



Inter-American Sustainable Social
Development Development Development
Bank Department Division

From the Division Chief

The importance of effective action in the social sectors increases manifold when countries undergo shocks, be they natural or man-made. Unfortunately, the immediate response to a specific shock often dwarfs attention to the social, or human, side of a crisis. Just months after a hurricane devastated Central America, and following serious regional financial turmoil, this second issue of *Social Development* hopefully serves as a reminder that social development is central to the region's economic growth and its ability to respond effectively to crises.

The articles in this issue cover a broad array of social concerns, from health to violence to childhood development and women's and indigenous people's advancement and rights. Despite the variety of subjects treated, common themes emerge, including the importance of investing in prevention and the continuing quest for effective interventions. This newsletter seeks to inform those interested in social questions about our work and to foster a dialogue on these issues. We hope to hear from you.

Mayra Buvinić

Prenatal Care: A Key to Future Development

BY ALFREDO SOLARI

Scientific research has identified approaches that help reduce physical, psychological, and intellectual disadvantages in early childhood. The key is proper nurturing, especially during the first years of life, not only in terms of food, but also in terms of emotional and intellectual stimuli. But is a newborn's potential already significantly limited? If so, can potential disadvantages be reduced prior to birth? The answer to both questions is yes.

The limitations in question are present at birth, but they are not hereditary; they are caused by the conditions under which the pregnancy unfolded. Recent research at the *Centro Latinoamericano de Perinatología* (CLAP—Latin American Center for Perinatology) of the Pan American Health Organization demonstrates the magnitude and effects of

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Violence Prevention More Cost-Effective than Cures

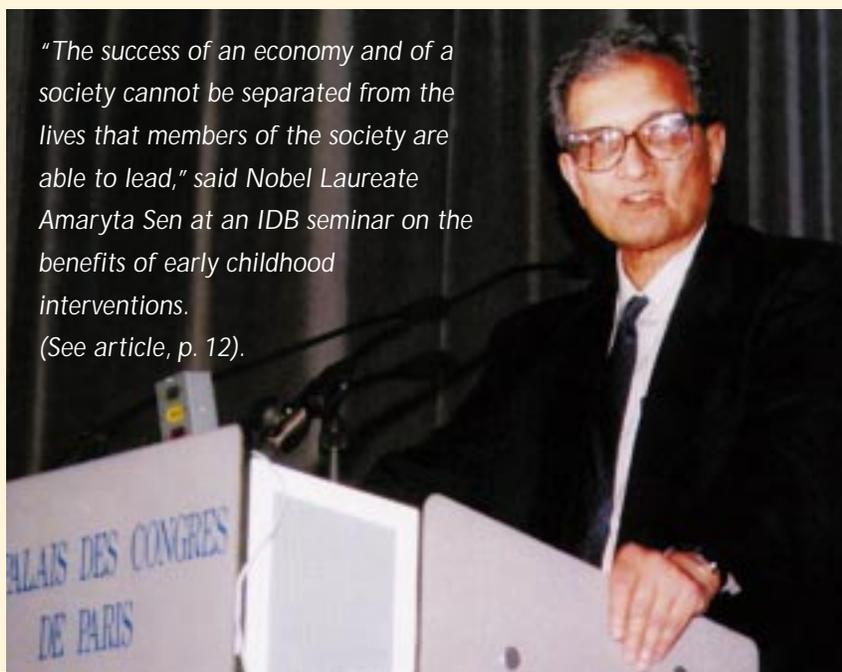
BY ANDREW MORRISON

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) may be among the most violent regions in the world. Evidence from the last year in which comparable homicide data are available for world regions (1990) shows the LAC homicide rate at more than twice the global average: 22.9 per 100,000 versus a worldwide average of 10.7. Only Sub-Saharan Africa had a higher rate (40.1), and no other region of the world had a homicide rate in excess of 9 per 100,000. The most recent estimates for Latin America and the Caribbean put the homicide rate at 28.4 per 100,000 in 1994. Although data are not uniform across countries, a 10-year trend is unmistakable: climbing homicide rates in 10 out of 14 LAC countries.

This disturbing trend points to a need to design policies that effectively
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"The success of an economy and of a society cannot be separated from the lives that members of the society are able to lead," said Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen at an IDB seminar on the benefits of early childhood interventions.

(See article, p. 12).



such non-hereditary congenital problems. A CLAP study carried out between 1985 and 1997 found that, by birth, 14.5 percent of newborns in 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries had not achieved a level of development consistent with their age - they were “small for gestational age (SGA).” In contrast, only 7 percent of newborns in developed countries suffer this type of delay, suggesting that this problem is linked to underdevelopment and that it is preventable.

SGA newborns have developed at a less-than-normal rate during the gestation period. These babies differ from premature infants, who are small because they were born prior to the usual 40 weeks of gestation. Of course, there are newborns who suffer from both problems: growth retardation and premature birth.

In general, premature infants have serious health problems at birth, but after such problems are overcome, there are no long-term consequences. By contrast, SGA babies suffer immediate and subsequent health problems. They face increased neonatal mortality: the risk of dying during the first four weeks of life is 10 times greater for these babies than for normal newborns. Further, they suffer delays in neurological development

and learning capacity during childhood, and, as adults, they run a greater risk of suffering chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. The vast majority of health and education-related problems in poor homes involve children who are “small for gestational age” and who are more likely to repeat the cycle of delayed intrauterine development with their own children.

Given the lack of sufficient scientific information on the prevention of intrauterine growth delays, Dr. José Belizán, an Argentine neonatologist and the Director of CLAP, developed a policy-oriented research program aimed at filling this knowledge gap. Many contributing factors of delayed intrauterine growth are already known: pregnant women who smoke, drink alcohol, eat improperly or insufficiently; are very young or have had a recent delivery; lack micronutrients (iron and vitamin A); and/or have acute infections or other medical conditions, are highly likely to have an SGA baby. Incorporating this information into reproductive health programs and health care reforms is as urgent as supporting research on this topic.

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Inter-American
Development Bank

Sustainable Development
Department

Social Development
Division

Mission Statement

The Sustainable Development Department's Social Development Division (SDS/SOC) assists the IDB by providing technical support to operations and by helping to identify and promote new opportunities for Bank action in social development that will accelerate growth and improve the well-being of people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Division provides technical and conceptual support on priority issues for women and indigenous groups through the Women in Development Unit and the Indigenous Peoples and Community Development Unit. It also provides such support on early childhood development, health, urban development, violence prevention and control, and the formulation of social policy.

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Gender and Natural Disasters: Reconstruction after Loss

BY MAURICIO R. BERTRAND

In cooperation with the IDB's Regional Department responsible for Central America, and with resources provided by Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the Women in Development Unit organized a technical meeting on gender and natural disasters in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on May 6 and 7, 1999. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain the effects of Hurricane Mitch on women and to identify opportunities for increased women's participation in the implementation of national reconstruction plans in the region. International experts, participants from the public sector and civil society of the affected countries, Bank officials from Headquarters and Country Offices, and representatives of donor

countries and institutions provided technical input at the meeting.

As a result of the discussions, the paper, "Hurricane Mitch: Women's Needs and Contributions," was prepared for presentation at the May meeting of the Consultative Group for Central America. The Consultative Group for Central America was formed to discuss the Central American reconstruction and transformation process following the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. It consists of representatives from the Central American countries and from donor countries and institutions.

For further information, contact Mauricio Bertrand: mauriciob@iadb.org or 202 623 2156.

"Investment in reproductive health is an investment in future health and development," said Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization and former Prime Minister of Norway, at the IDB Annual Meetings in Paris.



Technical Notes on Reproductive Health

The Women in Development Unit (WID) is preparing a "strategy profile" on reproductive health in collaboration with a Bank-wide internal working group. This document is a first step toward preparing a policy blueprint for future IDB action in reproductive health. To enable this process, WID has published a series of technical notes that provide reference information on key reproductive health issues relevant to Bank programming. The notes address the following topics:

- reproductive health-related morbidities and mortalities;
- the links between poor reproductive health and poverty;
- reproductive health and human capital development;
- costs and cost-effectiveness of reproductive health interventions;
- public sector reproductive health laws, policies, and programs;
- reproductive health and its fit with health sector reform;
- innovative programming in reproductive health;
- reproductive rights;
- prevalence, costs, and consequences of adolescent pregnancy;
- mistimed and unwanted births;
- nutritional effects on reproductive health.

To obtain a copy of the notes, contact Ingvild Belle: ingvildb@iadb.org or 202 623 2869.

WID External Advisory Council Examines Gender Issues in Rural Poverty

BY MAURICIO R. BERTRAND

The IDB's External Advisory Council on Women in Development met in Panama City in late February to discuss Bank experiences regarding the implementation of the Women in Development policy and to recommend new lines of action for Bank involvement in this area. The Council, chaired by the Honorable Billie Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados, was established in 1995 to provide technical guidance to the IDB on subjects involving women's participation; advise on strategies for strengthening the Women in Development Program; and help build networks and improve communications with interested parties in the Bank's member countries.

During the Panama meeting, the Council discussed the subject of poverty and rural women and examined a proposal to create a Credit Program for Rural Women. Elements of the proposal include establishing a credit program for rural women in both agricultural and off-farm activi-

ties; building the capacity of civil society organizations to channel credit and offer technical assistance to rural women and their organizations; and helping rural women gain greater access to credit programs and other financial resources existing in the region.

Ministers of Agriculture, or their representatives, from Belize, Bolivia, Central America, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Paraguay attended the meeting and expressed great interest in the subject and the proposed program. They recommended a resolution of support to promote the program before the Consultative Group for Central America at its May meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. The Program for Rural Women initiative has been promoted by the First Ladies of the Americas and has the support of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Cooperation (IICA).

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PROLEAD— Investing for Results

PROLEAD is an IDB initiative to support women's leadership and representation in Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result of a competitive process, 40 projects were selected for funding through PROLEAD's grant-making component. They include:

Empowering Women in the Media Project (Mexico, Central America, Caribbean)

This project, coordinated by *Comunicación e Información de la Mujer, Asociación Civil*, uses the mass media to raise awareness about the situation of women in the region. The project strengthens the national network of women journalists in Mexico and develops similar networks in Central America and the Caribbean. It organizes professional development workshops for women journalists, designs and produces training materials on gender awareness for media professionals, and disseminates public information materials in support of issues of concern to women. A particularly innovative aspect of this project is its evaluation plan, which includes open forums in newspapers and on the radio to determine the impact of project activities on public opinion.

Indigenous Women in Local Governance Leadership Project (Belize)

The Belize Audubon Society (BAS), in collaboration with the Women's Issues Network of Belize (WIN-Belize), provides skills training for indigenous women in three communities adjacent to a Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park in Belize. Focusing on the management and operation of the protected areas surrounding their communities, the women gain knowledge of and experience in community leadership and local governance. Importantly, the project aims to systematize and document the process of empowering indigenous women's leadership so that the model can be replicated elsewhere.

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Diverse Projects Combat Domestic Violence

By PAZ CASTILLO-RUIZ

With funds from the Governments of Finland, Norway, and Sweden, a “technical umbrella project” is supporting several activities aimed at preventing domestic violence. In Guatemala, *Asociación Hogar Nuevos Horizontes* held a training workshop for indigenous communities. In Nicaragua, the NGO *Cantera* organized training on the use of the manual, *El significado de ser hombre* (“What it Means to be a Man”), a community education tool aimed at reducing domestic violence. A unique training opportunity took place in June, when Central American specialists who work with physically aggressive men visited northern European countries to share experiences with their European counterparts.

In Panama, the first phase of a national campaign against domestic violence was concluded in March. The *Fundación para la Promoción de la Mujer* organized the campaign, which utilized television, radio, and the print media to sensitize the public to the problem of domestic violence.

Costa Rica’s *Fundación Género y Sociedad* began a comparative study of national programs against domestic violence in Latin America in April. In Bolivia, a study is underway on attitudes and perceptions regarding domestic violence in the schools. The purpose of this study is to design a model for detecting, preventing, and dealing with the problem that can be incorporated into the nation’s education system.

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TOP—Guatemalan women participated in a workshop on combating domestic violence organized by *Asociación Hogar Nuevos Horizontes*. BOTTOM—Nicaraguan men learned about “What it Means to be a Man” during a training session organized by the NGO *Cantera* to help prevent domestic violence.

PHOTOS: PAZ CASTILLO-RUIZ

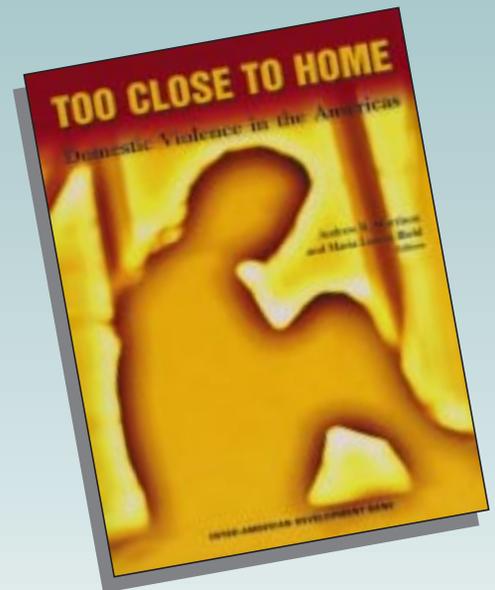
PREVENTION, continued from 1

address violence problems. Policy choices for violence reduction can be divided into *preventive policies*, and what might be called *treatment* or *remedial measures*. Ideally, policymakers would like to have data on the costs and benefits of integrated programs versus targeted programs, and of preventive policies versus remedial policies in order to choose the more cost-effective strategy. Unfortunately, there is little or no information available on program costs in the region, even from a simple accounting perspective. Consequently, it is difficult to evaluate program options, to say nothing of determining the benefits generated by different types of programs.

Experts in industrial countries, where there is more evidence on program costs and benefits, agree that preventive strategies are generally more cost-effective than treatment strategies. For example, in the state of Michigan, USA, the costs of adult criminality resulting from child maltreatment and inadequate prenatal care have been estimated at US\$175 million per year. Providing comprehensive parent education to each family expecting its first child would cost only US\$43 million per year. In addition to reducing adult criminality, parent education programs can have collateral benefits, including reducing expenditures on protective services, foster care, and the juvenile justice system, and reducing health costs associated with low birth-weight babies. In sum, preventive policies such as comprehensive parental education can be highly cost-effective and can have multiple benefits, including preventing criminality later in life.

The old cliché, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” has new currency in the area of violence reduction. Prevention efforts may be especially cost-effective in situations where very high levels of violence take place alongside weak social control institutions such as the judiciary and the police—a common situation in many LAC countries today.

For further information, contact Andrew Morrison: andrewm@iadb.org or 202 623 1763. Together with Loreto Biehl, he recently edited a book on domestic violence, *Too Close to Home: Domestic Violence in the Americas*, available through Johns-Hopkins Press and the IDB.



Experts Cite Costs, Offer Strategies on Domestic Violence

In *Too Close to Home: Domestic Violence in the Americas*, international experts in such fields as economics, medicine, psychology, and the media, discuss the costs of domestic violence to women, families, and society as a whole. The authors offer compelling insights into strategies that governments and communities can use to address this pervasive problem and prevent its replication across generations. Police, public health officials, NGOs, the media, and anyone interested in Latin America's development will find *Too Close to Home* a useful framework for understanding and combating domestic violence.

Too Close to Home is published by the IDB and is available from the IDB bookstore (202 623 1753) or through the Johns Hopkins University Press (1 800 537 5487). (US\$24.95)



PHOTO: ADA PIAZZE-McMAHON

Former Chilean President Patricio Aylwin discusses community economic development projects with members of the Grupo Lenca in Honduras.

Social Policy Dialogue: Consensus-Building in Honduras

By CHRISTINA MACCULLOCH

“In a globalized world of market economies, the great challenge is how to balance economic development with the demands of social justice,” said former Chilean President Patricio Aylwin during a visit to Honduras. “The process of reconstruction after Hurricane Mitch offers a unique opportunity for Honduras to design policies that will simultaneously boost economic development and social equity.”

Aylwin traveled to Honduras on March 15 for the second stage of the *Social Policy Dialogue* program, a trip that gained crucial importance after Hurricane Mitch devastated the country in October. The *Dialogue* initiative, led by Aylwin and the NGO he heads, *Corporación Justicia y Democracia*, satisfies a basic need to pave the way for participation and social consensus in

order to implement lasting social reforms.

Honduran President Carlos Flores confirmed the importance of the Dialogue in his request to the IDB that concrete working mechanisms be identified in two areas: 1) how to build consensus between the government and civil society, and 2) how to apply this consultation methodology to the reform of a specific sector—in this case education, which, in Honduras, has not seen reform in more than a century.

To help support the consensus-building process, the IDB held a negotiation forum from April 29 to May 1 in Washington, DC. Representatives from all sectors of Honduran society, including government, civil society, the private sector, and international institutions participated in

the forum. Led by an expert in negotiation techniques from Harvard University, the meeting was aimed at identifying points of agreement among diverse sectors of Honduran society on a number of proposals for education reform, and then expediting immediate action upon the participants’ return to their country.

The *Social Policy Dialogue* program, financed by the Danish government, has also been active in Ecuador, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. It is underway in Costa Rica and is expected to include three more countries over the next two years.

For further information about this program, contact Ada Piazz-McMahon: adam@iabd.org or 202 623 2049.

Chilean Experience Offers Lessons for Housing Reform

BY EDUARDO ROJAS

Chile's housing policy is widely regarded as a success. For almost a decade, new construction has been above the level required to provide houses for new families and replace obsolete structures. This raises hopes that within the next decade all families in Chile will occupy dwellings that comply with minimum quality and service standards. This is no small accomplishment for a country just entering the middle ground in the development scale. Moreover, the private sector is taking an increasingly active role in housing production and financing. This, too, is a significant achievement considering that in the 1970s most housing was built and financed by the government. Further, government assistance is effectively reaching the poor, and most public resources are benefiting low-income households.

These accomplishments are the result of a long maturation process in the Chilean housing sector. Fifty years of government policy have consolidated the legal, institutional, and entrepreneurial foundations of the current housing production and financing system. Several success factors can be identified: the integrated sector approach (which incorporates the housing needs of all income groups); the efficient subsidy system

(the result of a long process of experimentation); and the reforms of the general banking system and the social security system (which created strong institutions to intermediate the financial resources accumulated by pension funds and life insurance companies).

Notwithstanding its accomplishments, the Chilean housing sector still faces significant challenges, and improvements are needed to mobilize more effectively the resources devoted to housing. The lack of coordination between housing and urban development policies is becoming a major liability for both efficient housing production and equitable urban growth. Direct government involvement in house construction and home financing contributes to misallocated resources, and this approach may have run its course.

A recently published best practices paper on this subject, *The Long Road to Housing Sector Reform: Lessons from the Chilean Housing Experience*, reviews the evolution of the Chilean experience in housing, identifying its strengths and suggesting solutions to overcome its weaknesses. It is hoped that this review will be of use to practitioners engaged in formulating housing policy, helping to avoid the shortcomings of the Chilean experience and thus shortening the road to more effective housing policies in other countries.

To obtain a copy of the paper, contact Martha Chávez: marthach@iadb.org or 202 623 1969.

Did You Know?

- Agriculture accounts for less than half of all rural employment in Latin America.
- UNESCO has declared 24 cities in Latin America and the Caribbean patrimony of humanity.
- Public spending on security and criminal justice in Colombia amounted to 5 percent of GDP in 1996.
- One-third of the women who suffer domestic violence in Uruguay does not know it is against the law.
- On average, women hold 15.4 percent of legislative seats in Latin America and the Caribbean, more than 2 percentage points higher than the global average, and 50 percent more seats than they held only two years ago.
- At least 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have amended their Constitutions to recognize the multicultural and multilingual nature of their nations.
- Latin America and the Caribbean spend about 6 percent of GDP on health, or US\$60 billion. The US spends approximately 13 percent of GDP on health.



- Infant mortality in Latin America was 29 per 1000 live births in 1995. In developed countries, the figure was 6 per 1000. The figure for Asia was 58 per 1000 and in East Asia it was 35 per 1000.
- The infant mortality rate for indigenous people in Chile is more than twice the national average.
- The number of children in poverty has grown by over 60 percent since 1980 and is expected to increase until at least the middle of the next decade.
- In Latin America, only 20-26 percent of the children of the poor finishes secondary school, compared to about 60-63 percent of the children of the non-poor.
- In most countries, current investment in early childhood care and development is so low that even increases on the order of 0.5 percent of GDP would facilitate major improvements and expansions of programs.

IDB Holds First Health Seminar

BY RUTH LEVINE, ALFREDO SOLARI AND DANIELA TRUCCO

In early February, the IDB held a "Health Seminar" for staff from both Headquarters and the Country Offices who work on health issues. The objective was to develop better communication among the various actors and encourage reflection upon the Bank's activities in the health sector. Participants examined 19 Bank projects in preparation or execution related to health services (not including water and sanitation, nutrition, social investment funds, or children in special social circumstances).

Projects were analyzed according to the characteristics of a country's health system. Low-income countries with segmented health systems (Bolivia, Central America [except Costa Rica], Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Paraguay, and Suriname) were characterized by the subsidized delivery of basic health services.

For middle-income countries with segmented health systems (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela), the main feature was the strengthening of technical management. Countries with integrated health systems (the English Caribbean and Costa Rica) are generally attempting to improve the existing health service system's organization and sustainability. No definitive conclusions were reached for countries with subcontracting systems (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay) because only two projects were studied.

It is important to deepen this analysis by also studying technical cooperation operations and incorporating the vision of the IDB Country Offices into project execution (as opposed to design). These subjects will be further discussed at the next Health Seminar in the year 2000.

For further information, contact Daniela Trucco: danielat@iadb.org or 202 623 3631.



Agencies Cooperate on Indigenous Development

BY ANNE DERUYTTERE

Recent international legal instruments that secure the rights of indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities have inspired many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to alter their laws and amend their constitutions. As a result, new programs and policies that affect indigenous peoples are being implemented, sometimes at a rapid pace. These developments prompted the IDB's Indigenous Peoples and Community Development Unit to host an interagency meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Diversity in March.

At the meeting, agency representatives discussed the situation of indigenous peoples and reflected on new developments and concepts since the last interagency meeting at the World Bank in 1993. The group shared information on the operations of projects and programs supported by each agency and identified possible areas for increased coordination and synergy.

The principal international legal and policy instruments that have inspired the climate for change are: ILO Convention 169, *Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*, the draft OAS Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the establishing

agreement of the Indigenous Peoples Fund. Acknowledging the pluricultural and multiethnic character of the nation states, these new instruments

New international legal and policy instruments are granting indigenous peoples the right to lands they have traditionally occupied, access to bilingual and socio-culturally appropriate education, and a large measure of autonomy in determining their own affairs.

are granting indigenous peoples the right to lands they have traditionally occupied, access to bilingual and socio-culturally appropriate education, and a large measure of autonomy in determining their own affairs. Increased levels of organizational and political skills are transforming indigenous organizations into active participants in the democratic process.

Recognizing that indigenous people account for a disproportionately large segment of the poor, governments are increasingly responsive to the demands of indigenous peoples and are creating spaces for their effective participation in culturally appropriate economic and social development programs. In this context, there is growing importance for the role of international development agencies as facilitators of consensus-building

efforts and as promoters of pilot initiatives for culturally appropriate development.

The interagency meeting was successful in establishing a common ground among participants on conceptual and operational issues. The meeting resulted in key initiatives to enhance coordination, information sharing, and co-financing. These initiatives will be further developed at a follow-up meeting to be hosted by

the International Labor Organization later this year in Costa Rica.

Participants in this interagency meeting included representatives of the IDB's Indigenous Peoples and Community Development Unit, the World Bank, the Indigenous Peoples Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Organization of American States, the Pan-American Health Organization, and the Regional Program in Support of the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin (PRAIA).

The Indigenous Peoples and Community Development Unit is responsible for issues related to indigenous peoples, involuntary resettlement, community consultation and participation, and sociocultural soundness analysis. For further information, contact Lina Uribe: linau@iadb.org.

Publications

Breaking the Poverty Cycle: Investing in Early Childhood. SDS/SOC: March 1999. (English only).

Breaking the Poverty Cycle: Investing in Early Childhood (Video-15 min). SDS/SOC and Spark Media: March 1999.

La ciudad en el siglo XXI: Experiencias exitosas en gestión del desarrollo urbano en América Latina. Eduardo Rojas and Robert Daughters (eds). IDB: 1998. (Spanish only. Available from Amazon.com).

ECCD Guide: a toolkit for early childhood care and development. Ricardo Morán and Robert Myers. SDS/SOC: March 1999. (English only).

Fact Sheet on IDB Violence Activities. SDS/SOC: March 1999.

The Long Road to Housing Sector Reform: Lessons from the Chilean Housing Experience. Best Practices Paper. Eduardo Rojas. SDS/SOC: April 1999. (English only).

Too Close to Home: Domestic Violence in the Americas. Andrew Morrison and Loreto Biehl, (eds). Inter-American Development Bank and Johns Hopkins University Press: April 1999. (English only).

Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Framework for Action. Technical Study. Mayra Buvinić, Andrew Morrison, Michael Shifter. SDS/SOC: March 1999. (English only).

Unless otherwise indicated, documents are available in English and Spanish and can be obtained by contacting Luz Solís: sds/soc@iadb.org or 202 623 2416.

Calendar of Events

January 19-20
Kingston, Jamaica
Gender Training Program: Integrating Gender Consideration into IDB Projects

February 24-26
Panama City, Panama
WID External Advisory Council Meeting

March 14
Paris, France
Seminar: Breaking the Poverty Cycle: Investing in Early Childhood

March 14-20
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Social Dialogue—Country Visit

March 18-19
IDB Headquarters, Washington, DC
Inter-Agency Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Development
April 8
IDB Headquarters, Washington, DC
Meeting: Public Security—with Washington Office for Latin America (WOLA)

April 28-29
Quito, Ecuador
Gender Training Program: Integrating Gender Consideration into IDB Projects

April 29-May 1
Washington, DC
Social Dialogue—Forum: Reform of the Honduran Education System

May 6-7
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Meeting: Hurricane Mitch: Effects on Women and Women's Participation in the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America

May 10-14
Santiago and Valparaiso, Chile
Seminar: International Workshop on Rehabilitation of Historic Centers in Latin American and Caribbean Cities. For more information, see the website at: <http://www.archi.fr/SIRCHAL>

May 18-21
Querétaro, Mexico
PROLEAD Workshop: Institutional Capacity Building

May 27-28
San Salvador, El Salvador
Gender Training Program: Integrating Gender Consideration into IDB Projects

June 1-2
Guatemala City, Guatemala
Gender Training Program: Integrating Gender Consideration into IDB Projects

June 22-23
Mexico City, Mexico
Reproductive Health and Health Sector Reform Consultations—with the Population Council

June 30-July 1
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
Gender Training Program: Integrating Gender Consideration into IDB Projects

July 6-7
Quito, Ecuador
Reproductive Health and Health Sector Reform Consultations—with the Population Council

July 28-29
Brasilia, Brazil
Reproductive Health and Health Sector Reform Consultations—with the Population Council

July 29-30
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Mayors Network Meeting on Violence Prevention

Nobel Laureate in Economics Endorses Early Childhood Interventions

BY JENNIFER HAEFELI

Nearly half of the children under age 9 in Latin America and the Caribbean—some 43 million children—live in poverty. This number has been rising since the mid-1980s, and it is expected to grow into the next decade. Born into families with low incomes and scarce resources, these children are marked by malnutrition, poor health and poor health care, lack of education, and lack of adequate and positive stimulation. They rarely finish school, leading them to a life of low earnings and limited opportunities. In a vicious cycle sometimes referred to as the intergenerational transmission of poverty (ITP), they tend to pass poverty on to their own children.

Recognizing the important role of early childhood care and development (ECCD) interventions in breaking this cycle, the Social Development Division organized the seminar, *Breaking the Poverty Cycle: Investing in Early Childhood*, held during the IDB's

Annual Meetings in Paris in March. The governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and UNICEF co-sponsored the event.

Approximately 400 people attended the seminar, which stressed that ECCD investments make sense economically, socially, and politically. ECCD programs, which include interventions ranging from prenatal care and reproductive health programs to child care centers and parenting skills training, can be cost-effective and can have significant benefits not only for disadvantaged children, but also for their families and communities.

Importantly, they have the potential to better prepare disadvantaged children to succeed in school, improving their capacity to learn, and to earn.

Keynote speaker and Nobel Laureate in Economics Amartya Sen indicated that by “seeing investment in children as a part of the overall process of development, we can have a fuller understanding of the extensive reach and critical importance of investing in early childhood.” In her closing address, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization, pointed out that “the economic bene-

fits from investing in early childhood are impressive,” and that “the way to break the poverty cycle is to focus on children.”

The IDB is committed to supporting programs that benefit disadvantaged children and plans to increase investments in early childhood development over the next several years. More specifically, as stated by IDB President Enrique Inglesias in his opening remarks at the seminar, the IDB aims to

fund at least 60 new operations related to ECCD during 1999-2002. This represents a 50 percent increase over the annual average achieved during 1997-98.

But the Bank cannot do this work alone. As pointed out by Dr. Brundtland, “The way to results is through partnerships.” There is a need for new actors in this field, from both the private and public sectors. The Bank stands ready to help finance sensible ECCD projects; it welcomes ideas, proposals, and collaborative efforts from both traditional and new partners in the region to further ECCD efforts.

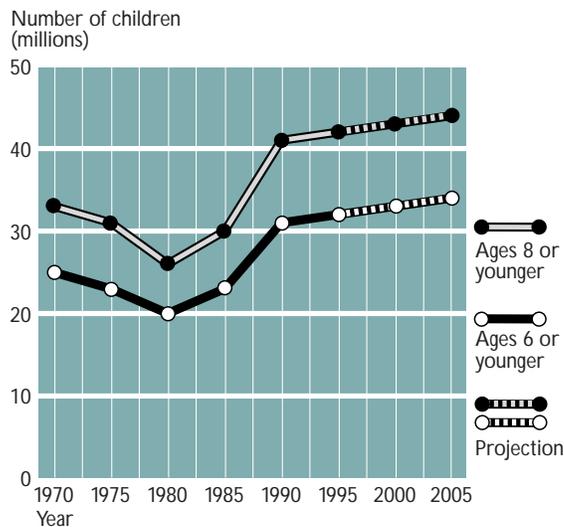
For further information, contact Jennifer Haefeli: jenh@iadb.org or 202 623 2137.



UNICEF's Marjorie Newman Williams (left) consults with Mayra Buvinić, Chief of the Social Development Division, during the seminar, "Breaking the Poverty Cycle: Investing in Early Childhood," held during the IDB's Annual Meetings in Paris.

IDB PHOTO: WILLE HENZ

Children in Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean 1970-95 and Projections to 2005



SOURCE: Calculators by Suzanne Duryea, Enrique Aldaz, and Ricardo Moran from IDB data files and Londono, 1996.