001, the project, the only one of its kind in Venezuela, has worked with 168 people infected with HIV/AIDS in training, networking and increasing awareness,” said Gerada Suescum Fraga, CEPOREJUN’s general coordinator, “thanks to the IAF’s support.”

IAF was created by Congress in 1969 to provide assistance to the poor in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 1971, it has funded more than 4,300 self-help projects throughout the region. For more information log onto [www.iaf.gov](http://www.iaf.gov).

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