

- Colombia is the leading drug producer in the Western Hemisphere. The United States has developed a military plan to stop drug trafficking, called Plan Colombia, which many critics say is excessive and does not address the roots of the problem. Break students into small groups and ask each group to investigate a different aspect of the "drug war." Groups may study the link between prices on world agricultural markets and the cultivation of coca, research groups such as FARC, AUC and international banks that profit from the drug trade and analyze human rights issues associated with the drug war in both Colombia and the United States. Based on their knowledge, students may develop proposals to address this major global issue. The full text of Plan Colombia may be found at this web site: www.usip.org/library/pa/colombia/adddoc/plan_colombia_101999.html
- Colonialism refers to a formal policy of domination and control over another nation for the dominant country's benefit, and is often cited as a historical cause of Latin America's massive inequality. Neocolonialism is a more modern term, defined as the domination of another society through informal means, while achieving goals similar to colonialism. For example, Latin American nations are considered formally independent, but many are still closely linked both culturally and economically to their former colonizers. Ask students to define terms such as *hacienda*, *latifundio* and *maquiladora*, discuss their historical origins and examine their modern function in the world economy. Students may debate the degree to which these economic entities and relationships can be considered "colonial" or "neocolonial" in nature.
- In 1950, George Kennan, an American diplomat who recommended the policy of containment toward the Soviet Union, said in a briefing to Latin American ambassadors, "The final answer might be an unpleasant one, but...we should not hesitate before police repression by the local government. It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by Communists." Ask students to evaluate Kennan's statement and discuss the degree to which it applied to America's policy toward Latin America throughout the 20th century. As an extension, ask students to investigate and summarize the U.N. Truth Commission report on Salvadoran death squads and the death of Archbishop Romero in 1980.
- Inequality and the lack of social programs to alleviate this problem have led to social turmoil in Latin America. Ask students to research the Chiapas rebellion in Mexico, the election of coup leaders in Venezuela and Bolivia and urban riots in Argentina and conduct a roundtable discussion reflecting on the goals and aspirations of these groups and individuals.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.ftaa-alca.org/alca_e.asp
The official web site of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas provides information about the purpose and progress of negotiations related to this important hemispheric trade treaty.
- www.uiowa.edu/~c030162/Common/Handouts/POTUS/TROos.html
The University of Iowa provides the complete text of the Roosevelt Corollary.
- www.amazongis.org/library/developmentissues.html
The Smithsonian National Zoological Park presents detailed information about environmental issues associated with the Amazon rainforest.

Suggested Print Resources

- Holtwijk, Ineke. *Asphalt Angels*. Front Street, Lemniscat, Asheville, NC; 2003. A novel that reflects the terrible conditions faced by a 13-year-old boy living on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. For mature readers.
- Kirk, Robin. *More Terrible than Death: Massacres, Drugs and America's War in Colombia*. Public Affairs, New York, NY; 2003.
- Manz, Beatriz. *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Terror, Courage and Hope*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA; 2004.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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TITLES IN THIS SERIES

- AFRICA: CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY
- GENOCIDE
- GLOBAL ECONOMIC ISSUES
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- GLOBAL SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ISSUES
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LATIN AMERICA: CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY Grades 9 & up

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the series, *Global Issues for Students*.

While science and technology have improved the standard of living for many people in the past fifty years, the global community has not been able to find solutions to major issues such as genocide, persistent poverty and environmental degradation. While the current wave of globalization has brought people in closer contact than ever before, it has also heightened our awareness of the tremendous gap in standards of living between the developed and developing worlds. *Global Issues for Students* will help viewers understand the historical causes, enduring effects and possible solutions to complex world problems. Students will increase their awareness of global issues that directly impact their lives, and in learning about these issues from a more global perspective, will become more knowledgeable citizens in our increasingly interconnected world.



Program Summary

Latin America has made great progress in recent years, reducing poverty and establishing democratic governments. However, despite a decline in the number of people living in poverty in Latin America in the past decade, the disparity between rich and poor may be more profound in this region than in any other place in the world. Issues such as crime, landlessness and inequality can all be linked to Latin America's huge income gap.

European colonialism played a large role in creating such unequal societies in Latin America. Starting in the early 16th century, a handful of wealthy Europeans claimed the best land, exploiting natural resources while brutalizing native peoples and enslaved Africans. Following independence, the United States asserted its right to control the region. With the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary as justification, the United States intervened in Latin America dozens of times throughout the 20th century, mostly to protect American business interests and to root out suspected Communist influence. Since that time, democratic governments have replaced military dictatorships throughout the region. But many people are concerned that these new democracies have been unable to address major social, environmental and economic problems in countries such as Guatemala, Brazil and Colombia. Many believe that Latin America will benefit with increased economic globalization, arguing that greater participation in free trade agreements will help to create more equality and address lingering regional issues.

Vocabulary

globalization — The bringing together of the world in increasingly interconnected ways, such as in the areas of economics, culture or through common threats such as AIDS or terrorism.

Third World — A term used to describe the group of developing countries in the world not linked with the United States or the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

conquistadors — From the Spanish word for “conqueror,” this term refers to the Spanish explorers who were responsible for the European conquest of the New World, especially of Mexico and Peru, particularly in the 16th century.

colonialism — The policy of a dominant country conquering and ruling a weaker country, usually for the purpose of exploiting the weaker country's natural resources.

Monroe Doctrine — The United States foreign policy, first announced by President Monroe in 1823, that aimed to close off the Americas to any further European colonization.

Roosevelt Corollary — The foreign policy pronouncement by Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 to establish the right of the United States to intervene anywhere in the western hemisphere to maintain order and prevent “wrongdoing.”

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communism — A system of government in which all social and economic policy decisions are made by a single party.

United Nations — An organization, founded in 1945, that works to ensure world peace.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) — An organization in the United States responsible for gathering information and facilitating overseas communications.

paramilitary — A group of civilians which, while not part of an official government military, operates in a military fashion.

Amnesty International — A non-governmental organization that works to try to ensure that all people enjoy the rights included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

International Monetary Fund — An organization created at the end of World War II to help countries whose economies are in trouble.

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) — An agreement made between the United States, Canada and Mexico that was intended to stimulate trade among these countries.

Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) — An effort to unite the 34 democracies in the region of Latin America into a single free trade area by 2005.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- It has been said that in a democracy, if you're president, then the troops obey you. In a dictatorship, if the troops obey you, then you're the president. Ask students to reflect on this statement and apply it to a historic or modern situation.
- Ask students to discuss what they know about the Amazon River basin. Why is this region so important? Students may speculate about why this area is known as the “lungs of the planet.”
- Who were the conquistadors? What effect did they have on the ancient civilizations of the Americas?

Focus Questions

1. What are some social problems that can be linked to the huge income gap in Latin America?
2. How did the arrival of Spanish conquistadors affect the Mayan and Aztec cultures in Mexico and the Inca in South America?
3. Historically, why was the development of democratic governments in Latin America so difficult?
4. Describe the purposes and effects of the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary.
5. Why was the 1960s one of the darkest periods in Latin American history?
6. Who was Salvador Allende?

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7. Why has the violence in Colombia been so profound?
8. What is the North American Free Trade Agreement?
9. Why is the Amazon River basin so important?
10. What are some environmental problems associated with mega-cities?

Follow-up Discussion

- Experts reflect that it is in the best interest of the U.S. to ensure that Mexico and other Latin American nations are wealthy. Ask students to analyze this belief and consider the effect that persistent poverty and inequality in Latin America have on the economy of the United States.
- A recent World Bank study concluded that economic inequality in Latin America is strongly related to unequal access to quality education and health care. Ask students to discuss the link between education and health care and improved standards of living.
- Many economists say that while working conditions are poor in Latin American sweatshops and farming estates, jobs held in these environments are still better than most others available to the average worker. Ask students to discuss the practical, moral and ethical issues surrounding situations in which people work for twenty-five cents an hour while being exposed to such dangers as carcinogens (in a textile factory) or insecticides (on a large banana plantation). With increased awareness of these conditions, will students stop buying clothes made in Latin America, or stop eating bananas? Is a boycott a viable solution to this issue?

Follow-up Activities

- In 1998, Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela by the largest margin in forty years. In a country where approximately eighty percent of the people live in poverty, Chavez implemented land reform policies and guaranteed free education and health care. Ask students to research the concept of Bolivarism, discuss it in the context of Chavez' reform plan, and outline the causes and effects of the extremely strong domestic and international opposition to this policy. As an extension, students may conduct a debate about the Chavez policies from the perspective of Venezuelan landowners and elites, Venezuelan peasants and American government officials.
- In a 1973 coup in which Chile's President Salvador Allende was murdered, General Augusto Pinochet took power. Thousands of dissidents were killed under Pinochet's authoritarian rule. Many people wanted him punished for crimes against humanity, but in 2000 authorities found him mentally unfit for trial. Ask students to research the history of Pinochet's rule and conduct a mock trial to address past abuses.

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