

FINAL REPORT AND SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

UNDER CONTRACT NUMBER AID/LAC/C-1310

I. INTRODUCTION

During the first three months of 1979, the Contractor traveled the full length of the United States-Mexican Border for the purpose of identifying and establishing contact with selected community and women's organizations, local and international resource groups actively engaged in providing socio-economic development programs for the poor, women, and children on either or both sides of the Border. These organizations and contacts are included in the roster compiled by the Contractor that is appended to this report.

In addition, the Contractor was to provide an assessment of existing Border programs in terms of the extent to which women are involved in their planning and implementation, the degree of their effectiveness in improving the situations of intended beneficiaries, especially with respect to the impact upon women's employment, incomes, education, health, housing, and access to public and private, legal and social services.

The Contractor was also responsible for exploring and making recommendations on possibilities for new or expanded programs in the Border region that could benefit the most from binational cooperation .

In keeping with our Scope of Work, and with the Agency's program focus on development, on human rights and on women, we restricted our listings of local Border organizations and resources to those who have significantly contributed to the social, educational and economic development of the area and who have also emphasized women's needs and women's participation in their total effort. There are presently no binational ongoing field projects serving the specific needs of poor women and their families and, hence, the inventory lists none.

Since there is no bilateral assistance program between Mexico and the United States, the Contractor had to rely on information provided by Mexican and United States government agencies, private foundations and international financial institutions who have activities in Mexico, in order to identify any ongoing field programs serving the target Border constituencies.

As part of our methodology, our first task was to define the geographic boundaries of the Border area to be surveyed. The ten Border states (six in Mexico and four in the United States) were included in the overall analysis but special emphasis was given to the counties and municipalities that: a) were immediately adjacent to the Border, b) have experienced the greatest population growth, and c) are bound together by economic interests. Although not all of them were personally visited by the Contractor, we were nevertheless aware of their presence and influence in the regional picture and they are included in the Statistical Data and Tables appended to this report. For pragmatic reasons, however, only the Border sites visited as per the contractual agreement are included in the detailed analysis.

Other information and data included in this report came from a variety of sources which included papers presented at three different national and international U.S.-Mexican Border symposia held during the Summer and Winter of 1978; selected contacts with scholars in the field doing research in the area of migration that specifically focused on the poverty-stricken and marginal groups that have congregated on both sides of the Border; documentation from studies on Women in Development, Women and Migration, Women Heads-of-Households, and Women in Rural Development, and some selected articles on the impact of urbanization, modernization, industrialization, and uneven development were also reviewed.

Organizations contacted were asked to respond to a basic set of questions

that identified for the Contractor, with varying degrees of success, the nature of the services provided, criteria for eligibility, fees for services, sources of financial support, and their geographical scope.

The broadness of the subject at hand and the fact that the whole U.S.-Mexico Border was to be covered in our survey under strict time limitations forced us to reduce our universe to programs in communities immediately adjacent to the international line and to be general in our descriptions and recommendations. The report consists of the following eight parts:

- I. Introduction
- II. Border Profile
- III. Border Development - Contrasting U.S. and Mexican Views
- IV. Border Programs in Existence Relevant to our Survey
- V. Specific Problem Areas found in our Survey
- VI. Conclusions
- VII. Recommendations
- VIII. Appendices

## II. BORDER PROFILE

### A. General (\*)

More than 3,100 kilometers of Border are shared by the United States and Mexico. The Border is formed by the six states on the Mexican side (North Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas) and four on the United States side (California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.) Thirty-six Mexican municipalities are contiguous with 23 U.S. counties, (See Map and Table 1.)

The Border region consists of arid sandy plains which vary in altitude from 34 meters below sea level in some parts of Baja California to 1,200 meters above sea level in Agua Prieta, Sonora and Douglas, Arizona. The climate is generally hot and dry, with seasonal variations in temperature which range from 0 degrees C in Winter to 45 degrees C in Summer. Average annual precipitation is less than 500 mm. In the Colorado River basin it is less than 50 mm. The rainy season in the inland areas extends from June to October. Along the Pacific Coast, the rain falls during the Winter months. During August and September, rain is abundant in the eastern part of the Border area and people living in the State of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and Texas are sometimes affected by hurricanes.

### B. Cultural Factors

The cultural patterns of the U.S. and Mexican Border states are profoundly influenced by the social and demographic conditions which are peculiar to the area. Border stations along the U.S.-Mexican line record about 82 million crossings every year. This heavy flow of traffic includes tourists and residents of both countries who cross the Border for work, recreation, or to visit family members who live on the other side. While there are many Mexican citizens who maintain a permanent

(\*) The Contractor wishes to acknowledge the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association for materials included in this section.

residence on the United States side of the Border, there are few citizens of the U.S. who reside in this part of Mexico. There are, however, thousands of U.S. citizens who spend hours or weekends in Mexico as tourists.

One result of this constant migration between Mexico and the United States is that all of the communities along the Border show the influence of both countries and both cultures. Clothes and other consumer goods produced in the United States are popular in Mexico. The Mexican population watches U.S. television programs and listens to U.S. radio stations. Eating habits, architecture, and music on the U.S. side of the Border show the influence of Mexico. These reciprocal influences are widely recognized. Economists can demonstrate the economic interdependency of the Border communities. Health planners must also recognize the importance of this intense interaction and develop health programs which promote the positive aspects of the bond between Mexico and the United States.

### C. Demographic Factors

According to the latest available data, the population of the Border area was 3.3 million on the U.S. side in 1975 and 3.2 million on the Mexican side in 1978. Population growth has been rapid on both sides of the Border. Between 1970 and 1978, the Mexican municipalities adjacent to the Border experienced growth rates ranging from 27.2% and 99.5%. The growth rates of the U.S. counties adjacent to the Border ranged from 8.8% to 23.5% during the 1970-75 period. (See Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5).

The U.S. Census Bureau's population projections for the four Border states indicate continued growth through the year 2000 at rates well above the national average. Under the assumption that the 1965-75 migration trend continues, the following projections were made:

State	1975 Pop. (mil)	2000 Pop. (mil)	25 years Change
Arizona	2.2	3.45	+ 56%
California	21.2	28.1	32
New Mexico	1.1	1.4	23
Texas	12.2	16.65	36

Population projections are not available for the Mexican Border states; however, the population of these states can be expected to double in twenty years if their growth rates are equal to the rate of natural increase for the entire country. In fact, the Border population more than doubled between 1950 and 1960, and increased by 78% between 1960 and 1970. Although the trend seems to be in the direction of smaller increases, a doubling of the population in twenty years is a conservative estimate in view of the rapid growth of the past two decades.

Migration and natural increase probably contribute in equal amounts to the high growth rate of the Border area. The birth rates in Mexico range from 38.1 to 49.2 for the Border states. In 11 of the 23 U.S. Border counties, the birth rate was over 20 and in one Texas County, it was 33.5 in 1976. (The average for the U.S. was 15.3 in 1977). The higher birth rate and lower life expectancy in Mexico (65 vs. 72 years in the U.S.) suggest a slightly different age structure in Mexico.

The majority of the population on both sides of the Border live in urban areas. In Mexico, 94% of the Border population reside in urban areas of 2,500 or more. Approximately 89.7% of the population reside in only 12 municipalities.

In rural areas, population groups are often separated by considerable distances. Many of the smaller municipalities are isolated in mountainous or desert areas. Both distance and isolation impose major barriers to the provision of health and social services and accessibility to them.

While the problems of accessibility and provision of services would appear to be easier to solve in urban areas, lack of transportation, limited financial resources, and social distance may make urban health services equally inaccessible to some population subgroups.

The rapid increase in the population on both sides of the Border has seriously hampered all planning efforts. Marginal settlements have mushroomed on the outskirts of Mexican Border towns. These areas are often without municipal services of any kind. The lack of water and sewerage systems, refuse collection services, and basic health services pose serious problems for the community. The low income areas of towns along the Border on the U.S. side are seriously over-crowded. Undocumented immigrants frequently find refuge in these areas. Health problems are often ignored until they become so serious that emergency treatment is required. Health statistics from both sides of the Border indicate that many people use hospital emergency health rooms for basic health services, an access increasingly being denied to Mexican-American poor citizens and to all persons suspected of being undocumented, in violation of their human and civil rights and to the detriment of U.S.-Mexico relations.

Accidents were among the leading causes of death for all age groups in the Border counties of Mexico and the United States in 1974. Traffic congestion in the Border area is often aggravated by the lack of uniform road signs and ignorance of local traffic laws by visitors from the other side, not to mention the monolingual character of the people and the signs.

Teenage pregnancies appear to be increasing in the Border areas. This probably reflects changing patterns of teenage sexual behavior and indicates the need for changes in the design and delivery of family planning services. In the Arizona Border counties, almost 18% of births were

registered to women less than 18 years of age. In California, 15% of births in San Diego County and 19.5% of births in Imperial County were to women of that age group. In New Mexico, 21% of births were to teenage mothers. Equivalent statistics were not available for the Mexican Border municipalities. Access to sex education, maternal-child health, and family planning services is limited, particularly for low-income women. A survey in the Texas Border counties in 1971 revealed that about 15% of women had no prenatal care, and an additional 10% had care only during the third trimester.

The collection and analysis of Border area vital and health statistics are seriously hampered by the mobility of the population, the absence of uniform reporting systems among the states and on the two sides of the Border, and the fragmentation of data gathering and processing efforts according to geopolitical areas.

Some information, (primarily concerning communicable diseases) is exchanged by direct contact among Border health personnel and through the PAHO field office. However, the complexity and multiplicity of health systems, particularly in the United States, the language differences, and the difficulty of comprehending the other country's data systems discourage cooperative efforts of area health officials.

#### D. Environmental and Health Factors

There are community waste water problems in some regions of the Border, where communities discharge raw effluents directly into the rivers. These problems, which are increasing, are serious as health problems because downstream areas utilize the water for human consumption and recreation.

An agreement between the State of California and Baja California allows San Diego to treat a portion of Tijuana sewage on an emergency basis.

However, because of limited capacity and the increasing load from Tijuana, a further cooperative effort in the treatment of municipal waste waters will have to be developed.

In both countries, the disposal of solid wastes is achieved by land fill, incineration or some other sanitary method. In Mexico, the percent of the population which does not have access to solid waste collection systems ranges from 20.9% to 49.8% among the urban Border populations. (See Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8). There are some air pollution problems associated with improper operation of dumps along the Border which have to be addressed.

With regard to atmospheric pollution, there are both stationary and mobile sources of pollution that create health problems on both sides of the Border. The State of California has very strict standards for the emission of vehicular gasses. The other three states of the Border area also have standards for vehicle emissions, but their regulations are less strict.

The U.S. has adequate federal legislation to maintain good environmental health standards. However, because insufficient resources are devoted to inspection and enforcement, violations of standards occur.

There is a signed agreement between the United States and Mexico which gives the responsibility for Border water problems to the International Boundary and Water Commission which has been operating for many years in El Paso, Texas. Both governments have recently signed an agreement between the Sub-Secretaria del Mejoramiento del Ambiente de Mexico and the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States for Border area cooperation in environmental programs. As part of this agreement, an inventory of environmental problem areas will be made.

### E. Economic Factors

Per capita GNP was estimated at \$7,890. in the U.S. in 1978 versus \$1,090. in Mexico in the same year. This relative difference in wealth is less pronounced in the Border area, for the U.S. Border area includes some of the poorest counties in the country, while the Mexican Border area is among the more prosperous regions of that country. Nevertheless, the contrast between the countries is striking, and provides sufficient incentive for thousands of Mexicans to cross the Border to the U.S. every year in search of the higher wages paid there. This ready source of cheap labor has attracted entrepreneurs to the U.S. Border states for almost a century. The many problems involved in the exploitation of the Mexican labor force and the illegal Border traffic have been a source of friction between the two countries for many years. Various agreements have been developed which attempt to regulate the enormous exchange of population across this Border. These have met with varying degrees of success. Although the disparity in income levels may be reduced in the future, the reduction will be a gradual one. The conditions generated by this disparity can be expected to continue for many years.

Income levels and educational status can often be positively correlated. The Border areas of Mexico demonstrate higher levels of educational attainment than the nation as a whole, while the U.S. Border areas are below the national average. Inevitably, as long as the Mexican Border maintains an image of relative prosperity in comparison with the rest of the country, the migratory tide is bound to continue.

### III. BORDER DEVELOPMENT - CONTRASTING U.S. AND MEXICAN VIEWS

Binational Border development has been intimately connected to the appearance of the twin plant program. The number of U.S. assembly plants in Mexico, most of them located in the Mexican Border cities, is today the subject of renewed discussion and "likely to double in number in the next ~~two~~ years," according to Professor Donald W. Bærresen, Director of Laredo State University's Institute for International Trade.

The U.S. businessmen's surging interest in the twin plants to "rapidly rising manufacturing costs in, and transportation costs to, other countries, and the proximity of Mexico as a supplier of low-cost and dexterous labor to company headquarters, sources of supply and markets in the United States" make them most desirable.

Some of the objections to the twin plants are that: a) the plants contribute to the overcrowding of Mexican Border cities and to their unemployment problem, helping to swell the flood of illegal aliens into the United States, b) the plants hire mostly women, while their fathers and brothers are out of work, and c) the plants have imported most of the raw materials and basic supplies from the United States instead of Mexico.

What follows is a socio-economic political analysis of Border development that contrasts the prevalent U.S. view vis-a-vis the emerging Mexican one.

#### A. Contrasting Views of Border Development - The Prevailing U.S. Business View

In 1965, the United States, under pressure from labor unions, terminated the Bracero Program. This program had set forth conditions by which Mexicans could legally enter the U.S. as seasonal agricultural workers. When this program was terminated, the generally high unemployment levels in the Mexican Border cities went even higher. Mexican officials began to seek new ways to

reduce this increased unemployment. (\*)

Following the lead of many other foreign nations (most notably Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea), Mexico took measures to attract industry specializing in assembling and processing U.S. products for U.S. markets. The Mexican Border Industrialization Program began in Mexico in 1965.

The Border Program for the first time allowed non-Mexicans, as well as Mexicans, to own and operate factories in Mexico. It originally allowed the duty-free importation of manufacturing and assembly equipment and materials into Mexico if the resulting products were exported from Mexico. However, some products assembled under the program may now be sold in domestic Mexican markets as well. As was hoped when the Border Program was initiated, the amount of U.S. products manufactured in Mexico for the U.S. market increased rapidly. In 1966, Mexico provided 0.7% of total U.S. importation of American products assembled and processed abroad. In just three years, Mexico's share rose to 8.0%.

In October, 1972, the Border Program was expanded to allow companies to locate factories anywhere in Mexico except in the heavily industrialized zones of Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara. Therefore, it is no longer called the Border Program, but the Mexican Industrialization Program. Still, most factories under this program are located in the thirteen cities and towns spread along the U.S.-Mexican Border. The Map in Figure 3.1 illustrates that across the Border from almost every sizeable Mexican community is an adjoining U.S. community. In many of the areas, the Industrialization Program has provided benefits to the U.S. city as well as to the Mexican city. This phenomenon has been the basis for what is called the twin-plant concept.

In addition to the increased purchases of U.S. goods and services by

(\*) In presenting this view, the Contractor has relied heavily on the Shipman Study listed in the References appended to this report.

Mexican citizens, the twin-plant concept has also attracted many new companies to U.S. Border communities. The Mexican factory, utilizing low-wage workers, performs the labor-intensive portions of the operation, and the factory on the U.S. side carries out those tasks which are more capital-intensive or less advantageous to do in Mexico because of specific tariff restrictions. Another key advantage to the twin-plant concept is the utilization of one manager and staff to direct operations at both factories.

While some factories have been set up to take advantage of the twin-plant concept, this has been the exception and not the rule. At present, the Industrialization Program is less than ten years old and many companies are still evaluating the program. In general, participating firms have taken the more conservative approach of locating plants in the Mexican cities that were near existing U.S. plants. Thus, Los Angeles and Phoenix, though located some distance from the Border, serve as sites for many second plants in this country. Of all the Border areas, probably El Paso-Ciudad Juarez comes closest to fitting the twin-plant concept as originally envisioned. In most other areas, the plant on the United States side of the Border is more typically engaged in warehousing rather than manufacturing.

At present, the future of this program looks bright. Although the U.S. government maintains a position of neutrality on the program, the Department of Commerce appears to be very much interested in its progress. Program opposition has come primarily from U.S. organized labor on the grounds that American jobs are being exported. A U.S. Tariff Commission study does not support labor's view. Most firms surveyed by the Tariff Commission study replied that their main reason for locating labor-intensive processing outside the U.S. was the inability to compete with imported finished goods. The potential tariff savings are only a marginal incentive in most cases. It can also be argued that it is better to have one U.S. job created

for every six Mexican jobs than to have the entire product produced in the Far East. Thus, the program seems secure, at least for the foreseeable future.

#### B. Border Development - A Mexican View

For Mexico, 1964 marks the end of the Programa de Braceros and the initiation of the Northern Border Industrialization Program. This is the start of the twin-plant program that has continued until today but whose antecedents go back to the 1940's when the Bracero Program was instituted by the U.S. and Mexican governments allowing the temporary entry of Mexican workers into the U.S. to fill the enormous demand for labor during the IIW.W. years.

Between 1942-50, it is estimated that four hundred and thirty thousand workers entered the U.S. through Hermosillo, Chihuahua and Monterrey, the three main recruiting centers. For each worker that was hired in Mexico, twelve were rejected, many of them hoping for an opportunity to enter the U.S. legally or illegally; they remained in the Border cities. In 1941, 6,082 were deported, and in 1954, that figure went over a million. This deportation figure gives an idea of the number of illegal workers that entered the U.S., even while the Bracero Program was on. After the termination of the Bracero Program, the U.S. would no longer import workers, but export its industries according to the North-American Congress for Latin-America s study, "Las Maquiladoras en Mexico."

In the U.S., the rise in salaries had reduced the competitiveness of American goods in world markets, particularly in those ~~items~~ where the process of production required a large use of hand labor. Europe and particularly Japan were highly competitive as they were able to keep a high level of profit without raising prices. In order to keep production costs low, a labor force cheaper than the American one was the answer; such a force was readily available

in the Mexican Border. Massive unemployment had occurred in Mexico's Border cities upon termination of the Bracero Program. The problem was further aggravated by the fact of the concentration of land ownership, and of the means of production added to the introduction of new techniques in the agricultural sector of the northern Mexican provinces, which increased rural unemployment and displaced agricultural workers who organized land invasions and showed an alarming militancy. This focus of tension was close to the Border area so that any industrial development that could help diminish the growing unemployment there and raise the expectations for salaried employment for the dislocated peasants would be the solution.

The utilization of the labor force congregated at the Mexican Border also meant for the U.S. government the possibility of building a natural dike to curtail the massive entry of undocumented workers which was beginning to emerge as a sensitive national political problem.

Thus, the twin-plant program, according to Mexican economists Juarez and Villarespe, represents the increased economic annexation of Mexico by the multi-national corporations and responds to the recomposition on a world-wide scale of the industrial army of reserve. The operation of the multi-national corporations in the industrial sector meant its development into a global perspective and strategy at a world-wide level for the purpose of increasing their markets and profits without any regard for the economic and political priorities of Mexico's social development. Such an operation is sustained by highly sophisticated technology linked to production, which imply that the industrial development is conditioned by the technological monopoly vested in the multi-national corporations, which in turn translates for Latin-American countries into a technological dependency vis-a-vis the same multi-national corporation.

The results of this dependency are: a) an acceleration of the process of concentration-centralization of capital which gives rise to the establishment of a premature oligopolic market, and also exacerbates income differentials in dependent countries. This process also affects the industrial installations which are totally imported and, b) a structural unemployment appears as a permanent feature which is sometimes called "technological unemployment". Only those technicians trained in corporate headquarters are capable of keeping installations running smoothly and of repairing them when the need arises.

Thus, the utilization of those technologies in the process of production that do not correspond to the country's functional proportions generates little employment and much marginality. The industrial structure of Mexico, intimately dependent to that of the U.S., underlines the character of Mexico's economic growth after the II W.W.; it is based on an accumulation of capital that is dependent, pre-monopolist, and socially excluding.

The high profits of multi-national corporations must have in every instance the existence of a large pool of cheap labor which is the labor sought by the maquila (assembly plant). Its essential characteristic is to constitute but one face of the process of production aggregated to an individual capital that takes place in a national location (Mexico) totally disconnected from the location where the original production cycle takes place (the U.S.), and where the real profits return.

The integration of the systems of production by way of the multi-national corporations has resulted in a tremendous increase in the labor force which constitutes an industrial army of reserve at their disposal. In the recomposition in a world-wide scale of such an army at the command of the multi-national capital reside the structural tendencies towards open unemployment and underemployment, a chronic condition in the Border areas for the Mexican and Mexican-American populations.

Juarez and Villarespe conclude that the Border Industrialization Program mirrors the industrial structure of Mexico, intimately dependent to that of the U.S., a structure that clearly underlines the character of Mexico's economic growth after W.W. II; is based on accumulation of capital that is dependent, pre-monopolist and socially excluding, with all the inherent negative consequences for the country's economic, political and social order, and directly affecting the economic rights and lives of Mexican citizens living in the U.S.-Mexico Border region.

#### IV. BORDER PROGRAMS IN EXISTANCE RELEVANT TO OUR SURVEY

##### A. U. S. Government Agencies

At the Federal level, there is no interagency coordination of program activities serving the poor, women, new immigrants and families. There are individual agency programs that deliver services to the poor, the unemployed and underemployed Border populations and to their families. Federal agencies with programs that address primarily our survey target populations are the Immigration and Naturalization Services (through its Out-Reach Program), the Community Services Administration, and the Department of Commerce's Southwest Regional Border Commission. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Commerce have programs and offices in the Border region whose activities impact on the target populations of our survey, but are not specifically designed to serve them.

The IWY's 1975 Mexico City Conference, the National Women's Conference held in Houston in 1977, and the efforts of thousands of women and men around the world have made the issue of Women in Development an important concern in the thinking of some academic and development practitioners in many nations. International and national private foundations have been slow and cautious in making women's projects a priority and, therefore, their funding policies reflect that view. The bulk of money awarded by them has gone into family-planning and fertility research, with only a trickle of funds ear-marked for researching and documenting the status of women and almost no funds for action-oriented programs that enhance the participation of women in development.

**B. U.S. Private Sector: Foundations and Service Clubs**

For the United States, it is also a well-established fact that private foundations have not been especially sensitive to women's needs as evidenced by the fact that precious little money has gone to fund projects that specifically designate them as beneficiaries. Nowhere is this disparity seen more painfully than in the funds awarded our own youth which, according to a recent study conducted by the Girl's Club of America, Inc., since 1970, foundation grants for programs for American girls totaled 5 million, while funds for programs for American boys exceeded 22 million. This obviously sizeable difference reflects the established sexist priorities and funding policies that still prevail and that have significant implications and impact on the amount and quality of services provided for girls and boys. The same priorities and funding policies extend to programs for women.

As stated earlier, there are no binational on-going field projects specifically designed for Border area women. To date, there is only one private organization that has a comprehensive binational U.S.-Mexican Border program, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC); and only one U.S. foundation created and financed by Congress, the Inter-American Development Foundation (IAD), that has given funds for a Mexican Border project that is also the only women-specific project receiving monies, the Centro de Orientacion de la Mujer Obrera de Ciudad Juarez.

The traditional social service clubs, e.g., Kiwanis, Rotaries, Lions, etc., have women auxiliaries who help carry out the charitable and service programs selected by their respective organizations and often involve members from both sides of the Border, but none target Border area women specifically.

The Chambers of Commerce on the Mexican and on the American side frequently interact and work to further the specific interests of their members and cooperate in "fact-finding" studies that impact on the business communities that are not always unbiased.

C. Financial Institutions

Financial institutions, e.g., the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc., do not have a special bilateral and/or binational Border funding effort. They operate through a centralized investment program for rural development such as Proyecto de Inversion y Desarrollo en la Esfera Rural, (PIDER).

D. Mexican Governmental Agencies

The initial Border Development Industrial Program has undergone major changes under the administrative organization of the Mexican Federal program. On December 1st, 1976, President Lopez-Portillo issued an Executive Order proclaiming the reorganizational changes. The new legislation contains important readjustments in the public administration that have wide-spread economic implications. The Executive Order created a new agency, the equivalent of our Office of Management and Budget, known as La Secretaria de Programacion y Presupuesto. It is this agency that is charged with the responsibility for the elaboration of national and regional plans for economic and social development, budget allocations, financing, and the evaluating of such plans. Therefore, the priorities for financing and investing, the nature and location of programs, and the allocation of resources are the exclusive domain of this agency.

The U.S.-Mexican Border is the subject of intense scrutiny and research as evidenced by the convocation of a national symposium on Border

studies which assembled top level Mexican officials and academicians in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, in January of 1979.

E. Description of Programs in Mexico

The Integral Development Family National System was created by Executive Order and signed by President Lopez-Portillo on January 10th, 1977 for the purpose of promoting the general welfare of the country by creating a national support system for families. Its antecedents date back to 1919 when the National Association for the Protection of Children was first established as a civic body whose main objective was to provide free breakfasts for poor children. The Association was traditionally presided by the wife of the President of Mexico and went unchanged until 1961 when a new Executive Order created the National Institute for the Protection of Children, a new decentralized public body. In 1973, because of increased demand for children services and for their families, the Institute gave a new emphasis to its objectives and programs which now included, in addition to the well-being of the child in the cultural, nutritional, medical, social and economic aspects, a view of the child within the family context and as part of the community that surrounds him. These changes brought about new legislation in 1974 and again in 1976, when the Institute became the Mexican Institute for Children and Families.

A different Executive Order signed in 1974 created a new public body whose legal statute defined its governing body and budget allocations for the specific purpose of providing medical and welfare services to abandoned and destitute children. The Mexican government structural reorganization, pointing to the complementary nature of those bodies, combined their operation into the Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF).

The DIF is a decentralized system of support for families. The wife of the President of Mexico is the national head; the wife of each State Governor heads DIF at the state level, and the wife of the Municipal head leads the local DIF. Together they mobilize a national body of female volunteers primarily constituted by the wives of all government political officials. They work mostly in assisting the poorest persons to secure help and services from existing governmental agencies.

The rights of women members to land owned by the family or the "ejido" (land owned and worked in common by the inhabitants of a village), has been the subject of recent legislative changes in Agrarian Reform Law. Thus, the question of land tenure was revised to include their right to claim:

- a) part of the family land that previously recognized only male children,
- b) where ejidos exist, the assignment of a parcel of land to the women residing within the confines of the ejido for the purpose of establishing their own farm industry, and
- c) the extension of credit through the Banco Rural Para el Desarrollo, for the development of rural co-ops or projects designed to bring women some cash income and to develop their organizational and managerial skills, which are expected to spill over their integration in Mexico's development effort.

The Mexican government has adopted a National Family Planning Program which is mostly educational and does not carry any financial subsidies but uses the electronic media extensively to carry its message. The location of clinics where information on family planning is available and/or a telephone hot line number is given as part of the prime time T.V. spots addressing the issue. Nevertheless, this is primarily an urban and centralized effort.

Recently, the federal government has intensified its efforts to recruit private groups to make family services available to rural and urban low-income dwellers in the U.S.-Mexico Border area.

Nevertheless, a recent trend was observed by the Contractor in the administration of youth agencies in Tijuana, Mexicali, and Ciudad Juarez, moving them away from the traditional secular management in the delivery of government subsidized human services for the very young, which is increasingly being placed in the hands of Catholic religious orders; even the Red Cross is now among them.

This trend has implications for the kinds and the limitations of services provided by such agencies, and severely curtails any efforts to give the adolescents and women an adequate education on human sexuality, or any comprehensive counseling on birth control, family planning and abortion.

Therefore, the private efforts and programs in family planning, on human sexuality, in teenage pregnancy in Mexico and in the U.S. Border area must be strengthened by binational and international coordination so that services can be provided in a complementary manner. A critical area here is access to safe abortion services; since in Mexico abortion is illegal, there is a definite need to find a way to give access to poor Border Mexican women and to Mexican descent teenagers to safe and inexpensive U.S. abortion clinics. Access for Mexican women would mean facilitating their crossing and charging them a small or no fee for this service. Teenage abortion counseling should be readily available and again, fees for such services must be minimal, as girls usually do not have any allowances or jobs and there is always a need to protect their privacy. Young workers and more females are needed in family planning and in reproductive freedom programs to maximize their impact.

#### F. International Agencies

The U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association is the only official binational association whose activities extend the full length of the Border

on both sides. The association's theme is "Health without Boundaries", and it is primarily a civil and voluntary association supported by the governments of Mexico and the U.S. and by the Pan-American Health Organization, in addition to minimum membership fees. The Association has over 2,000 active members at the present time and it is made up of citizens of both countries. The Association is 37 years old and it is governed by a combination of high ranking government officials from the Departments of Health, health practitioners, administrators and lay persons active in the health field, all in equal numbers from both countries. Their field activities are carried out by local binational health councils set up to promote and research health issues relevant to their communities. The Association sponsors joint health activities aimed at improving the health status of communities along the Border. It concentrates its efforts on four major areas: communicable disease control, health service delivery, environmental sanitation and health information systems development, planning, and evaluation.

Family planning, private programs receive major emphasis during the April annual convention of the Association. An all-day workshop was devoted to several presentations that dealt with female fertility, malnutrition, bilingual health service personnel, and extension of services to under-served populations, urban and rural poor, women, and children. Unfortunately, the topic of teenage pregnancy was not covered and neither was the topic of industrial health hazards affecting the women working in the maquiladoras.

There are binational activities that involve Border women as planners and promoters of fund-raising events that benefit the poor, women, and families, and who split the proceedings of such events and channel them into their favorite charities. One such a group is Caridad Internacional in the San Diego-Tijuana area; another is the National Women's Political Caucus

in El Paso, which recognizes and honors women's leadership in El Paso as well as Ciudad Juarez and is moving towards joint binational activities to help solve some of the most common critical problems women face in the area.

The National Association of Women Graduates in International Relations is a private, non-profit organization based in Mexico City and legally registered with the Mexican government as a voluntary body. Its purpose is to provide its members with a national and international network of support to enhance their professional capabilities. The association provides information on funds, scholarships, and other technical assistance available to pursue additional graduate work. It also helps international relation's students in their senior year with the selection of a thesis theme and facilitates their field work by identifying national or international resources they can tap. We include the association here because one of their initial interests has been the channel of research efforts to migrant and Border studies.

## V. SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS FOUND IN OUR SURVEY

The Border is the spot where the economic disparities between Mexican and North-American life are revealed sharply. This disparity is even more acute in the northern Mexican region bordering Texas, which encompasses the states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila and Chihuahua, the very states that have the highest per capita income in all of Mexico. On the Texas side, this fact is sharply contrasted by the existence of three of the poorest Standard Metropolitan Statistical areas in the U.S.; Brownsville, Laredo and McAllen. The economic disparity between the two countries is such that the economic level in the U.S. remains higher than in the Mexican communities. Mexicans live and work on both sides of the Border, whereas Chicanos can only work in the U.S.

The twin cities are so dependent on trade with each other that any fluctuations in conditions on one side can affect deeply the conditions of the other. The devaluation of the Mexican peso in the Winter of 1976 severely affected the economics of the Border cities and the proverbial chronic unemployment situation there.

Mexican per capita income is about \$1,000 per year and increasing unemployment/underemployment in Mexico was recently estimated by Commerce in America in its July 4th, 1977 issue to be 49%. This is a conservative estimate as it does not take into account the percent of women who have increasingly entered the labor force in the last few years.

The spiraling effort to industrialize the most important cities along the U.S. and Mexican Border has critically impacted the employment of women. It is known that: a) approximately 80 to 90% of the labor employed in the twin plants in the Border areas is made up of women, b) Mexican and U.S. Border cities have become one of the focal points of

attraction for all unemployed Mexican labor seeking employment, and that one of the main factors in securing employment in the twin plants coupled with the possibility of crossing into the U.S., (the twin plants do not absorb a substantial number of workers to offset the ever-growing demand for jobs), and c) the migratory phenomenon to the Mexican Border area where the twin plants are concentrated has resulted in an over-abundance of labor willing to work for the lowest wages, especially women with all the consequences attendant to their excessive number which: 1) seriously cheapens it, 2) is readily available, substituted and/or replaced, 3) stresses economic roles for women that conflict with traditional ones as they are removed from the domestic nature that has previously characterized most poor women's employment, and 4) seriously and negatively affects the unemployment and underemployment of men in these cities.

The 450 subsidiaries of U.S. corporations who have established direct or contract operations in the 20 kilometer strip south of the Border use low-wage women workers in about 90% of their labor intensive industrial operations. Women are specifically recruited in these dead-end jobs because they have little or no tradition in unionism and because women have always been paid lower wages than men. Permanent positive effects on Mexican communities are questionable when it applies to the status of women workers in the maquiladoras, given a lack of emphasis on training and especially on the protection of worker's rights, e.g., wage levels and contractual agreements that guarantee job permanence after the probationary period stipulated by Mexican laws, salary increments, job seniority, inclusion in the social security benefits which also covers their families, etc. In other words, there is no formalized commitment on the part of these trans-national corporations to better the situation in the communities where they operate as evidenced by the treatment given to their women

workers who, in many instances, are the only wage earners in a family unit.

The extent to which women workers constitute the sole support of their families is not known. This is an area where research covering the full length of the Border following the pioneer studies of Escamilla (1978) and Fernandez Kelly (1979) could shed important light on a subject that is perhaps the most volatile as evidenced by the following example.

One of the most dramatic incidents ever to occur on the U.S.-Mexican Border took place in the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez crossing during the weekend of March 9th - 11th, 1979. It dramatically pointed out the critical importance of female labor to the economies of those Border twin cities. Charles Perez, District Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, stated that the crack-down against illegal maids resulted in the strongest protest ever. The weekend "blitz" began at 6 AM, Friday, March 9th and resulted in the exclusion or unofficial deportation of about 250 Mexican nationals from El Paso. This action by INS quickly brought together a group of prominent El Paso and Juarez professional leaders prepared to approach any government body that might be considering actions detrimental to the general well-being of what they termed the El Paso-Juarez Complex.

The ensuing protest led to two days of disturbances that closed all three international bridges and focused attention on a very real economic fact of life: many El Paso women who must work to support themselves and their children cannot do so without the services of a daily or live-in maid. The standard rate of pay for such a helper is \$25 per week, plus room and board, with two days off every other weekend. This sum is so absurdly low that few, if any, Americans would accept it; but it is attractive indeed to residents of Juarez where the unemployment and under-

employment of the population has reached critical levels, especially for males, forcing women in larger than ever numbers to enter the labor market wherever possible.

No one knows how many Mexican nationals are working as maids in El Paso homes, but most observers agree that an estimate of 10,000 is conservative. The removal of these undocumented maids from thousands of El Paso homes, with no domestic labor to replace them at wages the employer's mostly working women feel they can afford, would have a domino effect on the El Paso economy as thousands of American women would have to quit their jobs and stay home to care for their children. It is not surprising, therefore, that while the maids and their families were demonstrating on the bridges, one could hear El Paso working mothers talking seriously about staging their own supporting protest on the U.S. side of the Border. The demonstrations resulted in the death of a ten year-old girl from Juarez and serious injury to her small brother which further increased all of the Mexican nationals, and may very well prove to be forerunners of increased tensions between the two countries in the future. What is obvious, though, is that in Border communities, jobs and law weave into an economic fact of life that fosters the employment of Mexican help, documented or otherwise. It is of critical importance to note that the lives of working women are dependent on each other for the survival of their families.

On the American side, some persistent positions and elements that have influenced U.S. immigration policy over the years have compounded the problem of immigrant women workers as pointed out by the Special Report on Manpower and Immigration Policies. They represent the views of those who: a) would profit economically from legal or illegal immigration, b) stress national security and would see the Border region as neither

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Mexican nor American where a "silent invasion" is taking place, c) hold the view of immigration consistent with their desire to preserve the ethnic/racial status quo, d) view immigration as a threat to the interests of the domestic labor force, e) view immigration as a process by which their own non-majority ethnic group can persist and grow, and f) regard immigration as a demographic factor.

The question of female migration and immigration and its relation to salaried employment has been, in terms of research and measurement, overwhelmingly neglected. Mexican immigrant women share with resident American women the same labor market problems, namely, job discrimination, lower wages, and relative lack of promotional opportunities. Further, many are new to the job market and are more likely to be laborers, service employees, and seldom operatives. The recruiting technique used by employers is the word-of-mouth information system which effectively operates on both sides of the Border. In the U.S., employment as household domestics in light manufacturing and in service establishments is more likely to seek new immigrants, and of the larger enterprises, the large agricultural businesses and those in health care often have a sizeable number of immigrant employees. The inability to speak English negatively affects wages and tends to concentrate all immigrants on "ethnic jobs" that rarely pay the legal minimum wage. Employers often prefer these workers as "you don't have to speak English to a sewing machine, and you don't have to speak English to the lady beside you." It is also the reason for the low turn-over of workers since, without English, they have trouble finding other jobs and can not be promoted beyond a certain level unless they can speak English. Therefore, language is a crucial question for immigrant workers but a particularly exploitative device for those women suspected of being undocumented who, in addition to the low wages they command, are reportedly the victims of sexual harrassment on the job.

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Working conditions in the maquiladoras constitute serious health hazards for the workers. The older physical plants resemble prisons as they have poor ventilation and lighting, are overcrowded with matchbox rooms for the workers, all of which adds up to the all too familiar sweatshop conditions. The repetitious and tedious nature of the piecemeal work, the noise level and the tension generated by the speed of production which is needed to sustain the high quotas demanded from the workers creates intense mental and physical stresses. Statements made by 18 to 20 year old electronic maquiladora workers to Fernandez Kelly and Escamilla Mora repeat time after time how after two years of working in the industry "all the girls have to wear glasses." Aside from the damage done to their eyesight, migraine headaches and other nervous connected disorders afflict them. The temporary nature of their contracts, a device used to keep workers, aiming to secure job permanency by achieving even higher production levels, prevents them from collecting any form of health insurance, other benefits, and the compensation that Mexican working laws allow them.

Resentment over these practices is bound to grow over the years as the harm done to these young lives becomes more widely known.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The U.S.-Mexico Border locations mirrors the needs of two worlds united by geographical, political, social, historical, cultural and economic circumstance. The Border is a critical juncture where the defense of common interests can lead Border residents to a path which, through joint and organized action, can work towards the achievement of a more balanced development. An enlightened public policy would seek to promote this by working across political boundaries whenever possible.

The demographic profile of the Border discussed earlier clearly indicates that the rapid increase in the population on both sides of the Border has seriously hampered all planning and development efforts. Information collected is fragmented and not readily available.

This informational void is responsible for the lack of coordination in the research and the duplication of efforts in certain areas (with hardly any studies addressing women). There is also a lack of substantive data suitable for comparability studies that would help in the formulating of sound policy decisions regarding the Border development projects.

Recent pilot studies by Dr. Margarita Nolasco Armas, head of the Mexican Northern Border Project of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, on the subject of marginal populations in Tijuana, most of whom are new migrants, point to the magnitude of the problems faced by poor women and their families in those "lost cities".

There exists an even greater need for information concerning the position of new immigrants in the U.S. and of women migrants to the Mexican Border areas on their changing role and on how their presence impacts in the economic, political, social, and cultural spectrum of the region.

The insightful study of Dr. Margarita Melville of the University of

Texas at Houston on stress as a factor in the adaptation of Mexican immigrant women to the U.S. needs to be, and should be, expanded and replicated in other Border areas.

There is a need to establish binational citizen councils in the areas of culture, credit, labor and immigration patterned after those of the Border Health Association. They could prove increasingly effective in serving as forums to explore common problems and exchange information. Within the limits of each country's jurisdiction, these binational councils --- ideally constituted by an equal number of men and women covering the social spectrum --- could play a critical role in increasing binational cooperation that would lead to the increased well-being for the inhabitants of the Border, thereby strengthening the social framework in which all human activities take place.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Research

The Contractor believes that there is a need for a conceptual framework that is integrated in its approach and extends beyond the fragmented, micro-level type that is predominant in current in-depth research relating to women. Although most U.S.-Mexican Border studies have tended to address issues globally, and helped illuminate their articulation to other studies and to appropriate macro-variables, none have been done jointly by a binational team of researchers with the exception of the health needs survey done by the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association. This kind of participatory research process is itself potentially a tool for generating social change. Involving Border area research experts and residents that are also members of the target group involved in the study would help define problems, examine causes, and formulate recommendations and possible solutions. In involving such participation the researchers would have not only symbolic representations of reality but the way reality itself is experienced by those who live it.

The Contractor believes that such a participatory research process should be consciously incorporated into the design of all future research in order to make the resulting action programs more effective. Further, the Contractor recommends that credit for research findings be shared by all members of the research team and that, whenever possible, such research be done binationally.

As a starting point for model research projects on women in the urban Border area, individual studies on the status of women patterned after those of Margarita Nolasco Armas, Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, and Norma Escamilla, addressing the situation of poor women in Tijuana, the make-up

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of the assembly plants labor force in Mexicali and Ciudad Juarez respectively, should be broadened to include similar studies in the whole Border Mexican region.

Initiate binational research focused on the employment of Border women as domestic servants, street vendors, market women, factory, service, and laundry workers will also provide data on migration and on the changing roles of women, men, and the traditional family structure.

The socio-economic profiles of the individual women found in the files of the Mexican and U.S. family planning clinics in locations immediately adjacent to the Border are excellent sources for more comprehensive and in-depth future research regarding the status of Mexican and Mexican-American women in the Border area. (Attachments X and Y are samples of the questionnaires filled by women seeking services at such clinics).

#### B. Action Programs

Following the example of El Paso NWPC, and Caridad Internacional of Tijuana and San Diego, explore added ways to link and promote the full utilization of women resources existing in the Border communities who occupy key positions within traditional service groups or who, as individuals, have distinguished themselves in the political spectrum as professionals or as volunteers in social service work. Keep in mind that the Mexican Government, through the established municipal committees for the Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF), which also coordinates and structures the activities of a national body of volunteers, already constitutes a basic network that could be tapped.

There is an immediate need to provide technical assistance to the assembly plants being run as co-ops by women assembly workers in Mexicali so that they acquire the management skills that are key to their survival,

since the extension of credit and the elimination of intermediaries, (who presently are the ones making a profit out of the women owned co-ops), hinge upon their acquisition of such skills.

There is also a need to provide technical assistance in project design and management skills to the women in the rural communities, especially in those ejidos adjacent to the Border urban municipalities who are eligible for credit through the Banco de Desarrollo Rural (World Bank). Technical assistance should include an educational component for the purpose of informing the women and all of the ejidatarios of their rights and responsibilities under the new Agrarian Legislation. It is especially critical that they understand their legal recourse when and if project control is interfered with or taken from the group by any outsider.

Sensitize the President's Advisory Committee on Women and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women to the unique and severe problems poor and migrant women face in the U.S.-Mexico Border area in order to call national attention to their plight and to help formulate action programs addressing their needs.

Promote inter-agency collaboration and coordination for the provision of services to the poor, women, new immigrants and families so that the Departments of State, HEW, DOL, Justice-INS, Commerce, HUD, Agriculture and SCA who have offices and/or programs in the areas immediately adjacent to the Border maximize their impact and positively enhance the well-being of all the citizens in the Border area thereby helping create a climate of cooperation between the governments of the U.S. and Mexico.

Sensitize the Southwest Border Regional Commission to the needs of women and encourage project design and program activities that include women as a target group for economic development.

Call for a high level binational U.S.-Mexico Border Conference on Women where the invitees would include the top Mexican and American researchers on the status of women in the Border area plus Border representatives of government agencies, foundations, and those from the U.S. private sector whose subsidiaries employ the largest number of women in the twin plants (preferably to include members of their corporate boards).

Support the full efforts of Border binational social and cultural groups to hold seminars and workshops on women to explore specific areas of common concern.

Develop and implement bilingual education programs on human sexuality for different age groups utilizing a wide variety of community settings, e.g., factories, neighborhood centers, recreational areas, schools, military camps, health clinics, etc.

Establish bilingual counseling for teenagers where problems related to their age may be discussed openly and freely.

Develop an adjunct bilingual counseling service to sensitize and educate Border area parents and grandparents of teenagers to the stress and problems faced by this group in a Border intercultural setting which is often conflictive with traditional values.

Publicize the recommendations of the Bilateral Committee on Border Health Planning presented to the Pan-American Health Organization and promote their adoption as a blue-print for bilateral cooperation by the U.S. and Mexico in a joint effort to develop an organized plan of action between the two countries.

That through appropriate State Department and AID channels, private foundations be encouraged to speed up efforts for setting up programs and/or projects in the U.S.-Mexico Border area. The Ford, the Rockefeller, the

New World Foundation, the Center for Community Change and the Partners of the Americas are among those who have expressed an interest in becoming involved in the Border area. Although traditionally the Ford Foundation has funded research projects in Mexico rather than action ones, there is a recent interest in expanding funding to pilot action projects located in the Border region.

That the efforts of the El Paso Foundation to obtain an IRS ruling extending the same tax regulations and exemptions to community foundations for funding binational projects be publicized and supported. Such a ruling could be the avenue available to U.S. corporations involved in the twin-plant operation to fund projects addressing the needs of Mexican and Mexican-American women and girls and thus promote their status in both Border societies.

It is hoped that with the help of the key contacts identified in the course of this survey increasingly effective working relations can be built up in time. The promotion of a basic human needs strategy for Border development should be the crucial factor in all programmatic activities.