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## **Costa Rica: Organizations Providing Assistance To Women Ineffective**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Oct. 19 at the Brazilian Embassy in San Jose, Ileana Ramirez and Miriam Abramovay presented results of a study on the effectiveness of public and private organizations in Costa Rica and Brazil set up to provide assistance to women. The study was sponsored by the Swedish and Dutch governments, and the Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute (IICA). The IICA, headquartered in San Jose, is funded by member-nations of the Organization of American States. The study was based nine Brazilian and six Costa Rican organizations. Included among the Costa Rican organizations were the Centro de Orientacion Familiar (COF), Centro de Mujer y Familia, and the Asociacion Demografica Costarricense. According to Ramirez and Abramovay, study results indicate that the very organizations established to provide assistance to women in both Costa Rica and Brazil deliver contradictory and discriminatory messages to beneficiaries. Researchers found little difference between public and private institutions in this regard. The organizations in question fail to address basic issues, such as sexuality, job discrimination, and violence against women. Health problems are not treated in a straightforward and coherent manner. For instance, while the organizations stressed women's responsibilities to their children, issues such as abortion and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) are not directly discussed. Ramirez and Abramovay noted that when family planning is discussed, the focus is economic consequences, not women's rights to control their own bodies. (Basic data from Notimex, 10/19/91)

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