

Executive Summary

Summary of Key Activities

Geographic Expansion: A main focus of the community implementation team this quarter was assessing which municipalities to enter in the second and third entry groups. In March, the project visited 11 municipalities and carried out 70 interviews with key actors. The project plans to enter six new municipalities (bringing the total to 10) and approximately 50 communities (bringing the total to approximately 77) in FY21Q3. The project plans on entering the third and final group of municipalities/ communities in FY22Q1. The additional municipalities are within the list of 15 already approved by USAID.

Institutional Strengthening: This quarter, the project developed important relationships with the Presidential Commission for Peace and Human Rights (*Comisión de Paz y Derechos Humanos*, COPADEH), Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerio de Gobernación*, MINGOB), and



Ministry of Energy and Mines (*Ministerio de Energía y Minas*, MEM). All three institutions are key for institutional strengthening efforts at the national level. As such, the project is in the process of developing Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with the three institutions as well as drafting requests for applications (RFAs) to respond to identified needs. The institutional strengthening effort will focus on reinforcing the capacity of personnel, developing institutional frameworks, and improving systems to perform core

functions sustainably and to continue to improve and develop over time. In the case of MEM, the validation of the ILO Convention 169 and consultation process will be a main priority.

This quarter, the newly formed Departmental Commission on Security and Conflict Management (*Comisión Departamental de Seguridad y Atención de Conflictos*, CODESAC) was integrated in Totonicapán with support from the Peacebuilding Project. With this achievement, the project is now working with CODESACs in all four departments. The project also supported the CODESACs in developing their annual operating plans.

Community and Municipal Implementation: Conflicts often disproportionately impact women and other vulnerable groups. During the month of March, in commemoration of International Women's Day, the project supported various activities that recognized the role of women in peacebuilding and conflict mitigation. Creative also published a success story on how the project helped restore water access to El Rancho, Chiantla¹. As the story notes, the burden of the scarcity of water in the community primarily

¹ <https://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/stories/water-for-el-rancho/?fbclid=IwAR0IK3NwAGV2GZUwCaWh-wKAgWt47ojbicxwd9ohzFY57oija8XMZI5jqmA>

fell to the women, who are often responsible for carrying water jugs up and down the steep hill from a natural water source at the base. “Before I had to carry the water, but now we have the water service,” says Matilde López García. “It is a great advantage to have the water pump, thanks to the people who organized themselves in the community and the support of institutions like [Tejiendo Paz].”



The Western Highlands suffer from high levels of domestic violence, and this issue is being exacerbated by the COVID-19 Crisis. In response, the Foundation for Education and Social Development (*Fundación de Educación y Desarrollo Social, FUEDESA*) implemented a communication campaign for the prevention of domestic violence that ran from November 18, 2020, to January 16, 2021, and was disseminated in 27 communities and four urban/ semi-urban areas of the projects target municipalities.



The campaign included 24 radio spots, 12 videos on social networks, and four radio shows, as well as posters, calendars, stickers, and banners

that were distributed to departmental and municipal governments, local authorities, and families. All communication pieces were designed in Spanish, K’iche’ and Mam. The estimated audience reached was 230,666 people between 10 and 70 years old.



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This quarter, Central American Institute of Studies for Social Democracy (*Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios para la Democracia Social, DEMOS*) completed the implementation of their small grant for the organization of a network of 46 *voceros juveniles* (28 women and 18 men) in the Western Highlands. The youth indicated that the training gave them new technological and communication skills that will help them to have more substantive participation in civic activities as well as give them an advantage in finding employment. The *voceros juveniles* network is a space for youth to have a voice to advocate for development and peacebuilding opportunities that benefit them and their peers.



Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Implementing effectively in the face of an evolving COVID-19 Crisis remains the biggest challenge. Most activities remain virtual, particularly at the national, departmental, and municipal levels, although some meetings are more effective in-person, and the team responds to those requests. Most staff continue to work remotely, although some come into the office as needed. The project is assessing how to responsibly increase implementation next quarter while ensuring the health and safety of project staff and participants. The lack of access to vaccines remains a concern.
- Some of the public officials engaging with project activities at departmental and municipal levels were removed from or left their positions. This required additional effort from the project to develop new relationships and train new people.
- A key lesson learned this quarter was the need to reduce the time between community vision development and the implementation of conflict mitigation strategies. This is particularly important given that due to delays in implementation, related both to funding restrictions and the COVID-19 Crisis, the project will have less time than originally anticipated in the second two groups of municipalities and communities.



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Indicator Data

During FY21 Q2:

- 50 women participated in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process.
- 390 unique individuals (134 women and 211 men) participated in activities addressing the peaceful management and resolution of conflict.
- 18 trainings, exchanges, and/or coordination meetings with GoG and/or non-governmental organizations related to preventing, managing, and resolving conflict were held.

