

Executive Summary

The Peacebuilding Project, known as *Proyecto Tejiendo Paz* in Spanish, is a 6.5-year (May 2018 – November 2024) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) cooperative agreement implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. (Creative) in partnership with approved subrecipients PartnersGlobal and ProPaz. The project is designed to reduce social conflict and violence and strengthen social cohesion, with a specific focus on the Western Highlands. The project addresses the underlying causes of social conflict by focusing on four general categories: 1) youth, gender, and families; 2) governance; 3) land; and 4) natural resources.

The main challenge faced by the project this fiscal year was that the project faced uncertainty around incremental funding, both the amount and timing. Per USAID's request, the Peacebuilding Project presented and received approval for FY21Q1-Q2 and FY21Q3 contingency plans that demonstrated the activities that the project was carrying out with the remaining funds. A FY21Q4 contingency plan was later submitted and approved following incremental funding received in May 2021. The project then received a total estimated amount (TEA) increase in September, which extended the period of performance by 18 months through November 2024. A second major challenge FY2021 was implementing effectively in the face of an evolving COVID-19 Crisis. Compliance with the COVID-19 prevention measures is still a challenge in communities, particularly maintaining social distancing and using masks. In addition, many communities still have very low vaccination rates.

The on-going COVID-19 Pandemic, uncertainty around funding, and the need to implement under contingency plans for the entire fiscal year limited the scope of project implementation and resulted in some indicators not being met. However, despite these challenges, the project was able to achieve important results that lay the ground for implementation over the next three years.

Summary of Key Achievements

Geographic expansion and requests for ongoing support: This fiscal year, the project expanded into six new municipalities, bringing the total to 10, and signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with each mayor (or his representative). The MOUs focus on strengthening municipal capacity for conflict management and peacebuilding, as well as providing a general framework for action between local authorities and the project. In addition, MOUs were re-signed with the four municipalities in which the project has already been working. The project team presented on advances to date to each city council. In two of the four municipalities, Chiantla and Tonicapán, the mayor requested Peacebuilding Project support in addressing conflicts in new communities. Please see the success story [USAID Peacebuilding Project Expands Coverage in the Western Highlands](#) for more information.

Building bridges between communities and governments to reduce conflict and violence: Implementing sustainable plans that address the drivers, structural and institutional causes, and contributing factors of social conflict, requires coordination with diverse Government of Guatemala (GoG) institutions and municipal governments who are responsible for public policies and services. A key success of the project has been facilitating coordination between government entities and rural communities, creating bridges between communities, local governments, and national entities which did not previously exist. For example, in response to a community vision

(CV) in the indigenous community of Tepán in San Pedro Necta, Huehuetenango, the Peacebuilding Project collaborated with the Municipal Commission for Food and Nutritional Security, the Municipal Women’s Offices (*Direcciones Municipal de la Mujer*, DMM), and Secretariat of Food and Nutritional Security (*Secretaria de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional*, SESAN), organized a three-part workshop with 40 women on weaving traditional Mayan patterns into footwear. The purpose of the workshop was to promote economic agency and eliminate barriers to participation. The women had also shared that they were experiencing discrimination; not being able to afford traditional clothing has prevented them from participating in leadership roles and decision making in their communities. The Peacebuilding Project supports women in strengthening their capacity as leaders so that they can take on more active roles in community decision-making and therefore in supporting the resolution of social conflict. Please see the success story [Guatemalan Women Protect Cultural Identity and Promote Gender Equity](#) for more information.

Strategic partnerships for impact, sustainability, and local ownership: The project has established successful alliances with more than 25 partners from different sectors, including community authorities, municipal and departmental governments, public institutions, civil society, indigenous organizations, the private sector and other international development agencies. These alliances have created spaces for collaborative work and have brought financial, technical, and in-kind resources that are contributing the projects objectives. These alliances have also positioned the project as a reliable and relevant partner in conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Respectful engagement with indigenous peoples and authorities to empower them as key actors for conflict transformation and peacebuilding: The project has maintained regular interaction with community mayors, ancestral authorities, midwives, and other indigenous leaders to address conflict across all four categories and in strengthening their capacity to address conflict in accordance with their worldview. The Peacebuilding Project design is intrinsically focused on engagement with indigenous peoples as project partners. The project area of intervention is predominantly indigenous, and the historic marginalization of indigenous peoples has resulted in communities that are particularly vulnerable to conflict and violence. The participation of indigenous peoples is essential for effective peacebuilding processes and conflict transformation. Indigenous authorities are key partners in resolving social conflict and preventing conflict from escalating into crisis and violence. Their ancestral knowledge, systems and practices are fundamental for the implementation of effective, alternative mechanism of dialogue, mediation, and negotiation. The Peacebuilding Project has intentionally recruited a community implementation team that is fluent in the indigenous languages where the project works. This is critical in ensuring that the identity and promotion of indigenous practices and rights is fully integrated into project implementation. This year, the project formed an Indigenous Advisory Group that provides Peacebuilding Project with advice, guidance, and feedback through respected leaders from different indigenous groups in the Western Highlands.



Strengthening departmental governments to address local conflict. Department governments are on the front line in addressing social conflict. They represent the GoG in the interior of the country and play a fundamental role in early, peaceful, and constructive responses to social conflict. Departmental Commissions on Security and Conflict Management (*Comisiones Departamental de Seguridad y Atención de Conflictos* (CODESACs) are spaces where representatives from different sectors and institutions meet to analyze social conflict and formulate coordinated strategies to respond to conflict. They are key in preventing the escalation of conflicts and the emergence of violence. The Peacebuilding Project successfully strengthened four CODESACs in in the early, peaceful, and constructive prevention of social conflict and violence.



Promoting consultations with indigenous peoples: The Peacebuilding Project provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) for the elaboration of the methodological procedures to socialize, receive feedback and validate the draft of the regulations for the consultations with indigenous people related to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169. According to ILO Convention 169, the government has the responsibility to apply the provisions of the convention, including consultations with indigenous peoples. In Guatemala, MEM is leading the process, ensuring government ownership and sustainability. Appropriate implementation of consultation mechanisms prevents conflict and violence and ensures respect for human rights.



Indicator Data

Please see Annex A_Peacebuilding Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Annual Report for an analysis of the indicator data. Key indicator data results during FY2021 include:

- Two (2) civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving United States Government (USG) assistance engaged in advocacy interventions.
- Ten (10) youth-led initiatives to prevent or reduce violence and conflict, or promote social development, were implemented with USG assistance.
- Three (3) activities designed to promote or strengthen the civic participation of women were implemented by the Peacebuilding Project.
- A total of 592 local women participated in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process supported with USG assistance.
- A total of 3194 unique individuals (1360 women and 1834 men) participated in project activities that addressed the peaceful management and resolution of conflicts.
- A total of 547 citizens were engaged in cooperative community dialogue.
- Forty-seven (47) women were reached by a USG funded intervention providing gender-based violence (GBV) services.

- Fifteen (15) community strategies were implemented to address identified sources of conflict during FY2021.
- 100 percent of those strategies were implemented with external support.
- Eighty-three (83) trainings, exchanges, and coordination meetings with GoG and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) related to preventing, managing, and resolving conflict took place.
- Eight-five (85) national and local authorities (governmental and ancestral) and non-governmental actors demonstrated increased capacity to respond to and resolve conflicts at the local, municipal, and/ or national levels.