



# The Inter American Foundation and Disabled Peoples Organizations

No. 39

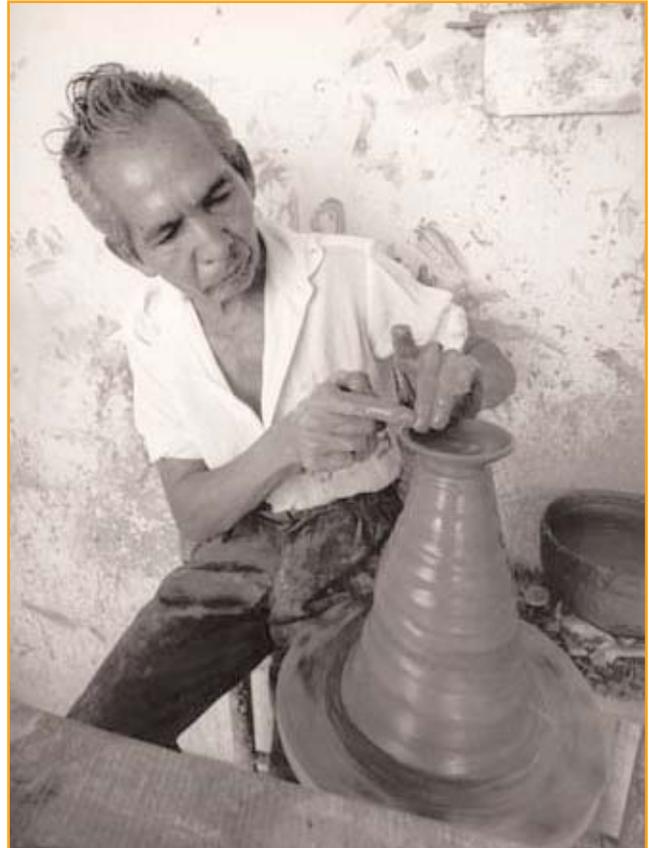
**T**he The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) is a U.S. government agency that provides grants for grassroots development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IAF responds to self-help proposals from grassroots groups and the organizations that support them, aimed at improving the quality of life for poor people and strengthening democratic practices.

For more than three decades the IAF has helped marginalized communities overcome biases and work toward full participation in economic and civic life. Over the past three years, the IAF has intensified its outreach efforts and has invested more than \$2 million dollars in Disabled People's Organizations working on prevention, education, rehabilitation, advocacy and job development:

El Ceibal Asociación Civil (El Ceibal), a grassroots support organization, is helping to consolidate clusters of artisans in Santiago del Estero and Tucumán, Argentina, into a single weavers' association. El Ceibal provides the artisans with marketing support and training in traditional indigenous weaving techniques to improve quality and add value to their products. The organization is actively identifying weavers with disabilities through a pilot project to integrate them with their peers.

Associação de Deficientes Físicos de Betim (ADE-FIB), a disabled peoples' organization, focuses on protection of watersheds and the preservation of surface ground water sources in the municipality of Betim in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Tackling a problem that affects everyone in the community and is not usually associated with this constituency, ADEFIB brings attention to the abilities of these individuals as it educates the public in environmental conservation. The organization is also providing job training and placement for 200 of its members.

Fundación Telefónica de Chile (Telefónica-Chile), a corporate foundation, partnered with the IAF to

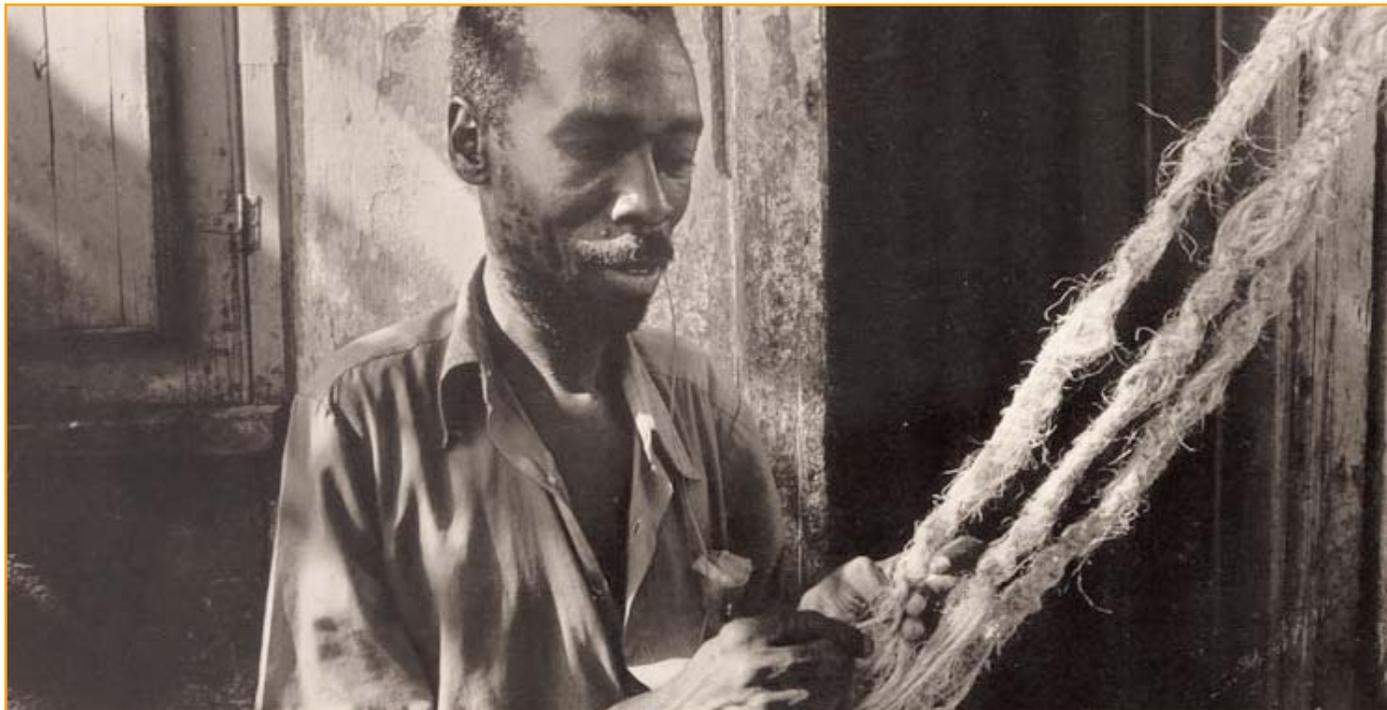


Sean Sprague

*A 1988 grant to La Asociación Cooperativa de Grupo Independiente Pro Rehabilitación Integral (ACOGIPRI) supported the expansion of Shicali Cerámica, a studio that employs Salvadorans with disabilities and exports ceramics to Canada.*

benefit persons with disabilities through a grant fund for small projects focused on education and income generation.

Asociación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo Campesino (ASDEC) is working with 500 shrimp farmers in the department of Usulután, El Salvador, to improve production, create a processing facility and take advantage of local and international markets. The farmers are organized in cooperatives, several of which are made up of disabled veterans of the country's civil war. Individuals and hometown associations in Salvadoran communities in the U.S. and Canada will help secure additional technical support and identify export markets.



Mitchell Denburg

*A 1981 grant to the Jamaica Society for the Blind (JSB) extended credit for enterprise development to the pictured artisan and others.*

Asociación Nicaragüense para la Integración Comunitaria (ASNIC) is developing a baseline study and a pilot community integration project to assist families and community-based associations in ensuring that children with disabilities receive an education. ASNIC will work with parents, teachers and school officials toward mainstreaming children in Managua, Ocotol and Bocao in Nicaragua and Ciudad Guatemala, Quetzaltenango and Santiago de Atilán in Guatemala as a first step toward nationwide inclusion.

Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH), a human rights group in Peru, is creating a national network of Peruvians with psychiatric and cognitive disabilities. Its workshops will train 520 individuals with mental disabilities and their families in leadership, legal and human rights, organizational development and other relevant areas. Twenty trainees will receive scholarships toward intensive leadership and advocacy training and will become trainers themselves. The workshops will provide the tools that

individuals with mental disabilities and their organizations need to work with government in order to influence policies that affect them.

In addition to awarding development grants, the IAF has worked with the Inter-American Institute for Disabilities and Handicap International to sponsor travel for activists and other civil society representatives, which allows them to participate in events and conferences. These included sessions of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities and the Inter-American Disabilities Conference held by the Organization of American States.

For additional information visit  
[www.iaf.gov](http://www.iaf.gov)

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