



"Education through  
Photography, Finding a  
Voice" Photoessay on Latino  
children's images of their  
own environments, on page  
16. Text by Adriana Katzew,  
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ARYANNIS CUEVAS

## Education in Latin America

*Challenges for Latin Americans, U.S. Latinos*

BY EILEEN DE LOS REYES

Whenever one asks about ways of struggling against impossible odds in Latin America, one is told not to worry because no "*hay mal que dure cien años*" (no evil lasts one hundred years). The saying indicates passive resistance. Remembering our collective histories of endurance in Latin America, Central America, and the Caribbean, one may relax and choose to wait it out. But the popular saying "*no hay mal que dure cien años*", continues, "*ni cuerpo que lo resista*" (nor body that can resist it). This second part suggests shifting the form of resistance from passive to active since, clearly, resisting for so long is not possible.

This issue of DRCLAS NEWS, which focuses on education, challenges this popular saying. It inspires active resistance to the educational neglect suffered by the majority of Latin America's citizens. As



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Fernando Reimers in "Education and Poverty in Latin America" tells us, in Latin America "[i]t is almost possible to imagine two distinct countries within each country's physical borders, according to educational attainment." He explains that the first country prepares students for participation in the elite; the second country, that of the dispossessed, receives few educational opportunities, ensuring perennial poverty.

The second country has tested the saying and found it fundamentally flawed on both accounts: educational neglect can and has lasted for hundreds of years. Poor and indigenous Latin Americans have resisted with their bodies, minds, and spirits, but change has eluded them.

There is general consensus that if the countries of Latin America were serious about facing up to the poverty of millions of children, they would focus on educational reform. Students and parents know this; some politicians and policy makers seem to understand it. Yet, all too often, one finds an absence of will (and capacity) to implement changes and provide the necessary supports to ensure success. Merino Juárez, in his essay, "Education Decentralization and Institutional Change: Preliminary Lessons from Mexico," concludes that "absent additional reforms, the process might be too slow." Given how long poor and indigenous children have waited so far, "too slow" is too long. The cost for each generation that is left waiting—the unrelenting continuation of poverty—is too high.

Links explored in this edition—especially those that connect the experiences of Latinos/as in the northern and southern hemispheres—deserve further scrutiny. Donaldo Macedo, in the foreword to Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1998), explains that the United States is starting to resemble the Third World. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, in his article "Society and Education: Latin America's Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century", after pointing to the poor educational levels of indigenous children in Latin America, particularly high school desertion rates, reaffirms Macedo's observation, pointing out that "a similar situation prevails among Hispanic children in parts of the United States." Lawrence Hernandez, in "Latino Families and the Educational Dream: Resilience Along the Rocky Road," and June Carolyn Erlick, in "Harvard Immigration Project: Researching the Lives of Children," explore these connections in more detail.

Again, as if to test the popular saying, poor Latinos in the United States searching for better educational and economic opportunities for their children come up empty handed. Evil not only seems to last for hundreds of years, but it also seems to follow parents and children to the United States. But Latinos/as are resisting, searching for solutions to a centuries-old problem.

This issue of DRCLAS NEWS offers up examples of new solutions to old problems. Stavenhagen points to the necessity of community involvement: "educational systems will flounder without community support and they will flourish with community involvement." Lúcia Dellangnelo, in "Community Participation: What Do Communities Get Out of It," adds to Stavenhagen's argument, explaining how participation in the schools benefits com-

munity members in multiple ways. Through activism, individuals and families break their isolation, reconnect with their communities, and find strength in the collective struggle to improve the lives of their children. Claudia Uribe, in "The Teacher and School Incentives Program in Columbia: Promoting Participation for Improving School Quality," finds hope in the community and recounts her visits to schools where everyone had mobilized to paint, raise funds, and plant gardens. Full of hope and excitement, these communities view these activities as steps in the right direction.

From these articles, communities emerge as powerful agents in educational reform. It appears that the most effective way to break the cycle of poverty is to invest time, effort, and resources in community activists who are unwilling to wait another one hundred years for change. To effectively support community-change efforts, however, we must shift our paradigm. The paradigm that rules our way of thinking both in Latin America and the United States—that educational/social change comes from the top down—prevents us from understanding that effective change, in fact, comes from the bottom up, or at the very least, emerges from collaborations at the grassroots level. It will take a leap of courage and conviction to shift paradigms, but the cost of not doing so is too high—continued poverty for millions of Latinos/as throughout the Americas. We as educators must begin to learn from those we have unsuccessfully tried to educate for hundreds of years as the only strategy that makes ethical, moral, and common sense.

The following articles explore ways new hope can be discovered in the midst of old stories of neglect and despair.

*Eileen de los Reyes, Assistant Professor of Education in Harvard's Graduate School of Education, is the co-author of the forthcoming book, Pockets of Hope: How Students and Teachers Change the World (Greenwood Press).*

## DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

**Director** John H. Coatsworth

**Executive Director** Steve Reifenberg

**Publications Director** June Carolyn Erlick

**Conference Coordinator** Debra-Lee Vasques-Hagopian

**Design** kelly design

61 Kirkland Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Tel: (617) 495-3366

Fax: (617) 496-2802

E-mail: <[drclas@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:drclas@fas.harvard.edu)>

<<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/>>

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CLAUDIA ROMÁN

# Education and Poverty in Latin America

*Can Schools Make Any Difference?*

BY FERNANDO REIMERS

**M**ORE LATIN AMERICANS ARE LIVING in poverty than twenty years ago, despite the region's economic growth. The poor generally are still illiterate or barely literate. What is worse is that their children have limited opportunities to learn. They do not get a chance to move out of poverty by acquiring skills and knowledge, although about nine out of every ten children in the region enrolls in first grade.

The dynamics of education in Latin America are a critical link in the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Equality of educational, and social, opportunity is central at this time in the history of Latin America because it

will contribute to the perceived legitimacy of democratically elected regimes and their policy choices. Democratic consolidation requires a broad based understanding that the life chances of all citizens are a function of merit and ability.

There is a documented association between poverty and educational attainment in Latin America. The poor are those with lower levels of education. Because they have disproportionately more children, most children in Latin America are poor. Although most poor children enter first grade, they enroll in schools of lower quality, and are more likely to drop out after completing a few

grades. In order to reduce poverty in Latin America, we must first understand the simultaneous processes of how education reproduces poverty and how education fosters opportunities to learn and for social mobility for the poor.

At least one in three people in Latin America now lives in poverty. Thirty six percent of the population lives on less than US\$2 per day at 1985 prices. For the structurally poor, it seems, prosperity has not trickled down during the last ten years. Countries achieving significant economic growth during the last ten years have not reduced the incidence of poverty. In Argentina, for example, eco-

"The children of the poor face very limited opportunities to participate in economies ever more integrated into the world economy," writes Fernando Reimers.

conomic growth more than doubled per capita income and led to increases in real salaries and to the creation of thousands of jobs. Yet, unemployment in that country has also doubled and about a quarter of the population has lived with unmet basic needs since 1991. The percentage living below the poverty line in Latin America has stagnated since 1980, according to World Bank studies. The percentage had declined significantly from 60% in 1950 to 35% in 1980.



CLAUDIA ROMÁN

**"Poor children have very limited opportunities to quality pre-school," observes Fernando Reimers**

Educational opportunities are the key to provide Latin American citizens access to knowledge, to the opportunity to participate in the creation of wealth, and to the opportunity to prosper. As the economy becomes more global and knowledge-based, those with the greatest access to knowledge will benefit the most from the opportunities resulting from the integration into the world economy.

In Latin America, the sharp inequalities in the distribution of

income reflect themselves in equally sharp inequalities in the distribution of access to knowledge and skills. Some children participate and succeed in schooling, acquiring basic cognitive skills, world views and social experiences. Their education enables them to go on learning, to work productively and to participate socially and politically. The children of the poor have more limited educational opportunities, leading to school failure and a lack of opportunity to acquire the same cognitive skills, to partake in the views and social experiences associated with good schools. Many of them face very limited opportunities to participate in economies ever more integrated into the world economy.

A fair amount is already known about the relationship between education and poverty in Latin America. We know that the poor have lower levels of education and that income rises with educational level. In Latin America, 14% of adults 26 years and older cannot read or write at all. If we assume a sixth grade education is necessary to reach functional literacy and to acquire basic cognitive skills, the number of Latin Americans who are absolutely or functionally illiterate equals the number of people living in poverty.

Education and income are closely related. In Brazil, for instance, the poorest 40% of teenagers (ages 15-19) average four years of schooling, while their counterparts in the top 20% of income distribution have twice that average level of schooling. In Northeast Brazil the gap increases: the poorest 40% of fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds average only two years of schooling versus five years for the top 20%. In Haiti the poorest 40% of the youth average two years in school, while the wealthiest 20% average six years. In Guatemala the gap between these groups is two versus six years of schooling on average.

Indigenous Latin Americans suffer even more from lack of schooling. For instance, in Bolivia's urban areas, the average non-indigenous person goes to school for ten years, Spanish-speaking indigenous people average six years of schooling, and those

who do not speak Spanish have an average of 0.4 years of schooling.

The lower levels of educational participation and attainment among the poor in Latin America are a paradox in a region with legislation that mandates universal free primary education. We can understand this paradox if we think of educational opportunity as a series of steps in a ladder.

The most basic level of this ladder is the opportunity to enroll in first grade, an opportunity now enjoyed by the great majority, but not all, of Latin America's poor children.

Considerable progress has been made in expanding access. In the last 50 years, the number of students at all levels in Latin America increased from 32 million in 1960 to 114 million in 1990. Only three out of every five children were enrolled in first grade in the early 1960s, but today 95% of nine-year-olds are enrolled in school. Enrollment rates since 1960 increased from 60% to 88% at the primary level, from 36% to 72% at the secondary level and from 6% to 27% at the tertiary level. These increased opportunities to enroll in school demonstrate a remarkable expansion of the education system and great efforts in building schools and hiring and training teachers, especially when one takes into account the burgeoning population.

It is generally between the first and second level of the ladder of educational opportunity that the poor fall behind in today's Latin America. One out of every three children who enrolls in first grade fails just as they are beginning school. Many of the poor have no preschool education whatsoever, and many teachers serving poor children have not been prepared to address their particular needs. For instance, many indigenous children are taught in a language and with materials they don't understand. Grade repetition is disproportionately higher among the poor. Research shows that repetition leads to more repetition and eventually to school dropouts.

The third stage of educational opportunity gives students a chance to complete the first cycle of educa-

tion, to achieve functional literacy, to do simple math, to establish cause-effect relationships, and to have basic information about science, history, and social studies. Most of the children of the poor do not complete this cycle. One reason is that parents of children who must repeat grades find it increasingly impossible to continue supporting their studies. High repetition rates mean children only reach an average of fourth grade, even if they are staying in school longer.

The next level of opportunity means students in the same grade will learn comparable skills and knowledge. However, most students in Latin America don't get this chance because schools are very segregated by family income and sometimes ethnicity. In general, students from low income families have the lowest scores on standardized tests.

The highest level of opportunity provides equal economic and social opportunities to students with equal skills. Thus, graduates of a given educational cycle will have the same options in life. This level of opportunity does not exist in Latin America. Studies have shown that indigenous workers, and especially women, have the same educational achievement and work experience as their mestizo counterparts, but they generally still earn less money. It is not apparent that Latin American societies and labor markets have meritocratic systems to provide access to social and economic opportunities.

While Latin America has made much progress in advancing the first level of educational opportunity, many interlocking reasons prevent equality from being obtained at all levels of educational opportunity.

The first is poverty itself. The children of the poor have poorer health and nutrition; they have less time to spend on school activities and less support for homework, and they tend to be absent more from school because of poor health, family and economic needs. Thus, poverty perpetuates poverty.

Since poor children have very limited opportunities to quality pre-

school, they are less ready for school when they actually do begin. The type of schooling they are offered is often not equal to that provided to better-off children. The schools and teachers are often of lower quality; there is less access to instructional materials and less time devoted to teaching.

Above all, there is a lack of compensatory policies, of positive discrimination, which would enable teachers to work effectively with disadvantaged children and which would provide them with instructional materials geared to their needs.

The impact of these factors is cumulative and compounded over time, as children reach higher levels of education. Low quality or no access to pre-school education makes it difficult for poor children to benefit equally from primary education; the resulting low quality of learning at the primary level makes it difficult to benefit equally from secondary education, and so on. As can be expected, very few disadvantaged children reach higher levels of education. In El Salvador, for example, only seven percent of the university students come from the poorest 40% of the households, while 57% come from the richest 20% of the households. As Latin American economies become more competitive a quality higher education becomes more important. The fact that most higher education graduates come from higher income groups leads to the consolidation of inequalities and lack of social mobility in Latin America.

**THE GOOD NEWS: THE GREAT POTENTIAL OF POOR CHILDREN AND THE DIFFERENCE SCHOOLS CAN MAKE**

Although the children of the poor generally have on average lower levels of academic achievement than their non-

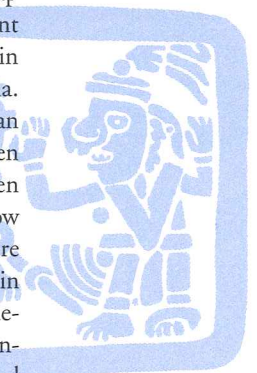
poor counterparts, I have found in Colombia and Mexico that there is overlap in levels of achievement between the poor and non-poor. Some disadvantaged children have comparable levels of academic performance

as children in significantly more advantageous conditions. For example, in Mexico's four poorest states, I have observed that some children attending indigenous and small community primary schools have levels of achievement higher than most of their urban counterparts in standardized mathematics and Spanish tests.

This demonstrates that poor children are capable of the same levels of performance as their non-poor counterparts. I have found the same overlap in the levels of academic achievement among secondary school students in rural and urban areas in Colombia. Variations in student achievement can be explained by differences between schools and by differences between children. The data from Mexico show that the poorer the child, the more important the quality of the school in explaining the differences in academic achievement. This finding is consistent with research in the United States and other OECD countries, but it is especially significant because it signals the potential of schools to further opportunity for the poor to learn.

Several Latin American governments are implementing policies to foster educational opportunities for poor children. These programs include affordable access to pre-school in disadvantaged communities, improvement of educational quality in rural areas, and improvement of the quality of education in selected schools attended by disadvantaged children in urban and rural areas. Several years ago, for example, Chile started a program to improve the quality of rural schools and to proactively compensate by upgrading schools attended by the

Many interlocking reasons prevent equality from being obtained at all levels of educational opportunity.



poorest children. Mexico has several programs to selectively increase the quality of education of the schools in its poorest states and those attended by the poorest children. There is much yet to learn about the effects of these interventions, although they signal the possibility to implement compensatory and positive discrimination policies.

Turning around the vicious cycle of poverty reproducing itself through the education system requires that we better understand and change the conditions that give opportunities to learn to the children born in low-income homes. We must look at the experience of Latin America and

other regions to evaluate the results of policies to provide the children of the poor real opportunities to learn and to experience social mobility. The Summit of the Americas last year prioritized education as an avenue of poverty alleviation. Achieving this goal will require education reforms which actually implement these policy aspirations. Only then will it become possible for every citizen in the region—most of them children—now living on less than \$2 a day, to benefit from the remarkable economic, social, and political achievements made by Latin America during the twentieth century.

*Fernando Reimers is an Associate Professor at the Harvard School of Education and Director of the new masters program in international education policy. He obtained his masters and doctorate in education policy at Harvard and his Licenciatura at the Universidad Central de Venezuela where he lectured 16 years ago. Prior to joining the Harvard faculty he served as senior education specialist at the World Bank and as an advisor to several governments in Latin America on issues of education reform. He is currently conducting research on the links between education and poverty in Latin America.*

## Decentralization of Education and Institutional Change

*A Look at Mexico*

BY GUSTAVO MERINO JUÁREZ

IN THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE IN Oaxaca last September, as is tradition, hundreds of the city's schoolchildren marched alongside rescue workers, police, and soldiers. Leading each school contingent were two children carrying the school banner bearing its name and in most cases the words *Escuela Pública Federal* and its number. The legend struck me as odd. Eight years before the federal government had transferred to the states the responsibility for the operation of all but a handful of schools at the "basic" level (pre-school through grade-nine plus teacher training. Schools, since that time, are no longer "federal." Had the schools been slow to change their name or merely failed to update their banners? While a minor issue, it is related to larger questions I am working on as part of my doctoral dissertation and which had brought me on a research tour to Oaxaca and other states: How had state governments responded to the decentralization of education? Did decentralization result in significant innovations, changes in education policy, finance or schooling techniques?

The decentralization of education has the stated goal of improving the quality and access to educational services. It's expected to promote better resource allocation because state authorities have more information on local conditions than federal bureaucrats and can foster innovation. Ideally, it will also elicit greater financial contributions from the states. The reform could improve administrative effi-

ciency within the Ministry of Public Education (SEP), which had become extremely large and inflexible, and curb the influence of powerful groups within, especially the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE).

Decentralization efforts in education were not new to Mexico. Previous attempts in the seventies and eighties had been significantly scaled down in the face of opposition, primarily from SNTE, so that the educational system remained highly centralized by the early nineties. 65% of all schools and 75% of those in basic education (pre-school through ninth grade) were federally funded and controlled. Federal involvement in education was unequally distributed, however. In some states like Aguascalientes, Oaxaca, and Hidalgo, all but a handful of schools at the basic level were federally operated and funded. At the other extreme were states with a strong educational tradition and large education budgets that enrolled a significant number of students in state schools. The state of Mexico, Baja California, and Nuevo León fall in this category. The rest of the states fall in between these extremes. Everywhere, however, the federal government designed education policies, set the calendar, and assigned textbooks and other activities.

By 1992, President Salinas was able to overcome much of the opposition and the decentralization, or "federalization" agreement was signed by both levels of government and the SNTE. By design and political compromise,

its scope was limited although wider reaching than previous attempts. States would now control and operate all schools in basic education, but the federal government kept the main regulatory and policy responsibilities and remained as the principal source of funding. Teachers became state employees but remained affiliated with SNTE under a largely unchanged labor contract and centralized wage and benefit negotiations.

Preliminary analysis suggests that the response of state governments to decentralization has been mixed and generally weak. State governments have not, in general, carried out significant reforms in the operation of educational services now under their responsibility, nor in the allocation and magnitude of monetary and human resources devoted to education. This result is common across states in spite of the large differences between them regarding educational levels and economic, social, and demographic characteristics.

This is not to say that states have been idle or uninterested in promoting policy changes. 23 states out of 31 have drafted or reformed their education legislation and most have created educational development plans. Several states have promoted reforms seeking to improve administrative procedures and reduce costs or instituted training programs for teachers and supervisors. Some have funded scholarships and special programs such as the use of computers in schools. While necessary and praiseworthy, these efforts nevertheless do not appear very far reaching as they do not significantly change the way public education is provided.

Three highly important policy areas where reform has been lacking refer to education finance, integration of state and federal systems, and control over human resources. First, while public education expenditures have risen since decentralization, much of the increase is driven by federal aid rather than state expenditures. Additional funds are used primarily to cover the costs imposed by decentralization, mainly the equalization of teacher wages and benefits between ex-federal and state teachers, and not in other educational inputs currently under-funded. Further, the structure of spending, at least with regard to educational levels, has not changed significantly and most changes can be explained by longer term trends.

Second, states have been very slow to integrate their own educational systems, where in existence, with the ex-federal system in their jurisdiction. Hence, they cannot take advantage of economies of scale or administrative efficiencies. By 1998, two systems still remained in 9 out of 20 states, each with its separate head, schools, teachers, and students. Even where there was formal integration of the educational systems under one Ministry of Education or its equivalent, the two sub-systems were often administratively separate or treated as such in practice. Third, closely related to the lack of effective integration is the restructuring of the system's human resources to achieve policy goals. Most states have not attempted any changes in the distribution of teachers among schools, lev-

els, or districts, even though there might be a surplus in some levels or areas and a shortfall in others.

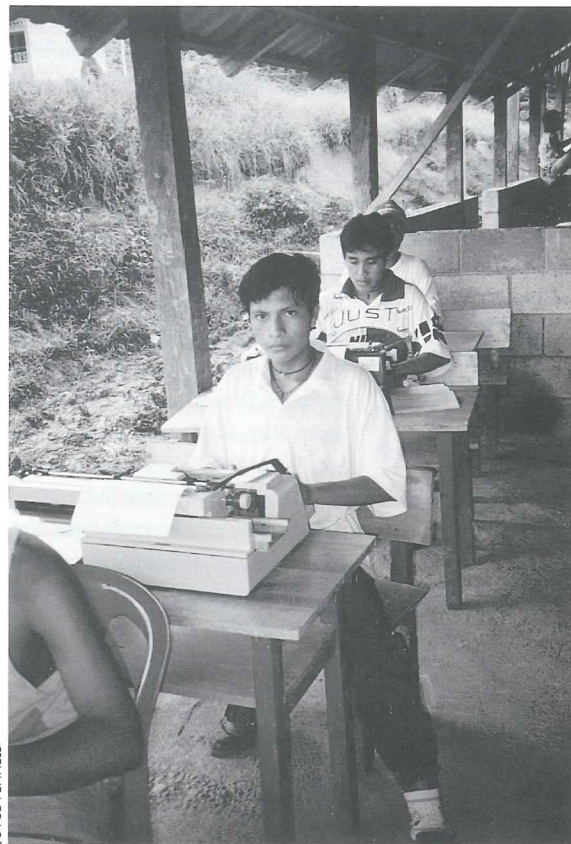
Why the weak response of state governments to decentralization? I think it reflects inappropriate economic and political incentives for significant policy reform at the state level, combined with the federal government's failure to enact complementary institutional reforms to reinforce the mechanisms by which decentralization supposedly leads to better service delivery. Moreover, some of the major policy tools directly or indirectly

affecting the provision of education remain centralized.

As was mentioned earlier, the 1992 decentralization did not grant state governments much autonomy with regard to educational policy since the federal government kept most regulatory and policy-design functions. This affects educational planning on both tiers: the federal government cannot exercise the same authority over state departments of education as it could previously over its own delegates, and state authorities face uncertainty regarding policy directives. It also reduces accountability as the blame for suboptimal performance can easily be shifted between levels of government given the shared responsibility for education.

Furthermore, the fiscal system remains highly centralized. State governments are highly dependent on the federal government not just for education finance but for most of their income as their taxing powers are very constrained. With limited ability to raise additional funds, increasing educational spending means less expenditures for other public services. Because much of federal assistance is discretionary, states might also fear lower aid receipts if they increase their own expenditure in any public service. Such fiscal arrangement can further weaken accountability structures.

The persistent centralization of the SNTE and the political influence at its disposal through its control of over a million members and its traditional alliance with the PRI, makes it a formidable opponent few governors willingly challenge. In addition, decentralization went as far as the state level, with no provisions for greater autonomy at



JOYCE PENFIELD

**"Citizens are becoming accustomed to holding policy makers accountable," writes Gustavo Merino.**

the school level. Last, low technical capacity at the state level reflecting decades of centralization and bureaucratic inertia, slows down change. The new educational authorities in many states were formerly employed by SEP and therefore their policies might not differ much from those to which they are accustomed.

The limitations mentioned above should not be taken to imply that decentralization brought no benefits. It is perhaps too early to make definitive judgments. Some reforms have been mentioned already and there is evidence from a few states that decentralization led to the social and political reevaluation of the importance of education for regional development. The federal authorities, now free from some administrative burdens, have also developed new programs to raise educational quality, access, and equity. Time and the consolidation of democracy might help solve some of the problems that limit effective policy response. Demands for fiscal decentralization are louder. The national SNTE leadership will lose influence in line

with the PRI's electoral fortunes and as the regional section leaders gain prominence. Citizens are becoming accustomed to holding policy makers accountable.

What the evidence so far suggests, however, is that if additional reforms do not take place, the process might be too slow. Education is too important to wait for these developments to happen on their own. Institutional change and the generation of appropriate incentives can be achieved faster if there is political will.

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*Gustavo Merino Juárez is a Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This article refers to preliminary results of work in progress for his doctoral dissertation on decentralization and federalism in Mexico. Some of the material was gathered through field research financed in part through a Summer Research Travel Grant from DRCLAS. Comments welcome at <merinoj@ksg.harvard.edu>.*

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## Brazil: Community Participation

*What do communities get out of it?*

BY LÚCIA DELLAGNELO

**A** VERY POOR, BLACK mother in a fringe neighborhood in Porto Alegre, Brazil, drew herself up with pride as she told me about her recent meeting with the Mayor to discuss the problems of municipal schools. Although the 33-year-old mother of two can barely read and write and never thought she had any special skill, she earned the respect of her community and the admiration of her children because of her invitation as a parent representative.

This woman was one of the many low-income parents (mostly mothers) I am interviewing for my doctoral thesis at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. These parents have been participating actively in the schools; I want to investigate what communities get out of this sort of involvement.

I chose Porto Alegre, in Brazil's



Ceará, Brazil

southern region, as my research site because the municipality is considered a paradigm of community participation in a public educational system. For the last eight years, a progressive

municipal administration has enabled community members to decide on the allocation of public investments, through the "orçamento participativo" (participatory budget). Community members also help to elect school principals, and school councils formed by teachers, school administrators, and parents. The councils also have been given stronger deliberative power.

Brazil, like several other developing countries, is undertaking major educational reforms based on the international trend of decentralization and greater school autonomy as key strategies to promote schools' efficiency and effectiveness. A core assumption of the Brazilian

educational reform is that the adoption of participatory practices by the educational system will generate benefits for schools, students, and their communities.



However, more comprehensive and consistent empirical evidence needs to be gathered to document this viewpoint. To date, community participation in schools is generally defended with one of two arguments: an ideological discourse claiming the right and responsibility of citizens to participate in public institutions; and another argument, based upon an extrapolation of the evidence, produced mainly in the context of industrialized countries, of positive effects of parents involvement on students' academic achievement.

The idea that participation can be a formative and empowering experience for community members is particularly appealing for countries needing to consolidate democratic regimes through greater social participation. However, few research efforts have been designed to investigate to what extent participating in public institutions, like schools, can indeed constitute opportunities to learn and practice skills that will enhance personal and social development. Moreover, an important voice is often missing in the debate of community participation in schools; the voice of those who participate, who choose to devote time and energy to a public institution: What do they get out of it?

My study focuses on parents participating in two schools of a low income district. Although the parents have a similar socio-economic background, community participation in the schools has taken very different forms. In one school, community participation was stimulated and organized by the principal, who created a Mothers' Club, and allocated time and special funds to mobilize parents to get involved in the school. An active group of mothers is presently participating in different activities at the school.

The other school is located in a housing project occupied by a group of squatters, who took over buildings under construction that had been abandoned after the contractor went bankrupt. A strong residents' association successfully lobbied for the construction of the school and the provision of other social services. The representatives of

the association are currently involved at the school, although the principal complains about the low level of family participation.

I'm only now beginning to analyze the data. However, the interviews with parents involved at the two schools are revealing to me a fascinating range of perceptions: from a total unawareness of the effects of the experience of participation in their lives to reports of radical changes of self-image and acquisition of personal and professional skills.

One mother said that by participating at the school, she "became someone in the community"; she is recognized at the streets and was invited to join the residents' association. When her son became sick, she received help and solidarity from people whom she did not even know—"but they knew me because I participate at the school," she explained.

In another interview, I learned that a young mother of four children, a middle-school drop out, is now looking for a secretarial job. She feels capable of working as a secretary and is looking for a job, something she had been afraid to do before. After painstakingly learning the skills to produce the records of the School Council's meetings, she realized she could take on the professional challenge in the job market. Interesting connections are made over and over between participation and professional opportunities by the parents interviewed.

In the voices of all people I am interviewing, a very concrete and intense effect of participating in the school has been breaking social isolation. Parents report participation in the school helps them to feel part of a community. They realize they are not alone in the search for better life conditions for them and for their kids. Several women reported that participating in the school brought them back to social life, after being isolated in the domestic world of child-rearing.

The opportunity to establish personal relationships with teachers and with other mothers at the school is also mentioned as an important effect of participation. These relationships seem to be important in the sense of pro-

viding emotional support and friendship, but they also become a source of learning. Parents report that closer personal relationships with teachers, for example, help them understand what their children are learning and to advocate for adequate attention to their children's needs.

One mother said that she learns new words and new ways to look at her personal problems during her conversations with her daughter's teacher. Another mother says that she learned where to look for help, and has followed the orientation of the school principal in seeking financial aid so that her daughter can attend college.

More than providing direct answers about the impact of community participation, this group of Brazilian parents are providing reassurances of the need and importance of asking the question. Little is known about what parents and other community members think and feel about their participation in schools. The investigations are important not only in order to incorporate the voices of the community in the debate, but to understand how, and under what conditions, participation in school can become a learning and empowering experience for community members.

Even the most skeptical about benefits of social participation would be intrigued by the confidence and excitement with which this group of Brazilian parents describes the effects they attribute to their participation. Which generates a new question: if it can so good for community members to participate, why do only a few of them do so? How can the empowering experience be translated for others to encourage more participation?

*Lúcia Dellagnelo is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Human Development and Psychology at Harvard Graduate School of Education. She works as an independent consultant for projects in the area of education and community development in Brazil and is currently involved in projects in Latin America of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the World Bank in Latin America.*

The idea that participation can be a formative and empowering experience for community members is particularly appealing for countries needing to consolidate democratic regimes through greater social participation.

# Colombia: Teacher and School Incentives

*Promoting participation to improve school quality*

BY CLAUDIA URIBE

**Y**OU CAN BRING THE HORSE TO WATER, BUT YOU can't make him drink," goes the old saying. Education planners and reformers often find the adage all too true when they try to implement plans without engaging teachers or creating incentives for their participation. Even well-formulated and funded reform initiatives are sometimes frustrated by the failure of their supposed implementers—teachers, students, administrators, parents, and communities—to change or adopt new behaviors.

In many Latin American countries, factors such as the antagonism of teacher unions, scarcity of resources, or low technical capacity of individuals and institutions are frequently blamed for lack of effective implementation. I do not doubt these problems are critical barriers that need to be overcome. However, my experience in Colombia leading the Ministry of Education's Teacher and School Incentives Program, showed me that when educators and communities *know and understand* what the reform calls for, find an *individual and collective meaning and sense of mission* in its purposes, have *incentives* to engage in it, and *can do* what the reform calls for with their *personal know-how*, the dynamics and energy to get the reform going are a given. Although this may sound commonsensical, these are factors that are frequently ignored or taken for granted by reformers.

## THE CONTEXT FOR THE TEACHER AND SCHOOL INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Colombia's 1994 Education Reform Act (Ley 115) set a new legislative base to address the multiple challenges faced by the education sector in terms of access, quality, and equity. Decentralization and new spaces for participation gave teachers, administrators, and communities new roles and

a greater responsibility in addressing local educational needs. However, as is many times the case, more is said than done. In early 1995 very little had changed at the local or school level and it became evident that teachers in many classrooms remained uninformed of the reform's goals and processes. Moreover, the resources allocated for the reform were put at risk by a new salary increase demand and threats of strike from the teachers' union.

After a long and difficult negotiation with the union, the Ministry of Education created an Incentives Fund for rewarding those schools and teachers making efforts to improve their schools and implement the reform.

## THE TEACHER AND SCHOOLS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The incentives strategy called for a massive evaluation of schools and teachers. During 1995's second semester, the Ministry of Education developed indicators of "school quality" and of "reform advances" to evaluate schools and teachers and to "translate" the objectives of the reform into clear and attainable goals. The program designers also collected children's opinions of what they think is a good teacher to use as criteria for the evaluation (See Box 1). The following decisions for the implementation of the program were made:

- All 40,000 primary schools in the country were eligible to participate voluntarily.
- Based on the standards prepared by the Ministry, each participating school would elect their "best" teacher to receive an economic incentive. Preference would be given to teachers who worked in the first three grades.
- One school out of every school cluster in the country would be selected to receive an economic incentive to invest in school improvements. Colombia has approximately 2000 school clusters, each of which is directed by a cluster director who is the link between schools and municipal authorities. Each cluster has from 15 to 30 schools, both urban and rural.
- Regional authorities and cluster directors would implement the program.
- Cluster directors and supervisors would inform teachers, principals, parents, and students of the process and objectives of the program and motivate them to participate in the evaluation.
- In an open meeting, teachers, students, parents, and the school council would discuss and examine their school and teachers' performance under the evaluation criteria

A scrapbook compiled by teachers and parents shows children happily learning.



provided by the Ministry.

■ Cluster directors would check for evidence on what was stated on the evaluation forms to select the best school in the cluster.

The evaluation process was accompanied by a massive communication strategy that stated the program's philosophy and gave meaning to the purpose of the reform. The following are some of the messages that teachers and schools received through radio, television, and newspapers:

"All professions have a project for social equity and justice. We contribute to equity when all our students learn—this is our ethical responsibility—in particular if we are teaching the children of the poor. Knowledge is the currency of the future, we educators are the bankers of this currency!"

"A school is good when all students learn what they have to learn, in the moment they have to learn it, and do so in harmony and happiness. We educators must understand and help parents and society understand, that if we join our efforts and offer students the opportunities they need, all are capable of learning."

"A good professional does not blame her students for failure. Strangely, education is planned, administered, paid, and carried out by adults...But... when something fails it is the student who is blamed! Every failure of a student is a professional failure of his teacher!"

**A PARTICIPANT'S EXPERIENCE**

One school supervisor and regional coordinator for the Teacher and School Incentives Program in the Department of Putumayo, describes her reasons to be optimistic and hopeful. The supervisor, whom we'll call Carmen Rodríguez, since she requested her name not be used, is one of the 2,000 school supervisors and cluster directors who visited each of the country's 40,000 primary schools in the context of the National Teacher and School Incentives Program to select and reward the best schools and leave guidelines to improve the rest.

During her strenuous and long journey through the mountains and rainforest of southern Colombia where she visited schools and met with communities, Rodríguez witnessed the enthusiastic response of teachers, students,



A scrapbook compiled by parents and teachers shows eager children.

and parents to the Ministry of Education's call to evaluate and improve the quality of their schools. Even though this visit gave Rodríguez a painful first-hand view of the dismal situation of schools in this coca-leaf-growing region struck by drug and guerrilla wars, she was impressed to see how communities mobilized and worked hard to improve their schools. In a letter to the Ministry of Education, Rodríguez gave testimony of her experience: "...Can you imagine how very happy the communities felt? They said that government had given them the opportunity to evaluate their teachers and schools and were well prepared for the day of the evaluation. Some had whitened the walls of their school to a sparkling new freshness after raising funds in the community, others had organized collective work days to clean the schools and plant gardens and trees; others began to organize the school vegetable garden...everyone had made a big effort to be the best the day of the evaluation."

Experiences like that of Carmen Rodríguez, that in one way or another engaged communities in school improvement efforts were replicated in many of the country's 40,000 primary schools. Although there are no silver bullets for improving schools—and Colombia's program does not pretend to be one—change in education is unlikely to happen without the active participation of those who take part or have stakes in the educational process.

Colombia is an example that this can be done.

*Claudia Uribe is a doctoral student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the area of Administration, Planning, and Social Policy. Before coming to Harvard she was Director General of School Organization in the Ministry of Education in Colombia, where she was responsible, among other things, for the design and implementation of the Teacher and School Incentives Program.*

**This is How I Want My Teacher**

- I like her to understand we are all different but special.
- I want her to be proud of me!
- I don't like her to yell at me.
- I like her to laugh and have good humor.
- I want her to believe that I am smart and capable of learning.
- I want her to understand that we are young.
- I like it when she's really interested in the things she teaches us because that makes us interested too.
- I want her to have time for me when I have problems.
- If I make a mistake, I don't want her to embarrass me in front of the other kids.





STELLA JOHNSON

A Mexican child concentrates on her homework.

## Gender and Education

*Some Questions on Machismo, Pedagogy, and Values*

BY CAROLINE E. PARKER

*"There aren't very many young women [in Latin America] who can consider autonomous life plans."*

—Gloria Corvalán, 1990

**I**N TERMS OF SHEER NUMBERS, GIRLS in Latin American schools aren't in such bad shape compared to other areas of the world. They have gained what is termed "gender parity"—girls are as likely as boys to enter first grade, are as likely (or unlikely) to finish primary school, and in some countries are even more likely to attend college. And yet despite this relative advantage, young women in Latin America continue to be restricted in the life plans they can consider for themselves.

When Cecilia, a Central American

university student, went to see her professor about her grades, he made it clear that her grades would go up if she would offer certain services.

Marta, a teacher in a small town outside of Managua, found herself stuck without extra pay or childcare when she had to attend an intensive two-week workshop to learn about the Education Ministry's new third grade curriculum. Cecilia's and Marta's personal dilemmas are typical of the daily choices affecting women in Latin America today. Gender continues to be a major issue in education.

Current research about gender and education focuses on educational quality. What does it mean to give a quality education to all children?

What should a quality education look like for girls in Latin America? How does this differ from the education they are already receiving? What are the problems facing education for girls in Latin America? Where should gender awareness in education in Latin America be headed?

Economists tend to consider the question of access resolved when girls have equal access to schools, and so current programs focus on indigenous girls, the largest sector which still lacks access to basic education. Indigenous girls are less likely to speak the dominant language, less likely to go to school, less likely to complete basic schooling, and thus, less likely to be literate.

But access is only the first step in

examining equality of education. After access, students must be guaranteed equality of survival rates—"staying power"—and then equal quality of education, and finally equality of post-school outcomes.

At a recent Harvard-sponsored conference on education in Central America, the absence of a space to discuss gender issues was noteworthy, as were the informal comments of various conference members. One representative from an international aid agency in Nicaragua said, "we know that there is no need to focus on girls' education in Nicaragua because there are no problems there." A participant from Costa Rica confided that feminists made her uncomfortable with their insistence on putting gender into every conversation. It appears that in formal education circles, gender is not considered a particularly relevant issue, except for programs to promote indigenous girls' access to schools.

Why then, I find myself asking, do so many informal and adult education programs find themselves working with women, the female products of

public education systems? Why are informal women's programs focusing on literacy, small business administration skills, domestic violence prevention and gender awareness so widely funded? Perhaps if the critical issues affecting Central American women were directly addressed in the formal school setting, women would experience fewer severe crises as adults.

Researchers, analysts, and Central American women themselves point to certain specific areas in which formal education could benefit from using a gender perspective in analysis.

■ *Women as teachers.* Women make up the vast majority of primary school teachers in Central America.

They receive salaries far below what almost everyone agrees would be an acceptable wage for a professional. They are expected to attend weekend and vacation in-service training sessions, and are expected to figure out childcare, transportation, and food. In the informal education sector, when developing women-centered professional development programs, women's unique needs are addressed

through alternative meeting hours and provision of childcare. What if teacher training organizers considered the unique situation of poorly-paid women teachers who are often also heads of households?

■ *Parental participation.* Most "parent" meetings are dominated by mothers, who are often considered to be in charge of their children's education. How is the mother's experience in helping her child navigate the educational system helped or hindered by her gender? How does this experience end up being a changing experience for the mothers, as they also navigate the public space of the school?

■ *Harassment.* Girls are physically and verbally harassed in the school or classroom. How much does this affect their willingness to participate in schools? How often are girls placed in compromising positions by male teachers at the secondary or university level?

■ *Values education.* Where do values education and gender intersect? When values education extols the virtues of the nuclear family, in particular focusing on the role of woman as wife and mother, how does this impact a girls' sense of herself and her future? How much does this contradict children's daily experiences of far more varied family structures, and leave them confused about their position in society?

■ *Machismo.* How does machismo play itself out in formal education?

It appears that in formal education circles, gender is not considered a particularly relevant issue, except for programs to promote indigenous girls' access to schools.



JOYCE PENFIELD



JOYCE PENFIELD

Left: Santa Catarina, Sololá, Guatemala  
Right: Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

To what degree does education reinforce the machista values that degrade women? To what degree does it offer a way for girls to break out of roles?

■ *Pedagogy.* Currently, gender theory is looking at the ways that different pedagogies are more effective for some children than others, and in particular at how girls tend to learn in comparison to boys. Does pedagogy in Central America favor boys? Do girls learn differently than boys? A person's gender should not have an impact on which classes they are allowed to take, especially math and sciences, but their gender can and should have an impact on the pedagogy used to teach that

person.

■ *What do girls say?* How do they view the classroom and the school in their lives? What would they want to see change?

Jenny, one of those Central American girls, is one example. She repeated ninth grade three times, and finally stopped going to school altogether. "It won't help me get a job anyway," she commented. And in fact, studies indicate that for women who work in the sizable informal sector, their education has little positive effect on their economic future.

Other young women in Central America should not have to repeat Jenny's negative experience. They

should be able to dream of "autonomous life plans" for themselves, and not be restricted to the limited spaces currently offered them by society. While schools in Central America offer access to girls, they also perpetuate the social system that limits their opportunities. Central American schools—as well as many others in Latin America—face the challenge of addressing society-wide gender issues in the school setting.

*Caroline E. Parker is a first-year doctoral student in International Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She lived and worked in Nicaragua for 13 years.*

## Latino Families and the Educational Dream

*Resilience along a Rocky Road*

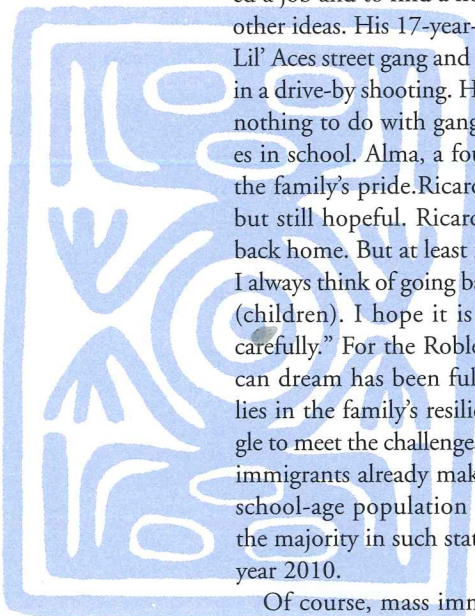
BY LAWRENCE P. HERNANDEZ

INSISTING THAT WE DO OUR INTERVIEW IN ENGLISH, Ricardo Robles reluctantly recalls the dreams he had for his children when first arriving nine years ago to the U.S. from Zacatecas, Mexico. "They deported me three times, but I kept coming back. I thought here my kids could get the education you know to be successful. I wanted a job and to find a house...to learn English." Fate had other ideas. His 17-year-old son Carlos, a member of the Lil' Aces street gang and a high school dropout, was killed in a drive-by shooting. His daughter Anita, now 15, wants nothing to do with gangs, but she is failing several classes in school. Alma, a fourth grader, is a star student and the family's pride. Ricardo is worried about his children but still hopeful. Ricardo explains, "Life was very hard back home. But at least in Mexico, I had all my children. I always think of going back for good, but I have two more (children). I hope it is better for them. I watch them carefully." For the Robles family, the road to the American dream has been full of potholes, but the real story lies in the family's resilience and two immigrant's struggle to meet the challenges of educating their children. New immigrants already make up a significant portion of the school-age population in the U.S. and Latinos will be the majority in such states as California and Texas by the year 2010.

Of course, mass immigration is nothing new to our

country. Between 1890 and 1920, America invited Europe to "give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free". After two generations, these immigrants assimilated quite easily into the American middle class. But it seems we have not hung out the same welcome sign for our Latin American neighbors. Recent immigrants are poorer, have less education, and fewer marketable skills that would enable them to take advantage of a burgeoning global economy which has become increasingly technological and more demanding of its worker's abilities. Coupled with lingering stereotypes and few resources, it has been difficult for Latino immigrants to move into the mainstream. In no place has this been truer than in the public schools.

Education is the single best predictor of the future success of immigrant children, but the schools have hardly met the challenge of educating these youth over recent years. Latino immigrants have the worst academic performance and the grimmest economic prospects in young adulthood of any group. Their dropout rate remains more than double the rate of African-Americans and over 3.5 times that of Anglos. This rate has improved little over several decades and later-generation Latino-origin youth fare only slightly better. As a result, Latino youth continue to be more distanced from the public school system each year, an argument supported by disproportionate dropout sta-



tistics, student suspensions, expulsion, and retention rates and low standardized test-scores.

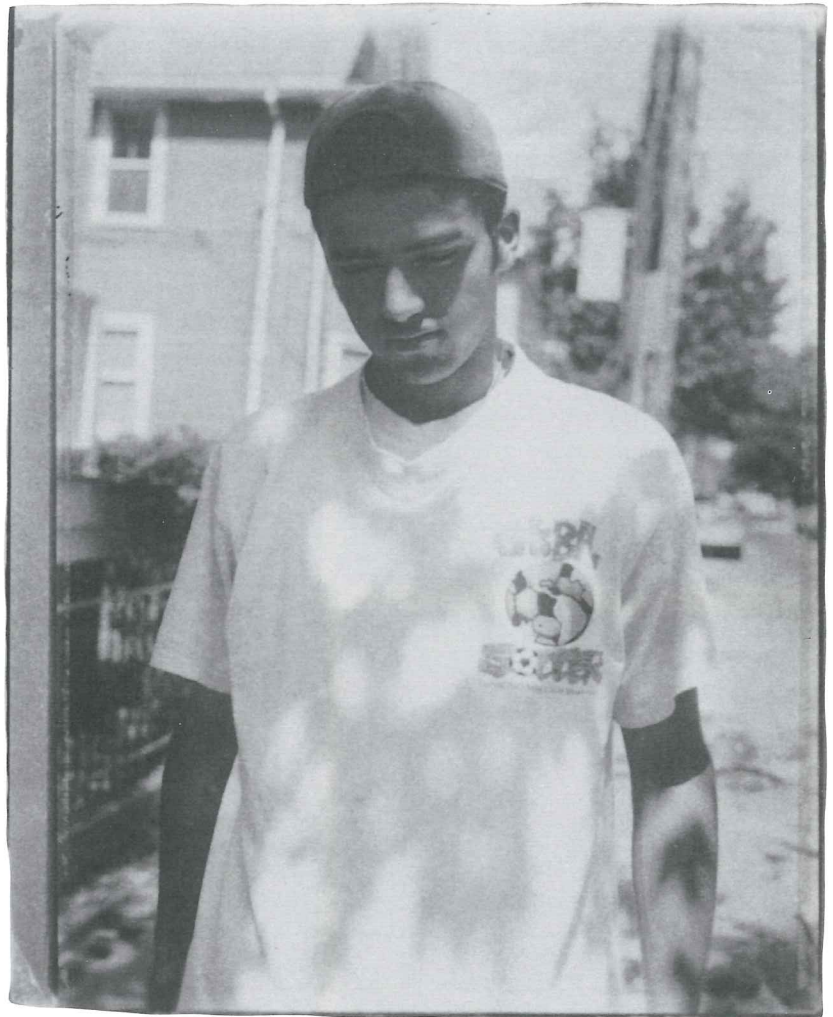
Despite these dismal results, Latino families continue to have high aspirations for their children.

One study of 13 high schools in California found that virtually all Latino students want a college education, but few Latino families had the specific knowledge to achieve this end. This knowledge was not being transmitted by high school counselors. In many cases, these students were not even enrolled in the basic college-track courses that were required for admission and 50% who were taking the right courses never took the SAT. In California, Latinos are over 30% of the k-12 population, but less than 4% of the Latino graduates in the state meet the requirements for admission to the UC system.

Other studies have found that schools tended to be less responsive to Latino parents' needs. These parents were less likely to be aware of their child's truancies, often because they did not have telephones, felt intimidated when approaching teachers and administrators to discuss their child, had reading difficulties, and because they were less frequently informed by schools regarding their child's academic performance.

Culture and language of the home do not become barriers unless specific school practices and policies make them so, as Harriett D. Romo and Toni Falbo point out in a 1995 study of the school graduation of 100 Mexican-origin students and families. They found most schools over-estimated the literacy skills, knowledge of the working of the school system, and other resources the family had to assist their child academically (e.g. transportation, time off of work to attend conferences, knowledge of the subject matter). In most cases, schools did not even inform parents that their children were having difficulty in school or had poor attendance, except for report cards that were sent home with the child. Even when parents were aware, they lacked the skills to effectively advocate for their child.

On the other hand, we have learned that behind the success of many Latino students are aggressive parents and supportive teachers that are not afraid to take on the educational system. My own research of 238 Mexican-origin students has shown that for those who go on to college, supportive relationships are more important than the student's family composition, income level or intelligence scores. The parents of successful students tended to set clear limits with their children, monitored their child's peer relationships and homework activities closely, constantly reinforced the importance of school, and pushed school officials to provide their children with the necessary academic assistance. These students were also more likely to have a teacher, coach, or other person in the school that was willing to take action on the family's behalf. In contrast, L.A. Public School official, David Flores, found that over 90% of gang-involved Latino youth reported not having a single person in the school they could talk to if they had a problem.



LAURA BLACKLOW © 1998

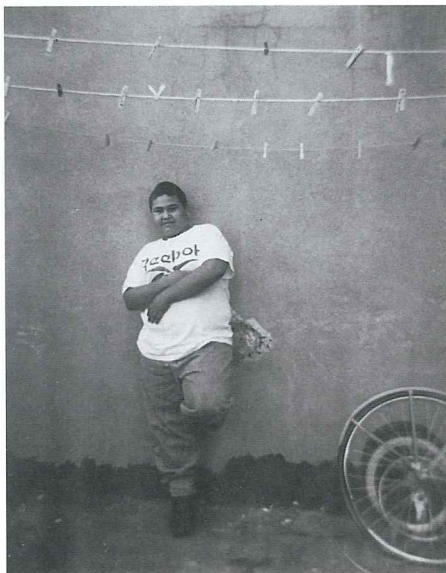
After working 12 hours at a construction job, Ricardo Robles sits with me on his porch one summer evening and watches the neighborhood kids kick a soccer ball back and forth. He asks himself what he must do to secure the promise of education for his children. Anita is hanging on by a thread to a school system which has done little to insure she learn even the most basic skill of reading. Alma is evidence of the results of a good school and the persistence of parents that have learned to navigate the educational maze. But in this neighborhood, quality schools are the exception and there are few resources to support parents in assisting their children. It seems clear that without broad scale systemic educational reform that improves schools and directly engages and supports parents, large numbers of poor Latino youth are destined to become a part of the growing permanent underclass—not a great legacy for a country where the Statue of Liberty looms over New York as a cultural symbol that is supposed to define us.

Portrait of David Paez in Central Square, Cambridge. "The road to American dreams... is filled with potholes... and hope."

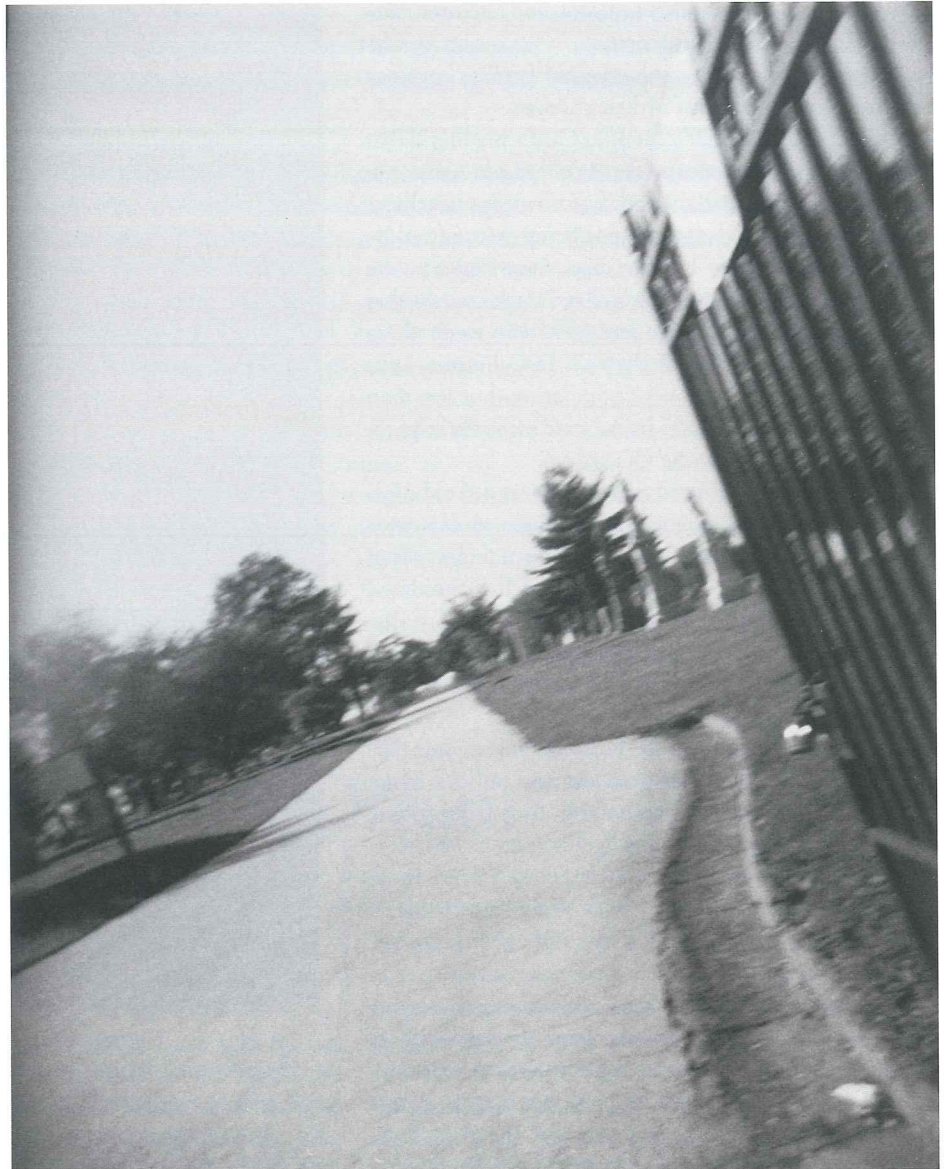
*Lawrence Hernandez is an Assistant Professor in the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is involved in several major school reform projects around the country to improve the achievement of Latino youth.*



KATSY MIRANDA



JOSÉ SUÁREZ



GISELLE RIVERA

# Education Through Photography: Finding A Voice

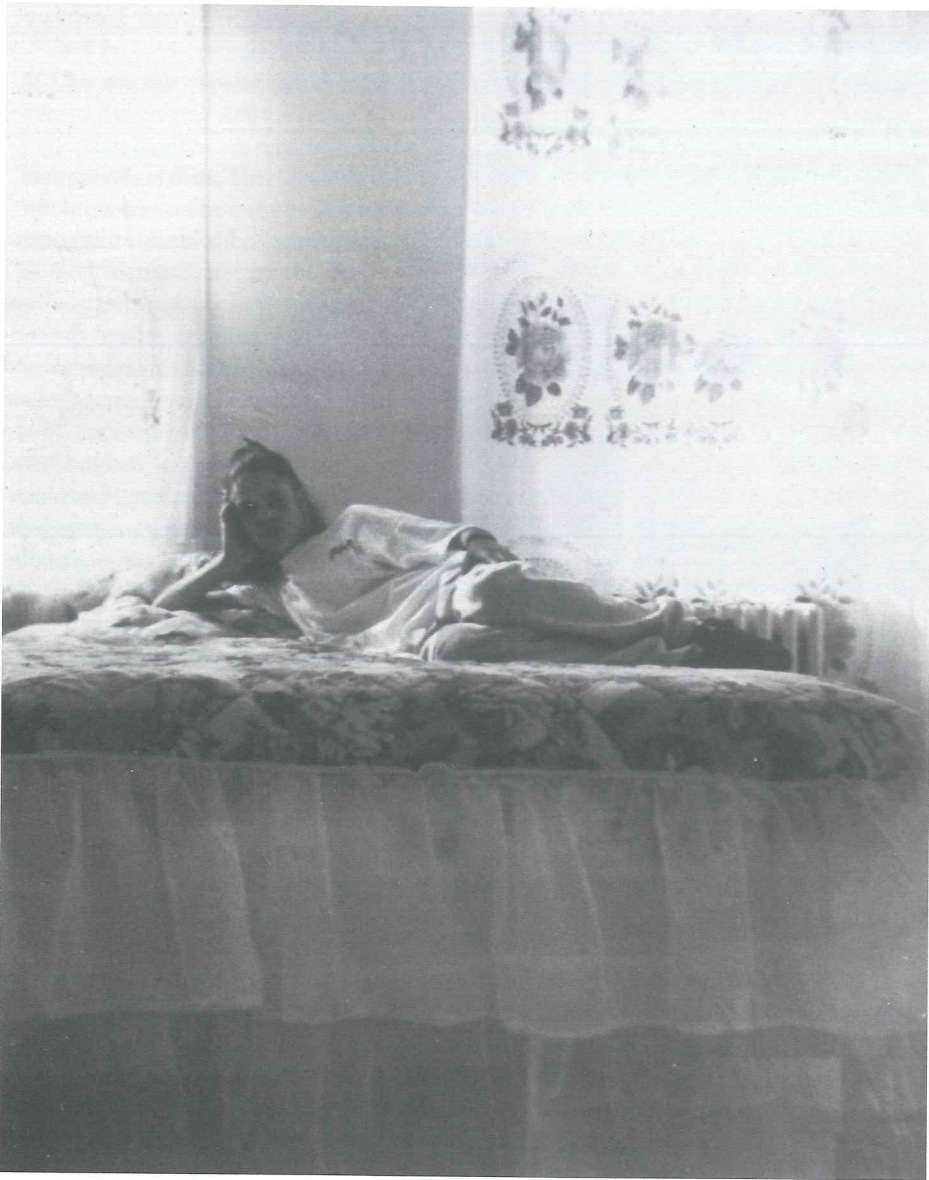
TEXT BY ADRIANA KATZEW AND PHOTOS BY CITY CLICKERS

**F**ROM 1995 TO 1997, MORE THAN 80 LATINO CHILDREN IN Philadelphia's barrio participated in City Clickers, a photography and creative writing program that I created and implemented with the financial support of the *echoing green* foundation. The program was originally designed to give 11- to 14-year-old recent immigrants from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic the opportunity to use photography as a means of communicating while learning English at the same time. However, it soon became apparent that photography was not just a tool for the children to learn and improve their English, but one that allowed them to develop a voice.

The children, all of whom were provided with simple cameras of their own, ventured into the community to document different aspects of their lives and to capture their realities. As they did so, they developed a voice—a voice reflected in their images.

Wolfran's photograph of barbed wire is powerful, since the wire was placed on each window at his school; the particular window captured by Wolfran was one of the many facing the school patio, a patio in which students were never allowed to play. Giselle's photograph reveals one of the places that most impacted her on her daily walks to and from school: the cemetery located less than one block away from school. Astonishing as well is Gilda's photo-





GILDA JIMÉNEZ



JULIO PÉREZ



WOLFRAN RONDÓN

graph of her sister on her bed in her bedroom. The curtains and lace in the bed, the whole mood of her bedroom evokes an oasis of ethereal beauty and safety amidst a neighborhood drug- and gun-ridden.

Aryannis' photograph on the cover of this newsletter, in contrast, depicts darkness from which her sister emerges wearing her best dress. Julio explores the question of isolation in his photograph of a boot lodged into the branches of a lonesome, barren tree.

There were no rules as to what the children could and could not photograph. Some focused on making self-portraits, others photographed friends, some photographed their families, usually focus-

ing on younger children or grandparents. Others explored the landscape of the barrio. Ultimately, however, the children were the sole decision-makers in the portrayals of their lives. The photographs that the Latino/a children took as part of City Clickers are a testament to the power of their voice, be it poetic, subtle or, hard to swallow. The beauty resides in the strength of their voices.

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*Adriana Katzew is a doctoral student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, in the Learning & Teaching program. She is interested in the visual media as a means to empower Latino/a youth.*

# Harvard Immigration Project

*Researching the Lives of Children*

BY JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK

**A** REFRIGERATOR IS THE MOST important thing in life, the 10-year-old immigrant child reported in a matter-of-fact sort of way.

And even though children most frequently responded with answers like “education” and “family” in a sentence completion exercise about “the most important thing in life”, Harvard Immigration Project research assistant Charlene Desir was saddened and intrigued by the boy’s answer.

“When a child tells you that, it’s like the experience of being poor really comes alive,” she told some of her fellow research assistants in a recent round-table discussion.

“Students talk about how they miss their experiences back home. Their life here is a struggle, but they are still so motivated,” added researcher Mariela Paez. “All of those things I used to read about, suddenly they come alive.”

Desir, Paez, and the three other round-table participants are just a few of the 27 research assistants on both

coasts of the United States working with Harvard Immigration Project’s co-directors Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Carola Suárez-Orozco, senior research associate and lecturer, to track the adaptation experiences of five different groups of first-generation immigrant adolescents between the ages of 10 and 14, for a period of five years.

Now in its second year, this ambitious project, officially entitled Longitudinal Immigration Student Adaptation Project, is researching the psycho-social development and acculturation of 425 adolescents who represent the major groups of immigrants arriving in the United States today: Dominican, Haitian, Central American, Mexican, and Chinese.

The bilingual researchers are looking at the homes, visiting the schools, and interviewing the parents, children, and teachers. They are trying to understand the cultural context and the immigrant child’s place in the society in general. The process is an intimate one, sharing lives and stories and hopes and frustrations. Like the children, many of the researchers are immigrants themselves.

Boston-area researchers—a Haitian school psychologist, a Brazilian teacher, a Puerto Rican linguist, a Dominican social worker, and a Haitian academic program director—got together recently to discuss some of their observations and their motives for becoming involved in the project.

“What drew me to this project was not only my interest in immigrant children and their families, but the fact that it’s one-of-a-kind,” said Paez, who grew up in Puerto Rico. “It’s the first of a kind, too. There hasn’t been any longitudinal work that looks at different groups of immigrant children.” Paez became involved with immigrant children and their fami-

lies through her work in linguistics and language development.

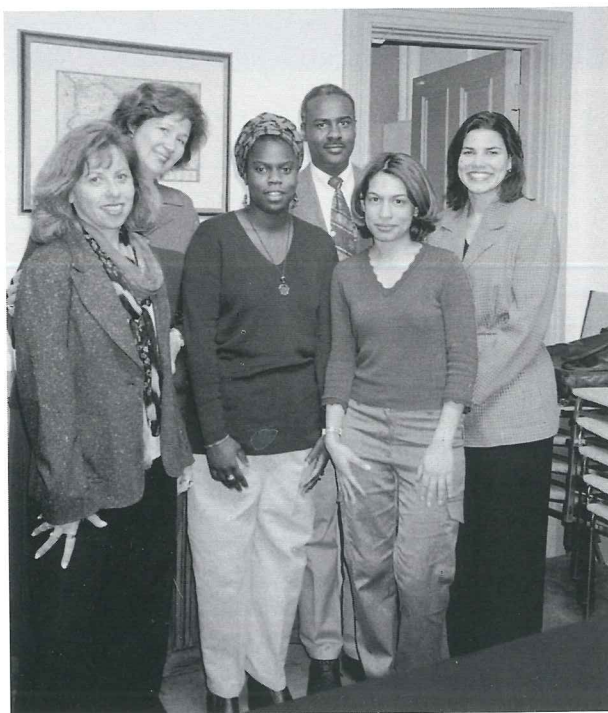
“I was fascinated by the process of learning two languages and the connections between being bilingual and what that had to say about cognitive development,” she explained. “Soon before graduating, I realized I was missing the entire thing. I was looking at children’s nouns and pronouns, but it was really much more than linguistics: it was about the context, the family, the culture.” She went to study applied child development at Tufts, and then came to Harvard to study under Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, who shared her interest in education from a psychological, anthropological, and sociological viewpoint.

Immigration project researcher Alix Cantave, director of the Haitian Studies Association, saw the project as a way to understand more about his community, “One of the difficulties has been the lack of data on immigrant children, and most specifically with the Haitian population in the United States, and in Massachusetts and Boston in particular. This study is a way of at least beginning to get some baseline data about immigrant children and their level of adaptation to the society. I see the need for data, more scientific data.

“And there’s a need to be out there,” added Cantave, “I think it’s an exciting involvement in defining how you analyze the data, just finding the data.”

Like the others, Eliane Rubenstein-Avila found her own cross-cultural experience sensitized her to the immigrant children. Her parents immigrated to Brazil before she was born; then the entire family went to Israel, and then Rubenstein-Avila came to the United States by herself in her early 20s. She also considers her move from California, where she first lived, to Cambridge as a quasi-immigration. “So there’s a whole lot of immigration

From left to right:  
Eliane Rubenstein-Avila, Carola Suárez-Orozco (in back row), Charlene Desir, Alex Cantave (in back row), Jeanette Adames, Mariela Paez.



JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK

experience there," she jokes.

And yet, there were many surprises. One was that with new immigrant groups Rubenstein-Avila is researching, many families are separated for long periods of time. Then, there's the whole question of how the groups are perceived, an issue that almost all the researchers raised.

"On the West Coast, they think of immigrants as people who come here to work real hard. Even people who were against immigrants thought they came here to work real hard," she observed. "On the East Coast, it's more loaded in terms of immigrants being thought of as usurpers of the system, of using services and so forth."

Jeanette Adames, a Dominican social worker, nods her head, "I was born in the States, but I didn't come to study here until I was 11 years old. I can relate so much to what I am hearing from the kids, what it's like to be in a classroom when you look different, that's something that I've experienced to a certain degree. I don't look at school and the relationship with school in the same way mainstream Americans do."

Children sometimes are seen negatively by teachers, even when they are of the same ethnic background. The teachers can be overburdened, forced to teach on several different levels at once, ill-prepared and overstressed, or just culturally insensitive, researchers said.

"I remember the case of a kid," recounts Cantave. "The kid was standing by the principal's office, and the teacher walked by, and says, 'Well, she's a bad kid' so this girl bursts into tears. She's new to the country, she's living with a family she's just exposed to for the first time, and she's just this little girl, all by herself. The teacher wasn't trying to understand, she's just reinforcing in the kid's mind that she's a bad girl. The poor child was in tears. That's how her day began."

In another sentence-completion exercise, many students declared that they were perceived negatively by Americans, and used strong words like "garbage" and "trash." Many of them have had to deal with violence in their



ANITA BACA

"As the kids go further in their education, there's a kind of disconnect,"  
—Charlene Desir

own countries, and now experience violence in their new cities.

Yet, for many of the children, school at home was an escape from the streets, a privileged and orderly place where rules had to be followed. There's often a disconnect with American informality in the classroom and the separation of the school from the community. Many of the parents have never been inside a child's school. Sometimes they are working too hard at many jobs; the school is often far from their neighborhood, and they are fearful about language communication.

"School is kind of a first introduction for immigrant children to adapt in the greater society," observes Desir. "As the kids go further in their education, there's a kind of disconnect."

The Suárez-Orozco's and their cadre of research assistants are trying to understand the nature of that "disconnect." They say that the idea immigrants assimilate naturally, to participate in a mythical "national destiny," is now challenged by the complexities of the new immigrant experience in the United States. While some immigrant children do brilliantly in schools, the school performance of many other immigrant children actually worsens the longer they stay in the United States. Far from fulfilling the American Dream, many successive generations of youths from

immigrant backgrounds are performing more poorly than their foreign-born, first-generation peers.

The researchers are learning from their subjects, and hope the children can also benefit, not only from future findings, but from the experience itself.

"I think that the piece that is the most important to me is the fact that I work with these students and that I work with these families, gaining their experience," explains Desir. "We're coming in and we're asking these students, 'I want to learn from you, I want you to explain to me what you go through.' We're reaching out to the parents and saying, 'Your voice counts, we want to learn to learn from you, we want you to tell us how to service your child.' I think that is the most important part of the project for me, validating who these children are."

Adds Adames, "I'm glad that Marcelo and Carola have approached the project, not just from the perspective of gathering data, but from that of teaching us to be better researchers. That's reflected in our training and in our weekly meetings. Marcelo and Carola are two people who validate not only the voices of the participants, but it's amazing how they validate us; each one of us brings very different skills to this project, as the result of our personalities, our experiences, our schooling. They are able to touch the best of everyone."

Education: Children at the crossroads, a sign at the U.S.-Mexican border



JACK LUEDERS-BOOTH

## Society and Education

*Latin America's Challenge for the Twenty-First Century*

**RODOLFO STAVENHAGEN**

**A**S A MEMBER OF UNESCO'S INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION on Education for the Twenty-First Century, I've come to realize that education is about much more than books. It's about the "four pillars of learning" directed to the major challenges facing education: *Learning to live together* in this new interrelated world, with its massive migrations and ethnic conflicts; *Learning to know*, the development of students' competence in interpreting and explaining facts, of rational thinking in order to acquire not only knowledge, but also wisdom, about the world we live in; *learning to do*, acquiring the competence to face changing technologies and shifting labor markets, and *learning to be*, developing one's full potential as a free individual and as a responsible member of a larger society.

Achieving this goal involves building partnerships, whether those partnerships are with businesses, labor unions, or rural cooperatives. Above all, it means building effective links with local communities.

Building partnerships for quality improvement in education requires more than an administrative decision at some governmental level. It involves research and dialogue with potential partners about the different needs and possibilities of everyone involved. For example, in most Latin

American countries rural schools lag well behind urban schools in every respect, and among the former, schools in areas with indigenous populations are even less better off.

Inadequate resources and lack of trained teachers are, of course, factors, but I consider inadequate understanding by educational officials of the social and cultural needs of the local communities to be the primary problem. Although serious efforts are underway in a number of countries to develop a truly bilingual and intercultural education for indigenous children, only very few well-trained teachers speak the indigenous languages. Local officials or even teachers coming from other areas quite often hold indigenous traditions in contempt. For decades, official educational policy in Latin American countries aimed to assimilate the indigenous population and disdained their languages and cultures. Consequently, educational levels and outcomes among indigenous children were poor, and school desertion rates were high. (As a matter of fact, a similar situation prevails among Hispanic children in many parts of the United States).

In situations such as these, partnerships with the local community mandate knowledge of and respect for local culture and vernacular languages. Before imposing a new

curriculum or educational agenda on rural school systems, education officials need to establish trust and mutual respect with local communities. This takes time and cultural sensitivity, something which bureaucrats on the run do not always possess in sufficient quantity. But beyond that, it sometimes means redefining the concept of the nation and the national culture, an issue that elected or appointed officials are not always eager to take on.

### THE PRINCIPAL PROJECT OF EDUCATION

In 1979 the Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean established the Principal Project of Education (PPE), a major coordinated regional effort. The Project aimed to achieve universal school access and to eliminate illiteracy by the end of the century. It also sought to improve educational systems' quality and efficiency through adequate reforms. At the end of the nineties, the first two objectives were well on their way to being achieved, whereas there is still a way to go regarding the improvement of quality and efficiency of education systems.

In Latin America, as in other parts of the so-called "developing world", international cooperation can play a significant role in educational development. The Commission identifies a number of common themes in international cooperation, such as the need to see education systems as a whole and to conceive reform as a democratic, consultative process related to an overall social policy.

The North-South imbalance must be offset with increasing North-South and South-South cooperation. From debt-for-education swaps, to regional exchanges of teachers, researchers, and students, to the establishment of regional research and training centers (as the United Nations University has done), to facilitating poorer countries' access to the new information technologies, to the building-up of basic educational infrastructure and teaching capacity: the possibilities for international cooperation in education are vast. The Commission believes such new partnerships can be built with UNESCO's involvement and among member states directly.

International cooperation in education in the region takes many forms. The Inter-American Development Bank financed 32 educational projects for a total of \$1.7 billion during 1994 and 1995 alone. Many of these projects involve educational reform efforts, including administrative decentralization at local levels, increasing autonomy of schools and parental involvement and higher incentives for teachers, as well as more traditional aspects of educational reform such as curriculum development.

The World Bank, a major partner of Latin American efforts to improve education, has increased its investments in education from less than \$200 million before 1991, to more than \$800 million in recent years, which represents nearly 14% of the total regional budget for education. 80% of World Bank loans go to basic education, a policy reflecting priorities determined by the region's countries. A major concern is to raise the average of 5.2 years of schooling of the population—two years lower than the

average in the countries of East Asia; as well as to improve academic efficiency, which is also lower in Latin America than in other areas with similar income levels. The World Bank has agreed to support such educational reforms as extending pre-school education and improving the quality of basic resources in schools, from textbooks to teacher training.

Another regional effort is coordinated by the Organization of American States (OAS), with particular emphasis on basic education, education for work, and in 12 countries, middle and higher education. Participating states have committed almost \$15 million to these three regional cooperative projects. A preliminary evaluation of the projects concludes that their results have been positive, pending a more careful study of their impact on the improvement of the quality and efficiency of education.

The Organization of Iberoamerican States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) is yet another regional effort (including Spain and Portugal) to help improve education. It is involved in prospective studies, the teaching of science and mathematics, educational research, the building of data bases and publications.

UNESCO's Principal Project of Education recognizes the important role of international cooperation in achieving its strategic objectives. Between 1990 and 1994 external financial cooperation for educational purposes reached a level of more than \$1 billion per year, a small fraction of total need, but a significant contribution to flexible expenditures for educational innovation and the improvement of quality.

One example of community partnerships is EDUCO in El Salvador. In 1991, the Salvadoran government decided to improve rural education by transferring funds from the Ministry of Education and delegating management of new rural preschools and primary schools to parents and community groups through a special program called EDUCO. A locally elected Community Association for Basic Education (ACE), whose members are drawn from the parents of the school's students, hires and fires teachers and closely monitors their attendance and performance, while ensuring direct feedback about pupils' progress. It also receives funds to buy limited school supplies. The role of the Ministry of Education's role is to help organize the ACEs and to train teachers and supervise their performance. The ministry also establishes the criteria for teacher selection: all teachers in EDUCO must be college graduates. By 1992 the program had expanded to 958 schools in all fourteen departments of the country, and over 45,000 pupils, and enrolled 10% of all rural students in grades one to three.

The program has faced opposition, particularly from teacher unions and leaders in the zones formerly in conflict, during El Salvador's twelve-year long civil war which ended in 1989, where it is perceived as a strategy of political co-optation. In these areas an alternative form of teaching emerged during the war—the popular teachers (maestros populares), supported by the political opposition. These now see EDUCO as a strategy of the central state

**In Latin America, as in other parts of the so-called "developing world", international cooperation can play a significant role in educational development. The Commission identifies a number of common themes in international cooperation, such as the need to see education systems as a whole and to conceive reform as a democratic, consultative process related to an overall social policy.**

to neutralize the network of popular teachers who identified with the opposition during the war. Teachers unions also opposed being hired by community associations, which fragmented the relationship of the trade union with a single employer: the education ministry.

An evaluation of teacher performance indicates that teachers in community-managed schools use more innovative practices and expose their students to more group work and pedagogical games than teachers in traditional schools. However, many rural communities were not able to provide a local college graduate as teacher, thus requiring teachers to come in from the outside, sometimes having to travel long distances.

Harvard's Fernando Reimers found in a 1997 study that standardized tests and evaluations showed that EDUCO has not made a difference in the number of class days or in the length of instruction students receive, findings inconsistent with the expected effect of the program. The study concludes that while students in EDUCO schools perform at levels comparable to those of students in other schools, there is no indication that this innovation has substantially increased school quality, internal efficiency, or even community participation. EDUCO shows that school autonomy and local participation are not panaceas, and require a long time to mature and produce their expected beneficial effects.

Communities are the building-blocks of a healthy society; in today's multicultural and multiethnic world, it is at the community level that tensions, frictions, and uncertainties must be resolved. Educational systems will flounder without community support, and they will flourish with community involvement. A successful educational system is the one that is able to draw upon the strengths and resources of the underlying community and it will, in turn, contribute to that community's vitality. This is a window of opportunity for the educational systems of the twenty-first century. The four pillars of learning, referred to in the Commission's report, must be solidly anchored in the life of the community, a task in which many social actors can cooperate. I believe the challenge is to find models in which these partnerships can function effectively.

#### TEACHERS AS PARTNERS

Dialogue between officials and teachers is crucial to this relationship. Teachers often feel that they are not involved in major decisions concerning educational programs. Their view of education seen from the classroom may be quite different from that of an educational planner negotiating budget approvals in ministerial offices. Educational needs do not always coincide with political imperatives. A case in point: in the middle '70s, responding to criticisms about the content of the official primary school textbooks used in the country, the President of Mexico decid-

ed to create a task force of social and natural scientists and other academics to rewrite the manuals. This ambitious objective had to be carried out in a few months, due to a specific political timetable. The Commission set about its task with great enthusiasm, and the books were published on time and distributed to millions of elementary school students at the beginning of the new school year. There had been no time to test them in practice, evaluate their effectiveness, and correct their errors and defects. School teachers, who had hardly been informed of these curricular changes, were asked to use the new textbooks in class immediately. They became the program's strongest critics, and demanded a return to the earlier system. Within a few years, under a new government administration, the books were scrapped and the old system was restored (still in place twenty years afterwards). The Regional Committee of the Principal Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, supported by UNESCO, considers that the first and foremost challenge in order to overcome the key causes of low quality education in the region is to create public support for personalized and group learning. Once this is achieved, other challenges can also be met. But how is public support created? Will the ministries take the initiative? The teachers unions?

What role will there be for the media? Do national parliaments have a role to play?

Educational systems cannot flourish and achieve their main objective in society in isolation from other sectors. How to develop constructive dialogue with these other sectors and their various actors (local communities, social interest organizations, economic agents, ethnic and cultural groups) is one of the major challenges as we enter the twenty-first century. The Commission has high hopes that these challenges will be met successfully. Jacques Delors, the Commission's president, affirms that there is "every reason to place renewed emphasis on the moral and cultural dimension of education, enabling each person to grasp the individuality of other people and to understand the world's erratic progression towards a certain unity..." In this context, cooperation and dialogue are essential, because, as Delors points out, "...after so many failures and so much waste, experience militates in favor of partnership, [and] globalization makes it inescapable..."

*Rodolfo Stavenhagen is Research Professor at El Colegio de México and member of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, UNESCO. He has been named the Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor of Latin American Studies at Harvard University for the year 2000. He will teach in Harvard's Anthropology Department. His article is based on his presentation at the Biennial meeting of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in Dakar, Senegal, October 1997.*

Educational systems will flounder without community support, and they will flourish with community involvement.



MAGGIE HUG

DRCLAS staff members André Leroux and Joanna Angelides lead a discussion with Cambridge Rindge and Latin School students on the Center's art exhibit, "Altars and Shrines of Haiti" by Marilene Phipps.

## DRCLAS Outreach

*A New Venture*

BY HILARY BURGER

A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT FROM Haiti explains the meaning of vodou to a fellow classmate from China. Three Harvard undergraduates gather a group of eager kindergarteners to play a game in Spanish. Such scenes are becoming more common around Cambridge and the Boston area because of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies' intensified outreach program.

With support from DRCLAS, undergraduates at Harvard organized to put into practice the concept that learning a second language should be a positive experience for children. Today, SABES (Spanish Acquisition Beginning in Elementary School) oversees 26 volunteers at the Agassiz School in Cambridge, where they teach Spanish language to 60 kindergarten through eighth graders two afternoons a week, using games, videos, and other fun activities. John Roderick, Agassiz assistant principal, wants this "wonderful program" to

become a permanent part of the school, where Spanish is not usually introduced until the seventh grade.

DRCLAS Latin American and Latino/a Art Forum welcomed students from Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS), located only one block away from the Center. The students came to see "Heavens of the Imagination" a watercolor exhibit by Chilean artist Lydia Nakashima Degarrod, from March to June 15, 1999. Nakashima Degarrod, who is also an anthropologist, sat casually on a table, surrounded by her colorful paintings, and answered the barrage of questions from 30 bilingual and ESL students.

It wasn't the first time the students brought their energy and curiosity to the DRCLAS art exhibits. Last November, Bilingual and English as a Second Language teacher Maggie Hug brought her class to the Center from CRLS. Her students, from places as varied as Quebec, Bolivia,

Brazil, and Ethiopia, listened intently as Center staff members André Leroux and Joanna Angelides explained the Center's goals and introduced them to the work of Haitian artist Marilene Phipps at her exhibit "Altars and Shrines of Haiti."

Francesse Meronnis, an 11th grade student from Haiti, wrote after the visit, "I really like the Rockefeller Center, and also I like the pictures because they make me proud of my country." Another student wrote thanking the Center for "giving an important place to Latin America's culture."

The visits are an example of the Center's new emphasis on working locally. DRCLAS, known for its academic conferences, lectures, and other intellectual events, has begun a concerted effort to directly reach out to the local community. The Center has developed ties with journalists and business, but, according to director John Coatsworth, historically has

lacked a full-fledged outreach effort. DRCLAS is now working to build relationships with area public schools, colleges and universities, as well as community organizations. The outreach program will supplement the work that the Center has already done in supporting research, student groups, and faculty initiatives that have a direct effect on our understanding of Latin America and Latin Americans in the United States.

With the help of the Center, Latino students from the AHORA program at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School are participating in more events on campus. A group of AHORA students recently joined the course Latino Cultures, where performer, writer, and educator Josefina Baez presented her work, "Dominicanish: Language Acquisition with Soul," and talked at length with the audience. This month, they will attend a performance of the New York-based theater group Universes, brought to Harvard by Fuerza Latina, a Latino student organization. Outreach is a

way of joining forces: in this case, many Latino undergraduates, including members of Fuerza, tutor and mentor at AHORA.

DRCLAS is also collaborating with other area studies centers at Harvard to give teacher workshops, and with the Boston-based World Affairs Council, in organizing a seminar for area teachers on "Brazil: Beyond Soccer and Samba." It is also exploring with state colleges and universities in Massachusetts how the Center might form alliances, particularly in the area of faculty professional development. The Center provides support and Center faculty regularly lecture for programs like Teachers as Scholars, based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, which offers in-depth academic seminars for area school teachers. Teachers as Scholars is also organizing a special seminar for Boston school superintendents on an issue central to the future of urban public schools, that of immigration, featuring a presentation by Harvard School of Education Professor of

Human Development and Psychology Marcelo Suárez-Orozco.

The interests of DRCLAS and the community overlap in many areas, including the Center's research priorities in immigration, public health, and Latino Studies. Over the long term, the Center seeks to extend its many resources and talents in the area of Latin American Studies to a less traditional, but equally valuable group of citizens, teachers, activists, and community members.

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*Hilary Burger, DRCLAS outreach coordinator, recently completed her PhD in Latin American History at Harvard. Fluent in both Spanish and Portuguese, she has close ties to Cambridge's Brazilian and Salvadoran communities and has a broad range of interests from Latino popular music to immigration rights. If you have suggestions about the way the Center can develop its outreach initiative, please contact her at 617-495-5435, e-mail <burger@fas.harvard.edu>.*

## Noel McGinn's Life of Learning

*Helping nations plan education and prepare for democracy*

BY ANDRÉ LEROUX

**N**OEL MCGINN, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, HAD A NORMAL American childhood in a small, sleepy town directly south of Miami—but 1200 miles south and across the Caribbean, in the Panama Canal Zone.

"I grew up in Gatún, a small town two miles from Colón on the Atlantic coast. It was very quiet." His kindly features crease with a smile as he tells me about being born and growing up in Panama for seventeen years. Curiously, he did not have to learn Spanish until his graduate studies in the United States because he had few opportunities to interact with local Panamanians.

"I went back for the first time just last month," he says, "and the town looks the same as ever! It's really a different world." McGinn chuckles. If the town hasn't changed much, he himself certainly has, traveling back to his birthplace as a consultant to Panama's ministry of education.

Given his beginnings, McGinn seems almost destined to have become a pan-American educator. A long, productive career spanning four decades as a teacher and con-

sultant connects Gatún and Harvard. His work has focused on educational planning, institutions, and democracy. In 1997, the Organization of American States awarded the Andres Bello Inter-American Prize for education to McGinn, the first U.S. citizen to receive the award.

After receiving his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Michigan in the enthusiastic Kennedy-Peace Corps era, he took a job teaching for two years at the ITESO in Guadalajara, Mexico. Then he signed on for a project in the Dominican Republic called Education for Democracy. But it never materialized—the U.S. Marines invaded in 1965.

Instead, McGinn joined up with a team in Venezuela working to create a 20-year plan for Ciudad Guyana's educational system. "The concept of educational planning was very new," he says, laughing. "Of course, no one would ever think of doing something like that nowadays." He comments that twenty years is too long to program ahead and plans need to be flexible.



But the experience was a valuable one. As a new field, educational planning had few practitioners but many clients, and institutions like the OECD and Harvard began to promote it strongly. McGinn began to work with a Harvard-based consulting group, a group of economists that incorporated professionals from other fields and eventually evolved into the Harvard Institute for International Development. For the next ten years, he worked as a consultant to foreign governments all over the world and later became installed as a teacher, researcher, and consultant in the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

#### EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

"People all over the world have gotten better educated over the last thirty years, although the problems have also gotten greater." McGinn points out that notions of education are being profoundly affected by a change in the way we think about systems of planning, and decision-making in general. In the United States and abroad, there has been a shift over the years from a 'bureaucratic' to a more 'democratic' model of social organization, from hierarchy to heterarchy.

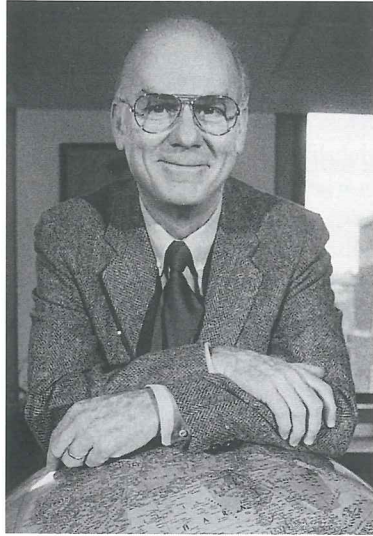
Unfortunately, education tends to be a backwards sector in the sense that it still follows a highly bureaucratic model in Latin America. This means that roles are strictly hierarchical, syllabi don't change and are centrally derived, and there is little supervision of teachers, who often work in isolation. This bureaucratic model "separates thinking from doing" which allows power to accumulate and makes change difficult. This assembly-line approach tends to create poorly trained teachers who reproduce what they were taught. Overall, it is a paternalistic system where the children are not taught to make decisions.

Of course, there are good reasons why the bureaucratic model has been so enduring. "Democracy is not efficient, especially when resources are scarce," says McGinn. He notes that there are dozens of interesting educational experiments in Latin America, but they tend to have localized impact. However, new sources of power have arisen in Latin American society. "The possibilities of improving the system are there now, and that's good."

In developed countries, McGinn says that teachers have more time to "think about things, read books and talk to each other". The trend nowadays in developed countries is to understand teachers as "managers of the learning process." This is a way of dealing with the increasing complexity and quantity of information in today's world. The idea is to teach children how to learn on their own by navigating and interpreting sources of information, with the teacher as a resource. Such stu-

dents will be capable of participating in team-based decision-making as adults.

"Every person builds their own knowledge," continues McGinn. "Knowledge is interpreted fact, and the process of learning is a process of construction." He goes on to say that the school environment should be a place to test out students' understandings. "Teachers need to be experts in the construction process."



Noel McGinn: education and democracy

#### RECENT WORK, FUTURE PLANS

"Good research has an effect, but over a long time and indirectly," says McGinn. Much of his recent work has focused on the possibilities and limitations of applying educational research to policy. As he describes in the book *Informed Dialogue: Using Research to Shape Educational Policy Around the World* (co-written with Fernando Reimers, Praeger, 1997), this can be very difficult. During one experience in Pakistan, McGinn and Reimers presented their research and conclusions to an audience of policy-makers, who then proceeded to draft

almost the opposite conclusions!

As a result, he has engaged in projects which aim to help people help themselves. He co-wrote another book for educational consultants called *Framing Questions, Constructing Answers: Linking Research with Educational Policy for Developing Countries* (co-authored with Allison Borden, Harvard University Press, 1995). "It is a 'random pages' book, meaning that you can open it up to any page and start reading." It strives to get people to frame their own questions and go about answering them.

#### AND THE FUTURE?

"This is my last year of teaching," he says. Lately, he has been spending quite a bit of time traveling with his wife Mary Lou. Together they have visited countries including Panama, Chile, and Argentina.

However, he will continue to be a formidable presence in the field as he explores the links between democracy and education. He is the editor of a forthcoming book appropriately entitled *Education and Democracy*, which tackles such issues as decentralization and governance.

"Education has enormous implications for the democratization of societies," explains McGinn, "because it constantly brings up the question of who's going to exercise power."

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*André Leroux continues a life of learning through his thesis research on Mexican environmental policy. He is the assistant to the director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.*

# Master's Program in International Education Policy

*Spotlight on Equality of Opportunity*

**A** NEW PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL Education Policy hopes to attract Latin Americans, Latinos, and others interested in building a community of learners interested in issues of equality of educational opportunity worldwide.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education's new one-year master's program in International Education Policy focuses on understanding education's role in promoting equal

systems (K-12) around the world.

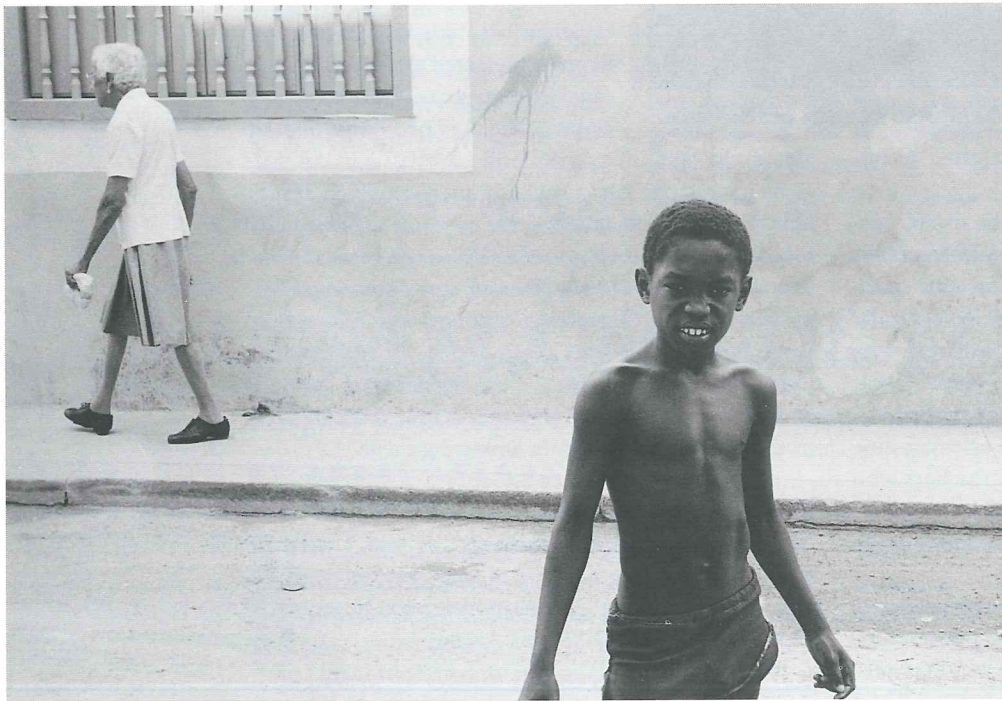
At the end of the 20th century educators everywhere are realizing that globalization has changed the context in which schools try to help students learn. Parents, teachers and education policy makers ask themselves: what kind of knowledge and skills will help our students participate successfully in the new global economy? How well do our schools do, relative to the schools of other countries? How have

Against Discrimination in Education, countries around the world have supported many programs to attempt to overcome the inequitable opportunities facing children from different races, ethnic groups, genders, or religious affiliations.

Students in the program will help each other learn by thinking together about what remains to be done worldwide to make education systems equitable. It is projected that by the year 2010 there will be 152 million children between 6 and 11 years, and 324 million children between the ages of 12-17 years who will not be attending school, according to a UNESCO report. Today girls are less likely to be enrolled in school than boys and women are far less likely to be literate than men. One in four girls and one in six boys in the 6-11 age group are not enrolled in school. Almost two-thirds of the illiterate adults are women.

The program focus on social inequality emerges from HGSE's fundamental commitment to using education's transformative power to improve a world characterized by tremendous inequalities within and across societies. Those who want to help make education systems even more inclusive can learn much by drawing lessons from other contexts. While universal prescriptions for policy reform are hard to find, much can be gained from comparative analysis of the ways in which different societies have gone about trying to achieve their education goals.

The new program, housed in the Department of Administration, Planning and Social Policy, aims to train education policy and evaluation specialists who can initiate and support reform efforts to improve equality of educational opportunity. The program is for those interested in such



CLAUDIA ROMÁN

Havana, Cuba

opportunity and in reducing poverty. This program is for those interested in international education policy, focusing on developing countries, as well as students interested in education policy in the U.S. and other OECD countries who want to study education policy issues comparatively. The goal of the program is to develop the necessary skills to develop and evaluate reforms aimed at improving the quality of education provided to children of all backgrounds in basic education

education planners in nearby and far-away countries gone about solving similar problems?

Much has changed in education systems everywhere since the General Assembly of the United Nations subscribed, in December of 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which declared that every person had a right to free and compulsory elementary education. Since the General Conference of UNESCO approved in 1960 the Convention

careers as educational planning, research, non-governmental organizations in the education sector, technical analysts serving teacher unions, and international development work with agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, and regional development banks.

The program emphasizes the development of analytic skills to enable participants to analyze policy options to improve educational opportunity and draw lessons from comparative cross-national experience with education reform. The coursework concentrates

on the following areas: concepts and theory, evaluation and research design, analysis, planning and implementation.

The program director is Fernando Reimers, Associate Professor of Education and DRCLAS policy committee member.

Applicants to the Master's Program in International Education Policy must follow the regular application requirements of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. A personal statement of purpose, transcripts of past academic work, test scores (GRE, TOEFL, and TWE), and letters of

recommendation must be submitted, along with a completed application form. Applications can be obtained by calling the HGSE admissions office, 495-3414, fax, 496-3577, or e-mail: <gseadmissions@harvard.edu>.

For additional information, contact: Masters Program in International Education Policy, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 4th Floor Gutman Library, 6 Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138, or <http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~apsp\_web/iep.html> or send an e-mail message to <iep@gse.harvard.edu>. —*June Carolyn Erlick*

## LASPAU Expands Fulbright Partnerships

### An Array of Partners

by Ned D. Strong

Since 1975, LASPAU has administered Fulbright Program grants for Latin American and Caribbean faculty members, professionals, and researchers. Fulbright programs have provided academic opportunities for university faculty from 26 countries, environmental scientists from the Amazon region, and Central American undergraduates, among others. These programs would have been severely affected by the federal budget cuts of 1996 had it not been for the efforts of Fulbright commissions, USIA, and LASPAU to attract a number of new financial partners.

The following recent efforts demonstrate the growing array of partners that enhance the Fulbright Program. Each new program provides advanced training in the United States for individuals in specific disciplines or from targeted regions. LASPAU assists with program development and promotion and with grantee selection and helps grantees gain admission to academic programs and successfully complete their courses of study.

■ **EMERGING MARKETS** A new effort of the Colombian Fulbright Commission and the Suramericana Group (a union of 120 industrial and service companies based in Antioquia, Colombia) will assist member companies to be competitive in the global market. Ten professionals from companies in the Suramericana Group will begin studies in business-related fields in September 1999.

■ **ECONOMIC JOURNALISM** Colombian journalists will have increased opportunities for advanced training through the Economic Journalism Program, a joint effort of the Coca-Cola Company and the Colombian Fulbright Commission. Grantees are selected based on their potential to improve and lead economic journalism in Colombia upon completion of their programs of study. The initiative is also expected to develop productive relations between the print media in the United States and Colombia.

■ **INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** The Fulbright Commission in Brazil and the Federação das Indústrias no Estado de Minas Gerais-Instituto Euvaldo Lodi (FIEMG-IEL), an industrial federation in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, have established a program that will enable 20 Brazilian professionals to pursue master's degrees in fields critical to the industrial development of the area. FIEMG-IEL will also provide practical training for grantees who wish to travel from their U.S. institutions to Brazil in order to identify strategic issues in the Minas Gerais industrial sector for their thesis projects.

■ **EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION** Turner Learning, the educational wing of Turner Broadcasting System, recently began a joint venture with the Roberto Marinho Foundation and ten major Brazilian organizations. The project, entitled TV Futura-The Knowledge Channel, will enable the broad dissemination of information and foster new teaching methods and practices such as distance learning. Turner created the Fulbright-Turner Program, which will provide training for Brazilian master's candidates who will later be able to lend their talents to TV Futura. Grantees will study for six months at a U.S. university and train for six months at Turner Learning in Atlanta, Georgia.

■ **ART AND DESIGN** The Fulbright Commission in Mexico has increased the number of grants available for the Fulbright Faculty Development Program through funds from the Programa de Mejoramiento del Profesorado (PROMEP), the faculty development program of the Mexican Secretariat of Education. Up to 15 grants per year will be awarded for master's or doctoral study in the areas of art and design.

LASPAU is a nonprofit organization affiliated with Harvard University and governed by an independent, inter-American board of trustees. For further information, call 617-495-5255 or visit the LASPAU web site at <www.laspau.harvard.edu>.

*Ned D. Strong is the Executive Director of LASPAU.*

# Strengthening Philanthropy in Latin America

**C**ONDITIONS IN LATIN AMERICA, at first glance, present a discouraging picture for those considering how to foster philanthropic giving. In some prominent cases, corruption has given philanthropy a bad name. The media may not be entirely receptive to coverage of the nonprofit or the "third" sector. Legislation may be outdated and cumbersome, hindering rather than helping wealthy individuals who want to give.

At the same time, Latin America has witnessed a massive emergence of civil society and voluntary organizations, many of them over the past decade. This is a sector of great dynamism, energy,

and innovation. These developments have created new opportunities to rethink what philanthropy means in the Latin American context and explore innovative approaches, including partnerships among business, government, and the third sector for addressing important social needs.

More than forty people from the Latin America and the United States participated in a February 12 conference on "Strengthening Philanthropy in Latin America," sponsored jointly by DRCLAS and the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University. The meeting, organized at the suggestion

of the DRCLAS Advisory Committee, drew representatives from the private sector, local and international foundations, nonprofit institutions, and multilateral organizations, as well as Harvard faculty who work on issues of corporate social responsibility, partnerships, and philanthropy.

The Harvard workshop is one of a number of regional conferences that have begun to highlight the Latin American experience in private philanthropy. The conference included testimonies of representatives from foundations, ranging from the Fundación Poma in El Salvador to the Fundación Mario Santo Domin-

go in Colombia. These stories, and the exchange of experiences that followed, demonstrated the extensive learning that has recently taken place.

Participants pointed out that Latin American philanthropy, "solidarity," and charity have a long history, even though they may have been practiced differently and called by different names. There are many success stories from the region, particularly at the local level, and part of the challenge is to identify and disseminate these successes more systematically.

At the conference, DRCLAS Director John Coatsworth outlined the daunting challenges facing Latin American economies and societies. While Latin American countries have undergone dramatic transformations with democratization and policies of privatization and decentralization, an enormous social deficit still plagues much of the region.

Other participants noted the obstacles facing organizations that engage in philanthropy in Latin America today. Periods of crisis impose serious constraints on building sustainable institutions. There is a need for legal and tax frameworks that support philanthropic participation and institutionalization among third sector organizations.

One of the fundamental disincentives to philanthropic giving in Latin America is the mutual distrust among the three sectors: business, government, and civil society. Innovative strategies do exist, however. Ariel Fiszbein of The World Bank described research on partnerships between the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and their contribution to reducing poverty. Jim Austin of the Harvard Business School presented a parallel model of successful partnerships between business and nonprofit organizations in the United States.

Christine Letts of the Kennedy

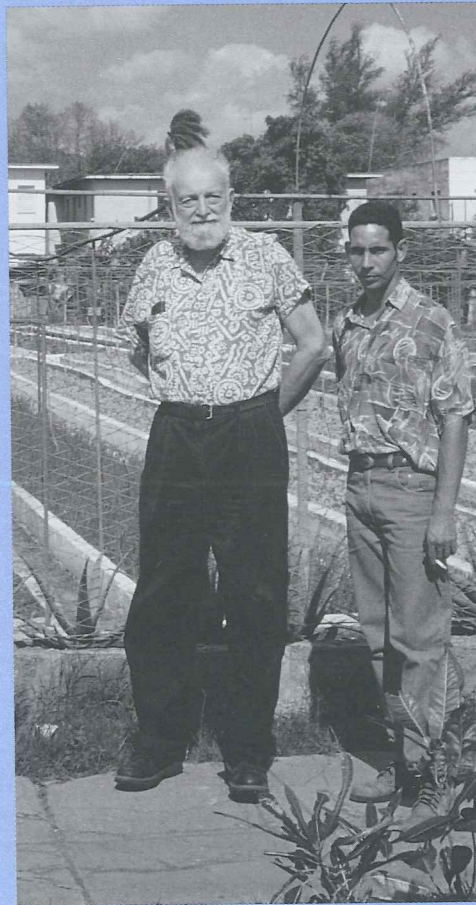
## Richard Levins

### Honorary Degree

**Richard Levins, John Rock Professor of Population Sciences at the Harvard School of Public Health, has been honored by the University of Havana with an honorary doctorate degree. Levins, an internationally recognized U.S. ecologist and bio-mathematician, is considered one of the most prominent authors of mathematical patterns, in biological processes. Levins has worked for 33 years as an advisor to the Cuban government on scientific projects in ecology, agriculture, and public health. He has collaborated extensively with several scientific institutions in Cuba, particularly with research laboratories at the University of Havana. Most recently, he has started a collaborative relationship between the Human Ecology group at the Harvard School of Public Health and Cuban institutions.**

**The University of Havana cited the "originality of Levins' contributions in different areas of the environmental sciences," especially the mathematic modelling of biological processes.**

**For a more complete account of some of Richard Levins' work in Cuba, see the Fall 1998 issue of DRCLAS NEWS.**



School of Government provided a "landscape" of philanthropy in the United States as one point of departure for thinking about philanthropy in Latin America. At the same time, participants recognized the need for sensitivity in Harvard's trying to foster "philanthropy," an inherently American idea, in a region with a very different institutional and cultural setting.

There is general consensus that raising awareness of philanthropy and the third sector is fundamental in overcoming barriers to change. Alicia Cytrynblum recalled the initial confusion that took place in launching the magazine *Tercer Sector*. Today, in contrast, she described how journalists rely on the magazine for their coverage of civil society in Argentina. Jay Winsten, director of the Center for Health Communication at the Harvard School of Public Health, described successful models for enhancing public awareness, in the case of a national mentoring campaign and a campaign against drunk driving widely disseminated in the United States.

The philanthropy workshop demonstrated a tremendous will on the part of those dedicated to making change, even in countries presently under severe economic and financial constraints. Speakers such as Manuel Arango of Mexico, Roberto Cezar de Andrade and Evelyn Ioschpe of Brazil, Ricardo Poma of El Salvador, and Pablo Pulido of Venezuela, among others, all expressed their commitment to creating a new vision for philanthropy and corporate and civic engagement in their countries. Furthermore, it became clear that from the point of view of the private sector, there are enormous business and political benefits attached to involvement in social causes.

The conference ended with some concrete suggestions for action. Practitioners in Latin America whose responsibilities

give them little time to reflect need a setting where they can advance research and thinking on philanthropy and the third sector. There was a nearly unanimous call for further research on tax legislation as it affects nonprofit organizations and giving. Other participants requested Harvard

faculty involved in philanthropy-related initiatives to provide training in nonprofit management.

As Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations Director Mark Moore noted, the workshop involved the crossing of many boundaries, not only institutional, between research centers at

Harvard, but international, between the United States and Latin America. Philanthropy can bring enormous rewards; its development will require building on lessons from the region and a clear understanding of what makes Latin America unique.

—Hilary Burger

## BOOKS

## Latin America and the World Economy

Latin America and the World Economy since 1800, edited by John H. Coatsworth and Alan M. Taylor

Published by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, distributed by Harvard University Press, Harvard University, 1998.

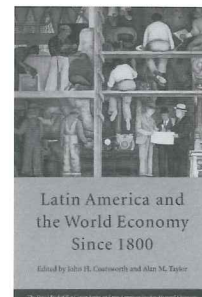
### A REVIEW BY COLIN M. LEWIS

**L**ATIN AMERICA AND THE WORLD *Economy since 1800* edited by John H. Coatsworth and Alan M. Taylor marks a watershed in the research agenda. It is important for several reasons. First, as the editors argue, because it demonstrates that a coming methodology has achieved a critical mass. The new institutionalism, an approach based on neo-classical economic theory and quantitative methods, is here applied systematically to the study of the history of Latin America. Second, because of the level of empirical sophistication—the quality and range of data impresses. Several contributors are to be applauded for combining the best traditions in economic history research—empiricism and a rigorous application of theory. Third, because it focuses on under-researched, domestic dimensions of Latin American growth—for example, the formation of credit and capital markets, wage and price movements, lobby groups and policy evolution, the emergence of modern business and financial enterprises. There are micro (firm-level) studies, sectoral

'performance' analyses, and assessments of long-run growth trajectories.

The book opens with a set of comparative essays that chart divergences within Latin America against external comparators.

Contributors speculate about why the continent "fell behind" and whether Latin America (or some countries) are "catching up" with other players in the global economy, including the vaunted "tiger" economies of Asia whose image is now somewhat tarnished. Coatsworth compiles a set of intra-Americas benchmark indicators covering the 1700-1994 period. Alston, Libecap, and Mueller contrast the securing of property rights on the frontier in the U.S.A. and Brazil. Hofman and Mulder look at growth and productivity in the twentieth century, marking the performance of Latin American countries against that of OECD economies: they devote particular attention to sector-level changes in Brazil



and Mexico. Part II seeks to fill a major lacuna in the literature by considering the relationship between investment and growth. An understanding of the process of capital accumulation and

allocation is fundamental as is an awareness of the role of financial intermediaries, actors, and institutions. These chapters provide new data on the functioning of the São Paulo stock market around the turn of the century (Hanley), the Argentine banking system during the inter-war period (della Paolera and Taylor) and patterns of foreign investment during the twentieth century (Twomey). Part III examines the formation of markets—regional, national and international, exploring the extent to which price convergence occurred across time and space. This is a difficult task, given that the history of prices is itself under-studied. Writing on the Argentine in the early nineteenth century, New-

land uses demographic data as a proxy to assess 'national convergence'. Triner is concerned with money market integration and, using interest rate approximations, finds that institutional changes facilitated concentration (in São Paulo) rather than seamless homogenization. Employing stock return data for the early part of the twentieth century, Nakamura and Zarazaga confirm the level of integration of Argentinian and international financial markets.

While there is a focus on the institutional throughout, chapters in Part IV explicitly employ quantitative tests to appraise the impact of specific institutional settings on productivity and welfare: namely, government regulation and financial market efficiency (in terms of providing finance for industry) in Brazil from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century (Haber); pragmatic interventionism and the performance of the sugar sector in Cuba around the turn of the century (Dye); the impact of the Mexican Revolution on worker and peasant standards of living (Gomez-Galvarriato).

The final section, Part V, assesses the efficacy of government policy in three crucial areas - 'managing' foreign capital flows, tariff strategy, and money supply: Summerhill considers how a regime of state-guaranteed profits shaped investment in railways in imperial Brazil (i.e. before 1889); Marquez measures Mexican tariff rates for the period 1892-1909, exploring the extent to which tariff policy driven by a fiscal imperative served to protect and promote domestic manufacturing; Díaz Fuentes charts changes in monetary policy in the three largest Latin American economies during the 1920s and 1930s, emphasising the orthodoxy of the 1920s, when countries struggled to re-establish the gold standard (thought not necessarily pre-war parities), and the limits to monetary heterodoxy in the 1930s.

*Latin America and the World Economy* makes a significant contribution to the literature. It demonstrates how, with a shared methodological approach, analytical coherence can be imposed on a collection of chapters covering diverse periods, distinct national and sub-national themes and analyses that range from the case-study specific to the globally comparative. Several contributions are highly original, offering new evidence: others present stimulating results from on-going research: most are revisionist, challenging

existing orthodoxies. An enduring legacy of the collection will be that it confirms the value of systematic archival work. Notwithstanding obvious problems of organization and, indeed, access confronting scholars seeking primary documents, this book suggests that rich resources remain to be explored in Latin America and that existing data sets might be reworked to good effect. Diligence and imagination, coupled with a clearly defined research agenda can yield studies of quality. Another virtue is the combination of

chapters by established scholars and relatively junior academics about to embark on their careers. This is refreshing. Finally, the editors are to be commended for tolerating (possibly encouraging) disagreement. On a number of key issues, contributions diverge over points of detail and explanation.

*Colin M. Lewis, Associate Professor of Latin American Economic History, London School of Economics & Political Science, is an Associate Fellow Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London.*

## Pan-Maya Activism in Guatemala

Indigenous Movements and their Critics: Pan-Maya Activism in Guatemala,

by Kay B. Warren, Princeton University Press, 1998

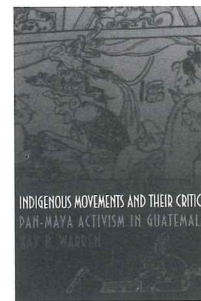
A REVIEW BY ALBERTO M. FERNÁNDEZ

I ARRIVED IN GUATEMALA FOR the first time in 1996 to administer the cultural, informational and educational exchange programs of the U.S. Embassy. This must have been around the same time that Kay Warren was putting the final touches on her book. Like many others, I was immediately struck by how much of the dynamism and creativity in Guatemala today resides in the burgeoning indigenous rights movement often called the "Mayan Movement" or "Pan-Mayanism". Although no stranger to the region nor to questions of ethnicity and cultural identity, my own journey towards understanding this phenomenon was immeasurably enriched by experts like Kay Warren, scholars who combined an empathy for Guatemala's native peoples with extended field work and research going back decades in the country's turbulent and bloody recent history.

Inspired by the grassroots resurgence of Mayan people, we have used Embassy programs, in a very modest way, to contribute to the intellectual development of a wide range of Mayan organizations

and individuals, many of them vividly described in Dr. Warren's book. I am particularly proud that there are more Guatemala Mayan students on U.S. government scholarships, both in Guatemala and in the United States, right now than ever before.

Warren accomplishes the near impossible in her essential new book. She gives us a rich tapestry, a snapshot of a people on the move, with all their diversity and contradictions. She provides an excellent introduction to one of the more interesting and significant developments in Latin America



today: the revival of a marginalized ethnic majority in post-war Guatemala. Warren's stated goal is to look at ways that "Maya public intellectuals, as cultural nationalists and agents of globalization, have pursued

projects for self-determination in Guatemala's climate of chronic political uncertainty."

The book's nine chapters examine different aspects of the Mayan movement, from the writings of several of its leading intellectuals to the reaction of its non-Indian critics to grassroots activism on the village level. Warren ably traces the "invisible thread of ethnicity" as the movement unfolds within the context of an only recently democratic Guatemala formally at peace since December 1996.

However, there are the various blank spaces left uncharted in her

overview of this Mayan resurgence, plus a few factual errors such as making Luis Enrique Sam Colop a graduate of USAC rather than Rafael Landivar University. Warren devotes three entire chapters (4, 8, and 9) to happenings in the small town of San Andres Semetabaj while the surprising outcome of the 1995 national elections, surely fertile ground for any scholar of the Mayans, is left untouched. Those elections showed the remarkable strength of the right-wing FRG in indigenous-majority departments. Even more significant was the victory of several Mayan civic committees in local races. The victory of the Xelju civic committee, under the leadership of Kiche'e "public intellectuals" Rigoberto Queme Chay and Ricardo Cajas, in Guatemala's second city, Quetzaltenango, the metropolis of the country's indigenous heartland, was so important because it symbolized precisely the metamorphosis of an indigenous civic-cultural organization into a political machine. Significantly, the 1999 Quetzaltenango Mayor's annual report deals with both traditional indigenous issues such as bilingual education and the Mayan university project and more mundane matters of local governance such as paving streets and supplying water to the city. Warren touches briefly upon the 1996 racist anti-Queme graffiti campaign while neglecting the much more important reality of these Mayan public intellectuals in power.

Several other striking events occurred after the book was completed. The success of the Kaqchikel municipal government of Solola, also headed by a civic committee, in running the Guatemalan Army out of town shows how fast Guatemala is changing and was also an important milestone unnoticed by the outside world. The 1997 decision of the Guatemalan Army to convert its notorious former base into a military high school (an Adolfo V. Hall Institute) was total-

ly rejected by the town's inhabitants who succeeded in winning over the central government. The site will become a university extension center, the first in Solola. The book has a photograph of those infamous giant army boots outside the base. Both boots and base are gone.

Finally, in a work whose stated focus is on Mayan intellectuals in the public arena, Warren is very subjective in her treatment of these individuals. The brilliant, U.S.-based, Victor Montejo is not well known at all in Guatemala, even in many Pan-Mayan circles. Warren's analysis of Sam Colop's thinking seems skewed towards earlier writings. The journalist of Achi origin, Haroldo Shetemul, who became the first Mayan director of a major Guatemalan

media organ, should be included. The prolific Estuardo Zapeta (like Montejo, a student of Robert Carmack's at SUNY-Albany) is undeservedly ignored. Zapeta was the first self-identified indigenous columnist for a daily newspaper in Guatemala at the age of 28. With his acerbic pen and neo-liberal views, Zapeta is a polarizing figure both within and without the Mayan movement, there is no doubt he plays an extremely prominent role in public discourse on Mayan issues.

Despite these criticisms, Warren's study is a qualitative leap in the right direction. Particularly insightful is her treatment of the often thorny relationship between Mayan intellectuals and foreign anthropologists. Guatemala is changing so rapidly

(mostly for the better) these days that any book on it published these days seems condemned to a perilously rapid obsolescence and I can only hope that Kay Warren is already hard at work on a sequel to this interesting book. This is an important work for American readers; it shows us a region that is much more complex and diverse than the prophets of regional integration would have us believe. As Warren so rightly notes, "the movement has already contributed to a paradigmatic shift" in all our thinking. One thing is clear, that the more democratic Guatemala becomes, the more "Mayan" her future will be.

*Alberto M. Fernández is USIS Director at the American Embassy in Guatemala City.*

### Editor's Notes Booknotes

**On March 10, 1999, President Clinton apologized to the people of Guatemala for the support provided by the U.S. government to that country's repressive military-backed governments between 1954 and the 1980s. His apology came days after the UN's Guatemalan Truth Commission denounced as "genocide" the massacres, extra-judicial executions, and other abuses carried out by the Guatemalan military and cited U.S. involvement.**

**Alberto Fernández, a longtime and astute observer of foreign affairs in both Central America and the Middle East, points out in his review of Kay Warren's recently published *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics: Pan-Mayan Activism in Guatemala*, history does not sit still.**

**The challenge for Warren was to represent an ongoing movement in a static printed form. Warren confronts that challenge by adopting an experimental genre in anthropology, one that not only provides an historical account of the Pan-Mayan movement, but also gives the reader intimate vignettes, much in the way a film would do. The book looks at social movements, analyzes the issue of ethnic and cultural revitalization, and exam-**

**ines how social critique is produced and how cultures appropriate knowledge. It also tells the story of an emerging parallel middle class, a middle class that somehow feels alienated from its own class position, and yet is becoming part of a vibrant intellectual scene both in Guatemala and internationally.**

**Warren illustrates the interplay between local, state, national, and transnational facets of indigenous movements, as well as the interplay between anthropology and politics.**

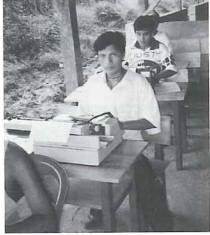


Also reviewed on these pages is *Latin America and the World Economy Since 1800*, edited by John Coatsworth and Alan Taylor, the second in a series of books published by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and distributed by Harvard University Press.

The Center is pleased to announce the release of two more books in May: *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda*, edited by Victor Bulmer-Thomas and James Dunkerley (co-published with the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London) and a new Harvard edition of *Bitter Fruit, the story of the American coup in Guatemala*, by Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer.

—June Carolyn Erlick

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Harvard University  
 David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies  
 61 Kirkland Street  
 Cambridge, MA 02138