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# DEVELOPMENT

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## ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN LATIN AMERICA: BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

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Since the 1970s, increasing evidence has linked environmental degradation and deteriorating living standards to non-democratic political systems. In Latin America that evidence, combined with a growing trend toward democratization, has led very diverse groups, pursuing equally diverse agendas, to seek a new development model. The emerging paradigm links environmental management, human well-being, and democratic processes.

Thanks largely to pressure by indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots organizations (GROs), in the 1980s the governments of Latin America began to pay more attention to environmental issues and democratization. (*See Box 1.*) NGO and GRO efforts were accompanied by a movement led by northern support institutions seeking to reform development assistance and the lending practices of multilateral financial bodies.

As a result, the sustainable use of natural resources has become a top issue on the development agenda, and environmental considerations are now part of national planning processes. Worldwide, 135 nations made available one or more reports on the status of the environment between 1987 and 1992.<sup>1</sup> Countries such as Mexico, Colombia, and Chile have new laws requiring their governments to establish environmental planning committees with wide social representation at the provincial or local levels. Similarly, Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina have set up or are considering creating high-level governmental offices to investigate and prosecute citizens' complaints related to environmental matters.<sup>2</sup> These new mechanisms represent an opportunity for non-governmental groups to play an increasingly important role in policy-making and implementation.

In many Latin American countries, NGOs and GROs are already deeply involved in environmentally related poverty-alleviation activities. In Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, for example, NGOs and GROs provide technical assistance to approximately 15 percent of the region's farmers on sustainable agricultural practices, surpassing the outreach capacity of the state.<sup>3</sup> As governments dismantle extension services, they are asking NGOs and grassroots organizations to fill the void; this has been the case in Chile, Bolivia, and Mexico.<sup>4</sup> In the conservation arena most governments in the region, unable to manage their protected areas properly, have begun to share this task with NGOs.

Undoubtedly, NGOs and GROs have created new opportunities for policy dialogue while contributing to the search for more equitable and environmentally sound development alternatives. But NGOs and GROs have also identified a need for strengthening their organizational capacities; they see institution building as necessary to furthering their efforts toward opening up the decision-making process, which will eventually lead to a more democratic and equitable society.

The twin purposes of this paper are to identify the main organizational constraints facing NGOs and to offer a set of recommendations on how to build up their institutional capacities to better influence policy-making and implementation.

### THE CHALLENGES

In strengthening the organizational capacities of NGOs and GROs in Latin America, three challenges stand out as particularly important:

- 1) defining their specific roles and developing the corresponding skills to contribute effectively to

solving the complex problems that they are being asked to address;

- 2) obtaining enough long-term financial assistance to be able to focus on strategic planning and implementation of projects;
- 3) joining forces to open political spaces and to confront common problems with all those involved in attaining sustainable development.

### DEFINING NGO/GRO ROLES AND CORRESPONDING SKILLS

Current development and environment literature, as well as several experiences in the developing world, suggest that indigenous NGOs are better suited than foreign agencies, their northern peers, and even the local governments to reach the poor. NGOs run relatively small operations, have a permanent presence in the field, have a highly committed staff, tend to be more flexible, and have a better rapport with local communities.<sup>5</sup>

However, the same observers that give NGOs these good marks point to several weaknesses prevalent among these organizations. Although NGOs frequently adopt a holistic approach that leads them to carry out many diverse activities, this keeps them from developing strong technical skills in any specific area.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, NGOs often present themselves as highly participatory, when in reality they practice an "enlightened" top-down approach to planning and implementation. While claiming that they are more effective at reaching the poor than the government, NGOs have not been very keen on monitoring and evaluating just how effective they are.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these weaknesses, during the 1970s and early 1980s, NGOs were quite successful at portraying themselves as legitimate voices for the grassroots. Also, the apparent failure of the state to provide a wide variety of services to the poor helped highlight NGOs' "comparative advantage." This, in turn, attracted both attention and funding to NGOs. Financial assistance allocated by OECD countries to NGOs grew from U.S. \$1.4 billion in 1975 to U.S. \$4.0 billion in 1985.<sup>8</sup>

However, as the grassroots become better organized, donors are turning to GROs as direct implementers of the activities previously carried out by NGOs. In some instances, NGOs are finding themselves at odds with those whom they are supposed to serve. But other NGOs see GRO visibility as an opportunity to further their support for self-help among the grassroots; these groups are seeking to strengthen their collaboration with these organizations.

As NGOs move beyond their role of direct service providers, they are finding that they will require a new set of skills if they are to play an important role in grass-

#### Box 1: Actors and Scripts

*Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)* comprise a wide variety of service institutions devoted to the design and execution of development or environment projects. NGOs frequently engage in policy dialogue seeking to influence government policies of the populations they serve. They are private, non-profit organizations that operate within a legal framework and are staffed and led by paid professionals, para-professionals, or volunteers. NGOs are financially supported by such development cooperation institutions as northern NGOs, Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), private foundations, multilateral institutions, bilateral agencies, governments, and in-country philanthropic sources\*.

*Grassroots Organizations (GROs)* are formed by rural or urban marginal populations to produce specific benefits for their members. They frequently devote their efforts to self help as a way of addressing the problems facing their communities. Some GROs, such as co-ops, credit unions, and farmers' unions operate within legal frameworks; others, such as neighborhood groups or village committees, are informal and not legally constituted. Unlike NGOs, top decision-making positions in GROs are held by leaders elected by the rank and file, and leaders remain accountable to the members. GROs rely heavily on in-kind and monetary contributions, or fees from their members. Depending on their size and scope, they might hire professionals, but in most instances, professionals remain accountable to the elected leaders.

\* *Government-organized, Non-Governmental Organizations (GONGOs)* have emerged as distinct from NGOs. The increasing international interest and support for NGOs has led governments to set up GONGOs, first, to tap the financial resources that are now being channeled through NGOs, and second, to make sure that the independent sector does not remain completely free from government influence. Oftentimes, high-ranking politicians establish GONGOs as post-retirement sources of work or as professional options to pursue once out of office. Some private, for-profit consulting firms have also billed themselves as NGOs to promote their economic or political interests and to avoid taxes.

roots development. In a new "division of labor," it appears that NGOs could make a significant contribution in helping GROs develop their own strategies for dealing with complex processes, in providing technical assistance, and in helping GROs to set in place effective management and administrative systems. More important, NGOs and GROs must learn to walk uncharted roads, taking guidance from their experiences and those of others.

#### Develop NGO/GRO Skills in Planning, Management, and Administration

- Selecting Priorities and Actions

One of the most frequent needs mentioned by NGOs and grassroots organizations is for better planning. This includes the need to define their mission more clearly, to discriminate among opportunities, and to identify activities that use their scarce resources to make lasting contri-

butions toward addressing development and environmental challenges.

NGOs in developed countries are becoming increasingly adept at using strategic planning methods to guide their activities and organize themselves to face the ever changing and increasingly uncertain context in which they operate.<sup>9</sup>

Organizations such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Institute of Cultural Affairs have developed useful handbooks and have convened workshops to help developing-country NGOs to improve their planning skills.<sup>10</sup> These handbooks and workshops are important channels for making information on strategic planning available to Latin American NGOs. But because strategic planning was developed to address the needs of for-profit firms, most NGOs and GROs in the region see it as a business tool inappropriate for them. Many are not willing to invest time and effort in learning and experimenting with these methods.

Two actions by donors or northern support organizations could help overcome this reluctance. First, lend support to southern organizations interested in adapting and experimenting with methods, as opposed to training staff in specific strategic planning methodologies developed by international cooperation organizations. Second, carry out and disseminate case studies that illustrate the process through which strategic planning was adapted to the needs of specific NGOs or GROs, as well as the impact of these methodologies on performance and organizational achievements.

For NGOs and GROs in developing countries seeking to address development, democracy, and environmental issues, planning is not exclusively an internal exercise. They must consider the needs and interests of other stakeholders. For these organizations, participatory planning methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or Planeamiento Andino Comunitario can be very helpful in attempts to define problems and priorities and to develop action plans in ways that build support from other important interest groups.<sup>11</sup> PRA consists of loosely structured field inquiries and discussion to define local problems, opportunities, and actions to address the identified problems. PRA teams include from 8 to 15 persons including local people (among them, leaders, women, and the poor), and technical advisors and government officials representing different institutions and areas of expertise. PRA uses diagrams (such as community maps, transects, agronomic calendars, diagrams depicting local organizations and outside institutions, and flow charts) as visual tools to facilitate information gathering, organization and analysis. Typically, PRAs last ten days, during which the PRA team alternates field visits with group analysis and discussion.

Because several interests are represented in the PRA team, disagreements on the interpretation of specific information frequently take place. These disagreements, phrased as questions that can be answered through additional fieldwork, are used as opportunities to build consensus. Findings are then presented in an open community meeting, where they are reviewed and amended, where problems and actions are ranked, and where action plans are drafted. By drawing other stakeholders into the definition of problems and potential solutions, NGOs and GROs can arrive at action plans with wide social support. (*See Box 2.*)

- Putting One's Own House in Order

Many NGOs working with GROs still lack the elementary administrative skills needed to keep an organization functioning smoothly. Financial know-how on budgeting, accounting, and cash-flow management is critical to the success of any project. Accounting systems are essential to track costs and allocate resources. In addition, such systems frequently play a key role in legitimizing an organization.

NGOs and GROs that lack transparent financial management are often accused of misappropriating funds. This undermines their credibility, breeds internal con-

### Box 2: Planning as Consensus Building

In Guatemala's region of Chiquimula, the Centro Mesoamericano de Estudios Sobre Tecnología (CUMAT) carried out a PRA to identify natural resource management priorities in the region and to develop a plan that would be supported by the local communities. This PRA was sponsored by the Guatemalan Forest Action Plan (PAFG), the Asociación de Entidades de Desarrollo y de Servicio No Gubernamentales de Guatemala (ASINDES), and WRI. The team included men and women from the local villages and staff from CUMAT, PAFG, ASINDES, and four other NGOs. After six days of field visits and group discussions, the PRA team identified deforestation, soil erosion, and fuel wood scarcity as the main natural resource management problems facing the local population. Furthermore, everyone agreed that these problems were likely to get worse unless something was done, and together they outlined the main elements of a natural resource management project for the region. A regional organization was formed by village representatives to develop a project with CUMAT (the NGO) and PAFG. As a follow-up to the PRA, local representatives held village meetings, discussed the project with other villagers, and formed village committees in charge of reforestation activities, control of tree diseases, and the monitoring of tree cutting.

The regional organization offered to assume all the costs of forest protection and reforestation if the proper training was given to village committees. PAFG offered to provide training on forest protection, seedling production and nursery management. Demands for training were high, and the PAFG office lacked the staff to do the job itself. But, a "trainer of trainers" approach was developed, whereby the PAFG trained local volunteers, who, in turn, trained the village committees.

flict, and sometimes leads to institutional collapse. One of the key factors resulting in the failure of a tortilla co-op run by women in Patzcuaro, Mexico, was the lack of an accurate record of income and expenses. Over time, this situation generated mistrust and conflict, which led to the withdrawal of a group of co-op members. Severely weakened, the co-op eventually closed down.<sup>12</sup>

As another example, consider the case of The Asociación de Agricultores de Alto Paraná in Paraguay (ASAGRAPA), a regional organization formed by 40 committees of farmers in 1984. ASAGRAPA hoped that joint marketing of cotton would raise farmers' incomes and persuade farmers that properly managed credit was an important resource. However, at harvest time ASAGRAPA was not able to deliver the cotton it had promised to the cotton gin owner with whom it had a contract. When the project failed to deliver the expected benefits, local committees questioned ASAGRAPA's leadership. Poor record-keeping made it difficult to assign responsibility for the losses, so tensions among the members grew. The outcome of this experience was positive: ASAGRAPA set aside highly uncertain cotton marketing in favor of the production of traditional foodstuffs for the market. Still, the transition was difficult. ASAGRAPA was able to overcome its problems only after a series of tense and time-consuming meetings that nearly destroyed the organization.<sup>13</sup>

Conversely, sound financial management and administration have been key aspects of grassroots organizational success in countries such as Ecuador and Mexico. For example, in the community enterprises established in San Juan Nuevo in the state of Michoacan in Mexico, accurate accounting systems have helped local leaders emerge unharmed by politically motivated audits carried out by Mexico's Ministry of Government. Local leaders have used the reports from these audits to respond to accusations of financial mismanagement, and their ability to respond to financial management questions has contributed to the organization's success. San Juan Nuevo first established a collective logging firm in 1977, and by 1990, the community had established diversified community enterprises that grossed five million dollars.<sup>14</sup>

### **Develop NGO/GRO Specialized Knowledge and Technical Skills**

NGOs have tended to focus on activities that mitigate poverty's effects on marginal populations. In so doing, they have frequently adopted integrated approaches that combine training (on issues such as health, nutrition, and new agricultural technologies) with credit (for improved seeds and fertilizers, water and sanitation works, community housing, etc.) Drawing on simple technologies that have been proved elsewhere,<sup>15</sup> NGOs

have been able to provide important services to the communities with whom they work.

However, the environmental problems emerging throughout the region require NGOs to develop specialized knowledge and skills. For example, due to the expansion of non-traditional crops in Central America, a growing number of NGOs and grassroots organizations are getting involved in health and environmental issues related to pesticide use. Knowledge of proper handling of agrochemicals, methods for measuring residues, and the health and environmental impact of pesticides is key for organizations seeking to assist farmers in the field. In addition, such knowledge will help them gain the credibility needed to lobby governments for appropriate regulations regarding pesticide use. The same applies to a wide variety of issues, from alternative treatment of solid wastes, to improved soil-management practices.

Northern NGOs have developed many approaches and training materials to address the technical needs of NGOs and GROs. Nevertheless, cultural contexts, the availability of financial resources, and staff schooling levels vary dramatically from one NGO to another, and even more from NGOs to GROs. Given this diversity, methods and training materials developed for or by northern NGOs do not always meet the needs of southern NGOs, especially those of GROs.

- **Learning Partnerships as a Form of International Cooperation**

One approach used successfully to solve this problem is to promote partnerships between northern support organizations, southern NGOs, and grassroots groups to develop in-country capabilities to lend technical assistance.

WRI established one such partnership with the Group of Environmental Studies (GEA), a Mexican NGO. The purpose was to jointly test and adapt a handbook and other materials on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) for a two-year period. Twelve months after the collaboration began, WRI turned all training activities on PRA and participatory planning methods over to GEA, which by then had the capacity to provide intensive technical assistance and to carry out ambitious training programs. WRI has subsequently focused on helping to legitimize GEA's work in the eyes of the government and other international cooperation organizations. For its part, GEA has done an excellent job in promoting its services among grassroots organizations and other NGOs.<sup>16</sup>

The partnership between GEA and WRI expanded when the Mexican Program for the Protection of the Tropical Forest (PROAFT) requested technical support from WRI and GEA to train local groups in PRA techniques, and to help define, through consultation, long-term policy guidelines for tropical forest management in

Mexico. Collaboration with PROAFT was possible partly because WRI had developed the participatory planning methods that GEA later tested and adapted, and also because GEA had an in-country presence.

Partnerships like this tend to be beneficial in two ways. First, they result in the production of practical materials (methodological guidelines, case studies, and other "how to" manuals) that are culturally sensitive. Second, they develop in-country capacity to continue adapting and developing solutions in response to local needs as they arise.

Visits and exchanges among groups facing similar problems have also proved effective in ensuring that methods and skills meet the needs of southern NGOs and GROs. The WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature) sponsored one such visit to introduce agronomists from Mexican NGOs to the organic farming techniques developed by the World Neighbors in Honduras. WRI, World Neighbors, and other northern support organizations are relying increasingly on their collaborators in Latin America to provide technical assistance to other southern groups. These exchanges strengthen the capacities of host and visiting organizations and promote cross-fertilization.

While the approaches described above have helped develop needed skills and knowledge in Latin America, the demand for technical assistance currently far exceeds supply. New methods and more financial and technical support will be needed to expand outreach. As illustrated by the GEA-WRI collaboration, building in-country capabilities is likely to be the most effective way to expand such services. These capabilities could be developed inside NGOs or universities, which then can function as resource centers to design and test methods that are appropriate for NGOs and grassroots groups.

- Learning Through Horizontal Exchanges

Development activities have always been characterized by uncertainty due to unforeseen or changing economic, technical, political, and natural circumstances.<sup>17</sup> The integration of environmental considerations into development activities in many ways complicates the technical and political issues that projects must address. Nonetheless, this factor has provided new perspectives that are beginning to generate the necessary will to take on some longstanding development problems.

While there is a growing awareness of the need to bring together development and environment activities, there are few precedents. The search for ways to tackle old problems, compounded by new concerns, will require a great deal of inventiveness and flexibility, as well as the ability to learn from experience.

### Box 3: Population Issues versus Population Issues

In 1991, American Council for Voluntary International Action (INTERACTION), a U.S. consortium of NGOs, approached the Asociación Latinoamericana de Organismos de Promoción (ALOP), a Latin American consortium of NGOs, to conduct a series of workshops aimed at understanding how development, population, and environmental activities can be linked. Such linkage was to be identified by looking at existing projects that incorporate the three elements. The first step was to organize a regional workshop on the subject, with the participation of Latin American and U.S. NGOs. The date of the conference, a list of participants, and a general agenda were all agreed upon ahead of time.

During the conference, however, it became apparent that INTERACTION and ALOP had very different ideas of what the term "population" stood for. INTERACTION was particularly interested in linking family planning with development and environment. ALOP, on the other hand, wanted to focus on "family security" (health, food, employment) and environmental issues. While both interpretations of the term "population" are correct, each one had dramatically different programmatic implications. These differences were difficult to reconcile in the absence of specific examples.

As it turned out, none of the participating NGOs were involved in field programs addressing population issues (as in "family planning") at the grassroots level. Discussions during the workshop remained abstract. Participants did agree on some general principles, but the conference did not provide specific guidelines on how population, environment and development activities could be integrated.

The next step was to hold three follow-up regional workshops. This time, several of the NGOs invited to the events were directly involved with field family planning activities at the grassroots level. Unlike the earlier conference, the regional workshops began with site visits to local projects and with the analysis of specific case studies of programs dealing with population, development, or environmental matters. Once participants had acquired a good understanding of the issues at hand, they addressed a series of questions on the integration of population and environment in local development projects.

By focusing their discussion on specific cases, and by defining up-front operational problems, participants came up with guidelines for planning these projects. Furthermore, these workshops generated such interest that many groups, even the ones that in the past had resisted dealing with population issues, submitted proposals to INTERACTION to apply some of the guidelines developed during the event.<sup>18</sup>

One way to help groups grappling with these complex and elusive matters is to facilitate the systematic exchange of information among them, seeking to promote a joint reflection among organizations concerned with similar issues. As the following examples show, case studies, workshops, and seminars are all options.

With support from the Ford Foundation during 1990 and 1991, several individuals who had helped develop community forest enterprises in Mexico held a seminar

to exchange information and collectively analyze their experiences. In the case studies that grew out of this collaboration, lessons learned in community forestry in Mexico were highlighted.

Networks or consortia of NGOs have played an important role in getting a variety of organizations together to explore a common problem and to provide new and useful insights. In Mexico, Program PASOS has held several workshops for that purpose, and it regularly publishes a journal featuring "lessons in development."

International cooperation organizations sometimes facilitate these exchanges. The Inter-American Foundation occasionally helps organize panels for professional meetings, and it finances the participation of some of its southern collaborators on these panels. In Ecuador, Catholic Relief Services and the Christian Children Fund have supported the Agroecological Network, through which NGOs exchange lessons and methods to promote environmentally sound agricultural practices.

During 1991 and 1992, the World Bank provided technical and financial assistance to a group of Latin American NGOs to carry out case studies on efforts by NGO networks to plan and negotiate programs with governments. This project offered NGO networks an opportunity to apply some of the concepts of strategic planning in assessing and documenting their experiences. As a result, they were able to generate an initial set of guidelines to plan programs for such sectors as health and agriculture in collaboration with governments.<sup>19</sup>

Seminars, workshops, and conferences organized for the purpose of exchanging information and sharing experiences have proven to be more productive when:

- 1) the goals, methods and expected outputs (i.e., a series of case studies, methodological guidelines, project proposals) have been defined and agreed to up front by all participants;
- 2) workshop attendees are engaged in activities that directly address the central subject of the workshop or have specific programmatic, and not merely intellectual interest, in it, and
- 3) workshops are based on the analysis of particular experiences.

### **Acquire Capacities to Produce and Disseminate Sound Information for Timely Action**

Sound information and analysis are important to catalyze citizen action and political will to bring about changes in the way natural resources are used. But governments frequently restrict access to, or delay providing information on matters that they consider politically sensitive (i.e., levels of air pollution in heavily contaminated cities, industrial accidents, and other environmental catastrophes). As a result, many life-threatening

situations or processes destructive to natural resources go unchecked. They usually become public issues only when the human and material costs are already too high.

Increasingly, NGOs are playing an important role in promoting a better public understanding of the linkages among the economy, the environment, and the well-being of local populations. The NGOs that have proven most effective in influencing policy-making are those that have focused on making available to the public and policy-makers clear and timely information.

- One Step Ahead, Shaping the Policy Debate

Some organizations have developed such a good reputation that governments and multilateral banks go to them for advice, studies and assessments. LIDEMA, a consortium of 19 environmental NGOs and research institutions in Bolivia, is a case in point.

On several occasions in the last five years, the government has asked LIDEMA to carry out environmental studies and analyses that are later used to formulate large-scale projects or sectoral policies. LIDEMA, in turn, has used its prestige to promote the discussion of environmental issues at the highest levels.

In March of 1993, LIDEMA held a conference on environmental policy with all the major presidential candidates. In that forum, the country's most pressing environment and development problems were discussed, and options to address them were presented. The candidates were highly impressed by the conference, and all agreed to endorse an environmental manifesto.<sup>20</sup>

In this case, LIDEMA created a platform for the major presidential contenders to express their views on environment and development, allowing them to benefit from the "green" spotlight. More important, by inviting all the candidates to the conference early in the presidential campaign, LIDEMA was able to make the environment a prominent campaign issue and to obtain a written commitment to environmental issues from whomever was to be the next president.

- Choosing the Right Messenger for the Message

More generally, experience to date has shown that relatively small consortia that have connections with grassroots groups or are well regarded among other NGOs, such as LIDEMA, seem to be the most capable of taking timely action on specific issues. That timely information offered by groups perceived as legitimate and disinterested parties can make a significant difference has also been proved successfully by PASOS, a consortium of three Mexican NGOs. PASOS joined efforts with several regional community forestry groups to amend a forestry bill sent to Congress by President Car-

los Salinas de Gortari in June 1992. The bill was intended to completely reform the country's forestry law to facilitate private investment in the forestry sector. However, the proposed legislation made little reference to environmental protection measures and did not mention community groups and forest dwellers at all.<sup>21</sup>

PASOS' first step was to publish a set of articles in the magazine *El Cotidiano*<sup>22</sup> shortly after President Salinas sent the bill to Congress. As the congressional debate progressed from July to November, the group maintained public attention on the issues by testifying before Congress, publishing newspaper articles, and holding press conferences on the subject.

By making available to decision-makers and the general public information on community forestry and on the likely impacts of commercial timber plantations, this small consortium unleashed a wide debate on the new forestry law. As a result, the bill initially sent to Congress by President Salinas was substantially amended.

Large networks and umbrella organizations have also helped sensitize the public by organizing highly visible forums that bring together those with differing perspectives on a particular topic. This was the case in the workshops sponsored by national and international NGO networks in many countries leading to the Global Forum on the environment celebrated in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. These events helped raise public awareness on matters of equity, human rights, democratization, and the right to information, which generally do not figure prominently on official agendas.<sup>23</sup> Umbrella organizations have also been used to facilitate the transfer of funds from international donors or governments to NGOs and GROs. An example of these types of consortiums include La Asociación de Entidades de Desarrollo y de Servicio No Gubernamentales de Guatemala (AS-INDES), which was founded in 1987 and has since evolved into a consortium of 20 NGOs. ASINDES's mandate is to provide a range of services to member organizations, among which brokering financial assistance has been particularly important.<sup>24</sup>

However, the appropriate functions of large networks and the conditions or factors that lead to their success have not yet been fully understood. While they have been promoted frequently as coalitions that strengthen the independent sector's capacity to influence policy, large networks have been shown to be fragile as mechanisms for negotiating specific agendas for action with governments. Given the diversity of interests, ideologies, and methods used by NGOs, grassroots groups, and research institutions, it is neither realistic nor desirable to expect large networks to function as monolithic interest groups.<sup>25</sup>

Case studies and other research that document roles, methods, achievements, and weaknesses of networks can help to develop a better understanding of their potential role in promoting a more informed and open society.

### **OBTAINING LONG-TERM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR NGOs AND GROs**

Most Latin American NGOs finance the bulk of their activities with funds from the United States and Europe.<sup>26</sup> And to have access to these resources, southern NGOs must operate within the constraints set--knowingly or unknowingly--by their northern counterparts. A study of NGOs in Mexico conducted by the German Development Institute reports that some of the most frequent complaints by Mexican NGOs about northern donors are "short-term funding", "imposition of fads," and "reluctance to provide funds to cover overhead and equipment costs."<sup>27</sup>

Many southern NGOs also believe that they must spend too much time meeting the reporting requirements of donors, renewing proposals, and searching for additional funding. At the same time, they have to stretch their resources to carry out activities they consider important but that are of no interest to their international sponsors.<sup>28</sup>

Donors, on the other hand, point to tardy progress reports and faulty accounting systems on the part of NGOs, noting that as donors, they are responsible for the stewardship of funds and must adhere to quite strict accounting regulations. They are rarely in the position to allocate funds freely and must work within the context of budget cycles. Similarly, donors must follow the guidelines set by their governing bodies, as well as the administrative procedures set by government regulations. Northern NGOs that solicit funds from the general public for development assistance are also limited by the dominant public view of what development assistance is all about.<sup>29</sup> For many years, the public in northern countries has been led to believe that development assistance is about the direct service provisioning for poverty alleviation and emergency relief. Environmental issues have frequently been equated with species conservation. Many northern NGOs are looking for ways to change these perceptions by educating the public on self help and capacity building and the linkages between environment, poverty, and democracy, but this is a slow process.

### **Defining Together the Principles that Will Govern Funding Relations**

Development assistance is carried out through very uneven relationships between donors and recipients. Furthermore, given the intense competition for funds, re-

recipients feel that they have to be extremely cautious in reporting programmatic setbacks and changing needs to those who hold the upper hand.

The transition to a more equitable collaboration is the responsibility of both donors and recipients. A better mutual understanding of their respective needs, resources, and problems will greatly facilitate this transition. For instance, donors should always provide clear information on the constraints they face in tax laws, fund stewardship, and accounting, etc. This will help recipients understand the reasoning behind funding decisions and administrative requirements, and it is likely to make them more willing to fulfill the reporting needs of donors. Fund recipients, on the other hand, should try to set more realistic objectives when submitting proposals. They can also use progress reports to communicate to donors the problems, achievements, and complexities involved in their work.

- Building a Propitious Environment for Dialogue

One way to promote a better understanding between donors and recipients is to create neutral channels of communication (workshops, newsletters). These provide opportunities for a candid, non-threatening dialogue in which the two parties discuss their various needs and ways to address them.<sup>30</sup> Some of the needs addressed by these dialogues will relate to funding levels, priorities, and accountability mechanisms. But other important topics include the need for political support, self determination, and information. One important topic that has received little attention is the juridical and fiscal status of NGOs and GROs. As mentioned, the U.S. non-profit tax law constrains donors in a variety of ways. In Latin America, NGOs and GROs sometimes lack a clear legal standing and tax status that distinguishes them from other partisan or for-profit organizations. These issues are important, and developing country NGOs and GROs must address them if they are to carry out their work more effectively.

Power differences can also be neutralized if donors, recipients, and other interested players come together to discuss priorities, issues, and actions, as well as the best methods for confronting a particular problem. A program of activities could be developed accordingly.

In February of 1993, The United States Man and the Biosphere Program (USMAB), in collaboration with the Central American Commission for Development and Environment (CCAD), held a workshop to identify the actions necessary to improve the conservation and management of the Maya forest. The workshop was attended by over fifty representatives of NGOs and governments from Belize, Guatemala, Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Representatives from several foundations with programs in the region were also invited.

During the two-day workshop, key issues were identified and discussed, and short- and long-term actions were agreed upon to address them. As a result, USMAB elaborated a three-year plan to be implemented jointly with CCAD in response to the needs identified during the workshop. The plan seeks to foster greater participation of forest dwellers and users in decision-making, to make information and funds available to support local management initiatives, and to promote compatible policies in Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico to protect the tri-national Maya forest.<sup>31</sup>

### Exploring Alternatives for Long-term Funding and Security

Long-term funding and flexible planning that permit the incorporation of lessons learned in the field into program design are particularly important when seeking to build institutional capacities.<sup>32</sup>

However, southern NGOs and GROs frequently find out that after one or two years of work, just when they are beginning to understand how to address the issues they have set out to confront, funding cycles end or donors shift priorities. Consequently, many valuable opportunities for organizational strengthening and for acquiring development and environmental expertise are lost.

- Long-term, Tripartite Commitment

A good illustration of how important securing long-term funding is in institution building is the collaboration between the Center for Social and Ecological Studies (CESE), a Mexican NGO, and the Organization Against the Contamination of Lake Patzcuaro (ORCA), a GRO. Since 1982, CESE and ORCA have been working together to improve ORCA's capacity to develop technological and policy alternatives that could reverse the destruction of Lake Patzcuaro. For the last ten years, ORCA has been able to organize all 28 fishing communities on the lake; test simple technologies to reduce erosion; work with the communities to make sure that government programs will incorporate these and other technologies that have been used locally; and establish inter-community mechanisms to ensure local participation in the planning and implementation of government programs.

These outstanding accomplishments were possible because both CESE and ORCA received financial support from one donor throughout the ten years. This financial security allowed CESE, ORCA, and HIVOS (a Dutch humanistic institute for international cooperation) to build a strong regional organization with wide community participation. In the process, the three organizations developed a working relationship through which they periodically reviewed objectives, accomplishments,

and methods, learning from their experience and incorporating lessons into future program activities.

A sudden shift from one- or two-year grants to five- to ten-year grants is likely to be difficult for most donors. Previous commitments, limited funds, and reluctance to significantly reduce the number of groups that they support in favor of a few privileged organizations are all legitimate considerations. Nonetheless, some steps could be taken to explore the feasibility of long-term funding by learning when it is essential to project success and how best to secure it.

Long-term funding will require more careful planning and a clearer thematic and geographical focus on the part of donors. A better understanding of the issues and players involved will help to reduce the risks involved in long-term partnerships with fewer organizations. This transition could take place in phases, allowing donors to test approaches and gradually direct their support to the most promising groups and initiatives.

- Endowments and Income-generating Activities

To ensure the long-term financial security of projects, donors and northern NGOs can help develop the ability of southern NGOs and GROs to diversify their revenue. One way to do so is to build NGO or GRO fundraising skills or help create funds and endowments managed in developing countries. The Nature Conservancy, the Worldwide Fund for Nature, Conservation International, and the United States Agency for International Development (AID) have provided technical and financial support to help NGOs build endowments through debt-for-nature swaps in countries such as Costa Rica, Bolivia, and Ecuador.<sup>33</sup> Examples of foundations or endowments that are well established include Fondo Nacional para el Medio Ambiente (FONAMA) in Bolivia, Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (ANCON) in Panama, and Fundación Vida in Honduras.

Northern organizations such as Conservation International and Cultural Survival support grassroots groups through income-generating activities, which have several advantages. They produce revenue for the local population and its organizations, and they ascribe economic value to natural resources, thereby creating incentives for resource conservation.

Income-generating activities also further equity by encouraging governments to establish legal tenure by resource users. For example, in many Latin American countries, colonization laws require farmers to demonstrate that they have made improvements on the land before they can apply for legal tenure titles. Most frequently, farmers "improve" the lands by cutting down the forest, thereby contributing to rapid deforestation

and encroachment on indigenous peoples' lands throughout the region. To prevent the human rights abuses and the environmental destruction that frequently accompany this pattern of agricultural expansion, some NGOs have helped indigenous groups develop forest-management plans, which include environmentally sensitive improvements on the land. In this way, environmentalists and indigenous populations have begun to forge alliances that help protect indigenous peoples' tenurial rights while also arresting environmental destruction. Support for these activities frequently includes assistance in negotiations with government officials, start-up capital and money to cover expenses, assistance in developing markets for products, and training on natural resource management, planning, financial management, production processes, and marketing.<sup>34</sup>

- In-country Contributions

For almost twenty five years, the Pan-American Development Foundation has been helping to form in-country foundations by pulling together resources from local philanthropy and international funding sources. One example of these is The Fundación Centavo in Guatemala, which finances land purchases for landless farmers. Recently, the Synergos Institute began a program to promote in-country giving for development. Efforts like these are important in helping develop the institutional structures that promote and facilitate local giving in developing countries.

In some countries, the legal and fiscal status of nonprofits are not well defined; other times, NGOs and GROs find the existing legal forms too confining and inappropriate for their needs. A clear legal definition of NGOs and the various forms of GROs, the granting of tax exempt status, and the incorporation of tax deductible contributions in fiscal systems of developing countries are all important measures that governments could adopt to promote in-country giving.

- Tax-deductible Contributions

Some Latin American NGOs, with the assistance of U.S. NGOs, have been able to connect more directly with the U.S. public. The Mexican organization Amigos de Sian Khan (Sian Khan is a protected area in the Peninsula of Yucatan in Mexico) has established a permanent collaboration with Friends of Mexican Development, a U.S.-based NGO, to obtain tax-deductible donations from the U.S. public. Friends of Mexican Development has a special account in which interested individuals can deposit their donations for Amigos de Sian Khan. Except for a very small fee, all funds in the account are transferred to the Mexican organization.

Such arrangements between U.S. and southern NGOs are particularly attractive to the U.S. public because

many individual donors like to give directly to those that will be using the funds for specific projects and also because their donations are tax deductible. In this way, Amigos de Sian Khan has been able to develop a reliable network of donors that together give them about U.S.\$9000 a year, which supplements other income-generating activities and grants.

### **Incorporating Administrative and Equipment Costs as Legitimate Expenses**

Frequently, southern organizations lack administrative support and the most basic instruments -- from typewriters to telephones to motor vehicles -- to carry out their programmatic activities. Indeed, most donors tend to finance direct rather than such operational project costs as administrative support, and equipment.<sup>35</sup> As a result, allowances for overhead costs in grant agreements are often low.

On the other hand, NGOs eager to obtain funding or unaware of the problems caused by not fully accounting for overhead, frequently accept grants that are insufficient to cover the costs of managing the project. This is a difficult situation that works against the goals of donors and recipients alike but is rarely discussed openly.

While donors need to be more willing to finance overhead, southern groups need to give donors accurate information to justify these costs. They must learn to quantify project overhead and to assign it to various program activities in ways that make it easier to track expenses. Without this information, donors will find it difficult to make any changes in their current policies.

- **Small Grants That Go a Long Way**

Donors and support organizations in the North should seriously consider providing small grants (\$2000 to \$3000) to southern organizations to purchase a fax machine, a telephone, a computer, or other basic equipment, which are likely to dramatically improve organizational performance.

In 1990 WWF collaborated with the Mott Foundation on a small grants program for institution building, with grants ranging from \$1500 to \$5000. One such grant was given to Protección del Medio Ambiente de Tarija (PROMETA), an NGO initially formed by three student volunteers in Tarija, Bolivia. Since 1985, this group has been involved in environmental education and in organizing university debates and radio campaigns for public awareness. With a \$3000 grant from WWF, which was not tied to any specific program, PROMETA was able to purchase a computer and other equipment. Its new outreach capacity allowed PROMETA to increase its staff to eight volunteers and twenty associates, and to further expand its publicity campaign. As a result, its profile and legitimacy in the community grew, which allowed

PROMETA to launch and coordinate a series of environmental forums, and to help organize a regional consultation on Bolivia's environmental law.

Non-programmatic grants of this sort that permit NGOs and GROs to address seemingly minor bottlenecks can have a strong, lasting impact on institutional capacities.

### **CONFRONTING COMMON PROBLEMS WITH ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED**

Latin America's environmental challenges are of such magnitude that no single sector can address them on its own. Effective strategic action frequently requires working with other organizations, especially when seeking to influence government policies, laws, or projects.<sup>36</sup>

But NGOs, GROs, and other civil organizations are often beset by turf battles, competition for human and financial resources, and mistrust. Coupled with the high costs of collaboration (in staff time and financial resources), these woes often prevent them from joining forces to attain common goals.

### **Promote Synergistic Alliances Among GROs, NGOs, and Governments**

A step in the right direction will be to identify and bring together all parties facing common challenges. Alliances in which different groups coalesce to address a particular problem are crucial when taking on issues that transcend the immediate locality and are best addressed at the regional, national, or international levels. (Large development projects, the formulation of new laws, and the establishment of international protocols are all examples of such challenges.)

Synergistic alliances can be promoted by supporting coalitions of groups with a stake in resolving common problems. This support could consist of extending financial or technical assistance to organizations involved in conducting studies, developing and adapting tools and methods for problem analysis and planning, or negotiating with governments and other donors.

One example of a promising alliance is the Congress of Nahua-Speaking Communities of the Higher Balsas River (CPNAB) in Mexico, which was formed to stop the construction of the San Juan Dam. This dam was proposed to replace the existing El Caracol dam, which is losing water capacity because of siltation problems.

The San Juan dam would flood 37 Indian towns with a total population of 60,000, as well as an important ecosystem featuring a rich endemic biodiversity. After an intense press campaign and demonstrations, which CPNAB coordinated with journalists and NGOs, the or-

ganization obtained assurances from President Salinas that the dam project would be canceled.

However, the fundamental cause of the siltation--the high rate of erosion in the higher Balsas basin--was not being addressed. The Nahua Congress understood the magnitude of the underlying problem and knew that the dam would probably be built during future administrations. It therefore requested the assistance of NGOs in developing specific alternatives to the construction of the dam by improving management of the region's natural resources.

Collaborating NGOs are now engaging in joint planning with other NGOs, CPNAB, and the National Indian Institute (which represents the Mexican government). A series of town meetings have been organized to consolidate the alliance and to define priorities and alternatives. This has required the willingness and skills to negotiate, to define clearly the role of each player, and to agree on a process by which decisions will be made and reviewed. To ensure wide participation by local groups, new methods and tools for analysis and planning are being tested and developed.<sup>37</sup>

- Building Allies Through Information Exchanges

The lack of access to information on who is doing what, where, and how limits the potential of organizations to join forces to pursue a common goal. Groups carrying out activities at the local level are likely to be unaware of efforts by other organizations in other areas, or at the national or international levels. Communication gaps between national and international initiatives are largely the result of insufficient communication channels (networks, newsletters, alliances) to facilitate the flow of information on programs underway and other related issues. Accordingly, many opportunities for coordinated and effective action are lost.

During 1991 and 1992, a group of NGOs in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, organized themselves to ensure that a proposed forestry project financed by the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) would adequately incorporate both the needs of the local population and key environmental considerations. In the process, local NGOs found it difficult to obtain information about the project, as well as environmental impact reports held by the government.<sup>38</sup>

IDB officials later indicated to the NGOs that they would have provided much of the relevant information and also would have welcomed their input. For the Oaxacan NGOs, however, cultivating contacts with the IDB and keeping apprised of activities at the IDB headquarters in Washington would have been expensive and logistically difficult.

While the NGOs in Oaxaca were searching for ways to influence the IDB project, a group of North American NGOs was searching for ways to promote multilateral bank reform. Only a few of these northern groups had contacts in developing countries and access to specific information about multilateral bank projects. The Oaxacan and North American NGOs did not learn of each other's efforts, so they could not support each other's work.

Lost opportunities such as the above occur largely because most northern support organizations and many NGOs or GROs in Latin America confine their actions solely to the local, national, regional, or international level. Few organizations facilitate linkages and information flow among those working at different levels, and donors prefer funding a discrete set of activities to supporting information exchanges that tend to have a less well-defined impact.

Given the global dimensions of environmental challenges today, mechanisms that support worldwide information exchanges must be strengthened. One way is to promote North-South and South-South communication among groups working on similar issues but at different levels. A first step would be providing easier access to available information through newsletters, computer "bulletin boards," and networks.

## CONCLUSION

Longstanding development issues, coupled with new environmental concerns, are posing increasing challenges to all those organizations and institutions concerned with the well-being of populations and the rational use of the resource base.

For the last two decades, NGOs and GROs in Latin America have been playing an important role in forging a new development paradigm based on equity, democratization, and the sustainable use of natural resources. Two significant changes have contributed to the evolution of this paradigm. First, there is evidence that NGOs, GROs, and governments are now more willing to work together in identifying priorities, as well as in planning and carrying out programs that respond to people's needs; and, second, there has been a gradual shift of responsibilities for project implementation from northern support organizations to southern NGOs, and particularly to GROs. However, further efforts by both the public sector and private organizations at the local, national, and international levels will be needed if the emerging development paradigm is to meet the needs of marginal populations while protecting the environment.

Multilateral lending institutions and bilateral development agencies can help by encouraging governments to incorporate environmental and social criteria in develop-

ment programs through participatory planning and in monitoring compliance. In turn, governments can make the decision- and policy- making processes more democratic by requesting and welcoming the input of the intended beneficiaries of development.

For their part, NGOs and GROs will need to improve their ability to make good use of opportunities for policy dialogue and to make realistic proposals that can be acted upon. This will help them to be recognized by governments as valuable partners in development.

An equally important challenge for these organizations will be accepting that their roles are being changed by the new realities that they themselves have helped to create. How they redefine and fulfill these new roles while making the best use of their comparative advantages will largely determine their future.

This is especially true for NGOs. As grassroots groups become more organized and active in self help, as well as in making their voices heard at the highest levels, NGOs have to discover how they can help strengthen GRO efforts. Building their capacity to generate, analyze, and disseminate information; developing specific skills in project design and management; acquiring the technical knowledge needed to perform specialized work in development or environmental activities; and gearing GRO training to particular needs and specific cultural contexts will help them to avoid being redundant. More important, meeting these challenges will ensure that NGOs can continue to make a valuable contribution to the process of sustainable development.

### Background

In the fall and winter of 1992, the World Resources Institute (WRI) contributed to organize and facilitate three workshops involving some 80 individuals representing various NGOs, foundations and government offices from the United States, Canada and Latin America. Each workshop had a different thematic and geographical focus, but all of them addressed two key questions: (1) what are the main environmental challenges facing the region, and (2) what GROs, NGOs, donors, and governments can do to confront those challenges. This document summarizes and builds on the recommendations resulting from the three events. Full reports from these workshops are available from WRI, *Organization Capacity Building in Latin America: Issues and Recommendations to Strengthen NGOs to Address Environmental Challenges*, Washington, D.C.: World Resources Institute, 1992; Pan American Health Organization, *Coloquio con Organizaciones No Gubernamentales Sobre Salud y Medio Ambiente en Centroamerica*, Washington, D.C.: Pan American Health Organization, 1993; and U.S. Man and Biosphere Program (USMAB) & The Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), *The Maya Forest: Key Issues and Recommendations for Action: A Workshop Report, Flores, Guatemala*, CCAD/USMAB: 1993.

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## NOTES

1. See Dan Tunstall and Mieke van der Wansem, eds., *1993 Directory of Country Environmental Studies: An Annotated Bibliography of Environmental and Natural Resource Profiles and Assessments*. Washington, D.C.: World Resources Institute, 1992.
2. See *Environment Watch Latin America*, Volume 3, Number 4. Cutter Information Corp. April 1993.
3. See David Kaimowitz, *The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer in Latin America*, Costa Rica: Inter-american Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, n.d.
4. Kaimowitz, n.d.
5. See David C. Brown and David L. Korten, *Understanding Voluntary Organizations: Guidelines for Donors*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, Policy, Planning, and Research Working Paper Series No. 258, 1989; Thomas F. Carroll, *Intermediary NGOs: The Supporting Link in Grassroots Development*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1992; Ann Gordon Drabek, "NGOs: Do We Expect Too Much?" *Progress*, Spring/Summer 1992: pp. 40-44; and Judith Tendler, *Turning Private Voluntary Organizations Into Development Agencies: Questions for Evaluation*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Agency for International Development Program No. 12, 1982.
6. See Paul Streeten, "The contributions of non-governmental organizations of development," *Development: Seeds of Change* 4, 1987: pp. 92-95.
7. See Gretchen Bauer and Anne Gordon Drabek, "NGOs as Development Agents and Educators," in Elizabeth Morrison, Randall B. Purcell, eds., *Players & Issues in U.S. Foreign Aid: Essential Information for Educators*, West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1988; Brown and Korten 1989; Michael M. Cernea, *Nongovernmental Organizations and Local Development*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, Discussion Paper No. 40, 1988; and Tendler 1982.
8. See Cernea 1988; and Hendrik Van Der Heijden, "The Reconciliation of NGO Autonomy, Program Integrity, and Operational Effectiveness With Accountability to Donors," in Anne Gordon Drabek, editor, "Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs," *World Development* 15, Autumn, 1987: pp. 103-112.
9. The approaches that are being proposed vary. For some examples, see David Korten, *Getting to the Twenty-First Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1990; Manitoba Institute of Management Center, *Managing the Non Profit Organization*, Manitoba Institute of Management Center, Inc., n.d.; Bryan W. Barry, *Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations*, New York: The Wilder Foundation, 1991; and John Friend and Allen Hickling, *Planning Under Pressure: The Strategic Choice Approach*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987.
10. See Richard Devine, Ruth Norris, and Monique Zegarra, *Recursos para Lograr Exito: Un Manual para Organizaciones Conservacionistas*, Arlington, Virginia: The Nature Conservancy International Program, 1990; and World Wildlife Fund Programa para Desarrollo Organizacional, *Una Guía para Diseñar Propuestas Eficaces*, Washington, D.C.: World Wildlife Fund, 1992.
11. See World Resources Institute (WRI) and Grupos de Estudios Ambientales (GEA), *El Proceso de Evaluación Rural Participativa: Una Propuesta Metodológica*, WRI/GEA, 1992; and Galo Ramón Valarezo, "Andean Community Planning," *Forest, Trees and People*, forthcoming.
12. See "El Caso de la Tortillería," in *PASOS: Practicas de Desarrollo Rural*, December, 1989 No. 1: pp. 25-28;
13. For more information on the ASAGRAPA experience, see David Bray and Dionisio Borda, "Internalizing the Crisis of Cotton: Organizing Small Farmers in Eastern Paraguay," *Grassroots Development: Journal of the Inter-american Foundation* Volume 12, No. 2, 1988: pp. 16-24 (case in Paraguay); For other cases that illustrate how the lack of accurate financial records has resulted in serious organizational problems, see, e.g., Kevin Healy, "From Field to Factory: Vertical Integration in Bolivia," *Grassroots Development*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1987); Jonathan Fox, "Democratic Rural Development: Leadership Accountability in Regional Peasant Organizations," *Development and Change* Vol. 23, No. 2: pp. 1-36 (case in Mexico); and Galo Ramon et al., *Actores de una Decada Ganada: Tribus Comunidades y Campesinos en la Modernidad*. Quito, Ecuador: COMUNIDEC, 1992 (case in Ecuador); The evidence of these articles, and particularly the Fox article, indicates that accurate financial records become more important as organizations grow. As organizations become more complex, personalized forms of social control cease to operate. New mechanisms of accountability that do not depend on personal trust must be developed. A

rigorous accounting system is one type of mechanism that has frequently been chosen by successful GROs.

14. Personal communication with Gonzalo Chapela, Professor at the National Autonomous University in Mexico City, March 26, 1993; for more information on the San Juan Nuevo experience, see Pedro Alvarez Icaza, "Forestry As a Social Enterprise," *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Spring, 1993: pp.45-47.

15. See Streeten 1987.

16. WRI has established similar partnerships with Research Systems and Community Development (COMUNIDEC) in Ecuador. See Bruce Cabarle and Aaron Zazueta, "Gaining ground: people's participation in the tropical forestry action plan for Ecuador," *Forest, Trees and People*, February 1992, Newsletter No.15/16: pp. 32-35; and Galo Ramón Valarezo, forthcoming.

17. For an in depth discussion of the uncertainties associated with development projects and with planning in general, see Albert Hirshman, *Development Projects Observed*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1967; and Ralph D. Stacy, *Managing the Unknowable: Strategic Boundaries Between Order and Chaos in Organizations*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.

18. The outcomes of these workshops were reported in *Monday Developments* of April 4 and December 2, 1992.

19. See "Primer Seminario de Planificación Estratégica para ONGs de America Latina y el Caribe: 01 al 06 de junio, San Jose, Costa Rica," Instituto de Desarrollo Económico, 1992.

20. See "Habitat," No. 21, La Paz, Bolivia: LIDEMA, March-April, 1993.

21. See Gonzalo Chapela, "Nueva ley forestal, nuevo interlocutor," *Cuadernos Agrarios: 27 Constitucional*, May 5 - December 6, 1992: pp.80-87.

22. See *El Cotidiano*, June, 1992.

23. See Charles A. Reilly, "The Road From Río: NGO Environmental Policy-Making," Inter-american Foundation Unpublished paper, 1992; Hilda Salazar Ramírez, "El medio ambiente y la participación ciudadana: El Foro Mexicano de la Sociedad Civil para Río 92," *El Cotidiano* 47, May, 1992: pp. 11-15; and Julio Romaní, "Foro Mexicano de la Sociedad Civil para Río 92 ¿cruzar el río?," in *PASOS: Prácticas de Desarrollo Rural*, April, 1992 No. 4: p. 82.

24. Other services which ASINDES has sought for its members include training and policy dialogue with the government. But ASINDES's success has been mixed. Its most stable role has been in brokering financial resources for its members. For two analyses on the ASINDES experience, refer to Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT), *Trends in PVO Partnership: The Umbrella Project Experience in Central America*, New York: PACT, 1989; and Private Agencies Collaborating Together, *Steps Toward a Social Investment Fund: Negotiations Involving Nongovernmental Organizations, Government of Guatemala and the World Bank*, New York: PACT, 1990.

25. See Alfonso Gonzalez, "Socio-ecological Struggles in Mexico: The Prospect," *Internal Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 12 (4-7), 1992: pp. 113-118. In this article, Gonzalez documents how coalitions of NGOs and GROs have been effective when seeking to influence specific government actions such as the construction of a nuclear plant in the state of Michoacan in the early 1980s. Nonetheless, Gonzalez illustrates how attempts to make large networks interlocutors of civil society with the government have failed to do to the great diversity of interest in society. For further reading on the strengths and weaknesses of networks and consortium organizations, see Alan Fowler, *Prioritizing Institutional Development: A New Role for NGO Centres for Study and Development*, London: International Institute for Environment and Development, Gatekeeper Series No. 35, 1992; Miguel Sang Bang, "Los Consorcios Nacionales y Las Fuentes Internacionales de Financiamiento del Desarrollo: Nuevos Enfoques y Perspectivas," *Posibilidades y Perspectivas de la Cooperación Internacional*, Santo Domingo: Centro Dominicano de Organizaciones de Interés Social, pp. 19-26; Daniel Santo Pietro, "Los Consorcios de ONG's Como Elementos Claves de la Cooperación Internacional," *Posibilidades y Perspectivas de la Cooperación Internacional*, Santo Domingo: Centro Dominicano de Organizaciones de Interés Social, pp. 29-32; and PACT, 1989.

26. See Frank Hess et al., *Política Ambiental en México: El Papel de las Organizaciones no Gubernamentales*, Mexico D.F.: Informe Preliminar, Instituto Alemán de Desarrollo, 1990; and Kaimowitz, n.d.

27. See Hess et al., 1990; and Carlos Pimentel R., "Inventariando la Cooperación Internacional en la República Dominicana" *Posibilidades y Perspectivas de la Cooperación Internacional*, Santo Domingo: Centro Dominicano de Organizaciones de Interés Social, pp.35-41.

28. See Peggy Antrobus, "Funding for NGOs: Issues and Options," in Anne Gordon Drabek, editor, "Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs," *World Development* 15, Autumn, 1987: pp. 95-102.
29. See Thomas H. Fox, "NGOs from the United States," *World Development*, 15, Supplement, 1987: pp. 11-19.
30. In the workshop sponsored by WRI in October of 1992, which brought together U.S. foundations and U.S. and Latin American NGOs to identify major NGO institution-building needs, participants remarked on the rarity of the opportunity to talk to each other outside a funding relationship. Similarly, several representatives of Latin American NGOs indicated that the workshop helped them understand some of the constraints facing the donors (WRI 1992).
31. See Tropical Ecosystems Directorate, U.S. Man and the Biosphere Program, and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, *The Maya Forest: Key Issues and Recommendations for Action*, Workshop Report from Tri-national Meeting on the Maya Forest, held in Flores, Guatemala on February 8-9, 1993.
32. See Fowler, 1992; Norman Uphoff, *Local Institutional Development: An Analytical Sourcebook With Cases*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1986; and Jerry VanSant, *Benefit Sustainability*, prepared for the Advisory Committee for Voluntary Foreign Aid. Washington, D.C.: Development Alternatives, Inc, 1987.
33. See Kristin Dawkins, "Debt-for-Nature Swaps," in Lawrence E. Susskind, Esther Siskind, and J. William Breslin, eds., *Nine Case Studies in International Environmental Negotiation*, Cambridge, Mass: The MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program, 1990; and Roque Sevilla Larrea and Alvaro Umaña Quesada, *Por Qué Canjear Deuda Por Naturaleza?*, Quito: Fundación Natura and San José: Ministerio de Recursos Naturales, 1990.
34. See Ted MacDonald, *Working With Indigenous People in Latin America: Towards Social Equity in the Conservation of Fragile Lands and Protected Areas*, Cambridge, Mass: Prepared for USAID by Cultural Survival, Inc., 1992; and Peter Poole, *Developing a Partnership of Indigenous Peoples, Conservationists, and Land Use Planners in Latin America*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, Policy, Planning, and Research Working Paper Series No. 245, 1989.
35. See Hess et al. 1990.
36. See Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid 1990 Report, *Responding to Change: Private Voluntarism and International Development*, Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, 1990.
37. For more information on CPNAB, see *Cuadernos de Alto Balsas No. 1, El Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas de Alto Balsas (CPNAB): los primeros años: 1989-1992*, Mexico: Grupo de Estudios Ambientales, A.C., 1993; and *Cuadernos de Alto Balsas No. 2, Hacia un Camino Propio de los Pueblos del Alto Balsas: síntesis del proyecto alternativo CPNAB-GEA*, Mexico: Grupo de Estudio Ambientales, A.C., 1993.
38. The project eventually became too controversial and has been put on hold by the Mexican government.

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