

Executive Summary

The Peacebuilding Project, known as *Proyecto Tejiendo Paz* in Spanish, is a five-year project focused on the Western Highlands region in Guatemala. The project goal is to reduce social conflict and violence and improve social cohesion and peacebuilding in the Western Highlands. This annual report covers Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, from October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019.

The issue of external migration from Guatemala to Mexico and the United States continues to be a priority issue for the United States Government (USG) and the Government of Guatemala (GoG). While the Peacebuilding Project was not originally designed to specifically address migration, the project recognizes that social conflict is often a driver of migration and the migration can be trigger of further conflict. The project is well positioned to address some of the root causes of migration, specifically conflict and violence, particularly given that the project area of intervention has some of the highest rates of outward migration in the country. Actions taking consideration of migration are included in the narrative of this report.

Summary of Key Activities

Community Selection: Given that the project was unable to start community entry until all 15 municipalities and 195 communities were identified, a comprehensive and participatory geographic selection process was the primary activity this fiscal year. The Peacebuilding Project

implemented a two-tiered selection process, first by municipality and then by community, utilizing a selection index comprised of three scales: 1) presence of conflict and vulnerability; 2) social and political will; and 3) potential and opportunities for



impact. Once the 15 municipalities were approved by USAID, the Peacebuilding Project team began the community selection process to identify the 195 communities. The community selection process was divided into two phases, one that consisted of meetings with community representatives, members of *Consejos Municipales de Desarrollo (COMUDE)*, and another that involved a participatory activity with civil society organizations, governmental institutions, and citizens (*World Café*). A total of 612 citizens, including 209 women, participated in this process.



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Strategic Communication: Strategic communications is a fully integrated component of the Peacebuilding Project design. As such, the Peacebuilding Project developed a strategic communications strategy to guide program communications across the three objectives. The strategy includes the following objectives: 1) raise awareness of the work being carried out by the Peacebuilding Project in 130 communities in four departments in the Western Highlands of Guatemala; 2) disseminate accurate, clear and concise information on the three Peacebuilding Project objectives; and 3) publicize and share the main achievements and impact of the Peacebuilding Project. Three cross-cutting principals – conflict sensitivity, gender, and empowerment of indigenous communities – are fully integrated into the communications plan. In addition, the topic of migration will be integrated into communication materials as appropriate and when relevant.

Community Implementation: A strong community implementation team is key to the success of Peacebuilding Project activities at the community level. As such, the project dedicated significant time to recruiting and training the community facilitators this fiscal year and will continue to do so throughout the life of the project. The Peacebuilding Project implemented a 10-day training for community supervisors and facilitators to strengthen their capacity in key areas prior to community entry. Six people completed the training, including one supervisor (male) and five facilitators (three women and two men).



Following the completion of the community selection process, the Peacebuilding Project began designing the community entry strategy. The team has identified an initial proposal for a staggered municipal and community entry approach; the project will enter four municipalities in October 2019, up to five in late FY2020, and the final six in FY2021. The exact order and timing of entry in the second and third groups is subject to change based on the context and lessons learned from community entry in the first group as well as available funding. If there is uncertainty around continued funding, the project will continue to implement as planned in the first group of municipalities. The project currently has sufficient funding to complete one round of the community implementation cycle in the communities in the first four municipalities and will not enter additional



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communities unless at least one round of the community implementation cycle can be completed.

Partnerships: Although the implementation of community visions (CVs) will not begin until FY2020, the Peacebuilding Project was proactive in identifying potential local organizations that can support actions prioritized by the community visions. In FY2019, the project published a Request for Information (RFI) for organizations to register their interest in the project. The project met with 15 potential grantees in San Marcos and Huehuetenango and will finish the outreach process in early FY2020 in Totonicapán and Quiché. As part of efforts to engage the private sector, the Peacebuilding Project conducted outreach with CentraRSE, the largest coalition of private sector companies in Guatemala that supports corporate social responsibility (CSR) and other private sector representatives.

Institutional Strengthening: This fiscal year, the Peacebuilding Project finalized the structure of the Consultative Committee, which was approved by USAID. The Consultative Committee is a mechanism to facilitate the advancement of the project objectives and will provide technical advice on issues related to peacebuilding and reduction of social conflict and violence. The Consultative Committee is an important mechanism for the sustainability of the project and as such includes members from different sectors with diverse experiences. The first Consultative Committee meeting was held in Guatemala City during FY19Q4. The meeting included a discussion on the role of the council, a presentation of the project and a discussion on the challenges that the incoming government will face in addressing social conflict in Guatemala.

During FY2020, the Peacebuilding Project also implemented activities related to strengthening GoG capacity and coordination in identifying, preventing, addressing and responding to local conflict. The project began by implementing a participatory needs assessment and stakeholder mapping of both government institutions and social actors working to transform social conflicts. One of the initial findings of the GoG assessment refers to the absence of a coherent government strategy to address social conflict. In response, the Peacebuilding Project implemented two Inter-Institutional Meetings, which are



designed as a space to promote discussion and coordination between government institutions on the causes of and potential solutions to specific types of social conflict. Once the project is implementing in the communities, the Inter-Institutional Meetings will focus on the conflicts identified by the community implementation team and linking government institutions with communities.



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Challenges and Opportunities

- Consolidating the Peacebuilding Project consortium: The project consortium was originally comprised of four partner organizations located in four different cities, presenting challenges around coordination and arriving at a shared vision for the project. As a result, Creative and Save the Children reached the decision to dissolve the partnership. Creative also decided not to open an office in Quiché in FY2020. Creative is confident that along with ProPaz and PartnersGlobal, the project team will be able to effectively implement impactful activities in the target communities. Consolidating project operations and personnel in Quetzaltenango has allowed the project to reinforce and strengthen the community implementation team.
- Smaller community implementation team available for community selection: Only nine members of the community implementation team were hired in FY19Q1, rather than the full team of 20 people. In response, the Creative administrative teams participated as active members in the community selection process. As a result, there is significant buy-in from the entire team on the selection of the project target municipalities and communities. In addition, by waiting to hire the rest of the community implementation team, language needs have been more accurately identified and recruited for.
- Change in municipal and national level government authorities: The first year of project implementation took place during an electoral period, resulting in turnover of municipal and national level government authorities that will take office in January 2020. The Peacebuilding Project team designed the community entry strategy to take into consideration these challenges. The fact that community entry is taking place following the elections means that the project will have continuity in working with only one municipal government. The strong relationships established with GoG authorities in FY2019 should facilitate continuity of efforts under Objective 3.

Indicator Data

- Indicator 0.5: Number of people participating in project activities that address the peaceful management and resolution of conflicts: During FY2020, a total of 730 people (219 women, 444 men and 67 unidentified) participated in project activities that addressed the peaceful management and resolution of conflicts.
- Indicator 3.0: Number of trainings, exchanges, and coordination meetings with GoG and/ or non-governmental organizations related to preventing, managing, and resolving conflict: During FY2019, a total of three trainings, exchanges, and coordination meetings with GoG and/ or non-governmental organizations related to preventing, managing, and resolving conflict were held.



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