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ABSTRACT

Three case studies show innovative education programs that provide quality basic education with equity. After explaining the significance of educational innovation of democracy in Latin America and the constraints to educational development, the investigation of the three programs follows. The program of Fe y Alegria (Faith and Joy) in 12 countries shows that it is possible to mobilize teachers and communities to provide quality education to the most disadvantaged. This program offers a successful model of partnerships between governments and private sectors. The program of Escuela Nueva in Colombia illustrates that it is possible to teach children in rural schools with few teachers and that those children can learn basic skills and complete primary education. The principle design of the program is active learning and providing children opportunities to progress at their own pace. The Programa de las 900 Escuelas in Chile shows that a society can choose to give more resources to those who have less and that it is a productive investment. These three cases provide direct channels to consolidation for democracy in the region and models for others to follow. Eight lessons develop from the case studies and serve as guiding principles in the design of future educational innovations: (1) a sense of mission; (2) the role of community; (3) democratic leadership; (4) strict and lean management; (5) resources and donor support; (6) political awareness; (7) open communication systems; and (8) teacher training. Five tables provide statistical information about student enrollment and the schools. (CK)

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Education and the Consolidation of Democracy in Latin America

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Education and the Consolidation of Democracy in Latin America:

Innovations to Provide Quality Basic Education with Equity

Fernando Reimers

Harvard Institute
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This paper is dedicated to the memory of Russell Davis, pioneer of studies in education and development at Harvard University, who died in 1993.

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Introduction and Background

With the return of democratically elected governments to several countries in Latin America, interest in the links between education and democracy has returned. During the last decade, this interest was reflected in several meetings and publications in the region. In 1987 the Organization of American States organized a workshop to examine the links between education and democracy, which led to the publication of a special issue of the journal *La Educación* on the subject. Several meetings were organized on the same theme in countries such as Paraguay, El Salvador,[1] and Chile.[2] The regional office of UNESCO sponsored a study on the role of education in the transition to democracy in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay.[3]

This interest in the links between education and democracy goes beyond Latin America. During the same decade of the 1980s, the Council of Europe published a study on how the education systems of southern Europe were preparing citizens for democratic life.[4] The concern about education for democracy is a subject of growing interest in South Africa,[5] and, more recently, in Russia.[6]

In the United States there is an old tradition of interest in the relationship between education and democracy, as the writings of John Dewey[7] and James Conant[8] illustrate. This interest has been shared over time by groups such as the Commission for the Defense of Democracy,[9] educational administrators,[10] and curriculum specialists, represented most recently in the writings about the role of education for democracy in a multicultural society[11] and in publications of the American Federation of Teachers about the teaching of democratic values.[12]

The consolidation of democracy in Latin America poses major challenges to the education systems. Education systems in the region are perpetuating and increasing social disparities by not providing access to education, or to education of equal quality, to children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, public schools are reflecting authoritarian styles of government rather than promoting participation and local leadership.

Is change possible? The three innovations examined in this paper demonstrate that it is indeed possible to provide quality education to the poorest children of Latin America. Promoters of democracy in the region should turn to programs like these for hope. The positive quality of the education provided by these innovations stems not just from increasing the level of student achievement, but also from providing alternative educational processes that foster the social and emotional development of disadvantaged children. These processes also support democratic initiatives, especially community and teacher participation, thereby returning schools to the communities and providing students with successful role models of citizen participation and local control.

This paper investigates three particularly successful education innovations:

- *Fe y Alegría,* which operates in 12 countries in Latin America
- *Escuela Nueva* in Colombia
- *Programa de las 900 Escuelas* in Chile

The program of Fe y Alegría in 12 countries shows that it is possible to mobilize teachers and communities to provide quality education to the most disadvantaged. This program offers a successful model of partnerships between governments and private sectors—partnerships that have successfully survived political changes. The schools of Fe y Alegría, expanding continuously, are a helpful reminder to Ministries of Education, which sometimes suffer from system fatigue, that poor children can learn and that it is possible to teach them well.

The program of Escuela Nueva in Colombia shows that it is possible to teach children in rural schools with few teachers and that those children can learn basic skills and complete primary education. Escuela Nueva also shows that schools can foster positive self-images and confidence in children in rural areas and that schools can provide opportunities for children to learn democratic forms of organization and participation.

The Program of the 900 Schools in Chile shows that a society can choose to give more resources to those who have less and that this is a productive investment. Though this experience is still too recent for definitive comment, it suggests that commitment to true educational opportunity can be sustained and supported by groups with different views and philosophies.

These cases provide not only direct channels to consolidation of democracy in the region, but also models for others to follow and from which to draw lessons. We have derived eight lessons that may serve as guiding principles in the design of future educational innovations:

1. **A sense of mission.** This should include a clear sense of what the innovation is about, reference to the consolidation of democratic institutions, and specifics as to how the innovation will be carried out. The innovation should also be linked with broader values that will mobilize different actors in the process of implementation and that will give transcendental meaning to the activities of the innovation.

2. **The role of the community.** This involves more than the traditional requests for help from the community. It should include explicit recognition in the school curriculum of the students' particular community, new ways for the community to contribute to the mission of the school, and new ways for the school to contribute to life in the community.

3. **Democratic leadership.** This requires the promotion of school autonomy and of leadership at different levels of the innovation. Innovations to promote democracy cannot do so under authoritarian styles.

4. **Strict and lean management.** A good and efficient organization is essential to accomplish the mission of the innovation. Once tasks are defined, appropriate levels and units must be established to clarify responsibilities and supervisory levels, ensure delivery of the different project elements, and build accountability into the process.

5. **Resources and donor support.** Donors play a particularly significant role in the development and support of innovations to the point where they show sufficient success to make a valid claim for public funds.

6. **Political awareness.** The leaders of the innovation at all levels need more than good technical skills; they have to be good politicians and diplomats and have abilities in social marketing.

7. **Open communication systems.** For the innovation to succeed, the initial technical design need not be perfect; instead, it is important to establish networks and communication systems that will allow learning by doing.

8. **Teacher training.** Changing the way teachers act in the classroom is critical to improving the quality of education.

The behaviors, attitudes, and preferences of the Latin Americans of the 21st century will be shaped by today's schools. While the consolidation of democratic institutions in Latin America will be the result of many influences, what schools do and fail to do today will surely affect the future of democracy in the region.

The next sections of this paper attempt to explain why these innovations are significant, presenting each in detail, examining the process of implementation, and identifying factors that make these programs successful contributions to the consolidation of democracy.

The Significance of Educational Innovations for Democracy in Latin America

The long-term survival of democracy in Latin America relies on an educated citizenry. Educated populations will establish a base for increased productivity, which will in turn move the economies of the region toward growth. Education can also provide the majority of the population with a basic framework of values and attitudes, which is essential for participatory forms of government and the proper functioning of democratic institutions. Among those values is the understanding that all people have equal dignity and therefore the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Promoting this common framework of values requires providing each person with opportunities to develop self-esteem and to appreciate the value of others and their points of view, including those of people from different sociocultural backgrounds.

Democratic elections benefit from an educated electorate which is motivated to participate and make informed choices. Citizens need to know their rights, the systems of government, and the avenues open to them to control those in government. An educated population is also necessary to facilitate the implementation of further reforms to deepen democratic processes, such as tax reform which can be more successful if citizens understand the purposes of the taxes and can follow tax collection procedures properly. Development of new opportunities for the private sector also can benefit from more educated entrepreneurs ready to respond to those opportunities.

The general model of society for the functioning of democracy is that of a critical mass of people educated to at least a basic level. An education system in which a few achieve very high levels of education while large segments of the population remain illiterate will not help to consolidate democratic institutions. In addition, to strengthen democracy it is not sufficient to provide children with schooling that addresses the development of academic skills alone. Although academic skills are undeniably important, schools must also address social and emotional issues to prepare students for responsible citizenship.

Schools that systematically send poor, disadvantaged children or members of ethnic minorities the message that they do not belong in the school—such as through excluding references in the curriculum to the systems of meanings with which these children identify—will end up either expelling these children from school or producing graduates who cannot reconcile the realities of school with the realities of their lives. For example, Rigoberta Menchu, the 1992 Nobel peace prize winner and leader of one of the Mayan groups in Guatemala, related how her father insisted that she quit primary school because the schools did not allow children from indigenous groups to attend in their traditional dress. For many families, not using the traditional dress, especially for girls, was associated with a form of dishonor.

Constraints to Educational Development in Latin America

Currently, in the primary schools of Latin America three basic constraints exist in the consolidation of efforts that support the role of education in strengthening democracy:

1. Students learn little of the intended curriculum.

2. Schools reinforce social disparities.

3. Curricula lack explicit attention to the social and emotional domains. In many instances the "hidden" curriculum is one that teaches apathy, hopelessness, or resignation; children learn to wait for the central government to solve problems.

Most children are learning too little in the primary schools. Furthermore, the schools do not seem to contribute to reducing social inequities, as rural and poor children have less opportunity to learn than their urban peers.

A study in a sample of rural schools in Honduras found that 1,253 children who took a multiple-choice test measuring basic reading ability averaged 44 percent correct responses in grade one and 36 percent correct responses in grade three.[13] Data from Chile show that while students from families in the highest income quintile scored 80 percent correctly, students in the lowest quintile scored only 40 percent correctly.[14] A test administered to 3,248 primary school students (in grade six) in a random sample of Mexican schools shows that on the average the students scored only 48 percent of the items correctly in a curriculum test of basic subjects.[15] Students in Mexican private schools obtained higher scores (65 percent) than their counterparts in public schools (47 percent).

Results of a study using standardized tests in mathematics and science show that students in Brazil have significantly lower achievement than students in England, China, or Portugal. While Chinese students scored 80 percent of the answers in the math test correctly, students from Sao Paulo scored only 37 percent of them correctly, and students from the disadvantaged area of Fortaleza, Brazil, scored only 32 percent correctly.[16]

While it is true that most of the school-age children in the region are enrolled in primary school at some point in their lives, there are, however, great disparities among and within countries in how many children are left out of school. Furthermore, among those who are enrolled, great disparities also exist in the opportunity to learn for children from different socioeconomic backgrounds and for those living in urban and rural areas. As a result, while most children enroll in primary school at some point in their lives, many enroll in schools that put them at such a disadvantage—compounded by their own social disadvantage—that school failure is the most probable outcome. They learn little, repeat a grade several times, and eventually drop out of school.

Table 1 shows that in almost half of the countries in the region, at least 15 percent of the primary school-age children were not in school in 1980; by 1987 at least 15 percent of the children in the same number of countries were not in school. Overall little change or improvement had taken place. Net enrollments had even declined in four countries—Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, and Paraguay.

Table 1. Net Enrollment Ratios and Growth in Enrollment Ratios in Primary Education in Latin America, 1980-87

	Net Enrollment Ratios (%)		Average Annual Growth (%)
Country	1980	1987	1980 - 87
Argentina	94	100	0.89
Bolivia	80	84	0.70
Brazil	81	77*	-0.84
Chile	98	89	-1.37
Colombia		81	
Costa Rica	91	86	-0.80
Cuba	97	99	0.29
Dominican Republic	71	71	0.00
Ecuador		94	
El Salvador	64	71	1.49
Guatemala	58		
Haiti	41	61*	5.84
Honduras	76	89	2.28
Mexico	95	98	0.52
Nicaragua	74	77	0.57
Panama	88	90	0.32
Paraguay	87	85*	-0.39
Peru	87	95	1.26
Uruguay		90*	
Venezuela	86	92*	1.13

* Year 1986

Derived from: UNESCO-OREALC, 1990. *Situación Educativa de América Latina y El Caribe 1980-1987.* Santiago, Chile.

The problem of participation leads to one of equity: the children who are not enrolled in school are disproportionately the children from poor and rural families. In Costa Rica, for instance, according to survey data from 1982, children in the age group 7-12 with no schooling were 13.3 percent of the lowest income quintile and only 2.6 percent of the two highest income groups.[17] A related fact constraining participation is the differing quality of the services provided to children from different socioeconomic groups. With regards to public education, as with many other fields of governmental activity in Latin America, those who have more get more.

The disparities in participation in schooling among and within countries of the region can be observed in Table 2.

Table 2. Children Without Schooling in Several Latin American Countries, circa 1980

Country/Region	Total Number of Children Ages 10-14	Number of Children Ages 10-14 With No Schooling	Percentage of Children Ages 10-14 With No Schooling
Argentina (1980)	2,456,168	26,196	1.1
Buenos Aires	912,352	5,014	0.5
Cordoba	207,927	1,393	0.7
Chaco	80,780	4,556	5.6
Formosa	36,378	913	2.5
Bolivia (1976)			
La Paz	171,820	12,134	7.1
Oruro	37,772	1,207	3.2
Santa Cruz	86,785	5,244	6.0
Pando	4,405	1,286	29.2
Chuquisaca	41,715	9,110	21.8
Brazil (1980)	14,252,521	3,738,960	26.2
Urban	9,073,691	1,301,128	14.3
Rural	5,178,830	2,437,832	47.1
Federal District	132,646	9,336	7.0
Espirito Santo	248,081	40,513	16.3
Acre	40,561	21,908	54.0
Alagaos	267,435	145,801	54.5
Colombia (1985)	3,199,965	760,844	23.8
Bogotá	391,259	80,881	13.0
Cundinamarca	159,055	26,827	16.9
Bolivar	154,698	50,086	32.4
Cordoba	120,468	39,308	32.6
Costa Rica (1984)	272,008	12,377	4.6
Urban	104,903	2,175	2.1
Rural	167,105	10,202	6.1
San Jose	91,161	2,458	2.7
Heredia	20,459	635	3.1
Puntarenas	34,443	2,533	7.4
El Limon	21,638	1,722	8.0
Venezuela (1981)	1,810,432	153,285	8.5
Federal District	218,981	9,303	4.2
Aragua	109,579	6,295	5.7
Barinas	45,550	6,619	14.5
Apure	27,976	5,069	18.1

Source: OEA, 1991. *Deficits Educativos en America Latina.* Patzcuaro, Mexico.

Among countries, participation for children ages 10-14 ranges from 99 percent in Argentina to 84 percent in Brazil. In Argentina, participation ranges from 99.5 percent of the children in places such as Buenos Aires to 94 percent in Chaco. In Bolivia, the disparities are greater, ranging from 93 percent in La Paz to 70 percent in Pando. In Brazil, participation is much greater in urban areas (86 percent) than in rural areas (53 percent), ranging from 93 percent in the Federal District to 45 percent in Alagoas. In Colombia, participation also ranges widely across regions, from 87 percent in Bogotá, to 67 percent in Bolivar or Cordoba. In Costa Rica, participation is also higher in urban areas, ranging from 97 percent in San Jose to 93 percent in Puntarenas or Limon. Disparities in access in Venezuela illustrate the same point, ranging from 96 percent in the Federal District to 82 percent in Apure.

Proportionately more people in rural areas have no access to schooling because those are the areas least served by the state in providing education. Many of the teachers in rural areas teach more than one grade (a rare phenomenon in urban schools) and have less training, less supervision, and less access to materials. Many of the rural schools also do not offer all grades of primary education. In 1987, in Colombia, 23 percent of the urban teachers were untrained vs. 39 percent of the rural teachers; in Honduras, the figures were 15 percent vs. 46 percent, and in Nicaragua they were 32 percent vs. 74 percent.[18]

In Peru, the percentage of trained teachers (*maestros titulados*) in primary education ranges from 95 percent in Arequipa (where the reported repetition rate is 11 percent), or over 70 percent in Lima (repetition rate around 10 percent), down to 20 percent of trained teachers in Madre de Dios (repetition rate 46 percent).[19]

Table 3 shows that the percentage of public "incomplete schools" (not offering all grades) is much higher in rural than in urban areas.

Table 3. Percentage of Schools That Are Incomplete in Urban and Rural Areas, 1987

Country	Percentage of Urban Schools That Are Incomplete	Percentage of Rural Schools That Are Incomplete
Bolivia	0.0	29.6
Colombia	26.2	62.1
Ecuador	26.0	88.6
El Salvador	3.4	62.8
Panama	2.1	11.3

Source: UNESCO-OREALC, 1990. *Situación educativa de América Latina y el Caribe 1980-1987.* Santiago, Chile.

In addition to the problems of access and equity, schools in Latin America often are better at preparing children to adapt to authoritarian styles of government than at developing the critical thinking and social skills necessary to promote democratic forms of government.

Schools are one of the first institutions of the state with which children come into contact. In the hope of consolidating national identity and promoting universal education, central states have cut many of the links between schools and the community. A local school is local only in the sense that it is placed in a specific locality and enrolls the children in the area. Teachers and principals are appointed centrally, many times at the direct intervention of the Minister or Vice Minister of Education. Curricula and textbooks are designed at the central level. Supervision is associated more with "policing" to ensure that schools are carrying out bureaucratic requirements according to central guidelines than with promoting local initiative. Very few avenues are available for local communities, parents, or teachers to influence what takes place in the school, to challenge abuses from the central state—corrupt supervisors or teachers—or to influence central decisions about resources for school repairs or teaching materials.

One message the school conveys to children and communities is that the central government is in charge and the individual should learn to accept this state of affairs. Public schools in the region help children to "learn their place in society." The schools reinforce the status quo rather than prepare children for a different social order. When the existing social order is authoritarian, the long-term sustainability of democracy is jeopardized by this hidden curriculum.

Innovations to Provide Quality Basic Education with Equity

Against this background, the three innovations discussed in this paper represent hopeful examples of approaches to providing quality education to poor children, a necessary condition if education is to contribute to the consolidation of democracy. The significance of the cases examined is that they show it is possible to provide quality education to poor children. Education systems are so trapped in day-to-day routines, or suffer from "system fatigue," that they are only able to maintain the status quo, not improve it. As we have seen, the status quo cannot produce the critical mass of well-educated citizens needed to sustain democratic forms of government in the long run.

In the context of societies that are just embarking on democratic forms of government, identifying examples that show it is possible for schools to educate children for active learning and participation becomes especially important, as does the need to understand why these innovations have succeeded.

The following sections of this paper present the innovations in detail and discuss what factors account for their success.

Fe y Alegría

Fe y Alegría (Faith and Joy) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) which provides formal and nonformal education at different levels in 12 countries in Latin America. It began in 1955 as a project of Fr. Jose M. Velaz to educate 100 poor children in a room in the house of a construction worker in Caracas. By 1964, the program began to expand to other countries in the region, and by 1992 it had expanded to become an organization active in 12 countries reaching 512,796 students in 509 centers. Table 4 summarizes the history of the expansion of Fe y Alegría.

Table 4. Summary of the History of Fe y Alegría by Start Date, Country, Numbers of Centers and Students, 1992

Start date	Country	Centers	Students
1955	Venezuela	103	97,358
1964	Ecuador	38	29,670
1965	Panama	8	13,396
1966	Peru	43	43,733
1966	Bolivia	138	147,535
1968	El Salvador	16	48,409
1972	Colombia	76	99,109
1974	Nicaragua	21	16,784
1976	Guatemala	23	8,584
1980	Brazil	31	4,908
1991	Dominican Republic	5	2,600
1992	Paraguay	7	710
Total		509	512,796

Source: Fe y Alegría, 1992. Movimiento de Educación Popular. Asunción, Paraguay.

Fe y Alegría's primary mission is to provide quality education to the poor, as expressed in its motto, "Where the asphalt road ends, where there is no water, electricity, or services, there begins Fe y Alegría."

Most of Fe y Alegría's work is in the formal education system. Its basic operating principle is to create partnerships among the organization, the state, and the local community to provide quality education to poor children. Typically, the Ministry of Education pays the salaries of the teachers; the communities participate in the construction and maintenance of the school; and Fe y Alegría trains and supervises the teachers (in some cases it also selects them), manages the school, and coordinates activities so that the school operates as a center for community development.

Most of the students in Fe y Alegría schools (56 percent) are in primary education, a third (30 percent) are in secondary education, and a minority are in preschool or daycare centers. Table 5 presents the number of students in Fe y Alegría by level and country in the formal education system in 1991.

Table 5. Students in Fe y Alegría Formal Schools by Level and Country, 1991

	Level of Education System					
	Day Care	Preschool	Primary	Low Secondary	High Secondary	Total
Bolivia	120	7,606	40,780	23,809	16,577	88,892
Brazil	6,384	6,679	3,998	50	0	17,111
Colombia	9,009	1,514	30,150	3,687	5,126	49,486
Ecuador	0	1,939	12,325	1,917	310	16,491
El Salvador	130	89	5,644	1,143	0	7,006
Guatemala	0	1,160	4,938	768	0	6,866
Nicaragua	0	1,048	5,578	1,847	518	8,991
Panama	0	0	0	520	0	520
Peru	0	144	25,426	19,189	0	44,759
Venezuela	0	7,057	39,881	13,288	1,260	61,486
Total	15,643	27,236	168,720	66,218	23,791	301,608

Source: Fe y Alegría Internacional. Estadísticas 1991.

While Fe y Alegría covers a very small percentage of all children enrolled in school in each country, it offers a successful model of providing quality education to the poor and of having the potential to inspire others in the larger education systems where it operates. In 1991, on average less than three of every 1,000 primary school children in the LAC region attended a Fe y Alegría school. The organization is most expanded in Bolivia, where three of every 100 children in primary school attended a Fe y Alegría school, and in Venezuela, where one of every 100 children in primary school attended a Fe y Alegría school.

Enrollments in Fe y Alegría have been growing at a moderate rate. Between 1990 and 1991 enrollments in primary education increased 3 percent; in lower secondary, 2.7 percent; and in higher secondary, less than 1 percent. Enrollments in preschool expanded 46 percent between 1990 and 1991, reflecting substantial growth in each country, particularly in Brazil.

Fe y Alegría defines itself as a movement of integral popular education. Its primary objective is to provide education for life, giving socially disadvantaged children opportunities to improve the quality of their lives.

The organization is structured around principles of the functional autonomy of the countries, regions, and centers within broad principles and objectives. Although it is an institution of the Catholic Church sponsored by the Society of Jesus, many other religious congregations participate, and most of the teachers are not ordained personnel. In 1991 only 6 percent of the teachers and principals were members of a religious congregation.

The national chapters of Fe y Alegría are legally registered as private nonprofit organizations. The national chapters have agreements with the Ministry of Education. They are also part of the federation *Fe y Alegría Internacional*, which is recognized as a consultative member of UNESCO and UNICEF and has roster status in the economic and social council of the United Nations.

The establishment of a community of parents is an important feature of all schools in Fe y Alegría. The following notes from one of the teachers of a Fe y Alegría school in Venezuela illustrate the type of relationship these schools have with the community:

> *We pay attention to the community in the very examples used to teach reading, and in the contents of all the other subjects. We teach knowledge in its context, acknowledging the elements of oppression, but also those of resistance by the popular groups, we rescue popular culture. . . . With this kind of planning the parents can easily become teachers as they can help reconstruct the story of the barrio or describe the village where they came from or narrate episodes of the history of Venezuela. . . . We have also transformed the parent-teacher meetings; we have gone from boring meetings in which parents were just given the grades of their children to encounters in which students participate telling their mothers about their problems and sharing their progress. . . . Experience has shown us also with how much responsibility mothers can fill in for an absent teacher; this requires frequent communication between teachers and parents. . . At the same time the school becomes the center of celebrations for the barrio and shares in the barrio's successes and problems. . . . The school participates with the community in the celebration of the anniversary of the barrio, the week of the school, Christmas, Holy Week. Christmas, for instance, provides opportunities to develop special activities in the subjects of Language, Social Studies, Religious Education, Work Education and to organize with the neighbors and parents community nativity sets, street decorations for midnight mass, and confection of sweets.*[30]

In their links with Fe y Alegría schools, communities go beyond simply supporting school activities: the school becomes a center of community development. This is also illustrated in the case of Peru.

Generally, when we open a school we begin using bamboo mats until we can find funds to build. The contribution of the community is significant. It helps in leveling the ground, finishing and maintaining the building. However, the community also participates in other ways.

The community participates from the time in which its leaders approach the Fe y Alegría organization to establish a school. Once they request it, we have a meeting with all people living in the community to explain the objectives of Fe y Alegría and our belief that an integral education requires their active participation. If everyone agrees, we sign an agreement and begin the new project. The first task of the community is to donate the land to Fe y Alegría for the construction of the school.

However, the formal education of the students is not our only objective. The school is an opportunity to be present in the barrio. Every student in the school lives in the community, and we attempt to make the school a center of development of the barrio. The religious congregations that manage our schools live in the same barrio, building a house in the same land of the school. They also participate in community activities and support grassroots organizations. Slowly a number of programs develop from our schools: health programs, food programs . . . support to the leaders of the organizations of mothers.[21]

Fe y Alegría maintains intensive efforts to produce education materials, leaflets, and pamphlets designed to educate the staff about the philosophy of the organization. Many of these efforts are the result of periodic meetings held by representatives of the national chapters, who also develop their own materials for the national network of schools and exchange them through the regional network. These materials emphasize what Fe y Alegría should be and provide new teachers with an ongoing vision of the philosophy and aims of the movement.

According to the *Propuesta Educativa de Fe y Alegría*:

The educational proposal from Fe y Alegría to the schools is summarized in the belief that schools should become educational community centers. These centers will be sustained by a number of principles and practices to guarantee the students an integral education of quality with the following features:

- *Education emphasizing learning processes and content that originate in the reality of daily life*
- *An active, critical, and creative pedagogy*
- *Education in productive work*
- *Education in Christian values*
- *Education that confronts community problems*
- *Education in participation*
- *Education that fosters a permanent learning process*
- *Education committed to a new model of humanity and society*[22]

The national chapters also produce information pamphlets for the larger community; these pamphlets present the objectives of the schools and the activities developed in that country to mobilize and maintain local support. Recently, some of the national chapters have produced documents to stimulate national dialogue about the direction of education reform. The Venezuelan chapter, for example, is producing a series of booklets discussing education in that country; education quality; popular education; didactic experiences in language arts, mathematics, and social studies; and experiences in teacher training and education projects.

No systematic evaluation is available that compares the results of Fe y Alegría to those of regular public schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the schools are generally recognized by parents as providing better education than public schools. In Bolivia, the World Bank *Poverty Report* indicates, "Some observers estimate that the number of public schools managed by the Catholic Church would double if the government approved all community requests for its services".[23] Some of the national chapters (for example, Colombia and Venezuela) are undertaking or sponsoring evaluations at this time.

A case example of Fe y Alegría's success is Bolivia. Fe y Alegría began in Bolivia in 1966. It has since expanded into what is perhaps the most developed of the national chapters of the regional federation.

Funding comes from a number of sources. The Bolivian Ministry of Education pays the salaries of teachers and principals. A small student fee—the same as that which students pay in public schools—covers the cost of regular teaching materials. The national headquarters prepares project proposals, which are submitted to international agencies for additional funding. (In other countries, but not in Bolivia, yearly national raffles help generate local funds for operating expenses.)

Although the government agreed in theory that Fe y Alegría would select teachers for its schools, this has not been possible because of government and union pressures. Fe y Alegría, however, selects principals on the basis of training, experience, and commitment to the mission of the organization.

In 1992, Fe y Alegría operated in eight of the nine departments in Bolivia. Its main programs include formal education at the preschool, primary, secondary, and technical levels. It also conducts extensive programs of radio education, teacher training, parent education, community development, daycare, health, and religious education.

The administrative structure includes a staff of sixty. Seventeen persons work at the national headquarters, and two to five people work in the coordination offices in each department. There is extensive coordination and communication among the schools in this network. Teachers of each cycle in nearby schools meet and plan together once a month. Departmental coordinators visit schools frequently.

Early on in its work in Bolivia, Fe y Alegría identified the low level of teacher training as a constraint to providing quality education. In 1972 a program of in-service teacher training was begun. Courses provided theory in pedagogical methods, and a training team provided follow-up in the classroom. Training took place on weekends or during intensive week-long sessions. The in-service training program was opened to teachers of the regular public schools, and between 1972 and 1977, 33 percent of all primary school teachers were trained.

With the reinstatement of democracy in 1982, Fe y Alegría became a source of dynamism for public education. Shortly thereafter, however, Fe y Alegría determined that too much expansion had compromised its quality, and the organization chose to focus training only on its own schools and to initiate a series of teacher training pilot projects.

Fe y Alegría introduced a number of education innovations in Bolivia: for example, personalized instruction, which structured the curriculum in didactic units, and reading and science corners, which provided opportunities for children to progress at their own pace. This program took place from 1972 to 1976, when it was interrupted by lack of funds for teaching materials and school libraries. There was also some resistance from teachers because the program required additional work from them.

It is common in Fe y Alegría schools to see older students helping with the education of younger students. This has been very useful in recent years when teacher strikes have increased becuase of reductions in teacher salaries, helping to keep schools open while teachers are on strike.

Other innovations included development of centers of education and production, and the Program for Parents and Children (*Programa Padres e Hijos*) begun in 1984. This program was implemented throughout the Fe y Alegría system for parents of children enrolled in those schools. The program consists of a series of workshops to address different problems influencing the quality of family life, such as communication, family relations, alcoholism and drug addiction, and the media. The main objective of the program is to assist dysfunctional families through parent education and counseling. The workshops are based on an active and participatory approach to promote adult learning. In 1991 this program was functioning in three departments in Bolivia; 27 groups reached 945 parents and approximately 3,780 children.

In 1992, Fe y Alegría Bolivia was developing another model for rural education—the boarding school. In these schools (called Houses of Knowledge), community members participate by contributing food and supplies, and a local mother assists the school with food preparation and organization. Each boarding school has a school government, and students participate in establishing community rules and electing a board to maintain discipline. Students maintain a school garden where they cultivate vegetables and fruits.

Another project involving some 200 teachers in Fe y Alegría schools produced 90 prototype textbooks for primary education. These books reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of Bolivia, rescue the heritage of each region, and reflect the reality with which students are familiar.

The relationship between the school and the community is a cornerstone of Fe y Alegría. At the beginning in Bolivia, parents just participated in the construction of the schools, but since 1968 they have participated through the barrio associations in many aspects of the school. The school also participates with the community in projects of health, potable water, and sewage.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that graduates from Fe y Alegría schools have better mastery of basic skills in reading, writing, and math. In addition, they have had opportunities for social and emotional growth; their teachers have paid attention to the development of self-esteem. Students usually come to schools on Saturdays and Sundays to play in the sport yards, and the schools seem to meet their social needs. In most of the schools, youth groups work on special projects such as Christmas activities, field trips, sports, and cultural events.

In addition to emphasizing mastery of academic skills, the Fe y Alegría schools in Bolivia, as elsewhere, emphasize values education, teaching honesty and solidarity. Graduates develop a meaningful attachment to their school and in some cases have established alumni associations.

The director of Fe y Alegría in Bolivia indicates that the overall education process has four dimensions:[24]

1. *Economic.* Education must provide graduates with opportunities to earn a living.

2. *Political.* Education must support grassroots organizations so that people become aware of their rights and can organize themselves to protect those rights.

3. *Cultural.* Education must promote cultural and ethnic identity.

4. *Religious.* Education must provide a transcendent dimension to motivate individuals throughout life.

Escuela Nueva

For a number of years in the 1960s, Colombia experimented with "unitary" schools[25] as part of a UNESCO-sponsored project to provide instruction in all of the primary grades in rural schools with only one teacher. Colombia attempted to extend this approach from 150 pilot programs to all one-teacher schools. This effort was unsuccessful for a number of reasons, including inadequate teacher training, inflexibility of the curriculum, and lack of receptivity on the part of teachers.

As a result, a group in the Ministry of Education developed Escuela Nueva in 1975. Escuela Nueva is designed around the principle of active learning, providing children opportunities to progress at their own pace.

Escuela Nueva was an attempt to provide quality and complete primary education to children in rural areas. It shared some of the fundamental principles of the unitary school, while learning from the failure at implementing unitary schools at the national level, and incorporated some new ideas to provide quality education.

The implementation of Escuela Nueva benefitted from the initial early support of USAID, which began funding the project in 1975 at a time when the Ministry of Education had given up on the unitary school approach.

> *In 1975, the Unitary Schools project (as it was then known) was at an ebb. UNESCO's activity in the Unitary Schools project had ended in the 1960s. The Ministry of Education and the Universidad de Antioquia, each with a different unitary school approach, had little or no funding for their programs. The pilot school at Pamplona and several pilot schools affiliated with the Universidad de Antioquia were the remnants of the UNESCO project. Although the Universidad of Antioquia design was commendable and well planned, its instructional model was considered too expensive to implement.*
>
> *Charles (Chuck) Green, then the USAID/Colombia Chief of the Human Resources Division, recognized the value of the project and was instrumental in promoting it for Mission approval. USAID/Colombia contributed funding and technical support for the project and agreed to a new beginning and a new name: Escuela Nueva. If Chuck Green hadn't persuaded the Mission of the value of the program, the Ministry of Education would have relegated its multigraded, rural Unitary Schools program to the bottom of its priority barrel.*[26]

This support of Escuela Nueva and the early experiences gained from the unitary school model gave the innovation enough time to mature. USAID supported the implementation of Escuela Nueva in 500 schools in three regions of the country. At a later stage, funding from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Federation of Coffee Growers allowed for the expansion of the program to 3,000 schools. At the end of the

1980s, a World Bank loan and support from UNICEF provided further support for the maintenance and expansion of the model to cover all rural schools. In 1978, some 500 schools had adopted the model; this figure had grown to 2,000 by 1982. By 1989, 17,948 schools were included, and the target of universalization became 41,000 schools by the mid-1990s.[27]

There are four basic components to the Escuela Nueva model: curriculum, training, administration, and community involvement.

The curriculum component

> *. . . promotes active and reflective learning, the ability to think, analyze, investigate, create, apply knowledge, and improve children's self-esteem. It incorporates a flexible promotion system and seeks the development of cooperation, comradeship, solidarity, civic, participatory, and democratic attitudes.*[28]

The curriculum component includes self-study guides for children in grades 2 to 5, learning activity centers, a school government, and a school library.

> *Essentially, this system provides active instruction, a stronger relationship between the school and the community, and a flexible promotion mechanism adapted to the lifestyle of the rural child. Flexible promotion is the methodological process whereby students may advance from one grade or level to another at their own pace. It allows children to leave school temporarily so as to help in agricultural activities or because of illness or any other valid reason, without jeopardizing the chance of returning to school and continuing their education.*[29]

The flexible promotion system is based on the organization of the curriculum in modules which students master at their own pace. If a student drops out of school during the year or has a prolonged absence (which is frequent in rural areas where children help with harvesting or other jobs at certain times during the year), the student can return to the school—during the same calendar year or in the future—and continue with the subsequent modules, not repeating what has already been covered as would happen to a student repeating a grade in a traditional school.

The program relies on teaching guides and student books that allow each student to advance at his or her own pace and to work in small groups. In addition, the curriculum provides opportunities to establish links between the school and the community. For example, using a map of the village where the school is located, children may be given homework that includes frequent field trips to different parts of the village to interview parents and relatives about the history of the village, local recipes for preparing meals, and local farming methods.

Escuela Nueva also features a student government. Students nominate among themselves for president and vice president of the school for two-month terms. Once elected, the leaders organize different committees to accomplish their campaign promises. The student government provides opportunities to work in groups, develop social skills, and take roles in promoting responsibility for the school.

Escuela Nueva schools also have libraries and learning activity centers. Teachers are trained to work as facilitators of student-centered learning.

Teaching materials are produced at the national level to benefit from economies of scale, although some of the materials are designed for particular regions of the country, and regional materials may be produced at the local level.

Teacher training consists of four basic workshops and a teacher's training manual, which explains in detail each aspect of the Escuela Nueva model. Teacher training is decentralized and includes visits to demonstration schools, one in each school district. The training workshops follow a curriculum that is student-centered and that provides teachers with opportunities to share their experiences in participatory teaching. A basic tool of the training is a manual called "Towards the Escuela Nueva," which explains in detail the objectives of each component of the model and the activities to be performed to achieve those objectives. This guide has several basic units:

- Escuela Nueva
- School and community partnership
- School government
- Learning corners and other resources
- Techniques for group work
- Use of study guides
- Assessment
- Schedule
- School library
- Preparing teacher guides

Workshops for local follow-up constitute the rural microcenters (*Microcentros Rurales*). Teachers meet in groups of eight to twelve individuals to exchange experiences with applying the Escuela Nueva model. The teachers meet in a demonstration school, another rural school, or a public library.

> *The demonstration school became a complement to the training process and a way to ensure the quality of the model in the process of expansion. The microcenter in the expansion phase became a participatory space where teachers can evaluate, create, enrich their own experiences, innovate, criticize, analyze, and carry out projects for the improvement of the school and the community.*[30]

Community involvement calls for the participation of parents in school activities. Administration of the Escuela Nueva program has a national coordination level, which designs policies and provides technical assistance. In each department of the country, there is a committee that includes the Education Secretary of the Department and of the Finance Ministry, a Project Coordinator for the Department, and a team of multipliers.

Several evaluations have been conducted of Escuela Nueva. Although none points to overwhelming learning gains over traditional schools, it appears clear that students in Escuela Nueva do just as well or slightly better than their counterparts in traditional rural schools in academic subjects, creativity, and civic education.[31] The fact that Escuela Nueva schools can do this with fewer teachers than traditional schools (one teacher per grade) while providing students with the opportunity to complete primary education suggests that this innovation is better than the existing alternatives. Some analysts have suggested that because Escuela Nueva was implemented first in the most disadvantaged schools its parity of results to other rural schools further highlights its success. Although no baseline data are available to test this hypothesis, the implication is that traditional rural schools teaching such disadvantaged children would have achieved much lower results.[32]

Some of the most recent evaluations, however, suggest that many schools included in the Escuela Nueva plan have not in fact adopted the model.[33] Since the innovation has not been fully implemented, it would be meaningless to use information on the learning gains of students in those schools to speak about the effects of Escuela Nueva. Further research should attempt to determine what the factors are that have impeded the successful implementation of Escuela Nueva on a national scale.

Programa de las 900 Escuelas

In 1989, democratic elections ended sixteen years of military rule in Chile. The new government was supported by a coalition of political parties, which had been making plans and preparing programs since the time the military government announced there would be free elections the following year.

The program to improve the quality of primary education in the 900 poorest schools, or P-900 as it is called, was one of the first policy initiatives in education of the new government. Funded by a grant from the governments of Sweden and Denmark, this program targeted schools with students of the lowest socioeconomic background and the lowest academic achievement for special attention and resources. Information to identify those schools was available from the National System for Measurement of the Quality of Education (SIMCE).[34]

Begun in March 1990, P-900 is based on the premise that positive discrimination is necessary to achieve true equality of educational opportunities, as socioeconomic background

puts some children at a disadvantage even before they enter school. The goal of the program was to compensate for the effects of poverty on educational opportunity by giving special attention to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

P-900 was a response to two features of Chile's education system: (1) the almost universal access to primary education achieved as a result of long-standing education efforts in the country,[35] and (2) the increase in disparities resulting from the privatization and decentralization of education implemented during the military regime.[36] Two related factors contributed to the design and implementation of P-900: the development of nongovernmental organizations that worked in education during the long military regime and the existence of a large body of research and documentation diagnosing education problems and identifying interventions that were later incorporated into the policy options developed by the democratic coalition. Many of the key actors in the design and implementation of P-900 came from the leading NGOs in education research in Chile.

The program originally began with 900 schools, but by 1992 the number of schools involved had increased to 1,385, representing 15 percent of the public primary schools. All of these were located either in rural areas or in urban areas of extreme poverty. The focus of the program was on the first four years of basic education.[37] In 1992, the program reached 222,491 students, or 20 percent of those enrolled in the cycle; 7,267 teachers were supported through this program.

The program has specific objectives:

- Improve the reading and mathematic skills of students in grades 1 through 4
- Improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the classroom
- Train supervisors to act as advisors in pedagogy
- Change negative attitudes of teachers towards poor students
- Make teachers aware of their responsibility for the academic success or failure of their students
- Promote group work among teachers
- Integrate school and community[38]

The program includes the following activities:

- Distribution of textbooks to students
- Development and distribution of teacher's guides
- Development and distribution of workbooks for students
- Development and distribution of guides for tutors to provide remedial instruction to the slowest learners
- Development and distribution of guides for school principals

- Training of supervisors, who will in turn train teachers in the use of materials produced and in new approaches for teaching math and language, developing self-esteem in students, and improving school-community relations
- Program of learning workshops, conducted by young tutors (monitors) who are from the community and who provide remedial instruction to the slowest learners
- Repair of school buildings
- Establishment of school libraries for grades 1 and 2 and provision of teaching materials, including tape recorders and mimeo equipment

The program is administered through the existing administrative structure of the Ministry of Education. A small coordinating staff recruited from the leading education research centers in Chile has overall leadership for the program. The basic implementing agents are the school supervisors, who are asked to focus primarily on the schools included in the program, although all of them have other schools to supervise.

Implementation of the program began by focusing on improving the physical plant and providing some basic equipment to the schools. Schools included in the program were surveyed to assess the needs for physical repair; soon after, the schools were repaired and painted, and new furniture was provided.

> *New furniture and brightly colored school rooms, or any of the other improvements made to the infrastructure, produce positive effects. Such changes provoke positive attitudes about the school among students as well as their parents. The children improve their personal hygiene, take better care of the materials, and generally seem content. Parents, seeing the physical changes, are more likely to offer their collaboration to the school.*[39]

In-service training of supervisors and teachers was the next emphasis of P-900. The supervisors are trained in three meetings per year, each lasting one week. These meetings are highly participatory and attempt to model the training approach expected of supervisors when they train the teachers.

Six training guides were produced for in-service teacher training to be given by the supervisors. The training workshops take place in twelve sessions of two hours each. Teachers meet with the supervisors once a week over the course of twelve weeks; six of the training sessions deal with teaching math, and six deal with teaching language. Training is designed to be highly participatory and focuses first on sensitizing teachers to the special problems involved in teaching math and language and then on proposing suggestions to teach those subjects. In math, the emphasis is on teaching math, not as an abstract subject but as it applies to the context of the child. In language, the emphasis is on allowing children first to express themselves and then on focusing on grammar and rules. Teachers are sensitized to promote student participation and creative use of the language. Teachers also are sensitized

to incorporate the diversity of student backgrounds in teaching language, for instance by asking children to tell stories about their family life.

Although based on workshops developed and carried out by one of Chile's leading education research centers for the past ten years, the learning workshops by young monitors were initially the most resisted aspect of the overall program. At first, principals and teachers resisted letting monitors from the community play a role in the academic work of the school. Monitors were chosen from among young members of the community, and priority was given to those trained as teachers or in related fields. Candidates were required to have completed high school and were trained with the assistance of materials specially designed for this purpose. Initial training was followed by ongoing training and monitoring from the school supervisors.

The tutors meet for two hours each week with the third and fourth grade students who have the lowest academic results. Many of the activities emphasize developing social skills and self-esteem. For example, at the beginning of the school year all students collaboratively develop the basic rules of discipline in the workshop; thereafter, all members of the group share responsibility for those rules. The training of the tutors emphasizes developing skills to attend to the developmental and social needs of children. Several guides have been prepared by child psychologists and cover such subjects as listening to and respecting children's views, the physical and emotional development of children, and activities suggested for the workshops.

A communication component has been developed to support P-900. Posters were produced with slogans summarizing the mission of the program, one of which reads "Quality Education for All," and another which reads, "In this school, all children learn." In addition, the program distributes a newsletter to all participating schools, and a video was produced to provide a quick orientation to the program for education administrators in each province.

Since its beginning, P-900 has contemplated several evaluation activities to strengthen the implementation of the program. An ongoing evaluation conducted by the participants themselves is designed to provide formative feedback, and two additional evaluations—one of the learning workshops and the other of the whole program—will provide summative results.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Prior research has shown that the lessons derived from the systematic study of educational innovations can yield frameworks to plan future innovations. Warwick and colleagues illustrated a transactional model of implementation from the study of five different educational innovations in Pakistan.[40] Cummings studied the implementation of the same innovation to provide low-cost primary education in six nations.[41] This section discusses eight factors that account for the success of the three innovations studied here.[42] The factors proposed should be understood as working hypotheses; they are derived from elements present in these three cases. A more rigorous testing of these hypotheses would require the study of more innovations, including failures as well as successes, and systematic measurement of comparable outcomes including measures of student learning and other gains.

Among the eight factors mentioned, the first three (the sense of mission, the role of the community, and democratic leadership) have the dual role of contributing both to the successful implementation of the innovations themselves as well as to the consolidation of democracy.

A Sense of Mission

All the innovations studied here have a clear sense of mission. We could call this the "spirit" of the innovation, merging the different components of the innovation, including the technologies and the people involved (teachers, trainers, administrators, students, and parents).

The vision articulates why the innovation makes sense. It reflects an understanding of the problem and how the proposed set of activities will address the problem. Beyond the level of resources or an adequate technical design, the vision works as a force to motivate the people involved to commit to the innovation and gives their participation in the innovation meaning in the frame of their own personal values and beliefs.

The spirit of the innovation is in part shaped by the deep personal commitment of the innovators. It gives the innovation meaning in terms of broader values, such as those expressed in religious systems or political ideology or in alternative systems of belief for particular groups.

Fe y Alegría emphasizes that teachers in their schools find in teaching a way to achieve religious transcendency. P-900 has a spirit that reflects the energy and motivation that led to the arrival of democracy in Chile and that wants to see democracy succeed. In Colombia, the spirit of Escuela Nueva links the innovation to broader themes of social justice, concern for the poor, and to the long Colombian tradition of grassroots activism.[43]

The spirit of the innovation is often captured and transmitted in symbols and rituals. For instance, Escuela Nueva has a number of hymns and poems specific to the project. Fe y Alegría's logo is as well recognized in the region as any commercial brand of soda or soap. The motto "Where the road ends there begins Fe y Alegría" also captures the philosophy of providing education in areas not reached by the government. P-900 developed posters which were given to every teacher trained in the program to place in the schools. The poster which reads "In this school, all children learn" makes clear reference to the priority given to reaching all students.

Celebrations and group dynamics are often incorporated in the training and the outreach programs, all conveying the special characteristics of the innovation. An indicator of the live spirit of the innovation is the clarity with which participants at different levels in the project can communicate about the innovation: what it is trying to achieve, how it is going about reaching those goals, and why the innovation is important to them.

A common element in the spirit of all the innovations discussed here is the desire to focus on socially disadvantaged students and to provide them with skills and attitudes that will increase their sense of control of their lives, a necessary condition for democracy. This is expressed in the emphasis on developing self-esteem; incorporating the culture of the students into the curriculum; providing opportunities for participation on the part of students, teachers, and communities; and expanding the links between schools and communities.

The Role of the Community

The three innovations examined in this paper give the community of parents a larger role than do traditional schools. This has involved explaining to parents what the innovation is trying to do for their children, requesting support from parents, and ensuring that the school in turn would support community activities or community development. In a very real sense, these three innovations opened the school to the community, not just to ask for help with school repairs or student fees, but to identify new ways in which communities could help schools carry out their new mission (such as the young teaching monitors in P-900) and new ways in which schools could support communities (such as Fe y Alegría schools which serve as centers for a number of education programs for parents and other members of the community).

The schools in these innovations connect with their communities through the curriculum, which recognizes and builds on the community where the students live. In Escuela Nueva, the map of the village and other activities bring the reality of the community to the school. In P-900, the training of teachers emphasizes using examples that acknowledge the diversity of student background by allowing students to use nonstandard forms of language in school or encouraging students to tell stories which reflect diverse home and family experiences. In this way, the school sends a very direct message to parents and

students that it is not working to educate an "ideal" child who may or may not conform to reality, but that it is trying to recognize the uniqueness and diversity of all children.

In a very real sense, these innovations attempt to place the schools where they belong—in the community—and to promote mechanisms for community involvement in running the schools. This is very important for the support of democracy as it promotes local participation in solving local problems and presents a model to children of local action and participation in development.

Democratic Leadership

The successful implementation and expansion of these innovations relied not just on good management, but also on good leadership. Each new school added to the program required the re-creation of the innovation's vision. This called on leadership supportive of participation at different levels. The creation of space for local leadership in turn relied on democratic leadership at higher levels. At the higher levels the innovations seem to have benefitted from skilled social entrepreneurship on the part of individuals with the ability to articulate the vision, turn challenges into opportunities, and motivate others to join the project. It is possible that the freedom that results from small-scale organization in these cases explains the continued level of commitment and energy found among top leaders of these innovations. It may be easier to communicate a vision and to translate it into action in a small organization than in a ministry of education.

An explicit objective of the P-900 program is to turn every head teacher into a leader who is capable of developing a sense of mission at the school level and who will mobilize teachers, parents, and students to improve the quality of education. Escuela Nueva also promotes leadership at the local level in the rural microcenters and demonstration schools.

Local leadership requires space to exercise that leadership and increased school autonomy. All of these innovations simultaneously addressed developing leadership abilities among principals and teachers while increasing school autonomy. The innovations engaged teachers in the re-creation of the vision, the spirit, and the innovation by providing space for the participation of teachers. Allowing teachers more direct control in influencing decisions about how their schools operate will enable them to increase community participation and to provide effective role models for their students.

Strict and Lean Management

The importance of leadership and vision should not allow us to underestimate the importance of organization and management. These innovations are projects with little room for inefficiencies; they have tight budgets and reduced personnel so resources are stretched to the limit. Two alternative forms of organization are illustrated in these innovations: nongovernmental, independent structures and structures embedded in the ministry of

education. In the case of Escuela Nueva and Fe y Alegría, the programs have their own organizational structures, very small and efficient, responsible for implementing the different components of the innovation. Escuela Nueva, however, has come to rely increasingly on the existing administrative channels of the Ministry of Education, one factor which may account for the increasing variation in program success. P-900 relies on the structure of supervisors to implement the program of school improvement. There may be a trade-off between the quality of implementation and the degree to which the innovation is institutionalized.

Parallel nongovernmental administrative structures ensure a greater degree of quality at the school level, but the schools become dependent on the parallel structures (for example, the Fe y Alegría program would probably disappear if the different religious congregations now supporting it withdrew their support). Higher reliance on government structures allows programs to reach greater numbers of children. Thus, Fe y Alegría reaches comparatively few children; Escuela Nueva had a significant impact only when it became a national program; and P-900 has touched a significant number of children by turning pilot experiences into a national program of the Ministry of Education.

Resources and Donor Support

The implementation of these innovations required funds to finance schools, textbooks, training, and other inputs that brought the mission of the innovation alive. It is significant that these three innovations all evolved at some distance from public funds; public funds became available and important once the innovation had proven itself. It is possible that the particular styles of government reflected by Ministries of Education in Latin America have not been very conducive to innovation.

The Fe y Alegría innovation developed as a private initiative; later on, a number of agreements with governments sought public funding. In Bolivia, where Fe y Alegría expanded the most, funding from international agencies is significantly higher than the other countries where the program operates. Escuela Nueva was initially maintained with funding from USAID and the Federation of Coffee Growers. P-900 began with a grant from the governments of Sweden and Denmark.

Political Awareness

The long-term survival or the large scale achieved by these innovations requires sensitivity and diplomacy to handle the conflicting political interests in the education system, not only at the coordinating level, but also at the local level.

The chief figures responsible for these innovations are not only motivated educators with a clear sense of mission, but also skilled politicians. They understand the politics of the education system and how the project affects those politics. They can communicate, bargain, and negotiate at two political levels: the politics of the project environment and the politics

internal to the project itself. The project environment involves the Ministry of Education, international donors, the community, local politicians, political parties, and other interest groups. Internal politics are those which arise among the people working on the project and which increase as the project moves from being an experiment to a large-scale enterprise.

Handling the politics of the project environment sometimes requires building support and coalitions through mass media to reach different groups and communities. A clear communication strategy within the program is also necessary to maintain the quality of the innovation and to handle internal politics. The strategy includes the use of formal and informal communication channels to provide feedback from the schools to the higher levels of project management and effective communication systems from higher management levels to teachers and local managers. An important objective of a communication strategy is to ensure a shared understanding among all participants in the innovation and its supporters of what the innovation is about, what it is trying to do, how it is trying to do it, and why it is important. In other words, this strategy should attempt to communicate the "spirit" of the innovation.

Open Communication Systems: Learning by Doing

All these innovations, at least in their present state, seem to be the result of successive adaptations and of learning by doing. The Fe y Alegría concept has evolved over many years. The periodic meetings of educators involved in the project and of the national coordinators of different countries have provided opportunities to exchange experiences and improve the initial design of each project component. For example, the lessons learned in the development of the radio education project in Fe y Alegría Bolivia have been useful in the expansion of this initiative to other national chapters of Fe y Alegría, most recently to Venezuela.

Since its inception, Escuela Nueva has built on the lessons learned after a number of years of experimentation with the unitary school. Project documents reflect how the innovation has evolved and adapted to new ideas in the field of education. The student government, for example, has become more important in recent years than it was when the project began in the 1970s. P-900 built on the lessons learned through pilot projects developed by education research centers in Chile. For example, an offer of funding from foreign donors required a quick response from the Government of Chile; although the time allowed was less than sufficient for careful planning and design, this does not seem to have harmed the life of the project, which is continuously being improved and refined.

These examples provide an important lesson for school improvement projects that tend to overemphasize the role of technical design and planning, leaving little room and resources for experimentation and opportunities to exchange information.

Good programming, however, is essential to achieve project targets with limited resources and time. Good programming requires careful specification of the components of the innovation. It may make sense to differentiate at least two stages in the lives of innovations, one in which refining the innovation is the more important goal, and a second in which achieving maximum impact is more important. These two phases do not represent a clear dichotomy, but rather two moments with different emphases on two objectives present at any time during the life of an innovation.

Teacher Training

All these innovations recognize that a clear mission, good design, and sufficient resources will not be successful if they do not affect the attitudes and practices of teachers in classrooms. Because these are innovations, teachers must change what they do.

The methods used to help teachers acquire effective skills to enact the vision of these innovations in the classroom all seem to involve three components: emotion or affection, knowledge or cognition, and behavior or action. The first is an attempt to motivate the teacher to learn new skills and to share the spirit of the innovation. This is done in different ways. Escuela Nueva relies on visits to exemplary schools (demonstration schools) and on using an active learning approach to train teachers. Many of the materials produced by Fe y Alegría for teachers are aimed at the motivational and emotional level, emphasizing the transcendent features of the work. P-900 relies on group dynamics to promote exchanges among teachers to help them open up to new ideas.

The cognitive dimension of training is addressed in materials and demonstrations that explain why the new approaches work and what they are trying to achieve. Training attempts to replace or expand the teachers' existing systems of knowledge and belief with alternative systems of knowledge and belief. The guide *Hacia la Escuela Nueva* explains each of the components of the innovation, what is involved, and how and why each activity should be done. The teaching materials of P-900 also expand the teachers' knowledge.

The action or behavioral dimension of training provides opportunities for teachers to practice the new teaching styles or to observe other teachers using them. This is done in the training workshops or in practice sessions in schools selected for this purpose.

Summary

Latin America has the distinction of being the region of the world with the most inequitable income distribution. Leaders of the region recognize the need to systematically reduce inequities, increase competitiveness, consolidate democratic institutions, and promote stability and accountability. To achieve these goals, countries of the LAC region will increasingly have to turn to schools to provide a broad base of responsible citizens with

increased competencies and greater initiative. In particular, acheiving these goals will require that countries turn to those very schools that have been most neglected: schools attended by the urban and rural poor.

The results achieved by such schools as those in Fe y Alegría, Escuela Nueva, and P-900 become especially significant in this new search for options to expand educational opportunity. These programs show that it is possible to provide quality education to the children of the poor and that this education can expand the options available to these children in later life. The programs are important in their own right, for they have directly influenced the opportunities of many. But they are even more important for what they can inspire. These programs remind governments, political parties, business communities, civic groups, and all members of society of the educational possibilities—this reminder highlights the urgency of making these possibilities real.

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42. The working definition of *success* adopted in this paper refers to those innovations that are "in place" in a number of schools in the different countries studied and that all signs indicate will be sustained over time. Although solid evidence documenting that students in those schools actually learn significantly more basic subjects than students in traditional schools is lacking, there is also no evidence documenting that they learn less. This gap results because these innovations have devoted relatively little priority to the formal evaluation of their impact, either by not carrying it out or by conducting it with poor design and analysis methodologies.

43. Some of the difficulties associated with expanding the program are a direct result of the lack of "spirit" as the innovation became a government program and called for the participation of large numbers of actors with different value systems.

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