

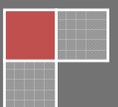
2011

Caribbean Conference on Horizontal Cooperation in Social Protection

Final Report of the Conference



Organization of American States (OAS)
February 2011





Organization of
American States



Inter-American Social
Protection Network

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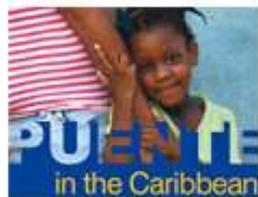
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Caribbean Conference on Horizontal Cooperation in Social Protection

January 19 to 20, 2011. St. Michael, Barbados

Introduction

The Conference was organized by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development of Barbados with the primary aim of affording an opportunity to showcase experiences in horizontal cooperation in social protection of countries participating in the meeting.

The forum was held to present experiences of South-South cooperation, such as the Puente in the Caribbean Program, coordinated by the OAS; and, in the framework of the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN), it sought to provide a forum for exchange on the main challenges and outcomes of international cooperation in this area. Additionally, opportunities were explored for future cooperation initiatives in the region.

The Conference brought together 12 Member States of CARICOM, as well as representatives of the Governments of Chile, Colombia, and Mexico. The Government of United States was represented by officials of the Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Barbados. Also participating in the Conference were representatives of United Nations agencies (UNICEF, UNDP), the World Bank, and other multilateral organizations and regional and international cooperation agencies such as the European Union, IICA, OAS, OECS, PAHO, and academic institutions. Participating in the Conference as observers were permanent representatives of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Barbados.¹

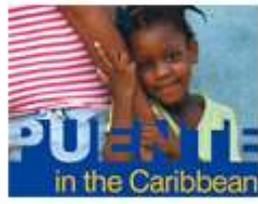
To summarize, a wide array of participants and guests took part in the Conference, facilitating reflection based on different points of view – from the perspective of governments, academia, and multilateral organizations, among others, – and generating discussions and integral and comprehensive deliberations on horizontal cooperation in social protection, its political and technical dimensions alike.

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Inaugural session

The conference opened with official remarks by the main authorities present:

¹ Attached hereto as an appendix is the List of Participants in the Conference.



- a. Ms. Sonja Welch, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development of Barbados;
- b. Mr. Francis McBarnette, Representative, Office of the OAS General Secretariat in Barbados.
- c. Honourable Steven Blackett, Minister of Social Care, Constituency, Empowerment and Community Development.²

Minister Blackett indicated to the plenary the commitment and support of the Government of Barbados for OAS hemispheric activities in social protection. This commitment was manifest in the decision to host the Conference, the fact that Barbados now served as Vice Chair of the Inter-American Committee on Social Development (CIDES), and the membership of that country in the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN).

Upon the conclusion of the protocolary ceremony, the meeting took up the thematic agenda for the meeting with a presentation by **Francisco Pilotti**, Director, Department of Social Development and Employment of the OAS, who established the framework of the Conference in his keynote address: **From the Puente in the Caribbean to the Inter-American Social Protection Network.**

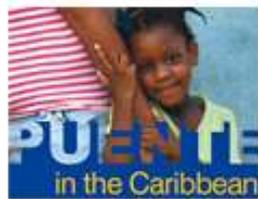
The presentation noted the OAS political mandate to carry out this process which was moving from implementation of the Puente in the Caribbean Program to the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN). The Meetings of Ministers of Social Development held in 2007 had endorsed the idea of establishing the Network, which occurred in 2008, and ultimately its official launch in New York City in 2009.

Since its launch, the Network had been identified as a forum for exchange and learning that had enabled different countries' experience to be brought together. To that end, it constituted an intervention or a strategy for mutual support and assistance among the countries of the region.

From that perspective, he noted the launch of conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs in the region, with their investment logic and their resource distribution system. Monitoring and observation of these programs had enabled the OAS, in its capacity as the IASPN's Technical Secretariat, to begin to make clarifications and distinctions in the implementation of these experiences. In these terms, in the IASPN framework, to the OAS, it appeared more relevant for the discussion to focus on **co-responsibility** (rights and obligations), and not only on **conditionality**.

CCT programs did not resolve all problems, but rather were a mechanism for assistance and financial compensation for the poorest. The cooperation process implemented with the Puente in the Caribbean Program allowed for a more in-depth discussion, which had facilitated a gradual implementation process

² To provide the context in which the Caribbean Conference was held, the remarks by His Excellency Minister Blackett are attached hereto as an appendix.



– in both phase I and phase II of the cooperation program –, including the incorporation of a psychosocial support component complementing the CCT programs now being implemented in some of these countries.

It is notable and relevant that in no case did this program replicate Chile's Puente program. On the contrary, this was transfer of knowledge, reflections, and lessons learned as a whole. This facilitated the adjustment of processes, procedures, and tools taking a specific approach to transfers agreed upon by FOSIS – OAS and the participating Caribbean countries.

Based on this embryonic experience, the path towards the IASPN would enable actions for cooperation and exchange to be strengthened and implemented in a context of learning from one another. It would probably be necessary to make further adjustments to the most relevant and adhoc mechanisms to the needs and requirements of all involved.³

Discussion and Q & A session

One of the questions raised by Conference participants was how conditions could be created for implementing co-responsibility among users of programs in execution in the countries.

The panelist focused his reply by indicating that this was a process. It involved strengthening democracy in the region. A gradual shift towards a more rights- and social guarantee-based vision could now be seen in the region. Social guarantee was a term in evolution, evidently depending on each country's history and political situation. As a philosophical concept, it was a universally accepted term.

The process was self-fulfilling and if the citizenry perceived that governments were committed to the process of enhancing quality of life or of overcoming poverty, this would consolidate democratic processes and lend robustness to social policy practices.

Another matter discussed in the questions and comments session was participation by migrants or refugees, how they were involved in programs of this type, and what advice the OAS could give in that regard.

The Director of the OAS Department of Social Development and Employment indicated that this clearly did not involve giving advice. However, it was evident that national realities differed. Poverty in the Caribbean was different from that in countries such as Chile or other Latin American countries. At the start of this cooperation program, two problems were apparent: HIV and the situation of migrants. It was important to explore such migration since on occasions it placed too heavy a burden on the social service system. It was necessary to assess and verify in what way and how this reality could be addressed.

³ The complete presentation is available at: www.socialprotectionet.org



Saint Lucia, one of the participating countries, pointed to the summary provided in the presentation on the Puente in the Caribbean Program and how it showed the evolution of the process. It was also noted that several meetings and conferences had been held where many of the stakeholders present here today had helped ensure good outcomes in implementing programs of this type and that could to continue. There was reference to the negotiation process under way in the OAS to define an agreement with the different United Nations agencies (FAO, UNICEF, UNPD, ILO, among others) specifically establishing the contributions that these agencies could make. In short, to build an agreement for cooperation and collaboration based on the specific experience of each agency so that, together, they could address social protection from their respective perspectives.

Panel 1: Poverty and Social Policy in the Caribbean: Challenges Ahead

The aim of this session was to provide the necessary context for the matters that would be considered at the Conference. The panelists presented the realities of poverty and vulnerability, and social policies in the Caribbean, especially in terms of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals from the perspective of the regional development agencies. The example of Belize was also discussed, emphasizing existing challenges it faced and efforts made to tackle poverty, unemployment, and vulnerability-related issues.

Moderator: Darrel Montrope, Head, Social Development Unit, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Panelists:⁴

Ms. Rachel Nadelman, Consultant, World Bank: **Building Equality and Opportunity through Social Guarantees**

The presentation compiled the main findings and outcomes of research conducted in 2007 by the World Bank, which, based on different case studies, explored rights-based approaches to social policy.

The presentation pointed to an emphasis on developing rights and social guarantee-based approaches to social policy, not only from the social protection perspective used thus far. This approach involved emphasizing the relationship between government and citizens, how the latter understood their rights, and mechanisms established by States to permeate social policy with this approach, seeking equality of access, quality of social services, financial protection, mechanisms for redress, and systems for participation and accountability, tasks incumbent upon citizens.

⁴ The complete Panel 1 presentations are available at www.socialprotectionet.org



Social guarantees provided a means of strengthening the Social Pact agreed by the State and the citizenry; hence the importance of considering some recommendations at the time of their application to national realities:

- a. Civil society participation in the monitoring and implementation of social guarantees.
 - b. Robust mechanisms for redress in the social guarantee framework.
 - c. Participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the social guarantees.
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Dr. Corin Bailey, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI, Cave Hill Barbados:
Social Protection in Communities Vulnerable to Criminal Activity

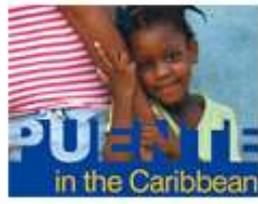
The second presentation of this panel session referred to research conducted in a marginalized community in the Kingston Metropolitan Area of Jamaica. The evidence showed a community with high levels of unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, high levels of interpersonal conflict, and violent crime, etc. This occurred in conjunction with a reduction in the quality of social services and infrastructure.

In that context, the implementation of intervention models that only take account of risk management did not appear to allow the issue to be comprehensively addressed and for effective and efficient solutions to be sought. This was the case for models such as the ecological model, which aimed at designing interventions targeting the individual, family, community, and societal levels. According to the WHO: *“Each level of the model represents a level of risk and a key point for intervention...and interventions which target several levels at the same time are more effective than single-level interventions.” (2001)*

The ecological model for intervention proposed for the intervention recognized that:

- a. Risk was spread across different levels.
- b. Intervention required collaboration across these levels.
- c. In violence research, it demonstrated how both social and economic factors combined to influence risk.
- d. It provided an understanding of social protection and could address both material and social needs.

The panelist described the methodology utilized and outcomes of this research. He concluded that collaboration across all sectors was required to achieve a successful intervention, since violent behavior emerging in marginalized communities stemmed from both social and economic factors.



Ms. Judith Alpuche, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation, Belize: **Vulnerability and Social Policy Responses: The Case of Belize**

The representative of Belize presented in the context of her country, data showing its social, economic, and demographic realities, and highlighted that despite major investments made by the country to overcome poverty and extreme poverty, the expected results had not yet been achieved.

Poor and vulnerable families in Belize face a series of risks that have been exacerbated by macroeconomic disturbances with direct impact on employment, income, and consumption. Furthermore, microeconomic variables expose families to a series of adverse situations, in addition to the frequent natural disasters to which the country is exposed.

Thus far, the Social Protection System has faced certain challenges in terms of the need to address the risks these families faced. She pointed to three key problems: poor resource allocation, weak targeting, and low social program effectiveness.

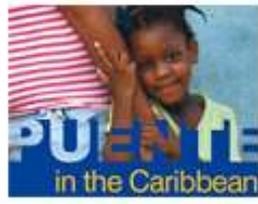
The social policy goal established by the government was: to promote key social sector reforms within a framework of fiscal sustainability and macroeconomic stability in order to achieve the social sector goals set out in Belize's National Poverty Elimination Strategy.

In that context, the specific aims providing a framework for these reforms were to:

- a. Maintain sound macroeconomic policies.
- b. Improve the quality and coverage of primary health care for the most vulnerable population.
- c. Improve the quality of teachers and equity in secondary education.
- d. Improve the capacity to target, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate social services.
- e. Enhance fiscal transparency and responsibility for fiscal sustainability.

She indicated that the main challenges in strengthening the social security network and generating efficient linkage and integration of programs now available to the population were:

- a. Recognizing that a work in progress requiring a great deal of effort.
- b. Increasing the coverage of programs was fundamental.
- c. There are several elements at work at the same time – ensuring quality and coherence in program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation systems.
- d. Coordination with other government Ministries.



Discussion and Q & A session:

The plenary session discussed in greater depth the social guarantee and right-based approach. There was also a need to strengthen the concept of citizen obligations. Strengthening of democratic systems meant that citizen obligations and responsibilities had to be promoted.

In response to the question on what political system could facilitate the implementation of a right-based approach, it was noted that democratic systems were unquestionably the most appropriate political systems to promote these approaches.

Cash transfers received by the poorest could not be understood as “blessings,” but rather as rights that could be guaranteed, but that required responsible actions by those receiving them. To that end, it would appear imperative to address equity and equality-related issues in working with a social guarantee-based approach.

In the case of several of the countries participating in the Conference, the current problem was no longer access to goods and services, but rather was the challenge of seeking innovative strategies guaranteeing the use and quality of those goods and services by the poorest.

For Saint Kitts and Nevis, the experience of Belize in collaboration with credit unions was interesting, especially with regard to the needs noted in female-headed households.

As regards the study presented by Mr. Bailey, a question was asked regarding the research conducted by Caroline Mosser, which found correlations between crime rates and days of the week. It was noted that in fact the study presented during the panel session had had some influence on the above-mentioned research.

Panel 2: Puente in the Caribbean: Background and Implementation

This panel session reflected on the Puente in the Caribbean Program: strategies and outcomes thus far. It also noted the experience of two countries that had participated in the program’s first and second phases, showing what had been learned, design, implementation experiences, and future plans. The session also summarized the main lessons learned from the experience of Chile as the technical donor country.

Moderator: Francisca Rivero Garay, Consultant, OAS.

Panelists:⁵

⁵ The complete Panel 2 presentations are available at www.socialprotectionet.org



Ms. Julie Nurse, Specialist, Coordinator, Puente in the Caribbean Program, DSDE, OAS: **The OAS Puente in the Caribbean Program**

Puente in the Caribbean is a horizontal cooperation program designed to improve social protection strategies in the Caribbean, taking as model Chile's successful Puente program. The program has been under implementation in the Caribbean since 2007. Participating in its first phase were: Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Participating in the second phase were: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname. In both cases, the Government of Chile through the Solidarity and Social Investment Fund (FOSIS) provided the technical support for this experience and the OAS has coordinated the actions taken.

The elements of the approach to Program implementation could be summarized as follows:

- a. Learning by doing, as the main tool for collective learning.
- b. A continual process of reflection and programmatic adjustment.
- c. Ongoing documentation and systematization of the processes.
- d. Lessons applied for future programming.
- e. Use of the Puente Program intervention strategy and approach as a frame of reference while addressing the specific and expressed needs of Caribbean countries in overcoming poverty.
- f. Formulation of Country Work Plans facilitating monitoring, evaluation, and technical assistance.

The presentation also emphasized strategies used in this horizontal cooperation experience and how they became strengths and/or weaknesses during the process: the tutors from Chile, technical country teams; supervision and technical assistance from the OAS; monitoring visits and internships in Chile to achieve the most direct approach to execution of the program.

In addition to a more in-depth analysis of the outcomes and challenges of the program, the presenter noted more substantive lessons drawn from the implementation of this program in seven Caribbean countries:

- a. The success of a program such as Puente required strong political will and support for the decision to implement it.
 - b. The local programs developed through the methodological transfer should be allowed to evolve by adjusting the designs to local reality and needs and encouraging innovation.
 - c. Monitoring and evaluation systems, at both the design stage of the program and in its implementation and execution, were key and resources had to be available for that purpose.
 - d. There was value added in fostering collaboration, support, and sharing among Caribbean countries.
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- e. The Puente could not and should not be transferred in its totality. It was important to identify the key and critical components of the Puente that could and should be applied to the Caribbean context.

Inshan Mohamed, National Director, Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, Ministry of the People and Social Development, Trinidad and Tobago: **RISE-UP Program** (The Rights of Individuals to Social and Economic Security, Universal Prosperity)

The representative of Trinidad and Tobago began his presentation by showing the sustained upward trend in investment by the country in the social sector in the period 2004 – 2010.

He noted that the social sector was composed of different sectors, ministries, and services, which had led to the formation of a Multi-sectoral Working Committee. Among sectors involved were: health, education, housing, environment, community development, national security, and finance, among others. Each had its network of programs serving the poorest and most vulnerable families.

The experience of Trinidad and Tobago, as a country receiving horizontal cooperation in the first phase of the Puente in the Caribbean Program had afforded it the following benefits or opportunities:

- a. The Network has created opportunities for building awareness and dialogue in support of related social development issues;
- b. This program has allowed Caribbean nations to share experiences and learn from each other;
- c. The effort of the Network, through its various training initiatives in the area of social development and poverty alleviation, has helped to strengthen human resource capacity in the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction initiatives;
- d. This exchange of experience had helped expand social capital in programs, incorporating psychosocial support components previously not incorporated;
- e. The learning methods and approaches utilized - study visits, internships, workshops, seminars, and the virtual platform were valuable in the transfer of social technology.

Below is a described description of how the program evolved in the country and how, based on the experience of cooperation, an intervention program was established that brought together some components of Chile's Puente program, but adapted and designed based on the requirements and reality of Trinidad and Tobago. The RISE – UP Program included social workers who provided psychosocial support to families served, based on eight pillars: personal identification, health, education, housing, employment, family dynamics, safety and security, and income.



He described how RISE – UP had been created to become the psychosocial support component of the conditional cash transfer program of Trinidad and Tobago (TCCTP) and that it was executed by the Family Intervention Network, used by social workers for their intervention and follow-up of families.

The presentation included a detailed explanation of the program’s management model, and its intervention logic at the different levels and territories where it was applied. the following considerations were noted as the way forward:

- a. Development of a policy for RISE-UP to ensure the integration of the conditional component of the program and establish clear linkages with social services (housing, education, health)
- b. This Framework would incorporate a rights-based approach, where clients were given preferential access to social protection measures.
- c. Movement to a Multiple-Grant Card that brought together the different financial benefits received.

Ms. Patricia Watts, Chief Welfare Officer (ag), Ministry of Social Care, Empowerment, and Community Development, Barbados: **ISEE Bridge Program**

Barbados’ ISEE Bridge Programme is a highly interactive program which focuses on intervention at the household level, addressing the needs of each member of that household and seeking to transform their lives.

The four areas of critical intervention are: identification, stabilization, enablement, and empowerment. In its formulation, the Bridge Program in Barbados was considered the gateway to social inclusion and integration of participating individuals into society. It was the conduit for individuals to take up opportunities being offered in the wider society. Direct intervention in households was at the centre of the program, providing them with essentials, along with a psycho-social component to improve their quality and standard of living.

Barbados is now at the stage of designing and implementing the ISEE Bridge Programme and the team had identified different challenges that are now being addressed. These were linked to different areas of public administration, e.g., the permanence and sustainability of the national coordination committee; judicial and legislative adjustments involving the enactment of guarantees and access to social services; education and training for human resources working in this area; technology systems facilitating monitoring and evaluation; and overcoming “departmental territorialism,” through a territorial vision that would ensure the success of the program in the service delivery area, among others.



In addition, there are challenges associated with the subjects of intervention: the families. Adjustments to educational materials were needed, recognizing cultural differences and the different existing expressions of family dynamics and structures in the country.

Ms. Watts defined the following as plans for the future:

- a. Training for agents involved.
- b. Public promotion of the program.
- c. Preparation of educational materials.
- d. Adjustments to programs and their benefits
- e. Design and management of the program/pilot and launch of pilot.

Patricia Díaz, Deputy Director for Program Management, Solidarity and Social Investment Fund (FOSIS), Chile: **The cooperation experience: a mutual learning opportunity**

The presentation by Chile discussed four topics:

1. What had been done in its cooperation with the Caribbean?
2. What capacities had been developed?
3. How could they improve?
4. What had FOSIS learned from this cooperation experience?

Regarding the first point, it is important to note: Chile's presence in different South-South cooperation agencies and its active participation as a member of the Social Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC). This was one of the platforms from which the first actions for exchange were launched and it had specifically given rise to the possibility of launching the Puente in the Caribbean Program, together with some member states and the OAS, with financing from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The two phases of the program were described, as well as program-related activities, with FOSIS making technical support efforts in this horizontal cooperation process.

As regards capacities that have been developed, it notes those related to interaction among professional teams of the two countries, essentially expressed in the different education and training entities and methods offered by Chile. Additionally, the critical reflection in which the seven countries participating in the process engaged led to the certainty of adjusting an intervention strategy and its methodology to the reality of the Caribbean countries. There was particular appreciation for transfer of the psychosocial



support component and the definition of family support, supporting and guiding families during the intervention.

The improvements identified were related essentially to the image of a local consultant, the virtual platform, and the Caribbean tutor.

Regarding the learning processes resulting from this experience compiled by FOSIS, it drew some interesting distinctions. Different personal and technical learning processes had impacted the professionals working as tutors. However, FOSO also noted learning of another type that had enabled the institution, based on this experience, to design the cooperation model it now applied.

Discussion and Q & A session:

The participants asked the panelists interesting questions, generating a debate that enriched the exchange, based on the experience of the Puente in the Caribbean Program. One of the matters discussed was the arguments needed to put forward the advantages of implementing a program of this type in a country in which a change of political authorities had taken place. What arguments was it important to make when presenting it to the new authorities?

Julie Nurse emphasized the substance: the countries had always been encouraged to see Puente not as a new program, but rather as a different intervention approach, that is, a new way of doing things. One key process of this approach was the opportunities map, consisting of reflection on or a review of all programs and services in the country and generating linkage or coordination among them so that they could be made available to families in extreme poverty in a timely and systematic manner. The Puente approach, therefore, meant bridging gaps in the ability of families to access existing services. The Puente Program did not seek to replace existing programs, but rather to utilize them as part of a network of client services that worked in a synchronized manner.

It was also noted that several evaluations had been made of the Puente Program of Chile, by ECLAC and other organizations, making evident the impact and value of the program as an effective social protection mechanism. At the political level, it was important to remind the Heads of State and Ministers that this approach had been endorsed at the Summit of the Americas.

Solid arguments were needed to persuade new authorities taking office in the countries that were unaware of the process that had been implemented in recent years. Another strategy complementing those already noted could be utilized: pointing to the example of other Caribbean countries that had adopted the Puente Program components that could share information and comments on their experiences.



The team of Chile indicated a need for political will on the part of governments and for commitment on the part of the different stakeholders involved in the process. Therefore, it was not merely a question of the availability of financial and material resources, but also of human resources who imposed a sense of urgency in the implementation and execution of programs of this type.

Belize asked Trinidad and Tobago how many families were served by program social workers. In Trinidad, work had begun with 27,000 families, meaning that each social worker had had responsibility for some 600 families. Currently, with a larger complement of social workers, the ratio was 200 to 250 families for each.

For its part, Barbados, which had implemented horizontal cooperation actions with Trinidad and Tobago, noted that one of the components that had been of interest to it in the program of that country was the education and training people receive in the life skill development area. The representative of Trinidad referred to this subject, indicating that based on evidence of families that had graduated from the program, those most successful in its process were precisely those that had received additional training on life habits and skills.

Plenary session: Reflections

In this closing session of the first working day of the Conference, the representatives of the countries participating in the Puente in the Caribbean Program shared specific experiences of this cooperation program in different areas so as to gain a comprehensive vision of the process.

Moderator: Anthony George, Coordinator for Technical Assistance, Saint Lucia Social Development Fund.

Panelists: Scarlett Gillings, Director General, Jamaica Social Investment Development Fund (JSIF):

Interagency collaboration.

Participation by the JSIF in this initiative had arisen from the recognition that it was necessary to supplement the public intervention being made to combat poverty and to have an intervention of the type being implemented in Chile with the Puente program. For Jamaica, this had been an opportunity. The idea had not been to create new programs, but rather to adapt existing programs and to generate conditions to target and focus intervention on the poorest families.

The way to implement it was for the different stakeholders to coordinate to generate these initiatives. The Ministry of Health was working, the Ministry of Education was working, as was the JSIF, but without communication among them. This program facilitated interaction and joint work.

It had not been easy to obtain the resources required for its implementation, especially since the experience in Jamaica had targeted the community. When efforts were made to target the family, this approach was seen as more costly, and thus complicated the approval of new or additional resources.



There is now greater collaboration among the institutions participating in the Bridge Jamaica Programme: the World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank were involved. In fact, the latter would conduct the evaluation of the pilot project and, based on its outcomes, inputs for future programming could be obtained. Therefore, it was possible that the resources needed would be obtained to expand the program, in conjunction with the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), which had played a very important part in implementing the pilot project.

The great challenge was that officials of the institutions involved were often busy and focused on their own tasks, and did not pursue collaborated or in coordinated actions. Therefore it is important to note what has been accomplished in Trinidad and Tobago; its progress had been made because of political commitments that had been obtained and agreements that had been reached. Leadership and political will were key.

The work done by the OAS to facilitate this exchange of knowledge was to be commended. A cooperation strategy with an experimental approach that included workshops, internships, monitoring visits, and education and training had been shown to be a successful choice.

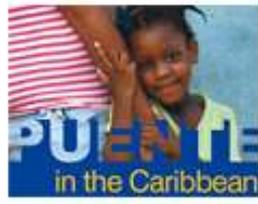
Joachim Henry, Executive Director, Saint Lucia Social Development Fund: **Bilateral exchange – drawing lessons from the Caribbean itself**

Bilateral efforts had been key to the success of the cooperation experiences of Saint Lucia in the framework of the Puente in the Caribbean Program.

However, its implementation faced major challenges, in particular, obtaining the human and financial resources required. This had delayed the process more than expected. However, with support from the Caribbean Development Bank and the European Union, it had been possible to maintain relations of assistance and support with the families. This period of delay had been an opportunity for reflection, especially regarding matters related to the local social protection networks and how they functioned.

Awareness-building sessions had been held in the ministries, from which arose interesting lessons: the use of relevant data made it possible to act with conviction, but based on evidence. At the same time the lessons related to peer-based learning, were specifically noted, involving the exchanges with Saint Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The exchange with Trinidad and Tobago had enriched Saint Lucia's governmental efforts; the main ministries had been able to meet and work together. Notable among areas of collaboration were: the use of electronic cards to collect CCTs and implementation of the information system needed for that purpose. They had had an opportunity with a European company to provide local training on the use of this type of computerized system to provide benefits and transfers to households.



Saint Lucia had also received direct support from the Ministry of Social Development of Trinidad and Tobago in the period immediately following Hurricane Thomas in early November 2010. The counterparts in Trinidad were providing links to construction material suppliers to assist in rebuilding houses for vulnerable individuals impacted by the hurricane.

Jamaica had also been a model for Saint Lucia and had shared experiences and technical know-how. For example, they received assistance on the procedures for merging the Poverty Reduction Fund with the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF).

Sharon Rattan, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Social Services, Community Development, Culture, and Gender Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis: **General lessons and challenges encountered**

The main challenge Saint Kitts and Nevis had had to face was the loss and lack of human resources needed to implement this program. The process had been slower than expected. However, in the past year, they had had an opportunity to listen to and learn from other countries.

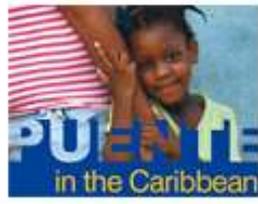
In May 2010, the outcomes of a UNICEF/World Bank study had been presented and its findings would make it possible to continue reforms of the social security network in the country. They ensured that the lessons of Puento Program would be part of this process.

From the outset, this cooperation process had been based on a theoretical approach to intervention. Thanks to participation by FOSIS and the OAS in the monitoring visit, awareness had been raised among government teams.

This exchange had facilitated learning about the use of information and the implementation of this type of tool in serving families. The next step was collaboration with the other countries of the region. This had already taken place with Jamaica and it had been highly important for direct intervention with families to be monitored, especially in areas of family dynamics.

The most notable lessons were:

- The need to take account of evidence drawn from data and information instead of interventions based solely on opinion.
- The value of monitoring visits, especially at the time of generating exchange of knowledge of the program with other civil society partners, and with Nevis and its own integration process.
- There had been an opportunity to join in a visit to Jamaica organized by the Social Development Unit of the OECS. During this trip, a visit had been made to a family participating in the Bridge Jamaica Programme.



- Of vital importance were problems of family dynamics encountered by every family group, made evident in this type of intervention, and the need to make the program visible and disseminate information about it.

Jemma Alexander, Social Worker, Ministry of National Mobilization, the Family, Persons with Disabilities, Social Development, Youth, Sports, and Culture of Saint Vincent: **The Puente Virtual Forum as a permanent classroom**

The Virtual Forum made it possible to share activities and experiences of all countries involved. It afforded an opportunity to follow-up on tasks and actions undertaken by country teams, but also generated conditions for delving deeper into content, identifying guidelines, etc.

All members were invited to participate. Questions could be asked, uncertainties clarified, and advice sought. Round the clock connection enabled exchange and learning to be encouraged, even when participation was not direct or simultaneous.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, there was a need to increase the commitment to participate among the team of professionals. Some did not have an Internet connection and others did not see the value of this tool as an opportunity for mutual learning.

To summarize, the Virtual Platform was an effective medium for exchange and learning. It was something that could be replicated and replication was important. This because it was a good instrument to meet the challenges faced in implementing programs and also constituted a forum for learning from one another.

Clarisse Pawirondi-Dasi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing, Suriname: **Managing the Political Dynamics of Social Policy**

Suriname in the presentation highlighted the changes implemented in the country since 2010 in shaping the new government, which assumed office from November of last year. For the technical team that has been part of this process of transfer of the Bridge Program in the Caribbean, this involves a challenge to continue to have the political will and commitment needed to give continuity to the actions already implemented that would benefit the country's poorest families.

The work plan developed by the country team, had established goals in different areas in order to achieve the expected results: financing; training for technical teams; coordination with the other services, etc.



It was increasingly evident to the new political authorities that it was important to take decisions and relevant steps. The NGOs and the most enduring civil society organizations in Suriname's social and political dynamics had to be incorporated.

The country is currently at a crossroads – as described by the Prime Minister – investment had to be made in families, they had to be provided with education and health care, etc. All this was to be found in the Puente Program, and a five-year program had been developed that would enable this plan to be implemented.

The program had been promoted and consultations conducted with different relevant stakeholders for the conclusion of agreements and to base actions thereon. Meetings had been held with other ministries and their respective Permanent Secretaries. Lastly, consultations had been effected with the President of Parliament, which also included members of the opposition. The expected result of this strategy was that a joint vision would be developed enabling agreements to be reached and work to be done in partnership.

The new Minister was highly interested in ensuring that an intervention of this type reached regions of the interior of Suriname. This could ensure, in part, the implementation of the plan.

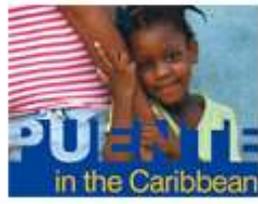
Discussion and Q & A session

The representative of Colombia, Fernando Sánchez, proposed four variables that should be considered when discussing the impact of decisions or political terms in our countries:

The Families in Action program of Colombia had been in place for 10 years and was ever subject to political vicissitudes. What factors or variables had allowed it to continue?

- a. Political intent was based on a technical design that took account of short, medium, and long term perspectives. It was not subject to political terms.
- b. The designers and implementers had to be technical personnel, rather than officials who received political mandates linked to rotating governments.
- c. It was key to have measurement elements for short, medium, and long-term evaluation as evidence, based on work plans, projects, and targets, supporting the results obtained. These were inputs made available to politicians for their public presentations and debates.
- d. The existence of monitoring and support from multilateral organizations (WB, IDB, OAS, etc.). Government validated these programs when they received technical assistance from these organizations.

The Permanent Secretary of Barbados, Sonja Welch, pointed to the Virtual Forum tool in this horizontal cooperation process. She suggested that mechanisms or incentives should be sought to ensure



participation in the Virtual Forum to help ensure that professionals were motivated and made effective use of the tool and valued it. Possible incentives included:

1. Certification of participation and/or learning.
2. Formation of study groups.
3. Agreement on meeting schedules for exchange.

Also raised in the plenary session was the subject of targeting and selecting families. In the case of Saint Lucia, that process had been implemented with support and technical assistance from the statistics institute, which identified families with the tools and instruments available to them.

In the case of Colombia, the SISBEN was used, which, through a proxy means test, enabled beneficiary families of programs to be selected. This was a single system for targeting and selecting families.

For its part, Chile indicated that it was utilizing the social protection record (Ficha de Protección Social - FPS) and that, using this instrument, families were selected. Adjustments were now being made to improve it and optimize targeting mechanisms based on the new governmental guidelines.

Targeting mechanisms should assist in obtaining a fuller and more comprehensive vision of the poverty phenomenon and in identifying risks and vulnerabilities for outreach to the poorest families with greater precision and relevance, without errors of targeting, preventing errors of exclusion or marginalization. Participants that had developed such tools agreed that substantial resources were required for that purpose. These were highly complex procedures in terms of methodology and were not cheap, but they were highly necessary if public investment was to be effective.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2011

Panel 3: Puente in the Caribbean: Selected Topics

This panel session presented the crosscutting themes and tools that had arisen from the Puente in the Caribbean Program. It also afforded an opportunity for the Chilean tutors to discuss technical and conceptual aspects of social protection systems in the context of a cooperation initiative.

Moderator: Francisca Rivero, Consultant, OAS

Panelists:⁶

⁶ The complete Panel 3 presentations are available at www.socialprotectionet.org



Claudio Ferrada, Tutor, Saint Kitts and Nevis: **Managing inter-institutional Networks**

In the context of the transfer made by FOSIS in the framework of the Puente in the Caribbean Program, in its two phases – I and II, a recurrent matter of interest to participating countries was to discuss and understand how institutional network management was addressed and implemented. This presentation discussed that subject in particular, based on the conceptual definitions and approach which, in the case of Chile, had enabled a protection network to be implemented at the national, regional, and local levels.

Poverty was a phenomenon caused by multiple factors, so that it was understandable that the intervention to overcome poverty had to be multidimensional. Facing the multidimensional nature of poverty and vulnerability required the commitment and contribution of all public institutions and of society as a whole. Therefore, political and technical intent was needed wherein the State committed all its efforts.

The institutional system, public funding, and intervention models had to contribute to reducing gaps impacting the population in different dimensions or areas. Parameters had to be defined in order to identify ways in which public social programs and services could contribute to protecting people's rights and overcoming vulnerability and extreme poverty in its different dimensions.

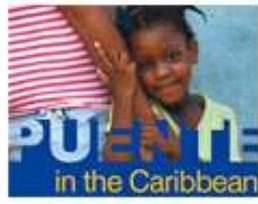
Furthermore, socially excluded families had to be supported in order to make effective use of the structure of opportunities available in public institutions. This support had to be based on assistance and promotional strategies in order to restore people's life skills and develop the necessary skills and practice tools for their effective social inclusion.

Lastly, it was emphasized that a social protection system involved the linkage or and complementarity of network service providers in order to generate significant impacts in the life of poor families. Coordinating with others meant means looking for complementary areas. This depended on how much each of the members knew about the services and programs of the others

Monitoring the results that were committed to by the system made it possible to assess its performance in terms of how and how much it supported families.

Paola Barros, Tutor, Barbados: **Educational materials in the psychosocial support process**

The educational materials of the Chile Puente program that had generated interest by the Caribbean countries were conceived as a tool to support the Puente intervention strategy and psychosocial approach to families in vulnerable conditions. Therefore, it was key to address their applicability and relevance based on the context and reality where the intervention was to take place.



The methodological principles for utilizing materials were:

- a. Recognizing that dialogue was the main method. Conversation was adapted to each individual and family, in which everyone participated actively.
- b. Huge sheets with paintings that represented scenes from daily family life were created in support of the conversation in order to go from something abstract to something concrete.
- c. Facilitating the formation of spaces for reflection and discussion within the family about matters significant to them, including all members, regardless of age and gender.

The following recommendations on the use of educational materials were made:

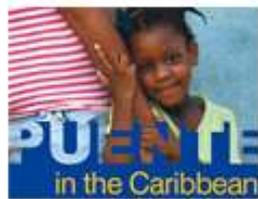
- a. Local culture and features had to be appreciated. Symbolic aspects could not be translated in a literal way.
- b. Incorporate each country's experiences in education and training processes; reuse those concepts, games, types of relationships, etc. that were part of personal, family, and community history.
- c. Resist the temptation to reduce the use of these tools as the ultimate goal of the program.
- d. If well utilized and targeted, the tools gave families the opportunity to build something in a symbolic way and, at the same time, in a very concrete way to carry out their own development plans.

José Cisterna, Tutor, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: **Registration and monitoring systems**

In implementing social protection programs, targeting, identifying potential beneficiaries, and information of quality for monitoring and evaluation were of fundamental importance. Therefore, from the outset of the Puente program in 2002, it had had its own Registration and Monitoring System.

The system contained information on all families participating in the Puente Program and fulfilled different functions, among them:

- a. Registered the families' incomes.
- b. Registered the interventions of each Family Support Counselor with his/her families.
- c. Activated and monitored the Social Protection Voucher.
- d. Made the monitoring process easier (as it applied to the system's stakeholders such as heads of the Family Intervention Unit, family caseworkers (Apoyo Familiar), Supervisors.



- e. Assisted in family supervision.
- f. Provided information for the creation and distribution of public social services.
- g. Made goal monitoring easier.
- h. Provided data for other social information systems.

To summarize, registration and monitoring systems added value and efficiency to governmental social policy management since, on one hand, they provided information for management, and, on the other, enabled information to be managed. This meant databases were available that facilitated ex post evaluation processes, especially impact evaluations.

Also evident was the contribution they made to governments, especially to the Ministries of Social Development, by unifying user information, avoiding the unending process of having to provide the same information over and over again when people needed support from the State. Thus, technological tools were being used to overcome vulnerability and poverty.

Discussion and Q & A session:

As well as expressing appreciation for the clarity and contribution of the presentations, the representative for Saint Lucia indicated that it seemed necessary to delve deeper into the difficulties noted in moving forward in identifying families and implementing the intervention as such. It had noted that a recurring challenge was coordination of the different stakeholders. To that end, the existence of family databases could contribute to the involvement process and strengthen it. It indicated to the plenary how countries had resolved this problem and how the solution had been implemented.

Based on its experience and history with SISBEN, Colombia mentioned that registration systems should have the following three fundamental characteristics:

- a. The information entered should be detailed, not nonsense.
- b. Registration systems had modular growth: a minimal starting point, allowing for gradual growth, which, over time, definitely made them more robust and efficient.
- c. Monitoring and evaluating the entry and use of data.

Trinidad and Tobago referred to its experience of implementing user registration systems. It was noted that moving from manual to digital registration was not easy. Neither, at the outset, did it comply with standards of quality that ensured relevant information. During the review of systems now under way, errors, difficulties, and gaps generating problems were noted. They were now in the process of adjusting and adapting them to overcome these obstacles identified.



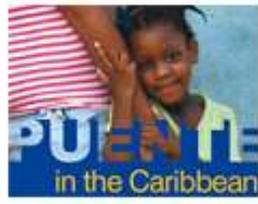
Barbados asked about the use and confidentiality of information. Chile explained that there were different ways of safeguarding it: legislation, rules and procedures, rigorous selection of family caseworkers, and their respective training. The objective was to have access to the information required for management and not include irrelevant details. Direct conversations between the family caseworker and the family were not entered in the system. Reciprocity in the use of information was basic and fundamental as an element of network management. Accordingly, requests for information should be based on a specific need intended to identify alternative solutions to problems or requests made by families.

James Riccio of MDRC asked what happened when the family resisted or responded negatively to the intervention. The Chilean experience showed that there were in fact families that resisted intervention. In that case, the program made it explicit that both parties be committed and full compliance with the agreements was required. When this did not happen, the program discontinued the intervention. This did not hinder or eliminate the support, but it did hinder or eliminate psychosocial intervention, which required the commitment of both parties.

In that connection, and given the importance accorded by Puente in Chile to concluding the contract for participation and for fulfillment of partial contracts, Saint Vincent asked what the legal implications were for the family in the event of failure to fulfill the contract between it and the family caseworker. Chile indicated that underlying this approach was an intervention approach related to developing the autonomy promoted by the intervention. The contract was part of a process where it was used as an instrument to promote or generate conditions for the adoption of practices and habits: **they were commitments to action.**

Also discussed was the topic of participation and how families were part of Chile Puente program design. The team noted that families did not participate in program design. It was a standard design applied throughout the country. The difference and co-creation occurred on the occasions for direct intervention between the family and the family caseworker. That was where adjustments were made and the family participated actively in that process. Additionally, means available to municipalities serving as executing agencies for this program included opportunities for changes and adjustments in accordance with their own reality, but ensuring achievement of the objectives for which the program had been was created, that is, avoiding alterations to its character.

Lastly, with regard to funding for these programs, Trinidad and Tobago explained that in their case, funding was entirely public.



Panel 4: Evaluation of Social Protection Initiatives - Challenges, Results and Lessons

Moderator: Julie Nurse, Specialist, OAS Department of Social Development and Employment

Panelists⁷:

James Riccio, Director Low-Wage Workers and Communities Policy Area, MDRC, New York: **Challenges in evaluating employment programs for vulnerable populations**

The presentation by James Riccio discussed three major subjects:

1. Description of the use of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in building evidence for social protection policies.
2. Illustration of the use of RCTs in these two very different “co-responsibility” programs in the U.S.:
 - California’s mandatory welfare-to-work program (1990s)
 - New York City’s voluntary conditional cash transfer program
3. Reflections on using evaluations to improve social protection policies.

The use of randomized controlled trials in the United States had increased over the last 40 years. RCTs are not feasible or ethical in all cases, but appropriate in many situations

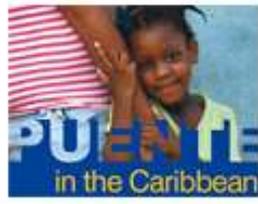
To discuss specifically the measurement approach and results obtained, he described in detail two programs where randomized controlled trials had been used. One was the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program (its Los Angeles and its Riverside versions) and the recent Opportunity NYC program.

The description of the impacts obtained in applying this evaluation methodology was highly interesting and enabled necessary adjustments to be made to the programs when it was observed that they were not being effective in achieving the objectives for which they were created.

The most important conclusion noted by the panelist was that it was important to evaluate innovations. It was recognized that evaluation involved time and money, but it was wasteful to implement ineffective strategies. Opportunities might be missed to improve lives and possibly save money in the longer term.

As a challenge it was noted that it would be interesting, to take a cumulative approach in the public management sphere,. That is, each generation of policymakers should have more evidence on “what works” (and what doesn’t) than the prior one.

⁷ The complete Panel 4 presentations are available at www.socialprotectionet.org



Koen Rossel-Cambier, Social Development Attaché, EU Delegation for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean: **Social protection enhancement in the Eastern Caribbean: Lessons learned from EU interventions**

The content of the presentation by the Social Development Attaché of the EU Delegation for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean was structured as follows:

- a. Background.
- b. EU interventions in social protection.
- c. The experience of social investment funds in the Eastern Caribbean.
- d. Lessons learned and ways forward.

Europe's experience of social protection dated back to the Industrial Revolution and owed its existence to unions and individuals.

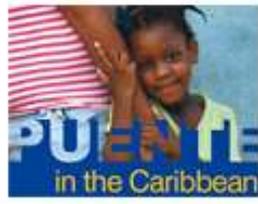
The European Social Agenda had played a role in shaping the priorities of European Social Fund spending. The Social Agenda sought to update the "European social model" by modernising labour markets and social protection systems so that workers and businesses could benefit from the opportunities created by international competition, technological advances and changing population patterns while protecting the most vulnerable in society.

In the search for a broader concept of social protection, the EU had determined that, beyond social security, it also included most activities linked to prevention of and response to all social deficits, such as: employment generation, training, access to micro-credit and – in a context of a large informal economy – micro-insurance, access to services to cover basic needs, and other poverty reduction initiatives.

The main initiatives on Social Protection in the Eastern Caribbean financed by the EU were:

- a. Technical support to social protection reform in Saint Kitts and Nevis and Dominica.
- b. Technical assistance for budgetary management in Dominica and Grenada.
- c. Support to vocational training and human resources development in Saint Lucia and Barbados.
- d. Social Investment Funds.

A description was provided of good practices implemented through the Social Investment Funds (SIF) of Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica, going into greater depth in the last case. Finally, based on the experience and evaluation of SIFs, the following questions were posed for discussion:



How do SIFs fit into the larger picture of a national social protection framework?

Are they suitable to become a long-term tool for community-oriented social protection interventions?

Do SIFs alleviate intergenerational poverty and increase social protection?

Tom Olsen, UNICEF Representatives, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean: **“Social Safety Assessment Findings in the Caribbean”**

The UNICEF presentation did not refer to any particular country, but rather provided an overview of social protection and child protection in the region.

Social protection was a thematic area of interest to the international agencies. It was not an issue included even in the Millennium Development Goals, but today it was a priority of different international agencies.

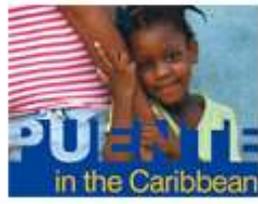
Impacts on children were evident if there were no social protection systems and this was linked, for example, to food production. As it had a child-based vision, the approach was human rights-based. Article 26 of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child declared that they had a right to social protection. Therefore, their social protection was central: access to education, access to health, protection from abuse, etc. Investment made in this segment was key to the development of human capital.

In late 2009, in conjunction with the World Bank, an assessment of the social security network had been made. The aim of this effort was to provide guidance for policy in the Caribbean States. Noted as findings were: duplication of programs; targeting difficulties; and complex difficulties in addressing education, etc. It was also evident that systematized information was lacking and therefore, evaluation was highly precarious.

National financial resources were invested and it was sometimes not possible to determine on what it had been spent and, still less, what results had been obtained. No program audits had been conducted. Coverage was poor; eligibility of potential beneficiaries remained a pending task. Political influence could be seen in some programs. And, on occasions, much economic, but not social, data was available.

Recommendations:

- a. Establish a social protection framework.
- b. Improve coverage for the poorest – effective means of selection.
- c. Targeting methods, even when costly.



- d. Define evaluation and auditing systems. Support should be sought from international agencies.

The next steps should be: improve coverage for the poorest and most vulnerable; reduce or eliminate inefficiencies; and seek to interrupt political interference. Economic development was part of the agenda, but it was changing, and therefore we should ask ourselves how it should be done. This was where the international agencies came in, in terms of partnership and advocacy.

Discussion and Q & A session:

The plenary session discussed different topics raised by the panelists, with special emphasis on program evaluation and coordination of actions in terms of the interests of international organizations and the governments themselves.

In connection with the latter, Suriname asked how to contribute so that the interest in implementing different programs directed by these international agencies could be coordinated and the government could still have some control over the. The risk was that, in the absence of such coordination, resources would be lost or efforts duplicated.

The answer came from UNICEF and the European Union with their respective experiences in the region. UNICEF indicated that the country receiving cooperation should be the one to decide what to do and how to do it. Then came the conversations, negotiations, and work agreements as a whole. However, some processes needed to be improved in designing programs. For example, in the Caribbean, a baseline of child social data was still unavailable. To overcome this deficit, the agency was working together with governments to develop relevant indicators to facilitate monitoring and relevant program design. The goal was to report after 2012 and this effort had to be made.

The EU acknowledged the relevance of coordination. For example, it had been noted in the region that the smaller countries had many partners. To avoid duplication or loss of resources, the EU targeted its cooperation through a single ministry (finance) to inject capital and build local human resource capacities. It was also proposed to other donors that they join the strategy and collaborate. In Saint Lucia, for example, the current focus of cooperation was health. Each country had its sector focus in anti-poverty areas or improving the quality of life of its inhabitants, and, based on that focus, defined by the country, the EU provided support through financing and technical assistance.

The representative of Mexico shared a reflection regarding the history of social policy in Latin America and the Caribbean and how it had been strengthened through evaluation processes. Social investment funds (SIFs) as a mechanism arose in the 1990s in response to the structural adjustment process and the economic crisis of the time. As a first option, these became programs heavily emphasizing facility and infrastructure construction. Then CCT programs appeared, and the emphasis changed. In the case of Opportunities Program in Mexico, the objective was to break the intergenerational poverty cycle; hence,



cash transfers were targeted at the health and education areas. Lastly, when social protection systems emerged, the aim had been to serve those outside the redistribution system. Therefore, the intent of social protection was to protect those outside the system against risks. Of unquestionable relevance were the evaluation mechanisms applied to these programs. With these inputs and outcomes, progress could be made and the objectives for which they were created consolidated.

Barbados reiterated the importance of working in conjunction with the international agencies. In the case study being conducted by UNICEF in the country, it was essential for the government to know in advance that a survey was being developed and not only to know the results, but also to make them available to government so that intervention could be improved in a timely manner, thus obtaining better results.

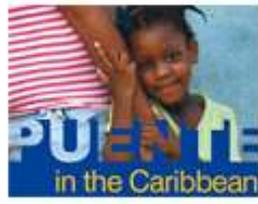
Julie Meeks, academic of the University of the West Indies (UWI) of Jamaica, indicated that it was important to take account of the financial costs of evaluation processes, and that those resources had to be available. It was fundamental for program design to include monitoring and evaluation stages in order to ensure the necessary resources. At the same time, she asked for greater detail on how the impacts on the control group were managed in the case of the randomized evaluation of the Opportunity NYC program.

In response to the question asked by the representative of the UWI, James Riccio explained that in the case of the NYC program, the control group had not been part of the program and so did not receive Opportunity interventions. Since these families did not have previous histories nor were they seen to be or did they feel impacted, no problem arose with the evaluation process.

The same was observed in the programs presented that were also subject to this type of evaluation. In all cases, the control groups maintained their original conditions without impacts on social benefits they had received prior to selection as a control group. It was, however, true that selecting this type of methodology gave rise to discussions of ethics that were relevant to consider in taking decisions to utilize it. The contribution that was evident in evaluating programs from that perspective was that in many cases these were programs very well designed on paper, with large budgets, but they did not achieve the objectives for which they had been created.

Exhibition of Tools used by the Puente in the Caribbean Program

This was an interactive session whose aim was to discuss some of the main instruments utilized in the cooperation program to facilitate shared learning and adaptation of Chile's Puente program in its Caribbean counterpart countries. Following the discussion of the tools, a plenary session was held where comments from participants were received.



Presenter: Julie Nurse, Specialist, OAS Department of Social Development and Employment

• **Module 1: The Puente Virtual Forum**

The tool was shown using the Internet connection available in the conference room. Participants were able to see the functionalities of the Virtual Forum, its main advantages, obstacles that had been encountered in utilizing it, challenges arising based on this experience of virtualizing education, and future cooperation processes.

• **Module 2: Operations Manual**

This Operations Manual had been prepared to provide a concrete work tool for the countries' technical teams. It would be of assistance so that when funding no longer continued, they would have strategic guidelines to operate and manage the intervention. It also systematized the process and therefore compiled its history.

The manual systematized the process and tools utilized. It assisted not only in understand what had been done, but how the intervention had been implemented through its basic components.

The structure of the Manual was:

- i. Background to the Puente in the Caribbean Program.
- ii. The Social Protection Framework: approaches and social policy in the Caribbean.
- iii. Strategies involved:
 - a. Communication and dissemination.
 - b. Agreements with the political and technical counterparts.
 - c. Intervention strategy development from the standpoint of the objectives: institutional mapping, recognizing the role of social workers; monitoring and evaluation.
- iv. Conclusions of the model and adaptation processes.

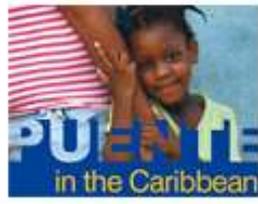
The process of preparing the Manual had been interactive from the outset. That meant contacting and receiving feedback from the participating countries, in both phases – I and II – , and therefore, it could be said to be a collective effort that compiled the experience and its implementation, with the specific details of this initiative during implementation.

The Manual set out the different phases of the Program implementation:

Phase I: Launch.

Phase II: Education and training.

Phase III: Implementation and follow-up.



The Manual was designed essentially as a self-instructional educational tool. Therefore, it incorporates key reflection questions that had arisen during the implementation of this experience. It provided guidelines and shared reflections, making it a highly useful teaching tool.

The first phase of the design and conceptual development of the Manual had now been completed. The goal was for it to be printed by late March 2011 so that it could assist in the exchange, contributing to international horizontal cooperation. It was a basis that could promote encounters among countries.

Discussion and Q & A session:

The representative of Jamaica pointed to the role and contribution of social workers in experiences of this type and reflected on the part played by universities in their training. So far it is not clear that these issues are part of the academic curriculum of these professionals nor that there is also a university involvement in processes of the sustained cooperation. She noted that she hoped the program would not end, but rather be an ongoing project in the different countries, and that cooperation could continue to be received.

The Director of the OAS Department of Social Development and Employment, Francisco Pilotti, indicated that the sustainability of these programs was their most relevant aspect. That is, to lend continuity to the interesting matters that had resulted from this exchange and cooperation process, reinforcing and strengthening the human resources involved. Clearly, education and training for technical staff was key and here the UWI, for example, played a part, and this alternative was also being explored with universities of Canada and the United States. Perhaps it would be possible to work with these academic institutions to implement Master's or graduate programs contributing to education, generating long-term transformations. This was achieved through human capital development and did not depend solely on the implementation of a program.

Barbados also agreed with the comments of Jamaica and recognized the value and timeliness that programs had had through the use of the tools developed for the Program: the Virtual Forum and the Operations Manual.

The Forum generated interaction, reflection, and discussion among peers, but the experience could be improved if systems for certification of the learning acquired were created. For social workers, these were important incentives.

Barbados indicated that the most relevant aspect of the Manual was that it promoted reflection, and they awaited with interest the final product. It clarified that it wished to continue with these exchanges in the IASPN framework, since they had been highly beneficial to the country in general and in particular to the Ministry. It mentioned that Secretary of State Clinton, in her recent visit to Barbados, had praised the Network.



It agreed with Jamaica regarding the relevance of participation by social workers. They had to receive training and education. It noted that for two days prior to the opening of the Conference, a training workshop for social workers had been held, with support from experts of Chile, and that it had been a very good experience. This also could assist Jamaica and could be shared. It reiterated the importance of processes for certification of the skills acquired.

Panel 5: Promoting Cooperation in Social Protection under the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN)

This panel session discussed the IASPN in greater depth, its objectives, activities, and strategies. It was also an opportunity for other Latin American countries to provide information and share their experiences of cooperation in the social protection area. Lastly, it provided the context for the discussion of new horizontal cooperation opportunities in the social protection area in the framework of the Inter-American Social Protection Network.

Moderator: Julie Nurse, Specialist, OAS Department of Social Development and Employment

Panelists:⁸

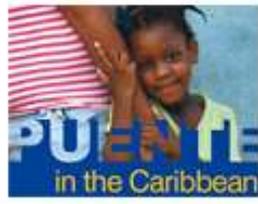
Francisco Pilotti, Director, Department of Social Development and Employment, OAS

An overview was presented of the strategic objectives and approaches of the IASPN from the perspective of international cooperation, exchange among countries, and opportunities and challenges arising for the OAS and international development agencies. The main topics discussed are described below.

The comparative advantages of the OAS were essentially that it afforded opportunities for political discussions at the highest level (Presidents and Heads of State). Ministers of Labor and Social Development as well. This led to clearly defined guidelines and strategies in cooperation areas.

The capacity building and strengthening approach developed in the wide array of cooperation experiences had a **CRITICAL TRANSFER** element. This effort was important and mechanisms emphasizing it had to be sought, since it had been validated and had political legitimacy. The OAS had clear political mandates and would promote the sharing of approaches, facilitation of know-how, and mutual transfer of learning. The virtual tools would strengthen this effort and assist in maintaining Network activities.

⁸ The complete Panel 5 presentations are available at www.socialprotectionet.org



Critical transfer in this context refers to adaptation. Countries had different histories, culture, and institutions, expressed in different ways. For that reason, cooperation processes had to respond with relevant technical tools that took account of these differences, prompting critical reflection and reciprocal adaptability. Management models could not be replicated without necessary adjustment and/or adaptation.

In the context of the IASPN, different cooperation mechanisms could be combined: bilateral, multilateral, horizontal, etc. What was interesting was that this process activated, rather than hindered, such exchange. Best of all was that in a multilateral relationship, the entire array of supply could be seen; hence the most relevant cooperation modalities were utilized.

The IASPN was now undergoing a foundation process. The initial actions which will make it possible to work together have already been established. The virtual platform would assist in ensuring this. The intention is to enable a virtual library that would make available not only documents, studies, or systematizations but also included the social protection-related documents or experiences of each country itself.

During 2011, an interagency meeting would be held. Social protection and the IASPN were not exclusive to the OAS. Therefore, the respective agreements were being concluded to generate more generic and integrated activity. Accordingly, the different approaches used by the agencies involved were being compiled.

In the second half of 2011, in Mexico, the technical consolidation of the network would be organized with all ministries. There, some of its components would be presented, how it worked, what activities it would have, how to participate, in short, what they had been convened to do, what commitments were established, and how the countries would be involved.

Countries such as Chile, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico had been very active in social protection cooperation processes and had also expanded this exchange far beyond the region. In the case of Brazil, even to Africa and the Middle East. It would of course be interesting to expand the sphere of cooperation actions; it was highly important to know how these processes had been implemented and the IASPN afforded that opportunity.

Alexandra Barrantes, Social Development Specialist, Coordinator of IASPN, Department of Social Development and Employment, OAS: **International Cooperation in Social Protection: preliminary results of the Brasilia event**

In her presentation, the panelist described the principal results of the roundtable presentations and discussions with the countries that participated in the horizontal cooperation workshop held in Brasilia, in July 2010. She also gave account of the preliminary results of the systematization and analysis of the



information provided by Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Chile in a questionnaire that aimed at gaining an awareness of cooperation modalities implemented.

Main challenges to be faced and emphasized by the countries were: consolidation of an international cooperation policy; human resources involved in these cooperation actions; the sustainability and replicability of these experiences; implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems; and the development of a transfer methodology.

The main thematic areas in which cooperation missions had been conducted were:

- a. Improvement of the design of social protection policies and strategies.
- b. Social policy implementation/improvement support.
- c. Institutional capacity building and/or strengthening.
- d. Human resource training.
- e. National poverty analysis systems.
- f. Beneficiary registration systems.
- g. Information system strengthening and/or technical assistance for the creation of information systems.
- h. Monitoring and evaluation.

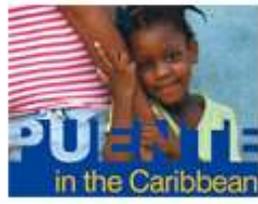
In light of these experiences, it could therefore be stated that the road ahead as far as the consolidation of the IASPN would involve the following goals:

- a. To gather data from all OAS member states. For that reason, the questionnaire had been applied to all Caribbean countries participating in this Conference.
- b. Regional mapping of cooperation.
- c. Developing a cooperation matrix to identify supply and demand for cooperation in social protection areas.
- d. Defining thematic areas: regional trends and specific country priorities.

All of the foregoing is understood as technical cooperation in the IASPN framework.

Fernando Sánchez Prada, National Coordinator of the Institutional Strengthening for the Family in Action Program, Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation, Social Action: **The Case of Colombia**

The country's existing cooperation strategy emphasized South-South cooperation as a mechanism to generate positive development agendas. It sought to position Colombia and make it visible as a cooperation agent in the promotion and social development sphere.



A coordinated effort was being made by the Foreign Affairs Ministry – which provided policy guidelines – and Social Action – which provided the technical guidelines. This translated as:

- a. A situation whereby supply was driven by demand.
- b. Moving from isolated activities to cooperation projects.
- c. Sector programs and regional programs.
- d. Replicability and capacity building.

International cooperation had been implemented in a variety of scenarios. The most frequent was bilateral, which led to cooperation agreements with other countries. There were Caribbean Basin initiatives, especially in the food security area.

This had enabled meetings to be programmed sensibly with the counterpart technical teams of each country. Having a clear agenda with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Social Action received demand and viability was examined. The latter was verified and consolidated in mixed committees that operated regularly during the horizontal cooperation process and its implementation was evaluated.

The challenges faced were: strengthening response capacity; consolidating evaluation and monitoring systems to be able to report the results of initiatives: effects and impacts; and ensuring financial resources for the implementation of programs or projects.

Additionally, **Families in Action** was one of 72 existing CCT programs worldwide. At the outset, the aim of Families in Action was to reduce extreme poverty. However, it was then understood that the program was an anti-poverty tool. It shifted its emphasis to human capital development and promotion. The program was part of the Juntos (Together) Network.

In that context, cash transfers were linked to health and education (primary and secondary), and the emphasis of the program was changed, moving from conditionality to co-responsibility.

The program had been adjusted to the Millennium Development Goals. That is, a guideline was set forth and it established a commitment on the part of the Colombian government for its fulfillment by 2019.

The program has undergone impact evaluation and the results indicated:

- a. A significant decline in children affected by diarrhea-inducing disease in rural areas.
- b. A significant reduction in children attending development and growth consultations.
- c. Height/weight improvements.
- d. More children remaining in school.

Resources received by families based on the transfers are used for: food (better child nutrition), children's clothing; and transportation costs so that children could attend school. Increased expenditure on alcohol was not observed in areas where the evaluation was made.



Additional results: women's empowerment through training and education. An improved local economy, with higher sales of goods and services, since families had more resources.

Blanca Lilia García, Director, International Cooperation, Secretariat for Social Development (SEDESOL):
The Case of Mexico

Since 2008, Mexico had had a federal government strategy, Vivir Mejor [Live Better], which aligned all programs and initiatives, thus avoiding duplication of effort and organizing them as four action lines:

- a. **Development of basic capabilities:** Opportunities program, food support, food for rural areas, and Liconsa.
- b. **Social protection system:** the 70 y Más [70 and above] program; temporary employment, agricultural day laborers.
- c. **Bridges between economic development and social well-being:** Partially State-subsidized child day care services]; support for Mexican craft workers.
- d. **Development and improvement of the physical environment:** restoration of public spaces; immigrants; basic and community infrastructure in rural areas; regularization of precarious and illegal settlements; housing improvements.

This included all social programs executed or implemented by the ministries. SEDESOL was the social authority and had direct responsibility for 20 programs. In 2004, the law on social development operation had come into force. It had established that programs were to be evaluated and could not be eliminated for political reasons. They therefore became State policy.

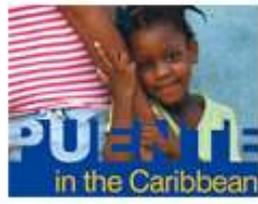
The importance to Mexico of international cooperation lay in mutual exchange. Owing to the income level achieved by the country, it was supposed to be a donor, but areas of backwardness remained leading to requests for cooperation.

The federal government did not have an international cooperation agency, but SEDESOL had implemented international cooperation in its bilateral version.

In this case, the experience of the Opportunities Program was noted. Based on all evaluations of this program, permanent improvements had been made, as well as through the exchange, which had enriched its implementation.

It served families to help eliminate the generational cycle of poverty. The supports made available were:

- a. Nutrition component.
- b. Health component.
- c. Education component.



In 2010, coverage had been expanded towards urban areas, utilizing to that end geo-referencing systems to identify individuals.

The presenter also described were the other programs which formed part of the Vivir Mejor strategy.

Discussion and Q & A session:

The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines asked about the approach the IASPN would take in compiling information in the region and how it would be done. She noted that the existence of databases would assist in establishing cooperation mechanisms among countries.

The OAS indicated that a cooperation matrix was being prepared – which compiled cooperation requirements, but also opportunities for cooperation and exchange – and that, together with ECLAC, information on the countries of the region was being updated. The IASPN platform could help each country to have the information and to see what was being done, and to make available what each country was doing.

The representative from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines requested that the subject of natural disaster mitigation be incorporated. It was observed that this topic of discussion had not been addressed in this conference or any other and that without question it should be incorporated as part of social protection program design. The countries of the region had been plunged into a context of natural disasters, making it necessary to have mitigation policies in place to protect the affected population.

A representative from Chile mentioned the need for knowledge of the targeting mechanisms utilized in Mexico in the programs that had been presented during the panel session.

The representative of Mexico indicated that the Chilean government had a beneficiary standard for use in targeting, and, with the technical assistance at the time the Ministry of Planning (MIDEPLAN), progress had been made with targeting tools and mechanisms, which were those used thus far, and enhanced over time. The national household survey also made targeting possible and georeferencing information was incorporated.

Suriname inquired about the status of REDLAC, the Social Network of Latin America and the Caribbean in this new context, and how it would be linked to the IASPN.

It was explained that the aim of the IASPN was to create a broader forum and to establish new more appropriate cooperation practices that were relevant to existing realities and emerging issues in the countries. The intention was not to maintain two initiatives, but rather to strengthen the strategic vision contained in the IASPN's functional design and so link cooperation actions and exchange through this new network.



Based on the experience presented by Colombia on the Families in Action Program, a question was asked about the distinctions and approaches that the country had developed in order to cease to speak of conditionality and incorporate the concept of co-responsibility.

The representative of Colombia went into greater depth in this regard, indicating that in speaking of conditionality, reference was made to a condition imposed on an individual. In that logic, this condition was one-way. The change meant understanding that a co-responsible action entailed the establishment of agreements among the parties. The State gave money to a family and the family was responsible for the child attending and remaining in school, thereby improving his or her living conditions. The co-responsibility triangle was composed of the State – local government – families.

- a. Understanding the action in this way, the State then assumes the following commitments: To make municipal officials available to serve the program.
- b. To have an office in the municipality where families could receive information, complete procedures, etc., but also make complaints regarding program operation.
- c. To ensure sufficient supply of education and health services (quality in their delivery)

The Political Constitution of Colombia established the State as a State of Law that guaranteed the different legal and judicial mechanisms to ensure that citizens received responses to their requests and demands. The legal mechanism of stewardship was mandatory and was the highest level at which solutions could be requested when agreements were not fulfilled, so that the petition had to seek judicial remedy. Response was made to the citizen and the State worked jointly with public institutions to ensure that undertakings were fulfilled.

SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE

At this final stage of the Conference, the Director of the OAS Department of Social Development and Employment, Francisco Pilotti, summarized the main decisions taken and indicated the next steps to be taken in the framework of the IASPN:

Participating countries and international cooperation organizations had engaged in an interesting discussion during the Conference. Although the latter had requested the countries to improve their operations, especially with regard to duplication of effort and resources, in parallel, the countries had challenged the organizations to cooperate with one another to achieve better synergies and integration. The OAS' plan to coordinate and hold an interagency meeting in the IASPN framework was a step in the right direction. Following the meeting, the outcomes would be disseminated to the relevant stakeholders.



The rich history of cooperation among countries in the social protection area discussed during the final panel session (Colombia and Mexico) has created opportunities to continue to move forward in compiling lessons learned and implementing transfer programs that brought together in a relevant way intervention modalities, management models, mechanisms and tools. Still more importantly, there was an evident intent to explore opportunities to share with the countries taking part in this Conference. The IASPN was a fundamental mechanism facilitating such exchange.

Also to be noted was that this meeting had discussed the need to review and rationalize cooperation strategies to ensure that they were effective, relevant, timely, coordinated, and did not ultimately overwhelm technical donors.

A key instrument facilitating information exchange and making available all current data was the questionnaire that had been sent to the Ministries of Social Development of the Caribbean. This questionnaire was designed to compile information from each agency on its past and recent experiences of cooperation in the social protection area. Another aim was to compile information on needs and interests, and on the areas where they would like to offer cooperation or technical assistance to other countries. This information would be entered into a database on the IASPN web page and would be available to all to facilitate exchange based on the available supply and demand indicated. Each country representative could determine and select areas of interest for the exchange of knowledge and technical support.

This effort to compile information on cooperation processes in the region would assist in categorizing and profiling requirements with greater clarity, identifying intervention characteristics, etc. Those countries that had not yet forwarded the information were requested to do so as soon as possible.

Lastly, it was noted that cooperation should be provided on an ad hoc basis, avoiding standardization and taking account of differences. The lessons learned and experiences shared at this Conference would facilitate the effectiveness and efficiency of such cooperation in the future. This was the opportunity afforded by the IASPN to work together.



Caribbean Conference on Horizontal Cooperation in Social Protection
January 19 – 20, 2011

Agenda

Venue: Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Center, St. Michael, Barbados

DAY 1 – January 19, 2011

8:30 – 9:00 **Registration of Participants**

9:00 – 10:00 **Opening Ceremony**

- Welcome: Ms. Sonja Welch, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, Community Development, Barbados
- Francis McBarnette, Director, OAS Office, Barbados
- Honorable Steven Blackett, Minister in the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, Barbados

10:00– 10:30 Break (Departure of Officials)

10:30 – 11:15 **Key Note Address: “From the Puente in the Caribbean to the Inter-American Social Protection Network”**

Francisco Pilotti, Director, Department of Social Development and Employment, OAS

Q&A Session

11:15 – 12:30 **Panel 1 – Poverty and Social Policy in the Caribbean: Challenges Ahead**

This session provides the necessary backdrop to the issues that will be considered in the Conference. It will examine the realities of poverty and vulnerability, and the current social policies in the Caribbean particularly in terms of efforts at achieving the Millennium Development Goals from the perspective of the regional development agencies. It will also expose the example of Belize, by highlighting the current challenges faced and the efforts adopted to address issues of poverty, unemployment and vulnerability.

Moderator: Darrell Montrope, Director, Social Development Unit, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Panelists

- Rachel Nadelman, Consultant, World Bank "Building Equality and Opportunity through Social Guarantees"
- Dr. Corin Bailey, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI, Cave Hill Barbados. "Social Protection in Communities Vulnerable to Criminal Activity"
- Judith Alpuche, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation, Belize. "Vulnerability and Social Policy Responses: The Case of Belize"

Q&A Session

12:30 - 2:00

LUNCH

2:00 - 3:15

Panel 2 – Puente in the Caribbean: Background and Implementation Experiences

This session will provide some reflection on the Puente in the Caribbean Program, its strategies and results to date. It will also highlight the experience of 2 countries that have participated in the first and second phase of the program, highlighting their learning, design and implementation experiences and plans for the future. Additionally, the session will highlight the main lessons drawn by Chile as the technical donor country.

Moderator: Francisca Rivero Garay, Consultant, OAS

Panelists

- Julie Nurse, Specialist, Coordinator of Puente in the Caribbean Program, DSDE, OAS. "The OAS Puente in the Caribbean Program"
- Inshan Mohamed, National Director, Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, Ministry of the People and Social Development, Trinidad & Tobago: "STEP-UP Program"
- Patricia Watts, Chief Welfare Officer (ag), Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, Barbados: "ISEE Bridge Program"
- Patricia Diaz, Deputy Director for Program Management, Solidarity and Social Investment Fund (FOSIS), Chile: "The cooperation experience: a mutual learning opportunity"

Q&A Session

3:15 - 3:30

BREAK

3:30 - 5:00

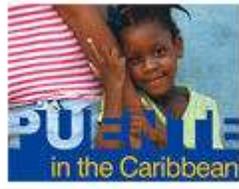
Plenary session: Reflections

Representatives of participating countries of the Puente in the Caribbean Program will share on specific experiences from the cooperation program.

Moderator: Dr. Anthony George, Technical Assistance Coordinator, Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF)

Contributors

- Scarlett Gillings, Managing Director, Jamaica Social Investment Fund, Jamaica: "An example of inter-institutional collaboration"



- Joachim Henry, Executive Director, Saint Lucia Social Development Fund, Saint Lucia: “Bilateral exchanges- drawing lessons from the Caribbean itself”
- Sharon Rattan, Ag. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, St. Kitts and Nevis: “General lessons and challenges faced”.
- Jemma Alexander, Social Worker, Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Youth and Sports, St. Vincent and the Grenadines: “The Puente Virtual Forum- a permanent classroom”
- Clarisse Pawironadi – Dasi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing , Suriname: “Managing the political dynamics of social policy”.

Q&A Session

7: 15 p.m. A cultural evening for Foreign Delegates, hosted by Hon. Minister Steven Blackett, Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development. Transportation will leave Almond Casuarina at 7:00 p.m.

DAY 2– January 20, 2011

9:00 – 10:30 Panel 3: Puente in the Caribbean: Selected Topics

This Panel will present transversal topics and tools that have emerged throughout the Puente in the Caribbean Program. It provides the opportunity for the Chilean tutors to showcase technical and conceptual elements of social protection systems within the framework of a cooperation initiative.

Moderator: Francisca Rivero, Consultant, OAS

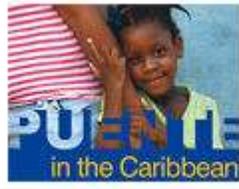
Panelists

- Claudio Ferrada, Puente Program, Chile: “Managing Inter-institutional Networks”
- Paola Barros, Puente Program, Chile: “Educational materials in the psychosocial support process”
- José Cisterna, Puente Program, Chile: “Registry and monitoring systems”

Q&A Session

10:30 - 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 - 12:30 Panel 4: Evaluation of Social Protection Initiatives - Challenges, Results and Lessons



During this Panel the critical issue of evaluation will be addressed by exposing some of the challenges involved. Panelists will share actual experiences in evaluating social protection programs and demonstrate some of lessons and results that have emerged.

Moderator: Julie Nurse, Social Development Specialist, OAS

Panelists

- James Riccio, Director Low-Wage Workers and Communities Policy Area, MDRC, New York, “Challenges in evaluating employment programs for vulnerable populations”
- Koen Rossel-Cambier, Social Development Attaché, EU Delegation for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean: “Social protection enhancement in the Eastern Caribbean: Lessons learned from EU interventions”
- Tom Olsen, UNICEF Representative, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean: “Social Safety Assessment Findings in the Caribbean”

Q&A Session

12:30 - 2:00

LUNCH

2:00 - 3:00

Exhibition of Tools used by the Puente in the Caribbean Program

This is an interactive session to expose some of the key tools used in the cooperation program to facilitate sharing learning and adaptation of Chile’s Puente Program among Caribbean counterparts. The exposition of the tools will be followed by a plenary session to receive feedback from the participants on the utility and practicality of each tool.

- **Module 1: The Puente Virtual Forum**
- **Module2: Operations Manual**

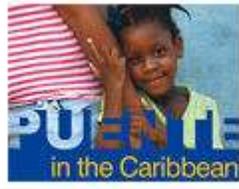
3:00 - 4:30

Panel 5 – Promoting Cooperation in Social Protection under the IASPN

This panel will explore the IASPN, its objectives, activities and strategies. It will also provide a space for other countries from Latin America to provide feedback on the cooperation tools discussed previously, and to share their experiences in cooperation in the area of social protection. Finally, it will provide a backdrop for discussing new opportunities for horizontal cooperation in social protection within the framework of the Inter-American Social Protection Network.

Moderator: Francisco Pilotti, Director, Department of Social Development and Employment, OAS

Panelists



- Alexandra Barrantes, Social Development Specialist, Coordinator of IASPN, Department of Social Development and Employment, OAS: “International Cooperation in Social Protection: preliminary results of the Brasilia event”
- Fernando Sánchez Prada, National Coordinator of the Institutional Strengthening for the Family in Action Program, Presidential Agency for the Social Action and International Cooperation, Social Action, Colombia
- Blanca Lilia García, Director International Coordination, Secretariat for Social Development, SEDESOL - México

Q&A Session

4:30 – 4:45 **BREAK**

4:45– 5:15 **Next Steps for the IASPN**

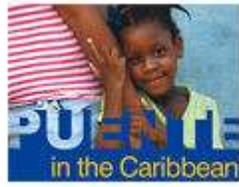
This session will go over the IASPN’s and Puente Program’s next steps in terms of forthcoming activities and a brief summary of the main topics discussed throughout the conference.

- Francisco Pilotti, Director, Department of Social Development and Employment, OAS

Q&A Session

5: 15 – 5:30 **Closing Ceremony**

- OAS Representative
- Representative of the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, Barbados



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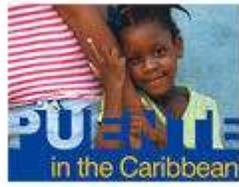
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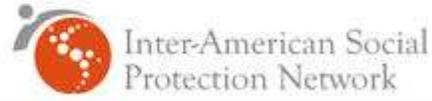
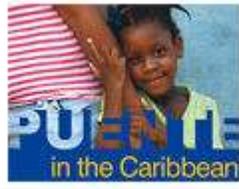
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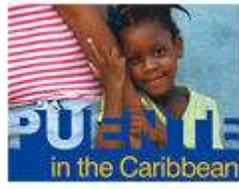
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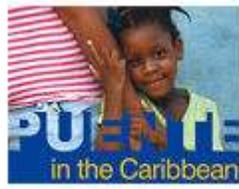
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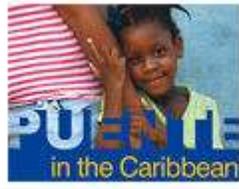
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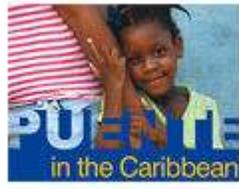
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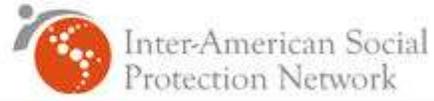
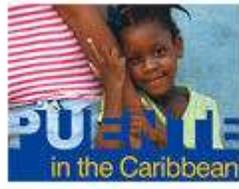
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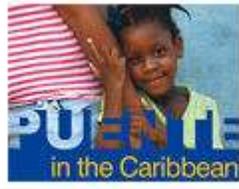
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