

THE
TRANSNATIONAL
VILLAGERS

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For my mother and father

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Transnationalizing Community Development

Meetings of the twenty-member Miraflores Development Committee (MDC) take place each Sunday at a member's home in Jamaica Plain. These gatherings usually last about three hours. When it is warm, members, who begin arriving at about 5 P.M., gossip about sports and politics on their host's front porch. When it gets colder, they relocate their conversations to the living room. In warm weather or cold, though, no one ever seems to get down to business before 6:30 or 7.

Miraflores created the MDC to improve living conditions in Miraflores. Between 1992 and 1994 the committee raised more than \$70,000. They built an aqueduct, providing Miraflores with a reliable water supply for the first time in its history. They funded renovations to the village school, health clinic, and community center. They also began construction of the funeral home and baseball stadium.

The Boston committee has a sister chapter in Miraflores. Though this group also raises funds, its primary function is project implementation. The two chapters communicate regularly by phone to update one another about their progress, exchange village news, and resolve disputes. When disagreements about project management arose in Miraflores, for example, MDC leaders in Boston asked the committee's nonmigrant leadership to organize a community-wide meeting to be held at the same time as their weekly meeting in Boston. The two groups then conducted a transnational town meeting via conference call during which they discussed their concerns and agreed on a project-implementation plan.

This chapter examines a third type of transnational organization, a community development group. Unlike its political and religious counterparts, the MDC acts transnationally to achieve locally. It in-

tentionally uses resources, money, and skills acquired in the United States to promote community development in Miraflores. Horizontally integrated chapters in Boston and on the island articulate goals, make decisions, and implement projects across borders, but these are all aimed at improving life in Miraflores rather than Boston.

The MDC's transnational character enhanced organizational performance at the same time that it constrained it. By organizational performance, I mean the group's ability to effectively articulate and achieve its goals. The Miraflores Development Committee (MDC) contributed significantly to Miraflores community development. A larger, more diverse, highly skilled group of migrants and nonmigrants participated in its activities than in previous development efforts. The committee functioned more efficiently and accountably. And the community bolstered its bargaining position vis-à-vis the state.

The benefits of transnational activism, though, were not without cost. An increasingly well-defined division of labor between migrant donors and nonmigrant beneficiaries meant that nonmigrant interests sometimes received short shrift. Since migrants funded so much of the MDC's work, their vision for Miraflores community development often took precedence over the needs and goals of those still residing there. The unique challenges of sustaining participation across borders resulted in frequent ebbs and flows in activism. Finally, the community's heightened ability to solve its own problems absolved the state of its responsibility to provide adequate services and infrastructure in Miraflores and allowed the government to continue pursuing policies that hurt rural development.

These concerns notwithstanding, the MDC and other organizations like it represent an important, emerging arena for coordinated transnational community development efforts. These transnational migrant organizations (TMOs) are likely to become increasingly important as transnational communities grow and strengthen over time.

Migrant Organizations Past and Present

Much of the research on immigrant associations analyzes their impact in a single context. These studies generally describe the organization's accomplishments with respect to home-country affairs or focus on activities affecting the host country without paying much attention to the interaction between the two.

How migrant associations affect local sending-country communities is not always clear (Sassen-Koob 1992). They often try to influence U.S. foreign policy toward their countries of origin, particularly when members are official or *de facto* political refugees (Zabin and Escala-Rabadan 1998). They are said to contribute significant financial and material support to the communities they come from. However, Georges (1988a) found it was not migrants but middle-class, nonmigrant community members who were the strongest proponents of community development. Other studies indicate that migrant organizations impede change. Both rural-to-urban and international migrants often invested heavily to preserve cultural institutions that would attest to their continued membership in their sending communities.¹ Castro (1985) found that migrant associations exerted a conservative influence by introducing new practices like evangelical Christianity.

Research on the impact of migrant associations in host countries is also inconclusive. Such groups clearly play an important role in creating the social networks that facilitate migration and settlement (Boyd 1989; Massey et al. 1987). Some researchers also claim they ease migrant adaptation (González 1970). Others argue they prevent needed resocialization by reinforcing homeland ties and re-creating traditional power arrangements (Hendricks 1974). Georges (1988b), however, suggests that migrant organizations are an indicator of, rather than means to, adjustment because so many of the Dominican groups she studied gradually shifted their goals from social and cultural preservation to increased political integration.

When, as in the case of Miraflores, migrants and nonmigrants remain strongly connected to one another, the terms of these debates shift. The question becomes not about sending- or receiving-community development in isolation but about how these two are mutually linked and about the best kind of organizational arenas to achieve transnational goals. What projects should be carried out and who should choose them? How can migrant and nonmigrant concerns both be adequately addressed? What resources and skills arise from transnational activism that are not present when sending- or receiving-community members act on their own? What kinds of unique challenges result?

Several recent works shed some light on these questions. While Salvadoran and Guatemalan hometown associations in Los Angeles

primarily support development projects in their sending communities, some groups are becoming more concerned about the needs of their immigrant constituents. One federation established a credit union to serve low-income residents and workers in a neighborhood with large numbers of Central American residents. The same group made an agreement with a savings and credit association in El Salvador to allow migrants' family members access to credit as well (Hamilton and Stolz Chinchilla 1999). Zabin and Escala-Rabadan (1999), however, found that although the Mexican hometown associations they studied mobilized against anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California, this did not translate into regular political organization around U.S. causes. Though these groups held political sway with their hometowns, states, and the federal government in Mexico, they did not contribute to political integration in the United States.

Prior Experience with Community Development

Despite their limited experience with democratic governance, Miraflores have strong traditions of collective organization and sharing labor with one another. In the late 1960s the community created a mutual aid society that continues to help defray burial expenses. Each year Miraflores organizes a large, nine-day-long celebration in honor of its patron saint that is attended by Dominicans throughout the province. Farmers have a long-standing custom of helping one another during the peak of the harvest. Each day, a group of neighbors helps one family harvest its fields, successively rotating until each one is cleared.

After Trujillo's downfall, the Dominican government actively promoted the growth of Dominican civil society. State workers came to Miraflores to create farmers', youth, and mothers' associations. Miraflores established the Sociedad de Progreso y Cultura (Society for Progress and Culture) to promote cultural and educational activities in the community. They set up a library and convinced foreign diplomats to donate books. They founded a savings and loan cooperative at which community members who deposited their money earned interest on their savings and were entitled to loans they would not have been eligible for at a bank. The cooperative, though initially success-

ful, later disbanded amid accusations of corruption. In fact, almost everyone claimed to know exactly who stole the money, though this happened almost 30 years ago.

People lost faith in the cooperative and it fell apart. They thought that if you put in 1,000 pesos, you could get 1,500. Even I believed it. The whole cooperative movement throughout the country came before its time. You have to educate people first before about what a cooperative is and how you use it. This is why they all failed and so few are still left. (Roberto, 62, nonmigrant, Miraflores)

Two new organizations emerged from the failed co-op. Farmers established their own association to improve access to technical assistance, equipment, and credit. The community at large created the *Movimiento para el Mantenimiento y Obras de Miraflores* (the Movement for Construction and Maintenance of Miraflores) to promote community development. That organization was the predecessor of today's MDC.

Mirafloresños living in Boston also began getting together informally during the mid-1970s. At first these gatherings were primarily social events until someone suggested that the group organize activities to better the community.

Our meetings were a place we could feel at home because at work and on the street we were still having a hard time getting adjusted. Then Pepe had the idea to try to do something for Miraflores. We had a big meeting on Mozart Street, where he was living. One of the people wrote a letter back saying we wanted to work with the *Movimiento* and help them. The idea to build the park originated in Boston. And after that we were always doing something. We would finish a project and the group would stop meeting. But then someone would come up with a different idea and we would get going once again. (Carlos, 42, return migrant, Miraflores)

All Mirafloresños are automatically members of the MDC, regardless of their place of residence. Each chapter has its own leadership and organizational structure. In 1994 seven *directores* (leaders) in Miraflores and eight leaders in Boston ran the organization. In addition to their weekly meetings, the group periodically organized larger meetings when a new project was starting or when committee members felt they needed additional help. The MDC in Miraflores orga-

nized community-wide *asambleas* (assemblies) about once a year to elect new leadership. Community-wide meetings also took place when a particularly difficult problem arose or a decision had to be made requiring a broader consensus. Members in Boston communicated their views by phone before these events, though they did not actually vote. Migrants chose their leaders separately, by informal agreement. When members of either chapter visited Boston or Miraflores, they were expected to attend the meetings held during their visits. As Rosita, a thirty-two-year-old nonmigrant, described it:

Last summer, I went to visit my sister in Boston for two months. While I was there, I used to go the *comité* meetings every Sunday night. People expected me to do this. And it helped. I could tell the people in Boston what was going on in Miraflores, and when I got home I was able to give the other members of the committee a better idea about what was going on.

When migrant leaders returned to the village to live, the community expected them to assume a leadership role in the MDC. "We are just waiting for Marcial to get settled," said Alfredo about a new returnee. "He's been back only five months, but when he's ready, we are counting on him to be very active with us."

The MDC does not receive technical assistance or financial support regularly from the Dominican government. It does not belong to a national or international nongovernmental organization (NGO) network. Independence has its advantages and disadvantages. Clearly these kinds of relationships can produce needed resources and enhance migrants' influence. In the Mexican case, however, while the government's Program for Mexican Communities Abroad extended resources and invited greater participation among immigrants, it also formalized and standardized many of these activities under the direction of the Mexican government.² Some argue that these transnational activities reproduce long-standing inequities because those already in power and an emerging migrant elite monopolize their benefits (Guarnizo 1998; Goldring 1999). Though migrant leaders' increased social status and economic weight earns them substantive citizenship rights they did not enjoy as residents of Mexico, it is at nonmigrants' expense.

The MDC is, however, operating in an environment that is favorable to NGOs. In the past two decades, international development agendas have devoted significant resources toward strengthening civil society and building institutions. The United States Agency for Inter-

national Development supported such programs in the Dominican Republic as a way to circumvent government corruption and encourage the growth of alternative political forums. Organizations have also been created that directly address migrants' concerns. The Fundación para la Defensa de Dominicanos Residentes en el Exterior (Foundation for the Defense of Dominicans Living Abroad), a group formed primarily by return migrants, works to improve the image of Dominicans Ausentes because they are so often associated with the drug trade and prostitution (Itzigsohn et al. 1999).

The MDC's Accomplishments

For twenty-five years various incarnations of the MDC have strategized, raised funds, and implemented projects across borders. These activities produced significant improvements in village life. Monies raised by the MDC purchased more than 80 percent of the land that the communal facilities were built on. The MDC also constructed the community center, health clinic, park, cemetery, and bridges over the irrigation canals that traverse Miraflores. In 1993, in addition to renovating the school and health clinic, the MDC also funded physicians' salaries and medical supplies.

Some combination of community and state resources generally supports these projects. The MDC funds at least some portion of all its projects, by either paying for the entire project or leveraging monies it raises to secure matching funds from the government. Fund-raising generally took two forms. The groups in Boston and on the island organized large fund-raising events, such as dances and fairs, which often took place simultaneously. The radio telethon in Boston, for example, during which Mirafloresños called in to pledge donations to the MDC, was broadcast at the same time in Miraflores. The Boston group held its big dinner dance during the village's *fiestas patronales* (patron saint celebration), which was also the most important fund-raising time for the MDC on the island. In Boston committee members also recruited villagers to contribute a \$10 *cuota*, or donation, to the MDC each week. They visited their contributors every weekend to collect money, exchange news, and offer updates on the committee's progress. During this study, anywhere from 40 to 150 community members contributed money on a regular basis.

The MDC's contributions to community development in Miraflo-

res, however, go far beyond physical improvements and fund-raising. The committee fosters positive change in the community in several other ways. First, the MDC solidified and expanded upon the informal solidarity that was such an integral part of Mirafloresño community life. Despite their regular exchanges of labor, food, child care, and clothing, attempts to formalize this social capital and use it systematically had generally failed. In addition to the previously mentioned co-op story, respondents recalled a number of other incidents in which they felt they had been taken advantage of. It was simply a fact of life, many said, that when funds are raised, someone pockets something for themselves.

I remember I was living in Boston and they came around asking for donations. They wanted to build a sewing workshop where they could teach women in the village how to sew and they could earn some extra income. I said I would donate the machines but not money. I was not going to give money and have it stolen another time. I never heard back from them. And now, look around you, do you see anyone making dresses anywhere? (Rolando, 46, return migrant, Miraflores)

As a result, the community was very suspicious of its leadership and had difficulty working together as a formal group. There were few community members considered honest enough to be leaders. After all, in a world where everyone must struggle to make ends meet, why wouldn't someone take advantage of an opportunity that presented itself? Don Miguel went so far as to say, "If you don't want to be called a thief, then you shouldn't belong to any organization." Added Juline, a sixty-seven-year-old nonmigrant:

It is very curious because we are a very generous people. We give to each other all the time. But any time someone tries to get us to work together as a group on some joint project, we all get suspicious of one another. We accuse each other of cheating and stealing or of trying to get something for ourselves. The people are right in this. There are too many instances where people cheated their fellow community members. That makes it very hard to trust someone who is not part of your family.

In the MDC's case, however, both the social remittances migrants introduced and the clear rewards resulting from the MDC's efforts helped convince a critical mass of Mirafloresños that community organization could work. In the same way that migrants encouraged calls for a different kind of politics, they also contributed to demands for an

MDC that was more accountable to its members. Some of the management and administrative techniques they introduced made this possible. Furthermore, increasing numbers became convinced once the MDC established a successful track record of completing projects that clearly made a difference in the community. The committee's activities stood in sharp contrast to the corruption and inefficiencies pervading Dominican life. While these examples could not counteract years of disillusionment with the state, they did provide models of success that could be emulated.

We still do not trust one another. And every time we start a new project, you know by the end that someone will be the bad guy. But we also have seen that if we work together, we can succeed. People see that we are finishing the funeral home. We're finishing the baseball stadium. These are clear examples that people see and say to themselves, we can do this. We can make things better around here without someone profiting for themselves. (Laura, 58, non-migrant, Miraflores)

A second way that the MDC promoted community development was by fostering organizational growth. The community took on more projects, addressing a wider variety of concerns, because of the large sums migrants raised in Boston. As a result, greater numbers of migrants and nonmigrants participated in a more diverse set of activities, which in turn required a wide variety of skills.

In 1993, for example, committee leaders restructured the MDC in Miraflores to be able to manage its activities more effectively. They created health, education, and sports subcommittees supervised by an overarching coordinating committee. Someone uninterested in sports could work on health. A person worried about schools could go to the education subcommittee's meetings without having to sit through the entire meeting of the MDC. This made it easier and more attractive for Mirafloresños to focus their time and energies. Leaders estimated that participation in some kind of group rose from about 10 to 20 percent of all community members. More people also participated in Boston. Though the Boston chapter continued to meet as a whole, rather than dividing around specific activities, leaders felt that more migrants either attended meetings or kept informed about the group's activities because the MDC addressed a wider set of concerns.

Participation taught some respondents a new set of skills. Maribel, a twenty-six-year-old nonmigrant, said she learned some basic ac-

counting and that this helped her manage her finances better at home. Mayra, a thirty-four-year-old nonmigrant, improved her social skills:

I gained a lot more confidence about speaking in front of a group. It used to be that I hardly ever went out, let alone got up in front of people and said what I had to say. But little by little, after going to meetings, I started feeling more comfortable. We were working together and it began to feel like a team. And one day, I finally raised my hand and said something. After that, they couldn't keep me quiet.

The creation of subcommittees particularly encouraged women to participate. As the MDC became more prominent and respected for its accomplishments, community members became more open to the idea that *mujeres serias* could be active in its work. Decentralizing the organization created "windows of opportunity" where women could assume more responsibility and have more say. Though in general men continued to dominate the organization and women took on traditionally female roles, their participation increased.

Women have always participated in the church. It is considered okay for even a woman who is married to go to mass and to attend meetings of the parish council. But very few women were active in the MDC. It wasn't considered proper. Now, though, that they have the health committee and the education committee—these are things that people feel it is okay for women to be involved in. They will not accuse a woman of going to a meeting to flirt with men. They will say she is there because she cares about her children. (Pedro, 58, return migrant, Miraflores)

The MDC also needed to improve its management and accounting practices. It was managing more projects involving larger sums of money and, at the same time, its members wanted a more thorough record of how things were done. In response, the committee formalized its administrative structure and delegated roles and responsibilities to its leaders in a much more systematic way than it had done before. Each subcommittee was ordered to maintain its own records and accounts and report back to the larger group.

This level of formalization and standardization contrasts sharply with earlier MDC projects, which were often run according to their organizers' whims. In the late 1970s, for example, Don Manuel Ricardo worked with the MDC to raise money to build a baseball stadium. He collected the money, purchased the land, and constructed the bleachers. Several years later, however, when he decided he

wanted the land for himself, there was little villagers could do. The land legally belonged to him because he had purchased it in his name. Now, all purchases made on behalf of the community require three signatures. Such rules prevent future mishaps and also give community members more confidence about collective development efforts.

These new systems have made project implementation more effective and more transparent. Initially Boston committee members sent their contributions directly to the subcommittee in Miraflores in charge of the project they were working on at the time. They sent migrants' donations for the baseball stadium, for example, directly to the head of the sports committee. Members of the coordinating committee, however, felt these lines of communication did not allow them to supervise projects adequately. They also felt that if some subcommittee members had more friends in Boston, they would receive more support for their projects than other groups. As a result, all migrant contributions must now be channeled through the coordinating committee. In this way, leaders can distribute funds more evenly among projects and supervise how funds are spent.

A third way that the MDC promotes development is by generating some modest employment opportunities. The committee needs bookkeepers, watchguards, and manual laborers to help with construction projects. Though these are only temporary, part-time positions, they have been a help to some families.

When we began building the baseball stadium, we realized we had to hire several people to help us. We needed an architect. We needed men to help carry supplies and do some of the labor. We needed someone to keep watch over the site so no one stole the materials once we bought them. All of these needs made the MDC into an employer, which we had never been before. It was good because we could hire some of the men in the community. (Jesús, 48, nonmigrant, Miraflores)

Finally, the efforts of MDC members in Boston and Miraflores enhanced villagers' ability to make demands of the Dominican state. In some areas, such as health care, the community was able to provide for itself what the government did not provide for them. Before the PRD government (1978–86) built rural health clinics throughout the country, it was the MDC that financed health care provision in Miraflores. In other cases, the community leveraged the monies it raised to

secure additional funds. Leaders convinced municipal authorities in Baní, for example, to match the \$10,000 they collected to build the community's park.

Migrant support also ultimately enabled the MDC to pressure the government to provide for them. The committee raised approximately \$50,000 to construct its aqueduct. Members planned to finance and implement the entire project on their own because they were tired of waiting for the government to do it for them. After the MDC raised enough money to begin work, committee members visited provincial water supply authorities to get the permits they needed. When months passed and no permits arrived, they began making weekly trips to Santo Domingo to complain at the National Palace. Though each time officials assured them that the permits were on their way, they never materialized. Finally, after several months, the MDC learned that President Balaguer was coming to Baní to inaugurate another public-works project and they arranged to meet with him.

We found out that Balaguer would be coming to Baní, so we asked the Reformistas in town to arrange a meeting for us. As the MDC president, I went as the representative of the entire group. I said, Dr. Balaguer, our village goes without water for days at a time. We want to build an aqueduct, and with the help of those who are living in Boston we have raised the money to do so. We have been asking the provincial water authorities for months to give us the permits we need, but there is always some excuse. We would like you to help us. And the old man looked at me and he said, "You can tell your community members to keep their money. I will build your aqueduct." (Ramón, 48, nonmigrant, Miraflores)

Migrant contributions enabled the MDC to advance the project far enough to capture Balaguer's attention and pressure him into helping them. Since one way he ensured the Dominican public's continued support was to bestow favors on them, Balaguer was unlikely to allow Mirafloresños to solve problems on their own. Such successful community organizing should ensure that politicians of all persuasions will find it more difficult to ignore Miraflores in the future.

The MDC also functioned as the logical counterpart to the state in subsequent public-works projects. Committee members were better at advocating for themselves and negotiating their way through the government bureaucracy because they were more experienced at these challenges. In the case of the aqueduct, in particular, MDC leaders were more educated consumers. Since they had already paid an ar-

chitect to draw up construction plans, and had advanced the project to the point they did, they could supervise the building process in a much more knowledgeable manner than they would have had the project been completed by the state alone.

The Limits to Change

The MDC acted transnationally to promote community development in Miraflores. It raised funds, acquired organizational skills and management strategies, and implemented projects across borders, but the fruits of these efforts registered in Miraflores alone and they were not all positive. The additional resources, skills, and opportunities for participation engendered by the group's transnational character came at a price.

First, when communities get better at solving their own problems, it lets the state off the hook. Because migration enabled Mirafloresños to meet their own needs more effectively, the Dominican government could continue to pursue policies that hurt rural development and caused migration to begin with. While high-migration communities like Miraflores are in a better position to withstand state negligence and to make stronger claims on the state, neighboring communities, from which few migrants leave, are double victims. They still have few resources with which to bargain and the Dominican government has even fewer incentives to help them (Goldring 1992; Smith 1995). Uneven development is exacerbated by the unequal distribution of migration's rewards.

Second, transnational community development created a sharp cross-border division of labor within the MDC that empowered migrant community members at nonmigrants' expense. Who decided what was in the community's best interest and how it should be acted upon changed such that migrants enjoyed greater influence while nonmigrants' interests were often given short shrift. Ostrander and Schervish's (1994) view of philanthropy as a social relation offers a useful way to examine the changing dynamics between migrants and nonmigrants by highlighting shifts in philanthropic arrangements over time.

When the MDC was first reconstituted, all of its members were both donors and recipients. Nonmigrants contributed to and benefited from the MDC's efforts. Many migrants also thought of them-

selves as beneficiaries because they planned to return to live in Miraflores as soon as they could. During these early stages, both migrants and nonmigrants engaged in consumption philanthropy (Schervish and Herman 1988). They were all donors who contributed to causes from which they directly benefited.

These relations changed over time. As migrants' economic status improved, they assumed the lion's share of responsibility for fund-raising. Though nonmigrants also raised money, everyone agreed they could not possibly contribute as much as migrants. Instead, they took responsibility for project implementation or, in the case of the aqueduct, for advocating to make sure the project got done. Sharp lines developed between donors and recipients. Though migrants still saw themselves as reaping the rewards of the MDC's efforts, they began to want different kinds of benefits from those nonmigrants wanted. The way in which power was distributed between these two groups, and the extent to which each took the other's interests into account, was constantly renegotiated. Different visions of the "future Miraflores" and how to create it were proposed. Nonmigrants wanted jobs, youth programs, and a better baseball facility. Migrants wanted a Miraflores where they would be comfortable vacationing or retiring to. They wanted cultural programs that preserved the community traditions they remembered so fondly from their youth.

Among migrants this new focus signaled a shift from consumption to a combination of empowerment and therapeutic philanthropy. In this second type of giving, donors take charge of their own "wealth" and their desire to empower others (Schervish 1996). Migrant MDC members used giving as a way to understand their new lives and to orient the course of change in Miraflores in a particular direction. In many cases migrants contributed out of a strong sense of responsibility to their birthplace. They felt that they were indebted to their friends and family and to the place they came from. As one leader put it, "We are sons of Miraflores and it is our responsibility to share our good fortune by giving back to the place where we were born."

In other cases migrants gave to make their personal difficulties easier to bear and to counteract their fatigue and loneliness. Just as individuals felt somehow compensated for their hardship when they gave gifts to their friends and neighbors during their visits home, so MDC members derived a similar sense of satisfaction from being able to give to their community. Still others gave to show off their success. Ri-

cardo, who left Miraflores in the early 1970s, contributed \$1,500 toward the baseball stadium and requested that a dugout be named for his family. Those who donated benches to the park had their names inscribed in them to affirm their continued membership in the community and to demonstrate their new social standing. Finally, a last group contributed to preserve the Miraflores they left behind. They supported poetry contests and patron saint's day celebrations because this is what they remembered most fondly about their childhoods and what they most wanted to return to.

The project selection process reflected the growing divergence between migrant and nonmigrant community goals and how difficult it was to make decisions across borders. The funeral home provides a case in point. Though pleased with the final product, both migrants and nonmigrants felt that far too much money had been spent. They seemed perplexed when I asked them how the actual decision to build the funeral home had come about. Each group felt that the other had supported the project more avidly.

Some wanted a funeral home because El Llano, a neighboring *campo*, already had one and villagers did not want to be outdone by their long-standing rival. Others felt it was migrant community members who wanted the project because their priority was to create a comfortable place to vacation and return to in their old age. Others argued the project was misguided.

If they had left it up to me to decide, I would not have built it. We are going to break a tradition that we have always had, and we are going to bring a modernization here that we don't have and that we don't need. . . . If you ask other Mirafloresños, I bet there would be 70 percent who would prefer to be laid out and mourned in their own homes. They wouldn't want to go to a funeral home. . . . I also realize that when people die in the U.S. and are sent home to be buried, if they are laid out in the homes, all of Miraflores goes. But if it is in a funeral home, women have to go to the beauty parlor, men have to wear ties, and you have to have the right clothes and this destroys something about it. Many people prefer not to go. They wait until the family goes back to their home to pay their respects. I know that this is going to happen. It was not a priority. (Gustavo, 43, return migrant, Miraflores)

Additional disagreements between migrants and nonmigrants arose over the baseball stadium and the health clinic. Members in Boston objected when the sports subcommittee hired nine replacement players from outside the community to play on the Miraflores baseball

team. Even if Miraflores wins, they said, it would not be a real victory for the community because these players were not from Miraflores. They felt that only young men from the community should play because the character-building aspect of playing was more important than whether the team won or lost. Nonmigrants, however, cared little about these larger social goals. They wanted to win and saw nothing wrong with hiring people from outside the community if it enabled them to do so.

In the case of the health clinic, the community was at odds with doctors who had been stationed there by the government as a mandatory part of their medical training. Boston members made matters worse when they gave the MDC's contributions directly to these physicians. They diminished the community's already weak sense of ownership toward the clinic and bolstered the physicians' position at the community's expense. This working at cross purposes occurred, in part, because migrants wanted to be seen as benefactors and because they did not have their fingers on the pulse of daily village life.

As the line between donor and beneficiary became more pronounced, nonmigrants grew increasingly dependent on migrants. Though community members in Boston recognized that it was hard for nonmigrants to raise money in Miraflores, they still felt that those who remained behind should at least try to do their fair share. In fact, Boston members withheld funds twice during the course of this study to register their displeasure with the management of the baseball stadium project. They said they would not send more money down, even if they had it sitting in the bank, until those in Miraflores made more of an effort to raise funds on their own.

The Possibilities for Transnational Community Development

Doing development transnationally heightened conflicts between migrants and nonmigrants, but it also strengthened organizational performance and produced significant gains for Miraflores. The MDC's efforts improved infrastructure, increased participation, created jobs, improved skills, and bolstered organizational effectiveness.

But immigrant Mirafloresños face problems, too. They often found it difficult to raise their children in the new environment in which they found themselves. They lacked adequate English-language skills. They

did not always know what kinds of services were available to them or how to get access to them. How can organizations like the MDC, which successfully help nonmigrants, help migrants as well?

Several issues need to be resolved before a truly transnational community development strategy becomes possible. The first is that the solidarity that is so plentiful when it comes to Miraflores does not always apply to life in Boston. According to Raúl, an MDC leader, a different set of social rules is gradually taking hold in the United States. While in Miraflores, he feels it is his right and responsibility to scold a teenager who misbehaves, in Boston he feels that young people are "too far out of control" and that "they don't respect adults the way they do at home." There is a feeling of every man for himself—that when it comes to Miraflores, "we are all members of the same family, but when it comes to life in the U.S., we are beginning to compete with one another."

Second, committee members tended to view community development as a zero-sum game. They claimed they had limited time, energy, and resources and that devoting themselves to making life better in Boston would detract from their efforts to help those at home. "If we work on the problems that we face here," Doña Juana said, "it will take away from what we are trying to do for Miraflores." By turning their attention to Boston, they would also be facing up to the fact that they were unlikely to return. "If we begin working to help the community here," Don Héctor said, "it means admitting that we are here to stay."

These issues are not necessarily insurmountable. Social-service providers could reinforce community ties before they weaken further. Practitioners could convince Mirafloresños that addressing the problems they face in Boston does not mean they will permanently remain. Foundation program officers can support pilot transnational development efforts involving projects in Boston and on the island.

These efforts could take a number of forms, from the very simple to the more complex. The social remittances migrants send to their families regularly contribute in small, individualized ways to positive social change. Because we understand the mechanisms of social remittance transmission, and because the source and destination of these transfers is clear, many kinds of ideas and practices could be purposefully transmitted to particular audiences with positive results. Health behaviors, business and technical skills, and organizing techniques,

for example, could be channeled toward specific target groups with beneficial effects.

These kinds of information transfers should not be one-way. Migrants are circulating in and out of U.S. and Dominican schools, health care institutions, and churches. Some workers enter and exit specific factories and service-sector industries. Information about Dominican life could be targeted at health care providers working with this community. Exchanges between U.S. and Dominican educators could improve school performance. Transfers of information about Dominican work culture could also help integrate migrants more successfully into the U.S. workforce.