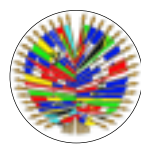


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This issue of *Américas* highlights the relationship between human beings and nature and the importance of social policies for overcoming inequalities in the world and in our hemisphere.

Children are the future in every society, and it appears that government efforts to reduce poverty and improve the lives of children have borne fruit in the first decade of the 21st century. Less than five years from the target date for the Millennium

Development Goals, this issue shines a spotlight on the Latin American and Caribbean campaign, to reduce the child mortality rate and ensure healthcare and education for all our children.

Prosperity is measured in works and in results, and so is the future. This issue also looks at the achievements of the Trust for the Americas, which has benefitted thousands of people throughout the hemisphere through partnerships with the private sector that create education and job opportunities.



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Meanwhile, the cry to preserve the balance of nature and biodiversity is growing louder each day, and more people are aware that conservation is a way to fend off poverty and ensure a better quality of life. This issue of *Américas* takes you to see a vast network of traditional water channels, or *acequías*, in the southwestern United States, maintained for hundreds of years, not only to distribute water to those who need it most, but also to nurture the spiritual and material connection between human beings and the gifts of nature. We also bring you the story of foreigners in Costa Rica who have traded in modern city life in favor of sustainable collaboration with rural communities in their new country. Nature never ceases to inspire and amaze us. In the mountainous desert of northern Mexico, a natural laboratory amid gypsum dunes and freshwater springs is a window into our prehistoric past. And in Chile, an architect combines nature, comfort, and scenery from the Valley of Aconcagua to the Atacama Desert.

History, art, literature, film, and sports all come together in this issue as *Américas* brings you a broad cross-section of life in the Americas during the time of bicentennial celebrations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Cover: A young Morochuco girl from the Peruvian Andes near Ayacucho

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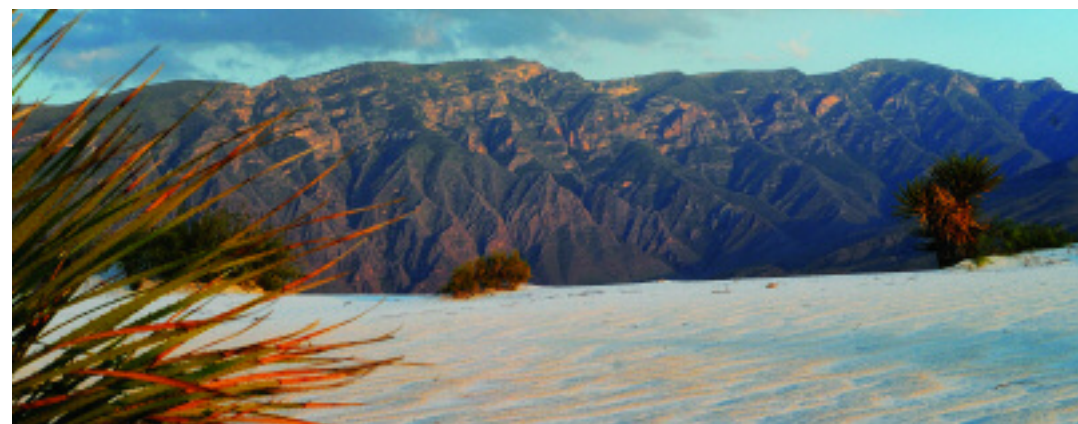
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