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PEACEBUILDING PROJECT

May 2018 – November 2024

BUDGET: \$24,899,367

The Peacebuilding Project *-Tejiendo Paz-*, is a six and a half year USAID project implemented by Creative Associates in partnership with PartnersGlobal and ProPaz. The project is designed to reduce social conflict and violence and strengthen social cohesion at the community and municipal levels, in the Western Highlands of Guatemala (15 municipalities, and 130 communities of five departments: Huehuetenango, El Quiché, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, and Totonicapán), as well as strengthen the Government of Guatemala's (GoG) capacity in managing and responding to local conflicts.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC APPROACH

The project works in five departments of the Western Highlands of Guatemala (Huehuetenango, El Quiché, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, and Totonicapán), as well as strengthen the Government of Guatemala's (GoG) capacity in managing and responding to local conflicts. The project is working with 130 communities in 15 municipalities in five departments and has developed relationships with key Guatemalan government institutions.

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Social conflict pervades Guatemala, particularly affecting rural communities in the Western Highlands. Roadblocks and public protests are common examples, but many cases escalate into further conflict and violence. These tensions, perpetuated by entrenched corruption, play out against a backdrop of endemic poverty, inequality, insecurity, and weak institutions. GoG institutions struggle with low levels of citizen confidence due to challenges in serving rural communities. The historic marginalization of indigenous people in Guatemala magnifies these issues and weakens the social fabric of these communities. Having suffered devastating losses during the internal armed conflict, communities in the Western Highlands are particularly vulnerable to conflict and violence. This unbroken cycle of insecurity and conflict feeds directly into the high levels of migration from this region of Guatemala.

APPROACH AND RESULTS

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. Through a community-based development approach, Tejiendo Paz engages community authorities and leaders, women, and youth in transforming conflict, restoring social fabric, and building peace in their communities. Tejiendo Paz strengthens the capacity of statutory and traditional governing institutions to respond to local conflicts and builds their partnerships with communities, repairing trust and supporting social cohesion within and between communities.

Tejiendo Paz strengthens relationships within communities to increase peaceful cooperation. Through participatory processes, community members identify local conflicts, establish peacebuilding priorities, and devise strategies to advance them, culminating in action plans known as “community visions” for constructive engagement and serves as a tangible result of peaceful cooperation. Tejiendo Paz also strengthens governmental and non-governmental actors at municipal, departmental and national levels, leading to improved institutional effectiveness and legitimacy in addressing conflict through established conflict resolution mechanisms.

The project focuses on engagement with indigenous peoples as partners, which aligns with the USAID/Guatemala Indigenous Engagement Strategy. The participation of indigenous communities is essential for peacebuilding and transforming conflicts. Indigenous authorities are key partners in resolving social conflict and preventing violence. Their ancestral knowledge, systems, and practices are fundamental for the implementation of effective, alternative mechanisms of dialogue, mediation, and negotiation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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