

Ecology is the Answer

“At the weekend I study at the University in San Cristobal de las Casas and during the week I work for the Cooperative Paluch’en,” says Francisco Gutierrez with a friendly smile. The 21-year old does not seem worried that he has next to no leisure time. “I like working for the Cooperative,” he explains, “because life in our villages has improved since we have been organized.” The student lives in the Guaquitepecs Region in the Mexican State of Chiapas. The villages are so remotely situated in the jungle that their inhabitants, the Tzeltales, were still living according to their old Mayan culture until 60 years ago. As in all Indian cultures, their income derives largely from agricultural production. The land reforms of the 1940s gave them small plots of land. Previously they had worked on the large coffee fincas under slave-like conditions. They could now use their knowledge and began to grow coffee for themselves on their own land. But their new freedom was swiftly restricted by further dependency: middlemen and the unstable price of coffee on the world market now started to dictate their living conditions. They are currently trying to free themselves from this economic dependency while preserving their own culture. *Patronato Pro Educaci3n* is helping them to create the necessary infrastructure, cut out the middlemen and make sure that farming families receive a good education. The IIZ/DVV, whose Action Programme to combat poverty is primarily targeted at the Indian population, is supporting this non-governmental organization. Ursula Klesing-Rempel, head of the IIZ/DVV Regional Office in Central America, justifies the cooperation



on the following grounds: “A democratic modernization policy needs to include the rural Indian population in the socio-economic development of the country by creating the necessary infrastructure and providing a firm foundation of appropriate education.”

The Educational Goal of Staying on the Land

Patronato first helped the coffee-growers to set up their own cooperative: Palu’chen. This now has 122 members in five villages. If the Cooperative is to be successful for the long term, it needs well-trained people. The non-governmental organization has therefore opened a model school in Guaquitepec with lower and upper secondary provision. The curricula prescribed by the state are filled out with the everyday concerns of the Tzeltales, and theory is complemented by practice. “We learnt about our language so that we would un-

derstand our culture better,” says Antonio of what he was taught in the lower secondary section. And Francisco Gutierrez says of the upper secondary stage: “I learnt a lot about our culture, its myths and legends, and our traditions.” They both learnt to value their culture at school. “We need to know about our traditions in order to preserve our community,” says Francisco. He wants to help to keep the community alive. He and Antonio G3mez see their future where they grew up. This attitude is vital for Mexico as thousands try each year to cross the border illegally into the United States. There are now almost 10 million Mexicans in the USA. Most migrants are from rural Indian villages, like Francisco and Antonio. In some Mexican states, whole regions are already partially depopulated. Only the women, the children and the old are left behind.

The Educational Goal of Ecology

In its model school, *Patronato* provides Indian young people with both a good basic education and practical agricultural teaching. The organization offers adults continuing education courses in subjects such as ecological farming. The initial concern was the fields of maize and beans which families grow for their own needs. Barriers were built on the hilly terrain as a community effort to provide protection against continual erosion. Compost heaps were started. Schoolchildren such as Francisco frequently found themselves becoming the teachers. At school he learnt much about genetic technology and its consequences for rural agriculture. "I passed on this knowledge to our families in small courses," he says. In the village community it was a social revolution for children and young people to teach adults. Traditionally, it was not until people had started their own family that confidence was placed in them. It was the elderly who were listened to. But by



providing soundly based training, *Patronato* ensured that schoolchildren and those who had completed its technology courses won the confidence of the elderly. In this way, new knowledge became the basis for important decisions. The farmers decided, for example, not to buy any genetically modified maize cobs, but to keep to their traditional sort of maize, criollo. "That way we can select cobs from our crop for the next planting and are not obliged to buy seed," says Francisco Gutierrez. This knowledge has saved the farming families unnecessary expenditure and renewed dependence.

The Educational Goal of Economic Independence

Then *Patronato* organized courses on how to lay out ecological kitchen gardens. The women are particularly glad of this new knowledge. It helps them to feed themselves and their families healthily but cheap-

ly. "We now have vegetables to eat that used only to be available in the village shops," says Norma Trinidad. "And the herbs mean that we have medicines right on our doorstep."

Ecology has also shown the way out of dependency on prices in the world market. After receiving advice from *Patronato*, the Tzeltales went over to organic coffee-growing. The Cooperative now offers three quality levels of coffee: conventionally grown, coffee transferred to organic cultivation, and organically planted coffee. For this last product the Cooperative has been awarded recognised certificates of organic cultivation, the Mexican "CERTIMEX" seal and the European "Max Havelaar". This means that the Tzeltales can take part in "fair trade", which guarantees the farmers a fixed purchase price. The profit for the coffee-growers has increased in consequence by an average of two pesos per kilogram. Paluch'en has invested some of this profit in a fund out of which the Cooperative covers its main items of expenditure. With joint funding from the IIZ/DVV and other organizations, a warehouse has been built for coffee, which can also be used for the Cooperative's own monthly mee-

Target Group: The Indian Population

The history of the Indian population of Central America is one long story of cumulative setbacks. They lack the means of physical survival, and the right to their own cultural development. During the colonial era, indigenous people were driven from their original lands – and hence from what were usually fruitful natural resources. Present-day environmental problems, excessive deforestation, low prices for agricultural products, social marginalization and social discrimination make it yet harder for them to overcome poverty by their own efforts. Long-term projects such as that of *Patronato Pro Educación* are therefore all the more worthwhile since they combine basic education for children with continuing education for adults. They allow the community to develop from within.

tings. Some of the crop is traded in the international market. The rest is roasted at a small coffee-roasting plant in the provincial capital of Chiapas, ground and packed for sale in the national market. Antonio Gómez works in this roasting plant. When he successfully completed the *Patronato* secondary education course, he was trained by the non-governmental organization as a coffee-roasting technician. Francisco will also find a job in the Cooperative. Having completed upper secondary education, he is studying agriculture on a so-called semi-open course. At the same time, for the last year he has already been heading a Cooperative pilot project on diversification of coffee plantations. The aim is to develop yet more agricultural products which will sell well. Together with other members, Francisco intends to expand the Cooperative further so that it is not restricted to producing specific goods. In the long



term, Paluch'en hopes to play a part in resolving a wide range of problems in the region. The first course for Indian leaders in regional development and culture

has already started. When the participants have completed the course, they will take self-organization further.

GUATEMALA

Loans for a Million



"In our village of Xantún there was no electricity and no water," says the Quiché Indian Alejandro of the situation 20 years ago. Then some of the villagers decided to tackle matters jointly, and they set up a committee. They approached the private aid organization CDRO (*Cooperación para el Desarrollo Rural de Occidente*), which works for the Quiché Indians. To their astonishment the first answer was a refusal. They were told that nothing could be done with their loose association. What they lacked was not water and electricity but essentially an organizational structure. CDRO offered to give the villagers the requisite training. They agreed. In 1987 they then established a "*Consejo Comunal*", a Village Council, which they were entitled to organize under

collective Indian rights. Naturally the Council included the village elders and all moral and religious leaders, and the villagers elected additional members. Since then this Village Council has represented the interests of the village, with the support of CDRO, in dealings with official agencies such as the “*Consejo de Desarrollo*”. These Development Councils were legally enshrined in the 1996 peace agreement, but only began to operate at village level in 2002. The peace agreement provided for funding from which the Councils could develop village projects and expand the infrastructure. Through negotiations, and in close collaboration with the villagers, the *Consejo Comunal* of Xantún has had some successes: the village has received a water supply, living conditions have improved, and the first village health centre has been built.

Village Savings Banks

The villagers of Xantún are now participating in a regional funding project supported by the Regional Office of the IIZ/DVV. The proposal for this came from the Guatemalan non-governmental organization for social and legal advice, *Servicios Jurídicos y Sociales* (SEFJUS). For some years it had already been advising other organizations operating locally, such as CDRO, and had been training its staff. It was thus already in a position of trust. SERJUS now approached ten non-governmental organizations which had each been working with Quiché Indians in Guatemala for many years, including CDRO. These suggested establishing a financial network in the region. Because better deals could be obtained with a larger stock of capital, all those involved would pay into one pot.

A regional approach would benefit the Indians in two respects: first, they would feel the improvement immediately since money would be available to solve local problems. And secondly, networking could in the long term also lead to a more sustainable development plan for the entire region. This would do something for everyone. CDRO and the other nine organizations agreed. Thirty people were trained in courses and seminars for the



new regional task. Keeping accounts and credit management were only part of this. In order to plan sustainable development for the region, the training curriculum also contained programme development, organizational structure, participation and education. Members of the non-governmental organizations and villagers are being trained to administer the village savings banks. Transparency is the

principal rule for managing money as it is the only way of gaining and maintaining the trust of savers.

A Local Source of Money

For the Indian farming families of Xantún, village savings banks mark a huge step forwards. Previously, neither banks nor state agencies would lend them money. They were not credit-worthy. However, a financial advance is often needed for the marketing of agricultural products. They can now obtain this and therefore plan for the longer term. And this pays off, as the initial results have already shown. They have funded the construction of a warehouse to store their maize crop. The women have developed chicken-breeding. They have bought material and thread and now sell embroidered blouses. Small loans have had a great impact on them. Over a million people now have access to credit via the regional financial network.

The villagers of Xantún have now set up their own development organization, the *Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Rural de Occidente* A.C. They work as independent partners in the funding project with CDRO and SERJUS. “Lifelong Learning” is not a slogan as far as they are concerned, but an everyday event. “We need continual learning and cooperation if we are to expand our regional prospects,” Alejandro argues.

Credit Unions for Domestic Servants

Julia, her husband and their four children live in five square metres. They share the bathroom with four other families. Their house is cheek by jowl with many others in the metropolis of Medan in Northern Sumatra on the bank of the Deli – a renowned high water zone. The family can scarcely afford these meagre living conditions. Julia's husband suffers from tuberculosis but he still hires himself out as a day la-

Julia hopes to be able to pay for at least a few more years of schooling for the two younger children, her 7-year old son and her 5-year old daughter. She would love her older children to be able to go back to school. For the first time in her life she felt hopeful that things might get better when she heard about a savings and credit union from a neighbour. The private aid organization *Yayasan Sada Ahmo* (YSA) was

Mutual Funding

The women pay a one-off membership fee and a monthly sum, which is put in the savings account to build up their own starting capital. They can use the common funds to save or to borrow money at low rates of interest. Julia could scarcely believe it at first. This back-up would allow her to escape her constant fear of being made homeless. Occasional losses of earnings could be bridged by small loans. On the other hand, she had a new worry, that she would not be able to find the monthly contribution. But her neighbour persuaded her. The mutual credit cooperative

is not an anonymous bank where people go to draw money or make deposits. The women who are members meet once a month to discuss matters. From a member of the YSA staff they find out more about their political and social rights, about health prevention, and about commercial opportunities, particularly for credit unions. Although Julia works twelve hours every day and thus has little time or energy left for evening meetings, she agrees: "It helps me just to talk to other women in my situation." And the association

may perhaps help her children. In Dolok Sanggul, *Yayasan Sada Ahmo* has already set up a "Reading and Writing Corner". Children who have to work on the street, like her son, can go and learn there whenever their job permits. There is also a health centre where a midwife and a doctor will give women free advice and examinations. And health is the most important requirement for work. No one knows that better than Julia.



bourer in a welding shop. However, his earnings depend on turnover, and on many days he earns nothing. Julia cleans, washes and irons. She does anything and everything in the households of her three employers. Her 13-year old daughter helps her with the work, as well as at home. Her 10-year old son has also stopped going to school. In order to ensure the family's survival he cleans shoes on the streets of Medan, a city of two million.

intending to set up a credit cooperative in her neighbourhood especially for domestic servants. Similar organizations are to be established for women working as domestic servants and street-sellers in the suburbs of Medan and in the town of Dolok Sanggul. The Indonesian association is being helped to do so by the IIZ/DVV.

Finance Course for Single Parents

Halimah does everything to feed herself and her nine children. She makes small cakes and sells them. She goes cleaning, gardening and shopping – she will do anything that others are prepared to pay for. Even so there are evenings when there is not enough money for food.

Wariah is 49 years old, like Halimah. She gets up at four to make breakfast portions. From six she stands at bus-stops selling them. But however hard she tries, her income is less than one US dollar a day. Both women live in Indonesia: Wariah with her three children in densely populated Central Java, Halimah in a village near Pontianak, the largest town in Kalimantan – better known as Borneo. Both women are divorced. Both have to care for their children on their own. The number of single parents has risen constantly in Indonesia in recent years.

During the political unrest surrounding the fall of Suharto in 1998 many people died, most of them men. The island state, which relies on remittances from its migrant workers, was hard hit by the crisis in the Asian economy. Death, migration and divorce have split families. According to official statistics, 13.4 per cent of families in Indonesia are headed by single women. In West Kalimantan and Central Java, where Halimah and Wariah live, one household in three is in poverty, accor-

ding to the UN definition. The proportion of single parents among the poor is particularly high in both regions.

Needs-based Training

The women's centre PPSW (*Center for Women's Resources Development*) therefore decided to launch a self-help programme for single parents in these two regions. Its aims are: equal rights between the genders, participation by the poor, and the right to food. PPSW, promoted by the IIZ/DVV, began its women's support programme with thorough data research. In which areas of Indonesia do parti-

ted for the pilot stage. Five women's groups were given training in each of three districts. Specially trained staff selected 20–30 women from each group, including Wariah and Halimah. The women's groups essentially operate independently. The staff of PPSW provide support and advice. At two workshops, the women worked out their vision of a better life and ways of achieving their goal. PPSW now trains them in craft skills, accountancy and management. Key skills such as team-work are also taught. Individual women who are suitable and willing to take on responsibility are given further training to lead their local groups.

Financial Start-up Assistance

Every group is given a loan as a start-up package by the women's centre. The group can invest the money in a joint project or make low-interest loans to its members for them to develop their own businesses. But in every case the money must be repaid. In this way the group will remain solvent in the future. Wariah is glad above all that she has been able to receive micro-credits through the group: "I very much hope that my life and my children's lives will now be easier." Halimah is relieved that she no longer has to rely on commercial money-lenders

with their high rates of interest. In the past she had to keep borrowing money to make ends meet. In order to pay it back she was afraid that she might have



cularly disadvantaged women live? What employment opportunities are there locally for the unskilled? Central Java and West Kalimantan were then selec-



to sell one of her children. "Because of the group I shan't need to get into such terrible debt," she says. Both women are also glad to have got to know other women

in similar situations. "We support one another and help each other where we can," says Halimah. And Wariah adds, "I have found friends in the women's group.

We help each other and also learn a lot in the group. The new information helps us to manage our everyday lives better." In future, the women's centre would like to enable the groups to form networks. That way the women could plan bigger joint projects and defend their interests in public.

The links are there; they just need to be joined together. In the first year of the project alone, 30 women's groups with 30 members each were set up. That means that 900 female heads of household received training and access to cheap loans. The women act as multipliers in their locality. The women's centre estimates that at least 9000 people have been reached indirectly.

AZERBAIJAN

A Ticket to Craft Training

The house looks depressing. It is just walls, a roof and two windows. The Machmudova sisters live in this hovel with their mother. They are extremely poor, like their neighbours. In the monotonous grey settlement 20 kilometres from Baku there is nothing: no factory, no workshop, no inn. Anyone who wants to work has to travel to the capital. But there too there are not enough jobs. Most people earn a few manat by working illegally. The Machmudova sisters could not compete. They grew up to be unusually small, and were the butt of constant jokes at school. For eleven years they had to nerve themselves to withstand the teasing. Now they are 29 and 32 years old. Sometimes they have tried to earn a living from sewing, and sometimes they have received support. But they had no

prospects until they heard from an acquaintance of a craft course for people with disabilities run

by an Azerbaijani aid organization, the *Creative Women Association*.



Farida Musstafayeva, who is also disabled, heard about it, too. But she reacted sceptically. Earlier, she had organized a rehabilitation programme herself, in which old people taught the young national crafts. She had not thought at the time that she would ever earn her own living from craft work. She had a degree in biology and a secure job in research. But when the Soviet Union collapsed, research institutions and funding disappeared. After the revolution, 800 000 Azerbaijanis were forced to flee from Nagorno Karabagh, and 200 000 from Armenia. The Red Cross tried to find new jobs for these people. Farida Musstafayeva organized these programmes for six years, but then the funding was withdrawn. The former researcher, recently widowed, once more faced destitution: no job, no money and no prospects.

Earning a Living with Needle and Thread

With the help of the Baku branch of the IIZ/DVV Project Office, the Azerbaijani *Creative Women Organisation* offered people with disabilities courses at a pottery and a carpet-weaving workshop in Baku. Five subjects were taught in all: pottery, knitting, sewing, carpet-weaving and national crafts. Farida Musstafayeva particularly enjoyed patchwork, making ever more beautiful cushions, blankets and bags every day. After the morning class, the Machmudova sisters often practised weaving carpets well into the night. They had finally found a meaningful task which they enjoyed. A total of 22 people with disabilities were trained. At the end of the three-month course, the participants exhibited their work for sale at the Baku Art Centre. All of the great and the good came along: representatives

of diplomatic services, foreign firms and international and local aid organizations. Over half of the exhibits were sold. The sisters Afag and Nushaba Machmudova were especially delighted. Almost every one of their carpets had found a buyer. The proceeds were divided among the course participants, who used them to buy new materials with which to make further craft items for sale.

Since then, Farida Musstafayeva has lived from sewing. She uses the patchwork technique to make anything that will sell. The most popular items are her little shoulder bags. Most

had a room, she would like to arrange another course herself and pass on her skills.

Selling like Hot Cakes

Afag and Nushaba Machmudova had a different experience after the course. Despite their great success, they were still depressed. The proceeds of the sale were not enough to buy expensive looms. They now had the skills but could not do anything with them. The branch IIZ/DVV Project Office and the *Creative Women Organisation*, which had kept in touch with all the women on the course, looked for a solution. As an



buyers use them to keep their mobile phones in. She sells her goods through souvenir shops, and to her surprise, her new job has a therapeutic effect. Because of the pain in her back she had previously only looked for work that she could do sitting down. She can walk, but has to spend a lot of time lying down to rest her spine. When making patchwork she often has to stand up to fetch material and thread, to try out pieces of cloth, to take measurements and so on. She also walks a lot selling her products. Contrary to expectations, the exercise is doing her good. She feels fitter than before. If she

experiment they gave all the remaining items to the proprietor of the duty-free shop at Baku Airport to display for sale. The goods did not even make it to the shelves. They were snatched up immediately. All of them. This provided a guaranteed outlet, so that the Machmudova sisters could be provided with looms. Afag and Nushaba will be able to go on with the work they enjoy and to earn money for themselves. They hope one day at least to be able to pay for the most urgent repairs to their house.

Local Councils as a Firm Foundation

Times have changed in Guinea. Socialism, with its policy of centralization, is a thing of the past. After the first free elections in 1993, the Government began decentralizing decision-making and responsibilities. The *Communautés Rurales de Développement* (CRD), the local districts and their local district councils are to be given greater weight and power. In order to promote the development of districts, the Government launched the million-dollar support programme PACV (*Programme d'Appui aux Communautés Villageoises*) with the help of the World Bank and other major donors. Elections were held in every district.

Djénabou Diallo is happy to remember the day when she was elected. This mother of four received 64 per cent of the votes. She was widely known from her work in the women's self-help group. But disillusion set in at the first meeting of the newly elected District Council. Most of those elected did not know their rights and duties. The Government had issued sufficient copies of the new District Law, but the text was in French. None of the members of the Council could read this language – most could only speak French. Fewer than half of the councillors could read and write at all, and then only in Pulaar, one of the eight national languages of Guinea. The councillors could therefore find out nothing about their new role,

and yet there was so much to do. They should have found out what taxes people in their district had to pay, and how these were to be collected. Then they should have drawn up a district budget with this money. All these urgent steps would have helped the subsistence farmers in the district in the long term.

Djénabou Diallo and her council are not alone. In Guinea, just 41 per cent of adults can read and write – a legacy of the centralized past. The Government in Conakry and the World Bank agree that the high rate of illiteracy is a critical obstruction to deve-

lopment in the rural areas of Guinea. They therefore welcomed the proposal by the IIZ/DVV Office in Guinea to launch the continuing education and literacy programme PADEL (*Projet*

d'Alphabétisation des Élus et Leaders Locaux) for local councillors. This is based on the experience of the preceding project PADEG (*Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation et à la Démocratisation*).

A Voluntary Return to School

In each of four regions, two districts were asked whether they would be interested in a programme such as the World Bank's PACV. All eight said yes. But only four could take part in the pilot stage. The district where Djénabou Diallo lives was one of those chosen. Her district consists of several small villages, like any other in Guinea. The district councils could only send one person each to be trained as a literacy teacher. They were then asked to find and equip a



teaching room in each district. Ultimately, 20 literacy teachers were trained, to look after 22 literacy centres. The availability of teaching in the locality attracted not only council members.



predominates, was literacy taught in French.

The local councillors face a whole host of tasks. Forty per cent of the population of Guinea live below the poverty line. They have less than one dollar a day to spend. Only one child in three goes to school. Many cannot manage the long journey to school. There is a lack of everything in Guinea – infrastructure, social services and banking. The World Bank PACV support programme aims to tackle this situation and to build up the necessary institutions from the local level. The population is to be involved in every step of this process and to work out local development plans together with their district councillors. The World Bank and the decentralization authority hope that literacy will be an effective training tool for reaching this long-term goal. The IIZ/DVV will therefore train councillors in a further 69 districts in 2004. Djénabou Diallo is pleased with the programme: “Now we can take better-informed decisions about our lives and can find our own way – out of poverty.”

Other men, and particularly women, wanted to take advantage of the opportunity and to learn to read and write. The plan provided for this from the start as it would lay the foundations for dialogue between the local authority and the public. Rather than some 200 local councillors, 530 adults came to learn regularly. The norm of around 25 per class was thus more or less met. If the teaching was to be successful, it required a functioning administration. Djénabou Diallo took on this task in her district, together with the District Secretary and a literacy teacher. As in her case, each district elected an administrative committee of three. This provided initial experience of self-government.

Legal Texts used as Reading Material

The aim of the course was not merely the ability to read. The councillors and other mem-

bers of the district were also to learn about local self-government. To this end, the IIZ/DVV prepared materials which would be suitable for practising reading, based on the complex French legal texts. In the second, post-literacy stage, course participants were given basic information which would enable them to perform their duties. Literacy was taught in the national languages of Pulaar, Sousou and Maninka. Only in the forest region, where the official language



From Cooking Pots to Council Chambers

Annapurna gets up with the sun. Every morning she goes to chop firewood and to fetch water for breakfast. Then she cooks for the whole family. After that, there is work in the fields. A few years ago, she joined the women's self-help group *Sidheshwar* in the hope of an easier life and a bit more money. A private organization helped to set up the group, but when it withdrew none of the members quite knew what needed doing. Eventually Annapurna was glad to be rid of the additional work. In her village in Naugaon District in the new Indian State of Uttarakashi there is plenty to do. Here on the border with Nepal, traditions are kept alive. Almost every month there is one festival or another. The preparations make considerable work, particularly for the women.

Two years ago, experts visited her village once more and wanted to know what groups there were and what they did. Annapurna and the other women could not tell them much. The experts were members of PRIA, the *Society for Participatory Research in Asia*, which has been a partner of the IIZ/DVV for 20 years. Since it was founded in 1982, PRIA has supported the development of a civil society in India. The Society used to work mainly with large and medium-sized organizations. It has now turned its attention to small organizations such as Annapurna's self-help group. In this new field, PRIA works with HARC, the *Himalayan Action Research Centre*, which has been supporting grassroots organizations on the border of Nepal for 13 years.

Annapurna had already heard many good things about HARC from the surrounding villages. She was therefore willing to listen to the experts' suggestions. Finally, she and more than a hundred other women were invited to take a training course. Many of the other women came from self-help groups similar to Annapurna's, some belonged to local water and hygiene groups, and others were members of the *Rawain Mahila* Federation, an association of self-help groups.

conversed in their local languages, and only a few knew the official language, Hindi. They nonetheless learnt something. The adult educators from PRIA and HARC made even complex topics understandable by the use of drawings and role play. Like the others, Annapurna slipped into new roles, such as that of bank clerk. She negotiated a loan with another woman. And didn't think she had done too badly. Maybe she could do more than fetch water and cook food?

Learning Key Skills

After the workshops, a range of courses were offered: on leadership qualities, income-generating activities, credit transactions, financial administration and even



Annapurna felt lost at first. What was she, a farmer who could write her name but could barely read, doing on a training course? But at the very first orientation workshop Annapurna noticed that the other women were like her. Some were illiterate, and most could only just spell their names. Almost all of them

on how to exchange experience. Annapurna tried to find the time to attend increasing numbers of these meetings. She found herself wanting more and more information. Earlier, she would never have asked a question in front of other people. Now she wanted to know more, and she did ask. The answers were

worth it. Eventually, Annapurna and other women were invited on an excursion to visit villages with successful self-help groups. Some ran mini-banks which gave out small loans and micro-credits. This obviously made it easier for families to manage. Their harvests were good, and storage and sales were guaranteed. The children looked well-fed, and many women wore beautiful saris. The excursion took in the village of Ayar Toli, where a woman chaired the panchayat. She was a humble farmer who had taken her life in hand and had been elected mayor. Annapurna started thinking: what she can do, I can do too.



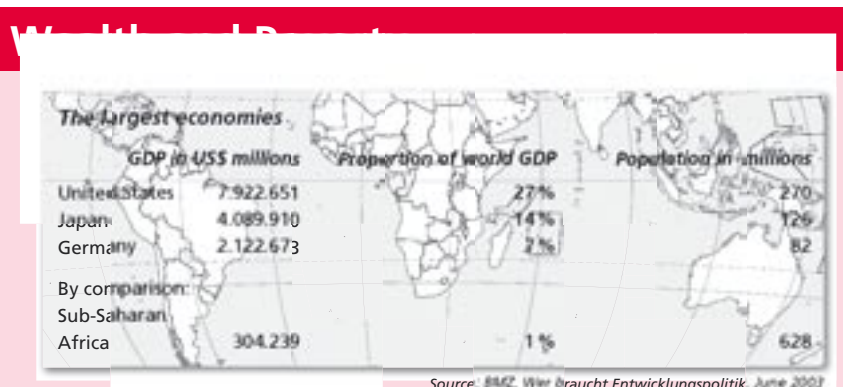
When PRIA asked which women were prepared to take on a leadership role in their village and to be trained to do so, Annapurna volunteered. Back at home, she started by relaunching her self-help group. With the help of PRIA and HARC, the Government set up a revolving fund for her group and a dozen others. To start with, a stock of capital was made available. When this was used up, new loans could only be made when the old were repaid. The money was used first to buy seed and fertilizer, and to plant vegetables. The group also organized its own storage and marketing. Trade was good. They were able to start thinking about other ideas. With four other self-help groups, Annapurna's group

eventually drew up a business plan which they presented to a bank. It was approved. With the new credit, the women bought cows and built up their own local dairy. The women were pleased above all to be able to feed their children appreciably better than before.

The women of the *Rawain Mahila* Federation have also been successful. They belong to 13 groups which had been growing traditional pulses for years. For a long time they sold them to middlemen – at very low prices. They have now taken the business in hand. They portion, pack and despatch their crop themselves, and their profits are now far higher.

Rights for Women

PRIA and HARC are continuing to work with the women. The 73rd Addendum to the Indian Constitution sets out the rights of districts and lays down a quota of women councillors. The two private organizations also want to establish a regular dialogue between self-help groups and district councils, and to encourage women to take on political responsibility themselves as the women's quota only exists on paper in many places. The organizations trained over one hundred women for leadership roles. Eleven of them stood in the next local election. Seven became district councillors, Annapurna among them.



Approx 12 billion people have less than US\$ 1 a day to live on. This means that more than one fifth of the world's population live in absolute poverty.

The three richest people in the world have as much wealth as 600 million others.

“I am Bringing up my Sons and Daughters to be Equal”

When I was seven years old, my father left us. For years, my mother was left alone with us children in our village of Gonogochi in Chihuahua. I helped her to make craft items for sale. One day my father came back. Despite everything we forgave him, and my parents had more children, eleven in all. Three died young. My mother still knew nothing about preventative health care and family planning, such as I would learn later.

At 14 I began to work on the project. I got to know Laura Frade, who subsequently set up the women's organization ALCADECO (*Alternativas de Capacitación y Desarrollo Comunitario*). She used to go from house to house visiting women who were not allowed to leave home alone. She took care of children, adolescents and mothers who were beaten by their husbands. She also treated children for undernourishment and disease.

Laura Frade taught me and five other women how to recognise and treat diseases such as respiratory infections, digestive disorders and rashes. We also learnt a lot about preventative health care. Every month we treated between 60 and 100 undernourished children and spoke to their mothers. We recorded what happened and kept a check of results.

Women's Emancipation through Work with Men

We also learnt to recognise and prevent sexual diseases in men. Many men infected their wives. Many beat them. And many

forbade their wives to attend the ALCADECO meetings. Juan Carlos from ALCADECO set up a men's group. Only a few came to begin with. But they told others about the group, and gradually more became interested. My husband was one of them. He learnt a lot and our relationship has changed greatly for the better.

I started to set up our own organization with other Raramuri women. We called it *Kari Igomari*

to solve conflicts. We can now negotiate with men without problems, even if they are from the Government. I have myself spoken about our problems as Indian women at international forums.

Together with ALCADECO, our organization *Kari Igomari Niwara* has opened its own shops. In two shops, Raramuri women sell their own craft products, and basic food-stuffs are sold in two others. These shops provide our villages with essential supplies. With the help of



Niwara – the House of Women. We now have 140 members from a number of villages. Our organization is managed solely by women. I work in the administration. With the advice of ALCADECO we began activities in our villages and learnt how to

ALCADECO we have built a water cistern which preserves precious water over several months for the dry season. We have also set up a primary school for our children so that they can be taught in their own language and in Spanish. In this way they don't forget their

Indian culture. The teachers are also Raramuris and have been approved by the state authorities.

Future Target: Votes for Women

We are kept extremely busy by our projects, but we are content. We Raramuri women have learnt to stand up for our rights as women. No one can take them from us again. But we still have no vote in village assemblies, although we take part in the discussions. Even that used not to be possible. We are changing some of our traditions – those that used to restrict us.

My life has been completely changed by the project. I am now treated differently. I am bringing up my two sons and my daughter the same. They all help at home, in school and in the project. I have shown my husband how to wash



clothes and trousers. It has become usual to work on our kitchen gardens together with the men. All the families grow a wide range of vegetables ecologically. We make organic fertilizer ourselves. My family grows maize, beans and potatoes. Our harvest is enough to feed us and leaves some over

for sale. I hope that many more women will learn to become independent. I shall go on working in our organization.

*Mercedes Lirio Vega, Raramuri,
32 years old*

NICARAGUA

“What we Learn Improves our Lives”

For as long as I can remember, our village of La Pita and the entire district of Tipitapa have been poor. We have no electricity even though we live only an hour away from the capital, Managua. Our families work in agriculture, small trade and crafts. Many husbands work away from home, some even in Costa Rica. Their wives and children stay behind on their own. Most people in our village were born here. Our children and grandchildren will live here too.



We inherited land from my husband's parents. I raise pigs for sale. And I make tamales and sell them. I do all I can to increase our income so that our five children, two sons and three daughters, can go to school. But sometimes the money is not enough. Sometimes the food is not enough either for the whole family. In agriculture you depend on the weather. The last few years have been too dry. The entire country is also still suffering from the effects of the civil war between Sandinistas and Contras, and of natural disasters like the appalling Hurricane Mitch.

A Woman's Place is in the Home – and the Classroom!

Most husbands don't want us women to organize. At best, we're allowed to become involved in the church. Two years ago, the National Institute of Research and Popular Education, INIEP (*Instituto Nicaragüense de Investigación y Educación Popular*), came to visit us. First of all they did a survey about our living conditions. Then they



invited us to a training course. Despite difficulties at home, we women met several times to discuss the idea, and eventually 30 women from my village and neighbouring villages accepted.

The meetings always take place on Saturdays. We have to walk five kilometres to get there, but it's worth it. We have already learnt a lot: how to get organized, to as-

sess risks, to keep accounts of our income and spending, and to invest our money at a profit, including in joint projects. We have discovered a lot of new things about agricultural techniques, and about health and family planning. INIEP has helped us to develop our own projects, for example a sewing project, and pig and chicken-rearing. We've even started a small bakery. Everything that we've learnt has substantially improved our lives and our families' lives. The project has also changed my position in my family. Even my sons, who help to look after the pigs, no longer see me as "nothing but a housewife". They respect me as a woman who has her own project and earns money. Our husbands, too, no longer make difficulties. They accept us and our work. We women have now been working together for almost a year. I now have the confidence to speak openly in front of others. I can talk about my feelings and my life. I see that as my greatest personal progress.

*Martha Lorena Luna Jarquín,
39 years of age*



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Title page	Literacy Festival of the NGO SABA, Guinea. Henner Hildebrand	p. 28 (top)	Analysing local and regional living conditions. <i>Center for Women's Resources Development</i> (PPSW), Indonesia
p. 8	Selling home-grown vegetables, Guatemala. Hans Pollinger	p. 28 (bottom)	A woman taking part in a craft course in Baku, Azerbaijan. IIZ/DVV Caucasus Project Office
p. 9	Cook with a new improved wood-burning oven, Guatemala. Hans Pollinger	p. 29	Patchwork cushion covers made in a craft workshop in Baku, Azerbaijan. IIZ/DVV Caucasus Project Office
p. 10	Misrat in her bakery shop in Ethiopia. Bernd Sandhaas	p. 30	Literacy Festival of the NGO SABA. Henner Hildebrand
p. 11	Learning to build houses at a <i>Community Skills Training Centre</i> , Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Bernd Sandhaas	p. 31	Literacy Festival of the NGO SABA. Henner Hildebrand
p. 12	Building a <i>Lifelong Learning Centre</i> in Azerbaijan. IIZ/DVV Caucasus Project Office	p. 32	Marginalized women taking part in a course to combat poverty in India. PRIA, India
p. 14	AIDS working group. <i>Associação Angolana Educação de Adultos</i>	p. 33	Marginalized women taking part in a course to combat poverty in India. PRIA, India
p. 15	Township in South Africa. Hans Pollinger	p. 34	Women's group in Mexico. Ursula Klesing-Rempel
p. 16	A social worker visiting a blind man. IIZ/DVV Project Office, South Africa	p. 35 (top)	Women taking part in a course to combat poverty. Ursula-Klesing Rempel
p. 17 (top)	Participants in an agriculture course in Nukriani, Georgia. IIZ/DVV Caucasus Project Office	p. 35 (bottom)	Women's group in Tipitapa, Nicaragua. Hans Pollinger
p. 17 (bottom)	Farm in Nukriani, Georgia. IIZ/DVV Caucasus Project Office	p. 36 (top)	Shop in Tipitapa, Nicaragua. Hans Pollinger
p. 18	Marginalized women taking part in a course to combat poverty in India. PRIA, India	p. 36 (bottom)	Keeping chickens in Tipitapa, Nicaragua. Hans Pollinger
p. 19	Basic education for women, India. Doosra Dashak		
p. 22	Tree nursery in Latin America. Hans Pollinger		
p. 23	Terraced cultivation in Guatemala. Hans Pollinger		
p. 24 (top)	Coffee-roasting machine in Chiapas, Mexico. Patronato pro Educación		
p. 24 (bottom)	Selling food in the market, Guatemala. Hans Pollinger		
p. 25	Street selling in Antigua, Mexico. Hans Pollinger		
p. 26	Discussion on economic activities. Center for <i>Women's Resources Development</i> (PPSW), Indonesia		
p. 27	Learning and teaching: women's lives. <i>Center for Women's Resources Development</i> (PPSW), Indonesia		

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV)

The Institute serves the national, European and international goals, functions and practice of German AE. The Institute supports the design and implementation of AE programmes in numerous partner countries, fosters cooperation between German and international AE, and promotes the exchange of information and experience in this field.

In the **1950s**, reconciliation and understanding between peoples were major goals of international contacts and partnerships. In the **1960s**, development-oriented AE was a component of the educational aid provided to support decolonization. Contacts were quickly made, and experience exchanged, with partners in Africa and Latin America, leading the DVV to establish a Department for Adult Education in Developing Countries in 1969, its name being changed in 1975 to the Department for International Cooperation.

Interest in international exchanges of experience in AE increased in the **1970s**, in response to the growing importance accorded to development cooperation. This led to greater commitments being made to partners in Africa and Latin America, and their extension to Asia.

The changes in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the late **1980s**, and the process of European integration in the early **1990s**, created new demands and challenges, which have been taken up since 1993 by the newly organized Institute for International Cooperation of the DVV in numerous initiatives and projects. These include projects in the areas of intercultural learning, dialogue between Europe and Islam, crisis and conflict prevention, the fight against poverty, and European education about the eastward expansion of the EU.

The **Guidelines** of the IIZ/DVV, first published in 1973, and later revised on several occasions, stress that:

- AE is an important component of lifelong learning, providing orientation and training leading to qualifications;
- AE has a liberating function in the development of individuals and society;
- AE goals, contents, forms and methods are determined by history and culture;
- the ultimate moral basis of the work is solidarity with the development aspirations of people in the partner countries;
- the goals for the work, which must be of a professional standard, are set jointly through partnership and participatory cooperation.

Functions, Methods of Working and Partners

The IIZ/DVV has adopted a very liberal **interpretation of AE**, responding to social conditions in partner countries and embracing non-formal and informal learning as well as the general and vocational, political and cultural dimensions of AE. The work of the IIZ/DVV is marked not only by its professionalism but also by a clear social orientation and identification with the interests of the poorer, marginalized sections of the population in partner countries. Among the partners of the IIZ/DVV are both ministries, government agencies and university institutions, and committed non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional associations.

IIZ/DVV **cooperation** with its partners therefore stresses support for sponsoring bodies, skills development and quality assurance:

- promoting the initial and inservice training of adult educators
- fostering practice-oriented evaluation and research
- encouraging the development of relevant teaching and learning materials
- providing support for the institutional and material infrastructure
- advising on organizational development and
- helping to ensure that AE receives political recognition and guaranteed status as a part of education.

Activities focus on basic education, environmental education and democratization. Particular attention is given to the goals and criteria of combating poverty, and promoting self-help and the advancement of women. The professional and practical aims of the IIZ/DVV are to:

- improve the incomes of disadvantaged population groups
- integrate people into work and
- strengthen the organization of self-help groups and cooperatives.

The IIZ/DVV takes into account the very varied circumstances and requirements of partner countries. It respects and endorses their particularities and cultural uniqueness. The IIZ/DVV regards as extremely important its collaboration with **international AE organizations**:

- the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in Toronto
- the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) in Brussels
- the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) in Mumbai
- the Latin American Council for Adult Education (CEAAL) in Mexico City
- the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg.

Services and Sectoral Projects

Major sectoral projects and services:

- initial and inservice training in developing countries: bursaries at African universities; micro projects in selected countries
- promotion of international professional contacts, exchange of information and experience, and collaboration with AE institutions in industrialized countries
- development education (advisory services, development of materials and inservice training) for the Land Adult Education Associations as a contribution to intercultural and global learning
- European initiatives: transnational, multilateral and intercultural projects.

Funding

The DVV does not regard itself primarily as a donor organization, but rather as a **professional partner**, contributing its experience and resources to joint projects, taking part in these as an equal, and continually learning from the knowledge and experience of its partners.

IIZ/DVV projects are funded from grants provided mainly by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, the Cultural Department of the German Foreign Office, and the European Union and the World Bank.

Publications

In addition to the large number of documents which it produces together with its project partners, the IIZ/DVV also publishes:

- the journal "Adult Education and Development" in English, French and Spanish
- Global Learning at Volkshochschulen, a series for VHS development education about Africa, Asia and Latin America
- "International Perspectives in Adult Education", a series documenting international perspectives in AE, (see back cover)

International Perspectives in Adult Education

Titles of volumes available

- 3 **European Adult Education – without Limits and Borders? A new Range of Tasks for the IIZ/DVV (French)**
- 6 **Bettina Strewe: Erwachsenenbildung in Russland**
- 7 **Die Rolle der kommunal orientierten Erwachsenenbildungsorganisationen in Europa**
- 8 **Paulis Apinis et al.: Erwachsenenbildung in Lettland**
- 9 **Rudi Rohlmann: Laws and Policies on Adult Education in Germany (English)**
- 10 **Community Adult Education Centres: Continuing Education for the Future. Schwerin Declaration of the DVV (English, French, German, Russian, Spanish)**
- 11 **European Network of Editors and Publishers of Adult Education Literature: Report of a seminar by Heribert Hinzen/Ulrich Mercker**
- 12 **Heribert Hinzen (Ed.): Adult Education and Development. 25 years of IIZ/DVV (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish)**
- 13 **Ekkehard Nuissl/Klaus Pehl: Adult Education in Germany (English, French, German, Russian, Turkish)**
- 14 **Edita Trečiokiene: Erwachsenenbildung in Litauen**
- 15 **Volkshochschulen, internationale Kontakte und Partnerschaften. Compiled by Hartmut Dürste/Manfred Fenner**
- 17 **Norbert F. B. Greger/Ewa Przybylska: Adult Education in Poland (English, German)**
- 19 **Adult Education in Multi-ethnic Europe (Dutch, English, French, German, Spanish)**
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- 26 **Uwe Gartenschlaeger/Heribert Hinzen (Eds.): Prospects and Trends in Adult Education (Albanian, Bulgarian, Croatian, English, German, Hungarian, Polish)**
- 27 **Heribert Hinzen/Josef Müller (Eds.): Bildung für Alle – lebenslang und lebenswichtig**
- 28 **Partnership and Solidarity in Action. International Cooperation Activities of IIZ/DVV**
- 29 **Gerhard Müller: Erwachsenenbildung: Auswärtige Kulturpolitik und internationale Zusammenarbeit**
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- 32 **Sharing without Barriers – Learning Fair – Conference; Documentation Hamburg, 7–10 November 2001**
- 33 **Dénes Koltai: Theoretical, Economic and Regional Issues of Adult Education. Hungarian Developments in an International Perspective**
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