

Modernizing the education system will require considerable foreign assistance. Consultants are needed for virtually all aspects of curriculum development and program delivery. Although Mexican government budgets have been severely constrained by the economic crisis, financing is still available from the major international development banks.

World Bank (WB) assistance is being channeled through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). It has agreed to contribute US \$265 million to a US \$412 million project aimed at improving the quality of technical education and training. The program will most likely be operated through existing educational organizations, such as *Programa de Becas de Capacitación para Trabajadores Desempleados (PROBECAT)*, a program of funding industrial training for the unemployed.

In 1994, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) approved US \$393 million in funding for a US \$653 million project to improve the Mexican primary education system. The program includes training for mothers of young children, as well as literacy training for adults. Consultants will be hired to train teachers and supervisors as well as design textbooks and conduct studies.

Another IADB project involves modernization and creation of infrastructure for the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)*, National Autonomous University of Mexico. The program is called UNAM-IABD and focusses primarily on the construction of new buildings, labs and libraries as well as the modernization of equipment. The funding is focussed on the exact and natural sciences and internal consultants have been engaged.

The executing agency for most IADB programs in Mexico is the *Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo (CONAFE)*, National Council for the Promotion of Education. Through CONAFE, the IABD is partially financing the *Programa Integral para Abatir el Resago Educativo (PIARE)*, a five-year program begun in 1995. This program focusses on initial, primary and adult education.

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

The need for improved industrial training to help Mexico adapt to a liberalized trade environment has been recognized by the government. In May 1995, President Zedillo, a former secretary of public education, presented the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (PND)*, National Development Plan, for his six-year term. The plan includes a call for more and better labour training. It proposes stronger links between industry and educational institutions, as well as new forms of certification to recognize practical skills. It also points to the need for improved opportunities for life-long learning.