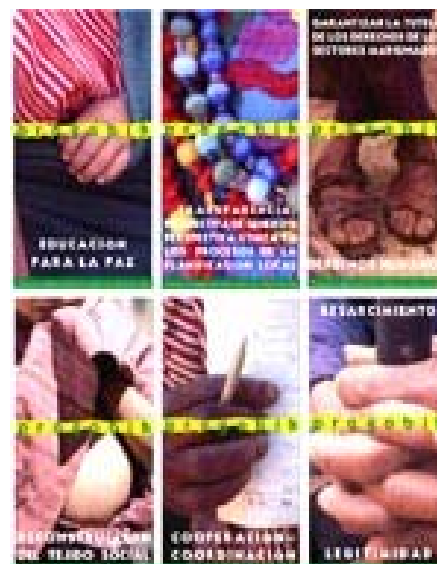


Huehuetenango

A look at its history and current-day reality

Huehuetenango, with approximately one million inhabitants, is a mainly rural and indigenous department, with nine Mayan ethno-cultural groups. It has one of the highest rates of poverty—77.8%—and of illiteracy—41.6%. These percentages increase considerably when the statistics are applied to women, who make up 52% of the population.

Problems such as exclusion, inequity and the exploitation of indigenous people and peasants have been a constant throughout Huehuetenango's history. These social groups have had no access to decent living conditions with respect to health, work, housing, infrastructure and essential services or to real possibilities for progress. The traditional authoritarian and corrupt forms of government that have been reproduced over generations in Guatemala have generated distrust of the state institutionality and have not permitted a democratic culture.



Militarization and the impact of the internal armed conflict in Huehuetenango, which reached a level of violence and destruction of the social fabric such as had only been suffered previously during the Conquest, has marked the department's social dynamics.

Governance and peaceful conflict resolution

In recent years, Huehuetenango has enjoyed experiences of civil society and of inter-institutional instances that have generated arenas for peaceful conflict resolution and respect for indigenous law. Through various legal mechanisms and judicial procedures, civil society has been demanding that the state entities closest to the citizenry respond to their problems in a way that translates into equitable, inclusive public policies that generate equal opportunities. This requires the application of mechanisms that ensure civic participation in community, municipal and department public administration.

Huehuetenango Comprehensive Governance Program (PROGOBIH)

How it came about

The Comprehensive Governance Program in Huehuetenango will be promoted by Project Counselling Service with funds from the Embassy of Holland (ERPB), which has prioritized the department of Huehuetenango as one of its areas of work. The program will support democratic governance processes with special emphasis on initiatives that favor the political participation of women and of indigenous peoples.

What it consists of

PROGOBIH's objective is to contribute to peace-building, reconciliation and democratization in Guatemala, promoting governance and expanding the participation of Huehuetenango's

population. In the near term it proposes to promote coordination arenas between local government and civil society as well as other instances that are helping promote better governance.

How the PROGOBIH Financing Fund is Applied

Civil society organizations (CSOs) as well as institutions of the state linked to inter-institutional coordination arenas may apply to PROGOBIH. Such interested organizations and institutions may request information as well as forms for project presentation to the PCS offices in Huehuetenango or its office in the capital city.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria that PROGOBIH will apply to the proposals and projects presented by the civil society organizations and public institutions will consist of objective appraisals regarding:

- 1) Programmatic coherence of the proposal or project with PROGOBIH's dimensions of governance, apropos of:
 - a) Reconstruction of the social fabric: organization and linkage among the CSOs, especially of women.
 - b) Ensure protection of the rights of the marginalized sectors: women and indigenous people, with special attention to women, who are the greatest users of the justice system insofar as they make up the sector where the highest rates of domestic, economic, patrimonial, sexual and other forms of violence are concentrated.
 - c) Transparency, gender perspective and ethnic perspective in local planning processes: Promotion of equitable and inclusive public social policies that generate equal opportunities through effective forms of civic participation in public resource administration at the community, municipal and departmental levels.
 - d) Legitimacy of democratically elected institutions and of organized groups working in defense of the public interest.
 - e) Inter-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation-coordination.
 - f) Education for Peace through processes that form and inform collective consciousness.
 - g) Truth, Justice and Reparations.
- 2) Considerations of the financial capability and administrative capacity of the organizations that present a proposal or project to PROGOBIH.
- 3) Pertinence of the proposal or project in terms of its contribution to governance and to a culture of peace in the Department of Huehuetenango.

- 4) Linkage of the proposal to other organizations or entities working on the same issue.
- 5) The degree of impact anticipated once the proposal or project has been implemented.
- 6) Sustainability of the process or initiative implemented through the proposal and/or project financed by PROGOBIIH.