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grassroots development

JOURNAL of the INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION



FOCUS: Celebrating the Grassroots Approach

The Inter-American Foundation, a public corporation created by the United States Congress in 1969, provides direct financial support for self-help efforts initiated by poor people in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Foundation makes about 200 grants a year to support projects carried out in more than 25 countries. Approximately half of its funds are appropriated by Congress. The remainder comes from the Social Progress Trust Fund administered by the Inter-American Development Bank.

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Cover photo: A young boy watches intently as an apprentice learns how to repair farm machinery in Coahuila State, Mexico.
Opposite: A health promoter in Cuernavaca, Mexico, peers into a microscope. These photos, both by Miguel Sayago, were selected as part of a retrospective honoring the IAF's twentieth anniversary. (See page 16.)

grassroots development

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Celebrating 2

Daphne White

When legislation creating the Inter-American Foundation was first introduced in the U.S. Congress, many thought the concept was so radical that the agency would never reach its first anniversary. But on May 3, 1990—after two decades of promoting grassroots self-help efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean—the Foundation returned to Capitol Hill to celebrate its twentieth anniversary.

"The message has gotten through: People are capable, the potential is there. You just have to give them the chance, the opportunity to help themselves, and they will supply the motivation," Congressman Dante Fascell told a capacity crowd of 250 people gathered in the committee room of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Fascell, who in 1969 cosponsored the legislation authorizing the Foundation, was honored at this celebration with the creation of an IAF fellowship bearing his name. The Dante B. Fascell Inter-American Fellowship will provide money for Latin Americans each year to disseminate information about successful grassroots development efforts in the region.

"The idea of personal communications embodied in the fellowship is one we have long dreamed of," Fascell said. "After 20 years, it is exciting to realize that all the ideas of the legislation, and all the efforts of the first board" have been implemented and been shown to be effective, said Fascell.

"The Foundation has been a courageous institution, sometimes sailing



In November 1971, the Inter-American Foundation made its first grant to a fishing cooperative in Peru, the *Cooperativa Pesquera Chimbote*. With \$68,000 from the IAF, the group purchased its first fishing boat, pictured here on its maiden voyage. Since then, the Foundation has made over 3,000 grants to self-help organizations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, for a total of over \$300 million.

In this Focus section of Grassroots Development, readers are invited to share in the events of the twentieth anniversary celebration, held last May in Washington, D.C., and to reflect with us on the challenges and opportunities ahead as the Foundation enters its third decade.

Illustration: Bill Firestone

0 Years of Work at the Grassroots

against the wind," noted Enrique Iglesias, president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the event's keynote speaker. "We have learned a lot with the Foundation: about the realities of poverty, about the abilities of the impoverished, and also about how to identify solutions."

The IDB is now working with some of the same microenterprises that were first identified and promoted by the Foundation, Iglesias said. "The Foundation, with singular success, has spotlighted the potential of nongovernmental organizations and helped them do the job they need to do," he noted.

The IAF recognizes that "a society is more than governments and institutions—it is groups of people working together in a democratic atmosphere," Iglesias said. In a region where one-third of society lives in absolute poverty, the Foundation's direct work with grassroots organizations is crucial, he added.

That theme was also explored in a special documentary videotape produced for the occasion, featuring journalist Bill Moyers. The IAF was created as "a new and experimental approach to U.S. foreign assistance," Moyers said in the documentary. "Many in the Congress had concluded that much of our bilateral aid was not reaching the poor for whom it was intended." While recently created nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) had started working with grassroots organizations in the late 1960s, official "foreign aid programs often overlooked many of these grassroots efforts," Moyers said.

The philosophy of the IAF is "as basic as Jeffersonian democracy, of-

fering an approach that respects the dignity and self-esteem of the poor," Moyers concluded.

"In its own quiet way, the Inter-American Foundation has proven that an international agency can support people-centered development," agreed Valdemar Oliveira Neto, a Brazilian lawyer who works among the poor in the slums of Recife. The Foundation shares a vision with several other multilateral agencies, "a vision in which people stand at the very center, not merely as beneficiaries to be measured or counted, but as the creators, planners, and implementers of their own development process," Neto said at the anniversary celebration.

"The Foundation, ahead of the times, made possible small-scale experiences that improved the quality of life in innovative ways; that promoted learning at all levels; that put the beneficiary in the driver's seat; that are replicable and relevant to social policies; and that, directly or indirectly, generate well-being and goods and services for the participating poor," said Mónica Jiménez, a Chilean social worker, university professor, and civic leader. The Foundation's work has "enriched the soil from which a democratic Chile now can grow," Jiménez told the gathering.

The Foundation's first president, William Dyal, was one of the last to speak on May 3. In his brief comments, he emphasized that "the real Foundation is out there, among the people of Latin America and the Caribbean." His last statement as president to the IAF board of directors in 1979, Dyal added, remains a valid prologue for the challenge of the 1990s: "While some funders grapple with the rhetoric of basic human

needs or the definition of who the poor are, the Foundation is busy funding the poor so *they* can grapple with the basics."

WHY CELEBRATE?

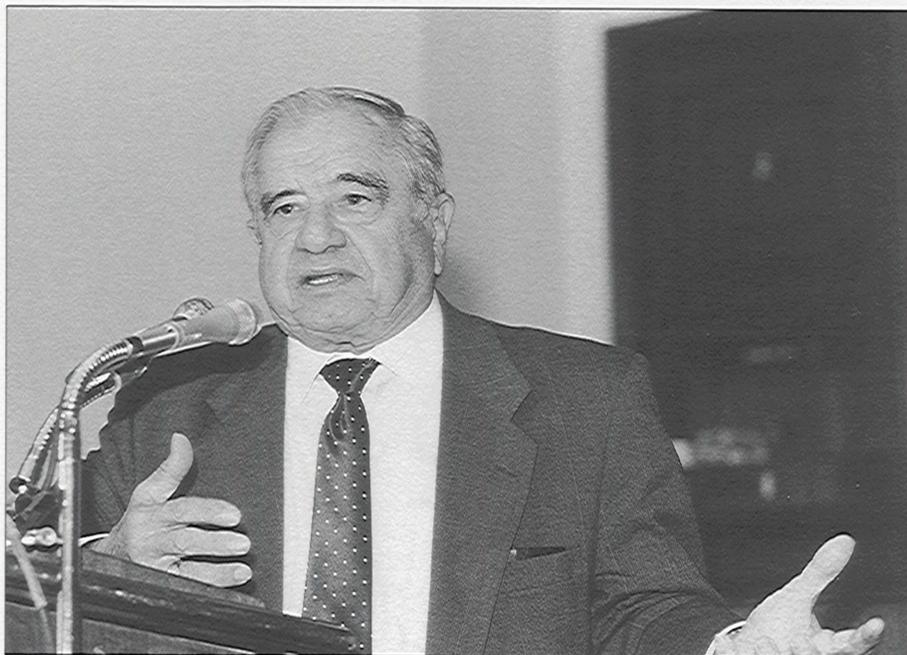
Deborah Szekely, the Foundation's outgoing president, was the impetus behind this twentieth anniversary celebration. "Essentially, it was an opportunity to tell our story on Capitol Hill," Szekely says.

"Our mandate is to fund, learn, and disseminate, and I want Congress to use our expertise when they are discussing Latin America," she explains. Even though the IAF is one of the smallest federal agencies—with a staff of just over 70 people and an annual budget of about \$30 million—it is one of the most knowledgeable when it comes to grassroots efforts in the hemisphere, Szekely notes.

This celebration and its attendant publicity, she adds, informs people of how that expertise qualifies the IAF to sit at the table whenever Latin American and Caribbean issues are discussed in Congress, at think-tanks, or among policymakers.

"The Foundation took awhile getting born, but in the future I would like it to take its rightful place in the development world," she says.

In her remarks on Capitol Hill, Szekely said: "Twenty years ago, Congress mandated that we be independent, above and beyond short-term foreign policy, that we be risk-takers, and that as we work we should learn from experiences in each and every country of Latin America and the Caribbean. That foresight enabled this very small agency with a budget of one-tenth of one percent of



U.S. foreign assistance funds to affect the lives of tens of thousands of the underprivileged."

After six years as president of the IAF, Szekely resigned in September 1990 to start a new foundation called Eureka. At Eureka, Szekely will work to transfer some of the lessons she learned in Latin America to organizations working with at-risk children in the United States. Eureka will focus on agencies serving children from the prenatal period through the age of nine.

The new foundation will identify successful community-based agencies to serve as "partner" organizations, and then offer staff from other promising grassroots groups working sabbaticals to visit these agencies and learn first-hand how to sharpen their own techniques.

It is a learning and dissemination model similar to that developed at the IAF, Szekely says. "The Eureka Foundation does not intend to create programs that require new money," she says. "Rather, it will transplant successful innovative approaches from one existing program to another and in the process multiply the value of grants long since made."

FASCELL FELLOWSHIPS

To broaden its dissemination effort, the IAF announced a new fellowship program to encourage people from Latin America and the Caribbean to

pool information about grassroots development.

"The Dante Fascell Inter-American Fellowship is targeted at Latin American and Caribbean leaders who have distinguished themselves in the field of grassroots development, are skilled at dissemination, and want to publicly promote a successful approach to grassroots development," explains Robert Sogge, IAF Director of fellowships.

Unlike the three other IAF fellowship programs, this one does not involve university study. "This fellowship deals exclusively with dissemination and communication, so people in Latin America can learn from each other and improve the way they deal with problems at the grassroots level," Sogge notes.

The fellowships, which will not exceed \$50,000 or last longer than 12 months, will pay for a full-time or part-time working sabbatical. Fellows may stay at their existing jobs, as long as they are not government employees; and they may work on on-going projects as long as these include dissemination. Fellows are not expected to move away from their homes during the fellowship period. As many as three fellows will be named each year.

Candidates may apply directly or be nominated. Once nominated, candidates will be asked to submit a short description of proposed activities during their fellowship period. A panel of

Clockwise from left: Anniversary celebrants included U.S. Congressman Dante Fascell, IDB President Enrique Iglesias, and CONSAL member Ramón Velázquez Nazar.

Latin American and Caribbean development specialists will review the final applications and recommend candidates for selection by the IAF.

A wide variety of people could qualify for fellowships, including journalists, authors, artists, development practitioners, scientists, social scientists, and volunteers, Sogge says. For example, an Andean musician may propose a series of master classes and workshops to strengthen pride in traditional culture and inspire people to organize for change; or a university professor who has written about microenterprises may set up seminars to train small businessmen. A scientist might want to sponsor a regional conference on deforestation, or work with NGOs on a series of town-hall meetings to mobilize local communities. Sogge adds, "We expect that whatever activity is launched during the fellowship will not end when the grant is over. We are looking for people experienced in dissemination who have a long-term commitment."

Although the Fascell fellowship is intended to stimulate dialogue within the Latin American and Caribbean region, some of its ripple effects could

Continued on page 7

Reflections from a Road Well Traveled

William Dyal

William Dyal was the first president of the Inter-American Foundation, at a time when few people suspected the potential of grassroots organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and even fewer were funding them. On May 4, 1990, Dyal returned on the occasion of the Foundation's twentieth anniversary for a dialogue with IAF staff, to share his experiences and some of the lessons he has learned during a lifetime of development work. The following is excerpted from those remarks.

Anniversaries are a time for celebration, but they also offer an opportunity for taking stock. After 20 years, it is appropriate to hold up a mirror to see ourselves as we are. This means not being afraid of finding gray hair, of discovering the shortcomings that always follow the high expectations of youth. Whatever weaknesses exist, however, it is important for the Foundation to remember the strengths it inherits. Rejuvenation does not require setting off in an entirely new direction to prove we remain on the cutting edge of development organizations. Rather, we must be self-critical in order to learn how to meet new challenges while fulfilling the old ones better.

I am delighted to see so many fresh faces here because new perspectives are essential for understanding how the world is changing. It may also be that many of you are in a better position to grasp the power of the original ideals of the Foundation than those of us who have labored long enough for some of that luster to have worn off.

It has never been easy to answer in 25 words or less, as I have often been asked to do, "Exactly what is it that the IAF does?" The temptation is to search for catchwords or stock phrases, but there is no glib explanation. From the very beginning, the Foundation's Congressional mandate was broad; those few pages of legislation could be taken to mean almost anything. But at its core were three cardinal principles: responsiveness to local initiatives, the establishment of mutual trust between

the IAF and its grantees, and the need to learn from projects and share that learning with others. The new foundation could best be understood not by the work it did, but by the way that work would be done.

When the IAF began operating, there was no road map to follow because there were no clear-cut roads. Time and again it was necessary to deal with things that had never been dealt with before. We had to gain entrée into each country in the hemisphere, meet local people, and fend off those, including many North Americans, who approached us with their hands cupped. It was also necessary to reassure nervous ambassadors and the host countries they dealt with, who were suspicious of grants to obscure private organizations not under their control.

But we were determined to break the tendency that exists in development organizations to sit down to lunch only with the people we already knew and were comfortable with. It was, and still remains, important to reach out and build bridges to a diversity of people so that one is not cut off from the changing currents of the real world.

With that spirit of openness and flexibility, it may have seemed we were marching to a drummer no one else was hearing. What is it that our Latin friends first dubbed the IAF? *La Fundación insólita*. There is no equivalent phrase in English, but Congressman Fascell, whose idea the IAF was, may have come closest. Yesterday he confided that what has

made him especially proud of the Foundation has been "its ability, during the past 20 years, to maintain its uniqueness without proclaiming its superiority to the rest of the development world."

This has not happened without a struggle. The Foundation has always grappled with the danger of becoming arrogant. This arrogance is frightening not only because it alienates us from other public and private funders, but because it has a way of flowing down to the grantees in the field. The staff of the Foundation is not *the* Foundation. We do not own it and never have; the ownership has always been elsewhere. The Foundation is a conduit for achieving a partnership with the peoples of this hemisphere. It is the model of relationship that separates the IAF from every other donor organization I have encountered.

To paraphrase the thinker John Gardner, "Leadership is the process of persuasion by example." For years, funders have talked about holding grantees accountable, but we felt that accountability began with us. So we inaugurated an internal process of evaluation that brought staff together to see how the lessons of one project, failures as well as successes, might affect the outcome in others. That task becomes more complex as the numbers and types of grants grow, but the Foundation in the 1990s must continue to devise ways to break down the geographical and sectoral barriers that prevent the sharing of useful information, not only among ourselves but with the grantees and others who are our partners in discovery. This is important because a small development organization, and a world of limited resources, cannot afford to continually reinvent the wheel. It is also important because we can easily become discouraged in harsh times into believing

that seeds planted scattershot among the grassroots cannot eventually grow into a forest.

In that regard, I would like to digress for a moment to share some personal experiences with you. I have always believed that the Foundation should be able and willing to close shop when it ceases to be what it was intended to be. I have also believed that this is not a place to spend one's whole life. There is a great temptation to do so because there is no better place to be. But there are other places to go.

When I left the IAF, I took what I learned here with me. I spent a year with the Ford Foundation as a consultant, literally traveling to each of their foreign offices, searching for ways they could cut their overhead costs, which were running at nearly 30 to 40 percent. Then I became president of the American Field Service (AFS). After spending most of my life focusing on Latin America, I had the opportunity to get to know the rest of the world, traveling to more than 70 countries in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere during the next six years. During that time I visited China, where I had initiated a teachers' exchange program for the AFS.

Each morning during my stay there I would jog in Tiananmen Square. One day, a group of young men who were also running in the square caught up to me and began speaking to me in Chinese, which I did not understand. We circled the square several times, conversing with sign language and gestures. The next morning, I trotted out the door of the Hotel Beijing and found these young men waiting. We became regular jogging companions. A few days later, I tried to explain to them that I would be leaving the country soon, and something happened that was uncharacteristic for both Chinese and North Americans—one after another, we stopped and embraced. That brief moment of intimacy would not have been possible except for the gift of cultural empathy—the ability to reach out, touch, and trust—that my friends in Latin America and the Caribbean had given me so many years ago. It



Bauer & Charles



Stephen Vetter

Top: William Dyal (center) with the IAF's second president, Peter Bell (left), and Dante Fascell at tenth anniversary fete in 1981. Above: Dyal with IAF grantees in Jamaica in the 1970s.

is a gift, I suspect, that many others here today have also received.

One of the things that struck me when I was president of the IAF was how most North Americans had so little idea of who their neighbors to the south really are. It may well be even more true today. Our awareness is confined to what we read in the paper or see on the evening news, brief and intermittent snippets about overwhelming social and economic problems. We never see the faces or come to know the names of that mass of people who have begun to mobilize themselves to improve their lives and the lives of their children. I was the director of the Peace Corps in Colombia during the late 1960s, and I actively followed what was happening there during my tenure at the IAF and cherished the friendships we made and the achievements of our friends. So I have been appalled and disheart-

ened by the headlines describing what has been happening there in recent years. When I confided these feelings to the Foundation's representative for Colombia, she replied, "But Bill, wonderful things are happening there." She then began to list an array of exciting projects.

I was reminded of a dinner conversation nearly 20 years ago in which 12 of us sat around a table with Cardinal Raúl Silva of Chile. It was not long after the coup there, and I remember asking the Cardinal how on earth were local groups able to continue working for development in such adverse times and what was his role. He replied, in his beautiful Spanish, "I just spread my robes out." He provided a unique umbrella for protecting many IAF grantees.

Then yesterday, I was moved to hear Deborah Szekely, the IAF's president, read off a list of former grantees who are now leaders in the new, democratically elected government of Chile. Some of the very people whom I had worried about with the Cardinal were now cabinet ministers.

Training people to become public leaders was not a goal of the Foundation when it began, but today those people are becoming leaders in countries throughout the hemisphere. It is one of the great spinoffs of the IAF's work during the past two decades, and it will accelerate because Latin America is changing. The real credit for that belongs with the people in communities throughout the continent who have struggled, with justice and power, to keep alive the ideals of democracy in their daily lives. The IAF has furthered this movement, not by urging the importation of North American institutions or ideology, but by strengthening the local organizations of civil society that are the sinews and bones of the democratic process. Today we can see that the impact of the IAF's efforts far exceeds the size of its grants. As long as organizations of, by, and for the people exist and continue to grow in Latin America and the Caribbean, there will be a role for a funder who works in partnership beside them. ◇

also include presentations at conferences in North America.

CONSAL

The IAF is already deepening regional dissemination through the efforts of the Consejo de Servicios de Apoyo Local (CONSAL), which met in Washington, D.C., during the same week that the Foundation celebrated its twentieth anniversary. CONSAL consists of one representative from the In-Country Support teams in each of the IAF's seven regions, and works to advise the Foundation president and staff about regional developments that cut across national boundaries.

One such issue resulted from the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement in 1989, which hurt small coffee producers in several Caribbean and Central American countries as well as Mexico. Partly as a result of CONSAL's work, the Foundation is now considering a proposal to support an international union of small coffee organizations called UPROCAFE. The union will spread infrastructure costs and act as a single marketing agent for the small producers, generating sufficient economies of scale to allow them to compete effectively with large growers.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Having celebrated its first 20 years, the Foundation is now in a time of

transition. A new president has not yet been named to replace Szekely, and in the interim, Vice President for Programs Stephen Vetter has been appointed acting president.

Frank Yturria has just started his term as the new chairman of the board (a profile of Yturria appears on page 47), and three new members have also joined the board in recent months. Board member Norton Stevens, an international businessman from New York, has traveled extensively in Latin America and is especially interested in Ecuador and the Andean region. The two new members from the public sector are Bernard Aronson, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, and James Michel, assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Five more members must be appointed by the Bush administration to bring the board up to full strength.

"Although we are in a period of tremendous change, it is also a time of rebirth, renewal, rededication, and recommitment," says Patrick Breslin, IAF research coordinator and the author of several books and articles about the Foundation. "After 20 years, the basic values of the Foundation still make sense, but it's a question of how you reinterpret them."

Whereas two decades ago the IAF had just started working with fledgling grassroots groups, this sector has grown in size and capability. This has led the Foundation into a period of

evolution rather than revolution, Breslin says. "From rhetoric about funding people, we have shifted to funding networks and interchanges across frontiers," he adds.

One of the challenges now facing the Foundation is encouraging other development agencies to become more involved with the burgeoning grassroots sector. "Twenty years ago it was a radical idea to fund grassroots groups, but now the World Bank is wondering how to fund them," Breslin says. The spread of democracy in Latin America bodes well for the survival and growth of grassroots organizations, Breslin notes, increasing both the opportunity and need for informed donor support.

Finally, Breslin suggests that in upcoming years the Foundation might help link Latin Americans with their North American counterparts. The Foundation already has a development education program reaching out to schools in the United States, and linkages have been made between Latin American and U.S. grassroots organizations working on similar problems.

"I think over the next 10 years we will be looking more and more for connections to our own country, transmitting ideas and experiences about how poor people help themselves," Breslin says.

And Edmund Benner, acting vice president for programs, suggests that the Foundation will also be linking microdevelopment efforts to macro efforts in the future. "The small groups we are funding are getting together to speak with a louder voice, especially in the emerging democracies," Benner says. "As a result, they can approach the larger funders and undertake larger projects as a group. Together they can also attempt to influence public policy."

"The world of grassroots organizations is much more sophisticated than it was 20 years ago," Breslin concludes. But as public social services shrink and national economies continue to founder, the task of improving the lives of the poor has also become more complex. The work of the Foundation still has far to go. ♦

DAPHNE WHITE is a Washington, D.C.-based journalist who writes on development and conservation issues.

Outgoing President Deborah Szekely at reception honoring the IAF's twentieth anniversary: "Essentially, it was an opportunity to tell our story on Capitol Hill."



Paul Kennedy

Putting the World Rightside Up

The Grassroots Perspective



Paul Kennedy

Three prominent grassroots leaders—Mónica Jiménez de Barros of Chile, Valdemar Oliveira Neto of Brazil, and Luis Hernández Navarro of Mexico—gathered with other Latin Americans and long-standing friends of the Inter-American Foundation in Washington, D.C., last May to help celebrate the IAF's twentieth anniversary. During their stay, *Grassroots Development* asked Jiménez, Neto, and Hernández to join a round table discussion of the future of Latin American development, and of the opportunities, risks, and challenges that confront nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as redemocratization gathers steam in countries throughout the hemisphere. They were interviewed by Washington, D.C.-based free lance writer Mary Beth Marklein, whose work has appeared in the *Baltimore Sun*, *USA Today*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Before the interview formally began, Marklein asked how each became involved in grassroots development. They all said that their course was set when they were quite young. Jiménez, whose father was a public health physician, cited a long family tradition of social work. As minister of health, her father helped formulate health policy in Chile during the 1950s; following the restoration of democracy in 1989, her brother became the new minister of health. Jiménez believes it is important for a middle-class family to have a "social conscience, to be aware of what is going on with the poor people in their country."

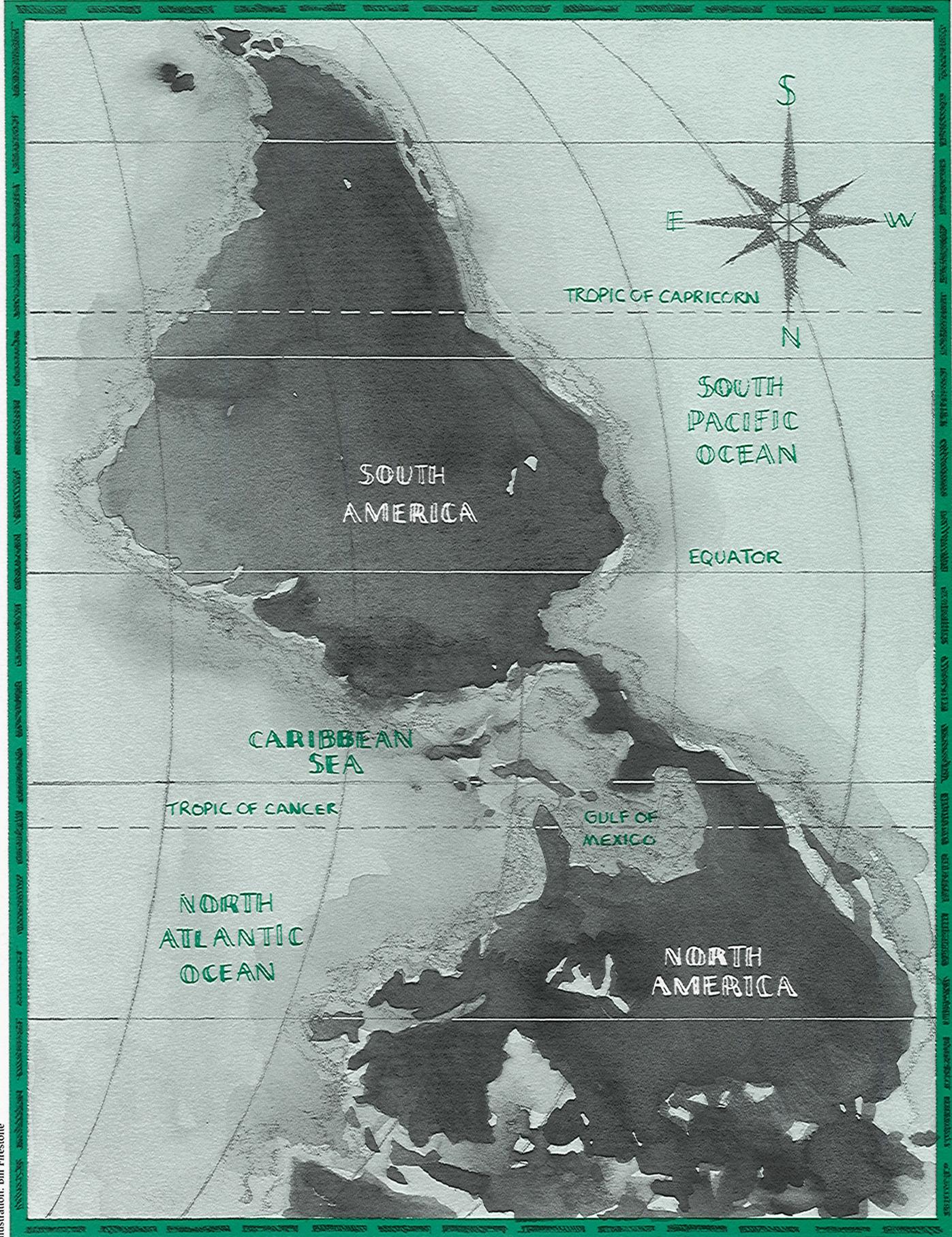


Illustration: Bill Firestone

Both Neto and Hernández began their work in development as college students. Says Neto, "At 23, when I began working as a young lawyer, I often went to the *favelas*—to the slums—where people were struggling for land on which to build their homes. Talking to the people there made a very strong impression on me." For Hernández it was also a case of direct contact with the poor. "As students," he said, "we had to make a commitment to end poverty—to reach out to the *ejidos* in rural areas, to our poor urban neighbors, and to the workers." Hernández's family had left Spain for Mexico during the Spanish Civil War. "They had been fighting there," says Hernández, "for the same reasons I started to fight for Mexico. Maybe this interest was in my blood."

When asked about the interest of young people today, Jiménez responded that the attitudes toward social work of her five grown children are a microcosm of attitudes prevalent in Chile, although no one in her family represents the apathetic segment of society—"those people who do nothing and believe in nothing." Three of her children are active in grassroots work. Another believes in business, in the power of the free market. The fifth is skeptical about the efficacy of politics or social movements but places his confidence in how technology can benefit the poor "by bringing water to the desert." He is very critical of the developed world to the north. Gesturing with her hands as though turning a wheel, Jiménez told how he had turned the map in his room upside down so that South America and Africa are on the top and the United States and Europe are on the bottom.

This image of the "upside-down" map aptly communicates a feeling that ran throughout the interview that followed—that the South is looking for a more equitable partnership with the North. By extension, it applies also to the relationship between the IAF and its grantees. Some dissatisfaction was expressed about this relationship, but what comes through stronger is agreement that an important evolution is taking place across the spectrum of partnership relations: in person-to-person communication, in NGOs extending their reach by creating new regional and national networks, in incipient "alliances" between governments and NGOs, and in transnational learning exchanges.

These three remarkable individuals express considerable optimism about the future of the grassroots, people-to-people approach espoused by the IAF for the past 20 years. They also see opportunities for the techniques practiced by NGOs to have a wider impact. But as their answers to Marklein's first question indicate, the new responsibilities are also a little frightening.

Q What are your concerns about the future of development in your countries?

Jiménez: For 16 years, Chile was under authoritarian rule, but the people taking over in the newly elected government hold philosophies more in line with ours. Now, if we don't do a good job, what will that say about the effectiveness of these philosophies? Under the dictatorship, it was very easy to blame the repressive political system when things didn't work out the way we had hoped. But now, with the government on our side, we no longer have that excuse, that scapegoat.

Hernández: We face a real challenge. The market economy has shown it can create jobs, wealth, and goods, but it lacks mechanisms to ensure that these things are distributed equitably to resolve poverty. Yet we all know that a centrally planned economy doesn't work.

In Mexico, things are even more difficult now than they were in the past. The economy has not grown for many years. If you monitor development, the economy, and the quality of health and education services, you can see that Mexico is not moving forward, but instead is falling farther and farther behind. And if you look at how income is distributed, you see the rich are richer and the poor are worse off today. That's not just in Mexico, it's all around the world.

Fifteen years ago we thought we could change society easily, quickly. Now we see that change comes slowly, that reforms come step by step, through cooperation with many factions.

Q: Does your work with NGOs offer a guideline for meeting this challenge?

Jiménez: It is more important now than ever before for NGOs to step forward. I don't think a radical change is the solution for Latin America, or the world. Like Luis, I am deeply troubled by both capitalism and socialism. Both systems are too far removed from the real problems of the people. Go to New York or the Soviet Union—you can find all kinds of problems in both places.

We need to cultivate person-to-

person relationships, and deepen them. If a network of grassroots and government institutions works together, I believe it's possible to get closer to solving the real problems. Big plans for big solutions don't work. We are moving slowly now, and looking for less dramatic reforms that *do* work. We are learning that small is beautiful.

Neto: If you look back 20 years, you can see that the relationship between NGOs, grassroots groups, and governments has already changed. During the 1970s and part of the 1980s, when Brazil was under a dictatorship, the only way to effect change was to work out of the public spotlight. Our goal was to strengthen grassroots organizations. We were working to make small but concrete improvements in communities throughout the country. Then, in the 1980s, as we became better organized, we began to address new and larger challenges. We tried to show the local groups how public policies affected not just one community, but often an entire city. We tried to help these communities understand how they could help shape policies by lobbying and establishing connections with the government.

Now we need to deepen our ability to manage this process, because the relationship has expanded to include regional, national, and international policies, including the debt crisis and trade issues. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, for example, design and implement national and international policies that affect the local level. As our voice begins to matter, we are frequently dealing with policies that we never before had to consider.

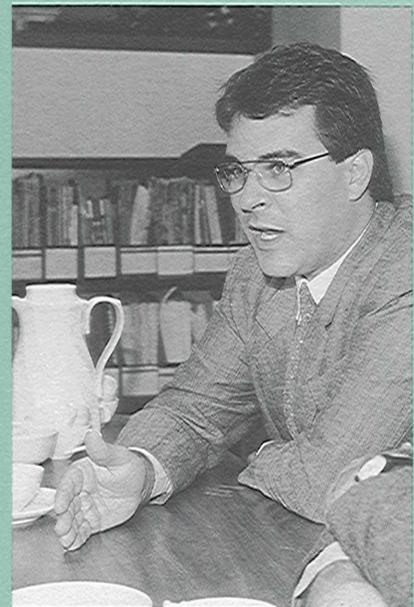
That's one way development is changing. "Development"—it's a beautiful word, with many different meanings. There is grassroots development that is based in the community and promotes self-help action. And there are big development projects such as those of the World Bank. Now we are fighting for a share of that big development pie to "scale up" our grassroots work. But to do so—to help communities understand the larger issues—we must develop new skills, get access to new technology and information, learn English, and so on.

Q: That costs money and takes time. Do donors have the patience to wait and the willingness to invest in strengthening organizational capacity?

Neto: Ten years ago it would have been pointless for NGOs to ask donors to support the kinds of work we are doing today because donors wanted to fund only community projects with an immediate impact. Now some donors are starting to respond to our demands.

Hernández: But the relationship between North and South isn't just a question of money. It is a question of creating a more equitable partnership. Remember how big the gap is be-

Valdemar Oliveira Neto, or "Maneto," has been director of the Centro de Cultura Luiz Freire, in Recife, Brazil, since 1983. The center, which receives IAF grant support, develops alternative forms of education for communities and serves as legal adviser for community groups. Under Neto's guidance, the center also developed a television program that is broadcast in nearby slum communities. Neto also serves on the boards of several groups, including a national network of NGOs in Brazil. Through Neto, the IAF has identified a number of grant opportunities, and he has advised the Foundation on negotiations with the Brazilian government.

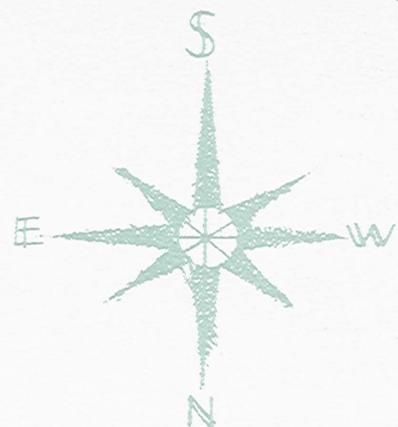


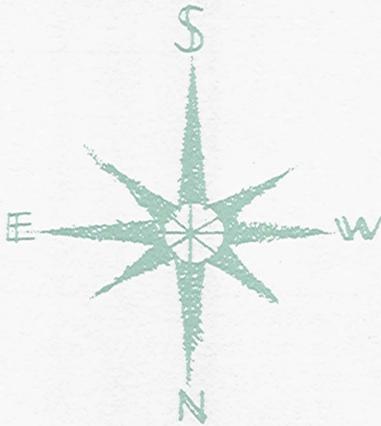
Paul Kennedy

tween the amount of aid doled out to us through international agreements and the amount of money we spend to pay off our external debt. Of all the money flowing out each year, how much gets back to the people who need it?

The South needs a way to communicate with decision makers in industrialized countries. For donors, that means a commitment to listen to us.

Jiménez: Another thing the North can do is to open up their markets. Remember the case of the grapes?





[Editor's note: In March 1989, the U.S. government pulled Chilean produce off grocery shelves after two cyanide-laced grapes from Chile were discovered in Philadelphia. Canada also urged consumers to destroy Chilean fruit. During the previous year (1988), estimates of U.S. imports of Chilean agricultural products approached \$285 million.] That was the worst thing the United States could have done to a country like Chile. With one single stroke, we lost more money than you could ever have given us. I don't think the United States intended to be malicious. I prefer to think it simply reacted too hastily, that it didn't think of all the problems the boycott was going to create for us.

for instance, have organized a network of local producers in Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. Now they are going to try to sell their coffee in the United States. The Mexicans have done it before.

Traditionally, only large, wealthy growers were able to export coffee, but now hundreds of small producers are beginning to make inroads into the international market—first, by organizing regional and national federations to provide volume and share the costs of building a promotional and technical infrastructure, and second, by approaching alternative trade organizations in the North. These organizations call themselves “alternative” because they emphasize both profitability and just and equitable social relations in the marketing of products. In Holland, for example, there is a law stipulating that coffee imports must include a certain percentage produced by small growers. This happened because of lobbying by the Max Havelaar Foundation, one of the most active alternative trade organizations. Equal Exchange, based in Boston, and the Thanksgiving Coffee Company of California, are trying to do the same thing in handling Mexican coffee.



Paul Kennedy

Mónica Jiménez de Barros is executive director of PARTICIPA, a nonpartisan organization that aims to show Chileans the role of democracy both as a system of government and a way of life. In March 1990, Jiménez was named chairman of the board of Fondo de Solidaridad Social, an agency that provides social assistance not addressed in the government's current budget. The IAF first became acquainted with Jiménez during her tenure as head of the school of social work at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Working in partnership with the IAF's In-Country Support office in Chile, Jiménez has played a role in several projects, including a major seminar on NGO-municipal government relations in the fall of 1989.

Jiménez: Countries in the North must remember that they are not our superiors, and we do not want them to be our benefactors. We have ideas and experience to share with the North. Maybe it's good to take the map and turn it upside down once in a while, like my son did.

Here is one example. In 1983, the Catholic University of America's National School of Social Services in Washington, D.C., arranged to come to our school of social work five times over a two-year period to conduct training sessions. When we started, I was nervous. I remember thinking, “Maybe the gringos are going to impose their policies on us.” But the reverse happened. After their trip to Chile, they reworked their entire social work program, which originally had been directed mostly at the middle and upper classes. Now it is a lot more involved with the low-income people in Washington, and in trying to reach those who are least organized. It is working beautifully, and we think that having had contact with life in Latin America helped make it

As Luis said, we are exporting more money than we are receiving. But we are not necessarily asking the North for money. Let us earn back that money by providing a market for our produce.

Hernández: Right. It's important to establish an equal exchange for things produced in the South and consumed in the North. Small coffee growers,

possible. That's the sort of thing we have to explore more. The feeling of having made a contribution can empower grassroots organizations more than donations of money or anything else.

Q: Do NGOs and grassroots groups also have something to offer governments? As democratization expands at the national level, has your focus changed in a way that could, ironically, weaken your impact?

Jiménez: Again, it's important not to forget that Chile—perhaps all of Latin America—doesn't want to expand its public sector. For one thing, Chileans don't want to return to a centralized economy. But also, we appreciate the benefits of the private sector. NGOs are more flexible and less bureaucratized. They can quickly go into an area of the country where they need to be, or redirect their energies to meet new needs.

Yes, it makes sense for Chile to expand its social policy by taking advantage of the knowledge gained from grassroots movements. Many grassroots people want to join the government or to work with the government. But if too many of them leave, we will lose the team, and it takes time to be a team. If we lose too many people, what will become of all the networking that took so long for us to build up? This is one of the dangers we face.

It's difficult for people in power to understand when you say you want to stay in the private sector. But I want to stay there for awhile, because I love what I'm doing and because I think we are making a difference in Chile.

Hernández: Your question began with the phrase, "as democratization expands," but it is not yet accurate to say that we have achieved a strong democracy in Mexico, or even that our work is nearing completion. Democratization in Latin America has just begun. We are living that process and are continuing to struggle to strengthen the power of grassroots citizens' groups and to minimize the power of the government bureaucracy.

In Mexico, many programs that were once run by the state are now

being administered by citizens' groups—health projects, education projects, legal projects, and so on. Although many of these activities should be the government's responsibility, the fact that they have been assumed by grassroots groups has advanced the process of democratization. And here is where NGOs and membership organizations can continue to play a very critical role for us.

Q: As NGOs and government become more closely aligned, might the government begin to rely too heavily on NGOs?

Neto: NGOs can play the role of service supplier for grassroots communities, but our main objective is not simply to deliver services when

too, but we must not allow ourselves to become overloaded or diverted from our main objective. And when we provide services, we must do it in a way that encourages community participation.

Jiménez: The government and NGOs must recognize and support the benefits that each can provide. One hallmark of NGOs is that they are very inventive, despite—or perhaps because of—their shoestring budgets.

Maybe government programs can achieve the same ends that NGOs achieve, but the way we reach the poor empowers them since we take cultural elements into consideration. For example, in a six-week research project in Chile, we compared gov-

The feeling of having made a contribution can empower grassroots organizations more than donations of money or anything else.

the government is unable to do it. Our mission is to make the government accountable to the communities.

Take World Bank projects for instance. Six years ago, we could do nothing to stop government dictums. One day the government would call a press conference to announce a new project; the next day they would start to finance it; and the day after that they would begin the work, never once allowing communities a voice in the matter.

But now, NGOs are briefed on government projects while they are still in the planning stages. We can bring those plans to the communities and involve them in discussions from the start. What's more, if the money is not used the way we were told it would be used, we can put pressure on the government, and even put an end to some projects. We've already done this two or three times.

So we don't intend to get too cozy with the government or become substitutes for it. Our role is much more to empower the grassroots and to establish a fair relationship with the government. We can supply services,

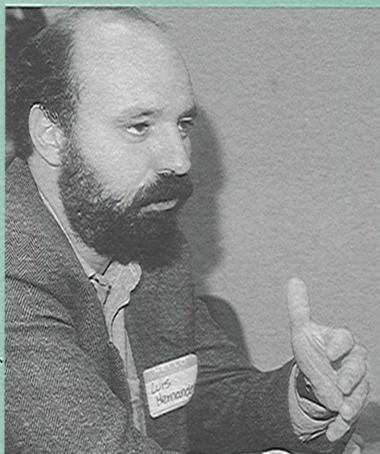
ernment preschools with community models. We found that the government preschools always had lots of children enrolled, while the NGO preschools were very small. But a cost-benefit analysis showed that the government model was more expensive and the NGO model produced better results.

Yes, in some ways the government model was the more professional one, but ours was more people-oriented. In our program, mothers, brothers and sisters, and sometimes fathers and other members of the community devoted time to these kids and learned hands-on how to work with them.

In the government model, on the other hand, parents left their children at the preschool with trained professionals who simply fed them, gave them play time and rest time, and so on, according to a standard procedure.

Remember: It's not just the child-care time that has to be considered. Preschool affects the whole life of the child. The research showed that girls and boys from the community pre-

schools go on to elementary school with better skills than the children in the government model. They have been given a very good start. An added advantage of the community model is that in small towns, working in the preschool provides a good leadership experience for women who have never worked outside the home. So the preschool benefits them, too.



Paul Kennedy

Luis Hernández Navarro is coordinator of the IAF's In-Country Support office in Mexico City and has been a consultant for the IAF since 1987. He has been a member of, or adviser to, several grassroots groups, including regional campesino organizations, urban social organizations, and independent unions. Hernández recently conducted field work and coauthored an article with Jonathan Fox about grassroots organizations and the democratic process (see Grassroots Development, Vol.13, No.2).

involved in preschool education. For a long time the government did not require preschools at the state level. Meanwhile, we were pushing for community-based schools. We now have 75 such schools. And under the new Brazilian Constitution, ratified in 1988, the government must provide preschool education for all children. So for the government, the question has become whether they will build a big bureaucracy or try to use some of our grassroots ideas. The World Bank is financing a project in São Paulo to do exactly this, to support community-based preschools.

Q: Democratization is not limited to Latin America. A lot of money—from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for example—has been diverted to Eastern Europe. How is that affecting Latin America?

Jiménez: I feel badly when organizations in the United States only want to talk about Eastern Europe because I think Latin America is the natural region for them to network with. Together, we should be thinking about what is taking place in our hemisphere.

One thing I learned when I went to Romania, though, is that Latin American professionals share a lot of similarities with Eastern Europeans and Africans. Consequently, I think the United States could make very effective use of Latin American professionals in identifying the best ways to work with Eastern Europeans and Africans.

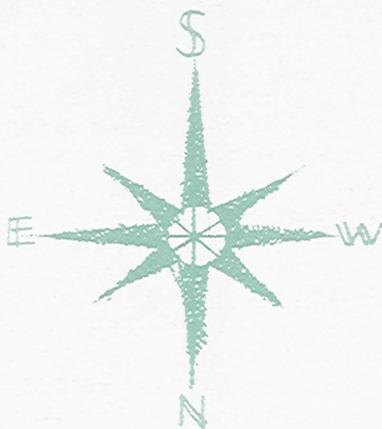
Q: How might Latin American countries work with Romania and the rest of Eastern Europe?

Hernández: There are many ways in which we can create linkages. First, the policies being implemented in those countries to introduce and strengthen market economies are the same policies that the World Bank and other advisers have suggested for Latin American countries. For example, Jeffrey Sachs, a Harvard economist, is adviser to the Polish government, and he was also adviser to Bolivia. It would be interesting to show Eastern European countries the side effects of those policies—what happened in Bolivia, for example, un-

Still, the fact is that some parents may need the government preschool because they both work and don't have an opportunity to donate time. So the challenge is, how can the NGOs share their preschool experience with organizations that are running preschools similar to the government model? We set up a council so that the NGOs can show the government what was successful for them and how the larger models might incorporate those successes.

Maybe it won't be possible for all successes to be incorporated. Or maybe the government could appropriate some money for the smaller model. Maybe working parents who must leave the child for the whole day can use the bigger preschool, while families where one or both parents don't work would be better off with the smaller model.

Neto: My organization has also been



der the Sachs plan. [Editor's note: The Sachs plan was initiated in 1985. While it brought down inflation and met other structural adjustment goals, it also reduced the amounts spent on social programs, placing a heavy burden on the poor.]

Second, grassroots organizations in Latin America have created successful social enterprises—enterprises that not only create income, but also find ways to distribute that income collectively. Perhaps those could be a model for Eastern European countries. For example, some lumber-producing communities in the state of Guerrero that have organized to market their products collectively have invested their earnings in building schools, roads, and hospitals.

And third, countries in Eastern Europe are starting a new democratic process that is, in some ways, similar to what we are creating. Mexico's membership organizations, for instance, are struggling to stay separate from the governmental system. That same struggle is taking place in Eastern Europe, too.

Q: The U.S. preoccupation with Eastern Europe aside, might Western European countries that fund Latin American NGOs also shift their attention away from you?

Neto: Western European countries are better able to reach the Eastern European markets than the United States is, so they naturally have a clear political interest in what's going on there. A meeting of 25 directors of Latin American NGOs and directors of European agencies will be held soon in Brussels to discuss the future of development cooperation. [Editor's note: As a result of the meeting, which took place shortly after this interview, the Liaison Committee of Development NGOs will present a resolution to the European Parliament demanding that increases in aid to Eastern Europe be matched by increases in aid to countries in the South.]

But I think the United States will have to redefine its role, too. Just as Japan is taking a lead in East Asia, the United States will have to recognize that Latin America is the region in which it can most effectively and productively invest and establish new relations. I don't think that's going to

happen in the short term, but in the long term, I think the United States will have an even greater presence in Latin America.

Q: The IAF is just celebrating its twentieth anniversary. Does it have some role to play in that process of hemispheric cooperation? Where should the Foundation focus its attention during the next 20 years?

Neto: The Foundation should start to "scale up." The importance of the work it is doing in Brazil with just \$2 million per year—which is really negligible—has a strong impact. The IAF model works because responding to the initiatives of grassroots groups leads to an understanding of the needs of each country.

Hernández: If possible, the IAF should see whether other major agencies—I'm thinking of USAID, for example—can adopt its model. I don't know if it's possible.

Jiménez: It's possible. I'm working with USAID. Why not?

Hernández: Also, the Foundation could help create linkages between private voluntary organizations (PVOs) in the United States and

relationship with many of its partners, so maybe it could let the partners do what they think has to be done without so many restrictions, as sometimes happens.

By deepening its relationship with us, the Foundation can show North Americans that Latin Americans know how to do things. It has to be shown, because we have to fight against the ethnocentrism that exists in all countries and pulls us apart.

Neto: The IAF has generally tried to develop programs on a problem-by-problem basis. Now, the Foundation is starting to look at some programs in the context of the country and the local NGO community. That is definitely a worthwhile approach. In December 1989, the Foundation's Brazil office produced a "Preview-Review" document outlining the strategy that guides its country program. Recently this document was presented for discussion and debate to a meeting of 25 Brazilian NGOs. This kind of open dialogue between a funding agency and NGOs goes a long way toward creating a relationship that is more egalitarian and mutually enriching.

Jiménez: We would like a more formal relationship with leaders in the IAF. We would like to be part of their

Just as Japan is taking a lead in East Asia, the United States will have to recognize that Latin America is the region in which it can most effectively and productively invest and establish new relations.

NGOs in Latin America, to create new kinds of services for the partners, and to discuss common issues. We were talking about the problems of small coffee producers before, but that is a common concern of many people who are trying to sell their handicrafts and other products.

You asked earlier about how donors could strengthen the capacity of NGOs. Perhaps the IAF could work more with the broad programs of NGOs and less with specific projects. The Foundation has created a positive

discussions on big issues that involve us. When they review their annual management report, we want to be there. When we come to Washington, as representatives of the In-Country Support teams for example, leaders here must attend these meetings not just to listen, but also to discuss the issues with us. We want to have a more equal North-South relationship not only globally, but also within the IAF. We have always said the IAF is the best, but we want to help make it even better. ◇

Hope in Adversity

The Human Face of Development

What makes a picture worth a thousand words? In selecting outstanding photographs from previous

IAF publications for a twentieth anniversary photo essay, *Grassroots Development* looked for images that tell a story too few people in the developed world ever get a chance to hear, since the poor of Latin America and the Caribbean rarely appear in the media. When they do, it is usually as a side-light to a "larger" story, such as the conflict in Central America or the Third World debt crisis.

The poor also remain faceless in many development publications. In closely argued analytical texts, they often appear only in the statistics defining their marginality. Fund-raising brochures that feature pictures of starving children or slum dwellers sometimes convey an equally depersonalizing, if unintended, message—that "beneficiaries" are powerless victims who can be rescued only through charity.

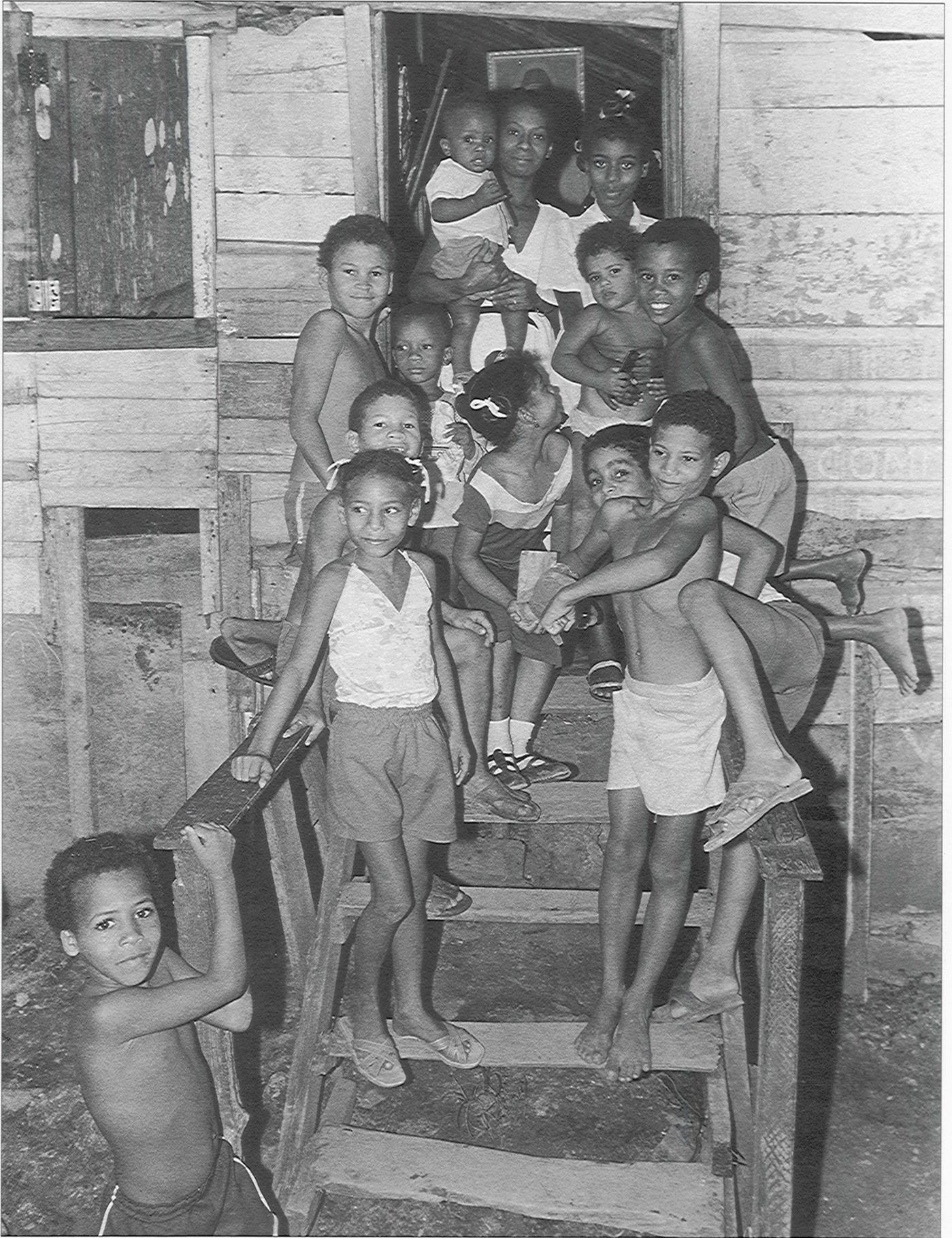
A founding precept of the IAF is that sustainable development must be homegrown. During the past two decades, the Foundation has found the people of the hemisphere eager to be partners in their own development. A thickening network of private local, regional, and national organizations has emerged to enable the poor to identify their own problems and set priorities for planning

and implementing their own solutions. Since its first issue in 1977, *Grassroots Development* has tried to tell that story, and photography has played a key role in illustrating not only how common this process is, but also how diverse the peoples and cultures making it happen really are.

During its early years, *Grassroots Development* relied primarily on pictures supplied by authors, IAF field representatives, local grantees, or other development agencies. When it became apparent that photography was not simply a tool for documenting projects, but for communicating the dignity and quiet heroism of ordinary people organizing to surmount herculean obstacles, the Foundation in the early 1980s commissioned Mitchell Denburg, a U.S. citizen then based in Guatemala, to serve as an unofficial house photographer. In recent years, the IAF has drawn upon the talents of a number of other gifted professionals, including Sandra Wavrick of the United States, Miguel Sayago and Marcelo Montecino of Chile, and Eduardo Gil of Argentina.

The following 12 images by these exceptional photographers were taken from hundreds of pictures in the Foundation's archives. Together, they offer a moving portrait of those who are working to ensure a better future for themselves and their communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. ♦







Award-winning photographer Mitchell Denburg poignantly depicts the living conditions of a family in Cartago, Colombia, *above*, before they rebuilt their home through a self-help housing project sponsored by the Corporación Diocesana de Cartago.

In a crowded shantytown in Santo Domingo, *left*, Denburg captured the energy and optimism characteristic of the region's poor on the faces of these youngsters—children of IAF grantees—spilling down a wooden staircase.

The power to effect social change through organization-building is conveyed in an almost-erie photo by Chilean Marcelo Montecino, *right*. During an assignment in 1986 to document a number of IAF projects in Chile, he attended this evening meeting of Mapuche Indian



farmers in their community near Temuco.

Preceding page: A striking "double exposure" of a Haitian woman, by Mitchell Denburg.

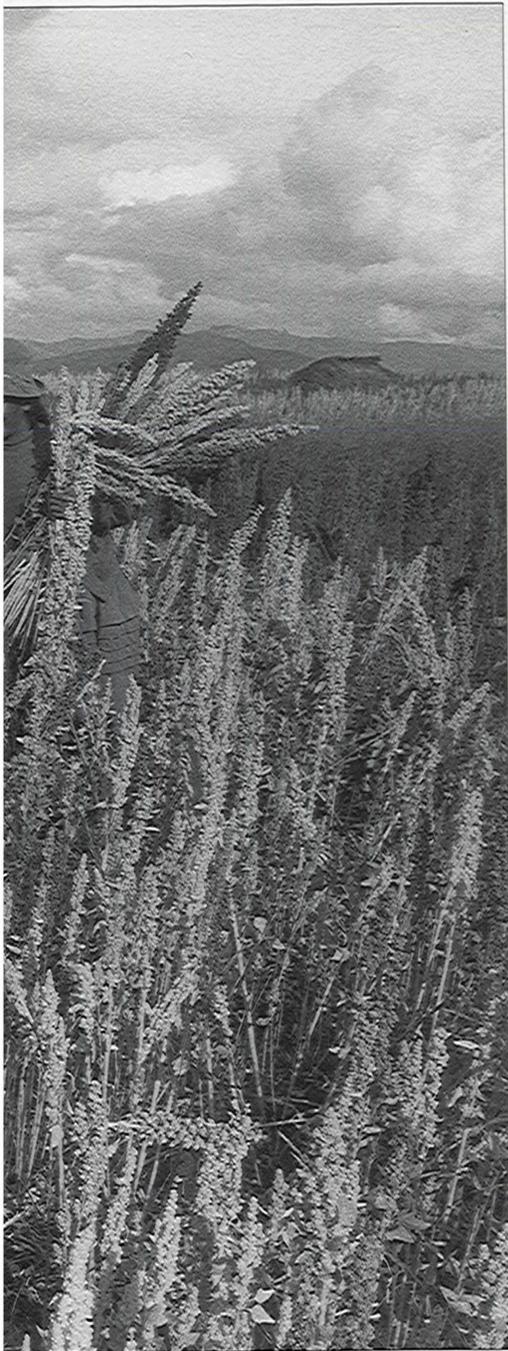


Traditionally, the Foundation has devoted the largest share of its grant portfolio to agricultural projects, through support for production cooperatives, rotating credit funds, crop diversification, and marketing programs.

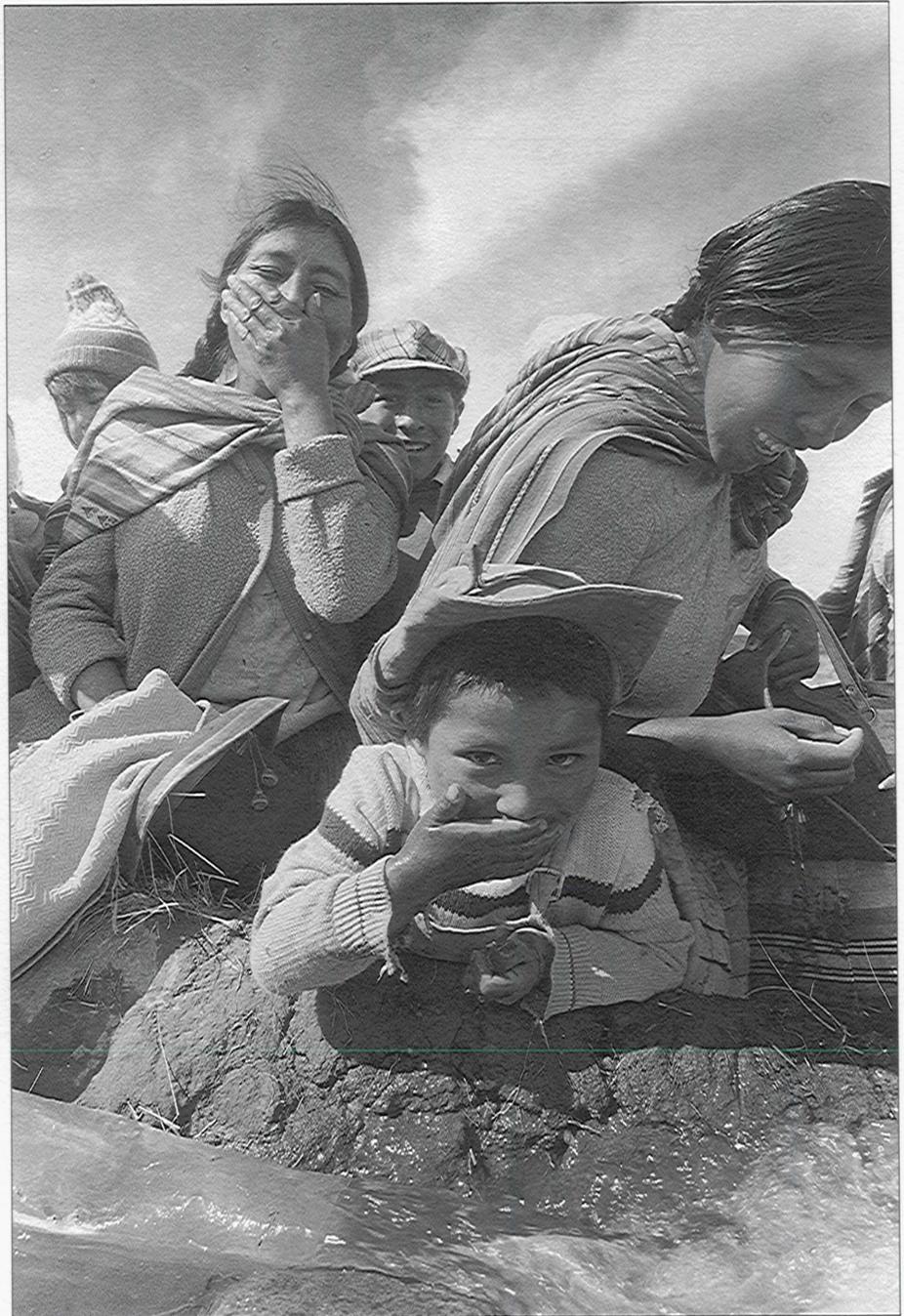
While visiting Foundation projects in Peru in 1988, Chilean Miguel Sayago took this richly textured

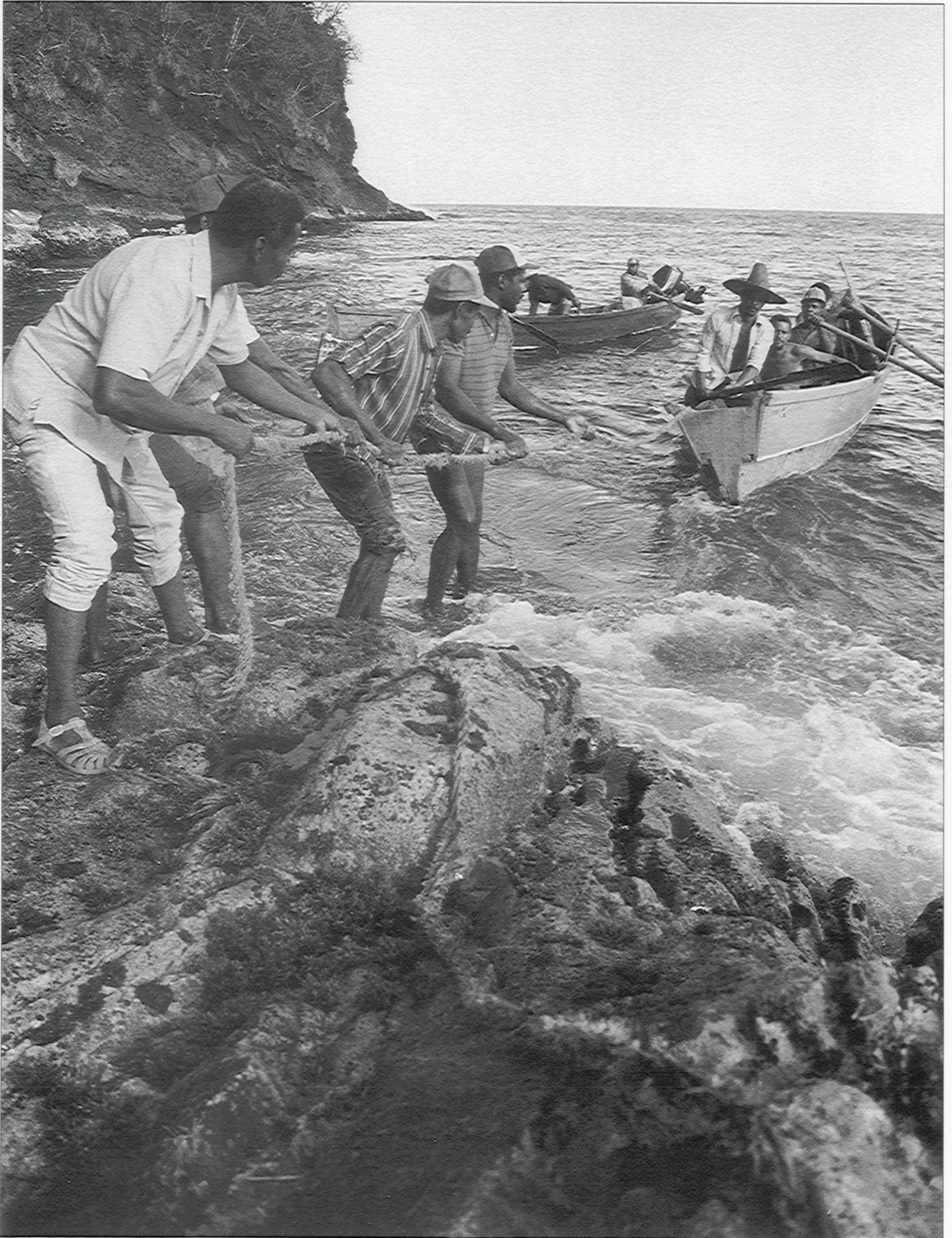
photograph, *above*, of farmers harvesting *quinoa*, an ancient, highly nutritious grain now appearing in health food stores.

In the tiny village of Querarani, Bolivia, Mitchell Denburg caught expressions of pure delight on the faces of residents as water from a new pump gushed into a community vegetable garden, *right*. The Asociación Familiar Campesina,



which sponsored the project, has produced a number of local leaders—both men and women—who have been elected to serve on the executive committee of the departmental federation of *sindicatos*, or rural unions (see related article on page 26).



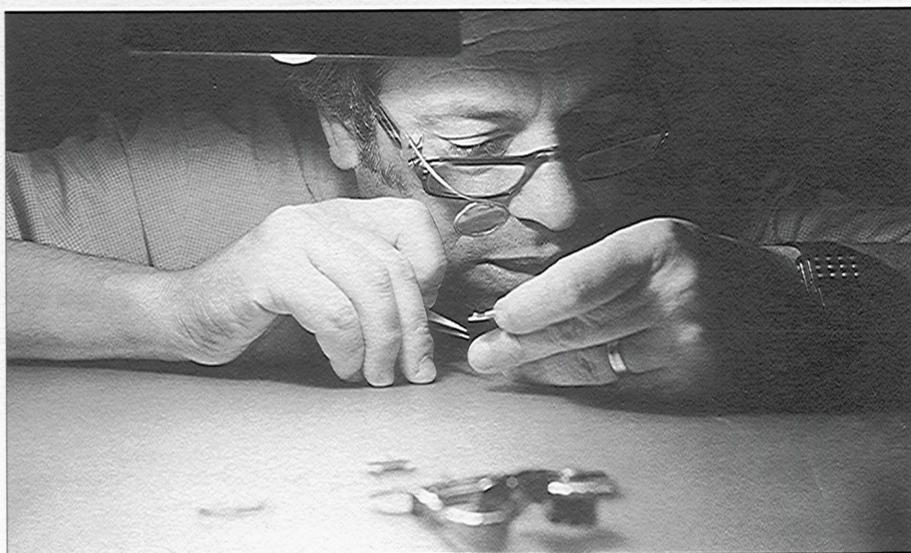
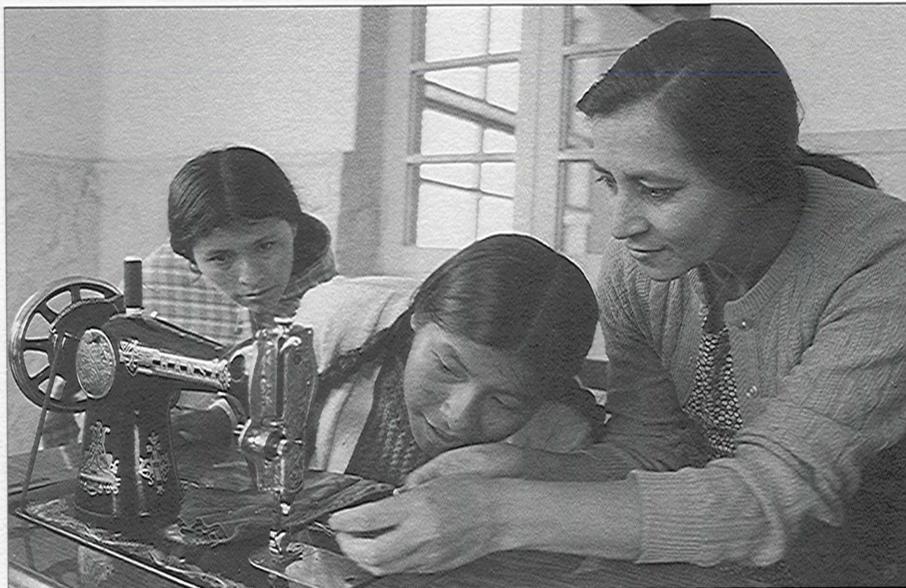


Using their hands in myriad ways, the region's poor are engaged in a tremendous variety of productive activities. On assignment for the Annual Report in 1988, U.S. photographer Sandra Wavrick visited the Centro Educativo Técnico Humanístico Agropecuario in Carmen Pampa, Bolivia. Her sensitive photo, *top*, reveals a young girl's eagerness to learn a new skill, as well as her instructor's quiet patience in passing along her own knowledge.

Mitchell Denburg's haunting photo, *middle*, is a study in contrasts and textures that the subjects themselves cannot see, since they are blind. These women use their sense of touch to shell peanuts for peanut butter, assisted by the Comité Artisanal Haïtien in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Another Denburg picture, *bottom*, taken in Uruguay in 1982, captures a microentrepreneur's intense concentration as he repairs a wrist watch.

The dramatic photo, *left*, of members of the Eastern District Fishing Facility pulling a boat out of rough seas off the Atlantic coast of Dominica was taken by Denburg for the 1987 Annual Report. With the snap of a shutter, he shows how obstacles can be overcome when people work together.



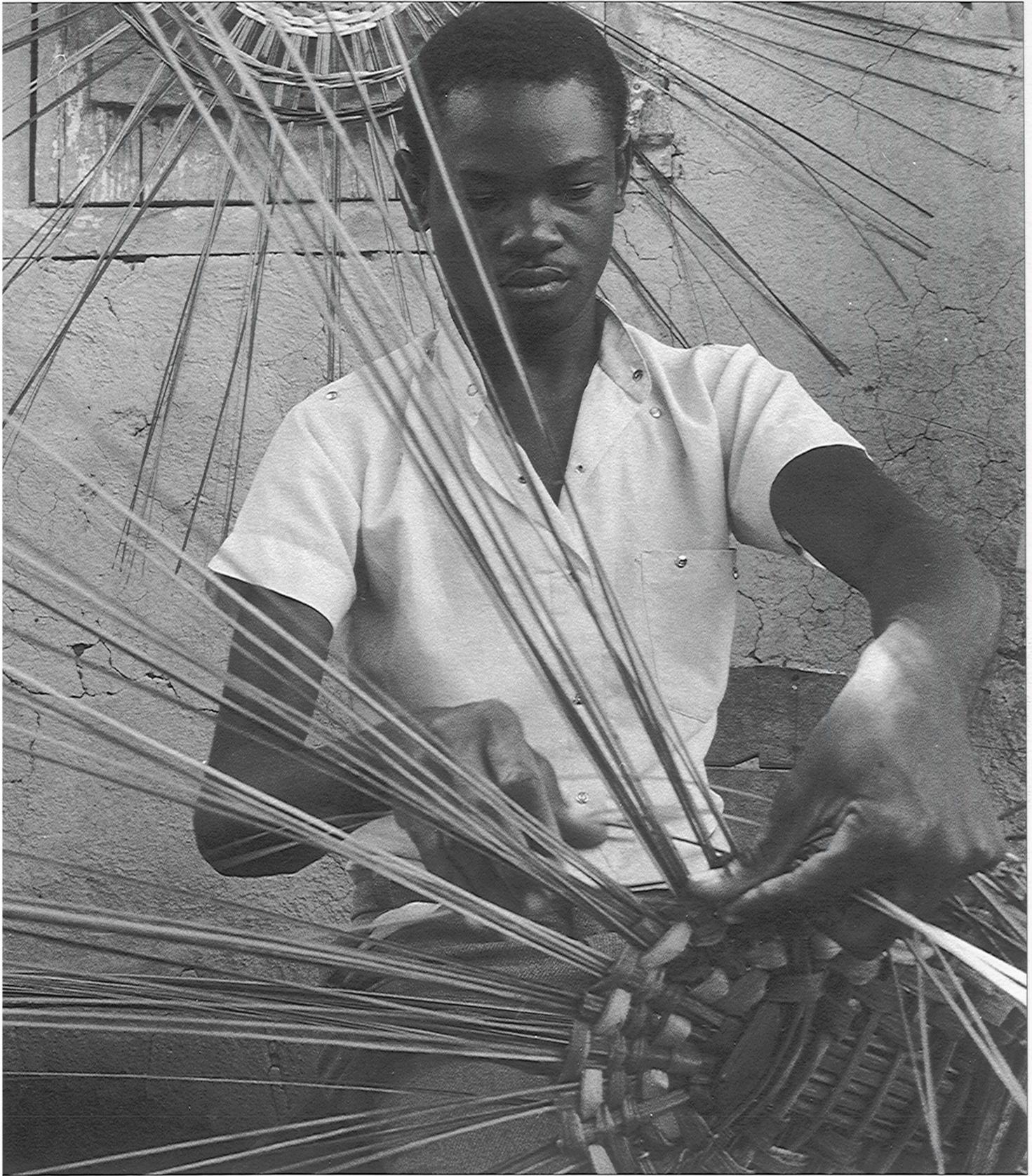


Although the majority of IAF-sponsored projects are not aimed specifically at children, youngsters are indeed among the principle beneficiaries of most development programs in terms of improved housing, nutrition, and access to education.

Two wide-eyed sisters, *above*, were photographed by Argentine Eduardo Gil in the doorway of their one-room home in a Buenos Aires tenement. Gil had been assigned to document urban housing problems for a 1988 article in *Grassroots Development*. Grupo Habitat, an IAF grantee, works with the urban poor to come up with new ways for renting vacant buildings and for renovating historic homes that were abandoned when their owners moved to more fashionable neighborhoods.

While in Haiti in 1983, Mitchell Denburg visited the town of Cazeau, where he photographed the two youths, *right*, making baskets to be marketed through the Comité Artisanal Haïtien. Such projects are both income-producing and cultural, allowing participants to take what is best about their past traditions with them into future endeavors.





Animating Grassroots Development

Women's Popular Education in Bolivia

Kevin Healy

Below the blue vastness of mountain sky, a dozen women in bowler hats and brightly striped shawls sit, fanned out in a tightly drawn semicircle, watching intently as the last in a series of illustrated posters is flipped over. Preceded by color drawings of a woman harvesting potatoes, washing clothes, cooking supper, and pasturing sheep, the final poster—labeled "Community Meeting"—depicts a woman pouring soup into bowls for a group of men huddled in conversation around a table. Standing to one side and pointing to the poster, the discussion leader asks, "What is going on here in this one? What does it mean?"

"It is our true situation," says a woman near the center of the fan. "We work, but no one sees us as we are."

"Yes, my identity papers say I am a 'mother,' but we are all farmers, too," adds another.

"It is like the campesina we talked about in that other picture, the one pasturing animals," says a third. "It is always the mothers and their daughters who are expected to look after the sheep. Who are the real sheep here anyway?"

One after another, these women are taking their turn at the educational game known in the Bolivian altiplano as *rotafolio*. This particular session in the courtyard of a village church in the department of Oruro has focused on the daily hardships and conditions of peasant women, but *rotafolio* is a mobile civics course whose posters can open windows on a myriad of other subjects—from lit-

By challenging people to think for themselves, a small NGO is inspiring a new kind of grassroots leader.

eracy, to ethnic identity, to the effects on small farmers of inflation and debt in the national economy. The technique is not new; its origins can be traced to the illustrations in Paolo Freire's *Education as Practice for Liberty*, the influential Brazilian educator's how-to book on adult literacy training that outlines techniques for unveiling the relationship between people and their culture, suggesting how poor people can learn to shape their own lives by "naming" and transforming their social, economic, and cultural reality. Inspired by that book and Freire's pioneering volume *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout the hemisphere during the past two decades have fashioned rotafolios, puppet shows, sociodramas, and a multitude of other educational devices into a tool kit for grassroots organizing.

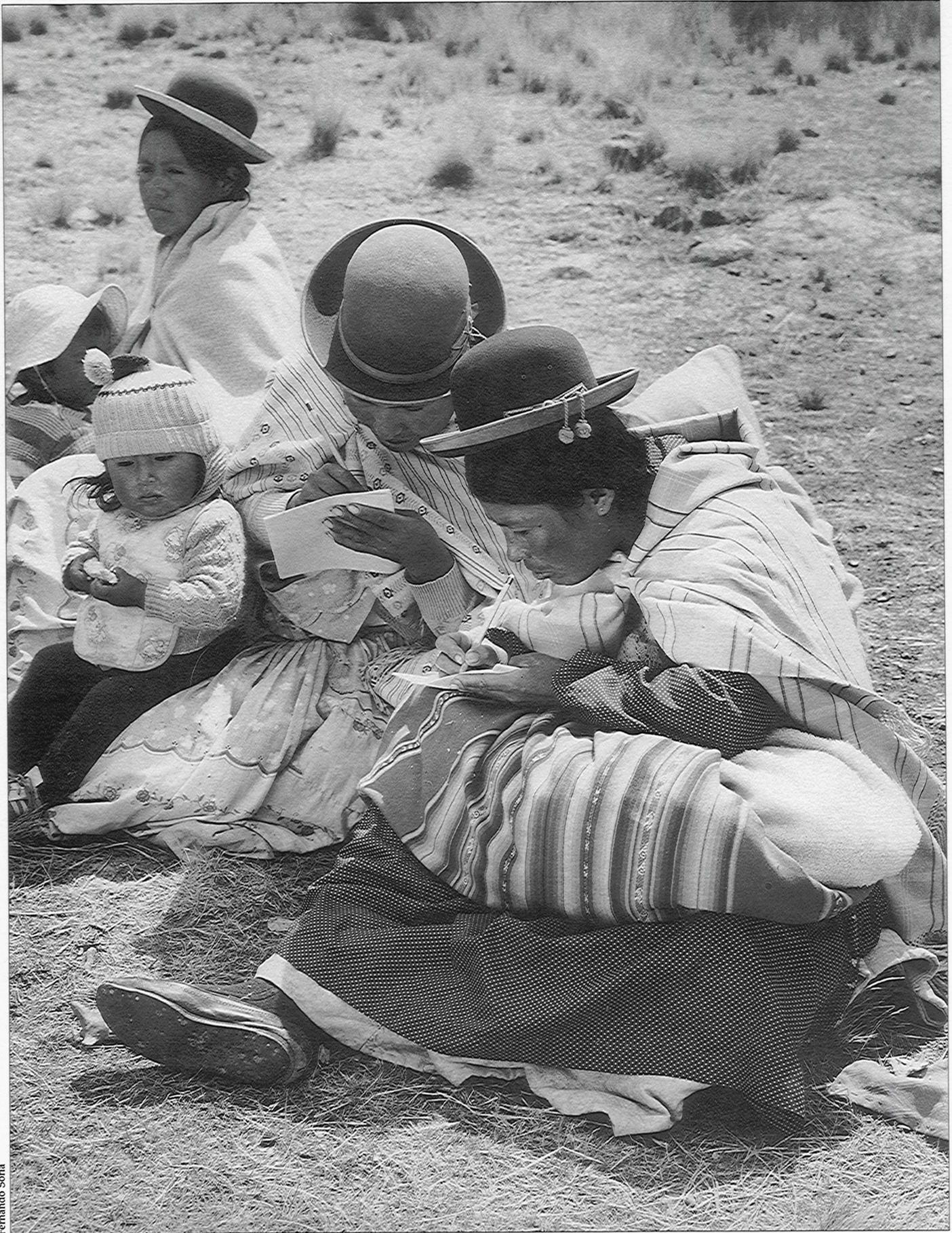
For the past eight years, the *Capacitación Integral de la Mujer Campesina* (CIMCA) has been refining these techniques and using them to inspire social change in Oruro, a desolate region 13,000 feet above sea level whose treeless, windswept plains—dotted with adobe villages—stretch between two Andean cordilleras. With one of the highest infant

mortality rates in the hemisphere, winters of bone-numbing cold, and periodic droughts, life for the predominantly indigenous population is not easy in the best of times. But the national economic crisis of the 1980s has devastated the region, reducing sheep herds to scraggy flocks, shriveling markets for small farmers' cash crops, and throwing thousands of tin miners out of work. For the past decade, more Aymara and Quechua men of the area have been emigrating in search of work, leaving their mothers, wives, and sisters behind to eke out a living from small family farms.

Out of these seemingly barren conditions, CIMCA has emerged as a beacon for women's rights and ethnic empowerment, inspiring the people of Oruro to uncover latent resources in their communities that would enable them to shape their own future and the future of their children. As CIMCA's director, Evelyn Barrón, points out, "Women are the great untapped resource of Latin America. Things are beginning to change in Oruro because we clearly cannot afford to waste the energies of more than half the people. If women are limited to looking after kids, tending livestock, and passing out food baskets from overseas aid programs, we will never touch the roots of rural poverty. Our story is still evolving, but we are getting our chance because almost everything else has failed."

CIMCA believes that the rural poor must organize to develop, but it also

Women take notes during a CIMCA popular education class.



Fernando Soria



Through CIMCA, women go beyond tending sheep to become more active in their communities.

believes that effective organizations require active memberships. This notion is widely held in development circles, but only partially practiced. By waking up people through popular education, CIMCA has not only planted the seeds of organizational reform throughout Oruro, it has also begun to produce the problem-solving leaders and self-confident memberships those organizations must have to attack the real needs of their communities. The journey toward this goal has been a long one, and its progress has been measured in fits and starts.

THE BIRTH OF CIMCA

CIMCA was founded in 1982 by a dynamic pair of Bolivian educators, Evelyn Barrón and Rita Murillo, who out of desperation decided to tilt at the windmills of development orthodoxy in Bolivia. Barrón is the guiding spirit of that quest. She was born in a small, southern valley town two days by bus from Oruro. With the self-assurance instilled by a mother who was the town's mayor and a father who was a lawyer, Barrón left home as a young woman determined to make her mark. She enrolled at the

national university in La Paz, earning a degree in social work, and in her twenties became director of the women's bureau of a national government program to promote rural community development. After seven years of record harvests for red tape, she began to wonder if the agency was for serving small farmers or for employing urban professionals to tell farmers what to do.

Barrón eventually left her position and went to work in the projects office of Caritas Boliviano, a nonprofit development agency of the Catholic Church, where she met Rita Murillo. They worked together for several years, but came to believe that the agency's distribution of surplus U.S. grains through local mothers' clubs too often led to a development dead-end. People were not starving, but nutrition levels remained substandard, and women were not learning how to improve production to feed their families. At about this time, Barrón and Murillo became acquainted with the writings and thoughts of Paolo Freire, who believed that charity undermined self-esteem among the poor and left them at the mercy of their benefactors. Too often it was a barter in which basic

necessities were exchanged for apathetic silence.

These ideas were not well received among their colleagues, so the two women left to join Catholic Relief Services, which also funneled food aid to the poor, but was staffed by several professionals interested in starting community development projects. Believing that success depended on local participation, Barrón and Murillo took charge of a training program designed to get women more actively involved in their communities. When the agency's priorities shifted, however, the two decided to found their own organization, CIMCA, and set out to test their beliefs in Oruro, an area of dire need that had few NGOs and minimal public resources.

NO MORE WHITE ELEPHANTS

The effort might never have gotten off the ground without a grant from the IAF, which was interested in encouraging Bolivians to find new models for sparking development among rural women. One of the attractive features of CIMCA's proposal was its decision to minimize administrative

overhead and maximize operational flexibility. From the beginning, Barrón and Murillo were determined to invest their energies and capital in people rather than offices or buildings. From her experience with the national community development program and two NGOs, Barrón knew that there were plenty of public facilities and church meeting halls that were unused or underused because they never became integrated fully with local communities. CIMCA would put these white elephants to work rather than enlarge the size of the herd by building a centralized training center.

Anyone visiting for the first time the one-room CIMCA office in the modest two-story house in a run-down section of the city of Oruro might wonder if CIMCA was an organization only in name. Looking at the battered desk, the handful of chairs, the piles of educational pamphlets with indigenous faces on the covers, the clerk occasionally interrupting her typing to answer the phone, it seems that nothing much is happening. But if one looks at the departmental map of Oruro hanging on the wall, studded with brightly colored tags marking the communities along the route of CIMCA's van, a different conclusion rapidly comes into focus. To find CIMCA—its leaders, its trainers, its impact—one must travel into the campo.

During the organization's early years, CIMCA's van was everywhere, pulling into one altiplano community after another out of the blue. The staff of trainers would pop out, engage curious onlookers in conversation, and persuade them to call a community meeting where interest could be sparked in women's issues and popular education. After a meeting was convened, Barrón would introduce herself and the staff, and explain what they hoped to accomplish. "We all know that economic development projects are needed," she would start, "but they are not enough. We need to see the true nature of our problems. If only a handful of people get rich from a project while the rest stay poor, is that development? I have been in communities where campesinos have learned how to increase their yields, and made lots of money, but turned around and bought a truck rather than put some of it aside to educate

their children. Perhaps you, too, have seen families take milk out of the mouths of their children to sell at the state dairy. This is giving value to things instead of people. What kind of development is it when women learn only to sew and knit and mind their own business, too? Shouldn't they have a say about what happens to their families, their communities, their country?"

Often the meeting never got be-



Fernando Soria

CIMCA founder and director, Evelyn Barrón (left), with staff members.

yond the spectacle of outsiders putting on a show. But CIMCA usually found a candidate or two eager to attend a regional training session to learn how to become an *educadora popular*, a popular educator capable of promoting community development. And if the show seemed to energize everyone, CIMCA would single out the community for more intensive training by assigning a staff member to live there for a time and hold informal classes in popular education.

This scattershot approach had its drawbacks. Recruits came from every corner of the department, making it difficult to schedule regular follow-up visits to see how new *educadoras populares* interacted with their communities. When follow-up did occur, the results were often discouraging. Distilling years of experience, Barrón and her colleagues had focused their training on achieving an immediate impact by improving community health and nutrition. Training sessions fed this information to trainees through the latest in popular education techniques to hold student interest. When CIMCA staff visited newly

trained promoters at home, however, they discovered that few families had changed their behavior. They were still selling their best sources of protein, such as eggs and meat, and were not growing the variety of vegetables needed for a balanced diet.

More alarming still, CIMCA found that many of their newly trained *educadoras populares* had abandoned their work, and often their villages, to get married. In selecting trainees, Barrón and her colleagues had emphasized young, single women who could read and write. Older women were thought to be too resistant to change, and less energetic and imaginative in inspiring others to change. The evidence soon suggested that perhaps the young were too changeable, unable to persevere when confronted by prospective husbands who saw popular education as an unnecessary diversion from starting and raising a family.

Yet CIMCA was also running into trouble even in the handful of pilot communities singled out for intensive promotion by core staff members. Ubaldina Salinas, CIMCA's best promoter, had been assigned for several months to the village of Querarani. Enthusiasm ran high when CIMCA's van had made its first visit, but when Salinas returned to set up a women's training workshop, no one came to the first session. Each time she rescheduled, she met the same stony silence. Finally, CIMCA recalled Salinas to reassess the assignment. She reported that the men were not letting their wives attend the sessions—not because they were threatened, but because they were not included. Faced with the choice of withdrawing or adapting, CIMCA sent Salinas back and opened up the sessions to all interested members of the village. That was the beginning of Querarani's development, planting the seeds of a future harvest, whose bounty would become apparent only later.

In the meantime, the crisis left an indelible mark on CIMCA, raising questions about its grassroots development strategy. Should CIMCA trainees be promoting community organizations for women parallel to those dominated by men? Would this fracture and weaken communities that were already unable to adequately defend their interests in Bolivian national society? CIMCA de-

cided to take a pragmatic course. It would continue to work with organizations such as mothers' clubs, but it would also try to strengthen and reform community peasant organizations by probing for initiatives that would broaden their membership base and lead to women's empowerment.

One such opportunity seemed to open in the province of Moza. Moza's small farmers produced potatoes that were renowned throughout Oruro, but lack of organization left them unable to bargain for better terms from the middlemen who trucked the crop to market and received the lion's share of the profits. CIMCA decided to work with a new association of potato growers in 15 communities, helping them consolidate their organizations by starting a project to encourage women to take a more active leadership role. Andean women play a key role in cultivating the crop, so it seemed obvious that their involvement was crucial for introducing new techniques to raise yields. CIMCA also hoped the time was ripe to show that women should participate in deciding how to raise profits through direct marketing. This attempt backfired, however, when ambitious male leaders grew impatient with the popular education process and tried to seize control of project assets by pushing Barrón and CIMCA's other trainers out of the zone. Suspecting that the leadership of the association had viewed women's training as a goose for laying golden eggs from outside funding, and realizing that local women were not far enough along to defend their own interests, CIMCA decided to withdraw from the zone.

The loss of young women promoters, the failure to change family diets, the temporary setback in Querarani, the withdrawal from Moza all had a common thread running through them. Barrón had long believed that development projects could not work without community participation. For women to participate fully, basic attitudes had to be changed not only in society but among women. Barrón concluded that "our early efforts fell short not because there was no need to improve nutrition or for families to raise their incomes, but because our women trainees did not truly value themselves, or have a sense of their own dignity. Realizing this forced us



Kevin Healy

CIMCA's training activities include educational games, above, and making and using hand puppets.

to get at the motivational factors, those deep-seated beliefs that form a person's self-image and place in society." For CIMCA to have an impact, it would have to begin at the level of the women it hoped to energize by first encouraging them to identify their own needs. Instead of providing answers, CIMCA would teach people how to ask questions.

CRYSTALLIZING A PEDAGOGY

Paulo Freire called the process of awakening people to the power of their own questioning *conscientização*. In encouraging the women and men of Oruro to begin that journey toward greater awareness of self and to understand how that could become a model for transforming the inertia of rural society into productive motion, CIMCA has also changed during the past eight years. From an ad hoc, improvisational approach, CIMCA has gradually evolved a structured multiphased program that has begun to come full circle, enabling the organization to begin addressing the complex of issues, including health and nutrition, that for a time it was forced to put aside. There are three stages to this training process.

The first stage of training takes



Mitchell Denburg

place at a centrally located site near participants' home communities. This has two advantages: It ensures that graduates become part of a mutual support network to sponsor local development, and it facilitates the scheduling of follow-up monitoring by CIMCA staff. In 1989, CIMCA held nine microregional workshops.

Enrollment in each of these workshops is limited to about 40 people for optimal participation. The three trainers are drawn from CIMCA's core staff of four, and from another half-dozen professionals and previously trained paraprofessionals who are available on a part-time basis as needed.

The first day, trainees are divided into small groups and taken outdoors for short walks and asked to make observations on what they see in the village around them. Those who

overcome their shyness usually note little that is remarkable, finding only what is to be expected. On the last day of training, they will repeat this process, and report back to the whole group on how their perceptions have changed from learning to see and question the hidden and constraining assumptions underlying the routines of daily life.

During the intervening two weeks, participants are exposed to a variety of situations designed, as CIMCA puts it, "to help one lose one's fear." Foremost among these fears is the fear of speaking. Cooking, eating, sleeping, dancing, singing, and working together, and looking after one another's children, creates a kind of family bonding that helps make it safe to talk freely. But it is the rotafolio that deepens the talk into dialogue.

CIMCA's rotafolios are the products of eight years of workshops, distilling testimonies from the whole range of women in Oruro. They are drawn by Germán Treviño, a graduate of the school of plastic arts in Oruro who has been working with CIMCA since 1984. He emphasizes that the power of the illustrations depends on "truly conveying what the *compañeras* tell us about their experiences. Sometimes it requires changing the rotafolio a half-dozen times before they are satisfied. The women do not want caricatures so I have to study their faces carefully." Years of studying faces for clues to the stories he has heard the women tell, Treviño says, has changed his opinions about the situation of rural women, which he never thought about before, allowing him to see their problems for the first time and to identify their humanity with his own.

This process of identification is what makes the drawings such an effective tool for consciousness-raising. Rotafolios are intended to be linked together to form a fan around a central theme. Together, they provide the elements of a puzzle that workshop participants will solve as they discuss an unfolding succession of narrative situations. Gradually, participants will come to identify it as the story of their own lives. Many years of workshop experience attest to the validity of the story line contained in each set of rotafolios, but participants must discover and resolve that story

for themselves. To emphasize that trainees are in control of the process, and to ensure maximum participation among literate and illiterate alike, drawings are often no longer labeled. The point of the story emerges from the telling, but its outcome is foreshadowed from the very beginning in the strong and resolutely human faces of the indigenous women in the

drawings. As one CIMCA trainee described her experience, "Before I came here, I thought I was supposed to be poor. Now I realize that is not so, and I will not let it be so for my children."

CIMCA has developed three sets of rotafolios about altiplano women, and these form the core of the first set of workshops. Trainees are asked to

The Road to Leadership

Eufracia Wilcarani Cari grew up in the remote area of Orinoco in the department of Oruro, where her family eked out a living from a small flock of animals and the money Cari's mother earned baking bread to sell in outdoor markets. Cari started school late because of a serious illness and because her parents saw no advantage to educating a girl.

One day that changed when the local school director insisted, "Eufracia must go to class, at least to learn how to sign her name." Quickly developing a love for learning, she whizzed through elementary and junior high school. Unable to afford a teachers' college, she returned to her community, seemingly destined to a life of herding llamas.

Cari joined a mothers' club, which channeled food aid from abroad and offered classes in weaving and crocheting. In 1983, she was selected by her community to participate in a CIMCA popular education workshop. Other workshops followed until Cari emerged as a genuine *educadora popular*, fulfilling her dream of becoming a teacher.

Recognizing her talent for energizing rural women, CIMCA asked Cari to travel to Peru to exchange training experiences with other women's organizations. On the return trip, her bus got stuck in the middle of the night in a muddy road winding high up the side of a mountain. The driver asked the men to get out and push, and Cari and a fellow trainer joined them. As they walked to the rear talking about how to get on with the job of freeing the bus, the earth above



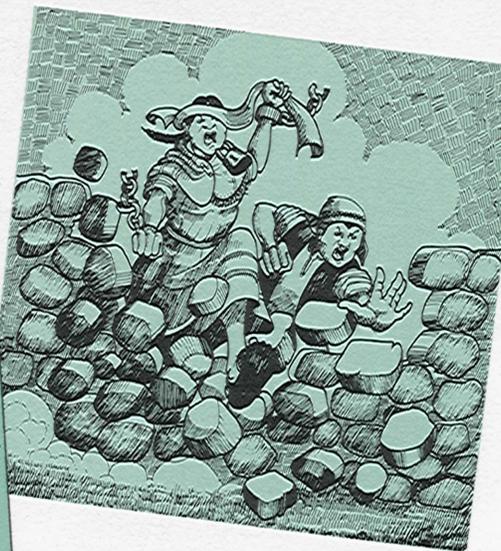
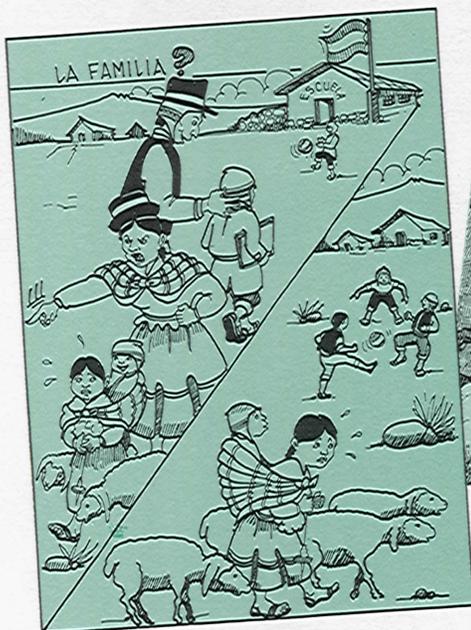
Eufracia Wilcarani Cari (front row, center) with sindicato leaders in Oruro.

the road gave way, sweeping the vehicle over the side of the precipice and taking the lives of all the women left on board.

When CIMCA's director Evelyn Barrón heard the news, she presumed the worst. Cari recounts the surprise on Barrón's face when she arrived two days later, safe and sound, telling the sad story of how she had learned, once and for all, the importance of women insisting on pulling their own weight.

Cari's rise to leadership began with her taking office in several local organizations, including her village *sindicato*. In 1988, she was elected secretary of training programs on the executive board of the regional committee overseeing hundreds of community sindicatos in Oruro, opening the way for CIMCA's methodology to be introduced throughout the department.

Looking ahead, she says, "For my remaining time in this world, I want to continue developing myself through workshops and other experiences to gain more awareness of who we are as women, and the road we have to follow together." ♦



analyze the condition of peasant women at all stages of the life cycle—from birth, through childhood, adolescence, and marriage, into old age. In the altiplano, it is common for people to commiserate with the parents of a newborn girl, implying that they have received a burden rather than a reward. In tracing the path of that burden as it is borne from grandmother to mother to daughter, the rotafolios eventually arouse a smoldering anger among the workshop participants at the experience of discrimination they all have in common.

There are rotafolios to show that anger. Pictures of campesinas breaking the chains binding their wrists, ripping off the bandanas covering their eyes, tearing the padlocks from their mouths, and crashing through brick walls. What is interesting about this anger is that it is not directed toward men but toward gender roles. In the rotafolio of a woman smashing a wall, a man stands beside her, urging her on. Other rotafolios suggest what a freer society might look like, showing men sharing responsibility for collecting firewood, pasturing sheep, or tending an infant. The rotafolio of a girl remaining behind to herd sheep while her brother saunters off—books in hand—to school is eventually answered by one of a husband and wife watching their son and daughter study together.

The channel for change outside the family is directed toward community organizations. Another set of rota-

folios focuses on the *ayllu*, a traditional system, based on lineage, for allocating the distribution of village labor and resources, and the *sindicato*, an association of all households in the community that serves as a local government and is the primary vehicle for addressing common needs, such as building and maintaining roads, schools, and water systems. Women are usually allowed to attend sindicato meetings only when their husbands are ill or have migrated in search of work, or if they are heads-of-household. The only leadership position open is "secretary of women's affairs," which often exists in name only at the regional level.

CIMCA's rotafolios offer a platform for questioning this arrangement and suggest how it might be reformed. The rotafolio labeled "Community Meeting," which shows a woman serving soup to a group of busy men, is followed by others showing a woman nervously addressing a group of seated men, working diligently beside other villagers on a community project, and finally sitting behind the table making decisions with the other community leaders.

Before the first phase of CIMCA training is over, trainees take turns tracing copies of rotafolios that they will take back to their communities for a nine-week practicum working with a local organization. During this time, a CIMCA trainer will make a return visit to see how things are going.

Those educadoras populares who have shown special promise are invited to attend a second set of workshops, which draw together people from throughout the province. In-

sights about family and community problems that were learned in the first workshops are now applied on a regional and national level. Introduced to the concept of "marginality," trainees examine how economic and ethnic discrimination helps perpetuate poverty. In small groups they analyze how indigenous people, even though they are the majority, are shunned by the national media, how they are expected to shed their traditional clothing, stop speaking Aymara and Quechua, change their surnames, and cut their braids if they want to fit into *mestizo* culture. While learning to make and use puppets, play a variety of educational board games, and act in sociodramas, trainees probe the humiliations they or their friends and relatives have experienced migrating to the city to look for work.

These exercises follow the same course traced by the rotafolios, channeling anger at the recognition of systematic discrimination toward a search for effective remedial action, for examples of ethnic pride that can be a catalyst for economic and social development. Again, much of the focus falls on the sindicato, which is much more than a community presence. With elected bodies at the zonal, departmental, and national levels, sindicatos have spearheaded the movement toward land reform, rural schooling, the end of military rule, and the return to constitutional democracy. CIMCA's hopes for the sindicato as a vehicle for socioeco-



Illustrations: Germán Treviño

conomic change are shared by numerous other NGOs and development practitioners in Bolivia.

But CIMCA tempers its hopes with a critical eye. Rotafolios explore the dangers of corrupt leadership practices, co-optation by political parties, and the prevalence of machismo attitudes that exclude women from active participation and positions of authority. CIMCA's workshop prepares women for the rise to positions of leadership in the sindicato movement and for the struggle to hold leaders accountable to their memberships, regardless of gender. As one recent CIMCA graduate, Flora Rufino, remarked, "First by joining, then by leading group discussions, I have learned how to talk with, not at, people. Now I can speak clearly and forcefully in public. I have the skills to keep minutes or run a meeting, and I know how to analyze issues in ways that allow the community to inform itself about national as well as local problems. CIMCA has challenged me to question, and that has taught me how to think."

Critical thinking is the basis of problem-solving, and the third stage of CIMCA training concentrates on technical subjects, such as community health, nutrition, animal husbandry, and agronomy. Launched in 1988, this program brings CIMCA full circle. With a cadre of popular educators who have a firm sense of self and society, and are highly motivated

(one, for example, put a clause in her wedding vows obligating her spouse to support her work as an educadora popular), it was only natural that they would demand to learn the kinds of skills that CIMCA had first come to the campo, years before, hoping to teach.

The workshop brings together men and women from throughout Oruro. Professional trainers offer seminars in a variety of disciplines, and there are field trips to ongoing rural development projects being sponsored by other NGOs. These visits are a learning opportunity for everyone; CIMCA's trainees arrive full of questions, not only about how to prepare seedling nurseries, for instance, but armed with suggestions on how local women might be included more actively in the project.

Sometimes the entire workshop is held at a site specializing in a certain skill. The Centro Agropecuario del Desarrollo Altiplano (CADEA), a previously under-utilized agricultural and livestock research station operated by the government in Oruro, is a prime example. CADEA's agronomists and extensionists are delighted with the arrangement. "We have had some problems reaching campesino groups," explains one researcher, "but CIMCA has a well-developed methodology, including the rotafolio, for getting communities to apply what they are learning. Sometimes teaching a technical course can be frustrating, like shouting into the bottom of a well, but with CIMCA you know they have the ability to draw

the knowledge up so it reaches campesinos' fields."

CIMCA REACHES OUT

After eight years of tireless effort in Oruro, CIMCA has moved beyond using other people's white elephants to helping NGOs and public agencies better use their own infrastructures. Overcoming the deeply entrenched barriers to reaching and mobilizing rural women is perhaps the single hardest task in development, and word-of-mouth communication about CIMCA's effective training methods has spread quickly throughout the department, and beyond. Grassroots organizations and NGOs from as faraway as La Paz and the neighboring department of Potosí are lined up to seek CIMCA's counsel. The European Economic Community, which funds a rural development program in Bolivia staffed by more than 170 employees, recently asked CIMCA to train the campesinas in its projects. The U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization has asked CIMCA to support small-scale irrigation projects. Even universities are sending their students and instructors to sit in on CIMCA workshops and observe the magic firsthand.

Perhaps the most dramatic turnaround involves Caritas Boliviano, the agency Barrón left behind on her journey to start her own development organization. As recently as the mid-

1980s, CIMCA's stinging rotafolios on the negative impact of food aid on rural communities was eliciting complaints from the agency's departmental director. During the past year, however, the relationship with Caritas has become increasingly cordial. Frustration with the limited impact of the Caritas program led its local director to ask CIMCA to introduce training in popular education to the 60 mothers' clubs in the province of Totorá, laying the foundation for a health education program to be jointly managed by the two agencies. A similar effort is underway at the request of a local bishop to revitalize a moribund network of mothers' clubs in the province of Corocoro.

CIMCA may eventually become the primary trainer of other NGO trainers in Oruro, but it has not lost sight of its goal to help make sindicatos more democratic by catapulting campesinas into leadership positions at all levels of this multitiered structure. As a result of CIMCA's persistence, the walls of gender discrimination are beginning to crack. Its trainees have moved beyond attending and speaking out at local, provincial, and regional sindicato congresses, to win elective posts. Nearly 20 have been elected to leadership councils in the various provinces of Oruro. The crowning achievement, however, was the election of four campesinas to offices on the executive committee of the departmental federation representing several hundred thousand small farmers.

The foundation for this accomplishment was laid at a CIMCA workshop for 50 women community leaders several months prior to the congress. After the course was completed, CIMCA staff divided the region by cantons and provinces, and monitored the performance of trainees at sindicato meetings. Forty of the women were then invited back to a second workshop to polish their skills and plan election strategy.

The most revealing sign that something fundamental had changed occurred after the election, when one of the winners was appointed secretary of women's affairs. Rising to address the several hundred delegates, most of them men, seated before her, she declined the job, saying, "How long do we have to make believe this is a real position? You give us a seat at the table, but you go on making decisions

in the back room. We are as capable as any man of filling a responsible position."

Embarrassed, the male leaders overseeing the transition of power announced she would be the new secretary of *sindicato organización*, an office that has traditionally wielded considerable clout.

Although CIMCA's pre-election workshop set the stage for this broadening of representation, the antecedents of the story reach all the way back to the community of Querarani, the scene of one of CIMCA's early false starts. After CIMCA acceded to community demands and held training workshops that included men as well as women, villagers created the Asociación Familiar Campesina (ASFACA) to start local development initiatives. ASFACA has an unusual leadership structure that fills each office with a man and a woman, who are also husband and wife. The idea is in harmony with the traditional dualism of Andean culture that predates the arrival of the conquistadors, but as an expression of power-sharing, it emerged directly from CIMCA's workshop. (This suggests that to prevent women's empowerment from being stillborn, it is important to find roots for the concept in traditional culture so that transformation of that culture occurs from within rather than becoming one more alien idea imposed from the outside.)

Since its emergence, the Asociación has started a literacy program in Aymara; worked with an international donor, CARE, to install a potable water system, with individual stand-

pipes for each home; planted communal vegetable gardens to diversify family diets; and purchased a tractor families can lease to till their farms. With the income from the tractor rental, the Asociación is buying a generator to bring electricity to the village. Last year, a man and a woman from Querarani joined the other three women trained by CIMCA as newly elected officials on the executive committee of Oruro's departmental federation of sindicatos.

Querarani is harvesting the fruits of *conscientização*. And the men and women of this isolated Andean village are not alone. CIMCA was recently featured alongside select projects from Asia and Africa in the four-part series *Local Heroes, Global Change* being televised in the United States, Japan, and Western Europe to examine models for a new direction in development. Evelyn Barrón has been invited to seminars abroad to share her experience in empowering rural women. The ideas set in motion by Paulo Freire are being felt worldwide, and CIMCA's voice is on the cutting edge of the dialogue. Working with the people of Oruro, CIMCA is helping create participatory institutions at the base of society to ensure that "democratization" becomes more than a hollow word. ♦

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CIMCA trainees learn new agricultural techniques from agronomists at CADEA.

Responsiveness and Responsibility

NGOs in Colombia

When representatives of the newly formed Inter-American Foundation began exploratory trips to Latin America and the Caribbean in the early 1970s identifying groups to fund, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were entering a period of florescence in Colombia. These groups are part of what Colombians call "*sociedad civil*," or civil society—a shorthand term for the multifarious types of civic organizations, from community associations to trade guilds to foundations, devoted to improving community life. The effectiveness of traditional structures had waned following the political turmoil of the 1950s, and NGOs were filling the gap. The ground was fertile for the kind of work assigned to the IAF by its Congressional mandate.

Today, 20 years and 229 grants later, Senior Foundation Representative Marion Ritchey-Vance reflects on the IAF experience with NGOs in Colombia in the second Country Focus study. Ritchey-Vance, who is beginning her seventeenth year with the Foundation, got started in development work a quarter of a century ago when a friend handed her a brochure put out by the Community Development Foundation, an offshoot of Save the Children Federation. She ended up working for the Community Development Foundation and Save the Children in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras, and then as Save the Children's regional director for Latin America.

For Ritchey-Vance the real impact of the IAF in Colombia cannot be measured by the goods and services that grantees supply the poor. The real impact is on the grantee organizations themselves, the skills they have developed, the ideas they are willing to try out, the opportunities

A 20-year investment
in grassroots networks
is paying national
dividends.

for participation they offer, and the role they play as part of a network of organizations dedicated to giving the poor "a stake in their society and a say-so in how the resources and the power of that society are used."

This view of "impact," says Ritchey-Vance, is more in keeping with Southern than with Northern values. The foreign assistance agenda of Northern agencies speaks in terms of sectors: health, family planning, agriculture, marketing, and so on, while Southern NGOs speak more of promoting participation, autonomy, and pluralism; achieving and guaranteeing democracy; developing ties with grassroots groups. She sums up: "The respective mindsets are embodied in the vocabulary. We in the North have tended to think of 'target populations,' services 'directed at' or 'focused on' poor people. The Latin Americans talk about 'creating space,' building civil society, and practicing democracy. The North has looked at efficiency, the South at justice."

TWO CENTRAL CREDOS

What Latin Americans think and do about development deeply concerns the IAF. From the outset, the Foundation's credo was to be *responsive* to its grantees. The early motto was "They know how." The initiative for projects was to come from the field, not from the offices of the IAF.

Closely allied to responsiveness is nonintervention, another Foundation credo. Attempting to break out of the traditional role of *patrón*, or "protector," once an agreement is signed, the

IAF has tended to stand back during project implementation and let the grantee make decisions unimpeded. Both credos manifested the determination of the IAF not to impose North American solutions. Both were a reaction to what was perceived to be wrong at that time with the delivery of development assistance by most agencies. (It is interesting that these credos, or others nearly identical, are now generally accepted by most development practitioners. Organizations that once would have rejected the "they know how" philosophy have come to acknowledge that imposed solutions, even those imposed with all the good will in the world, are not sustainable.)

Ritchey-Vance maintains that when a Foundation-supported project fails it is usually because the IAF has strayed from its basic credos or has carried them to an extreme. For example, responsiveness carried too far results in an abdication of responsibility. Keeping a healthy balance between responsiveness and responsibility is a theme that the author returns to again and again in this study as she looks back at the IAF's interaction with NGOs in Colombia and ahead to what the future holds for a nation in which NGOs play such a vital role.

RESPONSIBLE GRANTMAKING

The first responsibility of a grantmaking organization such as the IAF is to decide who to fund—no easy task, since the number of grant requests always exceeds available resources. How can such difficult choices be made? Several aspects that come into play are emphasized in the study. First, in selecting grantees, IAF representatives start not by looking at the

project proposal as such, but by looking at the organization making the proposal. If the organization is authentic, legitimate, and accountable to the grassroots, and meets other similar criteria, then and only then is its project proposal considered.

Naturally, the IAF or any other donor also must be "hard-nosed in assessing the viability of projects." Occasionally, according to Ritchey-Vance, the IAF has become so enamored with an organization that it has not evaluated its project proposal rigorously enough. At the same time, the IAF should not use the review process to push its own agenda.

A second aspect of selecting grantees concerns fear of failure. It would be irresponsible to award a grant without carefully scrutinizing the proposal, but neither should a funder back only sure winners. Not permitting NGOs to experiment with innovative ideas would rob them of what Ritchey-Vance believes is one of their major functions: to be "incubators" of social change.

By experimenting with "unconventional solutions" to "thorny problems," says the author, NGOs provide a research and development function for the public sector. Governmental agencies can adopt an NGO solution if it works well or carry it out on a larger scale. This has happened in several instances in Colombia. For example, the Fundación Granja Taller de Asistencia Colombiana developed a way to rehabilitate street people with chronic mental illnesses. At the core of Granja Taller's methodology is productive work, which the organization sees as a "fundamental human need and a way of establishing healthy responses to the world." The patients progress "from simple participation in the community, to learning workshops, to sheltered workshops, to a stage where [they] can be employed in a small enterprise or even in industry."

Meanwhile, they also participate in group activities to give them the social skills necessary for living in society. The IAF's grant to Granja Taller enabled the NGO to test its belief that "*locos de la calle*" could be reintegrated into society.

Granja Taller techniques are now being employed in government-run hospitals and other programs. The success of Granja Taller's program makes it easy to forget today that the project looked quite risky when it was first proposed.

A third aspect of institutional responsibility that comes into play in awarding grants is the development of an overall funding strategy that prioritizes project proposals. In Colombia, the IAF has evolved a "spider strategy" of funding, based on the idea that base groups trying to solve local problems can "go only so far without links to some kind of support system to marshal resources or represent their interests at a higher level." The "spider strategy" consists of "a support institution as the main body at the center, grassroots organizations at the extremities, and a dense web of connecting threads between." Says Ritchey-Vance, "In making its funding decisions, the Foundation looks at a proposal not only as a discrete project, but also as part of a regional or thematic network that can strengthen and support local groups."

Several such "spider" networks are examined in the study, including a regional artisan network formed around the support institution Fundación Centro de Investigaciones Económicas; another formed around Fundación para la Capacitación Organizativa de las Comunidades to support civic activities; and a third formed around the Secretariado de Pastoral Social (SEPAS) to support campesino organizations. In all three, the IAF has not just funded the main body at the center, but has also given support to the extremities and to the formation of the web of connections.

In evaluating the benefits of "spider" networks, Ritchey-Vance says of SEPAS: "The regional network reaches over 300,000 people, or nearly one-fourth of the population in the south of [the department of] Santander." The network has helped members to negotiate better prices for hemp, to improve their marketing arrangements with the commodities institute IDEMA, to obtain land from the Instituto Colombiano de la Re-

forma Agraria (INCORA), and to construct an irrigation reservoir.

HOLDING GRANTEES ACCOUNTABLE

Once a grant has been awarded, the funder must accept the responsibility to monitor it, make necessary adjustments during implementation, and underwrite technical assistance if the grantee can benefit from it. Historically, the IAF shied away from the role of monitor. In a section analyzing three "clear-cut" failures, the study maintains that in each case the IAF did not hold the grantee accountable. The Foundation "winked" when it should have taken a hard look. In the case of the Centro de Mercadeo del Valle del Cauca, for example, the IAF was too respectful of the leaders of the organization because of their long and dedicated service to campesinos. Unfortunately, in their new role as managers of a complex marketing business, these individuals got in over their heads, made unwise decisions, and eventually brought the project down. The IAF carried nonintervention too far when it was "too quick to condone major deviations from the original agreement without solid justification."

By the late 1980s, lessons learned from these failures and also from positive experiences led the Foundation to introduce some improvements in its funding and monitoring procedures. These are discussed in a section entitled "Shifting the Center of Gravity South," which describes the evolution of the In-Country Support (ICS) concept.

In 1986 the Foundation hired a number of Colombian professionals to supplement the capacity of IAF representatives to monitor and evaluate the growing number of projects. In 1988, this loose-knit group—with backgrounds in economics, law, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy—became a team under an ICS service contract with the Colombian social service group EVALUAR. The team works together "to carry out a systematic monitoring plan for all ongoing projects and to assist the Foun-



Miguel Snyago

A mentally handicapped worker packages bread in the bakery run by Granja Taller.

dation in reviewing incoming requests for funds."

The Colombia Country Focus study predicts that the center of gravity will continue to shift south with Colombians assuming a greater share of the responsibility for funding and follow-up. In this way, "they know how" responsiveness is being effectively transferred to the realm of project monitoring.

RESPONSIBLE EVALUATION

The ability of development organizations to evaluate projects lags behind their ability to fund and monitor. As the focus in Colombia has shifted away from specific sectors to institutions that provide the poor with access to resources, and as less emphasis is placed on individual projects and more on networks, so the criteria for evaluation must also shift. "Because much of what NGOs do mirrors the government's role in providing agricultural extension, housing, or primary health care to the poor," Ritchey-Vance states, "the tendency is to evaluate their impact in the same way that public programs are measured... by crop-yield-per-acre, or number-of-dwellings-constructed."

Reliance on these measures gives a one-dimensional "public works" view of development.

Existing evaluation systems fall short as measures of what the IAF and others are trying to achieve through grantmaking, although the IAF has certainly struggled to devise a better system and has made some progress in identifying appropriate indicators. Ritchey-Vance believes that the IAF must continue this struggle "to devise different ways of conceptualizing the development process." "The challenge," she says, "is how to get beyond the collection of anecdotes to an appraisal of impact that offers a reasonable degree of objectivity." The IAF's Office of Learning and Dissemination is engaged in several such efforts and will keep the search for solutions to the evaluation problem on its agenda.

The Colombia Country Focus lists some possible alternative parameters of evaluation—indicators of civic development—with examples taken from the projects discussed. Ritchey-Vance underlines the tentative nature of her list, saying that it merely "nudges the debate one step further." She notes that ICS team members felt that the study was most valuable in recognizing the need for evaluation indicators that get at what they feel makes projects vital. The team has chosen the theme of social and civic indicators for its working seminars in 1991.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

The practice of sharing responsibility with Colombians—ingrained as part of the IAF operational style—carried over into the process of preparing the study. Before Ritchey-Vance wrote the first sentence, she discussed her preliminary outline with the members of the ICS team and revised it based on their ideas. At her request, each member of the team wrote a short background article on the events of the 1960s in Colombia leading up to the Foundation's appearance on the scene in 1971. Much of this information was incorporated in the study. Team members also made

extra visits to projects to gather information not called for in regular monitoring reports and to look for social indicators of project success. To facilitate the final review, the manuscript was translated into Spanish chapter by chapter as the editing was completed so that it would be easily accessible to all members of the ICS team and all grantees mentioned. This consultative process added weight to the final product and stimulated debate within the ICS.

Mutual learning took place. The ICS monitors agreed that one of the real pluses of the study was that it brought together useful information from scattered sources on the evolution of the NGO sector, filling in a roughly sketched picture. When asked what gratified her most about writing the study, Ritchey-Vance pointed to the historical background research she carried out. It deepened her understanding of current events in Colombia—a country to which she has devoted a major part of her professional life.

* * *

The Country Focus Series seeks to examine the IAF's grantmaking experience in particular countries and to draw out commonalities in approach, results, and lessons learned. The first Country Focus study, *The Small Farmer Sector in Uruguay: A Partnership in Development Cooperation*, was published in 1989. The Spanish version, *El Sector de los Pequeños Productores Agropecuarios del Uruguay: Socio para el Desarrollo* appeared in 1990.

The Colombia Country Focus will be ready for distribution in English and Spanish in the summer of 1991. To obtain a free copy, write to the Publications Office, Inter-American Foundation, 1515 Wilson Boulevard, Rosslyn, Virginia 22209. ♦

—Diane B. Bendahmane

(Bendahmane, a Washington, D.C.-based editor and writer specializing in international relations and development assistance, edits IAF working papers and monographs. Currently she divides her time between the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project and the Inter-American Foundation.

What Is "Grassroots Development"?

Chuck Kleymeyer

For two decades, the Inter-American Foundation has supported self-help efforts among the poor in Latin America and the Caribbean, generating a substantial body of informed project experience. Numerous other institutions have long been involved in similar work. Yet many people still think of "development" in terms of building suburban shopping malls or ramming the Trans-Amazonian highway through virgin forest. For those of us who advocate that an alternative path benefiting and involving the poor is not only possible but vital, it is time to clarify what is entailed by the process we call "grassroots development."

Such a codification would be invaluable to students and teachers of development, and would also help development workers and project beneficiaries to set goals, define priorities, design policies, and carry out research. What follows is one IAF representative's attempt to synthesize 20 years of institutional experience into a description of the grassroots development process. This statement is not presumed to be fi-

planning and carrying out self-help projects, pressuring public and private institutions for resources, and representing the group's common interests before governmental agencies and the body politic.

Ideally, members of grassroots groups participate fully not only in identifying common problems, setting priorities, and designing strategies and programs, but also in carrying out project activities and distributing the benefits. These activities normally involve small-scale, practical efforts to achieve peaceful change, and are carried out by organizations such as village or neighborhood associations, production or service cooperatives, cultural groups, workers' associations, ethnic coalitions, or federations of such organizations. The breadth and intensity of participation typically generated by this grassroots approach is one of its major strengths relative to other styles of development.

This participatory approach to development is often called "bottom-up," since potential beneficiaries themselves take the initiative

strata of society, it produces solutions that are imaginative, unconventional, and highly innovative. This unique perspective, offered by people who are closest to the problem being addressed, represents another of the major advantages of bottom-up, grassroots development.

In the more common "top-down" approach to development, outsiders—usually higher up the socioeconomic and political ladder—choose the problems to be addressed and design and even carry out the solutions, at times consulting with prospective beneficiaries. In bottom-up development, outsiders are also frequently involved, though in a more collaborative role. Whether as individuals or as representatives of a private or public organization, they commonly provide services, technical assistance, and resources such as materials or funding; and they either share decision-making with project organizers and beneficiaries, or leave it to them entirely. The key point is that these outsiders usually respond to the initiatives of local organizations and collaborate with them in a supportive role.

Grassroots development efforts are more frequently based on a broader concept of deprivation and well-being than programs initiated from the top. Rather than limiting themselves to economic and material goals, grassroots organizations and the professionals that support them often try to achieve a mix of economic, social, and cultural objectives. Since they typically envision economic change as being built upon a solid social and cultural foundation, they include among their goals, for example, building collective confidence and self-respect, or fostering a positive group identity, particularly if the group is part of a cultural minority.

Results of grassroots development efforts can be intangible—improved skills in communication, leadership,

A grassroots development strategy is necessarily people-oriented, stressing the development of human resources over physical infrastructure.

nal or all-inclusive. To help sharpen the debate, however, I offer a working definition, and several caveats.

"Grassroots development" is the process by which disadvantaged people organize themselves to overcome the obstacles to their social, cultural, and economic well-being. The strategies they employ include

to identify problems and possible solutions. With their own human and material resources, and whatever outside technical, financial, or political assistance is available, they then address those problems. Because the bottom-up approach is typically grounded in the cultural traditions of people in the lower

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or management; a stronger sense of self; the establishment of rights to civil liberties; or the increased ability to leverage services from the state. Results can also be tangible—increases in production of agricultural or manufactured goods; a rise in family incomes; a building to be used for organizational activities; or a road or water system.

A grassroots development strategy is necessarily people-oriented, stressing the development of human resources over physical infrastructure. The belief is that broad-based, sustainable development at the lower levels of society results primarily from the strengthening of local organizations. Within this strategy, empowerment and democratization replace charity and the treatment of the symptoms of poverty. Improved organizational and problem-solving capacity is crucial for each group, as is the formation of mutually supportive coalitions, federations, and networks.

In sum, the major long-term objective of grassroots development is to produce more viable, productive, and effective local organizations that can carry out further development efforts on their own, long after a specific project has ended.

This approach to development offers great promise to disadvantaged people throughout the world. However, the strategy is not a panacea. Many problems cannot be effectively addressed by grassroots techniques alone, including major infrastructural needs, population explosion, racial discrimination, environmental degradation, and pandemics of communicable diseases. These problems require broad social and financial commitments, or even societal restructuring, that necessarily transcend, though do not exclude, the grassroots level.

Furthermore, a grassroots development approach is not without risks. Management of these projects

can be inefficient and authoritarian, just as in any other approach. Even when a grassroots approach is democratic, this rarely means that consensus is achieved—a majority can suppress the will of a minority or push it to the margins of the group. We often talk about “the people,” as if they were a homogeneous monolith. They are not.

There are other, more serious, risks inherent in grassroots techniques. Leaders can be co-opted or manipulated by political or economic interests. Hidden agendas can subvert original goals. Finally, grassroots techniques can be misused—for example, by hate groups, or fanatical individuals—to encourage ultimately destructive behaviors, such as discrimination, terrorism, and violence.

On balance, however, the grassroots development approach has proven itself to be a constructive, hopeful path for the disadvantaged. It is not the only path, and it is fraught with pitfalls and uncertainty. Sometimes it is romanticized by those who practice it. It will be best served as a method if its strategies, goals, and accomplishments, are scrutinized and refined through critical analysis and debate. This process necessarily begins with a clarification of what we mean by “grassroots development.” As others examine and refine the definition offered here, I hope we can advance our collective understanding of development goals and hone our skill at designing effective strategies for achieving them. ♦

CHUCK KLEYMEYER holds a Ph.D. in development from the University of Wisconsin. He first began working in grassroots development in 1966 as a Peace Corps volunteer, and has been with the IAF since 1979. He is the editor of a forthcoming book on the relationship between cultural expression and grassroots development.

JOINING FORCES TO SAVE THE AMAZON

Among certain groups today, the word “Amazon” can stir more emotion and heated debate than any other: Recently, it captured the attention of nearly 100 journalists from Europe, Latin America, and the United States as they assembled to witness the first summit between indigenous groups and environmentalists.

Held in Iquitos, Peru, deep in the heart of the Amazon Basin, this meeting received a remarkable amount of media attention due to an organizing effort by the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA). COICA is an umbrella group representing 1.2 million Indians belonging to 327 tribes in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil. Its members wanted to use the press to send this message to decision-makers: Indians want a voice in the debate over the Amazon, and to be major actors in the struggle to save it.

Thus was born “Amazon Voices,” a one-year media project conceived by Evaristo Nugkuag, president of COICA; Richard Chase Smith, Oxfam America’s South American projects director; and Jane Wholey, director of Esopus Creek Communications. The project, which began with a major news conference in Washington, D.C., targeted 500 newspaper, magazine, and television reporters with an interest in indigenous affairs, Latin America, or the environment. Then, over the course of a year, Wholey (who served as COICA’s media consultant) sent them a series of compelling letters and contacted them frequently by telephone. The response was overwhelming. Close to 50 reporters covered the Iquitos story, many actually traveling to Iquitos for the week-long summit. Among the media represented were the Today

Show, *The Miami Herald*, Cable News Network, *Village Voice*, *Time* magazine, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Since environmentalists and indigenous groups have not always seen eye to eye, this summit represented a breakthrough in their relationship. The Indians acknowledged that they need the environmentalists' help as they struggle against those people who are trying to exploit them and destroy their homelands. By meeting with environmentalists, COICA hoped not only to express its frustration and anger at being excluded from the battle to save the Amazon, but also to form an alliance to preserve the region and its inhabitants. The environmentalists agreed. Joe Kane of the San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network says in *Time* magazine that this meeting "established a true alliance between indigenous peoples and conservationists. To help save the Amazon, we will now make securing land rights for indigenous peoples a priority."

From this meeting, a declaration of solidarity was drafted and signed both by members of COICA's national-level confederations and by representatives from environmental groups worldwide including Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, World Wildlife Fund, and a consortium of Peruvian environmental groups. The participants formed a provisional steering committee to further develop the indigenous/environmentalist alliance.

IAF's Chuck Kleymeyer attended the conference as an observer and served as one of several volunteer translators for interviews between the Indians and the press. One of his strongest impressions of the meeting was the philosophy of non-violence practiced by the indigenous groups. "They could take up arms and use the jungle to wage guerrilla warfare for their land as the Viet-



Terence Moore

Journalists at COICA summit experienced the Amazon firsthand.

namese and many others have done," observes Kleymeyer, "but they have chosen a peaceful struggle. The Iquitos summit was a significant step forward in that struggle because it established COICA as a major actor on the stage where the fate of the Amazon is being played out."

Evaristo Nugkuag, president of COICA, sees the struggle as one of basic survival, in which the fate of the Amazon parallels the fate of the Indians: If the Amazon is destroyed, then we are destroyed; we will die, he said.

—*Maria Lang*

CONFRONTING THE NEW REALITY OF POVERTY

Soaring inflation, increased unemployment, and a turbulent political situation provided a backdrop for the biennial conference of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). Hundreds of social workers, community organizers, educators, and policymakers from every continent assembled in

Lima, Peru, to discuss "The New Reality of Poverty and the Struggle for Social Transformation."

As described by Eduardo Ballán, a political scientist at the Centro de Estudios de Promoción de Desarrollo, the "new reality of poverty" in Latin America is one that places over half the population of many countries in extreme poverty. This poverty is perpetuated by a vicious cycle of export-based and international-loan-dependent economies. In elaborating upon these themes, conference presenter Gustavo Gutiérrez—considered by many to be one of the founders of Liberation Theology in Latin America—articulated the structural and cultural factors perpetuating the growth of poverty and argued that any solution to the problem must have a "preferential option for the poor."

Themes of "underdeveloping the Third World" united the 150 papers presented during the conference, held in August 1990. Innovative strategies for community empowerment and social change through so-

cial work education and research were proposed, with particular attention given to efforts that maximize community self-determination and participation in decision-making. Michel Azcueta, mayor of the self-sufficient shantytown Villa El Salvador, urged social workers to collaborate with base communities in constructing a new democracy, a democracy that would strengthen the abilities of poor communities to meet their social, political, and economic needs.

Field visits to Villa El Salvador highlighted the range of efforts under way throughout Lima's shantytowns, where local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are addressing problems faced by the poor: inadequate health care and poor nutrition, domestic violence against women, lack of economic and political resources, and the need for income-generating projects and microenterprise. Cultural events introducing participants to Peruvian folklore, dance, and music also became a unique opportunity to build solidarity for further North-South and South-South exchanges.

The meeting was enriched by pre-conference symposia that stimulated debate and an exchange of ideas on popular education, women in poverty, AIDS, information technology, the informal sector, human rights, and developing nations' external debt. These symposia, coordinated by Peruvian universities and NGOs, detailed methods for social work practice and education, including the psychological and social impact of poverty, the contributions of popular movements in social transformation, and the role of *concientización de los pobres* (consciousness-raising of the poor) in the global development process.

Several five-day postconference workshops were also held in conjunction with the conference to pro-

vide training in community leadership and to develop social work curricula on priority issues in the struggle for social transformation. Workshop themes included empowerment of women for economic and social development; macro-development projects as they affect social work education and practice; social work education to address the increasing numbers of homeless street children.

Conclusions drawn from the workshops, regional meetings, and plenary sessions of the 1990 conference are being drafted into a final report, which may be ordered from Dr. Vera Mehta, General Secretary, IASSW, Palais Palffy, Josefsplatz 6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria. The 1992 IASSW conference will take place in Washington, D.C.

—Catherine M. Sarri

RODALE DEMONSTRATES "REGENERATIVE TECHNIQUES"

The Rodale Institute, which is on the cutting edge of regenerative farming technology, held its annual field days on July 24-25 at its research farm in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Seven IAF staff members attended

in order to learn about new techniques that might be transferred to the Foundation's partners in Latin America.

In addition to extensive work in the United States, Rodale is gaining considerable experience with Latin America, having worked with both governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations such as the Ministry of Agriculture and CARE in Ecuador. It has also collaborated with the Centro de Educación y Tecnología (CET) and the Comisión de Investigación en Agricultura Alternativa in Chile. Many of Rodale's insights have been disseminated beyond Chile through CET's participation in the Consorcio Latinoamericano sobre Agroecología y Desarrollo (see Development Notes, *Grassroots Development* Vol. 13, No. 1), a group of eight organizations promoting the practice of "low-input" agriculture with small-scale farmers throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Researchers and extensionists at Rodale call the technology "regenerative"; others call it "low-input," "sustainable," "agroecological," or "organic." All of these terms describe agricultural systems that mini-



Patrick Breslin

A researcher at the Rodale Institute explains regenerative agricultural techniques during annual field days.

mize the use of chemicals to lower production costs while improving soils and protecting ground-water quality. More and more farmers and researchers around the world are becoming receptive to this movement.

The Rodale Institute has been conducting scientific research for almost two decades, both on their experimental farm in Pennsylvania and through extension services to farmers in the United States and abroad. During their field days this year, researchers presented the latest results of their meticulous search for more environmentally and economically sound farming techniques. Participants included farmers, researchers, government personnel, and others who toured the center pulled by tractors from site to site.

Visitors saw some of the results from 20-year experiments to compare the costs and returns of various tillage methods to reduce soil erosion. They also viewed experimental plots planted with perennial grains

better suited for soil quality but not yet economically competitive with annual grain varieties. Other experiments examined alternatives to chemical fertilizers, such as the cultivation of over 100 varieties of legumes to assess their nitrogen-fixing qualities and adaptability to different farming systems. Alternatives to chemical pesticides being promoted include beneficial insects, bug traps, and plant breeding for resistance to pests.

Rodale has experimental orchards that minimize chemical inputs. It is also working to raise vegetable yields through lower tillage; the use of green manures, compost, and mulches; and modifications to farm equipment and tools. Some of the results were on display in the farm's spectacular garden, which features a wide variety of plants, flowers, and herbs, and a solar greenhouse.

In addition to these and other experiments, Rodale extensionists work closely with farmers around

the United States on projects to test the commercial applicability of their research. That work extends not only to projects in Latin America, but to projects in Africa, Europe, and Asia, all of which involve close collaboration with local research institutions and farmers. A wide variety of publications are available by writing to the Rodale Research Center, 611 Siegfriedale Road, Kutztown, Pennsylvania 19530.

—Jim Adriance

RURAL NGOs COMPARE STRATEGIES

Representatives of 20 NGOs met recently in the town of Formosa, Argentina, for a seminar on "Campesino Differentiation and Comparative Strategies of Rural Projects in Paraguay and northeastern Argentina" sponsored by SEDES and SEDDAR, the Argentine and Paraguayan support service arms of the Inter-American Foundation. The

IAF GRANTEES IN THE NEWS

Herbert Daniel and Walter de Almeida of the **Associação Interdisciplinara de AIDS** were interviewed on National Public Radio by Frank Browning, who prepared a series of four 10-minute segments on AIDS in Brazil for "All Things Considered." His report covered the serious social problems and high-growth potential of AIDS in Brazil, and the Brazilian government's response to this issue. • An article in *Time* magazine cites microentrepreneur Melba Lucy Montenegro, who received a loan through a branch of **Women's World Banking (WWB)** in Cali, Colombia. During the next 10 years,

WWB hopes to expand its activities worldwide by "helping women to find investors, to get more training, and to develop larger markets."

• The Rodale Institute newsletter, *International Ag-Sieve*, observed that support from the **Fundación Pro Iguana Verde** of Panama and Costa Rica has been essential to the continued success of the Green Iguana Management Project. The project—which attempts to increase the population of iguanas in areas where they are now virtually extinct—was originally funded by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. • Two groups recognized by *The Washington Post* for coordinating assistance programs and lobbying on behalf of street children in Brazil are **Cruzada do Menor** and **Movimento Nacional**

de Meninos e Meninas da Rua.

• Escuela Nueva, an innovative and low-cost education program designed by **Fundación "Volvamos a la Gente,"** will be extended to all of Colombia's 27,000 rural primary schools, according to *Development Journal*. The program's curriculum, which promotes problem-solving instead of learning by rote, offers benefits to communities as well, since achievement is measured by the extent to which students can apply what they have learned to activities in their neighborhoods. • *Pan Am Clipper* magazine recently highlighted the work of Mónica Jiménez, director of Participa, which promotes citizen involvement in elections and government in Chile. Jiménez was formerly the director of the **Escuela de Trabajo Social.**

Inside IAF

meeting was designed to bring together a range of organizations with years of experience working in the countryside so that they could share insights and information.

Preliminary studies were undertaken to establish a framework for seminar discussions, focusing on the growing economic and social complexity of the region and its effect on the core strategies of selected projects funded by the IAF. Participants were then free to zero in on specific subjects of interest.

The first working session set an agenda that focused on two major areas: the underlying causes of campesino impoverishment and responsive project strategies. The first area considered how land distribution, monocropping, the lack of credit, inadequate public policies, depressed national economies, and the lack of local organization had a stranglehold over small farmers. In evaluating effective project responses, three analytical questions were weighed. First, were project strategies designed to provide aid or to promote development? Second, what was the proper balance in project production strategies between subsistence and cash crops, and how could the mix be shaped to preserve the environment? Finally, how could NGOs help campesinos articulate their demands to affect public policy?

In arriving at conclusions, no attempt was made to forge a consensus. Emphasis was placed on preserving the diversity of approaches and views that had enriched the discussions. One area of broad agreement emerged in the evaluation on the closing day, when participants all agreed on the need to hold further meetings. A wide array of subjects and mechanisms was offered, and it was recommended that these initiatives be studied by SEDES and SEDDAR for implementation with networks of NGOs in both countries.

—Miguel A. Verdecchia ◊

Frank Yturria: A Man of Tradition

Daphne White

Frank D. Yturria, the IAF's newly appointed chairman, understands the value of tradition. An avid genealogist, he traces his Texas roots back to 1818 and has unearthed his family history back to 1767, when his great-great-great-grandfather Francisco was stationed in Veracruz, Mexico, to be posted with the Spanish Royal Regiment.

"I am very steeped in the dual heritage of my family," says Yturria, the third in a line of Franciscos. Like his predecessors, he has lived most of his life in the Brownsville/Matamoros area. The two cities—one U.S., one Mexican—face each other across the Rio Grande River near the Gulf of Mexico.

Yturria's family history, replete with military exploits and business ventures, has been etched out on both sides of the border. Like his ancestors, Yturria served in the military—during both World War II and the Korean War. And he carries on another tradition: managing the family business, which has been handed down for four generations. Yturria is the owner of Yturria Ranch Enterprises and chairman of Texas Bank and Trust, and has also been active in oil and gas production, extensive farming, and real estate development.

In addition to believing in the market economy, he believes in the marketplace of ideas, in the need for competitive parties if democracy is to serve the people and prosper. Though raised a Democrat ("no one is raised a Republican in Texas," he says), Yturria switched parties when Dwight Eisenhower announced he would seek the presidency as a Republican. "I was a great admirer of

him and of General MacArthur," Yturria says. He was also influenced by a speech he heard at about that time, "describing the states with one-party systems as the poorest, and the states with two-party systems as the most productive."

Along the way, Yturria met and befriended George Bush. "I've been a friend of the President for 30 years, since he ran for Congress," he says.

Yturria is fluent in Spanish, has many friends in Mexico, and has traveled extensively in Latin America. A year ago, Yturria was contacted by the White House personnel office and asked to serve as the Foundation's chairman. Hearings on Yturria's nomination were held in May and June, and he was confirmed by the Senate on June 26, 1990.

"As chairman, my first role is to give the Foundation the voice that it needs to be heard at the White House and on Capitol Hill," Yturria says. "I also feel that the chairman should be the overseer of the Foundation, and make sure the mandate of Congress is being adhered to." The chairman must ensure that "taxpayer dollars are properly spent on projects they were intended for, projects that will bear fruit," Yturria adds. "To do that, the board should meet quarterly, and receive quarterly reports."

The new chairman says he has no "pet" areas or projects, although he would like the IAF to increase its activities in Mexico. "Mexico is one of the largest countries in Latin America, and it is our next door neighbor," he says. By the year 2025, Mexico's population is expected to reach 250 million, Yturria notes, and the challenges facing its economy will impact deeply on the United States.

Although the Foundation has not supported projects in population control, this is one of Latin Ameri-

Reviews



Paul Kennedy

Frank Yturria, newly appointed IAF board chairman.

ca's most pressing problems, Yturria says. "Unless changes occur in the near future, the population explosion will make all our efforts useless," he predicts.

One of the ideas Yturria would like to explore as chairman is the possibility of getting Latin American university students more involved with local Foundation projects. "These students are the leaders of tomorrow, and I would like them to learn more about the Foundation," he explains. Volunteer students could also help the In-Country Support teams in their training and monitoring activities, Yturria says, providing solid experience for a new generation of development professionals.

In addition, the new chairman is interested in helping restore the traditional agricultural methods of Peruvian and Bolivian Indians. "The Indians had a very successful civilization that the Spaniards destroyed," Yturria says. Before the Europeans came, the Indians had an advanced culture and their store-

houses were full of food. "Perhaps the way of their ancestors is the way to go," Yturria adds, noting that recent archeological digs have revealed extensive irrigation ditches and aqueducts constructed by the Incas.

Yturria admits he has much to learn about the Foundation. He is looking forward to visiting IAF-funded projects firsthand. By the time his six-year term expires, Yturria hopes the Foundation "will have initiated highly successful projects that will be role models for others in the development community. I hope these projects will be so successful that the budget restrictions won't be as severe as they are now. Perhaps the Foundation's budget could be doubled to reach more people more effectively."

It is an ambitious goal, but that does not phase Yturria. He is a Texan, after all. ◇

DAPHNE WHITE is a Washington, D.C.-based journalist who writes on development and conservation issues.

MUJERES CENTROAMERICANAS ANTE LA CRISIS, LA GUERRA Y EL PROCESO DE PAZ: Volume I, TENDENCIAS ESTRUCTURALES; Volume II, EFECTOS DEL CONFLICTO, by Ana Isabel García and Enrique Gomáriz. San José, Costa Rica: FLASCO, CSUCA, and Universidad para la Paz, 1989.

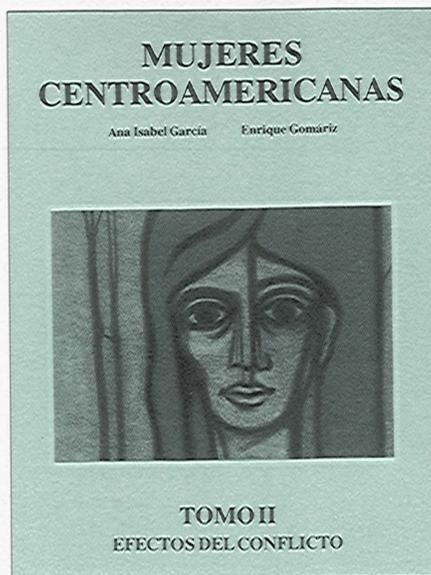
Sally W. Yudelman

For more than a decade, Central America has been trapped in a vicious cycle in which war has thwarted development and extreme poverty has fueled war. Between 1980 and 1988, the gross domestic product grew only 1 percent. Today 10 million people—40 percent of the population—live in absolute poverty, unable to meet basic nutritional requirements. Fifty-seven percent are unemployed, and barely half have access to primary health care. One out of every 10 children dies before reaching the age of five and over half of school-age children do not have access to education. Forty to fifty percent of the economically active population is estimated to be illiterate. More than 160,000 have died as a result of the conflict, and an additional two million more are refugees or displaced persons within their own countries. Women and the children for whom they are almost always responsible have been disproportionately affected. In Central America, more often than not, poverty has a woman's face.

Mujeres Centroamericanas is thus a timely and important publication. The result of a collaborative agreement among the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), the Consejo Superior de Universidades Centroamericanas (CSUCA), and the Universidad para La Paz, it is the first study ever carried out on a regional level to compile statistical data disaggregated by sex. Project director Ana Isabel

García and research coordinator Enrique Gomáriz have brought together an exceptionally able network of researchers and consultants in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The U.N. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women assisted in the development of the research methodology, and funding was provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Economic Cooperation.

Volume I, *Tendencias Estructurales*, provides extensive data about trends in population, employment, education, health, and the legal situation of women in each of the five coun-



tries. It concludes with a regional analysis of the significance of this information. Volume II, *Efectos del Conflicto*, analyzes the double crisis, the peace process, and the sectors at highest risk—indigent rural and urban women, married and unmarried; single women heads-of-household; adolescent girls; domestics; Indian women; and refugees. The volume examines the impact of public policies on these sectors and their vul-

nerability to human rights abuses. It describes how women have coped with war and deprivation and the role women's organizations play. Appendices include a partial listing of women's groups and organizations working with women in the different countries, and a bibliography with statistical sources.

Mujeres Centroamericanas tells us that Central American women are young, poor, and unhealthy. They have many children, a high level of illiteracy (24 to 40 percent), and live both in urban and rural areas. They face serious discrimination. Their considerable economic contributions are still undercounted and undervalued, especially in agriculture. Due to a deeply entrenched tradition of patriarchy, however, there is strong resistance to passing laws that would end discrimination. Costa Rica is the exception. Its levels of health, education, and literacy are among the highest in Latin America, and its recently approved Ley de Igualdad Real (Real Equality Law) is one of the world's most progressive.

Not surprisingly, the study also reveals that the costs of the conflicts of the 1980s have fallen heavily on women. The majority of refugees are women and children. Women make up one-quarter of the victims of documented human rights violations and, as is usual in times of crisis, traditional violence against women—rape and wife beating—has increased dramatically.

Mujeres Centroamericanas concludes with three general recommendations: Eliminate sexual discrimination; improve living conditions of the poor and indigent women who are the majority of the female population; and negotiate solutions to the political-military crisis. These general recommendations are followed by specific ones targeted at education, health (including sexuality and reproductive health), political participation, access to productive

resources, and legal reform for women at high risk.

Mujeres Centroamericanas is a pioneering work, carefully and thoroughly researched, wide-ranging in analysis and scope. It fills an enormous gap in the literature about Central American women and will be a source of information for students, academics, practitioners, and policymakers for years to come. If I had one criticism, I would cite the need for priorities among the myriad recommendations. Given the economic crisis, it is unlikely that governments (even if so inclined) could implement all of the recommendations. But this is a minor point. The study is essential reading for anyone interested not only in women's issues, but also in Central America. One hopes that at least a summary translation into English will be forthcoming. ♦

SALLY W. YUDELMAN, a senior fellow at the International Center for Research on Women, was a member of the International Commission for Central American Recovery and Development (The Sanford Commission).

THE CHALLENGE OF RURAL DEMOCRATISATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE PHILIPPINES, edited by Jonathan Fox. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1990.

Charles A. Reilly

If winds of democratization are sweeping Eastern European and Latin American cities, only gentle breezes—or perhaps the doldrums—envelope the vast majority of rural areas in the developing world. In this edited volume, political scientist and former IAF fellow Jonathan Fox has assembled case studies of social movements in Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and the

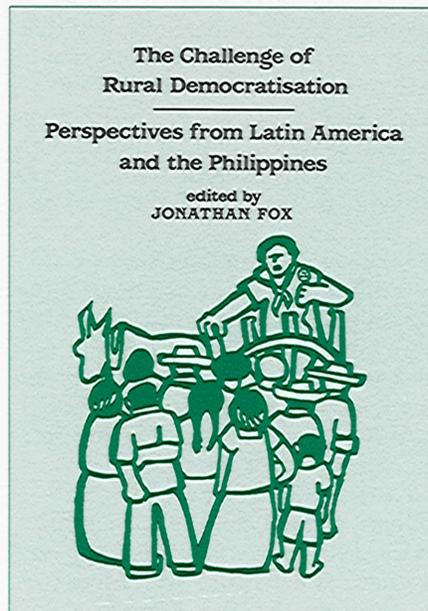
Philippines, offering many useful insights into what is happening to the rural poor. Although democratization and development have eluded the rural masses, each of these cases shows how social movements have dealt with the informal side of politics by setting up representative organizations. Inching beyond clientelism in the direction of citizenship, they are struggling to make their own organizations reflect democratic values that the broader polity is far from conceding.

The Challenge of Rural Democratization should appeal to a wide range of readers. For scholars concerned with linking democracy and development, it provides richly nuanced empirical data. Both ambitious theory-builders and more modest proposition-builders will do well to examine the case studies. Development practitioners will recognize some familiar landscape in these chapters—and much new terrain—since the phenomenon of social movements progressing from protest to effective bargaining and pact-making is something of a novelty for those more experienced with the world of NGOs and PVOs.

Fox frames the chapters well in a brief initial chapter. He notes the specificity of rural democratization, in which institutions capable of mediating the interests of civil society—"parties, trade unions, civic associations, and the media"—have a superficial or highly uneven presence in many developing countries. He also highlights three themes that echo throughout most of the papers: the relationship between electoral and non-electoral politics; the concept of rural citizenship versus clientelism; and the articulation of direct and representative democracy.

For the burgeoning number of advocates and vendors of democracy abroad, the collection provides some salutary cautions. Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui, for example, argues that

rich, traditional democratic forms of Bolivian social organization such as the *ayllu* are being thoughtlessly discarded and the right of Bolivians to choose their own models of democracy is being casually dismissed. She describes the negative impact of food aid tied to the formation of *sindicatos*, or rural unions, which actually undermine the *ayllu* forms of self-government and resource distri-



bution. The clash between indigenous styles of direct democracy and imposed representative democratic models introduced through NGOs and westernized union structures leads her to conclude that: "Citizenship must be reconceptualized in accordance with our multicultural reality."

Among other Latin American contributors, Cândido Grzybowski's account of Brazilian movements offers interesting parallels to Luisa Paré's work on Mexico. The Philippine material, written by Francisco Lara, Jr., and Horacio R. Morales, Jr., resonates easily with the Latin American

cases. The authors show how alliance-building has evolved in the post-Marcos period, both within and outside the formal political system. Peasant massacres, absentee landlords, colonization efforts, patron-client relations, the radicalization of Church personnel, and the evolution of autonomous peasant organizations could easily refer to many a Latin American situation. The formation of national-level coalitions such as the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform, with its estimated membership of 1.3 million, is a significant departure from the Latin models. Despite the size of the movement, the "blocked transition," as the authors describe the democratization process at present, still has a way to go.

Each of the chapters provides a useful contemporary bibliography. Each author offers a "thick description" of important rural social movements. However, the book would have been much enriched with a reflective final chapter to bring together a number of disparate strands. Fox's brief but analytically rich introductory chapter (and his work in other collections, including *Grassroots Development*) could have been extended here to help readers see how the principle of citizenship, incorporated into a variety of organizational garbs and decision-making processes, does succeed in introducing (or restoring) to rural settings those qualitative elements such as participation, accountability, access, representation, and competition that give democracy its value and its verve. That might require yet another volume. Read this one while you wait. ♦

CHARLES A. REILLY is the IAF vice president for Learning and Dissemination. He is also the editor of a forthcoming book on NGO-local government relationships in a democratizing Latin America.

Resources

The concept of management suggests different things to different people. To some, it is the necessary ingredient for healthy organizations, publicly or privately owned, that serve their clients well and have a high regard for their staff members. Others think of it as a primarily capitalistic structure within which delivery of services and benefits battles unequally against the drive to maximize profits. Another school of thought defines management as a developmental process holding the potential to empower workers, organizations, and even entire communities. In this issue of Grassroots Development, readers are offered a sampling of several resources that focus on the latter view, presenting management and institution-building as tools for sustainable development.

Striking a blow for effective management in development, Moses N. Kuggundu argues that development constraints arise more out of the mismanagement or misuse of resources than from any actual scarcity. His thesis is that development initiatives—whether by governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), or the private sector—cannot make significant headway unless they encourage and strengthen autonomous local organizations.

Kuggundu airs these views in the first book of a new series—New Directions in Development Management—sponsored by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. **Managing Organizations in Developing Countries: An Operational and Strategic Approach** is divided into two parts. The first presents an organizational framework. The second offers practical techniques for maximizing human resources; transferring technology, knowledge, and expertise; decentralizing program implementation; managing structural adjustments; and linking organiza-

tions to national development.

Copies may be ordered from Kumarian Press, 630 Oakwood Avenue, Suite 119, West Hartford, Connecticut 06110-1505.

A recent report published jointly by the United Nations Development Programme and the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project warns against limiting “community participation” to the mobilization of self-help labor or the organization of local groups to rubber-stamp decisions made by outside planners. Effective participation means community management, and puts the local people in charge, giving them “responsibility, authority, and control” over the development project. Without such control, the confidence and sense of ownership needed to maintain and repair infrastructure and expand services may never develop.

Community Management of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Services (WASH Report No. 67) examines the features of and requirements for community management, discusses its potential for developing project sustainability, and describes a five-level process that leads to a community’s full participation in its own development. To illustrate that process, the authors analyze project experiences from Sierra Leone, Togo, Malawi, Guatemala, Kenya, the Philippines, and the United States.

Two additional WASH publications examine the form community participation takes through the emergence of new institutions at the local level. **Evaluation Guidelines for Community-Based Water and Sanitation Projects** (WASH Report No. 64) begins with the need for a functional definition of “institution,” arguing that it must be broad enough to include any group that follows a set of operational rules, establishes policy, and has an identity

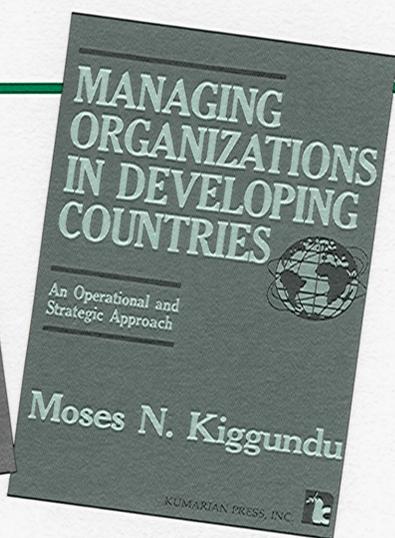
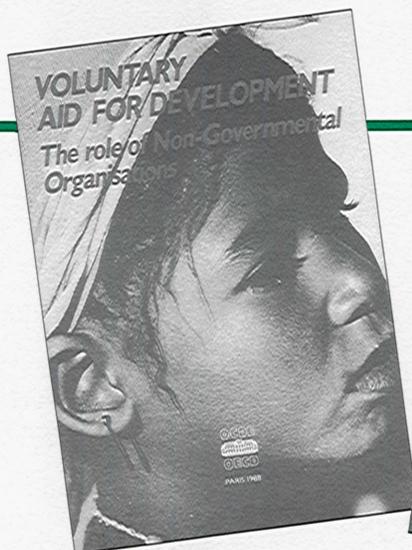
beyond that of its individual members. When noting the elements needed for a successful water supply and sanitation project, the author identifies institution-building at the village level as a key indicator of long-term sustainability.

Managing Institutional Development Projects (WASH Technical Report No. 49) examines how institution-building occurs and how it can best be managed. A section of “lessons” gained from project experience includes the need for project managers to be flexible, adaptable, and prepared for initial opposition from the community; the need to start with the least threatening change; the need to proceed slowly rather than overwhelming the community by attempting to work on all levels of the project at once; the need to remember that in organizational systems, information is power and must be shared with everyone; and, finally, the need to establish and maintain trust in counterpart relationships, the key to whether a project will sink or swim.

These reports may be ordered from WASH Publications, 1611 N. Kent Street, Room 1001, Arlington, Virginia 22209-2111.

Echoing the community responsibility/management theme, a report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suggests that local self-help organizations hold the greatest potential for overcoming poverty worldwide. Such organizations are often aided at a critical juncture by one or more NGOs, usually through the exchange of ideas and expertise (enabling both partners to do more with less); the procurement of materials or appropriate technology; or training and human resources development. NGOs can make perhaps their greatest contribution through the latter: Whether working with a co-op or a farmers’ organization, a

Letters



mothers' club or a water-users' association, the ability to promote and strengthen local institution-building may be viewed as an indicator of an NGO's effectiveness.

Voluntary Aid for Development: The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations surveys the NGO movement—its history, development, and impact. Material on local self-help organizations, although drawn largely from the African experience, could apply equally well elsewhere, as could the discussion of other issues such as institution-building, self-evaluation in local organizations, appropriate technology, and fostering microenterprises in the informal sector.

To order the book or to request a publications catalogue, write to OECD Publications Service, Sales and Distribution Division, 2 rue Andre-Pascal, 75775 PARIS CEDEX 16, France.

A complementary resource is the Transnational Network for Appropriate/Alternative Technologies (TRANET), which was founded to manage more equitably the terms on which grassroots organizations obtain needed resources. It aims to reduce dependence on governmental or outside assistance by promoting local self-reliance and by acting as a clearing-house for the sharing of resources and innovative ideas among

its international network of member organizations and interested professionals.

TRANET publishes a bimonthly newsletter that includes information on a variety of materials from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, Europe, and North America. A "bulletin board" offers members an opportunity to solicit assistance from each other in the form of information, advice, and, occasionally, commodities. Material on other networks is often included, as well. Periodically, network volunteers compile separate resource directories focusing on specific topics—"alternative travel" and "energy today" have been featured recently. A paid subscription to the newsletter will also cover a free subscription to someone in a developing country.

As an in-depth local resource for community self-reliance, TRANET has developed a mini-library of 100 books and do-it-yourself manuals for use at the village level. Members from the Third World selected these volumes, which they consider to be the best appropriate-technology publications available. The library's cost of \$1,000 includes delivery to any Third World village.

To request further information write to TRANET, P.O. Box 567, Rangeley, Maine 04970. ♦

Lynda Edwards

I have read and enjoyed the articles in *Grassroots Development* for many years and I would like to congratulate you on their quality and the information they contain regarding development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I would also like to clarify a fact that was misstated in the otherwise well-written article "Mastering the Craft of Scaling-Up in Colombia," by Brent Goff (Vol. 14, No. 1). On page 22, he says that "ACPA assembled a team of technical specialists and, with the support of an IAF grant . . ." This should read "and, with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) . . ." since the OAS provided the Asociación Colombiana de Promoción Artesanal with technical and financial cooperation to develop educational materials during an eight-year period. Negotiations with the Ministry of Education to support the Escuela Nueva program resulted from that assistance, as well.

Inês Chamorro
Arlington, Virginia

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The OAS did indeed make a significant contribution to the success of this project and it should have been acknowledged as a co-funder. ♦

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IAF Fellowships The Foundation has created four fellowship programs to support development practitioners and researchers from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States whose research and career interests concern development activities among the poor. Two of these programs support field research in Latin America and the Caribbean at the master's and doctoral levels; another brings Latin American and Caribbean scholars and practitioners to the United States for advanced training; a new program, the Dante B. Fascell Inter-American Fellowship, supports grassroots development dissemination activities of distinguished Latin American and Caribbean leaders.

Fellowship topics of primary interest are: 1) the nature of effective grassroots organizations among the poor; 2) the nature of effective intermediary or service organizations; and 3) systematic appraisals of local development activities such as studies of development programs and projects designed to reach the poorest populations, including small businesses in the informal sector, female-headed households, isolated indigenous populations, and artisanal fishermen.

Applications and inquiries should be directed to:

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