

P3024374

Final Narrative Report
September 1st 2014

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND STRENGTHENING OF
MUNICIPAL FUNCTION
IN PANTELHÓ, CHIAPAS



FONDO PARA
La Paz

CONTENTS

Project summary	3
Progress toward goals	4
Summary of carried activities	4
1. Establish a long term involvement of Fondo Para la Paz in Pantelhó.....	6
2. Promote community organization for the identification and prioritization of local problems and project elaboration.....	8
2. Mobilize \$1.5 million Mexican pesos (MXN) to finance community projects	12
3. Promote partnerships with at least 2 organizations (government and civil society) to address specific community issues	12
Future plans.....	13
Dissemination	14
Project director's opinion.....	14
Evaluation	15



COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION STRATEGIC PLANNING AND STRENGTHENING OF MUNICIPAL FUNCTION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PANTELHÓ, CHIAPAS

NARRATIVE REPORT – AUGUST 29TH 2014
REFERENCE NUMBER P3024374

PROJECT SUMMARY

In June 2013, Fondo Para la Paz, I.A.P. committed itself with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to settle and implement its community development methodologies in Pantelhó, Chiapas, with the long-term objective to improve the livelihoods and well-being level of one of the poorest and most marginalized municipalities of Mexico.

Our action is based on the principle that every human being is able, responsible and deserves to influence every process that determinates its future. We work as close as possible to the communities to build mutual trust and design projects that respond exactly to the needs and desires of the people we work with. Achieving this in Pantelhó was a challenging contest: the Altos region of Chiapas carries the weight of a long history of discrimination and human right abuses with episodes of extreme violence as during the repression of the Zapatista movement of 1994. Besides, State failure to develop the area and the repetition of swindling and fake development projects generated a widespread defiance towards foreign initiatives.

Despite these difficulties, we succeeded in completing most of the objectives to which had committed in our agreement with the Kellogg foundation, namely:

1. Establish a long term involvement of Fondo Para la Paz in Pantelhó
 - 1.1. Establish a local office in the municipality of Pantelhó.
 - 1.2. Identify main stakeholders in the area (civic organizations, authorities, community leaders) and sign partnership agreements.
2. Promote community organization for the identification and prioritization of local problems and project elaboration
 - 2.1. Form and train 5 Community Planning Committees
 - 2.2. Carry a participative development needs assessment
 - 2.3. Define development priorities for the selected communities
 - 2.4. Carry 5 participatory planning workshops for project definition
 - 2.5. Elaborate 5 community projects answering to identified needs
3. Mobilize investment to finance community projects
 - 3.1. Mobilize 1.5 million Mexican pesos to finance community projects
4. Promote partnerships with other organizations (government and civil society) to address specific community issues
 - 4.1. Promote partnership with at least 2 organizations to address community needs

As we write these lines, 5 communities gathering a total estimated population of 1,100 persons (205 families) are working with Fondo Para la Paz. In these communities, men and women have defined their development priorities, on which mixed planning committees have worked to propose concrete development projects. Fifteen women volunteered as promoters to assist FPP in the capacitation of beneficiaries and project monitoring.

PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

The Following section proposes an overview of the project realizations that allowed Fondo Para la Paz to fulfill its commitment with the Kellogg Foundation. After a short reminder of the approved objectives, it will present succinctly the main activities that were carried since the project started, then enter into details of the realization of our targets.

SUMMARY OF CARRIED ACTIVITIES

The project officially started in June 2013. The first five month were mainly dedicated to pre-assessment and administrative activities prior to the recruitment of a project team, under the direct management of the Community Development Coordinator in FPP's central offices. The selection of the project director – with the title of Regional Manager – lasted from August to October: 40 applications were analyzed until the recruitment was finalized in November. Actual operations, as presented in the Table 1, started from this point.

After a period of training and documentation on the regional context, the Regional Manager for Chiapas was in charge of investigating the opportunities of intervention in the different communities of Pantelhó, building partnerships with other organizations, organizing the implantation of a local office and recruiting the local team to carry the operations in the field. Exploratory missions were organized in December and February, to acquire a better knowledge of the communities and establish first contacts with local authorities and civil society organizations.

Options for our physical implantation were analyzed with FPP's Community Development Coordinator and a general strategy was set to develop our interventions. Premises for office installation were rented in February. Accommodation works, furnishing and equipment took place in the following months, and the office was totally operational at the end of May.

A Regional Supervisor was recruited in March, and took its office in April. Our State coordinator from Oaxaca completed its training the same month and Fondo Para la Paz was formally presented in the preselected communities. At the end of the first week of May, official collaboration agreements were signed with 5 communities.

Relations with other organizations intensified during the same period. The municipality of Pantelhó officially committed itself to support FPP's operations at the end of March. In April, Fondo Para la Paz integrated an initiative gathering civil society organizations working for the development of the Altos region of Chiapas. A proposal for a long-term project gathering Fondo Para la Paz and 8 other organizations to improve nutrition in primary schools and local food production is currently being designed, and its first phase will be proposed for funding at the end of August.

The project team was completed in May with a community technician and participative needs assessments were carried in the 5 communities under agreement. These meetings also allowed the formation of Community Planning Committees and the recruitment of 15 volunteer community promoters. As we write these lines 5 concrete development projects have been issued, or are at the point to be issued, from participative planning sessions.

Table 1: retroactive chronogram of carried activities since November 2013

[illegible]

1. ESTABLISH A LONG TERM INVOLVEMENT OF FONDO PARA LA PAZ IN PANTELHÓ

FPP doesn't focus on specific thematic issue like water, food security or sanitation. Our model of intervention focuses on geographic areas and people, in a long-term, sustainable development process. The implantation of Operational Centers at a maximal distance of two hours from the most remote communities we attend is an import part of our strategy to maintain a close relationship with the populations we work with. We also believe especially important to identify and establish good contacts with the stakeholders already present in the areas we settle in.

1.1. ESTABLISH A LOCAL OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PANTELHÓ

1.1.1. PREMISES RENTAL AND EQUIPMENT

Finding a proper place for our Operational Center was one of the main objectives of the reconnaissance visits carried in Pantelhó in December and February. It was determined that only the administrative center of the municipality was able to provide the facilities required to communicate between the local and general offices. 6 alternatives were examined, and the actual place we chose was selected with a special attention to the following criteria:

- *Visible and accessible location.* This criterion appeared important to dissipate doubts within the population about the reality of our implantation. We thus chose to establish the office directly in the town's main entrance on the main street.
- *Space and services:* Our Operational Centers must be able to welcome office activities, but also to provide basic accommodation services when required for occasional visitors or members of the local team.
- *Extension possibilities.* At its maximum capacity, an Operational Center must be able to attend up to 2,000 families, with a local team between 6 and 7 permanent members (Figure 1). The selected premises will allow further expansion of the lodging and office capacity.
- *Safety.* Criminality in Pantelhó is reportedly high, and carjacking appears to be especially frequent. This reason drove us to choose a building with an inner courtyard to park safely our vehicle.

The vehicle we chose is a crew-cab pick-up Nissan NP300, model 2014, one of the most commonly found in the area. Minor modifications such as changing rims and tires will nevertheless be necessary to adapt to the difficult road conditions in Pantelhó.



Adjustments were necessary to upgrade electricity and plumbing networks to provide satisfactory working and living conditions. Local workers were hired for this purpose and preference was accorded to local providers for the realization of office furniture. The center was fully equipped and operational at the end of May.

1.1.2. TEAM CONSTITUTION

All FPP projects share a common team organization. In central offices, the regional manager, under the direct responsibility of the Community development coordinator, is in charge of the administrative supervision, reporting and fundraising for projects at State level. He works in close relation with the state coordinator, whose responsibilities encompass forging of alliances at State level and the strategic planning of activities carried on the field.

The Regional supervisor is the principal executive in charge of an Operational Center. He manages the budget, organizes the

Figure 1: Operating model and population coverage of an Operational Center at its maximal capacity

activities carried by the community technicians and is responsible of the regularity and quality of community planning, project execution and monitoring. He can manage up to 5 community technicians, which are FPP's representative in the communities we attend. The technicians guide the Community Planning Committees sessions, report the results, participate to the formulation of projects and steer their execution at community level.

During the recruitment process, preference was given to applicants from Pantelhó or one of the neighboring communities. We considered important indeed, that all our local staff¹ would speak at least one of the indigenous languages of the area, and would know have an intimal knowledge of the main issues that attain the communities we work with.

Uvaldo Gómez Vázquez entered the team as regional supervisor the first week of April. He comes from the Tzotzil community of Yabteclum, Chenalhó, holds a BSc in sustainable development, and has an extensive experience in community planning and project management.

Our community technician, Juan Carlos Jiménez López, entered the team the first week of May. He was born in the Tzeltal community of San Francisco de Asís, Pantelhó and holds a Bachelor degree in Culture and Languages. He didn't have experience in community development but proved good learning and communication skills.

Both were trained directly in the field thanks to the support of more experimented FPP members. Complementary capacitation sessions are carried regularly by the project director. The team showed rapid progression in the understanding and implementation of FPP methodologies.

1.2. IDENTIFY MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder identification was carried in parallel to other activities along the process of FPP's implantation in Pantelhó. We identified four main categories of actors with a potential effect on our activities: administrative authorities, civil society organizations, educational institutions and economic actors. A directory have been constituted and updated through time, completed with relevant observations on their activities, relations or ay element of interest.

Administrative authorities at municipal level were contacted during our first visit to Pantelhó. A cooperation agreement between Fondo Para la Paz and the municipality, was signed on the 27th of March 2014. Since then we maintained constant relations, mostly to share information. The possibility to associate to carry specific projects was discussed several times and we are presently considering submitting joint applications to get State or Federal funding for community infrastructure projects.

A few non-profit organizations such as the Leon XII Foundation, DIFA A.C. or the Institute of Sustainable Development in Mesoamerica (IDESMAC) have opened programs in Pantelhó. Most of them actually work with reduced groups of beneficiaries in the administrative center area. Among civil society organizations, two actors have direct and significant impacts on FPP's activities:

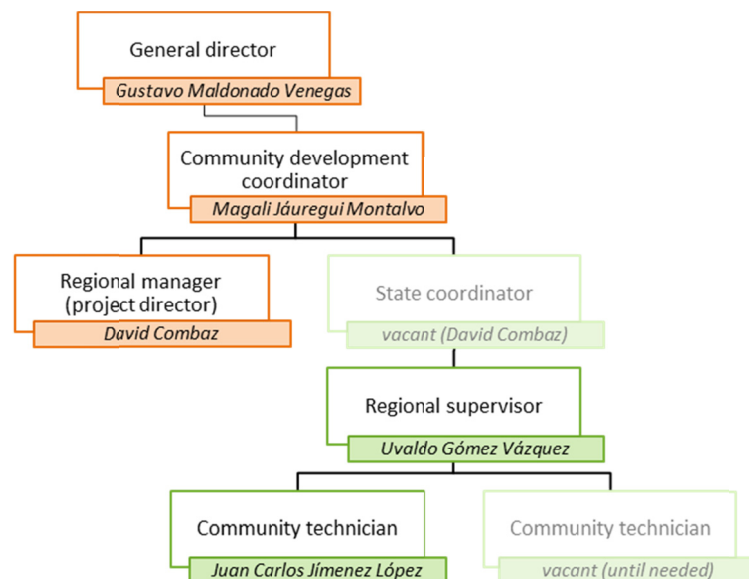


Figure 2: Project team organization. Positions located in central offices are marked in red; positions located in the field are marked in green.

¹ Usually this requirement is limited to community technicians.



Figure 4: In San Fernando



Figure 4: FPP's Vehicle in San Fernando

- IDESMAC has carried a 3-years long multidisciplinary diagnostic at municipal scale and generated “territorial agreements” with a number of leaders from diverse. These agreements define a 20 years action plan, which realization should be promoted by a municipal development council. FPP and IDESMAC have worked together since the first moments of our presence in Chiapas, sharing information to better articulate our respective activities.

- DICADEM is part of the Council of Development Agencies of Chiapas (CONADECH). It displayed the will to implement development projects in various communities of Pantelhó with participative methodologies similar to those we promote. To avoid competition or project replication in the communities where we might coincide we agreed (1) to coordinate our interventions and (2) to always work with the same Community Development Committees.

We set the principle of punctual collaborations with the Intercultural University of Chiapas (UNICH) during our visit in San Cristóbal de las Casas in December. It proved to be of valuable help to circulate our job offers for the supervisor and community technician position, and stays open for further collaboration.

Regular interactions have been established with primary and secondary schools in the communities of El Roblar Chistontic y San Fernando, where projects specifically dedicated to improve the water supply for the pupils are

being implemented with funding from the Banorte Foundation.

Outside Chiapas, other educational institutions are being associated to the project, and notably the Technologic Institute of Superior Studies of Monterrey (ITESM) which provided us support to evaluate the results of our project.

Among the identified economic actors of Pantelhó, the local coffee and honey cooperative and a group of textile artisans with links to the communities we work with have been identified as possible future partners. To avoid raising untimely expectations, no formal relations have yet been established with them.

2. PROMOTE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF LOCAL PROBLEMS AND PROJECT ELABORATION

Community organization is the keystone of FPP’s action. We define development as an empowerment process that allows people to choose freely their collective goals and the means to reach them. In this perspective, our projects are not only designed to improve life conditions but also to generate leadership, organization and cooperation within the populations.

FPP has developed methodologies to achieve this, codified in a Community Intervention Plan (CIP) shared by all Operational Centers. Two steps are detailed in the CIP to guide our action: (1) community insertion, which designate the processes by which we create a working relationship with a population represented by a Community Planning Committee, and (2) participatory planning, which allows the creation of development projects answering precisely to the needs identified by the population.

2.1. FORM AND TRAIN 5 COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEES

Community Planning Committees (CPC) are composed by an equal number of men and women, elected by the population gathered in assembly and must comprise a president, a secretary and up to 4 vocals. FPP's technicians are also considered as a permanent member of those committees. The formation of CPC can occur more or less rapidly depending on the community insertion process, and the availability of the population. In the case of Pantelhó it took us three months, from February to May.

Reconnaissance visits and office analysis had led us to prefer communities close to the administrative center to facilitate transportation and logistics, to limit security issues, and to ensure visibility to our projects. In March and April, we visited 12 localities² to present Fondo Para la Paz, first to local authorities, then to the whole population. The communities of Nueva Jerusalén, El Roblar Chixtontik y El Porvenir accepted immediately the principle of cooperation with Fondo Para la Paz. We had to discard El Porvenir because of strong political divisions in the population that would have jeopardized the neutrality of our intervention.

In San Fernando, we benefitted from presence of an organized group that promoted strongly our insertion in the community. Local authorities were nevertheless difficult to reach and retarded the signature of an official cooperation agreement. Yab Muktana and San Francisco de Asís responded positively but required various meetings take a final decision. The other communities remained skeptical about the reality of our intervention and chose to postpone their decision until concrete results would reach the field. The last cooperation agreement was signed in the first week of May, and we started working on participative needs assessments in the 5 communities.



Figure 7: Institutional presentation of FPP in San José Buenavista tercero



Figure 7: Our first community promoters, San Fernando



Figure 7: PRIorization of development needs with women in El Roblar Chixtontik

² San Martín Caballero, La Esmeralda, Victoria, Nueva Jerusalén, Yab Muktana, Guadalupe la Lámina, San José Buenavista tercero, San Francisco de Asís, El Roblar Chixtontik, El Porvenir, San Fernando y San Joaquín

The formation of the CPCs and the identification of our community promoters took place during these meetings, and required various sessions to ensure that all elected volunteers were really willing to commit in the planning process, and that gender equity was respected. This process took the most part of May. We considered that all 5 CPC were fully operative the first week of June.

2.2. CARRY A PARTICIPATIVE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND

2.3. DEFINE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE SELECTED COMMUNITIES

These two specific objectives were carried together and will be described as a single process.

The definition of development needs and priorities is the first step of the participatory planning process. Unlike other planning exercises, it is only carried once every two to three years, and involves the entire community gathered in assembly to set the development goals to reach during this period of time. These sessions hold special importance for us, as they allow detecting parameters such as the presence of natural leaders³, gender-based divergences on development issues, or the organization level of the community.

At least two sessions are necessary. During the first one, all men and women establish separately a list of 7 problems they consider as critical limits to their well-being. Problems are then compared by pairs, to decide which is most urgent to solve. Every time a problem “wins” a contest, it scores one point. 21 points are distributed this way. Problems are finally sorted by decreasing order of importance and draws are submitted to a new vote to get a provisional list of development priorities for each gender group.

The second session confronts the results of each gender group and FPP attributes 7 points of importance to the mentioned problems to express its own perception of development priorities. Scores are eventually

Table 2: Development priorities issued from the 5 communities. In italics the problems already treated in participatory planning workshops

#	El Roblar Chixtontik	San Francisco de Asís	Yab Muktana	Nueva Jerusalén	San Fernando
1	<i>Insufficient water supply</i>	<i>Insalubrious houses</i>	<i>Insalubrious houses</i>	<i>Smoky houses</i>	<i>No sanitation</i>
2	Insalubrious houses	Insufficient water supply	Insufficient familiar income	Low coffee production	Insufficient water supply
3	Smoky houses	Insufficient quality of coffee	Low coffee production	Insufficient familiar income	Low coffee production
4	Insufficient familiar income	Impractical houses	Smoky houses	Insufficient water supply	Insufficient quality of coffee
5	Insufficient quality of coffee	Exhaustion of women	Promiscuity	Insufficient child nutrition	Smoky houses
6	No sanitation	Smoky houses	Insufficient water supply	No community hall	Insufficient healthcare access
7	Insufficient food security	Insufficient familiar income	Insufficient sanitation	Insalubrious houses	Promiscuity
8		Insufficient healthcare access	No entertainment infrastructures	No laundry washing place	No community hall
9		Bad pathways	Insufficient child nutrition	Low water quality	Insufficient familiar income
10		Insufficient child nutrition		Bad pathways	Insufficient food security
11				Insufficient healthcare access	

³ Hence the decision to form CPC during these sessions.

summed, draws are resolved, and the final list is established for the whole community.

These exercises were successfully realized in the 5 communities in May and during the first week of June. In three communities, additional session appeared necessary to clarify specific points with one or both gender groups, especially when a given problem appeared more than once under different formulations, e.g. “insufficient quality of coffee production” and “need for coffee dryer”. This example also illustrates a regular tendency to define a problem as the lack of a preconceived solution. The final results of these sessions are summarized in Table 2.

1.1. CARRY 5 PARTICIPATORY PLANNING WORKSHOPS FOR PROJECT DEFINITION

Participative project design is at the core of the empowerment process we want to generate in the communities. Our methodologies are strongly inspired by logical framework methods, and seek to transfer to the CPC the competence and responsibility to analyze a given problematic situation, explore rational solutions and design feasible projects to solve it.

Planning sessions are carried weekly with the CPC and relevant community commissions, and animated by the Community Technician. The standard process involves 6 steps, as displayed in Figure 8, and the results are systematically archived to feed final project documents.

The whole process was completed successfully in Yab Muktana, San Francisco de Asís y Nueva Jerusalén. In San Fernando, although the six steps have been treated in CPC meetings, it appeared necessary to organize a seventh session to analyze new technologic alternatives, as we had doubts on the sustainability and economic feasibility of the sanitation project imagined by the community.

In El Roblar Chixtontik, the process is temporary blocked at its fifth step, due to the recent approbation of public investments to build water supply and education infrastructure. In one hand the subsequent works strongly reduced the availability of the CPC and drinking water commission, and in the other hand the concurrence of a public project cast doubts on the pertinence of the solutions imagined before.

Another factor that slowed the planning process in both communities was the execution by FPP of an additional project aimed at ensuring safe and sufficient water distribution in primary schools.

1.2. ELABORATE 5 COMMUNITY PROJECTS ANSWERING TO IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Project documents and organizing the information gathered in participatory planning sessions are currently being completed. As we systematically archived the results of every meeting with the CPC, the level of completion of these documents is globally high.

In Nueva Jerusalén, the community decided to equip houses with “ecologic stoves” allowing a reduction of firewood consumption and the efficient evacuation of smoke to the outside. The community committed to provide all tools and workforce to realize the construction. This community participation was estimated to represent about 20% of the provisional budget.

In Yab Muktana y San Francisco de Asís, similar projects were designed for houses equipment with concrete floors, to reduce contamination risks and facilitate systematic houses cleaning. Here again communities agreed to provide tools and workforce, which represent up to 20 of the estimated costs.

Documents for San Fernando and El Roblar Chixtontik are less advanced, and the exact nature of the realizations to be done is still uncertain.

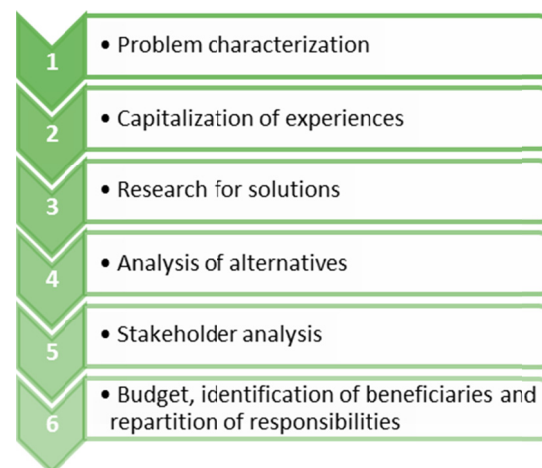


Figure 8: Participatory planning steps for project design

2. MOBILIZE \$1.5 MILLION MEXICAN PESOS (MXN) TO FINANCE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Financial sustainability is a permanent preoccupation for our projects. A given Operational Center usually rely on one major donor (WKKF in the case of Pantelhó) to finance operation costs, and raise funds from other partners to finance specific project realization, with the possibility to combine projects from diverse communities or Operational Centers.

In Pantelhó, the fact community planning sessions ended recently or are still in process limited fundraising below our expectations. It is nevertheless worth mentioning that:

- The Kellogg Foundation agreed to keep supporting our operations in Pantelhó and included an amount of \$1.8 million MXN to finance “material for domestic infrastructure and community equipment”. This represents an investment on project realization of \$4,500 Mexican pesos per family for a total of 400 families.
- FPP obtained a \$560,000 MXN grant from the Banorte Foundation to ensure sufficient and safe water supply in community schools. Of this grant, Pantelhó received a share of \$36,000 MXN. The project is actually in execution in San Fernando and El Roblar Chixtontik.
- Another two-year donation from the National Monte de Piedad to finance integral domestic water management projects is currently under management. Pantelhó should receive a total of \$240,000 MXN of it.

3. PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS WITH AT LEAST 2 ORGANIZATIONS (GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY) TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC COMMUNITY ISSUES

One important element we promote in communities is the necessity to identify its own competences and limits to set alliance strategies when required. The Altos region of Chiapas benefits from a strong presence of development or environmental NGOs. Our domain of expertise is community organization and planning. Other CSOs have better knowledge on specific issues such as water sanitation, food production territory planning at wider scale.

An early concern was thus to get in touch with such organizations and build ourselves a directory of potential allies, which was made possible by joining the “Circle of Allies” an initiative designed for this specific purpose and piloted by the organization IDESMAC. Two levels of cooperation emerged from our participation to these meetings:

- Bilateral cooperation schemes: for example, the organization Cántaro Azul, A.C. helped us to carry a diagnostic of drinking water supply in San Fernando and might be associated to our future actions to improve the situation.
- Multilateral cooperation: FPP integrated a joint initiative with 8 other OSC’s of the Circle of Allies to design and execute an ambitious project aimed at connecting local producers and school canteens to improve the nutritional status of children.

In addition, we strongly invest on our relations with the municipality. Since our establishment and the signature of our cooperation agreement in March, the authorities regularly support us with administrative acknowledgement, logistics and information. We recently entered in discussion to propose budgetary cooperation, and plan to present joint applications for State funding of community infrastructure. Besides, we are considering collaboration on waste management issues at municipal level, in which FPP would support the realization of diagnostic studies and the elaboration of an action plan.

FUTURE PLANS

The principal challenge of our first 6 month of operation in Pantelhó was to succeed in our implantation, i.e. to open an efficient operational center, to hire and train a local team to FPP's methods, to build trust with small number of communities, and to gain visibility and legitimacy on the field and with other actors. Even if there is still room for improvement, we can consider it as sufficiently advanced to move forward.

The main challenges that await us for the next year of operation are:

- To increase our population coverage, up to 400 families, i.e. 20% of the center's maximum capacity. A new phase of community insertion will take place in the autumn of 2014, with a target of 7 new communities. Contacts have already contacted with potential beneficiaries and helped define two strategic axes: (1) increase our presence and visibility in the main access roads to the administrative center (2) expand to new areas, more distant and marginalized. Depending on the results, a third expansion phase could be organized for next winter or spring.
- To reach higher quality standards for our work in the field and of the data processed in the Operational Center. Part of this process will occur automatically as the local team and CPC members build experience and knowledge, but we determined that special efforts will be necessary to:
 - Enhance our animation techniques to improve the participation of "low profile" CPC members, and especially women
 - Enhance the reactivity and proactivity of the local team to avoid confusions and accelerate the decision making process in communities
 - Transfer a higher responsibilities to community leaders
 - Get a better access to decision-making processes not directly related to our own development projects within the communities we attend
- To position FPP as an acknowledged reference in community development matters in Pantelhó and at the regional scale. This notably implies tighten bonds with the municipality to get involved in its territorial development strategies, and reinforce our participation to joint initiatives with other development NGOs.

Four elements should help the realization of these challenges:

1. First, the integration of a State coordinator to the team, planned for the autumn of 2014, will ensure a better monitoring of the quality of the data produced during the planning process and a better integration to concrete project. Besides, the State coordinator will dedicate an important part of his time to the establishment and reinforcement of alliances with local authorities and other OSCs. This will also allow the project director to focus on fundraising and general project administration tasks.
2. The realization of a complete community census, which is planned for the next month of operation, should provide solid material to establish a concrete baseline of the development situation in all localities we attend, and thus allow us improve the pertinence and focus of our interventions
3. FPP's participation in the School Nutrition Circle project, in coordination with other organizations of the Circle of Allies, will provide a concrete situation to enhance the establishment of territorial and thematic alliances strategies and help positioning Fondo Para la Paz as a reference actor for community organization in Pantelhó. In addition, the nature of the project itself will increase the level of territorial coherence of our actions, and give way to a better articulation among projects realized in the field. In a middle term perspective, it is hoped that this project will also have a positive effect to reinforce strongly the responsibilities and leadership of community leader, as

they would enter in direct negotiation with local authorities in the framework of Municipal Development Councils.

4. The thematic alliance with the municipality on solid waste management in Pantelhó should also be an important factor to reinforce and stabilize our relationships with local authorities.

DISSEMINATION

Transparency is one of the fundamental principles that dictate all FPP's operations. All activities carried by Fondo Para la Paz have been carefully documented and are available on request in the central offices and in the Operational Center.

On the field, the communication with the communities is ensured by the community technician, which systematically reports the progresses and issues of our activities to the CPC and promoters. The communication with municipal authorities is under the responsibility of the Regional Supervisor, which meets with the general secretary or the president of the municipal government twice a month to share general information about the project and discuss specific matters. Regular visits of the project director also provide opportunity to clarify specific issues when required with the communities and the municipal authorities alike.

External communication on the project is processed through institutional mechanisms such as the diffusion of our annual reports and the actualization of our internet communication platforms.

Besides, workshops and meetings with other organizations, such as the reunions of the Circle of Allies or the annual meeting "Seeding Alliances" organized by the Kellogg foundation allow disseminating general information about FPP's activities in the field.

Plans are currently made to improve the external communication of the Operational Center, notably through virtual social networks.

PROJECT DIRECTOR'S OPINION

Returning to the Altos de Chiapas after 10 years of absence had a symbolic weight for Fondo Para la Paz. FPP was precisely created to the populations affected by the conflict generated by the Zapatist movement of 1994, in the early times of the rebellion, and Pantelhó was one of the most affected territories in this perspective, as it received a large influx of refugees from the neighboring municipalities.

The resulting situation was really challenging for our settlement, as we had to work with a mosaic of small communities, with a great heterogeneity of languages, religion, political sensibilities, land tenure and internal organization. In addition, the weight of a violent history, the structural defiance towards institutions, the experience of repeated frauds and abuses and the predominance of sexist tradition were as many obstacles we had to tackle.

However, and despite there is still room for improvement, our strategies proved successful and we did establish good working relations with the 5 communities we attend. The most determinant factors that helped us to achieve this were:

- The actual implantation of a (very) visible operational center in Pantehó, and the regularity of our presence in communities, which allowed us to dissipate doubts about the reality of our commitment, and distinguish ourselves from organizations operating remotely.
- The cultural proximity of a local team fully identified as part of the territory, and its commitment to the institution objectives.

- The regularity of visits of members from other Operational Centers, which displayed the institutional experience and solidity of Fondo Para la Paz, and the reality of its commitment to indigenous development.
- The early realization of a concrete development project in two communities that finally made tangible the results of our methodologies.

This last point is particularly illustrative of one of the main limitation we are confronted with on the field: our participatory planning methodologies imply an important investment in time for the communities, and we were regularly exposed to critics about the fact we organize a lot of reunions before bringing concrete benefits. This type of comments was expected, and is symptomatic of the victimized posture we generally encounter at the beginning of our operations. Communities are used to be considered in a paternalistic way by State institutions and beg for support.

Our objective is to change this state of mind to generate pride and self-organization, but this process takes time. Constant communication efforts are made to overcome this difficulty, and we managed to maintain the participation at a satisfactory level. It nevertheless adds a strong, constant pressure on the team. The soon execution of projects issued from the planning sessions should help taking a decisive step in the resolution of this preoccupation.

EVALUATION

An external evaluation mission was carried by a team of assessor from the Technologic Institute of Superior Studies of Monterrey. The results of this mission are provided in a separate report.

FPP PROJECT TEAM

Community development coordinator:

Magali Alejandra Jáuregui Montalvo

Project Director:

David Combaz

Project supervisor:

Uvaldo de Jesús Gómez Vázquez

Community technician:

Juan Carlos Jiménez López

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Verónica Fernandez de Castro

WKKF Program officer for Chiapas

Central offices

Fondo Para la Paz, I.A.P.

Palo Santo #16

col. Lomas Altas

C.P. 11950

del. Miguel Hidalgo

D.F. México

Chiapas operations center

Fondo Para la Paz, I.A.P.

Calle Ignacio Zaragoza s/n

Barrio de Guadalupe

C.P 29880

Pantelhó, Chiapas



Please send information request to:

david.combaz@fondoparalapaz.org

+52 (55) 5570 2791 ext. 131

www.fondoparalapaz.org