Over more than 45 years in operation, the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) has developed a solid track record of empowering the organized poor in Latin America and the Caribbean to apply their wisdom, energy and assets toward bringing about positive change in their communities. The IAF accomplishes its compelling mission by investing directly at the grassroots in a careful mix of small grants, learning and collaboration among civil society peers, and insightful field research on citizen-led development. Last year, our grantee partners confirmed the effectiveness of this approach by once again giving the IAF high marks in the Grantee Perception Survey conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy. The word cloud on this page reflects the warmth of their feedback. The full report is available at www.iaf.gov.

In fiscal year 2015, the IAF awarded $15.7 million to 113 grassroots and nongovernmental organizations in 20 countries. They in turn committed or mobilized another $19.3 million for their initiatives. Our portfolio of 282 active projects represents a $70.5 million investment by the IAF and $95.1 million from our grantee partners. A highlight of the year was the participation of 100 farmers from 60 IAF-funded organizations across the region in the Ninth Meeting of the Rede Ecovida de Agroecologia, held in Brazil in April. This offered an opportunity to share experiences with systems of agricultural practices that improve production, protect the environment and engage the consumer. It also set the stage for further work together to encourage and facilitate adoption of these approaches. That same month, a dozen representatives of our grantee partners joined in two parallel fora at the VII Summit of the Americas to discuss their collaboration with government in social protection programs, which provided the basis for recommendations to the Hemisphere’s heads of state. Presidents Barack Obama of the United States, Luis Guillermo Solís of Costa Rica and Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay met with a handful of civil society leaders during a special session. IAF grantee partners Sonnia España (pictured) of Agrupación Afroecuatoriana Mujeres Progresistas, a community association in an impoverished neighborhood of Guayaquil, and Raúl Montiel of Fundación Saraki, an advocate for Paraguayans with disabilities, brought to the table years of practice with reversing patterns of discrimination and exclusion. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of the IAF’s dedicated board of directors and advisory council. These distinguished individuals bring the IAF the benefit of their diverse backgrounds in government, business, academia and international civil society. In 2015, several of them traveled with us to Chiapas, Mexico. During our memorable visit with grassroots partners there, we experienced the complexities of the development enterprise on the ground and witnessed the extraordinary creativity, commitment and energy of the men, women and young people who comprise the organizations that the IAF is proud to support so that they may help their communities thrive.
GUATEMALA

The IAF has strengthened communities in the highlands of Western Guatemala by helping to boost the production and sale of fair trade, organic coffee. Our support for the Federación Comercializadora de Café Especial de Guatemala (FECCEG), which represents eight coffee-producing cooperatives, has provided coffee farmers, 26 percent of whom are women, with training in leadership, finance, marketing and crop diversification. As a result, farmers have increased their exports, opened a local café and partnered with Kishé Foods L.L.C., to distribute its premium roast in Los Angeles. Profits from Kishé Foods are channeled toward improving the lives of Guatemalan coffee farmers. FECCEG has also increased the volume of coffee sold through Café Femenino, an international brand produced by women farmers.

“Before, it was more difficult to be here; there weren’t many opportunities. Now we have work.”

- Deris Samayoa, coffee farmer

Facts & Figures - 6 years

$459,935  
IAF grant

$750,050  
Grantee partner’s commitment

2,136  
Farmers reached

6.3x  
Increase in volume of coffee exports
“I started my business because I had a dream: I wanted to be a businesswoman. When PRODESAL gave us the opportunity, I signed up and followed all the procedures. It was great. Now I’m independent.”

Yesmi Flores González, Internet café owner

Urban, rural and indigenous youth in Colombia continue to face challenges as they grow into adulthood. Many are under constant threat of violence and recruitment by illegal armed groups. The rights and unique needs of young people—particularly those in rural areas—often remain invisible to government leaders. And opportunities to develop life and job skills are limited. The IAF is helping to shift this reality. Our investment in the nongovernmental organization Corporación Taller de Promoción Popular y Desarrollo Alternativo (PRODESAL), is equipping Colombian youth with the business skills and seed money to launch their own entrepreneurial ventures, which have included a beauty salon, Internet café and bookstore, among others. PRODESAL also teaches young people how to effectively engage with their local government, voice their concerns and stand up for their rights.
HAITI

After the devastating 2010 earthquake, food production among Haiti’s significant—yet often overlooked—rural population became dire. These days, however, life is slowly improving in communities near the country’s second-largest city of Cap Haitien. With support from the IAF, the farmer association Mouvement Paysan de l’Acul du Nord (MPA) works with families in agricultural management, microenterprise development, marketing and financial literacy to help better their production, processing and sale of manioc and other crops, including sweet potatoes, beans and Caribbean pumpkin. MPA has also developed a women-led credit fund, which provides loans to women micro-entrepreneurs to improve their sales of agricultural and other products, such as manioc flour and tapioca pancakes. The fund boasts a 100 percent repayment rate.

"[Women] don’t want to be dependent on their husbands. Many changes are afoot because women are becoming stronger.”
- Izna Antoine, MPA trainer

$542,900
IAF grant

$295,250
Grantee partner’s commitment

750
Families reached by MPA

54%
Percent of Haitians living on less than $1 a day

Facts & Figures - 4 years
HIGHLIGHTS OF IAF INVESTMENTS IN GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT

RESULTS

300,000 individuals benefited directly from IAF programs and 1,354,000 benefited indirectly.

187,000 individuals acquired new knowledge and skills in agriculture, manufacturing, civic engagement, marketing, and conservation.

53% of the 187,000 were women.

17,480 individuals experienced improved health.

COMMUNITIES

Percent of IAF grants directed to traditionally marginalized groups:

- Indigenous Communities: 37%
- Young People: 28%
- African Descendants: 22%

PARTNERS

On average, IAF grantee partners commit $1.36 for every $1 invested by the IAF.

EFFICIENCY

How the IAF budget was used:

- Administrative Costs: 11%
- Direct Program Investments: 89%

Number of partnerships that grantees secured, which enabled them to mobilize resources and share experiences:

- Total: 40
- Indigenous Communities: 30
- Young People: 20
- African Descendants: 10

187,000 individuals were women.

300,000 individuals acquired new knowledge and skills.

187,000 individuals experienced improved health.

300,000 individuals experienced improved health.

1,354,000 individuals benefited indirectly.

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53% of the 187,000 were women.

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Number of partnerships that grantees secured, which enabled them to mobilize resources and share experiences:

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FY15 INVESTMENT
$15.7 M INVESTED BY IAF
$19.3 M MOBILIZED BY GRANTEE PARTNERS

TOTAL PROJECT PORTFOLIO
20 COUNTRIES — 282 GRANTS — $70.5M

AGRICULTURE/FOOD PRODUCTION
$6.9 M

EDUCATION/TRAINING
$4.5 M

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
$1.8 M

ENVIRONMENT
$1.0 M

HEALTH/OTHER
$1.0 M

CORPORATE SOCIAL INVESTMENT
$0.5 M

CARIBBEAN
25 GRANTS $6.6 M
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 11
HAITI 11
JAMAICA 3

CENTRAL AMERICA
91 GRANTS $20.9 M
BELIZE 3
COSTA RICA 11
EL SALVADOR 21
GUATEMALA 22
HONDURAS 18
NICARAGUA 11
PANAMA 5

ANDEAN COUNTRIES
66 GRANTS $17.4 M
BOLIVIA 11
COLOMBIA 20
ECUADOR 11
PERU 24

SOUTHERN CONE
31 GRANTS $9.3 M
ARGENTINA 12
CHILE 2
PARAGUAY 15
URUGUAY 2

MULTI-COUNTRY
10 GRANTS $2.7 M

MEXICO
26 GRANTS $5.5 M

BRAZIL
33 GRANTS $8.1 M

20 COUNTRIES — 282 GRANTS — $70.5M

TOTAL PROJECT PORTFOLIO
INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

is an independent U.S. foreign assistance agency that promotes and invests in citizen-led grassroots initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean to help communities thrive. This approach results in effective, community-owned development characterized by economic opportunity, resilience to violence, social inclusion and greater citizen participation in democratic processes.

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Photos: Front cover and p.5 by Robin Wyatt; this page by Jeffy A. Wright; all others by IAF staff.