

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

**WOMEN AND THE MUNICIPALITY:
A NEW COMMUNITY PRESENCE IN
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
IN LATIN AMERICA**



**WOMEN AND LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

THE REGIONAL HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE/SOUTH AMERICA AND
THE OFFICE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR:
WOMEN AND THE MUNICIPALITY**

**A New Community Presence in Local Development
in Latin America**

**March 5-7, 1991
Quito, Ecuador**

Women and Local Development Program

**U. S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Regional Housing and Urban Development Office/South America
Office of Women in Development**

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Local Development

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Dedication

USAID's Regional Housing and Urban Development and Women in Development Offices and the International Union of Local Authorities would like to dedicate this publication to Maria Elena Moyano.

Maria Elena Moyano fought valiantly to integrate women into the political arena, opening new roads to community participation and local development. She demonstrated her total commitment to the needs of the community through her moral integrity and her struggle to advance the role of women in Peruvian society.

Maria Elena Moyano, as Deputy Mayor of Villa El Salvador, an informal settlement of 300,000, put into practice her strong convictions about social justice, democracy and peace. She was assassinated on February 15, 1992, during a community meeting, by Shining Path Guerrillas. They killed Maria Elena Moyano, but they were unable to kill her work, which lives on in the hopes of the poor in Peru and Latin America.

This publication attempts to give homage to the woman, her life, and her convictions.

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Preface

The United States Agency for International Development (AID) through its Regional Housing and Urban Development Office for South America (RHUDO/SA) and its Women in Development Office (AID/WID), initiated the "Women and Local Development Program" with the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA).

The program is the result of the keen interest demonstrated by AID in incorporating gender considerations in planning development, particularly at the local level, which is the main component of the decentralization process in Latin America.

Some weeks before the design of the program, representatives from AID's Women in Development Office visited the AID Mission in Quito, Ecuador, where RHUDO/SA's Headquarters is located. After conversations between these two offices, the idea of implementing a regional program to address new considerations of gender relations in local development was conceived.

As a result, RHUDO/SA assigned to its Latin American Center for Urban Management (LACUM) the responsibility to design a regional project, and to negotiate with the International Union of Local Authorities the implementation of the program. IULA welcomed the responsibility to carry out this program with enthusiasm.

The program's various components to be completed during a three-year period are:

- the development of the institutional capability of IULA and other institutions who act as local counterparts for the program in South America to incorporate gender consideration issues into their project design;
- the development of research and case studies;
- the development of regional seminars, national seminars and international workshops in eight countries of the region;
- the development of six publications to disseminate the results of each of the regional events (this publication is the result of the program's first regional seminar); and
- two evaluations to measure the program's effectiveness.

It is important to note that the program not only promotes the "Women in Local Development" theme, but it also builds institutional relationships between AID/WID and RHUDO/SA,

RHUDO/SA and IULA, and AID-IULA and local counterparts in the South American countries.

We hope that the English publication of "Women and the Municipality: A New Community Presence in Local Development in Latin America" will contribute to the incorporation of gender considerations worldwide.

**William H. Yaeger, III
Director, RHUDO/SA-AID**

Introduction

"We can no longer overlook the women's question."

Marta Arboleda

Director, Women and Development Project

Last March, more than one hundred women from Latin America gathered in Quito at a meeting sponsored by the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), USAID's Regional Housing and Urban Development Office for South America (RHUDO/SA), and USAID's Women in Development Office (WID). The women either were employed in the municipalities in policy or community management positions, or worked in cooperation with them.

This meeting was important not only in its being the first gathering of women involved in local government in Latin America, but also, in the opportunity it presented to measure the extent to which what have until now been considered "small experiences" and "small histories" of women at the local level have transcended this "smallness" as a result of their generalization across the continent and their contributions to development.

First of all, the meeting served as an opportunity to emphasize that the women's question can no longer be overlooked, that its real dimensions must be addressed and that in Latin America women are leading society to this realization. As we all know, the concept of the abstract political "person" neglected to recognize the rights of women. Significantly, underlying their democratic nature, the municipalities in Latin America today are the government institutions with the largest presence of women. These women work as elected officials at the executive level, as technical experts managing departments or administrative and service enterprises, or are recognized as emerging community social actors who are creating a new dynamic, a positive tension, and a viable challenge and a proposal for management, involvement, and development.

No experience of participation or social representation in Latin America has been able to hide a feature of the state that is, to a large extent, generalized in our societies: client relations, a mechanism that combines the tendency to politically exclude the middle and low-income classes with attention to groups according to their ability to apply pressure or have a public presence.

This situation has not been altered by the presence of women in municipal governments or in positions where they deal with these governments. However, we believe that with the basic policies established by women and their organizations, we can begin to

see the emergence of new forms of relationships with government. The essential merit of these new forms lies in their resisting these client mechanisms and in restructuring the means of social participation, insisting that this participation start at the beginning, during the design of local public policy and not only during its implementation and evaluation.

We realize that we are discussing complex processes where there are many elements in play, such as: internal party systems for choosing candidates or party activists; traditional forms of neighborhood and community representation; and practices of dismissing the social contribution of women. Ultimately, these factors hinder development by politically and socially marginalizing half of the population; by concealing the economic contributions of a portion of the population whose work generates a large part of the country's Gross National Product; and by minimizing the importance of social and cultural inputs of women who, as we will see in this publication, are not only involved in the issues of everyday life and maintaining their families' standard of living, but also have very strong ties to global proposals for equity, social justice, and development.

In an attempt to collect, promote, and reinforce the innovative experiences of women in local government, the Latin American chapter of the IULA organized the Women in Local Development Program under the auspices of RHUDO/AID. The project will last three years and will cover several Latin American countries.

The overwhelming response by individual women, municipal centers, and local governments to this program has made us believe that the following activities are possible: developing a cooperative effort that will strengthen the presence and management of women in local communities, including mayoral offices and councils; designing policies that consider women as mothers, but not exclusively in that capacity; improving and strengthening women's abilities and effectiveness while serving the entire community; and supporting an outlook that will expand women's ties to other community actors so that women can make their influence felt in all of society.

The Program will be based on the experiences of women, analyzing both the successes and particularly the difficulties experienced by women in local governments. The Quito seminar was organized with this in mind, and we have included its main presentations in this book. With these presentations, we hope to provide Latin America with the elements for a debate on the presence of women as agents of change and development at the local level.

One final point: the Quito seminar "Women and Local Government: A New Community Presence in Local Development in Latin America" was an implicit recognition of the women who have had to learn and understand operating methods and to question and place themselves critically in the current social and political world in search of a more just society. It heartened us to see that more and more men are acknowledging the collective advantages that come from the massive social change induced by women as well as the validity of the proposals made by women. They are proposals that must be combined and compared with those of other groups in society in order to fulfill our aspirations to build a better reality for this world in which we live.

Quito, June 1991

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

*The first section, **WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**, is presented in testimonial form. It relates the experiences of three current women mayors who come from very diverse communities. In this section, they discuss the relationships among women, policy, administration, and municipal management.*

Perhaps this section will answer the questions: What is distinctive about the way a woman runs local government? Or, to what extent is it possible to incorporate women's issues into local development?

Patricia Palacios

Women and Community Development

Victoria Eugenia Osorio de Mejía
Mayor, Municipality of Manizales
Colombia

Background

Since the 1950s, Colombia has undergone profound changes in its economic and social structures. It has gone from a basically rural country to one whose population is mainly urban: 65.3% of the population is located in the municipal seats.

This phenomenon is due to socio-economic and cultural factors such as rural violence; increased industrialization and urban construction; the lack of technology in the countryside and weak agricultural policies; and social and administrative factors that have political roots.

The social group that has been most affected by this situation is the family and its internal dynamic structure. It has forced women to assume a dual role: that of mother, with all of its implicit responsibilities of rearing, educating, protecting, and loving children; and that of breadwinner, with its responsibility of assuming full economic responsibility for the family.

According to the 1985 census, women with the same qualifications as men and doing the same work as men earned less money than men. Women were generally given lower-paying jobs.

Fifty-five per cent of working women are linked to the informal sector, a sector that is characterized by low earnings, instability, and lack of social security. Furthermore, the role of working peasant women has not been acknowledged.

Unemployment rates for women tend to be higher than those for men.

Discrimination against women is a well-known problem. Women have occupied a secondary position in many different ways, including the amount paid for work, income levels, political participation, contribution to development, etc.

Two factors have contributed to this discrimination. First, women maintain a subordinate role as society ignores historical changes in social development. Second, sexual discrimination affects all women equally across social classes.

This discrimination against women occurs throughout our country. Caldas is no exception.

Caldas is a state of contrasts. First of all, it is a small department with a large population living in poverty. Secondly, although as a coffee-producing state it helps produce the country's wealth,

According to the 1985 census, women with the same qualifications as men and doing the same work as men earned less money than men.

Discrimination against women is a well-known problem. Women have occupied a secondary position in many different ways, including the amount paid for work, income levels, political participation, contribution to development, etc.

farmers do not grow basic foodstuffs, which means that current consumption needs are not met.

Caldas has 956,232 inhabitants; of these, 37% are under fifteen (15) years of age; its population is very young. Of the total population, 62% live in municipal seats and 38% in rural areas. Women are estimated to make up 50.7% of the population.

Manizales, the capital of Caldas, has a population of 341,567. It is important to point out that 35.9% of the department's population lives in Manizales.

The municipal government administers Manizales via a system of groups of neighborhoods whose residents voice their needs through Administrative Councils.

Caldas is no stranger to social problems. Accordingly, this presentation focuses on the Community Welfare Homes Program (*Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar*). This Program, which specifically targets children under seven and their families, was created to improve local living conditions within a framework of community involvement and organization.

Evaluation of the Role of Women and Their Participation in Community Processes

Women play a particularly important role in the Community Welfare Homes Program. They are involved in its organization, implementation, development, and in the accomplishment of its objectives.

Women who participate in the program become aware of their current situation, obtain a new perspective on themselves, are able to evaluate themselves, and identify their need for individual or family development, which is what ultimately leads to their evolution.

When women participate in the Community Welfare Homes Program, their individual interests go beyond the personal level to the community level. They begin to place a value on their housework, give meaning to their lives, and therefore have the opportunity to influence others and to be recognized, accepted, and useful. They expand their realm of knowledge and acquire a sense of security and power that is reflected in their ability to express themselves, be heard, defend their rights, analyze, share with others in and outside of their community, educate, support, direct, lead, transform, experience changes, and, most importantly, occupy a position of social recognition.

Caldas has 956,232 inhabitants; of these, 37% are under fifteen (15) years of age; its population is very young. Of the total population, 62% live in municipal seats and 38% in rural areas. Women are estimated to make up 50.7% of the population.

Once women have developed, their families see them differently. They are mothers minus the burden of sacrifice, effort, dependency, or submission. They begin to value their own tasks and consider them important, because as they learn more about nutrition, health, organization, time management, space, and the importance of the integral human development, they establish new relationships with their husbands, companions, children, and other family members, and optimize these relationships.

Women are capable of making major decisions at the family level; they can replace or substitute for their husbands or companions in family or group activities. Their economic contribution does more than offer security and independence; it allows them to develop an equal relationship which their children recognize by viewing them as people, mothers, and active members of a family group. This strengthens a woman's identity vis à vis her companion and her children. It makes her companion share her work and gives a new vitality to their encounters; it serves to renegotiate new objectives, interrupt the power struggle, and broaden the scope of intrafamily relations. She faces conflict with a new maturity and fights for unity, thus laying the groundwork for better family conditions.

The women who are involved in the program do not abandon their domestic obligations in any way. On the contrary, they plan and organize their activities, learn to delegate responsibility, and educate their families so that each member does his or her own jobs.

The women who are involved in the program do not abandon their domestic obligations in any way. On the contrary, they plan and organize their activities, learn to delegate responsibility, and educate their families so that each member does his or her own jobs. They turn the household into a strong group that projects a unified, supportive, responsible, and developed unit to society at large.

As a result of the opportunity that women have to take part in organizing the Community Welfare Homes Program, their actions go beyond the domestic arena. They become motivators, organizers, and implementers. They broaden relationships and discover values in themselves that motivate them to join training groups, leadership groups, and self-help groups that contribute to the process of community organization.

Growth in these women creates an openness toward and interest in collective work. As they end their involvement with the Program, they no longer look for ways to make a contribution as an individual but rather as a part of a community, as someone with a social awareness. They become agents of change and promoters of community involvement and organization.

In this next section, we will describe some of the characteristics of the Community Welfare Homes Program.

Objectives and Strategies

General Objectives

To provide better living conditions for families and to facilitate the appropriate development of children under the age of seven in the poorest sectors of society.

Specific Objectives

- To facilitate the development of children under the age of seven through activities with them, their families, and their communities, thus reclaiming the family and community as an excellent educational resource.
- To strengthen the family unit through educational processes inherent in activities with children, parents, and the overall population.
- To contribute to the improvement of the nutritional state of the population under seven by providing a dietary supplement that contains between 50% and 70% of the recommended calories and nutrients, monitoring their growth and development, and creating alternatives for improving their diets.
- To improve the living conditions of families connected with the project through inter-institutional coordination and community participation.
- To support activities that lead to increases in income for the groups in the communities and sectors where the Program is operating.

[One objective is] to strengthen the family unit through educational processes inherent in activities with children, parents, and the overall population.

Strategies

1. Community involvement and organization around activities that help to improve the population's daily life and to forge new types of relationships between parents and children, between neighbors and residents, and between adults and children with the aim of creating more humane conditions of life. This community involvement is intrinsically linked to the process of decentralization and to the development of civic, social, and administrative responsibility in the municipalities.
2. Coordinating with institutions, volunteer organizations, teaching centers, and organizations that, given their functions and/or presence in the sector, can support

residents by mobilizing them for action and making optimal use of existing resources.

3. On-going training, both on-site and long-distance, for which Work-Study Groups (GET) will be either created or strengthened at the regional, local, and community levels.
4. On-going monitoring and assistance to sectors where the Program is operating so there can be regular evaluation and reflection; this assistance should be guaranteed by the appointment of technical experts from the ICBF and the National Family Welfare System (SNBF) institutions and by coordination with teaching centers and other governmental and non-governmental organizations that are able to support this work.

[Strategies include] on-going training, both on-site and long-distance, for which Work-Study Groups (GET) will be either created or strengthened at the regional, local, and community levels.

Methodology

Preliminary Activities

These are actions that a participating institution should complete before going into the field: inter-institutional coordination, creation of inter-institutional groups or outreach groups, selection of sectors, institutional pre-diagnosis, analysis of institutional information on the sector and its residents, and definition of institutional commitments.

1. Inter-institutional coordination

This is essential to ensure the presence of the State and, to a large extent, ensure the management and performance of the Program.

2. Institutional pre-diagnosis.

The outreach group should establish and standardize the criteria for the Program's objectives and goals by compiling, reviewing, and centralizing existing information on the selected geographic area.

3. Definition of commitments

It is important to define institutional commitments and links to accomplish the proposed goals through specific activities.

Field Activities

This includes surveying the area, disseminating information about the program, creating support groups, doing a self-diagnostic, and identifying physical spaces, and developing solutions and commitments.

Specific preventive activities in the Community Welfare Homes

1. Organization of the Parents

Define what is expected of parents; invite them to attend formal meetings intended to organize them. Organizing the parents is the most important requirement for determining whether the Program will exist in the sector.

The parents are expected to:

- Share responsibility for the activities with the groups of children with the Community Mothers since the quality of the activities depends on their participation.
- Participate directly in the activities with the children to improve relationships with them and to learn how to observe and understand the children better; parents must participate in these activities at least once every two weeks.
- Pay the monthly participation fee, which is 25% of a minimum daily wage, on time.
- Help in the procurement, distribution, and preparation of food.
- Become responsible for the maintenance of a large range of educational materials and furniture through their participation in parent workshops.
- Participate in the working committees for all activities aimed at improving living conditions in the sector.
- Organize to better supply food, educational material, and have a community association.
- Organize a Board of Parents for each Community Welfare Home, comprised of parents from the Home to handle its operational aspects.
- Elect, in each Community Home, three delegates for the Delegates Assembly and one Coordinator (these people should not include the Community Mother).
- Form Community Welfare Homes Parents Associations.
- Organize and operate the Community Welfare Homes Parents' Associations.

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Organizing the parents is the most important requirement for determining whether the Program will exist in the sector.

- Create outreach and support groups which, in accordance with the results of the self-diagnostic and the resources available, should determine the number of Community Welfare Homes to be organized and the number of Parents Associations needed for the program to operate.
 - Each Community Welfare Home should serve 15 children;
 - Each Parents Association should include an average of 15 Community Welfare Homes.

Once the Association has attained legal status, the temporary Board of Directors shall call upon the General Assembly to ratify the temporary Board of Directors or to elect a new one.

Each Community Welfare Home should serve 15 children.

The Board of Directors shall establish its own internal regulations which shall ensure that it fulfills its obligations.

The Regional Program Team will carry out specific activities involving planning, assistance, supervision, and control that will enable it to adequately monitor and systematize the Program.

2. Organization of the Suppliers

- The logic of involving the suppliers has to do with obtaining a high nutritional value in order to improve the quality of the population's diet.
- The program can work with the suppliers to regulate prices for the entire population, thus contributing to the improvement of the sector's living conditions.
- Suppliers will work together with the preventive programs being promoted in the community.
- Suppliers will participate in working committees involved in improving living conditions in the sector.

3. Organization of Community Mothers

The Association must be very specific as to what it expects of the Community Mothers:

- They must register for the Program's introductory training session.
 - They must organize and carry out activities with children's groups.
-

- They must work with parents groups in order to strengthen family relationships and to develop a sense of belonging and connection with the improvement of conditions.
- They must work with the preventive programs being implemented in their communities.

The selection process begins when the Program first arrives in the sector. It is the result of thought and reflection (by the parents association and persons interested in the activities with children) on training, performance, attitudes demonstrated by each of the candidates for Community Mother, and the various stages of the process of organizing and establishing the Community Welfare Homes.

It is important to take into consideration that the training workshop methodology must be based on the principle of learning, using group self-examination with regard to program planning and daily evaluation.

4. Composition of Children's Groups That Participate in Community Welfare Homes

- Parents and children jointly select the Community Mother and register the children.
- Community Mothers can register only up to 15 children under the age of seven.
- Care in a Community Home for children under the age of two will only be provided if they are unprotected and at risk of being abandoned.
- Of the 15 children served, a Community Welfare Home can house only one child younger than 1 or only two children between the ages of 1 and 2.

5. Activities With Children Under Two Years of Age and Their Families

Given the importance of a loving adult-child relationship during the first two years of life, child care arrangements during this time should respond to the following criteria:

- A lack of affection can have critical consequences for children at this age, as it can slow their subsequent development; therefore, it is important that a child be with

The training workshop methodology must be based on the principle of learning, using group self-examination with regard to program planning and daily evaluation.

the mother or some close family member as much as possible.

- Health conditions, hygiene, and nutrition are very important to children of this age; they are vulnerable and more susceptible to disease.
- The care of children under two years old should directly involve the family.

6. Training

Training is both an on-site and long-distance process; it is part of the daily activities that are necessary in order to improve living conditions and the quality of child care with the participation of the family and community.

The work-study groups are responsible for the training process.

Each work-study group is led by an institutional education agent and by a community education agent chosen from among the group participants.

Training is both an on-site and long-distance process; it is part of the daily activities that are necessary in order to improve living conditions and the quality of child care with the participation of the family and community.

In both the promotion and integration of the group, SENA-ICBF institutions provide on-going support to the training process through their education agents. These agents offer information, practical demonstrations, and educational assistance; facilitate educational resources; monitor progress; and encourage and guide individual and group self-evaluations.

Training in the implementation of all activities is given simultaneously to technical experts and to individuals from the sector from the moment the program is introduced into the area.

Specialized training is given for specific activities that involve children, young people, women, families, improvement of living conditions, and community organization.

There must be very specific training for the Community Welfare Homes aimed at the mothers, parents, Parent Associations, suppliers, and the community.

The training is based on the belief that the potential of neighborhood adults to serve as natural teachers and bearers of cultural values can be realized by providing on-going training, either on-site or long-distance, which in turn

provides the adults with an opportunity for reflection and a chance to discuss and share what they know and what they have been doing for years with their children. Thus by coordinating and gradually qualifying their actions, they become increasingly more aware of what they can do both collectively and individually.

When training is viewed as an on-going educational process, it continues through a process of self-education, mutual assistance, monitoring, and the ability to develop other specific actions in accordance with the needs that emerge during the regular course of events.

There must be very specific training for the Community Welfare Homes aimed at the mothers, parents, Parent Associations, suppliers, and the community.

TESTIMONY: Women in Local Government

María Elena Moyano
Deputy Mayor, Villa El Salvador, Lima
Peru

I come from the informal settlement of Villa El Salvador. I would like to give you a quick idea of what is currently happening in our country so that you will understand how women here participate in local government.

Peru is a country with a myriad of problems—political, social, economic, and moral—in virtually every structure within the State apparatus.

We are in the midst of a dirty war. A war in which women are raped, popular leaders arrested, and entire towns are leveled in the name of democracy. Certain people—in the name of fighting for the people—assassinate popular leaders and impose their ideas by force, assuming a position that is authoritative, vertical, and based in terror.

The situation in Peru is complex. The last elections held great surprises. Politicians made promise after promise, and the people no longer believed them. The people wanted to express their wishes and opinions, and so they voted for someone who was unknown in the world of politics. And ultimately the people were deceived.

In recent years, women have effectively demonstrated the importance of participating and getting involved in politics. We have not been content just to sit back and protest, complain about our situation, or make accusations; rather, we have combined those actions with practical involvement, with concrete proposals, and with alternatives to solve problems.

From Survival to Gender

Women have been much more effective than men in their efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty. Women have organized through cafeterias (hundreds and thousands of cafeterias) and through the Glass of Milk Committees (*Comités de Vaso de Leche*). These cafeterias have enabled women to leave their private worlds, their homes, and enter a more public one, a communal area where food and survival-related problems, as well as communal and social problems are addressed. It is a place where more personal and gender-related problems can be discussed, such as the problems of abused and battered women.

To accomplish this, women have had to struggle and work with local political or local government authorities on an on-going basis. They have done so effectively throughout metropolitan Lima. For example, when the proposal was made to cut the Glass of Milk Program, their actions had a very strong political impact.

We have not been content just to sit back and protest, complain about our situation, or make accusations; rather, we have combined those actions with practical involvement, with concrete proposals, and with alternatives to solve problems.

Women have created a significant presence on the national political scene through their struggle with and their practical involvement in survival issues.

Women were able to get a law passed (Law No. 24059) that guaranteed one glass of milk per day for every child in Peru: one million children. Perhaps that seems to be a very simple act, but for the children of Peru, one glass of milk every day means survival.

Women have created a significant presence on the national political scene through their struggle with and their practical involvement in survival issues. Nothing can be done to either the Glass of Milk Program or the cafeteria program without eliciting a response from women.

Women have been very involved in programs related to survival. This has permitted women to achieve higher levels of both political and personal awareness. We also face a serious structural problem regarding our rights—the problem of machismo.

Villa El Salvador: An Experience in Living

The town of Villa El Salvador is well-known both nationally and internationally for its degree of organization, participation, and struggle. In recent years, it has achieved its level of development not because of government participation but rather due to the efforts of an organized population.

We have a Women's Federation—the only one in all of metropolitan Lima—in which the organized women's movement has been centralized: Glass of Milk, cafeterias, manufacturing shops, mothers' clubs, etc.

We have a Women's Federation—the only one in all of metropolitan Lima—in which the organized women's movement has been centralized: Glass of Milk, cafeterias, manufacturing shops, mothers' clubs, etc. The Women's Federation has been involved in every activity, every decision, and every action carried out in Villa El Salvador.

In 1983, the town of Villa El Salvador succeeded in getting a local government established in this community of nearly 300,000. It was a struggle to establish a municipality in Villa El Salvador. The first elections were won by Michel Ascueta of *Izquierda Unida* (United Left). Ascueta is a very well-liked figure in our community. His support for women was very strong; however, this support was not reflected in the newly-elected authorities.

The same situation occurred with the second elected local government. There was no participation by women in the government and therefore no representation of our organized energy, this dynamic energy that exists in Villa El Salvador. It was at that point that the Women's Federation decided, during an

assembly in which 800 grassroots delegates participated, to get involved in the municipal government.

Women and Local Politics

At first, there were a lot of questions. There were questions on the policy positions, the styles, the way politics were conducted at both the local and central government levels. Questions were raised about the authoritarianism of the political parties.

Women have continued this questioning on an on-going basis since they have become familiar with the democracy in their own organizations. They are familiar with the level of self-government that exists in all of their organizations. In the last elections, every political party invited the women to participate on their slates and they were able to attract some women who were political party activists as well as women's movement activists. Many women involved in the Glass of Milk and Cafeterias programs have become members of Municipal Councils, positions that may not be particularly powerful but in this instance are held by leaders who truly speak for organized women.

This is a big step in political involvement by women. Not only do these leaders represent their respective political parties, but they also represent and express the feelings of our own organization, which is very powerful throughout metropolitan Lima and the entire country.

When the Popular Women's Federation (FEPOMUVES) in Villa El Salvador learned that elections were approaching, it decided to hold an assembly to evaluate the extent of involvement by women in the local government. We also decided to elect a candidate for the elections. I had served as President of the Federation twice and the women decided that those of us who had held that position should run as candidates in the elections as FEPOMUVES delegates. Some ran in the CUAVES elections (Self-Help Urban Community of Villa El Salvador, our neighborhood organization).

The women elected me as the candidate for the municipal elections. At the same time, *Izquierda Unida* (the political party in which I was active) asked the Women's Federation that I run on their slate. FEPOMUVES accepted and agreed to support the slate.

At first, we planned to try for the mayoral candidacy in *Izquierda Unida's* internal elections. Ultimately, because the position of women was rather weak within the party, the decision was made

As a result of their questioning of the political parties, women are struggling outside the party framework.

to give us the Deputy Mayor slot. That is the position which I hold today, thanks to the vote of the women and of my community.

I would like to point something out: as a result of their questioning of the political parties, women are struggling outside the party framework. I believe that the struggle both within and outside of the parties is very important.

The women decided to campaign on an individual level—making posters, signs, flyers, organizing cultural events, and, more significantly, calling fundamentally for the presence of women in the district. In this campaign, they did not formally acknowledge the mayoral candidate, but they did acknowledge their delegates who were going to participate in the municipal government in the neighborhood.

Municipal Government: New Initiatives

First of all, the Women's Federation supported the independent management of the Glass of Milk Program. Secondly, we called upon other women who were not organized and not members of the Women's Federation for support. We also called upon women's organizations that have been organized by the State apparatus and the central government, such as the Mothers' Clubs.

Thus, our local and municipal presence enabled us to involve another level of non-organized women in several of our campaigns.

Through the Temporary Income Support Program (PAIT), working mothers demanded that the government pay them an appropriate salary. Women asked for the support of the local government. A survey of PAIT was done. The women all got together to help each other. They did not turn to FEPOMUVES for assistance since they did not feel part of the organization. They turned instead to the women's representative in the local government.

We have also succeeded in organizing all the women small business owners, those with small workshops, so that they might have a place of business in the industrial park. There is an association of small- and medium-size industries in the industrial park. With the involvement of women in the local government, we have succeeded in securing a place for the women business owners in this park.

Women are effective actors when we decide to get involved in decision-making in local government.

Women's Committees to Defend the Economy: A New Experience

Women are effective actors when we decide to get involved in decision-making in local government. For example, we have a very serious garbage problem. We explained to the women that because we have limited staff and trucks, we had to mount garbage-campaigns. The women then got out and mounted massive campaigns to clean up the whole community. They cleaned all of Villa El Salvador just like they cleaned their homes.

We have a new project: Women's Committees to Defend the Economy and Public Order. These committees are comprised of women elected by a Glass of Milk or Cafeteria committee and, at the same time, elected in assemblies. They are trained by the local government in every aspect of environmental hygiene, health inspection, price controls, drug addiction problems, female abuse, women's legal rights, etc. We would like them to become educators in these areas as well as inspectors in charge of public order and defense of our economy.

We have serious problems with merchants and street vendors. Statistics show that, in our country, most of them are women, and so we work with them closely. Informal work is done primarily by women. However, despite our close relations with them, mistakes are sometimes made with the scales used by these workers. They steal 100 to 200 grams per kilo of rice or sugar, or they alter certain prices. When there are problems of shortages of certain products, they hide or hoard them.

While maintaining close, cordial, and cooperative relations with these organizations in the informal sector, we also work together with the "popular women inspectors." These inspectors go to the markets, stores, and warehouses to verify compliance with price controls and health and hygiene regulations in locations that sell food, ensuring that they are not dirty and are maintaining proper hygienic conditions. This is a priority in Villa El Salvador since we have a serious water supply problem.

We also inspect houses where drugs are sold. Drug use in our country is illegal, and a good deal of the drugs in our community are being sold to young people.

Doing these kinds of inspections, these women have become a kind of local police. The municipality has trained them and given them the power to move about freely in coordination with the community and the strength of their own organization in order to keep public order and stability in the district.

This experiment has never been tried before anywhere in Peru. Its work is very important. Women are beginning a new experience, very different from that of survival. This has had a strong impact on and raised the interest of the local government because some of the problems in our community, or at least some of the criticisms made of the local government, were that neither pricing nor cleanliness was controlled in the markets.

With this group of 100 women, we have succeeded in somewhat mitigating—although not fully resolving—hoarding, speculation, and disorder in our community.

Health Care for the Women of Villa El Salvador

Women are also involved in health care activities by serving on mixed commissions. We have joined the Women's Federation Health Commission in coordinating health care for the municipality (a mixed commission). We would like the municipality to do more than carry out actions related to health care, environmental sanitation, or drug addiction. We would like to see it make women's health care campaigns part of its work, such as campaigns to track vaginal diseases and cancer since these illnesses are common in Villa El Salvador due to our water problem.

We also succeeded in getting all the forces (the Church, CUAVES, the neighborhood organization) to recognize and respect the work that women are doing.

Within the municipality, what one would like to have done is not always done because there is a group of council members whose machismo prevents them from understanding the role of women. A good fight lies ahead of us in order to get the Council members and Mayor not only to respect the rights of organized women, but also to ensure that women are involved in every decision that the municipal government makes.

Recently there has been an increase in the number of women Council members in our country, but not in the number of women mayors. That is the challenge that now lies before us. Carabayllo is the only city with a woman mayor. We hope one day to hold power in municipal governments and in the Parliament, both in the Senate and House of Deputies, as well as in the central government.

A good fight lies ahead of us in order to get the Council members and Mayor not only to respect the rights of organized women, but also to ensure that women are involved in every decision that the municipal government makes.

Women and the Municipality: Intra-urban Mobility and Self-Help

Aida Moreno de Claros
Mayor of Tupiza
President, Association of Municipalities of Potosi
Bolivia

Research done in low-income urban areas, which for many years focussed on women, has proposed that women's issues can only be understood in relation to the historic development of a particular society. This research characterizes Bolivia as capitalist, dependent, heterogenous in its forms of production, and having an export-based economy.

This distinctive structural configuration explains, on the one hand, a social fragmentation in which "...alongside the modern social classes (proletariat and bourgeois) are peasant farmers, artisans, 'marginal' or floating sectors, and even remnants from some forms of servitude; and, on the other hand, there is the relationship between the nature of the agricultural sector and its economic, political, and social dependency on the urban sector with a migratory process that is not on the same scale as other Latin American countries."

Despite the numerous studies on intra-urban mobility done by entities such as the Mayor of la Paz in 1977, CERES in 1980, and the United Nations in 1978 (Project Bol 78/PO-3), we can say that intra-urban migratory movements are still unexplored territory.

An important theoretical point of departure for studying intra-urban mobility in Latin America is offered by the system developed in the 1960s by the architect John F.C. Turner in Lima and in Mexico.

In our case, the research is limited to just one aspect of mobility: the land-use behavior of migrant low-income residents in Tupiza, province of Sud Chichas, department of Potosi.

Based on his extensive experience, Turner published several articles on the origin and functions of self-help neighborhoods in large Latin American cities and the influence of government on the living situations of low-income groups. His central thesis is that there are huge differences in what inhabitants expect of their housing and their environment, based partly on their socio-economic position and their prospects.

1. The principal objective of migrants (in general, young men and women, single and uneducated) who go to the cities is locating a source of income, the first requirement for their survival.

This is reflected in the living needs. The top priority in terms of housing is that it be located near sources of demand for unskilled labor. As day laborers, they look for work in the large markets, construction sites, and other spots near the center where there are numerous opportunities for informal work.

The principal objective of migrants (in general, young men and women, single and uneducated) who go to the cities is locating a source of income, the first requirement for their survival.

2. After the migrant has managed to find a job that is more or less secure, although it may not pay well, his priorities in terms of housing will change. He will be more concerned with security. Having his own home will make it easier for the migrant to deal with unexpected crises. This becomes much more important when we remember that, in many instances, the number of dependent relatives will increase quickly during this stage.

Thus "consolidators" will try to get possession of a lot in the outskirts of the city or in the foothills and build a house. He weighs the possibility that the authorities (the City) will take action against squatters against the probability that he will ultimately be able to obtain legal title to the land. When the possibilities of de-facto (and perhaps legal) recognition of the land increase, the new neighborhood quickly finds itself involved in a process of upgrading. Residents, in accordance with their aspirations and means, upgrade their houses in phases or enter the SELF-HELP stage, using local materials and following the system of MUTUAL COOPERATION AND AID. The political pressure to get public services (sewers, water, electricity, etc.) and its gradual success are indications of social and spatial integration of the squatter settlements into the urban structure.

Turner proposed a third socio-economic category with which he completes his model. We, however, do not use this model as the basis for analysis.

According to Turner's model, there is a clear relationship between intra-urban migration and the growing social mobility of low-income migrants. Ideally (what Turner had in mind), rural migrants begin as renters in an economically deprived neighborhood, where it is relatively easy to find a job. After obtaining a more or less stable income, they move to SELF-HELP neighborhoods, where they build homes. Finally, full integration into the urban society is achieved when these successful migrants live in a house and neighborhood that has all necessary modern services.

With regard to our situation, SELF-HELP and Turner's theory will have to be verified since it apparently focusses on spatial movement. Turner connects the rural-urban migration of low-income groups with intra-urban movement, judging this movement to be indicative of how long the migrant will remain in the city and of the possibility of his obtaining a higher, more stable, and more secure income. At the same time, Turner assumes a correlation between improvements in migrants' social position and changes in their priorities regarding housing and

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environment. Consequently, intra-urban movements that occur mainly toward the periphery would be accompanied by the development of squatter settlements where SELF-HELP is a factor in the changes and improvements in the residential environment. The results of the analysis of the research data to determine which families will benefit from the SELF-HELP Project show that intra-urban migration in Tupiza can be easily interpreted within the context of Turner's theory, although there are some modifications pertaining to social mobility with regard to the move.

Self-help unquestionably plays an extremely important role in how the low-income population finds solutions to their housing situation.

SELF-HELP unquestionably plays an extremely important role in how the low-income population finds solutions to their housing situation.

Turning to the topic of SELF-HELP Housing in the northern outskirts of Palala Baja, within this theoretical framework, we see that this project is fully underway in terms of implementation. It will benefit 537 families, 201 of whom came from the countryside. The families have been in the city for an average of 4 to 8 years. All of the beneficiary families are low-income. Of the 537 families, 115 have steady work (service sector employees, masons, market workers, etc.), 422 are employed only part-time as a result of scarce job sources, and, significantly, 128 are SINGLE MOTHERS AND WIDOWS.

95% of those involved in construction projects are women.

The low-income housing program is implemented through a self-help system, which consists of mobilizing individuals in this sector to resolve their housing problems by means of their own efforts.

Interested community members, organized into groups, help each other build their homes by providing labor and using local materials. The work is done on Saturdays and Sundays. Knowing that 95% of those involved in construction projects are women, we can assume that their struggle is an on-going one; it is a struggle to obtain, in this case, not only housing, but also active involvement in the political, economic, and social development of our country.



WOMEN AND LOW-COST COMMUNITY HOUSING

*This section, entitled **WOMEN AND LOW-COST COMMUNITY HOUSING**, addresses a subject area common to the political and organizational practices of the majority of women in Latin America.*

Difficult access to land and housing, the right to ownership, the constant struggle to improve housing conditions, the demand for recreational space, the protection of the natural vestiges of our paved cities, the right to walk the streets without fear—these are only a few of the issues women must face with regard to low-income housing.

This section illustrates the complex interface between the private sector, that is, the domestic sector and individual housing, traditionally a concern of women; and the public sector, that is, the urban area, the city, or housing for everyone. The experiences described in this section illustrate the reality of low-income housing in four countries in Latin America and, most importantly, describe the specific actions and initiatives women have taken in an effort to overcome failings in the quality of life.

Patricia Palacios

Women, Housing, and Local Development

(The Chilean Experience)

Joan MacDonald
Undersecretary of Housing and Urban Development
Chile

We can learn some valuable lessons from Chile's experience regarding the role of women in local development, particularly in housing, both in terms of our thinking and in the implementation of specific programs. In this article we will first look at the housing system and its relationship with the local government apparatus and the community. We will then discuss the essential aspects of women's involvement in the country's democratic process in general, and in the area of housing in particular, in order to ultimately define the main tasks underway to strengthen and improve the organization of women in the construction of their housing.

Housing and Local Government¹

Beginning in the 1950s, the issue of low-income housing in Chile was handled by the government through specialized state institutions. Over time, these institutions took on the role of planning, both for housing and urban development, and in 1965 the current Ministry of Housing and Urban Development was established. Over the years, professional teams in the public sector have learned to handle the financial and technical aspects of low-income housing quite well, particularly in the areas of management and production.

When the current government took office, it was a strong proponent of community involvement in housing and urban development programs.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development now seeks to turn over to society the land and tools that will enable the people to resolve their own housing problems and to complement programs run by the government.

The current housing program incorporates community involvement at the decision-making level as well as at the level of housing procurement. The program does not involve just the implementation of programs that have been designed and selected at a central level, but involves the effective transfer of power at the grassroots level. Beyond making the community responsible for tasks related to the implementation of programs, such as savings or construction, it is important to ensure that those affected by the housing and neighborhood problem can determine which path is most appropriate for them in order to raise their standard of living.

The current Ministry of Housing made adjustments to the program so that the new procedure involves a dialogue between

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development now seeks to turn over to society the land and tools that will enable the people to resolve their own housing problems and to complement programs run by the government.

¹ See MacDonald, Joan: LOCAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT. Corporación de Promoción Universitaria, Santiago de Chile, 1984.

the municipalities and user organizations that is open to suggestions, opinions, and constructive criticism.

Women and Democracy in Chile

In a broad sense, the recent arrival of democracy in Chile has posed the challenge of rebuilding internal relationships and of reorganizing the functions and responsibilities of the different actors on a national level. On the one hand, the public sector must open the doors of institutions which for years have acted without taking into account direct popular participation as either an objective or a resource. In this way, the public sector will be able to report on its activities and incorporate the priorities and needs of those involved in its programs. In many sectors of the "private world," it is important to eliminate distrust, control expectations, and develop cooperative attitudes in order to coordinate resolution of problems with the State. From this perspective, a promising field of joint work is opening up between public institutions and the world of women.

A second aspect that must be considered here is the prevailing approach in society regarding the transition to full democracy. During this transitional period, the low-income sector has shown extraordinary prudence and generosity in its acceptance of the limitations that exist in terms of resolving society's most pressing problems.

For Chilean families, democracy does not have only abstract ethical and political implications. The new situation is seen in very real and daily aspects: democracy is lived and sought after in the communities, health centers, schools, and housing. We could summarize this as the simultaneous determination to achieve democracy and to democratize what has been achieved.

In light of these considerations, the role of women takes on special importance. Women have become key protagonists of the political process, not only when they become involved in policy or reach managerial positions in the government, but also on a daily basis, in their families, their neighborhoods, and their local governments.

The Reality of Women and The Family in Chile²

In Chile, women make up half of the population (50.6%); 85% live in urban areas. As in other aspects of the country's social structure, the position of women is changing rapidly. This change is related to changes in the family, socio-economic conditions, and cultural guidelines associated with urbanization.

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² See Hirmas, M. and Gomartz, E: THE SITUATION OF CHILEAN WOMEN, IN FIGURES. National Women's Office, Santiago de Chile, 1990.

Two out of every ten households are headed by women, most of whom are single. Of these women, one out of four does not have adequate formal education.

The country has 3.2 million families, each with approximately four members. There has been a gradual but steady decrease in the size of households; households have been growing at an annual rate of 2.5% while the population has been growing at the rate of 1.7%. For example, in the 1950s, women had an average of 5 children; today that number has dropped to 2.7.

Twenty years ago, 70% of the families were extended or combined families and only 30% were nuclear families. Today, over half of the country's families are a simple nuclear family, made up of one or both parents and unmarried children.

Two out of every ten households are headed by women, most of whom are single. Of these women, one out of four does not have adequate formal education (3 years or less). Thus, it is clear that these households are a socially vulnerable group.

Economically, women who head households are affected by the same job instability experienced by women in general, but their situation is more poignant as they are the only income winners in the family.

Women have begun working outside of the home in massive numbers; today they account for a third of the country's labor force. However, as in other countries, they earn substantially less than men doing the same work. They work primarily in the service sector and the informal sector.

In the area of education, by the end of the 1980s, women achieved the same footing as men. However, this advance has not been reflected in better access to jobs, either due to external reasons (structure of the job market, traditional orientation of women's education) or due to the realities faced by women and their families (marital instability, difficulty in accommodating the role of worker with those of wife and mother, etc.).

Women have become more active in politics in a changing Chile, which, in today's world, means social validation for them as important players.

Women have become more active in politics in a changing Chile, which, in today's world, means social validation for them as important players. In addition, women are very involved in grassroots organizations in the areas of housing, health, education, work, human rights, etc. This explains the interest and willingness in both society and the government to include women in large-scale national tasks at every level.

It is important to remember, however, that to date, this has not meant more formal participation by women in government.

Women, the Family, and the Housing Shortage

Chile has 3.2 million families and a total of 2.4 million housing units. Of these housing units, 2.1 million are either acceptable or good, and the rest are inadequate. Thus, there is a net shortage of 800,000 units. The addition to this total of the number of houses in poor condition demonstrates that over one million families in Chile are affected by the housing shortage. To a large extent, families without housing live as lodgers in other people's homes, accompanied by the serious problems of overcrowding, crime, and promiscuity.

The housing shortage affects every sector of society, but the poorest families, both urban and rural, are the hardest hit.

Long-term lodgers are not a new housing phenomenon in Chile.³ Lodging is a housing strategy that has been traditionally used by the poor, particularly during hard economic or social times, such as the early years of marriage. However, the increasing number of lodgers over the last ten years is a matter of concern. This increase is a direct result of the lack of access to urban land experienced by the poorest and youngest sectors of society.

Aside from the many negative aspects faced by homes that take in lodgers, there are also aspects that ease survival. Sharing expenses, caring for each other's belongings, cooking for those who work outside the home, asking for food from one person when another needs it—these are expressions of mutual support among the lodgers.

But the family also pays a very high cost for living in this way. This overcrowding has pushed women to organize around the housing issue.

In effect, the lodger cannot be comfortable at home if he lacks an adequate living arrangement.

Similarly, it is difficult to exercise a parental role in these households. There are practical problems of space and privacy, interference with other families in daily activities, and the ongoing threat that the children will bother the others.

In short, these lodgers are exposed to the deterioration of individual and family relationships. Women have become particularly aware that working in order to acquire housing means protecting their nuclear families from the devastating effects of this living arrangement.

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³ Studies on this topic can be found in MacDonald, J., Greene, M., k.l. Lastra, C: HOUSING AND LODGERS: INTERPRETATION OF LODGING BY LODGERS, unpublished preliminary document, Corporación de Promoción Universitaria, 1988.

Housing Programs and Women

In light of the complicated and serious housing shortage problem and its undeniable impact on low-income families, the democratic government has implemented a large-scale housing construction plan. Its goal is to double the average number of housing solutions developed per year over the last ten years. The current housing system has programs that target people from different socio-economic levels. For the poorest families, there is a "progressive housing" program, which allows lodgers and low-income families to acquire their own homes in stages. It combines public resources with those the families can provide, such as savings, labor, organization, etc. This program has been enthusiastically welcomed by grassroots organizations.

For families with a slightly higher level of resources, there is a core housing program. Here, the State acquires dwellings through a bidding process and allocates them to families selected from a Core Housing Application Registry.

Although in theory, the country's housing policy gives men and women equal access to housing, in practice this is not the case.⁴

Low-income women are extremely interested in tackling the housing problems that affect their families. An analysis of the registry list kept by the Housing Ministry for allocating housing serves as proof of that interest: 57% of those registered to receive low-income housing are women, greatly exceeding the number of men registered. However, only 45% of the housing is ultimately assigned to women.

We can conclude from this that women, who make up the majority of the low-income housing applicants, face significant obstacles in realizing their goal.

Of course, the disadvantage faced by women in terms of the job situation that we analyzed earlier affects women's ability to save money. In addition, the selection process assigns points for "family burdens," which until recently worked against women; although men were assigned points for both wife and children, female applicants, particularly those on their own, were assigned points only for their children. Changes introduced in terms of selection criteria should, at least in the short-term, restore equal opportunity in this regard.

Women and Ownership of Housing

Another point that merits analysis is women's accessibility to ownership of housing from a legal point of view.

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⁴ See the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development: NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY: REAL AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON WOMEN. Doc. 248, 1989.

A married woman, regardless of whether she has a paid job, can obtain a house if the family qualifies based on income earned by her and/or her spouse. However, if a woman is separated or has been abandoned, she can obtain housing only if she alone can meet the income requirements.

Women still face serious problems in this area in the case of common-law marriage and separation. With common-law marriage, if a house is obtained in the name of one of the partners and that person dies, the surviving partner does not have any legal rights over the property. When a couple separates, the legal spouse is disqualified from getting a new house through the current housing system if the husband has already benefitted from a housing program. Current law must address these problems gradually if equal opportunity in housing is to be guaranteed.

National Women's Office (SERNAM)

Cases such as those described here illustrate the challenge involved in creating appropriate legal instruments not only for correcting the structural failures that deny women equal access to the opportunities that development offers, but also for positively channeling efforts by women's organizations and by women in general to consolidate the democratic process.

In an attempt to meet that challenge, the National Congress recently voted unanimously to establish the National Women's Office (SERNAM). It is a technical governmental organization with ministry rank. Its function is "to coordinate, plan, and propose policies, plans, and programs that seek to obtain full equality and incorporation of women in all national activities and to ensure the elimination of any discriminatory practices."⁵

SERNAM also serves as the coordinating agency for other Government entities. It focuses on women's organizations (mothers' centers, workshops, soup kitchens, development and peasant groups, etc.) as well as on those organizations where women are leaders and/or are actively involved (neighborhood councils, health committees, human rights committees, lodging committees, etc.).

SERNAM also contacts other labor organizations, women's groups that support women in the informal sector, women civil servants, and women in political parties.

Women see SERNAM as a way for the government to formalize its commitment to the women's issue and to have sufficient

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⁵ The National Women's Office, Press Office, ACTIVITY REPORT, Santiago de Chile, 1990 and 1991.

contact with the systems that provide funding in order to resolve "the real problems facing women" in the areas of health, education, housing, community facilities, control of violence, etc.

SERNAM has developed an action plan with these objectives in mind. It has programs to provide support for women heads of household, to prevent domestic violence, to provide information and training to women, and to study legal reforms to eliminate discrimination against women.

The Government of Chile is emphasizing participation in the concrete and daily aspects of life in order to consolidate democracy in the country. As a result of these policies, SERNAM and the Ministry of Housing have worked very closely together in terms of participation by women at the local level. The first result of this cooperation has been the correction of the housing application systems discussed earlier. This change, based on the opinions and experiences of women, provides equal opportunity to women heads of households. Another example is the joint preparation (SERNAM-Ministry of Housing) of information centers that enable the community, especially women, to identify how to find appropriate housing solutions. These centers complement the direct and field communications between Ministry of Housing professionals and the neighborhood groups.

Future Prospects

Women have always played a very important role in housing processes, whether formal (application for government programs) or informal (land seizures, taking in lodgers). Recently, however, the role of women has been changing qualitatively. While several decades ago women supported and accompanied men in these processes, today, women are increasingly heading them.

Formerly the administrators of the family habitats supplied by men, women have become the builders and creators of those habitats. Collectively and individually, women are making decisions, organizing, building, and, by doing so, are radically changing their position in the power structure within the family.

This new position frequently extends beyond the family habitat and into the neighborhood and its services. From their role as protagonists in community organizations, women enter the struggle to obtain the facilities and services that are so lacking in low-income neighborhoods. Women have focussed particularly on this need, fighting for community centers where they can do domestic chores that cannot be done in small homes or respond to collective needs of promotion, growth, and solidarity.

Formerly the administrators of the family habitats supplied by men, women have become the builders and creators of those habitats.

It is easy to see that, just as in the area of housing, greater involvement by women in the creation and construction of neighborhood services and spaces means a more balanced role for women in decision-making at the community level. Many goals that would involve a difficult and lengthy process if attempted through structural reform can be achieved through the daily exercise of democracy.

On-going collaboration between housing institutions, local and municipal governments, and SERNAM should result in an increase in information channels, greater access to resources, training, and support, so that women, both individually and collectively, can assume their part in the rights and obligations that development involves.

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The Experience in La Paz

Mabel Cruz
Council Member, Municipality of La Paz
Bolivia

Municipal Democracy in Bolivia and the Role of Women

Between 1956 and 1985, municipalities in Bolivia were governed by de facto regimes. These local dictatorships were structured as part of the Ministry of the Interior and, thus, were part of the repressive arm of the national government.

It is unproductive to enumerate all of the effects of this form of government. However, it is important to point out certain results of its methods, such as the gradual loss of municipal power. Municipal authorities were absorbed by the central government through the Ministries. Municipal activities and investments were changed and misdirected, and civic and neighborhood organizations were destroyed or altered and turned into instruments of political patronage for the benefit of the Mayor in power.

Strange as it may seem, women are virtually absent from this phase of municipal history in Bolivia. The reason becomes clear if we look at the character and requirements that local government officials had to fulfill. Except for some temporary replacements, women played no direct role during this institutional phase, at least in the case of La Paz.

In 1985, municipal democratization was achieved through indirect elections. After 30 years, the Municipal Councils were re-established. Mayoral appointees emerged from the Councils as a result of the new Whole Law of Municipalities; modifications were made to the law for the first time since 1944.

In 1985, the excitement that accompanied the comprehensive democratization of the country led several women to gain seats in the local Councils. In La Paz, 7 of the 12 Council seats were held by women. Women were not only actively involved in the struggle for institutionalization in the country but also in the struggle for qualification of the Municipal Government in the power structures of the political parties.

However, this phenomenon was not representative of the rest of Bolivia. Countrywide, women council members accounted for only 8% of all local representatives, and only two cities appointed women mayors for the 1985-1987 governing period. Since 1987, and during the last two municipal elections, which were direct elections, the situation became more complicated. Women accounted for fewer and fewer of the council members and today, in most of the municipal councils, only two of the maximum

In La Paz, 7 of the 12 Council seats were held by women. Women were not only actively involved in the struggle for institutionalization in the country but also in the struggle for qualification of the Municipal Government in the power structures of the political parties.

La Paz is moving toward a key democratic innovation. Women now meet the requirements for taking on the political struggle; two women candidates are currently getting ready to take part in municipal elections at the end of the year.

Neither legislation that has a global perspective and a macro-focus nor specific, short-term actions—both of which are aimed at resolving the city's main problems—have facilitated the creation, analysis, or implementation of programs and projects that directly benefit women.

number of thirteen members are women. During six years of municipal democracy, Bolivia has not had even one female mayor.

Without turning this document into a treatise on the political segregation of women, it is important to recognize that the conditions for obtaining power are different for men and women. The current situation is changing; the country can no longer ignore the fact that electoral slates need to have greater variety. La Paz is moving toward a key democratic innovation. Women now meet the requirements for taking on the political struggle; two women candidates are currently getting ready to take part in municipal elections at the end of the year.

Their support is based in the dynamic insurgency of women's groups involved in the struggles and campaigns to win urban rights.

Legislation and Action: Women and Municipal Problems

Legislation and action are the basis of all municipal activity. The Deliberating Council and the Executive Council are the operational arms of the local government. The Deliberating Council legislates and oversees, while the Executive Council programs and implements. Of the 13 local representatives in the Deliberating Council, two are women; of the 16 advisers, two are women, and of the 60 in the administrative apparatus, 50 are women. In the executive offices, there is one woman among the 20 members of the Upper Directorate; at the mid-level range, 40% are women; and at the level of workers 50% are women. There are a total of 3,000 municipal employees.

Within this context, we can see that neither legislation that has a global perspective and a macro-focus nor specific, short-term actions—both of which are aimed at resolving the city's main problems—have facilitated the creation, analysis, or implementation of programs and projects that directly benefit women.

If, in addition to this scenario, we consider the on-going political-ideological confrontation that occurs every other year (as a result of municipal elections held every two years), we will better understand that promoting legislation and actions that work to benefit women is both a long-term effort as well as part of the process of the institutionalization and development of a local government that is seeking to establish its own identity.

Women Working in Cities: Their Impact on the Urban Scene

The city of La Paz is typical in many ways of capital cities in Latin America. As a result of an accelerated urbanization process concentrated at the national level in La Paz, this city lacks many basic services and adequate infrastructure, a situation that hits low-income sectors particularly hard. Only 50% of the inhabitants of La Paz have indoor plumbing and 60% of those living on the "high mountain slopes" do not have surfaced roads to their zones or "towns." Sixty-seven per cent of public housing is done with community help (*Ayni*) and self-help programs; over 55% of the population are renters.

The number of street vendors in the city has grown enormously. In the last five years, this number has increased from 15,000 to 50,000 vendors in the city's central area; 78% of these vendors are women.

The income earned from this work allows families to survive, sometimes even to improve their situation, and it prioritizes the work done by women, giving the family a measure of integrity.

Despite the importance of the informal sector in Latin American cities, in La Paz there are no policies that provide those working in the sector with assistance, advice, or services. Furthermore, these women, organized in unions that are generally headed by men, do not go to the local government to claim their rights. They are content to maintain a cordial relationship that translates into low tariffs, taxes, and permit fees as well as corrupt bureaucratic permissiveness of their activities.

The "Merchant Associations" are made up of women entrepreneurs who cope with unemployment by using non-conventional options regarding financing, intermediation, and investment. They are the most complex socio-economic phenomenon in our municipality today. These women are not supported by a social policy that promotes their development, responds to their basic needs such as health, education, and housing, or encourages them to start any kind of business. Thus, they survive using unorthodox mechanisms.

Although other women's organizations contribute and work directly and indirectly with the local government, this does not take away the importance of the street workers, association members, and artisans who represent one of the most significant groups in La Paz.

The "Merchant Associations" are made up of women entrepreneurs who cope with unemployment by using non-conventional options regarding financing, intermediation, and investment. They are the most complex socio-economic phenomenon in our municipality today.

Other groups that play an important role in the city's community life are the Neighborhood Councils (*Juntas Vecinales*). As representatives of the outlying neighborhoods, their purpose is to ensure that investments and improvements reach their vicinity.

The number of women heading these Neighborhood Councils: none. The percentage of women involved in various campaigns and struggles: 75%.

The number of women heading these Neighborhood Councils: none. The percentage of women involved in various campaigns and struggles: 75%. Women are the ones fighting for community facilities, parks, and municipal public areas. Administration of the markets and drainage and road surfacing projects are also handled by women; they implement these projects with their own hands.

It is important here to include something on one of the main conflicts that women working in the cities face: the care and rearing of children versus jobs and occupations.

As a result of high birth rates, high fertility rates, and low literacy and educational levels, most low-income women in La Paz have a child or baby accompanying them by the time they have reached their productive ages.

If a failure by the municipality must be acknowledged somewhere, I feel that it must be here: the complete lack of child care facilities for women working in the cities.

And finally, it is important to mention one of the groups of urban workers whose working conditions are among the most appalling anywhere: the women employed by the Office of Urban Sanitation as street cleaners and sweepers and urban hygiene workers.

Despite the efforts of the recent municipal administrations to improve the exceptionally unstable conditions of these jobs, very few gains have been made.

This is one of the most shameful topics in terms of the city and of women. The "*Pichiris*" of La Paz are a pitiful example of the failure of an uncaring and indolent society and a municipal institution which for years have neglected to provide even the most basic services to a group of women who toil on behalf of the community.

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Successes and Failures in Municipal Action

So far this presentation has been a thoughtful, introspective examination of innovations and solutions to community problems, using research and studies done on the role of women in the municipality of La Paz as the primary source of information.

Our achievements will be marked by the following programs which are currently underway and which address the problems that have been raised:

- a) The Microenterprise Program (PROMI), which is in the initial project implementation phase, has the following objectives:
- Create an information system on the situation of microenterprises (merchants and artisans);
 - Establish a microenterprise training and advisory unit;
 - Organize the health system for the organized non-salaried sector;
 - Build communal support centers for working mothers with the following facilities:
 - child care and mothers' centers;
 - production exhibition center;
 - municipal procedures information center;
 - data banks for merchants (prices, taxes, permits, etc.).

At the Municipal Council level, the program will be co-financed through legislation governing regulation of street settlements. This legislation, which is currently being studied, will benefit women especially. It will help eliminate the administrative corruption with which they must currently contend in their dealings with the municipal government.

- b) Approval of the municipal districting, which is currently being studied. Its purpose is to actively incorporate all groups of working women according to their geographic location, either through exchanges of food for communal work, or in grassroots organizations such as Mothers' Clubs, artisan associations, etc.

The purpose of the recently-built District Centers and the District Councils is to do planning, coordination, verification, and implementation of projects and investments that will benefit the population. It will be extremely important for women to have an active presence in them.

- c) The recent creation of the Solid Waste Collection Enterprise (EMA) was the response needed to the

The recent creation of the Solid Waste Collection Enterprise (EMA) was the response needed to the conditions under which municipal street sweepers work. The EMA is working to improve the infrastructure of the services the women receive, providing them with regular general medical care as well as equipment and clothing suitable for their work.

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At the same time, the Council's Public Services Commission is preparing Industrial Safety Guidelines, whose objective will be to provide greater guarantees for municipal workers.

The Urban Arena and the Politicization of Women in Everyday Life

Mayumi Watanabe de Souza Lima

**Director, Development of the Municipal Urban Development Enterprise
Municipal District of Sao Paulo**

My task here is to present you with a synopsis of the changes Luiza Erundina's popular, democratically elected government is implementing in Sao Paulo, highlighting the issue of women and their participation in the social and political aspects of municipal development.

Sao Paulo is the Brazil's most important economic and business center. As a result, the city is now home to 12 million people; of these 12 million, 51% are women; 67% live in sub-standard housing; and 10% earn 30% of the income.

In order to help you better understand the situation, I will provide a quick overview of our municipality and the social and political conditions that limit and define the possibilities for action by the municipal government, which is currently headed by a woman.

Sao Paulo: A Battleground

Sao Paulo is the Brazil's most important economic and business center. As a result, the city is now home to 12 million people; of these 12 million, 51% are women; 67% live in sub-standard housing; and 10% earn 30% of the income. If we bear in mind that the city extends beyond the metropolitan area, then the population is actually closer to 20 million. In addition, some of Sao Paulo's municipal facilities and services serve other municipalities that have fewer facilities and are described as bedroom communities because their residents work in Sao Paulo.

Although the demographic growth rate has dropped, the city's population grows by nearly 300,000 each year; 180,000 of these are the result of migration.

Although this scenario is similar to what is happening in other industrial cities in Latin America, it has some important differences that transform Sao Paulo into an extremely complex social and political battlefield, which includes the limits of municipal power.

The ruling classes are, for the most part, made up of the nouveau riche and their financial and military ventures; they have also incorporated the middle class into their powerbase.

Socially, these ruling and middle classes rose quickly. The accompanying political repression prevented progressive forces of workers or other segments of society from expressing themselves.

At the same time, there was a change in the economic configuration of the municipality. It went from being an industrial municipality, from 1960 to 1975, to a tertiary municipality with a need for a highly-skilled technical workforce. Rural and semi-rural migrants, who came to Sao Paulo attracted by a large industrial job market, increasingly found a situation

where there were no jobs in the lower-paying service sector. This scenario illustrates some of the characteristics particular to Sao Paulo: on the one hand, there is a conservative class made up of the *nouveau riche* and their servants; they are a class afraid of returning to the social conditions of before, and they are large consumers of non-essential products who engage in speculation, particularly of land and real estate. On the other hand, there is a class of impoverished workers who have little experience with city life, that is, a class of people who are unorganized and alienated from their roots.

Beginning in 1976 and 1978, with the massive strikes by automobile industry workers in the metropolitan region of Sao Paulo and public school teachers in the city itself, a new segment of the population began to participate in the city's social and political life. This coincided with the collapse of the economic-military model. Together these events were reflected in the elections of 1978, 1982, 1984, and 1988. The ruling class, previously linked to the military, became frightened at the growing perspective that the salaried class would be in a position to confront the elitist government.

Erundina Becomes Mayor

Thus it is easy to understand the 1988 victory of Luiza Erundina, the Worker's Party candidate, as the result of widespread dissatisfaction. She represented protest and hope. She won without the support of either the middle class—the class who formed public opinion—or the upper classes. The low-income classes supported her in the expectation that they would obtain access to free housing since the strongest image of Luiza Erundina, as a member of the Worker's Party and the City Council, was that of her on television battling the police, fighting for the people's right to housing.

The conditions for use and occupation of urban land and community facilities and services in the urban area of Sao Paulo have very serious implications for the low-income population and even more so for the segment which comprises the majority of that population: women.

In order to understand these implications, we must explain the relationship between the impoverishment of the population, public investments, land and housing speculation, and the expansion of outlying unserved areas that lie within the municipality and the growth of slums, which are known as "*corticos*" and "*favelas*." Today, some 40% of the municipality's population live in these slums. If we add the number of people

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living in sub-standard housing, we are talking about approximately 67% of the total population.

The municipal administration of Luiza Erundina faced an extremely difficult task. On the one hand, she had to confront the opposition of the conservative sectors with efficient administrative activities from a legal, formal, and technical standpoint in such a way so as not to interfere with her main objectives and goals of changing social structures.

And, on the other hand, she had to start to change the living conditions of the low-income population, primarily starting with their housing conditions. The Erundina administration proposal seemed very simple: change the philosophy of public investment. Instead of prioritizing the techno-financial interests of businesses and their upper class bureaucratic cohorts, take the needs identified by the low-income groups and transform them into explicit demands of an organized population.

Women are the ones who are involved in the regional planning meetings and who fight for their "neighborhoods" to be given priority in obtaining public works; they are the ones who pressure the government and public institutions for services; they are the ones who point out the errors, delays, and the mistakes committed by the municipal government and by those hired by the municipal government.

The Changes and the Presence of Women

It is precisely through this proposal that changes are being made in the processes of planning, decision-making, and allocation of public monies. However, it is also clear that this historically dependent population, people who have been denied access to their rights as citizens and lack any identification with the city, will not immediately jump at an invitation by the Mayor to participate in the decision-making process. Furthermore, their past experience was one of deceit at the hands of patronage-practicing politicians. This was certainly a long-term proposal and the product of a new consciousness.

As the philosophy of political investment changed, discussions and decisions moved from the offices of administrators and entrepreneurs to the neighborhoods; from the technocrats and entrepreneurs to the younger technical experts new to public service and the neighborhood residents. Naturally women account for the majority of the participants in this process.

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The solutions to urban problems based on this active involvement by women have other origins and characteristics which are much more practical and concrete. These solutions go beyond the technical solutions that came out of the compartmentalization of power, and they demand linkage and integration of the services and facilities themselves so that these solutions can better respond to the people's situations and needs. Let me summarize these changes here: locate elementary schools near day care centers and health care centers so that women have to make fewer trips; change the operating hours of public services so that they respond to the needs of women who work outside of the home; and improve public lighting, a measure to ensure greater security, in strategic places where women and children walk, such as bus stops, school exits, dark areas in the neighborhoods, etc.

The very concept of community facilities has been modified. For example, the project prepared by the Women's Municipal Coordinating Office equips the building that houses the community centers with a collective cafeteria and laundry. These facilities provide inexpensive services for working women and serve as places where women can cook and clean for their families while also developing their collective consciousness.

The Changes in Technical Equipment

This process, which was prioritized by the municipal government, showed the need to begin training technical experts involved in the production and dissemination of information in order to socialize them and thereby foster popular participation as well as the transformation of technical/intellectual knowledge into a tool for achieving democracy.

We have much to learn from the process in order for our technical and administrative work to begin with the people and their realities. This new philosophy creates different kinds of conflicts because it is necessary to go through a process of destroying myths and of building a new and difficult relationship between those governing and those being governed, between technical experts and users, between residents of different neighborhoods, and even between neighbors.

Therefore, the municipal administrative and technical activity that seeks to change the use of urban space is intimately linked to activities that are educational and which help women understand the causes, solutions, and conditions of city life.

Each project or investment provides an opportunity for participants to experiment in an informal decision-making process that politicizes women as they become aware of their roles and responsibilities in changing the development of the municipality.

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Self-Managed Low-Income Housing: A Real Low-Cost Solution for Low-Income Populations

Carmen Carmona

Former Mayor of Cartago

**Financial Administrative Adviser, Municipality of Cartago
Colombia**

The Colombian State has been unable to effectively resolve its housing shortage. Using the popular election of mayors and the process of political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization, which has permitted community involvement, it has barely begun the lengthy process of approximating the extent of the shortage.

Direct responsibility for this task falls to the local governments. Accordingly, the Municipality of Cartago has two housing programs that will serve as a model for economic and social development.

Municipalities must have an infrastructure for basic public services and must become engines of local and regional development.

Inter-institutional cooperation and integration are the basic tools that will help resolve this socio-political phenomenon.

Municipalities must have an infrastructure for basic public services and must become engines of local and regional development.

The Urbanization Process and Housing Systems

Urban centers play an important role as catalysts of economic and social development. Through them, the State transforms its structures, moving from traditional structures to modern ones.

Accelerated demographic growth leads to two processes that are progressing at a dizzyingly rapid rate: urbanization (change of residences or social mobility); and modernization (change of activities). Both processes are motivated by the desire for economic improvement.

One typical aspect of the process has been the concentration of production and service-related activities in a relatively small number of urban centers in the country. This has created a modern economic structure. This sectoral and geographic concentration of economic development has also resulted in economic improvement among small groups within the population.

However, this unbalanced socio-economic development has a large impact on the urban and housing markets where the population competes for fixed goods, such as land and housing, according to their ability to pay.

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Thus, it is very important to introduce a mechanism for urban development that will result in a more equitable participation of the population in the housing market.

Since we can only make policy recommendations and offer solutions based on what we know about a subject, it is essential to

get officials, specialists, students, and influential countries interested in the task of solving the housing issue.

Urban development begins with people willing to pay for housing even when the majority are unemployed, underemployed, or self-employed. They find a way to enter this vast market where, by creating their own **housing system** but continuing to take into account its urban, social, and economic components, they have a significant impact.

In Cartago, there are various typical housing systems which, to a large extent, reflect the situation throughout Colombia and Latin America:

- a. **Poverty belts, or slums** along the periphery of the city, many without public services;
- b. **Squatter settlements** that have minimal internal organization and a clear physical and social identification, and generally occupy public and private lots, common lands, or properties in dispute;
- c. **Pirate developments or neighborhoods** sponsored by private housing speculators who offer lots on land that is often either unserviced or has a minimal infrastructure of very poor quality and is subject to flooding and other problems;
- d. **Groups of apartments** situated around a common patio and located in an intermediary area of the city, occupied by long-term, moderate-income residents; and
- e. **Residential complexes** that are private, very expensive, and with every modern convenience; in numerical terms, this represents the smallest percentage of housing within the provisional context.

The City of Cartago

The city of Cartago is located in the northern part of the Department of Cauca Valley at an altitude of 917 meters above sea level. It currently has 120,000 inhabitants.

Its economy is based on agriculture, livestock, and commerce.

Cartago also has a university center, which provides the city with a supply of experts in agricultural administration, coffee production, and accounting. In addition, it has some forty elementary and secondary schools.

Tourism is also an important part of the national economy, and so an Office of Tourism has been established within the municipal government structure.

The Struggle for Housing

Social organizations throughout the world struggle to have the right to housing recognized as such. Housing is seen not just as a responsibility of the people, but also of governments and other official organizations at both the national and international levels. As a result of these struggles, opportunities are being created for participatory approaches and for support of social housing policy initiatives. One of the goals of the document on the right to housing prepared by the IHC in Cartagena was to define these needs and demands. The main points can be summarized as follows:

- The right to housing is not limited to just the house itself. It involves the habitat as a whole, with all of its cultural, historical, social, economic, political, legal, ecological, physical, and territorial implications.
- This is a life-long right; its practical application must reflect and recognize the changing needs of people during their lifetimes.
- This right includes the respect of the cultural identity of the various social groups in any local, national, or international context.
- Defending the right to housing does not mean defending any particular system of land ownership; rather, it involves defending the right of productive enjoyment of a living space in a permanent and dignified manner and guaranteeing satisfactory use of an appropriate space with assurances of privacy and security.
- To ensure this right for everyone, housing must be accessible, both physically and economically, and must remain out of the hands of speculators. This includes elements such as access to resources and services (land, building materials, infrastructure materials); social and legal security regarding ownership; a safe, healthy, and culturally acceptable environment; and appropriate economic and financial conditions.
- The right to benefit from technological development regarding technical processes in the production,

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distribution, and consumption of construction and housing components.

- The right to control housing and living conditions, and therefore, the right to participate at every stage of the planning and implementation of housing and regional and urban development policies.
- The right to organize, associate, and meet without any interference by the State.

Self-Help Housing

The Municipality of Cartago has set forth various objectives for self-help housing:

- To provide the communities with the necessary tools so they can gradually assume self-help functions in planning, programming, management, implementation, and evaluation of development projects that will improve the quality of life for the residents;
 - In conjunction with the community, to develop appropriate urban designs, community facilities, and architectural designs, taking into consideration the community's cultural, material, and socio-economic characteristics and complying with all existing rules.
 - To fully recognize the experiences, skills, and abilities of each of the community members in order to create work groups that give each group their own dynamic.
 - To implement, to the greatest extent possible, community businesses or workshops responsible for prefabricating some aspect of the housing in order to minimize construction costs and reduce existing unemployment.
 - To train some members of the community in the construction of earthquake-resistant housing; this training would include all phases of construction, from laying the foundation to the roof. The objective is to train participants to build their own homes and prepare them to enter a job market which, although uncertain, can help boost their family income.
 - To disseminate and distribute construction technologies, that are appropriate to the seismic and economic conditions which, for demonstration purposes or through subsequent activity by the participants, are disseminated to the low-
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income population who normally build their houses directly or use empirically-trained construction workers, relatives, or neighbors.

- To construct low-cost earthquake resistant houses for low-income communities.

Toward a Housing Solution

Solving the housing shortage in the municipalities is an issue that falls within the process of decentralization of authority to the municipalities. It follows the principles of the Urban Reform Law and the basic principle that needs must be met where they are most felt. Attempts to address these needs must be handled by the chief municipal authority, that is, by the popularly elected mayor. Furthermore, low-income housing is seen as a public service and thus the State has responsibilities it cannot delegate, such as its obligation to subsidize those who, for economic reasons, cannot afford to pay prevailing private market prices.

The fundamental objective of every municipality should be to optimize and institutionalize urban development, using community input as much as possible, first delivering serviced lots and then gradually housing that meets the residents' most immediate needs. This objective can be accomplished by implementing a Comprehensive Development Plan.

In Cartago, we have several different kinds of housing settlements supported by the Low-Income Housing Fund of Cartago and the Territorial Credit Institute. These plans began with the purchase of lots, improving and developing them, furnishing them with public services on a community-wide basis, and then gradually building the homes. Some houses were built out of bamboo and others out of other materials; all were constructed in such a way that they could ultimately become fully serviced modern neighborhoods with paved streets. This was all accomplished with the participation of official entities committed to an urban development and planning policy that was aimed at avoiding the institutionalization of slums in our city.

Any policy aimed at solving the housing shortage must take into consideration the following:

1. There is no financing for low-income housing in Colombia. It is urgent that the national government establish and regulate financing for housing programs that are being implemented by the municipalities, bearing in mind that they should be long-term, low-interest programs.

The objective of every municipality should be to optimize and institutionalize urban development, using community input as much as possible, first delivering serviced lots and then gradually housing that meets the residents' most immediate needs.

2. The agencies responsible for housing must take the lead in the planning and implementation of low-income housing programs being developed by both the public and private sectors.
3. The municipality must seek and implement operational and financial mechanisms necessary to "subsidize" the implementation of massive low-income housing programs. This should be done in coordination with and as a complement to policies proposed by the Ministry of Development and the Territorial Credit Institute (ICT) in their low-income housing plan.
4. Programs should involve the gradual development of housing which, through self-help, helps reduce final housing costs within the policy of "massive programs of serviced lots."
5. There should be better coordination between the public and private sectors for joint development of low-income housing plans; this should be done through inter-institutional agreements that help to reduce the final low-income housing costs.
6. Comprehensive community development policies should contain support for the development of microenterprises along with massive low-income housing programs.
7. It is urgent that the Municipality implement programs that will institutionalize processes to grant legal title to irregular properties and include urban ordering projects and services.
8. Mayors should create land and materials banks that will enable the municipality to implement its massive low-income housing policies as well as serve as a tool to control prices of urban land.
9. The Urban Reform Law and other laws aimed at decentralizing policy should be given priority; they should be applied using instruments that enable the revolutionary legislature to operate.
10. Define the institutionalization of self-help as the instrument that will strengthen the municipality both socially and economically (Success Stories, Technological Schools, etc.)

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The intention here is to reclaim and reaffirm our local environment—how it exists, thinks, and acts—by designing planning activities that prioritize human and natural resources, by providing an incentive to popular creativity, and by

demonstrating vernacular techniques that use indigenous technologies to solve basic needs and thus acquire their own position in the national order.

Community Involvement: An On-going Practice

In Colombia, we have a tradition of COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT that is as old as our history itself. It has historically been practiced by indigenous and peasant populations under different names, such as: *minga*, *convite*, *mano prestado*, *pancoger*, etc. These practices are an important part of our popular culture and have had, and continue to have, a strong influence in local communities.

Community self-help, harvesting of crops, construction and repair of streets, and construction of infrastructure works are among the primary social-community activities that have already earned a solid place in our community history.

One characteristic is always present in these practices by our people: they are practices among equals. A family or community seeks the support or help of friends and neighbors for a project that will benefit either an individual or everyone. This is done within the framework of mutual help and construction of the common good. Many community projects have been completed this way, particularly in the countryside, where the State has been, if not altogether absent, at least lacking in its presence. An example of this are the vast colonization zones that have been included in the National Rehabilitation Plan.

In recent years, a number of successive governments have made an effort to rework this cultural value into the fabric of life in Colombia. Thus, the concept of COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT describes the movement to encourage and train the community in an effort to improve living conditions through active community involvement.

Since the Alliance for Progress, international assistance programs have incorporated this concept into every development project. In Colombia, this effort has taken on even greater significance since the 1950s as a way out of the circle of violence that has marked life in our country.

However, all that these programs serve to do is to effectively institutionalize an old tradition in situations to which technical elements have been added. But in many instances, they have distorted this cultural practice, a practice so deeply embedded in our people, by establishing relationships of unequals and

Community self-help, harvesting of crops, construction and repair of streets, and construction of infrastructure works are among the primary social-community activities that have already earned a solid place in our community history.

channels of communication that do not mesh with our conventions of horizontal collaboration.

When we talk about relationships of **PARTICIPATION AMONG UNEQUALS**, we are referring to those proposals that come from the top down, from the Institution to the Community, and do not respond to community interests. They are conceived in institutional offices without community-based input. In short, although the technique used is often impeccable, proposals are made behind the backs of community members, which then feel **no connection with those proposals and do not commit themselves to working with them.**

With a **PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRATIC** alternative—which we support—a proposal would identify the conditions under which participation can have an effective impact both economically and politically.

- The first step would be to recognize that the goal of pro-development efforts that have relied on community participation has been to create closeness rather than distance between the State and the community. Vertical relations among unequals have been established, creating a situation where some “know” and bring programs to others who “don’t know.”
 - For **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION** to really exist, it is important that it develop under egalitarian conditions and that it bear in mind that real and effective involvement occurs at every step of development and includes **decision-making**, not just asking for opinions or advice; planning and prioritizing; monitoring and follow-up; budget management; and evaluation of every project proposed so that it can be implemented with the help of the community.
 - Reducing labor costs or shifting responsibilities should not be the goal of any program that is developed with community participation.
 - Participation requires timely and full access to information and smooth communication mechanisms. Whoever has information and can control the flow of information has access to power.
 - Participation is active. Its purpose is to bring about change and social, economic, and political transformation, not to maintain the status quo. The **LOCALITY** is where true **PARTICIPATION** occurs.
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- Participation requires that communities be involved in training processes, have high levels of consciousness and organization, be able to assume risk, make coherent and consistent proposals, and do so as equal members in the process.
- From this standpoint, neither PARTICIPATION nor DEMOCRACY is a gift or a license to take action. They are, above all, a gain made through organization and an on-going movement fighting for our rights.
- Seen in this context, PARTICIPATION is an opportunity to gain power through cooperation, negotiation, and shared developments.
- We conclude with the statement that the concept of PARTICIPATION is continuing to gain strength in the Colombian political arena. Proof of this are the popular mayoral elections, the recently approved plebiscites and local referenda, the establishment of Local Administrative Councils for towns and districts, and the participation by consumers on the Board of Directors of public service companies.

Participation is active. Its purpose is to bring about change and social, economic, and political transformation, not to maintain the status quo.

Cartago and Housing

The Municipality still has not implemented the first community housing program as a self-help enterprise.

Although each year the budget appropriates 5% of the liquid budget and 50% of the trees and parks budget for low-income housing, there has been no local action regarding housing. The current administration is taking the Municipality's first steps in this area with two self-help housing programs that, combined, account for a total of one hundred (100) solutions.

Operation of the program will be subject to various areas of activity.

The program entails construction of 100 low-income units for 100 members of the housing committee who currently do not have homes. The project will be situated on a plot of land measuring 10,920 square meters.

Community self-help processes will be used to implement the project. The project beneficiaries themselves will promote, manage, finance (partially or fully), carry out, monitor, and evaluate its development.

Since the project is intended to resolve a collective problem (housing), it will be run on a non-profit basis with collective decision-making and full participation by all project beneficiaries. Beneficiaries will comply with the standards established for these activities, including using technical studies and adhering to current regulations.

One of the program's main goals is to build houses for the lowest possible cost, channeling the beneficiaries' savings and using available labor.

In order to do this, the program will promote and encourage training for community organization, participation, and integration as well as for the specific tasks that project implementation will entail.

The program will use the skills of those involved in the program and available outside resources, and apply techniques appropriate to this kind of housing solution.

In order to qualify as a beneficiary of this housing project, an individual must meet the following requirements:

- Does not belong to another organization with similar goals;
 - Neither the beneficiary nor his/her spouse owns real estate;
 - Must be a head of household;
 - Must have a family income less than two minimum wage salaries;
 - Must have lived in the municipality for at least three years;
 - Agrees to contribute pre-determined amounts of money until the completion of the project to cover the purchase of land, materials, tools, project expenses, and any adjustments of payments determined by the Assembly;
 - Agrees to pay any depreciation and debt interests contracted by the Municipality for the project;
 - Agrees to supply labor as required during the construction of the project;
 - Agrees to comply with and ensure compliance with current laws.
-

The Current Housing Program

A Self-Help Housing Program means that the community benefitting from the program makes and implements all decisions related to the program.

This program has two fundamental aspects: organization, management, and coordination; and technical assistance.

Organization is the key to the program's success. This is done through meetings which provide information as well as promotion and training for community members.

The program operates through various committees or groups, as follows:

The **Organizing Committee** groups project beneficiaries by block according to the number of houses on each block. The coordinator must work well with people and have a good attitude toward work (a natural leader). She/he serves as the liaison between the group and the leaders, organizers, and other persons; she/he also receives and distributes tools and work materials for the work on his/her block.

The **Procurement Committee** is in charge of pricing everything that has to be purchased in order to find the best supplier. The money is not handled by either the mayor or the municipal treasurer, but rather the community regulates the finances. The procurement committee has three or four members who rotate after each purchase or supply contract.

The **Activities Committee** promotes and schedules various fundraising events for specific neighborhood facilities, such as street paving, schools, health posts, community center, parks, etc.

The **Inventory and Tools Committee** keeps the card file and helps the project accomplish its objectives efficiently. It accounts for the bulk of the community work.

The **Accounts Committee** presents the financial books to beneficiaries during training meetings.

The **Public Relations Committee** handles participant membership, welcomes visitors, celebrates birthdays and other social events, organizes recreational trips, and helps beneficiaries learn to live as part of a community.

Financing for the program comes from the Municipality, with modest economic contributions and activities from members and

A Self-Help Housing Program means that the community benefitting from the program makes and implements all decisions related to the program.

assistance from other sources in both the public and private sectors.

The Municipality initially provides the money for materials and members, their labor. When the houses are finally delivered, beneficiaries are given terms of up to ten, fifteen, or twenty years, with fixed monthly payments, in order to buy them.

The Municipality as Promoter of Development

Housing is one of the fundamental issues of the low-income population.

Policy on the national and departmental level must be consistent with local policy in order to avoid duplication or the shirking of responsibilities from one level to another.

It is important that the community recognize that its democratic and active involvement is necessary in order for actions taken at the national level to be truly effective.

Community involvement is clear-cut: labor, fundraising, interpersonal relations, work committees, etc.

As a result of the political, fiscal, and administrative decentralization process that Colombia is currently undergoing, the Municipality has become the main instrument for promoting development. Thus, resolving the local housing shortage, one of its most pressing problems, is among the Municipality's greatest challenges.

It is important to use inter-institutional relationships between the public and private sector to make every type of resource available.

Participation of Women in the Community

Legal equality is necessary to laying the foundation for and supporting change in the condition of women in society. Legal discrimination can shatter the aspirations of women, exacting a terrible cost in terms of poor allocation of human resources as well as in terms of pure and simple human suffering. Legal ordinances that affirm equal rights give people the tools to fight discrimination by placing the irresistible power of the State behind the ideal of equality.

Despite the laws upholding equality, social and economic disadvantages often prevent women from exercising their legal rights. For millions of people, the power of tradition is stronger

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than the power of the law. The law is limited in its ability to change people's beliefs and attitudes. The law can serve as a guide for those who work on behalf of true equality or can serve as an incentive for those who are apathetic, and these are among the law's most important functions. But, as architects of utopias always end up recognizing, it is much easier to reach perfection on paper than in practice.

Education carries with it a certain status and can thus facilitate a woman's access to prestigious positions that will guaranty her an indisputable position in society.

In short, the best context for achieving a healthier society would be one in which women share with men and among themselves all aspects of available resources and opportunities.

The study of women's processes of community involvement involves two areas of analysis, both of which have been explored in this presentation. To look at the specific identity of the gender requires a detailed examination of the functions linked to the role of women in the primary or family group, which are projected as cultural elements that legitimize women's social duties.

These elements of cultural identity are the subject of a keen questioning process as women begin to develop new guidelines for social participation by getting involved with community groups. Thus, one important aspect that should be kept in mind when beginning projects with women in rural areas is that the process of organization tends to alter traditional patterns of female behavior and therefore the process of creating women's "female consciousness." This also influences a new image of women and their family relationships within a very difficult process of change, including forms of participation that were not previously recognized or legitimized in pre-established social patterns.

Changing and adjusting the cultural image of what is feminine is a slow process that involves many variables of modification of macro-social life (women's access to education, changes in reproductive behavior and in economic participation, etc.). On the micro-social level, the results produce information that identifies tensions on at least two levels: in intra-familial relationships, women must face the rules of male authority regarding their role as wives. In this aspect, women have begun to develop what we call an "intra-family negotiation" that revolves around an initial "familial rationality," while their participation benefits their domestic household, including the argument for equal rights for social participation, which should not be limited only to men.

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In terms of their role as mothers, women have a much broader area of activity with a more dynamic pace of transformation. The tension here indicates a critical position regarding the orientation of their education during childhood as a result of the rigidity and lack of communication between parents and children. What stands out is the active and formative role women seek to have in the task of socializing their children.

Secondly, the composition of women's organizations produces a lot of tension with the community. Our information shows that the resistance presented by those living in the regions creates a real barrier that organized women must contend with in order to guaranty the continuity of their group effort.

A central thesis of women's participatory processes is that the situation of women must be addressed comprehensively, both in practice and in theory; it must include every aspect that characterizes women—social, economic, family, and individual. With women, these factors are very closely linked, an indication of their complex functions in social and cultural protection and reproduction. These particularities are reflected in organizational processes and must be taken into consideration in any experiences that new social forces may try to develop in the future.

Many households, both locally and socially, agree that it is the active and conscious involvement by women to resolve the housing problem that has helped bring about efficient solutions. This is the result of women's strong administrative skills, their dedication, their sense of responsibility, and, above all, their ethics and honesty in handling resources and managing the construction process.

There is a lack of will on the part of the government to pass self-help low-income housing legislation. Thus we cannot continue to await changes in governmental policies and legislation, or the creation of a Ministry of Housing. However, we cannot simply ignore this desire by grassroots organizations; instead we must use what laws we do have to begin work on a local level, certain that we will be an example for the national government, formulating true low-income housing policies with the active and conscientious participation of everyone.

If we gain the political support of the executive branch, the Mayor, and the Council and combine it with administrative capacity and social pressure from civic and grassroots organizations, we will effectively resolve the problem for all those affected by it.

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Women's Work and Local Government

(Excerpt from the paper presented at the Seminar)

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The purpose of this essay is to contribute to the study of the role of the family in the growth of urban areas. It is based on the characteristics adopted by the families of Gardenia Azul, which is a neighborhood that is located in Baixada de Jacarepagua on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro and is involved in a process of land occupation and settlement.

Introduction

Working from the understanding that non-capitalist forms of production contain an inherent logic—a logic which in a capitalist system is not dominant but rather dominated—we feel it is important to study how these forms of production impact on urban area.

Among these non-capitalist forms of production we will focus on the domestic work women do for their families since this type of work generates use-value that is essential for the reproduction of the family work force that turns to the market for a salary.

We are interested in the family unit as a producer and consumer of urban space. It is in the urban sphere that we find the most complex expressions of the social division of labor. The established separation of productive work and individual work for consumption—imposed by the premise that salary makes it possible to acquire the consumer goods necessary for the reproduction of the labor force—does not in fact occur in every aspect of life under a capitalist system.

This logic of accumulation and segregation combines with local social and economic forces to create a specific dynamic. This specific dynamic occurs as much due to the existence of local government relationships between the Mayor's Office, the City Council, and businesses who benefit either directly or indirectly from the transformation of urban land, as to these power relationships vis-à-vis dwellers' daily lives.

Urban space tends to have a specific prioritized use and the demand for it constantly opens areas for new settlements.

Urban space tends to have a specific prioritized use and the demand for it constantly opens areas for new settlements. In order to stimulate the circulation of capital, the State acts upon urban space and changes it, reorganizing it in accordance with the historical movement of the need for accumulation, with the social resistance encountered, and with the population's capacity for struggle and political representation.

During the second half of the 1960s, the State interceded decisively in the urban development of Rio de Janeiro, directing its growth towards the vacant areas of Baixada de Jacarepagua. Thus, with the objective of ensuring specific settlement and urban design patterns in that region, the State prepared and approved a pilot urban development plan whose basic characteristic was the concept of nuclearization.

As the public works—planned and guided by the urban development pilot plan for Baixada de Jacarepagua, located west

of Rio de Janeiro—progressed, and the distances from the urban center lessened, land values increased not only in Baixada (Barra de Tijuca, Recreio dos Bandeirantes) but also in the large neighborhood of Jacarepagua (Taquara, Freguesia, Tanque, etc.). In the process, the residents of Gardenia Azul directly suffered the consequences of land values which increased proportionally to the benefits created by easy access as well as by the pressures exerted by political and economic powers.

We will now address the issue of the defense mechanisms used by the residents of Gardenia Azul, especially the women, in response to the new dimensions their neighborhood had developed within the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Gardenia Azul: The Struggle to Exist

The struggle waged by the residents' association to settle Gardenia Azul took place during a unique time in the country's politics. The 1960s had special meaning for the country and the state of Rio de Janeiro. It was in 1960 that the country's capital was moved from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia. In 1964 there was a movement within the military that brought about profound institutional changes in Brazil, restricting political freedom (extreme socio-political control, shutting down of the working class's channels of communication) and tailoring the State to fit the needs for capital accumulation of the country's most powerful financial and industrial sectors. The 1970s were also characterized by dark periods of political repression. With respect to the economy, during the first half of the decade, the country appeared an "island of peace" amid one of the most serious international crises, which peaked during the oil crisis. The rest of the decade was marked by a deep economic depression/recession and an arduous struggle by the civilian population to regain their rights.

It was during those twenty years that the struggle of the Gardenia Azul residents' association took place.

Gardenia Azul was established as the result of a parcelling of agricultural land as urban lots that began in 1950 and was re-initiated in 1955. It is located on a tract of land that had been a small lake but became a lowland (below sea level) when the Arroio Fundo and Anil rivers were drained. The first families arrived in Gardenia Azul in 1956 and the Association for the Improvement of Gardenia Azul was founded on September 11, 1960. Its main goal was to fight for the legalization of the settlement.

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The absence of a political ideology that would have tainted the neighborhood movement is evident at least up until the mid-seventies. The residents' struggles are directly regarded as a way of resolving the population's immediate and concrete problems and are thought out with the interests of the neighborhood's working class in mind.

In discussing this community's development, the work of the Women's Commission deserves a separate chapter which relates the community's story from the perspective of its members and is linked to the daily lives of each.

However, as the residents of Gardenia Azul faced their opponents in court, expecting the court to resolve the problem of the legality of the lands, it became clear that they also had to contend with the government bodies responsible for providing the urban services necessary for the survival of their neighborhood. Thus, within the limits of institutional bureaucracy, they began to present their claims to the appropriate authorities.

The absence of a political ideology that would have tainted the neighborhood movement is evident at least up until the mid-seventies. The residents' struggles are directly regarded as a way of resolving the population's immediate and concrete problems and are thought out with the interests of the neighborhood's working class in mind. It was the collective that demanded that the government fulfill its responsibility. On the other hand, the leadership did not consider itself apolitical; it solely and emphatically stated that the Residents' Association was not political and that it was not associated with any political party but that everyone in the neighborhood knew where and how to defend the rights of the working class.

Within this perspective we ask ourselves whether the population's struggle—which reached the height of its capacity for mobilization when it focussed on its own demands for urban services in a time of political repression—had produced the effect of a certain world vision in which many (if not all) things began and ended in Gardenia Azul. We believe this was a necessary phase in the growth and establishment of the neighborhood. However, given the country's political environment at the time and the importance achieved by local neighborhood movements, which had gained the right to a voice, for the sake of the continuity of the process, it was important to expand horizons, to join with other residents' associations and assume a role and a place in the city's greater scene.

The Women's Commission and Its Role in the Community

During the twenty years of struggle waged by the residents of Gardenia Azul, in every association decision, there was always a group of women with unbending involvement in the fight for the urbanization of the community. It was a united group in terms of community interests although its members maintained their individuality and differences as friends and neighbors.

In discussing this community's development, the work of the Women's Commission deserves a separate chapter which relates the community's story from the perspective of its members and is

linked to the daily lives of each. The commission was made up of the Women's Department of the Association for the Improvement of Gardenia Azul.

The history of the Women's Commission is not linear and ascending, and neither is the community's process of urbanization. However, notwithstanding the struggle's ups and downs, the presence and participation of women in the community was consistent in the upkeep of daily life. If no external activities were taking place at the time, internal work provided enough incentive to mobilize them while preserving their characteristic level of energy and involvement.

The Commission also created a Mothers' Club that met on Wednesday afternoons. During the meetings, women exchanged stories about children and flower-growing as well as messages of optimism regarding meetings with public agencies and the progress of the urban development process. It was a way of keeping informed and being in touch with the struggle.

Women also found the meetings to be a mechanism for improving themselves and their daily work.

In addition, Mothers' Clubs also presented the possibility of monetary compensation in case of need. It was a time of moving away from solving problems individually and learning to contribute ideas and ideals to collective problem-solving. It brought people together and made them feel part of a whole that went beyond the limits of the household and the family.

There was the concern that women—whose world view was more limited because they only went out of the neighborhood occasionally—be assured that going to the public agencies was something honorable and satisfying, although not all meetings were immediately successful.

This was so primarily because, despite the necessity of the work, situations still arose within the community where the women's outings to the city were looked upon as an opportunity for them to "show off their legs." Therefore, it was not only necessary to win at the level of urban demands, but also at the level of human demands, by gaining the trust and respect of their neighbors after earning the right, in their own homes, to be considered human beings by their husbands.

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Although the Residents' Association had other departments, such as cultural and social departments, it was the Women's Department that was responsible for distributing literature, delivering official communications and letters, and following up various processes. According to one of the women interviewed, this was "... precisely because men couldn't do it. For instance, if we went today, we would be told to come back tomorrow and then next week. . . . Men didn't have the patience to stay there all day without lunch . . ., lose a whole day's work. . . . How many women spent ten, twelve hours washing clothes and cooking in order to be there at 7:00 the next day, as determined as ever?"

Although the women came from different family and social backgrounds and each had her own personality, they all had one trait in common: their link to the family—whether their mother's or father's family or their new family with their husbands and children. The feeling that they were not free to decide where to live, or better said, the fact that a woman's disagreement with her father's or husband's opinion with regard to where they were going to live invariably implied abandoning the family, her loved ones, as well as the life they knew, made the women develop conflicting feelings about their own behavior. The solution they found was to remain with the family and to try to solve daily problems by doing twice as much work, both at home and in the community.

Women in Gardenia Azul found themselves united by a common interest: the transformation of the area to which they had come to live into an urban environment equipped with the minimum elements necessary for survival—a neighborhood with a quality of life adequate for human beings.

The various processes of identity-building experienced by the residents of Gardenia Azul had an impact on the community's own identity, its energy, and its way of being. Women in Gardenia Azul found themselves united by a common interest: the transformation of the area to which they had come to live into an urban environment equipped with the minimum elements necessary for survival—a neighborhood with a quality of life adequate for human beings.

Women, motivated by common interest, working for both their individual and the common good, worked with those in the public agencies who had the power to solve their urban problems. Questioning the lack of an urban infrastructure, the women questioned the uneven distribution of public resources in numerous city neighborhoods.

Everyday life gained a new flavor. With more constraints on their time, the women had to improve planning and to combine

domestic work with trips to the city: "That was the struggle of being a married woman with children. The community didn't have schools, it didn't have anything. We had to make a real effort to gain our worth. I took advantage of every task and every demand. . . . I'd go out and leave the kids with my women friends. I'd cook the night before in order to get out to the struggle."

Women's active participation began because men did not have the time. When the Association was founded in 1960, women were already part of the Improvements Committee; about 25 were the most active members of the movement. At the beginning, when the situation was more complicated and it was difficult to obtain positive results from the meetings, a large number of women would appear before the public agencies, applying a very effective pressure with their presence: ". . .and they would ask that 'for the love of God' we not bring so many women because their staff was horrified to see so many women in the halls. At first, a lot of the men would also come but since very often no one would see them, they gradually left. It made no sense for them to lose a day's work. Others lost hope."

The fact that since 1980 there has also been a Residents' Commission in the neighborhood in addition to the Association—made up primarily of the most active women—produced a deeply felt power struggle in the neighborhood that can be attributed to the community's need to give continuity to the urban struggle by following the path that best represented its interests. Residents were upset at the inauguration of the urban planning of public works when the Government's political party interpreted the existence of the project as the sole result of one Congressman's efforts.

The women considered this seizure of the community's effort by a political party to be not only an illegitimate act resulting from the abuse of economic power by a government that was able to solve the problem in a year's time, but also an expropriation of a final product that had taken years of effort.

The basic weapon the Women's Commission used when facing government power was the legitimacy vested in them by their roles as married women and mothers. In that sense, they deserved to be regarded as dedicated women by government officials and those in charge of government agencies since the women had demonstrated with their "patience and love" their strength as citizens. Women have used that survival strategy at various times throughout history.

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We believe that the local neighborhood movement in Gardenia Azul achieved its high level of mobilization because the proposals presented by the leadership at the time represented the residents' interests and because of the close relationship between leaders and the community which permitted the community a certain amount of control over the daily behavior of the leaders. It was through simple daily activities such as late-afternoon conversations, the exchange of opinions, trust-building, solidarity, and friendly advice that the community was able to build confidence in the community leadership.

Women's Work and Local Government

To think about the relationship between women and urban development is to think about our experiences as women and as residents of big cities. Generally speaking, theoretical studies, particularly those dealing with urban issues, refer to people as the urban population, inhabitants, residents, or the economically active or inactive population. There is no concern for humanizing the collective, for seeing it as a group of individuals, of human beings, of men and women with their different characteristics, building a culture and, in turn, being shaped by that culture. It is a male-dominated culture that neutralizes its other components by minimizing and canceling out the importance of women's roles and by turning history into a chronicle of the deeds of men who had "great women behind them." That is the history of social production.

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Traditionally, women are assigned to a domestic space, a private space, the interior side of life; men are assigned to the public space, to the exterior aspects of the world. Space in a capitalist city reinforces and recreates the conditions necessary to maintain the situation of women. Dividing the social life into public and private spheres imposes upon women and their family-centered world a private space, away from the public sphere.

In the meantime, technological change and progress and social pressures are constantly changing social premises and forcing issues generally regarded as private into the public sphere.

However, we believe that domestic space does not mix with public space and, therefore, both can and do undergo the effects of that separation. There are various contentious situations that occur between those two spheres that are reflected in mutual gains and losses. The attempt to establish limits between public and private spheres leads us to regard the tenuous quality of these limits and to think that contradictions and confrontations between public and private spheres are fundamentally carried out through

women. It is in that space that a visceral relationship is created between woman and neighborhood. It is she who experiences with greater intensity the relationships with the educational system, health agencies, the church, the bureaucracy and the neighborhood. On the other hand, the non-existence of these systems and the need to find individual solutions (cf. Oliveira, 1976:73) are reflected in greater demands placed upon women in terms of their time and their labor.

In our opinion, the difference between public and private space is found in the work that is done in those spheres. Work performed within the family for the purpose of the physical and emotional survival of its members, which is neither paid nor directly supervised, which begins and ends within the confines of the home and generates use-value, is work generated in the private sphere. The public sphere entails the work that generates exchange-value and goes into the market where remuneration is produced; the distinction between remuneration in the form of wages or in the form of payment for independent services is of no importance here.

Since the home is the traditional space assigned to women, it is women who more frequently and for longer periods of time use the urban services that exist near her household. In the private sphere, it is she who will make up for the absence of public infrastructure. Since housewives make up a significant portion of the population and remain in the neighborhood for longer periods, they are the ones who lend the neighborhood its dynamism or make it distinguishable. Since they sustain the urban struggles, they steer towards the State demands which are directly linked to collective survival and which also have a profound impact on their daily lives as individuals.

Therefore, as women struggle within the confines of their traditional roles, they use effective mechanisms to apply pressure, obtaining positive results while preserving a certain ambiguity with respect to their power.

In truth, society perceives that women's movements that struggle under the banner of mothers or housewives is of the private sphere. Thus, these movements do not break with traditional roles, and are therefore not perceived as professing deep social change. They are non-threatening, because the political aspect of the struggle is not immediately evident. And perhaps most of the women are not aware of the political power they wield. In effect, more often than not, what motivates them are their own individual needs.

Since they sustain the urban struggles, they steer towards the State demands which are directly linked to collective survival and which also have a profound impact on their daily lives as individuals.

While women's movements are mobilized by collective demands using effective pressure mechanisms within their traditional feminine roles, the feminist movement tries to break out of these roles and demonstrate that those demands have a two-pronged effect on women: in their condition as a class and as individuals.

We believe that this constitutes the fundamental difference between the feminist movement and other social movements, especially women's movements. While women's movements are mobilized by collective demands using effective pressure mechanisms within their traditional feminine roles, the feminist movement tries to break out of these roles and demonstrate that those demands have a two-pronged effect on women: in their condition as a class and as individuals. Steering that potential for struggle which women possess in the direction of a broader, more politicized objective, which involves solutions to their own oppressive situation and to social and/or economic questions, is a goal that the women's movement has long upheld.

To guarantee the continuity of the process of inquiry and renewal experienced by women, we believe that it is vital to transform views of domestic work and to include it in the productive sphere. First, women do a kind of work that has value. Secondly, although large numbers of women participate in formal production, that is, remunerated, salaried or non-salaried production, their contribution to production is underestimated (they earn less and "work to help out"). Therefore, it is not formal exclusion from production or the work they perform that undervalues women, but rather the social correlation that exists between woman and the natural being that turns domestic work into something "natural."

As long as women's work done within or outside of the family does not undergo a reevaluation on a theoretical and ideological level, there will be no tangible change in the role that women play in the world of men and no reshaping of relations within the family structure.

On the other hand, we note that if women were conceptually and theoretically excluded from the productive sphere, even when they worked to help with the family budget, in practice, studies done by the working classes demonstrate that in that sphere, women's activities in the home are recognized as work (cf. Fausto Neto, 1982:66). There is respect for their individual production and an awareness of its importance to the survival of the family.

We believe that recognition of domestic work within the working class results not only from its real need not to go beyond day-to-day work, but also from everyone's involvement (men and women) in a more collective work that will guarantee the preservation of the neighborhood, whether it is by digging ditches or by taking care of the neighbors' children for unexpected reasons (cf. Rodriguez, 1979:136-137).

The testimony of the women of Gardenia Azul illustrated that women in general rationally organize the workday by doing the heaviest work in the morning and having a certain flexibility in the afternoon. However, one day is not very different from the next. Obviously for those who work outside the home, life also offers a certain routine. There is, however, a basic difference between busy and idle time. For the housewife, it is not possible to make a distinction between "time to work" and "free time" (cf. Caldeira, 1981:14). Her life is a lonely existence, a continuous concern for others, a permanent willingness to give time to the family.

The absence of a schedule is one of the unique characteristics of domestic work; this is, however, nothing more than a fallacy, in that the housewife has to respond to the different schedules of the household occupants who are subject to defined comings and goings. What in fact occurs is not an absence of a schedule but the existence of an undefined schedule that is limited only by the total number of hours in the day.

Domestic work is distinguished from other forms of work by the isolation in which it is performed (cf. Ribeiro, 1983:25). Not being able to distinguish between the space in which it takes place and the space where production is consumed turns the housewife into a specific worker. Her isolation from the world is considered her freedom. Women, however, defy their isolation by trying to enhance their routines, whether by watching television, exchanging recipes, or participating in Mothers' Clubs. It is an attempt to get out of the house within the limits ascribed to a good housewife.

In the working class in general, salary does not necessarily permit acquisition of all the goods necessary to reproduce the labor force, given that salary is fixed below the exchange-value. Salary limits have specific consequences on the production of use-values (cf. Topalov, 1979:65). Unmet human needs generate non-commercialized forms of consumption that may be private or social, self-produced or "socialized." Domestic work materializes as a non-commercialized and private form of consumption by restocking itself with use-value within the consumption unit: the family. Consumption is not limited to the purchase of goods. On the contrary, the moment when a purchase is made is just the beginning of this process (cf. Preteceille, 1977:177). Consumption is an activity, a type of work.

The exchange-value of the labor force (salary) will tend to fix itself at a minimum level, relying on the different private, non-commercialized forms of work that are possible in the process of

The absence of a schedule is one of the unique characteristics of domestic work; this is, however, nothing more than a fallacy, in that the housewife has to respond to the different schedules of the household occupants who are subject to defined comings and goings.

consumption. That is to say, if the possibility for self-provision exists by using non-commercialized forms of food preparation, for instance, the commercialized cost of reproducing the labor force is reduced.

Thus, we can see that the logic which regulates domestic work, that is, the production of use-values in the internal circuit, in the family's economic system, is by definition outside of a salaried relationship and is therefore not a dominant but a dominated logic. At the level of the productive process, domestic work does not exist; it is not taken into account when calculating the Gross Domestic Product of any country; it is not remunerated either directly or indirectly; it does not enter the market in its virtual or material forms; it does not undergo any kind of transaction.

The point that we must emphasize is that non-capitalist forms of production are inherent to capitalism itself.

In Gardenia Azul, questions regarding the socialization of consumption arose independently of family divisions. Housewives in Gardenia Azul questioned the conditions in which individual consumption work was performed because it was increased by the fact that the State was not providing the neighborhood with the means of collective consumption necessary for the survival of its residents.

Thus, we have a situation where collective work for consumption can be undertaken by a capitalist venture acquiring a commercialized form of production or becoming the responsibility of the State in a non-commercial form of production. However, initially, immediately before the State subsumed the socialization of consumption, collective work for consumption is done by the community and is found and reflected in the neighborhood relations existing in working class communities. The local neighborhood movements arising in those communities tend to demand that the State correct the deficiencies in collective infrastructure in order to achieve a real decrease in the collective work for consumption done by all.

Conclusion

Urbanization and Neighborhood Movements

The local neighborhood movements that arose or were revived at the beginning of the mid-1970s serve as a barometer of the political, economic and social life of Brazil, especially in the large cities where they were organized. Generally, those movements call for a better distribution of the resources allocated to the

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urban development process in the city as a whole and in the neighborhoods in particular.

The working class neighborhood movements contribute to each other "at the same time, as forms of expressing solidarity and community cohesiveness and as struggles for better living conditions for the poor" (cf. Singer, 1981:83). It is the population with the fewest resources and the least power that must exert the most social pressure to demand that the State provide basic infrastructure, taking into account that their neighborhoods will benefit least from decisions made by those in power with regard to where and how to distribute resources.

The needs felt by the population arise from conditions inherent in the spatial expression of capitalist development: the city. At the outset, industrial cities did not have sanitation services, water systems, electricity, trash collection, collective transportation, health clinics, police stations, or schools. These services were obtained or resolved individually according to social class.

Collective transportation, basic infrastructure works, health clinics, police stations, and schools are basic needs for the urban population's survival just as much as housing, clothing, and food are. In general, these services are located in the oldest or more central areas of the city and the competition for those valuable spaces between real estate capital and other commercial activities is very closed.

Following the development of working class struggles waged by local neighborhood movements leads us to observe that the issue of urban infrastructure emerges as a basic demand. It is the quality of urban neighborhoods that gives value to housing as a commodity.

The fulfillment of urban quality in this environment improves the living and working conditions of residents' day-to-day lives both as isolated individuals and members of a family.

One possible interpretation of the struggles and victories of the Gardenia Azul Residents Association allows us to observe the diverse priorities given to collective needs and how these needs have been met by urban services. We begin by assessing the handling of those needs which could be characterized as basic, that is, self-help housing and its legalization, as well as the linking of the neighborhood to other points in the city via the bridge over the Anil river. We continue with the development of water and electricity distribution systems. Finally, we arrive at the revitalization of agreements to develop a sports arena. This

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developmental progression reflects the prioritization of the pressing needs which are experienced daily by the community and which feature varying degrees of difficulty in terms of their resolution.

The local neighborhood movement of Gardenia Azul was driven by the relentless search for legality, by the "right to pay taxes," and by a transition from the clandestine to the official.

The local neighborhood movement of Gardenia Azul was driven by the relentless search for legality, by the "right to pay taxes," and by a transition from the clandestine to the official. Residents wanted to become an official neighborhood with legal certificates and all, and they showed great pride in having city tax payment receipts to show off as symbols of their accomplishments as if they were birth certificates.

The residents did not question ideological domination of the system and did not ask to change the rules of the game. What is perceived is a need to belong in a formal way, legally, with clearly defined limits. Questioning takes place in a rather immediate form; it is important, for instance, to buy a house in the open real estate market and not in the parallel market although this means paying additional rates. This is so because paying the higher rate increases the value of the transacted commodity through relations established in the capitalist game that involve these rates. It is as if by paying, the possibility or guarantee exists that in case something goes wrong, one would have someone to resort to and complain to, and that someone would be the State, that all-powerful entity that should solve the problems of the working classes as the rich have their own solutions at the level of the superstructure. It is a deep faith in the rights they have achieved, although everyday, they experience a lack of respect for those same rights.

Urban infrastructure directly affects domestic work by altering the nature of household work and the planning necessary to keep the household running.

The victories achieved brought a mood of celebration to the neighborhood, and the proximity between the object of the struggle and the everyday tasks they undertook were incentives to remain in the battle. In other words, when a resident, in this case a housewife, pressed forward in the process of demands before the government, she clearly knew what it would mean in terms of her daily work to have running water in her house. Mobilization took place at the level of clear and achievable results. Urban infrastructure directly affects domestic work by altering the nature of household work and the planning necessary to keep the household running.

We want to point out here that the presence of large numbers of women in the neighborhood movement is not solely a function of their flexible schedules or their free time. We have already seen that their schedules are not that flexible and their time not that free. Rather, since they are the ones who more directly and on a

daily basis execute the work for individual consumption that resupplies the family, they are also the ones with the greatest interest in socializing the production conditions of their work by changing the urban environment where it takes place.

In the Gardenia Azul movement, the homogeneous character of the urban demands aired in the public sphere by women who are traditionally responsible for the domestic, private sphere creates the conditions for political transformation within the community. Their demands are clearly geared towards demonstrating that "the State's lack of efficiency is not a technical inefficiency but one that is politically explainable" (cf. Ribeiro, 1980:125).

The housewives of Gardenia Azul do not define themselves as feminists, and in fact they are not feminists since they break with traditional roles without that being their objective. On the contrary, they make use of their roles and reinforce them in their struggles. We are not diminishing their participation; we are stating a fact. However, we think that the existence of the feminist movement and its ties to the mass media, as well as its step-by-step outreach to women, bolsters greater freedom in women to come and go, gives them greater confidence in themselves and in what they are capable of doing, and changes the way they are received by directors and public agency heads that know and are well aware that "women are changing."

It is in the context of this cultural change that we consider the influence and importance of the feminist movement in the Gardenia Azul movement.

At various levels, the Gardenia Azul Women's Commission took responsibility for bringing the neighborhood's urban development problems to the public authorities directly linked to the problem. The autonomy that they had in the private sphere was transposed to the public one with the support of the community and the legitimacy of their roles as "housewives," married women, and neighbors—roles they assumed because of their daily experiences with the urban problems to which they sought solutions.

We ask ourselves: What transformations took place in the women's personalities? Despite doubts regarding the limits of these transformations, we clearly see that they are influencing the development of the women in the community. In general, we believe that issues such as "where will we go" or "how will we get it" will be resolved in each of our daily lives, in our struggles with government, with our domestic life, and with the male stereotypes of what is feminine that are imposed on us by the ideology that inundates that new reality.

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INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION AND LOCAL PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN

This third section will address INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION AND LOCAL PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN.

For the sector of society made up by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or Private Voluntary Organizations, their best work is done at the local level. The connection with local government guarantees them legitimacy in the eyes of the beneficiary community and credibility or confidence in the eyes of outside funders.

This sector, which is made up to a large extent by professional women in various fields, has not underestimated the active participation of women in social development projects; on the contrary, their determination points to a strengthening of that contribution.

Patricia Palacios

Women and Microenterprise in Paraguay

Astrid Gustafson
Architect
Paraguayan Assistance and Development Foundation

Introduction

We are all gathered together today under the motto "Women and the Municipality." Our very presence here in Quito is in some way an affirmation of the increasingly urgent need for joint efforts among Latin Americans so that this concept of the Great City may comfortably encompass the mosaic of our realities—in which women shine with their own lights.

The process of profound change that humanity has been experiencing in these final years of the 20th century finds the Latin American part of our continent immersed in a process of accelerated urbanization, incipient political democratization, and the growing impoverishment of the majority of our population which coexists with very small groups with high incomes and standards of living.

Traditionally, the development model was based on a dual concept: rural society-urban society and agricultural society-industrial society. Development was conceived as the step from an agricultural rural society to an industrial urban society. However, the recent history of our countries shows us that the transformation from rural societies into urban societies is not enough to achieve industrial and economic development. Our poverty-stricken towns, new villages, and slums present us with the new and pressing problems of overcrowding, poor hygiene, social neglect, and unemployment.

More and more, the municipality is taking on not just the local problems of human settlements, physical infrastructure, basic services, parks, land use and the law, but also other actions under its authority aimed at helping the population to achieve well-being and growth.

We maintain that **development** consists of resolving the social problems that are associated with poverty in the areas of health, nutrition, housing, education, and employment.

Of these five typical areas of development, only one provides a way out of poverty: employment. Once employed, one can purchase improvements for health, education, and housing.

This social, not merely economic, framework is the reason for our unrelenting struggle to improve unstable jobs, to raise incomes, and to create new job sources among the poorest sectors of our societies in Latin America.

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Women and Employment

One of the most significant transformations that has occurred in the labor force in Latin America over the last twenty years is the growing participation of women in the labor market. The report on Economic and Social Development in Latin America put out by the Inter American Development Bank (1987) clearly shows the growing entry of women into the labor market.

While the number of men in the labor force in the region doubled between 1950 and 1980, the number of women more than tripled during the same period. For certain regions, the period between 1980 and 2000 will show an even greater increase in the participation of women in the workforce, particularly in Central America and those areas where urbanization has been slower (IDB, 1987).

According to a study by Marguerite Berguer on women in the informal sector, this increased participation by women is the result of three important social changes that have occurred over the past 20 years:

- The structure of Latin American economies has changed through increasing levels of urbanization, in that more women than men are migrating to the cities;
- Education has increased the economic opportunities within women's reach;
- There is a growing need for women to earn income in both nuclear families and families headed by women, whose numbers are increasing in Latin America.

Women and Microenterprise in Paraguay

In addition to economic circumstances that are bringing women into the labor force, it is important to recognize that women's lower educational levels and strong ties with child-rearing tasks in the nuclear family more frequently steer them toward the "informal sector" in their search for income, specifically toward informal microenterprises where the work is more easily adapted to women's situations.

Informal microenterprises are units that produce goods or services, made up by self-employed workers and staffed by unpaid relatives and paid non-relatives.

They are generally labor-intensive structures, with little physical infrastructure and limited access to financial resources.

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Microenterprises in the informal sector also accept less-skilled and inexperienced workers, training them to carry out their specific tasks and preparing future entrepreneurs, thus accomplishing an important social task.

The most striking characteristics of microenterprises are not found so much in their size as in their:

- lack of access or capacity to take advantage of modern business mechanisms, such as credit, insurance, legal protection, etc.;
- illegal or extra-legal status; many microenterprises operate without licenses, do not pay taxes, and do not provide their employees with any benefits;
- poor technology and training and, therefore, low productivity.

Informal sector microenterprises in Paraguay are no different than in the rest of Latin America; it has become the employment alternative for the excess labor who cannot be absorbed by the formal sector in industry, commerce, agricultural and livestock activity, and services.

Microenterprise, the Municipality, and the Community

Its importance as a major employer and its undisguisable presence in our Latin American cities make microenterprise in the informal sector an area where political, economic, and social interests must interact and therefore a topic that our municipalities must address. The challenging magnitude of the task to create income sources appropriate to the population does not always coincide with the availability of municipal resources in terms of finance, staffing, technical expertise, or politicians. Thus, joint efforts of various social organizations become more important and I believe will increasingly contribute their knowledge and efforts toward the common goal of sustained development.

The Paraguayan Assistance and Development Foundation, a non-profit group founded in Asunción, Paraguay in 1985, works with the urban informal sector in seeking ways to increase family income, to guarantee unstable jobs, and to create new job sources.

There are no exact figures on the relationship between microenterprise and employment although there are calculations

that can help us make certain estimates. For example, the evaluation of the impact of the Paraguayan Foundation's Microenterprise Support Program done by PREAL/OIT (April 1990) shows that each microenterprise generates an average of 1.22 jobs; after one year in the program, this figure rose to 1.99. This represents a 63% annual increase in the number of jobs.

The final evaluation of this program done by UNDP found these figures to be accurate. This permitted the Paraguayan Foundation to project the results of the evaluation and estimate that with regular assistance over a two year period, each microenterprise in Paraguay will create 2.5 new jobs. With this basis and the experience accumulated systematically over its five-year existence, the Paraguayan Foundation has developed a plan to create and strengthen 100,000 jobs with microenterprises in the country's central area during 1990-1993 (the plan's 1990 goals have already been surpassed).

Attention to Women Microenterprise Operators

In the course of its work, the Paraguayan Assistance and Development Foundation has paid special attention to women, who comprise 60% of those served by the Microenterprise Support Program. The evaluation report on the support program for women microenterprise operators, done by Arelis Gómez in September 1990, shows the program's strengths in terms of providing support for women.

- The Paraguayan Foundation's credit and training programs have facilitated access to financial and technical resources which these microenterprises would otherwise have been unable to obtain. The population served by the program is among the poorest in the country and prior to participation in these programs, they had either very limited or no access to credit and training resources.
- Surveys indicate that 43% of the women and 53% of the men had no alternative credit source when they entered the program; the rest participated actively in informal sources. 57% of the women and 50% of the men used informal credit sources to finance their needs for capital, primarily from moneylenders (40% of the women) and suppliers (25% of the men). For 88% of those interviewed, relatives and friends were the main source of credit to begin a business.
- The microenterprises that participated in the program are all very small: 86% of the microenterprises had no

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In those areas that employ the most women, seamstress shops generated the most jobs—1.53 jobs over a one-year period.

Women workers first funnel the successes of their businesses into improving the quality of their surroundings, which translates into higher family income. Men, on the contrary, channel a larger portion of their income into improving their businesses, which, in the long term, will be of greater benefit to their standard of living.

employees when they began the program, and the remaining 14% had less than five employees. The amounts of the loans were also small: 45% of the first loans were less than 100,000 Gs (US\$ 100) and 91% were less than 300,000 Gs (US\$ 300). Women tend to borrow smaller amounts, which indicates that their businesses are smaller than those belonging to the men.

- The surveys indicate that there has been a significant increase (inflation notwithstanding) in the levels of sales, fixed capital, and number of jobs created in the microenterprises served by this program. However, there are differences in the degree of impact when figures are compared in terms of type of microenterprise and sex of the owner. Women tended to have more moderate growth in levels of sales and capital compared to the men in both trade and industry.
- In terms of employment, more women than men had no employees when they began with the program and used family members as employees when they began to grow. In those areas that employ the most women, seamstress shops generated the most jobs—1.53 jobs over a one-year period.
- The more moderate growth among women seems to be due to various factors:
 - a) Women are less educated and thus less informed about what needs to be done to handle increased production: only 64% of the women have any formal elementary school education.
 - b) A woman's dual responsibility of running both the household and the business limits the amount of time that she can dedicate to the business and its growth.
 - c) Women tend to allocate a greater percentage of their profits than men to meeting their families' basic needs and a smaller percentage for reinvestment.
 - d) Women's fear of assuming the risks involved in expansion and of the responsibility of larger loans limits their ability to produce on a larger scale and thus move from subsistence production to more commercialized production.

The report's conclusions contain more details, but primarily it paints a general picture of the specific characteristics of women workers who first funnel the successes of their businesses into improving the quality of their surroundings, which translates into

higher family income. Men, on the contrary, channel a larger portion of their income into improving their businesses, which, in the long term, will be of greater benefit to their standard of living.

As we can see, the difficult balance will possibly lie in the middle of this abstract couple, where the woman attends to the urgent and dramatic needs of the present and the man works to ensure the future.

Municipal Subsistence Programs and Women's Organizations in the District of Ate Vitarte 1984-1990

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It is an interesting task to describe and analyze the beginning of the process by which municipal management experience inspires women to participate in the political process and eventually results in the formation of women's organization.

The objective of this document is to disseminate and discuss the relevance and importance of municipal programs that are sustained by the participation of women, and, based on the results, to conceive a role for women in development beyond the tasks considered practical for them to take on.

This document first describes Ate Vitarte, a populous district within metropolitan Lima (the capital of Peru); second, it discusses the locality's municipal governments since 1980; third, it discusses the development of municipal subsistence programs and their relationship to established women's organizations; and finally, it contains a number of conclusions.

It is important to mention that the basic information is the product of work done by the IDEAS Center's Urban Program in its capacity as technical advisor to the district municipality from 1981-1986, and of work done directly with nutrition and health organizations from 1984 to the present.

The District of Ate Vitarte

The district of Ate Vitarte is located east of metropolitan Lima. It plays a dynamic role in the area as a result of its industrial and commercial activities and its strategic location in terms of communication, access to food product supplies, mineral resources, general production, and raw materials for Lima's industries.

Estimates are that by 1990, Ate Vitarte's population will total approximately 200,000. The settlement pattern is characterized by low-rise structures, low and medium density, unplanned and uneven land use and suitability, slow dwelling construction, deterioration of the oldest dwellings due to a lack of maintenance, and uncompleted construction sites. In recent years, there has been a generalized tendency toward squatter settlements, resulting in a large number of low-income settlements.

Extensive Social and Community-Based Organization

One characteristic common to cities in Peru, primarily in urban areas, is the existence of a system of social and community-based organizations based in neighborhood residential units. An important component of the system are the housing

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organizations, which are considered to be core organization and planning units.

The district currently has 128 of these organizations, of which 8 are residential developments, 8 are residential centers, 56 are housing associations, 12 are pro-housing associations, 11 are housing cooperatives, and 33 are low-income settlements.

These organizations focus primarily on issues of land use consolidation; on the provision of basic services such as water, sewerage, and electricity; and on the construction of streets, sidewalks and community facilities. They play a major role in legalizing land tenure and general urbanization projects, leaving the construction of housing to individual initiative and funding. The communal decision-making process (institutional executive structure and assemblies), traditionally based on male-held lot title, is opening up to women, especially in the new low-income settlements.

A second important component of this system is the presence of nutrition and health organizations, which are made up mainly of women. These organizations have become increasingly stronger and more representative of the population. They have appeared primarily in low-income settlements during times of economic crisis and alarming health and nutrition conditions. With the worsening of the country's general situation, the number of organizations has increased in urban residential areas in sectors with scarce resources (cooperatives and housing associations). These organizations are:

a) Glass of Milk Committees (*Comités de Vaso de Leche*), created in the district in April 1984 as a municipal program that targets children up to five years of age and pregnant and nursing mothers.

Between 1984 and 1989, the number of committees grew from 91 to 441. They served 39,134 people, including children from 0 to 13 (the age limit was raised in 1985), pregnant and nursing mothers, elderly citizens over 60, and those suffering from tuberculosis.

In 1986, the Glass of Milk District Committee was founded, and at the end of 1990, the first District Convention was held to reorganize the new Board of Directors.

It is important to mention that since July 1990, the District Headquarters has been responsible for administering the Glass of Milk Program under the auspices of Provincial Municipal

Resolution 005-90, in order to resolve the coordination conflicts with the district municipality.

b) The Self-Managed Popular Cafeterias and Family Kitchens, established in 1982 by women who organized in the poorest neighborhoods and settlements, which were the sectors hardest hit by the on-going and growing economic crisis.

In 1985, the District Coordinating Office was established; this was followed in 1988 by District Headquarters for the Popular Cafeterias and Family Kitchens. Currently there are 102 affiliated facilities, representing a total of 11,070 members. The headquarters is part of the Coordinating Office of Cafeterias of the Eastern Cone and of the National Coordinating Office of Cafeterias.

c) Mothers' Clubs began in May of 1983 with support from the central government. Each organization provides cafeteria services, runs some kind of productive workshop, and has a Non-Academic Early Education Program (PRONOEI) for children under six years old.

The Association of Mothers' Clubs, an entity designed to centralize the clubs, was founded on February 7, 1990. It has 112 member clubs located throughout the District, serving 7,200 mothers.

d) Health Committees, which were formed in 1984 under the name of "popular medicine chests," have a central association that currently has 15 affiliated committees. They carry out popular educational activities and train health promoters in preventive health activities, primarily targeting mothers and their children.

A third component is the centralized associations that exist in industry and business. The Organization of Market Workers and Street Vendors (FETAMAV) is the oldest (dating back to the 1970's). The Association of Small Manufacturers (APIAC), which is relatively new (established in 1987) has 160 members, primarily textile manufacturers, shoemakers, carpenters, machinists, etc.

A fourth component are the peasant associations "San Juan de Pariachi" and "Agricultural Producers Gloria Alcanfores." These were founded by rural workers and growers, most of whom are small landowners who own and cultivate between 1/2 and 1 hectare.

The Self-Managed Popular Cafeterias and Family Kitchens [were] established in 1982 by women who organized in the poorest neighborhoods and settlements, which were the sectors hardest hit by the on-going and growing economic crisis.

There are also other entities with various focuses, such as: cultural (Lions Club), youth, sports (volleyball and soccer leagues), geography (primarily from the departments in the Sierras: Ayachucho, Cusco, Junín); and religion (the Catholic and Protestant churches).

Lastly, it is important to point out that Ate Vitarte has historically had active social movements, including the struggle to establish the eight-hour work day (at the beginning of the century), the popular movements to defend the right to unionize during the 1970s, and the popular movements of the homeless in the 1980s.

The Municipal Political Life of Ate Vitarte

During the 1980s, after 12 years of military rule, there was a significant democratic opening. In 1980, the constitutional mandate for the democratic election of local governments was restored. Decree Law 051 restored the function of planning to local governments, giving them the role of manager and executor in the management of development in their territories.

In November 1980, the United Left Front won the municipal elections in the Ate Vitarte district, thus beginning its first term of municipal government (1981-83).

During this period, development plans were prepared and implemented. Their operating budgets were based on their own resources (revenue collection was given priority) and on those of the central government. Efforts were made to coordinate these plans with those of the Municipality of Metropolitan Lima and to involve popular participation. Two Open Town Councils took place during 1983, debating and ultimately approving the Development Plan presented by the municipal authorities. It was this plan that served as the basis for the First District Development Plan.

This dynamic of bringing the municipal government and the population together proved decisive for the United Left Front's reelection in 1984. There was massive voter turnout in Ate Vitarte (54% of the total voting population).

In 1983, leftist forces reached power in the municipal government of Metropolitan Lima and in 19 of its 40 districts. During this period, the process of social organization became stronger, expanding its work in health and nutrition programs through an Emergency Plan based in three programs: Health, Popular

In November 1980, the United Left Front won the municipal elections in the Ate Vitarte district, thus beginning its first term of municipal government (1981-83).

Cafeterias, and Glass of Milk (this last program had the largest coverage).

In June 1984, the new law governing municipalities was passed (DL 23853). It established a new legal framework for the organization and operation of the municipalities. It gave citizens the right to vote every three years, established the population's right to be informed, and supported the creation and operation of Neighborhood Councils or Communal Committees; these committees were organized as consultative bodies (although they were part of the municipal government).

The United Left's second municipal term in Ate Vitarte (1984-86) was marked by a closer relationship and greater collaboration with the metropolitan municipal government.

The initial experience of local planning was continued and strengthened. Open Town Councils were followed by popular assemblies organized by neighborhood and by zone (including several neighborhoods). The Office of Emergency Planning, Health, and Nutrition was set up in the Municipality of Ate Vitarte to manage the creation of Health Committees, Glass of Milk Committees, and Popular Cafeterias. In February 1985, the first District Development Plan was approved as the instrument to set standards for local management.

In the municipal elections of November 1986, the people of Ate Vitarte again voted for the United Left Front, clearing the way for the organization's third term in municipal government (1987-89).

However, during this term, political problems and disagreements within the United Left Front became increasingly serious and more frequent and had an important impact on the community.

This situation ultimately led to electoral defeat in November 1989 by the Democratic Front (FREDEMO). FREDEMO was a right-wing party whose candidate was a woman who enjoyed a certain amount of support from the Mothers' Clubs and Family Kitchens that were supported by the Popular Action political party during the Belaúnde government (1980-85).

The first year of FREDEMO municipal government has shown a tendency to increase control and supervision of the nutrition organizations, primarily of the Glass of Milk Program. Under the new government, there has been an increase in the number of problems between the representative organizations and the population as well as problems of coordination within the Political

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Front itself. In addition, there is an obvious lack of understanding as to the real conditions in the district and a lack of initiative in preparing development proposals. There continues to be an economic deficit and shortage of technical and professional resources. Council sessions are not convened or held on any regular basis.

Municipal Nutrition Programs and Promotion of New Women's Organizations

The Municipal Programs: Organization and Structure

During its second term in the Ate Vitarte municipal government (1984-86), the United Left placed nutritional issues on its governmental agenda through supplementary programs developed at the provincial level.

In early 1984, the **Office of Emergency Planning, Health, and Nutrition** was established. It is presided over by the Deputy Mayor and has a team responsible for administration, promotion, and supervision to ensure better implementation and control of its programs; it was initially staffed by volunteers.

This team prepared and began its activities around the **promotion and implementation of the Glass of Milk Program**, whose goals are as follows:

- To reduce the levels of malnutrition among mothers and children in low-income sectors;
- To support the organizing process among the population, affirming women as protagonists in activities related to survival;
- To consolidate implementation of the program, promoting the levels of participation of the beneficiary population and facilitating co-management and self-supervision;
- To make the community more aware of the nutritional problems of children.

As part of the program, the municipality conducted a census of nursing and pregnant mothers and children under five years of age. Five volunteer mothers took part in each neighborhood, establishing levels of coordination with neighborhood councils in the settlements and housing organizations.

An important counterpart to the program were the training activities in the local municipality. These included training

[One goal of the Glass of Milk Program is] to support the organizing process among the population, affirming women as protagonists in activities related to survival.

workshops for leaders, assemblies, and zone coordinators, whose duty it is to report on the progress of the program and on the implementation of health and other campaigns.

As a result of the effective organization and the mothers' commitment; of the incorporation of new committees in the Glass of Milk Program, whose beneficiaries by the end of 1984 included 67 housing organizations and 22,300 individuals; of alarming data on malnutrition among a significant sector of the population; and of the experience of other neighborhoods where the popular cafeterias and family kitchens were supported by the central government, the decision was made to open a new facet in the municipal nutrition program. In January 1985, the Municipal Popular Kitchens Program was created and placed under the responsibility of the Office of Emergency Planning.

Among the first donations to the **Municipal Popular Kitchens Program** were a semi-industrial SURGE¹ kitchen with its own set of pots and pans (two No. 50 pots, one frying pan, one ladle, one skimmer, one serving fork, and one tea kettle); training in organization, resource administration, and nutrition²; and one-year progress-monitoring of participating organizations until they were sent out to their final destinations.

In addition, an agreement was made with the Housing Development Institution (FOVIDA), which was created under the provincial municipal government in order to develop nutrition programs. The agreement provided a truck for the weekly shipment of supplies and use of a municipal government conference room for meetings.

Three kitchens were formed in February of that year; within six months of the program's creation, eight were operating. However, as a result of the tempting municipal offer and the program's hasty creation, the work was not properly scaled to reflect the level of skill and experience of the participants. Menu preparation requires not only good organizational and administrative skills, but also entails purchasing supplies, fuel, and various other ingredients. Thus, it is essential that the kitchens have financial liquidity. Because they were ill-prepared, a third of the kitchens were closed soon after the program began; a municipal government representative filed the appropriate papers and all the donated equipment was gathered up.

The program was restructured in September 1985. It now required the kitchens to operate with their own resources for a three-month period. The new program also included support for self-managed popular cafeterias (formed at the population's own

¹ SURGE, an enterprise established in the district, gave facilities to the Municipality to acquire the kitchens (some at 50% discount and others donated), a one year guarantee, and technical personnel to train the women in the operation and maintenance of the kitchens.

² Implementation of the Agreement with the IDEAS Center in technical assistance to the Municipality and popular cafeterias.

initiatives), thus managing to increase the number of organizations in the program to 26.

Cooking competitions were also held at the municipal level, open to similar organizations that operated under other names (popular cafeterias, family kitchens, popular kitchens, children's cafeterias, etc.), with prizes awarded to the winning organizations.

Similarly, the municipality promoted coordination among the program's beneficiary organizations by setting up the District Coordinating Office of Popular Nutrition and Health Organizations in 1986.

Women Organize To Survive

The economic crisis has forced more and more low-income urban families, particularly women, to create new survival strategies or to use existing strategies in order to ensure minimum levels of family reproduction.

As a result of the lack of services and resources and the meager or non-existent contribution of men to household work, women have been forced to stretch their responsibilities and intensify their daily work.

However, none of this is new for low-income women. One example of their organizational experience and their ability to respond to housing-related problems is the active participation of these women in the housing settlement process from the very beginning: identification, maintenance, and protection of the lots; the battle for water, sewerage, electricity, facilities, and transportation; etc. The Women's Committees, which serve as the mainstays for the neighborhood councils, and the Welfare Assistance Secretariats, which are run by women, play an important role in addressing the basic needs of health, welfare, and human relations in the housing organizations.

The Mothers Clubs, which were very few in number until they joined the government programs of Popular Action, the political party in power, (1980-85), APRA (1985-90), and, currently, Change 90, received support and services from entities such as the National Office of Nutritional Support (ONAA) and OFASA (the Adventist Church), which donated food in return for communal labor.

Despite this concrete and visible contribution, women were still not represented on the neighborhood councils, did not vote in the

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neighborhood internal elections, and had only a marginal say the Town Assemblies.

Community Participation

With the emergence of the Glass of Milk Committees, the Popular Cafeterias (the municipal program's Popular Kitchens changed their name to Popular Cafeterias) and other such organizations in the district, a new form of organizing and a new style of management and participation in the community began. This style placed greater worth on women's work by the women themselves, their families, and the population in general.

The Glass of Milk Committees were originally established more with the enthusiasm and effort, rather than with the training, of the mothers responsible for the program's operations. Gradually, committee members faced and responded to the problems related to the conditions under which they prepared milk and cereal for babies.

In this process, the exchange of experiences and information by the mothers responsible for running the committees was very important. In many instances, they managed the work of the municipal promoters in the distribution, storage, and control of donations. Gradually, responsibility for monitoring and supervising the program's progress was assumed at the institutional level (by Zone Coordinators and District Coordinators). By the end of 1986, program administration was co-managed, and the statistics and reports for the Provincial Municipality were jointly prepared with the municipal team and signed by both agencies (Head of the Municipal Program and the President of the District Glass of Milk Committee).

During the course of that year, with the assistance of the District Municipal Legal Department, they developed by-laws which defined the Glass of Milk Committees as autonomous women's organizations set up to protect the rights of low-income populations. One of their goals was the legitimate and direct administration of funds corresponding to the Program. This was done at the district level and at the level of metropolitan Lima. Today, the Metropolitan Coordinating Office of the Glass of Milk Program has been established and the first provincial level convention already held.

It was during this stage of activism, with women leading the popular protests against the high cost of living with marches and massive demonstrations, that the political parties on both the left and the right have focussed their energies on the leaders of the

The government denounced "the political manipulation" of women, trying to diminish their just demands for autonomy, expanded coverage of the program, and additional resources.

women's movement. Through them, the parties hoped to control and capture the votes of this broad, organized sector (municipal elections of 1986 and 1989, and presidential elections of 1990). This factor was subsequently used by the government to denounce "the political manipulation" of women, trying to diminish their just demands for autonomy, expanded coverage of the program, and additional resources.

Many of these women leaders now occupy important positions on the boards of neighborhood organizations and at the metropolitan sectoral level.

Popular Cafeterias: Integration, Solidarity, and Self-Help

Popular Cafeterias were organized as a means of easing the economic burdens of families (later providing the same service to the community) by reducing food costs by preparing meals collectively and, at the same time, by trying to improve the quality of people's diets. The cafeterias were also seen as a way to improve living conditions and the quality of their surroundings through the integration, support, and self-help of women and through social organization.

The cafeterias operate according to rules and regulations that are established autonomously, each organization according its membership and coverage. They rotate responsibility for the preparation, cost, and distribution of menus and for the clean-up of utensils and the site.

During this fine-tuning period (mainly 1985-1987) in the management of these small food service units (popular cafeterias and kitchens), they received support from the municipality, primarily in the form of equipment, transportation of supplies, transportation of leaders for visits, use of the site for district and leadership assemblies, and support (with direct management) for requests made to State agencies.

As the economic crisis deepened, the number of members increased as did the number of those needing some form of social service (elderly, children left alone in the house while parents worked, and even cases of families without incomes as a result of factory layoffs). As a result of this and the growing number of popular cafeterias (1,300 in metropolitan Lima), Lima's District Headquarters Lima and representatives of cafeterias from various departments met and formed the National Coordinating Office of Cafeterias.

This Office channeled requests to central government agencies (primarily the Direct Assistance Program-PAD and the Temporary Income Support Program-PAIT) and to the Catholic Church (Cáritas) for direct assistance agreements. These included food donations or subsidies (for example, fish from the Peruvian Fishing Services Enterprise-EPSEP), credits to purchase kitchens, and, in the case of PAIT, funding for four positions per cafeteria (as was being done for the affiliated Mothers' Clubs). This was done with Cáritas in 1986 and with the State entities in 1987 (with some temporary setbacks).

The women district and zone leaders have participated in workshops on issues facing the district (housing and sanitation), on nutrition (preparing legislation), and on the situation of women and their role in development.

Today, these leaders are recognized for their managerial skills in the cafeterias, their social awareness, and their participation in the debate on proposals concerning their communities.

Implementation of the Program

Initially, there were various problems in putting the programs into operation:

With the Glass of Milk Committees:

- There were no general standards to provide direction for the work at either the province or district levels. As a result, there were only informal coordination and orientation procedures for the general and specific objectives of the program at each stage of implementation.
- The fact that the municipal staff was a volunteer staff affected the planning and pace of implementation.
- The program and local committees operated with inadequate infrastructure and production materials.
- Top-down and controlling attitudes of neighborhood leaders regarding the leaders of the Glass of Milk Committees.

With the Popular Cafeterias:

- The mistaken notion that the Municipal Program could be maintained with one-time donations (of kitchens and equipment) rather than through identifying the real needs of the communities and working with the women to train

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The fact that the municipal staff was a volunteer staff affected the planning and pace of implementation.

them and spark their interest; this reproduced the old charity-oriented style.

- Operational interference with the Glass of Milk Committees in terms of location and utensils and through the superimposition of Assemblies and tasks on the Committees, although the social base of the Committees and Assemblies was the same and in some instances the same leaders were shared by both organizations.
- Attempts to interfere with neighborhood leaders by taking over financial management of the cafeterias.

- Progress was made in achieving the main objective of the Municipal Emergency Planning Office, which was to help improve the health and nutrition of the low-income population by making this one of the central issues on the municipal government agenda.

This translated into the gradual improvement of the process of receiving, storing, preparing, and distributing the foods donated for the Glass of Milk Program, and establishing an agreement to provide support to the cafeterias, making available infrastructure, staff, and materials.

- State agencies and the community were made more aware of the extent of malnutrition in the country. With the determined mobilization of the mothers and the support of municipal and legislative authorities, the population's right to good nutrition was legitimized by approval of the Glass of Milk Law in August 1985 and the Recognition of Nutrition and Grassroots Organizations Law in January 1991.

- Space for meetings and discussions was created at the municipal level together with the women's nutrition organizations. The Municipality played an important role in the distribution of work related to proposal development by sponsoring district workshops and meetings on nutrition, on the role and contributions of grassroots organizations, and on the role of the district municipality.

- One important, critical point is the mistaken attitude of the District Glass of Milk Committee toward co-management of the Program. The District Committee sought to eliminate its administrative dependency by gaining absolute control and management over the program without municipal "intervention." By doing so, the District Committee was attempting to affirm its autonomy and demonstrate executive management capability

With the determined mobilization of the mothers and the support of municipal and legislative authorities, the population's right to good nutrition was legitimized by approval of the Glass of Milk Law in August 1985 and the Recognition of Nutrition and Grassroots Organizations Law in January 1991.

since the main resource (milk and cereal) has a regular system of distribution channels, established by law, paid for out of the provincial and district government budgets.

Program Results, Problems, and Data

Co-management is understood as joint responsibility for management of program resources (management and receipt of resources from the Provincial Municipality by the district, distribution to committees according to an established pattern, supervised preparation (including non-distribution) of uncooked foods, preparation of statistical forms, evaluation). Establishment of internal operational standards and election of executive positions are not part of the municipality's responsibilities.

Currently, under the new municipal administration, the conflict has reemerged. The municipal authority disregards and dismisses actions taken by the District Committee Board of Directors; it attempts to convene and reorganize the local committees; and it withholds quotas of milk and cereal to exert pressure. As a result, the settlements hurt by these actions have come out in support of autonomy for the committees and for observance of their hard-won right to participate in the management of the program.

Another aspect that must be considered here is the risk of instability in the municipal programs. Stability depends not only on the availability of resources but also fundamentally on the political will of the local government authorities in power.

One way of "protecting" these programs is to institutionalize them through legislation. In order for these laws to be passed, included in the national budget, and effectively implemented, residential organizations must apply pressure through mobilization of the neighborhood organizations.

Conclusions

One: There is a demonstrated need for these programs. Women play a vital role in their implementation by responsibly and efficiently managing the resources and organizations created for the purpose of improved nutrition. It is therefore essential that these programs be institutionalized within the administration of municipal governments so that they may allocate funds from their budgets and supply technical experts as needed.

Two: It is clear that the large majority of women's organization, that exist in our country today have been created as a result of their connection with the fundamental demands for good health

The stability [of municipal programs] depends not only on the availability of resources but also fundamentally on the political will of the local government authorities in power.

It is clear that the large majority of women's organizations that exist in our country today have been created as a result of their connection with the fundamental demands for good health and nutrition.

and nutrition. Many of them began under central and municipal government programs, which gives them a somewhat different profile from other grassroots organizations.

There are arguments that state that organizing around the issue of basic nutrition reduces the image and role of women to that of serving social reproduction, thus reinforcing their traditional role. Furthermore, these arguments say that this slows the development of their critical consciousness with regard to the serious social, economic, and moral crises that are wracking our country. In short, these organizations are useful for maintaining the system and social order and, because they are legally part of government programs, they are also considered to be corporate programs.

On the other hand, more important than how these organizations began, is how they and the women who make them up are developing and evolving. For example, the contribution these women have made to the examination and treatment of the issue of nutrition has been more lasting and efficient than any of the efforts made in this area by other neighborhood leaders or political forces. Thus, proposals developed by women with technical assistance from private institutions are more often accepted by and included in the programs of the political parties (although whom the programs serve also has an influence).

Although Municipal Subsistence Programs have provided new opportunities for women to organize and participate, they have not been successful in incorporating into their design and dynamic women's personal experiences, their rights, and their personal, family, and community needs.

This does not preclude these organizations from expanding into other areas of interest as they develop, such as women's health, sexuality, etc.

This is an open debate, but one in which poor women still have limited participation.

Three: Although Municipal Subsistence Programs have provided new opportunities for women to organize and participate, they have not been successful in incorporating into their design and dynamic women's personal experiences, their rights, and their personal, family, and community needs.

The supposed use and abuse of women's time is well known; they are assigned "obligatory" tasks and are then pressured into completing them, without taking into consideration the reality in which they live.

This is perhaps why training sessions focussed on issues such as management, nutritional education, health in family planning, and some birth control campaigns. Systematic debate and examination of the women's issue appears secondary to the

“important” matter of having women learn how to better organize their work so they can more adequately address the issue of family nutrition.

However, one way or another, the topic is addressed in the assemblies held by these organizations in their neighborhoods, where together they analyze the various levels of participation and commitment of their members. These assemblies explore the relationship of the couple and family and the conflicts and ethical contradictions which are generated—in particular among the most committed leaders—when women neglect family integration and harmony in favor of working full-time (for no pay) in the leadership of the organization.

Support and solidarity from the membership at critical times is significant, but it is also obvious that if everyone participated on a regular basis, the leadership's workload would be lighter and the organization would be more efficient.

And lastly: Given the importance of municipal government involvement—at the provincial and district levels—in the issues of popular nutrition, and bearing in mind the experience of co-management with women's organizations, programs must have supplementary services available, such as medical and legal services, day care centers, and places like *Casa de la Mujer* (a transitional residence for battered women), which was created in the provincial municipality under the United Left government and was subsequently shut down.

Although resources are scarce, there can be inter-institutional coordination and cooperation between public and private programs. Such joint efforts would result in significant and complementary contributions in the form of the technical and economic assistance that each entity can offer.

Women and Community Businesses: Mission Possible

Alba Cano
Caldas Regional "Construyamos"
Colombia

Women and Community Work

We begin with the concept that for many years, women have been relegated to family-related work, where their functions are limited to domestic chores and child-rearing, which is classified as part of the non-productive sector.

However, it is important to take into consideration that advances in our society, technology, and industrialization have forced women to look outside the home for new forms of income.

This gradual change is one of the most important factors in increasing the need for women to work. Women have gone from being passive subjects in work outside of the home to participating actively in this work and developing a consciousness of their role as protagonists.

This role can be seen in women who have reached managerial positions in government ministries, mayor's offices, secretariats, etc., where they have developed the ability to make decisions and to hold positions formerly occupied by men.

It is important to point out that women have a dual function: on the one hand, they work outside of the home, and on the other, they continue to work inside of the home.

However, women continue the struggle to defend their position in society. With the support of organizations, they have attempted to get involved in municipal government, demonstrating that they are capable of performing jobs that require intellectual, rather than physical, strength.

The Situation of Women

Only some women manage to complete higher education or specialized studies. The rest, whom we refer to as members of the low-income class whose income is insufficient to cover the costs of higher education, have had to turn to the so-called informal sector for work, where there is an abundance of unskilled, poorly-paid jobs. There we will find the full range of domestic workers, street vendors, etc.

These are the women who need motivation and support. Although organizations that provide them with assistance have been created in the country, others are needed to defend women's rights and to introduce innovative change—organizations through which women can participate and contribute to the development of communities, municipalities, departments, and the country in general. That is what will lead to their well-being, not so much

Women have gone from being passive subjects in work outside of the home to participating actively in this work and developing a consciousness of their role as protagonists.

individually but socially and as part of a family, and it is what will lead to a change in their standard of living.

One example of such an organization in Colombia worth discussing is called "We Are Building" (*Construyamos*), in which the majority of the women build their own houses through self-help. The aim of the project is to improve the standard of living for low-income families and to train women by having them participate in the project.

The project helped women fight the traditional segregation and social, economic, and cultural discrimination they suffered, as it trained women for work that has been traditionally considered to be men's work. The women who were trained could show others as well as themselves that their performance was as good as and, in many instances, better than that of men.

It helped improve women's position in the work force while contributing to the economic life of the country.

Another outstanding example of women's participation in our national economy is the ASOMUCA Project (Association of Peasant Women), a project of the peasant women from the Cauca Valley.

The project's purpose was to involve women in the economy as suppliers of agricultural products. In this particular instance, the product was pineapple, a regional food grown by most families.

With help from the ICA, the organization chose to establish a factory to preserve fruit. This way, the pineapple that was not sold due to a lack of demand could be sold throughout the entire country.

In our country there are women's organizations such as "We are Building," the Latin America Housing Federation, Women's House, the Association for the Integral Development of Women, and many others. Their purpose is to help women advance through work, which represents income and therefore a better standard of living for them and their families.

Women and Community Businesses

In recent years, women have opened their eyes and become aware of their importance as human beings and as economic factors in society. Throughout the world, women have been looking for mechanisms they can use to achieve integral development (psychological, family, and economic) and thus gain greater family and social independence.

One example of such an organization in Colombia worth discussing is called "We Are Building" (*Construyamos*), in which the majority of the women build their own houses through self-help. The aim of the project is to improve the standard of living for low-income families and to train women by having them participate in the project.

As a result of widespread poverty in the Third World, governmental and private entities have been unable to absorb the total demand for work into the labor market. Therefore, the population has had to devise various ways to meet its needs. It was out of this situation that microenterprises were born; they enable the unabsorbed workers to develop their capacities and thus achieve a better quality of life.

Community microenterprises also encourage women to see themselves as intelligent and productive, and not as the passive individuals of the past.

These women's groups, which grew out of territorial areas such as neighborhoods or settlements, join together to carry out various tasks in accordance with their skills, resources, and needs. Within these groups, the women receive training in human relations with the goal of learning to live and work together with others.

Training courses are aimed at teaching or perfecting a skill that is useful for the specific case and the type of microenterprise that has been established.

For example, some neighborhoods have community day care centers, community clinics, bakeries, and women-run factories in order to meet the primary and secondary needs of their residents.

Conclusion

Microenterprises are developed:

1. So that women can value themselves as human beings, appreciate themselves, and see themselves as individuals useful to their families, society, and themselves.
2. Because they have a moral and economic basis.
3. To establish among women a sense of belonging and identification with their group.
4. To meet the needs of the community of which they are part.
5. To collaborate in the industrial, commercial, and financial development of the country.

Community microenterprises also encourage women to see themselves as intelligent and productive, and not as the passive individuals of the past.

MUNICIPAL ACTIONS AND POLICIES FOR WOMEN

MUNICIPAL ACTIONS AND POLICIES *makes up the final section of this book.*

These presentations contain concrete and innovative evidence of how local governments have taken on the challenge and the commitment to incorporate women's issues into their policies.

The process that has been followed since the initiative began—the definition of policies, their implementation, and their final outcomes—is presented by some of the women responsible for implementing the initiatives.

This section seeks to generate the greatest number of observations that either correct and/or encourage the programs discussed in this volume. This examination of the programs is in itself an innovative practice of everyday political work.

Patricia Palacios

The Comprehensive Women's Program: An Overview of the Situation of Women in Buenaventura

Nubia Arteaga and Maritza Rebolledo
Municipality of Buenaventura
Colombia

The presence and participation of women in society, in its development and its history, is quite important, given their roles as citizens, women, mothers, wives, workers, professionals, and in general, their place in the social, political, and cultural arenas.

The presence and participation of women in society, in its development and its history, is quite important, given their roles as citizens, women, mothers, wives, workers, professionals, and in general, their place in the social, political, and cultural arenas. Nevertheless, only a small percentage of women in Colombia have participated, since their opportunities to do so are limited by the very social system in which they exist.

A woman's fundamental role is reproduction of the labor force. A poor woman lives in sub-human conditions in which, for her very survival, she must focus her energies on subsistence activities, such as selling fish, fruit, or food on the street.

A black woman is subtly displaced by a culture that sells her female stereotypes through advertising, books, and magazines. It is a loss of identity in which the values of her own culture tend to get confused.

A woman's role in the family is vital because she serves fundamentally as head of the household.

A woman's role in the family is vital because she serves fundamentally as head of the household. This phenomenon reflects cultural and social values that allow men to have various women with their families at the same time, without being able to respond equally to all.

Similarly, the woman also serves as the center of her family's health. Despite that role, she may be unaware of the services provided by health centers. Her access to these services is limited and, furthermore, she does not practice preventive medicine that would help her reduce mortality in her family.

There are various institutions that have focussed on developing programs for women. However, their efforts are not coordinated or included in the municipal development plans.

All these problems faced by women in Buenaventura are exacerbated by their lack of training and education, which is reflected in illiteracy, low academic levels, and in general, in the poor professional and technical training that prevents them from competing in the labor market.

There are various institutions that have focussed on developing programs for women. However, their efforts are not coordinated or included in the municipal development plans.

All this reflects the urgency of the need to present a response to the major issues facing women. Accordingly, the 1990-1992 Municipal Administration proposed creating an entity within the Mayor's Office that would be in charge of coordinating activities with various institutions and organizations and of promoting activities to help improve living conditions for women in Buenaventura.

The importance of this program lies in the benefits that women will receive in the area of economics, education, and health. It will also publicly promote and disseminate the role of women in society and encourage their participation in community development.

Another goal of the **Comprehensive Women's Program** is to provide an incentive for women's organizations to get involved in activities, programs and projects as a group or in coordination with other organizations, such as Local Administrative Boards, that foster true social welfare.

The Comprehensive Women's Program

The program has certain basic guidelines:

- It regards women, regardless of marital status, as the pivotal figure in the family who exerts influence on the major issues of concern for each family member; for this reason the program is aimed at the women of Buenaventura.
- Every project presented by the organizations should involve participation and contribution by project beneficiaries;
- The Comprehensive Women's Program will not take on any project in its totality;
- The projects must be presented by grassroots organizations, women's committees, associations, local administrative boards, or other socially-oriented groups;
- Every project must benefit groups of persons or communities and not respond to individual interests;
- Services with a social, psychological and legal orientation must provide individual services to anyone requesting them, without making distinctions;
- The Comprehensive Women's Program will be guided by the principle of respect for the autonomy and the policies of the organizations and institutions.

History of the Program

In 1981, Colombia passed Law 051. It was adopted under the terms of the CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN approved by the

The intent of Law 051 is to protect women against any form of discrimination in health, production, employment, education, civil and political participation, nationality, etc.

United Nations General Assembly. According to this law, Colombian women and men receive equal protection. The intent of Law 051 is to protect women against any form of discrimination in health, production, employment, education, civil and political participation, nationality, etc.

In addition, Decree 1398, which regulates this Law, was passed in July 1990.

During these ten years, women in Colombia have been involved in a number of experiences, activities, projects, events, meetings, and workshops aimed at transforming the social, economic, political, and cultural conditions of women today. There is a wide range of forms of activism throughout the country that have made it possible for women to grow as people.

The Comprehensive Women's Program in Buenaventura is really the first government initiative.

The State has taken very little action. Thus, the Comprehensive Women's Program in Buenaventura is really the first government initiative. It is a pilot experience in Colombia and Latin America.

The Comprehensive Women's Program proposes to develop its work in four basic areas, including those that entail the most pressing problems faced by women in Buenaventura.

These four areas are health, education and training, protection, and generation of income.

Coverage

The Comprehensive Women's Program serves all women in Buenaventura, regardless of age, ethnic or religious origin, political affiliation, or occupation.

The Program is aimed at both the urban and rural female population in Buenaventura. It considers women to be the center of the family and thus addresses, through her, the issues of children, youth, and the elderly of both sexes.

The Comprehensive Women's Program provides individual services to women in psychological, social, and legal matters and to organized groups in the area of income, health, education, and training.

Objectives

General Objectives

1. To coordinate, promote, and develop programs and activities aimed at supporting women in Buenaventura;

The Program is aimed at both the urban and rural female population in Buenaventura.

2. To provide a framework for solutions to the socio-economic issues facing women;
3. To provide incentives for women to participate in the development of programs aimed at bettering their living conditions;
4. To provide incentives for organizations through which women can develop creative problem-solving skills.

Specific Objectives

1. To create inter-institutional linkages between entities that address women's issues in one way or another;
2. To create the opportunity in the public sector for reflection on the conditions of women and to seek methods of intervention;
3. To help women solve their own problems;
4. To encourage existing organizations to participate in the development of programs for women.

Areas of Intervention

Protection of Women

In this area, the Program aims to respond to family issues facing women by providing elements that will ensure the well-being of the family and legal elements that will enable a woman to protect her rights in the area of employment.

The Comprehensive Women's Program also provides services in the area of legal advice, psychological treatment, and therapy for couples and families.

The services are provided on an individual or, in the case of therapy, on a family basis.

In this area, the Comprehensive Women's Program mainly organizes workshops that provide information to large groups of women on their rights in the areas of family and employment. It also sponsors workshops on Women and the Family, Women and Sexuality, Women and Work, etc.

Among its projects, the Program is sponsoring, along with other organizations, the creation of a Commission on Families through the Municipal Council and a home for battered and abused women with the support of private and public entities.

[One general goal is] to provide incentives for women to participate in the development of programs aimed at bettering their living conditions.

[One specific goal is] to create the opportunity in the public sector for reflection on the conditions of women and to seek methods of intervention.

Generation of Income

The objectives in this area are as follows:

To provide alternative solutions that will enable women to increase their income level.

To encourage the establishment of associated enterprises, microenterprises, and family enterprises among women in Buenaventura.

To channel economic, material, and personnel support for the implementation of productive projects.

The program will also provide certain types of services, such as:

The acquisition of resources for productive projects by coordinating with entities that specialize in financing projects or with institutions that provide logistical support for such projects:

Business assistance (provided to any organization that requests it in conjunction with a productive project);

Technical assistance (provided to projects that require TA, for which it has the necessary trained personnel).

In order to support the creation of associative enterprises or microenterprises, training courses will be held with specific women's groups (such as cleaning workers, food or fruit vendors, women prisoners, etc.) with a view to encouraging the creation of groups interested in working together.

It is important to note that initially the program had various project proposals presented by both urban and rural women's organizations. The rural organizations are moving ahead with production-oriented projects in Llano Bajo, El Llano, and Sábaletas.

Health

The objectives in this area are as follows:

To raise women's consciousness as to the importance of preventive health measures as a way to maintain family health, and to promote the participation of women in health programs.

In this area, the Comprehensive Women's Program is involved primarily in promotion and prevention activities.

Several sub-programs have also been implemented.

[One goal is] to provide alternative solutions that will enable women to increase their income level.

In order to support the creation of associative enterprises or microenterprises, training courses will be held with specific women's groups (such as cleaning workers, food or fruit vendors, women prisoners, etc.) with a view to encouraging the creation of groups interested in working together.

In coordination with Unicáncer, Profamilia, and the Pacific Regional Hospital, preventive campaigns targeting women have been implemented.

Workshops have been carried out with women's groups on family planning, first aid, sexually transmitted diseases, cancer, etc.

Education and Training

This area is a support tool for the others. Its objectives are to encourage technical training of women and provide an incentive for artistic creation aimed at economic improvement and better use of free time; to support training programs that permit women to improve their position as workers and to become part of the city's socio-economic development; to encourage cultural and recreational activities among women.

The area of education and training will provide support for events such as forums, meetings, conferences, and seminars pertaining to women's issues. It will carry out educational campaigns that advance the recognition of the value and rights of women.

It will also encourage the training of women in entities or institutions that provide this service.

Cultural and artistic events organized by women will be held in order to serve as a way for women to express their creativity. Any activity that supports any of the other program activities in any way will also be encouraged.

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Women in Town Councils: Innovative Solutions to Social Problems

Dr. Hilda Martínez Portocarrero
Executive Director for Development and Social Assistance,
Caracas City Government
Libertador Municipality

General Guidelines of Social Policy

In the course of the democratic experience in Venezuela, there have been various individual and collective initiatives whose intent has been to make both the State and the public aware of the importance of creating policies, programs, and actions that respond to the needs and aspirations of Venezuelan women.

In 1974, the State's political willingness to give fair attention to women's issues began to take shape with the creation of the first Presidential Women's Advisory Commission. Its mandate was to define the most important tasks to be undertaken.

In 1979, the State Ministry for the Participation of Women in Development was created. Among its major accomplishments were the approval of the Civil Code Reform of 1982 and its passage as federal legislation, and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

In 1989, a woman was appointed to serve as State Minister for the Advancement of Women, and the Women's Advisory Commission to the President was created. In 1990, the Advisory Commission for Policy on Women was founded in the Libertador Municipality.

To support the process of institutional reform in the social sector, the Caracas city government, through the Agency for Development and Social Assistance, created a comprehensive and consistent social policy to effect the improvement, efficacy, and efficiency of family social services, taking into account that women are the heads of households in a high percentage of families.

In 1985, the Federal District's City Council approved the creation of the Municipal House for Women in one of the municipality's main working class neighborhoods. The project was accomplished with the support of the "Manuelita Saéz" Free Professorship from the Central University of Venezuela, with which an inter-institutional agreement was established.

After five years of operation, we are proud to declare this institution a success. It has created a model for combining permanent research and women's participation in their community.

World society at this time is truly impressed by the extraordinary participation of women as competent individuals who can occupy high leadership positions for the benefit of humanity's growth and development.

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With a real sense of self-improvement, women have been surpassing the difficult thresholds that men have selfishly created for them in the course of history. At the end of this century, we are already observing women's long-overdue participation under equal conditions and circumstances with men. It is therefore fair to ask: What would the condition of humanity be today if women had been allowed throughout history to exercise the central role of protagonists as they do now? Undoubtedly, growth and development would have been more harmonious since everyone's participation would have encouraged understanding and cooperation, and the feelings of guilt associated with having kept women away from the necessary concert of ideas would not exist today.

Venezuela is a true example of human participation. Within our geographic limits, there is room for all cultural expressions, beliefs and religions, races, and ethnic groups existing on the face of the earth; that allows us to say that it is a true egalitarian spirit and a clear exercise of democracy which gives human beings a real human condition. The conditions described earlier provide women with the necessary opportunities to make the contributions our country requires for consolidating the democratic system and for resolutely advancing toward comprehensive development.

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In Venezuela, the family structure is centered around the mother. She is the permanent and stable adult figure. She finds herself obliged to perform a large number of tasks that are essential to society not only in her role as mother but as household provider. Therefore, her work burden doubles by also taking on the functions of men.

For all of this, as a woman, as a Venezuelan, and as Director of the Agency for Development and Social Assistance of the Libertador Municipality, I share with you the concerns and longings that make us commit our working lives to the women in our countries who sacrifice to take on the double role of father and mother; to the women who know how to earn a living; to the women who expect those of us who have achieved high government posts to provide effective and innovative responses; and to the women who, above all else, expect that we will treat them with respect and solidarity.

Programs for the Family, Women and Children¹

Primary Health Care

The creation, implementation, and strengthening of the community-based Primary Health Care Program, which provides comprehensive care for all, includes maternal and infant care, elimination and control of immuno-preventable diseases, promotion of breast feeding, care for growth and development, nutrition, early childhood stimulation, and the reduction of acute respiratory infections.

All this requires the definition of strategies to implement health education programs among the population, the training of community-based health workers, the creation of informational tools that are distributed regularly, etc. A valuable human resource is also part of this strategy: the students at the Medical School at the Central University of Venezuela. They are given the opportunity to perform tours of duty in mobile clinics and comprehensive health care centers. This allows for expanded services at lower costs.

In addition, inter-agency agreements have been entered into with governmental and non-governmental agencies for the purpose of responding to specific social policy operations.

The Mayor's Office of the Libertador Municipality has established agreements with the following institutions: the Ministry of Health, the Venezuelan League for Mental Health, the Venezuelan Association for Alternative Health Education (AVESA), the Unit for Cognitive and Sexual Research and Therapy (UCOSEX) and other agreements on health issues with the Regional Office of the Federal District.

Social and Educational Care

The Mayor's Office has set as a priority the mass expansion of pre-school education, based on the principles of quality and efficiency. This initiative targets the integration of the nuclear family so that education can fulfill its primary role of integrating upbringing with society and of strengthening the educational process by linking it with the basic social, cultural, scientific and productive aspects of the country's development.

Promoting and Strengthening the Family

Also established as a priority is the development of programs that strengthen family integration, the meaning of the human being from birth on, and all matters relating to his/her actions.

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¹ The main tasks undertaken by the Libertador Municipality through its social policy favoring the family are summarized in the presentation by Hilda Martinez Portocarrero, Director General of Development and Social Assistance of Caracas, Libertador Municipality, at the Seminar: "Women and the Municipality: A New Community Presence in the Local Development of Latin America," Quito, Ecuador. (editor's note).

The Mayor's Office has made an effort to develop activities that promote and strengthen the family economy, the organized community, sports, and organized recreation.

In this way, the Mayor's Office has made an effort to develop activities that promote and strengthen the family economy, the organized community, sports, and organized recreation.

For this purpose, the city government has created a training and technical and financial assistance network in order to generate an ideal labor force that is in accordance with the project's characteristics.

The Municipal and Youth Houses Program will also be strengthened in order to channel all the concerns and expectations in the areas discussed earlier into the various low-income sectors where the houses are located. It will also create Sports Development Centers in order to train the necessary staff and to encourage an interest in sports.

Coordination of Special Projects

The goal of the Libertador Municipality is to become a true coordinating body of services and programs that improve the overall quality of life. This management plan, which is based on coordination, helps by optimizing the municipality's resources, particularly economic and financial resources, in order to resolve problems quickly, and it encourages the establishment, development, and participation of programs that avoid duplication or overlapping of resources and efforts.

With these considerations in mind, the City has established various agreements whose objectives respond to the specific purpose and areas of expertise of the organizations involved. Below is a list of the institutions with which there are agreements:

- Central University of Venezuela: "Luis Razetti" and "José Ma. Vargas" Departments within the Medical School; Social Work Department and Education Department within the School for the Humanities and Education; School of Architecture.
- National Nutrition Institute, National Library, FUNDACOMUN, the Children's Foundation, CECODAP, CESAP, Unit for Cognitive & Sexual Therapy, AVESA, etc.

Other projects have been created in response to pressing needs felt by the community which require tangible solutions in a determined time frame. These projects involve environmental, health, or physical emergencies that require the ability to respond efficiently in solving the problems at hand. This program also responds to activities that result from the operations of other organizations.

**A Strategy for Organized
Women's Participation in
Local Housing: From
Community-Based Women's
Committees to Municipal
Residents' Organizations**

Mariela Silva
Huila Regional "Construyamos"
Colombia

Basic Needs and Self-Management

One of the most important events taking place in the Province of Huila is the public and massive participation of WOMEN in community organizing. It is the awakening of a new being who is participating and developing in many non-traditional ways while contributing to the progress of the community and the municipality.

Within the context of urban problems, women group themselves as a result of their basic needs (housing, health, education, services, etc.) into community-based organizations that follow the principles of community self-management.

Self-management has allowed us to find mechanisms that allow women to participate in planning and organizing work while fighting against unequal distribution and destroying the myth that organizations must be represented by men.

Self-management has also allowed us to rotate tasks so that political participation does not become an additional burden but rather a means to increase the participation of the rank and file.

Many Colombian municipalities have had women mayors and city council members, but this has not brought about changes in the relationship between women and municipality and local development. Although women have pressed hard to advance community work with low-income constituents, their efforts have basically duplicated what already exists. This situation leads us to believe in the need to transform municipal structures in such a way that will allow for the introduction and constancy of the changes that women demand.

Furthermore, this duplication was not caused by popular organizing or as a result of the work of competent women that led them to positions in the Mayor's Office, but rather was the result of appointments made by political godfathers and friends who leave little or no room for the real needs of women and who use them to repeat models that support their own interests.

One of the achievements of these new social actors is a bottom-up effort made up of the following elements:

ONE: The creation and operation of thirteen community-based women's committees in five of the province's municipalities.

TWO: The creation of a Research and Women's Development Center with a permanent qualified staff in charge of gathering information on women's participation at the local and municipal

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levels; of developing and training the members of the thirteen community-based women's committee; of carrying out a permanent research effort to improve, focus, and organize women's participation in the struggle for a worthy living environment.

THREE: The achievement of broad participation of women's community-based committees in the process of organizing residents at the municipal levels through **MUNICIPAL COMMITTEES FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING**, which are made up of community representatives for the purpose of exerting pressure on local government to find solutions to problems.

This can be achieved through the participation of women on boards of directors and by creating a women's municipal commission to provide support to Municipal Committees as a basis for guaranteeing representation of leaders who are aware of local needs, and thereby truly achieving participation in the implementation of changes, directives, and policies.

FOUR: The creation of a departmental network with the participation of all organized women in order to affect departmental, national, and international policy.

Community-Based Women's Committees

Various committees work within the community's organizational structure, bearing in mind that organizing is one of the most important tasks since it allows members to be clear with regard to their participation. The community must therefore have a comprehensive approach in its organizing, legal, administrative, social, financial, and technical aspects.

Community-Based Women's Committees gain experience in effective participation by serving on local administrative boards, municipal education boards, the municipal housing fund, public service boards, etc.

The Committees as Administrative Support Systems for Community Participation

Committees are support structures integrated into the General Assembly. Their number and composition depend on the kind of community they represent, as these committees are the main administrative support for achieving a good level of community involvement in self-management and self-help.

Community-Based Women's Committees gain experience in effective participation by serving on local administrative boards, municipal education boards, the municipal housing fund, public service boards, etc.

The following committees are the most active in the communities:

- Procurement Committee
- Projects Committee
- Evaluation Committee
- Training Committee
- Conflict Resolution Committee
- Women's Committee

The purpose of the women's committees is to emphasize, value, and implement women's participation not only in the area of work but also in decision-making.

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To accomplish their goals, they have established several basic objectives, such as an analysis of non-traditional work in which women can and must participate; leadership in organizing community activities that generate funds, etc.; promotion of women's participation in leadership roles; lobbying for the education and orientation of women with regard to their true social role; and community guidance for local improvement.

In this committee, women find a place to solve tangible problems by following strategies that change their situation.

Efforts are made to involve women's companions in their tangible needs by means of good planning while remaining convinced that although men and women should not be the same, they must be treated as equals.

The Research and Women's Development Center

Among the center's objectives are the following:

- Train a staff team to operate the Research and Women's Development Center.
 - Gather information on the participation of women as visible social actors.
 - Create and train community-based women's committees.
 - Maintain a permanent process of research that will help improve, channel, and project women's participation.
-

- Obtain the necessary audio-visual equipment for the operations of the Research and Women's Development Center.

Establishing the Center became a necessity, given the current environment. It is important to point out that there is at least one woman in each family. Half of the people in a community are women. However, because they are assumed to be inferior to men in the performance of physical work, in most organizations and groups they are relegated to passive roles.

It is important to overcome this situation by way of DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, and ACTION while also accepting commitments that put into play all those female capabilities and talents that have long been inactive.

The Research and Women's Development Center is a necessity that will work in coordination with the community-based and municipal women's committees in an on-going process of feedback and analysis of behaviors in order to generate activities that will stabilize women's participation in the defense of their rights and in the improvement of living conditions and the environment.

Municipal Committees for Community Housing

With the progress made by community-based women's committees, a type of participation is sought where women can maximize, express and make their contributions to the development of their urban surroundings through municipal women's committees.

The hope is that municipal women's committees will serve as conduits for the recognition of women's plans so that they will be institutionalized and turned into tangible programs.

At the same time, efforts are made so that women will not only get involved in practical work but also in public matters and in responses to their specific needs.

This kind of participation must also be sought at the municipal level since the State only thinks about practical needs and is not interested in the specific needs of women.

Above all, this must be so because even the most unpopular politicians have accepted the fact that women are not INVISIBLE, that they are important, and that they are struggling to build the city.

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Efforts are made so that women will not only get involved in practical work but also in public matters and in responses to their specific needs.

The objectives set out for this purpose are as follows:

- Generate policies for the transformation of the environment in each municipality.
- Obtain services that benefit the community.
- Open opportunities for the low-income population in all aspects of participation.
- Present proposals and programs that support public housing and other areas to municipal, departmental, and national agencies.
- Coordinate inter-municipal activities between residents' organizations and public and private sector institutions.
- Contribute to the development of a local attitude that is consistent with the need to support equality between the sexes.
- Participate in the municipal development plan.

Women are actively involved in the committees. There, women struggle to achieve practical solutions to their needs in order to contribute to the increase of the public presence of women, and it is there where we can see the influence of the women's municipal committees.

In municipal committees for community housing, participation has been achieved in the Public Housing and Urban Reform Funds, which are currently operating in six municipalities in the department of Huila. There is on-going citizen input to ensure that legislation is implemented and that community representatives are involved in the decision-making process regarding policy and budget.

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Through their training and development in the Community-Based Women's Groups and the Center for Research and Women's Development, women acquire a sense of clarity and identity with regard to their true role in the community and the municipality as they move continually toward organized participation.
