

MINK'A DE CHORLAVI FUND

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2001

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF RURAL POPULATIONS

The Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund hereby calls public and private organizations concerned for rural problems in Latin America, to participate in its Call for Proposals for the year 2001. The theme of this Call is "Collective Action and Improvements in the Living Conditions of Rural Populations". The proposals must deal with projects involving action-research or research applied to development. In this bidding, the Fund will allocate approximately US\$ 200,000 among ten projects.

JUSTIFICATION

1. There is broad consensus about the need to facilitate learning processes among public and private organizations whose activities have an impact on inequalities, on rural poverty, on the management of natural resources and on rural sustainable development. Although learning has always been relevant for the effectiveness of these entities, the socio-economic and institutional changes that have taken place in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) during the last two decades imply that we should carry out an in-depth review of our conventional way of doing things. It could even be stated that we should re-learn how to work successfully in pursuit of the goals of reducing poverty levels, changing exclusion systems, promoting rural sustainable development and improving the management of natural resources.
2. Fortunately, this learning process is already taking place through thousands of concrete initiatives addressed to struggle against poverty, improve the management of natural resources and promote rural sustainable development. In LAC, there are numerous economic, social, technological and institutional innovations under way, thus converting the region into a gigantic 'experiment' of local and regional response to this new scenario. These initiatives can and should be a primary source of new experiences, lessons and insight.
3. The Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund was created under the aegis of the Chorlaví Group (www.chorlavi.cl) and of the Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo (International Development Research Center) (IDRC, www.idrc.ca) in order to stimulate this process of systematic review, exchange, analysis and documentation of these initiatives to innovate in the management of natural resources, rural sustainable development and poverty alleviation.
4. The entities participating in this Bidding and whose projects are ultimately selected, must take part in the whole learning cycle envisaged by the Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund. Said cycle involves three main stages:
 - (a) The implementation of the winning projects.

- (b) A comparative analysis of the projects' results, so as to draw conclusions, lessons and recommendations that would be applicable in a more general context. In principle, this comparative analysis will be conducted through an electronic conference in which the project reports will be submitted and discussed.
- (c) A strategic communication process to inform about the results of the whole cycle, so as to make sure that these results are conveyed to those individuals and entities who are directly interested in the Bidding's theme.

OBJECTIVE

- 5. The overall objective of the Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund is to facilitate organizational learning in order to further activities aimed at reducing poverty, changing exclusion systems, promoting rural sustainable development and improving the management of natural resources.

TERMS OF THIS CALL FOR BIDDING

- 6. The theme for the year Call for Proposals for the year 2001 is **“Collective Action and Improvements in the Living Conditions of Rural Populations”**.

With the changes in the structure and functions of the States, the civil society organizations have undertaken responsibilities with regard to a broad range of issues that, until 10 or 20 years ago, were deemed as part of the public function. The liberalization, globalization and opening of our Latin American economies have also created new restrictions and opportunities for rural populations.

Several groups, populations, communities and organizations resort to collective action to deal with this new scenario. The enhanced role of civil society is filled with possibilities and hopes and this is illustrated by the thousands of collective endeavors all over rural Latin America. There are many success stories and achievements, although there are also numerous initiatives that have failed due to various reasons.

Understanding the grounds for the success or failure of these collective action strategies must be a major source of learning allowing to further public and private actions intended to alleviate poverty, change exclusion systems, promote rural sustainable development and improve the management of natural resources.

The initiation, characteristics and results of collective action strategies aimed at rural populations depend on a series of factors, both internal and external to the groups involved.

During the last few years, a concept which several experts denominate “social capital” has become increasingly important. It refers to all those social resources that populations can resort to in order to improve their quality of life. This concept comprises social networks, groups and organizations, as well as rules, norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that foster cooperation and collective action.

Many public and private corporations ask themselves how can they materialize the proposal that postulates that, in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of collective action, it is necessary to develop the institutions and organizations of rural societies. Answers to these questions are often too general in nature, since in Latin America there are still few experiences that have been systematized or investigated which could demonstrate, in concrete terms, how and to what extent “social capital”:

- (a) stimulates initiative and the development of collective action strategies;
- (b) has an impact on the characteristics of said strategies;
- (c) contributes to the sustainability of said strategies and their impact;
- (d) contributes to assuring that collective action strategies result in the promotion of greater equity within rural societies.

In choosing this topic, the Mink’a de Chorlaví Fund had in mind, as a goal, that projects supported through the year 2001 Bidding should help to become acquainted with and give proper form to approaches, methods and instruments that enable the strengthening of the rural populations’ organizations and institutions, in such manner that their collective action strategies may lead to better results in terms of raising the living standard and equity in the rural world.

Consequently, the proposals to be submitted to this Bidding shall:

- (a) Systematize concrete experiences regarding the development of rural populations, based on collective action strategies.
- (b) Analyze and explain the effects or impacts of collective action on the quality of life and equity of the populations involved in the development initiative.
- (c) Analyze and explain those factors which determine the quality and effectiveness of collective action strategies, taking into account at least the following: (i) the institutions (norms, rules, and social and cultural values), rural populations’ organizations and networks; (ii) the markets and their agents; (iii) the public programs and policies; (iv) the contribution of intermediate agents (such as NGOs, private technical advisors, national or regional rural organizations, etc.), and; (v) the characteristics of the individuals and households committed to collective action.
- (d) Draw conclusions, recommendations and lessons that may contribute to the enhancement of capabilities and the performance of public, private and social organizations that, in Latin America and the Caribbean, are engaged in poverty alleviation, changing exclusion systems, promoting rural sustainable development, and improving the management of natural resources.

An explanation of each one of the above four paragraphs is given below:

RESULTS EXPECTED FROM THE PROJECTS

7. In accordance with the terms of this call, each one of the projects approved, shall contribute with four specific results:

(a) Systematize concrete experiences regarding the development of rural populations, based on collective action strategies.

The Mink'a de Chorlaví Fund seeks to firmly base its contribution to organizational learning on the systematizing (i.e., critical description and analysis) of concrete development experiences. We wish to enhance the knowledge and “know-how”, by taking a careful, critical and thoughtful look at the concrete practice of those who strive to reduce poverty, change exclusion systems, promote rural sustainable development and improve the management of natural resources. The latter is a paramount and essential element that all project proposals submitted to the Fund ought to include.

The proposals sent in for this Bidding shall provide, as a primary product, a critical description and analysis of specific collective action strategies, based on the following elements:

- i. The initial situation of individuals, households, populations and/or organizations who participated in it.
- ii. The processes through which the collective action was defined and implemented, including the various agents who took part in it and the role they played, the resources raised and the actions undertaken, the methodologies used, etc.
- iii. The results achieved by implementing the strategy at the time when the survey was being conducted.
- iv. The context in which the strategy was carried out.

(b) To analyse and explain the effects or impacts of collective action on the quality of life and equity of rural populations.

The validity of the contributions made by each project sponsored by the Fund must be capable of being evaluated by all those who are interested in its conclusions and recommendations. For the Fund, an essential benchmark for such an evaluation are the results, effects and impacts of the systematized experiences regarding the living conditions of rural populations and, most particularly, concerning social equity in rural society.

At the conclusion of each project sponsored by the Fund, there must be a clear and precise answer to the following question:

What have been the changes brought about in terms of quality of life and social equity of the various types of individuals, households and rural populations who took part in the collective action strategy analyzed by the project?

The changes in the quality of life have to do with one or more of the following factors: (i) increase in the per capita and/or household income; (ii) greater access to basic public services; (iii) higher degree of participation in the processes and decisions affecting their conditions and opportunities for development.

The changes regarding social equity have to do with transformations in the power relations within each rural population, in such manner that the individuals, households, strata or sectors traditionally marginalized may have: (i) greater opportunities to participate in the strategies and actions for development and in the decision-making process, and/or; (ii) greater opportunities of access to human natural, physical, financial and social capital, and/or (iii) greater participation in the distribution of the benefits brought about by development.

Projects must be clear and direct in dealing and analyzing the aspects of social equity involved in collective action strategies, including equity among rural men and women. Therefore, the Fund will give priority to those project proposals that: (i) are related with collective action strategies that were specially designed taking into consideration the equity issue within rural populations (for example, in whose design, a gender approach was incorporated), and/or; (ii) when looking at the determining of the results or effects of collective action, include an explicit analysis of variables or phenomena concerning equitable access of various sectors of the rural population to development opportunities; (iii) in the analysis of the effects and results of collective action, include a consideration about the distribution of said effects and results among different sectors of the rural population.

(c) To analyze and explain the factors which determine the quality and effectiveness of collective action strategies.

If the two products previously described have to do with the systematizing of collective action strategies and their results, effects and impacts, the third aspect of interest corresponds to an in-depth analysis that explains which are the factors that bear an impact on the quality and effectiveness of said collective action strategies.

We require that said analysis should include at least a consideration regarding the following five elements:

- i. The role of “social capital”, that is to say, of the institutions (rules, norms, and social and cultural values), networks and organizations of rural people.
- ii. The role of the markets and their agents.
- iii. The role of public programs and policies
- iv. The role of intermediate agents, i.e., of extensionists and advisors, NGOs, social and political organizations, churches, etc.
- v. The effect of the characteristics of the individuals and households involved in the collective action strategies, in terms of their human, physical and financial capital.

(d) To draw conclusions, recommendations and lessons that can contribute to improve the capabilities and the performance of public, private and social organizations that, in Latin America and the Caribbean, are engaged in poverty alleviation, changing exclusion systems, promoting rural sustainable development, and improving the management of natural resources.

As it has been stated, the Mink'a de Chorlavi Fund was established in order to facilitate organizational learning that would enable an improvement of the actions aimed at poverty relief, changing exclusion systems, promoting sustainable rural development and improving the management of natural resources.

In view of the foregoing, projects must conclude with specific proposals in terms of approaches, methods, practices and instruments that may be of interest to public and private organizations willing to collaborate in improving collective action strategies of rural populations, in such manner that they may lead to a significant improvement in terms of equity and quality of life.

DEADLINES

8. The deadlines in the various stages of this Competitive Bidding are:

September 10, 2001	Proposals and all document required must be submitted.
October 31, 2001	Public information about the results of the Bidding
December 1, 2001	Signing of the contracts
June 30, 2002	Progress reports must be submitted
November 30, 2002	Final reports must be submitted.

RULES OF THE MINK'A DE CHORLAVI FUND

9. This Bidding is ruled by the **Regulations of the Mink'a de Chorlavi Fund**. It is of utmost importance that those interested in participating in this Bidding become acquainted with these Regulations, analyzing them previously and in detail. This document contains information about:
- (a) The characteristics of the entities who can send in their proposals to the bidding.
 - (b) The deadlines for submitting the proposals and other stages of this bidding.
 - (c) The criteria regarding eligibility, merit and selection of projects
 - (d) The maximum amounts that will be donated by the Fund, the budgetary items that can be funded and the co-financing requirements.
 - (e) The process of reception, evaluation and selection of proposals
 - (f) The format characteristics that proposals must comply with.
 - (g) The contracts that will be signed with those organizations whose projects are selected and the procedure used for transferring the co-financing resources contributed with by the Fund.
 - (h) The deadlines for the execution of the projects selected.
 - (i) The partial and final, technical and financial reports that must be prepared.
 - (j) The authority that the Mink'a de Chorlavi Fund has to make decisions concerning this Bidding.
 - (k) Other general aspects of the Bidding and of the Mink'a de Chorlavi Fund.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

10. The Regulations, as well as any other information of interest, are available on the Internet:

<http://www.FondoMinkaChorlavi.org>

or they may be requested from:

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