



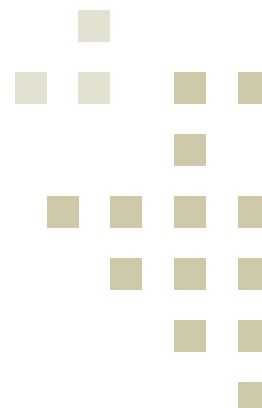
# [703] Paper

## Review of the Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala

**Axel Borchgrevink,  
with Turid Johansen Arnegaard  
and Miriam Bolaños**

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# Review of the Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala

**Axel Borchgrevink,  
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March–April 2006

**[Sammendrag]** The present review was commissioned in order to assess how the current project portfolio of the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala corresponds to the approved strategy, and to develop more concrete recommendations for the implementation of this strategy. The review concludes that while this strategy continues to be valid, it has not been followed in the selection of partner organizations and projects supported. A number of the projects fall completely outside of the thematic areas of the strategy, and as a whole the portfolio appears fragmented and unfocused. Recommendations include tighter adherence to the thematic concentration of the strategy, closer attention to the potential for having strategic impacts when selecting partner organizations, and the introduction of multi-year funding for the stronger of these organizations.



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## **Executive Summary**

Administration of the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala was transferred from NORAD in Oslo to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Guatemala in 2002. A strategy for the program was approved in 2004, focusing on the two thematic areas of *land rights* and *bilingual education*, with *gender* and *participation* as two crosscutting themes. Currently, the program supports 14 organizations, working in different parts of the country.

The present review was commissioned in order to assess how the current portfolio corresponds to the approved strategy, and to develop more concrete recommendations for the implementation of this strategy. The review was carried out through a two-week fieldwork in Guatemala in March 2006. The review team was led by Axel Borchgrevink of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, and also consisted of Turid Johansen Arnegaard, advisor on indigenous issues in NORAD, and Miriam Bolaños, program coordinator at the Embassy in Guatemala.

## **Findings**

The review team concludes that the strategy elaborated for the Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala under the 2004 review is still valid. It corresponds to real needs of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, at the same time as it is sufficiently focused to allow the program to have a real impact.

The thematic focus of the strategy has not been adhered to in the selection of program partners and projects. Many of the supported projects fall completely or largely outside of the strategy's recommended themes. Some of them do not even embody a rights-based or an indigenous perspective.

The partner organizations are also highly varied, spanning indigenous organizations, NGOs, state institutions, university institutes and cultural organizations, and working at different levels, from the very local to the national.

In sum, then, the current program portfolio is fragmented and fails to provide a focused strategic approach.

## **Recommendations**

Of the 15 organizations reviewed, we recommend unequivocally continued support for five. For four of these, we recommend that the Embassy consider entering into agreements with longer time horizons than one year. In two cases we are uncertain whether support ought to be continued, and suggest that the Embassy conduct more thorough assessments of these organizations. In the remaining eight cases we believe support should be discontinued. In two of these cases, some funding may be continued for phasing out. In two other cases the projects are strong even if they do not fit within the program strategy, and the Embassy could help establishing contacts with other donors.

The Embassy should take ownership of the program strategy and make clear its status by revising the strategy document, building on the framework

of the previous strategy and the specific recommendations of this report. Some of the key points are:

- The strategy should have an explicit rights orientation.
- The strategy should be oriented towards achieving significant impacts. To this end, it is of fundamental importance that partner organizations are selected on the basis of their potential for being strategic actors at the regional or national level.
- Projects should be selected according to the thematic orientation (land rights and bilingual education) and crosscutting dimensions (gender and participation) of the existing strategy.
- For the stronger and nationally significant partner organizations, more binding forms of cooperation and longer-term projects should be considered.
- In order to achieve maximum impact from the program, the program should consider funding those kind of components or activities that other donors are reluctant to fund – such as for instance core funding.

When applying this strategy in practice, more emphasis should be put on developing the appropriation document (BD), so that it reflect the strategic assessments and decisions made. The BD and the individual contracts and project descriptions should also be developed with more coherent goal hierarchies that allow them to be used as practical tools in the dialogue with the partner organizations.

More emphasis should be put on coordination and information exchange with other Embassy programs addressing the same themes as the Indigenous Peoples Program.



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

For almost twenty years, Norway has had an Indigenous Peoples Program, supporting indigenous peoples projects in selected countries in Latin America. Guatemala has been one of the program countries throughout this period. The program has been administered in different ways. In June 2002, the administration of the Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala was transferred from NORAD/Oslo to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Guatemala.

The focus of the program at that time was mainly on two topics: Bilingual Education and Sustainable Development. The portfolio was fragmented, and it was decided that a more coherent and focused approach was needed. A review of the program by an external consultant was therefore commissioned in 2003 with the purpose of giving recommendations for a future strategic approach for the program. However, the recommendations from this review were considered too broad and not helpful for developing a focused strategy.

An internal review was conducted in 2004 with the purpose of helping the Embassy to establish a more focused and relevant program. The report from this review describes the indigenous peoples policy of Guatemala, and discusses the main challenges for indigenous peoples in their efforts to achieve their rights and an improvement of their present situation. The report gave recommendations for how the Embassy should develop its direct support program for indigenous peoples. The strategic approach suggested by the report was approved by the Embassy and has functioned as the Program strategy since that time.

Currently (program year 2005–2006), the program supports 14 different organizations (covered by 13 individual contracts) working in different areas that together cover a large part of the country.

### 1.2 Program Strategy

In line with the Norwegian guidelines for support to indigenous peoples (*Norway's Efforts to Strengthen Support for Indigenous Peoples in Development Cooperation*, 2004), the strategy for the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala is based on a **rights-based approach**. It is further recommended that priority be given to indigenous organizations.

The key element of the strategy is the delimitation of two thematic areas, namely **bilingual education** and **land rights**. With respect to bilingual education, an important additional element is that the bilingual education should be culturally rooted (*con pertinencia étnica*). These two themes are supported mainly for their central importance to indigenous peoples in Guatemala – the land issue in particular – but also because the program has considerable experience in working with bilingual education.

In addition, the strategy identifies two crosscutting themes, that should be considered in all projects. These are **gender** and **participation**. The strategy also opens for support to some individual projects focusing directly on one

of these themes, even if they do not address the issues of bilingual education or land rights.

### 1.3 Terms of Reference

The current review of the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala was undertaken in order to assess how the current portfolio corresponds to the approved strategy, and to develop more concrete recommendations for the implementation of this strategy. Specifically, the Terms of Reference for the review give the following scope to the mission:

- Assess the relevance of the program portfolio in reference to the strategic approach chosen for the program.
- Assess the relevance of the portfolio in reference to the situation of indigenous peoples in Guatemala, the peace accords, the ILO 169 convention and Norway's guidelines for support to indigenous peoples
- Provide suggestions for a program strategy / action plan for the actual portfolio.

### 1.4 Team

The review team consisted of the following persons:

*Axel Borchgrevink* (team leader), Senior Researcher at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.

*Turid Johansen Arnegaard*, Advisor for Indigenous Peoples Issues, NORAD.

*Miriam Bolaños*, Coordinator for the Program for Indigenous Peoples at the Royal Norwegian Embassy of Guatemala.

### 1.5 Methodology

The methodology used includes both document review and interviews with key persons and organizations.

The documents reviewed include different documents regarding the program – former review reports, the appropriation document (BD), contracts and project descriptions – as well as different forms of material produced by the counterpart organizations, and various types of background literature and documents on the situation of indigenous peoples in Guatemala, and the relevant legal and institutional frameworks.

The interviews were carried out in the course of two weeks of fieldwork in Guatemala. All counterpart organizations were interviewed. In most cases, interviews were held in the organizations' offices, although in some cases, field visits were also included. In addition to Guatemala City, the team visited Chimaltenango, Chiquimula, Izabal, Santa Rosa and Quetzaltenango. Interviews were also made with representatives of the Embassy, of the UNDP, and with external resource persons. A complete list of institutions and people met can be found in the annexes.

Given the time limits, our focus has mainly been on the relevance of the projects and the partner organizations for the program strategy. We have not

had the possibility of assessing issues of effectiveness, efficiency or impacts. Neither has this been the objective of the mission (see the Terms of Reference).

The report has been written by Axel Borchgrevink. All major conclusions have been discussed and agreed within the team. However, I must take sole responsibility for the text of the report and the way individual conclusions and recommendations have been formulated.

### **1.6 Context**

Space does not permit any analysis of the situation of indigenous peoples in Guatemala and the challenges they face. An excellent overview can be found in the report on Guatemala by the United Nations' special rapporteur, from 2002. Furthermore, the 2005 Human Development Report for Guatemala focuses on indigenous peoples, and contains a lot of up-to-date information and statistics. Moreover, the report of the 2004 review of the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala analyzes closely issues with regard to bilingual education and land rights, while the 2003 consultancy report gives an overview of the challenges faced by the indigenous peoples of Guatemala.

In terms of the institutional framework of Guatemala, it is important to point out the agreements of the Guatemalan Peace Accords, in particular the *Acuerdo sobre Identidad y Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas*, which establishes important principles for the recognition of indigenous rights. Furthermore, Guatemala has ratified the ILO Convention 169 on indigenous peoples, and is consequently obliged by the terms of this convention. One key challenge concerns the political representation of indigenous peoples, and in this respect, the Guatemalan decentralization process institutes new mechanisms for participation (such as development councils at community, municipal and department levels) that potentially may be of great importance.



## 2. The current projects

### 2.1 AEPDI

*Asociación Estoreña Para el Desarrollo Integral* is a rights-oriented NGO based in El Estor, working primarily with the Q'eqchi' population of the department of Izabal. The organization was founded in 2000. The dynamic director and founder of the organization is originally from the US (but has lived in the area for almost 20 years) while the remainder of the staff are Q'eqchi'.

AEPDI implements several programs: 'Access to justice'; 'Adult education', a theatre group, and the program of rural development supported by the Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples. AEPDI has further been central in the campaign against the mining activities in El Estor, which have not been subject to proper consultations and could have large and detrimental impacts for the indigenous communities of the area. It is largely due to the efforts of AEPDI that ILO has accepted to look into the case. Moreover, AEPDI has established the *Defensoría Q'eqchi'* to promote the legal interests of the Q'eqchi', and the *Defensoría* plays a key role in the consultations for the establishment of the Sierra Santa Cruz protected area, which is part of the FUNDAECO project also supported by the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program (see below).

The rural development project supported by Norway has several components. The basic element has been the organization of indigenous women in different communities of El Estor and Livingston. On the basis of these women's organizations, development needs have been prioritized into local development agendas, presented as inputs in the local electoral process. Leadership training has been another component, while due to requests from the women themselves, an income-generating component (chicken-breeding and communal stores) has also been introduced.

#### 2.1.1 Assessments

AEPDI is a solid and strong organization with a clear rights perspective in all its activities. Its way of working at all levels – from small-scale activities in individual communities to successful interventions with international organizations – is interesting, impressive and commendable. Its active strategy of alliance building has probably been important for its successes. AEPDI is a particularly interesting partner for the Indigenous Peoples program since it is the protagonist in a mining case of potential great impact at both national and international levels, and since its *Defensoría Q'eqchi'* has an important role in the innovative consultation process of the FUNDAECO project.

On the other hand, it may be that Norway is supporting the AEPDI program that is least interesting from the point of view of the program strategy. Even if AEPDI's rural development program is heavily oriented towards participation, it is also the fact that income-generation – not contemplated within the strategy – comes to hold an important position within the program. The Access to Justice Program, on the other hand, has land rights as an important element, while the Adult Education Program offers intercultural bilingual education. (The fact that the Rural Development Program is

not even mentioned on AEPDI's webpage might even be taken to indicate that AEPDI also see this program as less central.)

### *2.1.2 Recommendations*

Support should be continued. AEPDI is one of the organizations with which longer-than-one-year projects could be considered (see the recommendations made below, in section 3.4).

It should be discussed with AEPDI whether support could be shifted to other activities more directly relevant for the program strategy, perhaps most importantly with respect to land rights in general and the mining case in particular.

The role that AEPDI plays with respect to the mining case is vital, yet one where it is difficult to plan activities in advance, as these need to respond to the developments of the case. The Embassy should discuss with AEPDI whether some form of flexible campaign funding, or core funding, might help the organization be more effective and responsive in its work to promote the Q'eqché interests in the case.

## **2.2 CADISOGUA**

*La Coordinadora de Asociaciones de Desarrollo Integral del Sur Occidente de Guatemala* (CADISOGUA) is an umbrella organization for development associations of Southeast Guatemala. It was created in 1989, when four local organizations started cooperating. Since then new associations have joined CADISOGUA and others have left. Currently, there are 11 full member organizations, with several others waiting to become members when their legal registration is in order. CADISOGUA has a number of programs for supporting its member associations in different areas: Organizational strengthening; agricultural extension; women's program; and the Norwegian-supported Human Rights Program.

This program started out three years ago by disseminating the contents of the Peace Accords, with particular emphasis on the Agreement on Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples. For the last two years, the project has focused on strengthening traditional local authorities and popular participation and influence through the recently introduced Communal Development Councils (COCODES) and Municipal Development Councils (COMUDES). This is done through the training of local leaders and council representatives, as well as by accompanying elections and other relevant processes to ensure that the councils are constituted in a representative manner and according to the law.

### *2.2.1 Assessments*

CADISOGUA is a representative organization with strong local and indigenous roots.

Through the project, CADISOGUA is doing highly relevant work in terms of making the COCODES and COMUDES function according to intentions, thereby promoting indigenous participation in key arenas. The legal

training, support and advice that CADISOGUA gives to its member associations are likewise very relevant.

However, queries remain, most importantly with respect to the importance that the organization holds as a regional strategic actor. From our meeting at the organization's office, it was difficult to gauge the scale on which the organization has an impact. Furthermore, the organization appeared weak with respect to alliances with other actors, and we left with some doubts about the approach to gender issues.

### *2.2.2 Recommendations*

Our conclusion is that there is a need for further information before deciding on whether to continue the support to the organization. The deciding criteria should be with respect to the scale of impact of the organization. The relevant information could be gathered through commissioning a review of the organization, but it would probably be sufficient if the program coordinator investigated the issue, through consultations with different sources and field visits to some of the member associations.

## **2.3 Cambalacha**

*La Cambalacha* is a cultural project that provides training and inspiration for a wide range of artistic expressions – dance, theatre, acrobatic, figurative – in San Marcos La Laguna. Seemingly without much of an organizational structure, and with only limited funding, a very large part of the youth and children of the area has been enticed to take part in Cambalacha activities and develop their artistic sides in the course of only a few years. Currently, 3,000 children take part in the program.

### *2.3.1 Assessments*

This is an extremely impressive project and one that makes anybody who learns about it happy. The artistic activities are obviously developing new sides and new capabilities of the involved youth. If development is freedom to use one's capabilities, then this is true development; something that is confirmed by the joy on the faces of the participating children. The project is furthermore achieving impacts at a significant scale with very limited resources.

Unfortunately, the project falls completely outside the program strategy. Cultural projects are not contemplated at all within the strategy, and furthermore, the project does not have an indigenous rights perspective.

### *2.3.2 Recommendations*

Support to the project cannot be continued through the program, as it does not correspond to program objectives.

Still, the program is highly worthy of support, and the Embassy should do what it can to ensure that Cambalacha continues to receive funding from one source or another. This could be from other budget lines of the Embassy – the cultural funds would appear to be natural for such support, but the team has been led to understand that these funds are all tied up for 2006. If this is the case, then the Embassy should consider whether it has other funds avail-

able that might be used for this quite small project. If this also proves impossible, the Embassy ought to do what it can to establish contact with another donor that could fund the organization.

## 2.4 Cholsamaj

The *Fundación Cholsamaj* is an indigenous NGO that was created in 1992. It has been engaged in different activities related to the publication of educational material, realizing investigations of multiculturalism in relation to issues of governance and participation, and to the general promotion of ‘interculturality’ and mutual understanding and acceptance between indigenous and non-indigenous. The organization has developed a specialized competence in the publishing of books and material in Mayan languages, and runs a publishing house and a printing press specializing in graphic design. These areas are run professionally and commercially and secure an income for the Foundation.

The project supported by NORAD consists in the development of intercultural textbooks for fourth grade students. The books are developed primarily for *ladino* children, with the purpose of promoting multiculturalism and knowledge about the cultural diversity of Guatemala. Textbooks are developed for the four basic subjects – mathematics, language/communication, natural sciences and social sciences. The textbooks are to be sold on the open market to private schools.

### 2.4.1 Assessments

Cholsamaj is a solid organization, with a well-developed administrative capacity, and a highly professional technical competence in all fields related to the printing of Mayan texts and graphic production. The organization also has a clear strategic vision of the indigenous issues in Guatemala, the Mayan movement and Cholsamaj’s position within it. The organization seems to be relatively alone in producing textbooks for the promotion of multiculturalism among the *ladino* population (it has also developed textbooks for the self-study of indigenous languages, designed for non-indigenous professionals required to learn indigenous languages). Cholsamaj should also be commended for the advances it has made towards financial sustainability.

However, some doubts emerge over the supported project. It remains to be seen whether the plan for distributing textbooks on the open market will be successful. It is furthermore not evident that the new books will be used according to the intentions of Cholsamaj, as no teacher training is contemplated. Furthermore, even if the project is educational, it does not correspond to the strategy of focusing on bilingual education. To what extent Cholsamaj should be considered an important strategic actor within the field of bilingual education is not clear to us.

### 2.4.2 Recommendations

The current project does not fit well with the program strategy, and should not be continued.

However, Cholsamaj is a strong organization, and support should be considered if they come up with a new proposal that fits better with the strategy



and makes use of the organizations core competencies. Furthermore, the expertise in text production in indigenous languages may be useful as support to the projects of other counterparts.

## 2.5 CNEM

The *Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya* is an umbrella organization for 20 Mayan organizations working in the field of education. It promotes a bilingual educational model with a strong emphasis on cultural identity. The organization was created in the mid-1990s, and rapidly achieved recognition as a dialogue partner for the Ministry of Education. Currently it enjoys good relations with several of the offices of the Ministry – the Vice-Ministry for Bilingual Education, as well as the Department for Bilingual Education, DIGEBI. CNEM counts with strong pedagogic expertise, and through the years the organization has done a lot of work in developing its alternative and culturally-rooted (*con pertinencia*) educational model, with corresponding curricular plans and textbooks for different indigenous language groups. CNEM has further been involved in the development of bilingual teacher training programs, in cooperation with ACEM (*Asociación de Centros de Educación Maya*, the organization of teacher training schools offering training in bilingual education). And CNEM is also active in lobbying activities. Currently, as there are fears that a proposed legal reform in the area of education may weaken the existing bilingual education system, CNEM is coordinating an effort against any such weakening with institutions such as DIGEBI, CODISRA (both are state entities) and FLACSO.

The Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples has supported CNEM since 2004. The project has had its main emphasis on curricular and textbook development, but also includes support for other CNEM activities, as well as a component of institutional strengthening.

### 2.5.1 Assessments

In the area of bilingual education, CNEM is a key actor at the national level; indeed, it was spoken of as the organization of reference in this field. It has developed relations with state institutions and is able to engage them as a dialogue partner. Moreover, it is active in advocacy over legal and educational reform. Thus, CNEM is the kind of strategic actor the program ought to work with. Furthermore, the organization has a well-developed educational model that places issues of cultural identity and belonging at the center, and it counts with expertise in the more concrete application of the model in curricular and textbook development.

As an umbrella for 20 Maya organizations, CNEM is already an expression of alliances. Yet it is worth asking whether the organization might have been even more effective if it had extended its alliances in lobbying and advocacy to also include other Mayan or indigenous organizations.

### 2.5.2 Recommendations

Cooperation with CNEM should be continued.

Given the central position that CNEM holds with respect to bilingual education, the program ought to enter into a new agreement with the organi-

zation that should have a longer time perspective than just one year. The Embassy should enter into a dialogue with CNEM in order to determine in which areas and for what kind of activities this support will be most useful in order to strengthen bilingual education with a cultural content in Guatemala. It is quite possible that further work in curricular and textbook development is not the number one priority. Areas such as teacher training; working for the acceptance of bilingual education among teachers and parents; alliance building and coordination among organizations working with bilingual education; and institutional strengthening of CNEM may be just as important.

## **2.6 CNP – Tierra**

*La Coordinación Nacional Permanente sobre Derechos Relativos a la Tierra de los Pueblos Indígenas* (The Permanent National Coordinator for Rights Referring to the Lands of Indigenous Peoples) is an umbrella organization or coordinating structure of 11 Mayan organizations working with land issues. It was created in the mid-1990s, with the objectives of developing and presenting proposals for the protection of the land rights of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, as well to give support to indigenous groups with concrete claims and grievances over land issues. CNP-Tierra has developed a number of proposals for the different elements they believe are needed to make up a coherent agrarian and land legislation that protect the concerns of indigenous peoples and of peasants and small farmers in general. The proposals have been collected in a compendium that has become an important point of reference for general discussions over the development of an agrarian code.

CNP-Tierra is not currently supported by the Indigenous Peoples Program. However, it did receive support for 2004–2005, and has presented a proposal for consideration for the program year 2006–2007. (The reasons for not being supported in 2005–2006 were purely practical – no proposal was submitted – and did not reflect any negative assessment of the organization.) We had a meeting with the organization because of its central role with respect to issues of indigenous land rights.

### *2.6.1 Assessments*

CNP-Tierra is an important strategic actor at the national level with respect to indigenous land rights. It counts with strong legal competence, has the capacity to formulate legal proposals and is able to influence political processes related to the development of new land legislation.

### *2.6.2 Recommendations*

The Indigenous Peoples Program should support CNP-Tierra. Since the organization is a key actor at the national level, the Embassy should enter into a multi-year agreement with it. The concrete contents of such a program should be decided through a dialogue with CNP-Tierra over how such a project could have the greatest impact. The indigenous land monitors of the current proposals could be included, but so could other activities, both with respect to the national level advocacy activities of CNP-Tierra and to the

strengthening of the organization's role as support for local groups in land conflicts.

## **2.7 CODISRA**

*La Comisión Presidencial contra la Discriminación y el Racismo contra los Pueblos Indígenas en Guatemala* is a presidential commission established to combat discrimination and racism against the indigenous peoples of Guatemala. It was established in 2002, and is still in a consolidation phase. Its work is concentrated in three areas: Influencing the politics and institutions of the state; campaigns to educate the general public on the issue; and institutional strengthening of the commission itself. It is headed by Ricardo Cajas who has a long history with the Maya movement and has proven to be an outspoken commissioner. The commission's most public act has been in connection with the presentation of Guatemala's national report before the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; a report that was fairly self-critical and went far in admitting Guatemala's problems with institutionalized racism.

The Norwegian support was contemplated for three areas: The establishment of a program for monitoring discrimination by public and private institutions; a public campaign against racism and discrimination; and institutional strengthening of the Commission. In practice, up to now all activities supported with Norwegian funds have been for the latter component (although a campaign of radio spots has been implemented, but with other funding).

### *2.7.1 Assessments*

The Commission has the potential for making an impact at the national level. Furthermore, it is headed by a commissioner committed to realizing this potential.

Yet it is difficult for the Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples to work with government institutions, both in principle and in practice. The fact that Norwegian funding goes directly to institutional support for a state entity is particularly problematic, especially when the government's funding for the Commission has grown rapidly and the Norwegian contribution small with respect to the overall budget. Furthermore, the Commission appears to be relatively weak administratively, and has problems in allocating the Norwegian funds according to the plans of the original contract.

### *2.7.2 Recommendations*

The project should not be continued for the next program year. CODISRA – as a governmental institution – is not a natural partner for the program, although support for specific and short-term activities in the future should not be completely discarded.

## **2.8 COPMAG**

The *Consejo de Pueblos Mayas de Guatemala* was created in 1986, first with the purpose of helping war orphans. From the early 1990s, the organization

has been working with alphabetization. It works over a relatively large area, with four language groups (K'iché, Kaqchikel, Ixil and Q'eqchí), and gives priority to the more remote areas where the government alphabetization programs of CONALFA does not reach. The organization has a good working relationship with CONALFA, with practical coordination and mutual support to field programs. Throughout the years, COPMAG has given courses to almost 30,000 people, with a high promotion rate (more than 50%). The alphabetization work is well organized, and COPMAG has developed a sound model for this work. In some periods, depending on funding, alphabetization has been complemented with workshops on issues of Human Rights and citizenship, and with interventions aimed at promoting empowerment and local development.

COPMAG has received Norwegian support for the alphabetization program throughout a ten-year period.

### *2.8.1 Assessments*

COPMAG is a solid organization with a proven track record in bilingual alphabetization with cultural identity. The alphabetization has had an impact at a regional level; it reaches the most remote areas, and covers three language groups. Thus, COPMAG must be considered an actor with impacts at a significant level. Furthermore, acceptance and a working relationship have been established with CONALFA, and COPMAG is attempting to link its alphabetization efforts to wider issues of empowerment and development.

On the other hand, COPMAG tends to remain in a traditional service-delivery role, with little attention to perspectives of working for the state to fully assume its responsibilities in the field of alphabetization. Prompted by us, COPMAG claimed to have plans to put greater emphasis on lobbying and advocacy. Still, the organization has no experience with this kind of work, capacity and willingness is uncertain, and currently it completely lacks alliance partners for this new activity. Without working effectively in this area, COPMAG runs the risk of simply being gap-filling and relieving the government of responsibility. Its vision of eventually replacing CONALFA does not indicate any awareness of the problem.

Another weakness relates to the dependency on Norwegian funding. CONALFA is aware of the need to develop economic sustainability, and has developed plans for income-generation through a government reforestation incentive program (PINFOR), but it seems highly uncertain how successful this may prove to be.

### *2.8.2 Recommendations*

The review team finds it difficult to make recommendations here. COPMAG is highly competent in bilingual alphabetization, which falls clearly within the program strategy. On the other hand, there are serious weaknesses that have not been resolved throughout ten years of Norwegian support. We suggest an organizational review and close attention to the ways in which COPMAG plans to overcome its gap-filling role and become a strategic actor before a decision is made.

## 2.9 FUNDAECO

*La Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación* is an environmental organization working with the establishment and management of protected areas. Under agreements with CONAP, the state environmental conservation agency, FUNDAECO is managing several protected areas. The management schemes also include different income generating activities for the local population, largely related to eco-tourism. The fact that FUNDAECO came into conflict with the local population in connection with the establishment of a protected area two years ago, led to a period of critical reflection within the organization, and eventually to a reformulation of the organization's mission. The promotion of the interests of the local inhabitants in and near the protected areas, with a particular concern for indigenous rights, has become a central element of the organization's objectives and strategy, alongside the conservation mission.

The project supported by the program is the first expression of this new approach. In working for the establishment of the Sierra Santa Cruz protected area, the intention is to do this together with the local indigenous communities. The key elements of the project are the registration and legalization of the land rights of the communities; open consultations with the communities about the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed protected area and the zoning into different land use zones; and the organization of the communities into a joint development association for the area. To allow the consultations to take place in a neutral manner, they are organized not by FUNDAECO itself, but by the *Defensoría Q'eqchi'* of AEPDI.

### 2.9.1 Assessments

FUNDAECO is a solid and highly competent organization in terms of managing protected areas. It also counts with expertise in the area of Cadastre/land registration. Currently it is in the process of reorienting its approach and basic philosophy to include an indigenous rights perspective, a process the program should be supportive of. FUNDAECO has good relations with and support from the current CONAP leadership, including for its new line of work – which might ultimately also influence official policies. Furthermore, the consultation process is innovative and realized in a serious manner, and may prove to set an example for the implementation of key principles of the ILO 169 regarding consultations, in Guatemala and elsewhere.

These very strong positive aspects outweigh the unease over cooperating with a non-indigenous organization and including in the program portfolio a project with a basic rationale springing out of a conservation interest, and with the concern for indigenous rights as only secondary.

One worry relates to FUNDAECO's recent conversion to more participative approaches, and its lack of experience in this field. The component of building an inter-community development association seemed for instance to be too focused on infrastructure.

### 2.9.2 Recommendations

The program should continue supporting FUNDAECO, most importantly because of the innovative consultation processes that may come to have an impact beyond the Sierra Santa Cruz.

These consultations may come to require a longer time perspective than originally planned, and the program ought to be prepared to give support so that they can be realized in a way that allows informed decisions to be made by the communities, even if this means extensions to original time horizons. The registration and legalization of land holdings is an equally important component of the project that needs continued support.

The inter-community network or association is an important structure for an eventual co-management organization for the protected area in the future. But it will be necessary to follow closely how this network develops.

### **2.10 FUPEDES**

*Fundación de Periodismo para el Desarrollo* is an organization that has been working with the training of journalists, with a particular specialization in development issues. The training has been particularly oriented towards the Mayan population, and scholarships have been an important element of this work. The Embassy has previously been supporting the scholarship program.

The current project with FUPEDDES is quite different. The organization has carried out a diagnostic study of what kinds of conflicts that are most prevalent in the different areas of the Department of Quetzaltenango. They have chosen to work with the three most important – family violence, poverty and migration – and attempt to deal with them through ‘psycho-pedagogic’ approaches. There are three lines of work – workshops where experts work the themes with different kinds of groups; competitions of artistic expression for youth; and diffusion through radio and television spots.

#### *2.10.1 Assessments*

The team sees this project as weak in itself, and as outside the program strategy.

There is no indigenous perspective to the project. The fact that the majority of the population in the area is indigenous does not constitute an indigenous perspective.

Furthermore, the project has consciously decided to tackle those aspects of the problems they work with that can be addressed at an individual, attitudinal level, while excluding the structural issues. This means that the project in reality has discarded a rights-based approach, which places it further outside of the program strategy. The project approach can further be seen as expressing distance to the participants, and being paternalist and weak on participation.

The team has strong reservations with respect to the methodology of the original diagnostic study, as well as with the relevance and potential impact of all the three lines of intervention.

In sum, this project ought not to have been included in the program portfolio. It is worth pointing out that it was not approved through the ordinary mechanisms of the program, but through the direct intervention of the ambassador at that time.

### 2.10.2 Recommendations

Support should not be continued.

### 2.11 IDEI

*Instituto de Estudios Interétnicos* is a research institute of the San Carlos University. It was created in 1992 to study and disseminate findings about inter-ethnic relations in Guatemala in order to promote justice and equality.

The project supported by the Embassy is a research program, where eight young indigenous women are trained as researchers, at the same time as new knowledge is generated about the political participation of indigenous women, and traditional views of women as passive victims are challenged. The researchers have been selected according to criteria of being indigenous women and speakers of one of the Mayan languages, having a certain academic level, and having an interest in and commitment to indigenous and gender issues. Each have chosen a subject within the broad heading of indigenous women and political participation, and receive close supervision and advice from a number of highly experienced researchers. The aim is to publish the reports of the studies in a joint publication. While support has only been promised for one year (up to June 2006), continued support until the end of the calendar year will be necessary for the completion of the project.

#### 2.11.1 Assessments

This is a project with a strong indigenous and gender perspective, carried out with serious commitment and enthusiasm. It is a successful training program, and is creating a set of skilled young indigenous and professional women, who are intent on using their new knowledge to make a wider impact.

The project may not fall completely within the strategy – which does not encourage research per se – but the project is strongly focused on the cross-cutting themes of gender and participation. Furthermore, the benefits in terms of developing human resources are considerable compared to the relatively modest costs of supporting the second phase of the program.

#### 2.11.2 Recommendations

Support should be continued for phase two.

### 2.12 INTRAPAZ

The *Instituto de Transformación de Conflictos para la Construcción de la Paz en Guatemala* of the *Universidad Rafael Landívar* was created after the signing of the Peace Accords, in order to work with research and mediation to promote reconciliation.

The project supported by Norway is a study of the limitations indigenous women meet with regard to access to justice in land conflicts. Four indigenous students were to be given grants for their studies as well as the opportunity to take part in the research project. Unfortunately, the project met with a long series of difficulties in recruiting and keeping these students, largely

due to problems outside the control of the project. The project was finally left with only one student, and it was decided to complement the team with hired researchers. The project consists of two phases, the first of which, a literature review, is completed. The second phase is field research in one department, which is ongoing.

#### *2.12.1 Assessments*

The research theme is highly relevant for the program.

The research of the first phase is not particularly innovative, analytic or of high academic quality. The limited attention to issues of gender can perhaps be excused by a general lack of literature and data on the subject, but the complete absence of data on indigenous tenure systems in the phase one report cannot be so easily excused. The results of the second phase cannot be judged at this stage, but what is evident is that it will not easily link up with the first phase. Furthermore, there is no plan for dissemination research findings or perspectives for how to make them relevant for the struggle for securing indigenous women access to land. Finally, the scholarship program hasn't functioned according to the intention.

#### *2.12.2 Recommendations*

Further support for the research program should not be given.

However, for the one remaining scholarship student who is halfway in her master's degree, the Embassy should continue the scholarship for the second year. One should seek to devise an arrangement that minimizes administrative work for the Embassy – preferably handled by INTRAPAZ – that presupposes normal study progression, and that cannot be extended beyond the projected termination in mid-2007.

### **2.13 Kiej de los bosques**

Kiej de los bosques was founded in 2004. The organization has worked with local communities, creating new and sustainable income-generating sources by building on local traditions, specialties and comparative advantages, developing innovative products, and creating vertical production and distribution chains that stretch from the community to the international markets.

The program has been supporting four projects in different communities: One with women using traditional mat weaving and basketry techniques for new products, for instance having found stable and well-paying markets for adorning the bottles of Guatemala's major rum producer; another with women weaving cloth with traditional tints in new designs; a third based on reforestation and ecotourism; and the final one dedicated to reforestation and development of carpentry products.

#### *2.13.1 Assessments*

The work of *Kiej de los bosques* and of the organization's highly dynamic leader is extremely impressive. The innovative and creative way in which new products have been developed on the basis of both local traditions and market opportunities, and the linkages established between local producers



and national and international markets can serve as models for small-scale sustainable economic development. In addition to its strengths in product development and marketing, *Kiej de los bosques* demonstrates a great ability to relate to the communities and its members in a natural and egalitarian way. The organization is therefore highly worthy of support.

Unfortunately, the projects fall completely outside the program strategy, which does not include economic projects. Furthermore, the project does not have the indigenous rights perspective which the program is designed to promote.

One might also ask if the project becomes too localized in its impacts, as the project strategy based on local resources and specialized market niches may prevent scaling up. On the other hand, this may be a bit unfair, as it is clear that the organization is achieving considerable impacts with fairly limited resources.

### 2.13.2 Recommendations

As the project falls outside of the program strategy, it should not receive further support.

On the other hand, as the project is highly worthy of support – and perhaps of a kind for which it should not be too hard to find willing donors – the Embassy might do what it can to facilitate contacts and recommend *Kiej* to potential new donors.

## 2.14 PAPXIGUA

The *Parlamento del Pueblo Xinka de Guatemala* was created in 2004, as a representative organization of 10 communities of the Xinka people. The Xinkas are an ethnic group that is reappearing publicly. According to one source, while in 1996 only 400 people acknowledged being Xinka, there are currently 16,000 with a Xinka self-identification. There is an unresolved conflict between PAPXIGUA and the older Xinka organization the *Consenso de Pueblos Xinkas*.

Norwegian support has been fundamental for the creation of the Xinka Parliament. It has funded both the acquisition of a piece of land and the construction of its offices there, as well as the main activities the organization has been carrying out. One key component has been the ‘documentation, valorization, development and systematization of the Xinka language and culture’. With the help of an ethnolinguist, the Xinka language is being documented and analyzed in cooperation with some of the remaining speakers. At the same time, an enthusiastic group of young people are learning the rudiments of the language as well as the tools of linguistic documentation and analysis. Other components include land rights protection, organizing Xinka women, and organizational strengthening. As the organization is new and inexperienced, much of the support is used for external consultants and advisors. This has also necessitated close involvement by the Embassy’s program coordinator.

### 2.14.1 Assessments

The organization does provide some representation to a weak indigenous group and has achieved relatively much in a short time span. This, however, is a complicated issue, as it may be that the generous Norwegian birth assistance to this new organization has served to deepen contradictions with the other Xinka organization. The *Consenso the Pueblos Xinkas* has apparently existed for more than a decade with little or no external funding. We have not had the opportunity to investigate the issue properly, but if it is the case that the project has led to greater divisions and conflicts among the Xinka, then Norwegian support might actually have served to weaken rather than strengthen the development of effective and representative Xinka organization.

The Linguistic research component is successful and based on a participative methodology, and the enthusiasm created around the language may have great symbolic value even if the language will never be in daily use. Nevertheless, this is a component that does not fall under the program strategy.

The land rights component also appears to have been successful in some cases of resolving land conflicts, and is of course in line with the strategy.

The Xinka Parliament is an emergent and administratively weak organization. Accompanying the consolidation of such organizations cannot be based on the capacity of the Indigenous Peoples Program coordinator, or on short-time consultancies. Longer-term consultancies, on the other hand, carry the danger of creating dependencies and may place the external consultant in a too-powerful role towards the organization. The same goes for the contracting of other NGOs to take this role. In general, we do not recommend that the Indigenous Peoples Program attempt to engage in the difficult and uncertain task of supporting the establishment and consolidation of new indigenous organizations, even if these are highly needed. The Embassy does not count with the resources necessary for following up such complicated partnerships. However, having already done this for three years, there may be a certain moral obligation not to cut all support directly.

### 2.14.2 Recommendations

There are two fundamental difficulties with this project, related to the conflict with the Xinka Council, and to the administrative weakness of the organization. Due to these problems, we recommend that the project should be stopped, with a phasing out period over the next year, during which close attention should be paid to the conflict and what may be done to alleviate or overcome it.

## 2.15 RAYUELA

Rayuela is a theatre group that has been working on a project of integrating Maya and *ladino* scenic traditions. Concretely, they have been cooperating with the 'owner' of a traditional Maya ritual or theatric spectacle, first in learning about each others traditions, and then in creating a joint theatre production, expressing both the Maya cosmovision and *ladino* artistic ideas.

The resulting spectacle will be shown in different places, in Guatemala City as well as the original area of the Maya theatre.

#### *2.15.1 Assessments*

This is an interesting experiment in cultural exchange and fusion. Undoubtedly it serves to extend the horizons of the theatre group participants. However, beyond this, it is hard to see any impacts of the project. It is of course also completely outside of the program strategy.

#### *2.15.2 Recommendations*

The support should not be continued.

### **2.16 Summary**

Of the 15 organizations reviewed (14 current program partners, and one former: CNP-Tierra), we recommend unequivocally continued support for five: AEPDI, CNEM, CNP-Tierra, FUNDAECO and IDEI. For the first four of these, we recommend that the Embassy consider entering into agreements with longer time horizons than one year.

In two cases – CADISOGUA and COPMAG – we are uncertain whether support ought to be continued, and suggest that the Embassy conduct more thorough assessments of these organizations.

In the remaining eight cases – Cambalacha, Cholsamaj, CODISRA, FUPEDDES, INTRAPAZ, Kiej de los bosques, PAPXIGUA, Rayuela – we believe support should be discontinued. In two cases (INTRAPAZ, PAPXIGUA), some funding may be continued for phasing out. In two other cases (Cambalacha, Kiej) the projects are strong even if they do not fit within the program strategy, and the Embassy could help establishing contacts with other donors. Finally, Cholsamaj is a solid organization with a specific expertise, and support to another project in the future should not be discarded.



### 3. The program

#### 3.1 Strategic impact, strategy and focus

The review of the individual projects above adds up to the conclusion that the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala has not adhered to a focused strategy. While a relatively clear strategy was developed for the program, this has not been followed. Most clearly, this is expressed by the fact that of the 14 projects supported, five fall clearly outside of the two thematic areas (land rights and bilingual education) and the two crosscutting themes (gender and participation) defined by the strategy. This applies to Kiej de los bosques, FUPEDDES, CODISRA, Rayuela and Cambalacha. Moreover, the support for two other organizations have the main emphasis on components not contemplated within the strategy (AEPDI; PAPXIGUA). Furthermore, a number of the projects do not really involve a rights-based approach (Kiej de los bosques; FUPEDDES; Rayuela) or are weak in terms of having an explicit indigenous perspective, beyond the fact of working with people who are predominantly indigenous (Kiej de los bosques; FUPEDDES; Cambalacha; INTRAPAZ). Furthermore, the projects show great variety in the levels of intervention – from the national to the very local – and in types of partner organizations – indigenous organizations, NGOs, state institutions and university institutes. It is by no means easy to discern any clear and conscious strategy behind this variability. The appropriation document ('Bevilgningsdokument', BD), which spells out the 2005/2006 grants of the program, does not indicate any awareness of this variability, nor does it attempt to justify support to the individual projects by referring to the approved strategy (or by any other means for that matter).

In sum, then, the portfolio must be characterized as unfocused and as not corresponding very well to the program strategy. Several of the projects that fall clearly outside of the strategy appear to be excellent projects that are worthy of support in themselves (Kiej de los bosques, Cambalacha). Thus, the decision to fund them is understandable. Still, the lack of focus is unfortunate, because it leads to dispersed efforts and lower impact in terms of program objectives. Of course, the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala is a relatively small program within the overall aid context, and one should recognize that its impact will inevitably be limited. Nevertheless, by having the explicit objective of promoting indigenous rights, the program does have a profile that distinguishes it from most other donor programs. The review team is convinced that this particular focus of the program gives it the potential to have a greater impact than its size alone would seem to indicate. However, in order to realize this potential, it is absolutely necessary to have a clear strategy for how to use the funds to maximum benefit, and to follow that strategy in practice.

A strategy for the program already exists. In the opinion of the review team, this strategy – with a thematic focus on land rights and on bilingual education, and with gender and participation as crosscutting issues – continues to offer a sensible course for the program to follow. Thus, the problem so far has been that the program strategy has not been followed, and not that there has been a lack of a formulated and focused strategy. This may indicate

that this strategy has not really been appropriated by or anchored within the Embassy. This interpretation is further strengthened by the lack of Embassy documents referring to the strategy, apart from an e-mail confirming that the program strategy is the one described in the 2004 report. Thus, a basic recommendation is that the Embassy affirms and appropriates this strategy.

Furthermore, while the existing strategy offers a sensible main course for the program to follow, it can be further specified and elaborated in a number of respects. The Embassy should develop a new and more comprehensive strategy document. In the following, some recommendations for this work are given.

A first point to make is that all decisions on what projects to support should be based on a consideration of the kinds of strategic impact that they may have. In order to maximize the impact of the program, support should be limited to projects and organizations with a potential to make a difference in a larger perspective. Projects which only focus on a small community, and which do not have any perspective of serving as a model for activities beyond that community, or otherwise impacting on a larger scale, should not be supported, no matter how excellent these projects may be in themselves. Scale of impact is therefore an important variable. In line with this concern for making an impact, the program should also consider what other donors are doing. Rather than taking part in the donor competition for identifying and partnering with those organizations that correspond best to current donor ideals, the program might prefer to look for the types of organizations and projects that are least likely to obtain funding from other donors (– given of course, that other criteria for funding are met).

In terms of thematic focus, comments can be made to the different areas and dimensions specified by the strategy:

*Bilingual education.*

- As is emphasized in the strategy, the Norwegian support should be for bilingual education that is culturally rooted (*con pertinencia cultural*), or which has a specific Mayan content. This is an important specification which the team fully endorses.
- Furthermore, it can be observed that within the field of bilingual education, there is a multitude of actors developing and promoting their own particular pedagogic models. Rather than contributing to this confusion by supporting yet other organizations with new models to be developed, support for curriculum/textbook/pedagogic development should be channeled with a view to harmonization under the umbrella of the strong actors promoting culturally rooted bilingual education at the national level.
- Decisions on what elements of bilingual education to support – curriculum/textbook/pedagogic development; bilingual teacher training; promoting acceptance of bilingual education among teachers and parents; etc. – should be based on an analysis of where the most important bottlenecks are to be found.
- In considering which levels of bilingual education to support – pre-school; primary level; secondary level; teacher training; alphabetization/ adult education – the program needs to consider carefully the

relative funding needs and potential impacts of the different options, as well as the activities of other actors (MINEDUC, other donors, etc).

- If the Embassy sees it as useful, one might commission a study on the situation of bilingual education, in order to orient future program decisions.

*Land rights.*

- As is specified in the existing strategy, the main focus should be on strengthening the collective rights of indigenous peoples to land. This does not exclude the possibility of also supporting individual titling processes where this is appropriate.
- The existing strategy also proposes the protection of the environment as a main focus within this thematic area. While we are of course not opposed to protecting the environment, we still propose that this be removed as a fundamental objective within this thematic component. As an indigenous peoples program, the strategic decision about whether a project is within the parameters for receiving support should be based squarely on its merits in terms of promoting indigenous rights. (The FUNDAECO project illustrates that an indigenous rights perspective may very well go hand in hand with environmental concerns. But on the other hand, it is worth keeping in mind that concerns for environmental protection may in other cases work against indigenous rights.)
- Important processes are taking place with respect to developing a new legal framework for land issues, even if progress is very slow. The program should support indigenous organizations with a potential for having an impact on these processes.
- The program should also consider supporting activities aimed at helping indigenous communities defend their lands in ongoing conflicts with outside actors.
- Furthermore, the program should seek to support processes of registration and titling of indigenous lands, especially those that are innovative and may serve as models for securing land rights elsewhere in Guatemala.

‘Participation’ and ‘gender’ are specified as crosscutting issues, that should be taken into account in all projects. However, the strategy also allows for considering projects that have one of these dimensions as the prime focus (even if they do not focus on bilingual education or land rights).

*Participation.*

- Given its frequent use within development circles, this term has all but lost its meaning. In the existing strategy, it is used in two ways: On the one hand with reference to the participation of indigenous people within Guatemala’s formal political system; and on the other, for the active participation of the beneficiaries within the individual projects.

- In terms of formal political participation, there is a wide gap between participation at community level (in the COCODES) where indigenous participation is reported to be increasing, and the departmental and national levels, where participation is minimal. (The municipal level falls somewhere between.) Activities that seek to address this imbalance in indigenous representation could be supported. It seems likely that the kind of training given by CADISOGUA to COCODES representatives, in order to make their participation and influence more real, is an important first step before greater representation can be expected at higher levels.
- As for participation within individual projects, this must be understood in relation to what kind of project or organization one is dealing with. It will for instance have very different implications for an NGO implementing a community development project than for an indigenous organization doing lobbying activities at the national level. Still, participation will be an important dimension in all cases.

*Gender.*

- Gender is an important dimension for the program primarily because of the double oppression faced by indigenous women: being discriminated both because of their gender and because of their ethnic identity.
- The existing strategy is quite vague in terms of how this gender focus is to be operationalized. In terms of gender as a crosscutting issue, the important thing would seem to be to always analyze all interventions with a gender perspective: Will this affect men and women differently? How can we make sure that the particular concerns of women are taken into account?
- The existing strategy also opens for projects focusing specifically on indigenous women. We would like to emphasize that this should only refer to projects that have an explicit indigenous rights objective. It should for instance not be taken to mean that income-generating activities for women groups should be supported, even if these might be based on traditional handicraft production. The IDEI project, on the other hand, which gives training in research methodology to highly motivated indigenous women, while at the same time realizing studies of the political participation of indigenous women, is an example of a project that corresponds to the strategy.

We recommend that the program in the future should adhere more closely to the strategy than has been the case up to now. Still, it is important to emphasize that a strategy should never be followed rigidly and formally. Rather, it must be flexibly adapted to the shifting and complex reality. In concrete project decisions, it may for instance turn out to be necessary to go outside the thematic recommendations given above and include components not within the strategy. If for practical reasons this is deemed useful, such flexibility should be practiced. However, flexibility should be exercised with the explicit intention of furthering the overall objectives of the program. Flexibility does not therefore mean that anything goes, but rather that project decisions



should always be based on the overall objective of maximizing impact in terms of promoting indigenous rights. It is more important to maintain focus on this overall objective than to follow rigidly the specific formulations of a strategy document.

Up to now, the program has sought to have a wide geographical coverage and representation of all linguistic groups. The team sympathizes with the underlying principle of non-exclusion and equal representation of all groups. However, in our judgment, the program is too small to attempt such total coverage. It means spreading resources too thinly, with too many partners. Therefore, our recommendation, instead of seeking to have all linguistic groups represented, the objective of the program should be to seek out partner organizations that can function as strategic actors.

### 3.2 Types of counterparts

When identifying organizations to work with and support through the program, the main emphasis should be on selecting *strategic counterparts*; that is, those organizations that have a potential for making wide-ranging and enduring social and political changes. In this sense, the first priority should be to do an actor analysis of the *organizations*, before assessing the merits of their project proposals. It is by no means easy or straightforward to unambiguously identify such organizations. The reason for qualifying as a strategic actor may be that an organization has the ability to engage with the authorities at a higher than municipal level; or it might be carrying out work on a scale that has a regional impact; or it may be developing new approaches and methodologies that may have a wider application; alternatively, it may be supporting local level organizing that in the future may be the foundation of new social movements; or it could be engaged in a specific case or conflict that is of (potential) national concern. Thus, concrete prescriptions for how to identify strategic actors cannot be given here, but the underlying question should always be about the potential scale of impact of the organization.

The existing strategy states that the program should favor indigenous organizations and institutions, but that non-indigenous organizations may also be considered where this may be relevant. We concur with this, with the addition that where support is channeled through non-indigenous support organizations, this should be with the explicit understanding that this is a temporary arrangement, where perspectives for phasing out the role of the organization as indigenous capacity is developed should be present from the outset. In a country with so many indigenous organizations as Guatemala, a non-indigenous counterpart organization should moreover possess a specific competence or expertise that is required for the realization of the project, and should work in partnership with an indigenous organization. The way FUNDAECO, with its unique competence on establishing and managing protected areas, works together with the Defensoría Q'eqch'í is good example of such a case. (In this context, it could be pointed out that the distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous organizations may not always be easy to draw. AEPDI and the Defensoría Q'eqch'í may be a case in point.)

Among indigenous organizations, one may find both NGO-type organizations and more representative organizations. Again, there is no hard and

sharp dividing line; organizations may be more or less representative. In general, the added legitimacy of representative organizations, and their potential impact because of this legitimacy, should imply that the program gives priority to such organizations. However, when representative organizations are new, weak, divided or with limited administrative capacity, it may be too complicated for the program to have partnerships with them, and NGOs with specific areas of expertise may be better alternatives. Supporting the development of emergent representative organizations may be a particularly complicated area, where funding under some circumstances may do more harm than good. Given the limited capacity of the program for hands-on follow-up of counterpart organizations, we do not recommend that it involve itself in such uncertain ventures. The program should give priority to working with consolidated organizations which already have a certain administrative capacity.

The Guatemalan indigenous movement at the national level is fragmented and weak. This is an unfortunate state of affairs, and not one that is easily resolved by donor funding. On the contrary, funding to organizations under such circumstances may actually lead to increased competition and contradictions between organizations. For this reason, it is important that such divisions and organizational conflict dynamics are understood and taken into account when making program decisions. While the program should not have great ambitions of fostering new unity between indigenous organizations, it should at the very least seek to 'do no harm' and avoid creating new or strengthening existing divisions between organizations. Support to the Xinka Parliament may have had such effects.

State institutions should not normally be partners for the program. Footing the bill for state activities and thereby relieving the Government of Guatemala of some of its responsibility for indigenous issues is not the right role for the program. On the contrary, its role should be to work for the government to assume this responsibility as fully as possible. The current project with CODISRA illustrates some of the possible problems such support may encounter. Still, it should not be completely discarded that for specific and agenda-setting arrangements or activities, some support to a state institution could be given.

Turnover among partner organizations appear to have been very high. Among the 14 current partner organizations, only one has been with the program since 2002, when the program was transferred to the Embassy. We do not know the reasons for this high rate of turnover, which may have been very valid. However, we recommend that in the future, the program seek to establish more continuity in its partnerships. By working together over more than a year or two, both partners learn to understand the other better, and cooperation is improved. Furthermore, promoting indigenous rights is a long-term undertaking, and individual projects benefit from continuity. Jumping from one partner to another every year is difficult to combine with a consolidated strategic approach. The approach recommended here, assessing relevant partners before going into the concrete project proposals, should be helpful for identifying longer-term partners.

### 3.3 Types of projects

The thematic priorities of the strategy are on culturally rooted bilingual education and land rights, with gender and participation as crosscutting themes. This means that certain forms of projects are defined out of the program. Thus, projects focusing on for instance rural development, income generation, health provision, or the promotion of cultural traditions or identity would all fall outside of the program scope.

The rights-based approach of the program strategy also has certain implications. On the one hand, it means that high priority must be given to lobbying and advocacy towards the state, in order to make it assume its responsibilities as the prime duty holder with reference to the indigenous peoples of the country. Similarly, support to the creation of strong organizations that may represent the interests of the right-holding indigenous peoples against the state will hold a similar high priority.

On the other hand, where activities are geared more towards service delivery – for instance with respect to the provision of bilingual education – it is not unimportant what form these activities take. Rather than simply filling the gaps created by the state's failure to deliver, activities should be geared at influencing government policies. Influence should be sought both in terms of expanding government coverage and in terms of improving the quality and cultural appropriateness of services.

One advantage of a program – consisting of a number of individual projects – is the opportunity it offers in terms of exchange and learning between the different partners. Thus far, this potential has not been achieved within the program. It is worth considering whether some funds should be reserved for networking between organizations. In this case, we suggest that the ambition should not be to link all counterpart organizations together, but rather those that work within the same thematic area. Furthermore, as tensions may exist between some of the organizations, one should be wary of forcing this type of network activity on the counterparts, but be sensitive towards their interest in it.

### 3.4 Applications and contracts

Currently, the program functions in the following way: Applications are received in the month of April. These applications are processed during the month of May up to June – involving some contact with some of the applying organizations, on issues such as overall size of project and budget adjustments. Contracts for one year are signed in July, and disbursements made in July. This procedure seems to function well in most cases, and it is suggested that it be continued as the general rule.

However, we propose that changes be made for some of the partner organizations that are deemed to be strategic actors in the national context, and have proven that they have a certain administrative capacity. Obvious examples of such organizations are CNEM and CPT-Tierra. Moreover, within the existing portfolio, it would also be possible to consider AEPDI and FUNDAECO for such priority treatment. With such organizations it is possible to follow different procedures that may allow greater impact. Firstly, with these organizations one should consider longer funding horizons – at

the least for projects of a three-year duration. Of course, formally it will be necessary to include reservations in the contract both with respect to project progress and to future Norwegian state budget decisions. Still, such contracts will give organizations a greater degree of security and allow the formulation of projects of a more far-reaching nature.

Secondly, we propose that with these organizations, the embassy take a more proactive role. Instead of simply receiving proposals, and saying yes or no to them, the Embassy should sit down together with the organizations (individually) and discuss in an open manner how and in what fields a multi-year cooperation could have the greatest impact in terms of the program objectives. Based on what is agreed here, the organizations should develop their proposals, which might be subject to several new rounds of discussions and revisions, should this be necessary in order to arrive at something both parties see as optimal.

Thirdly, with this kind of partners, the program should – where the proposed activities warrant it – be willing to consider higher levels of funding than for the ‘ordinary’ counterpart organizations.

Fourthly, as these are organizations whose existence and activity is seen as strategically important, the program might consider funding areas that donors are normally reluctant to support. Local organizations of all types have particular difficulties in obtaining funding for core activities and administration. Often this leads to dispersion of efforts in order to find ways of financing these activities, as well as reduced administrative capacity and support for program activities. The net result will often be less efficient organizations, fewer activities, and smaller impacts. For these priority organizations, the program might consider – on a case-to-case basis – whether core funding would be a useful option. With core functions already funded, such organizations might also be able to attract additional project funds from other donors, thereby further extending the impact of the Norwegian funding. Alternatively, in some cases, more flexible funding might be more important than core funding. AEPDI, for instance, is a particularly interesting partner for the program because of the pivotal role it plays with respect to the Estor mining case. However, such advocacy work cannot be strictly planned in advance – to a large extent it must evolve in response to changing events outside the control of AEPDI. Funding that is sufficiently flexible to allow AEPDI to respond rapidly and creatively to the needs of the case might be the best way of using program funds in this case.

### **3.5 Follow-up of projects and counterparts**

The coordinator has been able to maintain a relatively good contact with the counterpart organizations, thereby getting to know both the people involved and the organizations’ strong and not so strong areas. Such contact and the knowledge it allows is important for making good project decisions and for following up the projects and organizations involved. It is therefore important that also in the future the project coordinator be allowed to continue to have this kind of regular contact with the organizations and project visits. One difficulty up to now has been the demands placed on her time by weak organizations needing too much help for administrative tasks. In the future,

the principle should be not to fund organizations requiring such close follow-up.

For the coming project year (July 2006 – June 2007), there will be fewer funds than what has been available for the current year. Furthermore, if the above recommendations are followed, strategic partner organizations may be given higher funding than what has been the norm up to now. In total, this should translate into fewer partner organizations. If the program furthermore reduces or ends its cooperation with administratively weaker organizations, this should mean reduced demands for follow-up on the program coordinator. To some extent this may be counteracted by the need to work more closely with the strategic partners, but in sum the total demands on her time should be reduced. However, the Embassy should be aware that following up the program will still require considerable work from the coordinator. Firstly, as will appear from the following, there are areas where increased administrative efforts are needed, and better coordination with other embassy programs – discussed under section 3.7 – also has costs in terms of time. And secondly, it is vital to allow the coordinator the continued capacity to maintain running contact with the program.

The coordinator has received solid support and backup from the Embassy's Minister Counselor for Development Cooperation. This has been important for realizing her job, and such support should continue in the future. In some instances – for instance in difficult discussions with government institutions or well-connected organizations – the visible backing of the locally contracted program staff by the Embassy leadership may be vital.

In one instance, a project was approved by the former ambassador, against the advice of the outgoing as well as the incoming project coordinator. This is also by far the weakest project within the portfolio. Obviously, such ways of dealing with applications contradict the closer adherence to the program strategy advocated in this report, and ought not to be repeated.

### **3.6 Administrative issues**

The existing appropriation document (BD) is deficient in several ways. It does not contain any justification for why the counterpart organizations and the individual projects are selected. This makes it hard to discern any strategic thinking behind the allocations made last year, and, with the change of responsibilities since last year's allocation, continuity and transfer of experiences suffer. Furthermore, general objectives, specific objectives and expected results are defined in unstructured and unsystematic ways. This greatly reduces the document's potential as an instrument for guiding follow-up and project discussions throughout the project period. And finally, a section of the document that describes administrative routines does not at all correspond to the practice that the program has followed (and given the slow and bureaucratic procedure specified in this description, one should be grateful that it has not been followed). Apparently this description has been copied into the document from somewhere else, without anybody discovering that it doesn't fit in. In sum, then, the BD gives the impression of being hastily assembled, with the sole purpose of setting out the size of the individual grants received by the counterpart organizations. In the future, much more

time should be dedicated to the elaboration of this document, so that it can serve as a tool for follow-up of the program during implementation.

The same weakness in terms of unsystematic and incomplete goal hierarchies is carried into the contracts with the individual organizations (to be precise, the contracts' Annex 1, entitled 'Project description'). This should also be rectified, as this will be the document on which project discussions with and reporting from the organization will be based. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the terms of the contract – and the goals specified – are completely understood and agreed with the counterpart organizations, this document should be in Spanish.

A desire to receive the audited accounts of all the activities of counterpart organizations, also those financed by other donors, has been expressed from NORAD. Of course, this makes sense from the point of view of financial control. However, due to the program's project year – July to June – this is bound to introduce great problems for all counterpart organizations with more than one donor. And for an organization like FUNDAECO, which has around 20 donors, such requirements would imply a nightmare. It is therefore recommended that other means of better control are sought, such as closer contact between the coordinator and the auditors of the organizations, and where possible, that organizations limit themselves to using only one auditor for all their accounts and donor financial reports. Furthermore, to the extent that it is practical, one might recommend that partners based in the same area have the same auditor – thereby facilitating the contact between Embassy and auditors.

### **3.7 Coordination with other Embassy-supported programs**

There are thematic overlaps between the Indigenous Peoples Program and several other programs supported by the Embassy. In one case, one of the program counterparts (AEPDI) even receives funding through another Embassy program (PASOC). We do not see such overlaps as problematic – they might rather be understood as offering the potential for synergies. However, for this to be achieved, better coordination is necessary. Closer communication and exchange of information should be sought between the program coordinator and those responsible for these other programs at the Embassy. Such discussions will enhance the understanding of the institutions, mechanisms and dynamics of the relevant sectors among the Embassy staff, and might moreover serve to avoid possible duplications of efforts.

This involves at least the following programs:

*UNDP's PASOC (Programa Participación de la Sociedad Civil).* As mentioned, AEPDI is a partner of both PASOC and the Indigenous Peoples Program. Furthermore, the area of 'Access to Justice' within PASOC may have further overlaps with the program, perhaps particularly related to land issues.

*The Formalization Program.* Here there are clear thematic overlaps with the land rights projects of the Indigenous Peoples Program, for instance the work of FUNDAECO with the Defensoría Q'eqchí, and the work of CNP-Tierra.

*Cadastre program.* If Norway still supports this field, then the same comments apply as for the formalization program.

*UNICEF bilingual education.* This program also works with bilingual education, although with a somewhat different approach from the organizations receiving support from the program. Still, there should be potentials for mutual learning between these two budget lines. Among the Program organizations, CNEM is central, but also other projects in the field of bilingual education will be relevant.





## **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **4.1 Main conclusions**

The strategy elaborated for the Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala under the 2004 review is still valid. It corresponds to real needs of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, at the same time as it is sufficiently focused to allow the program to have a real impact.

The thematic focus of the strategy has not been adhered to in the selection of program partners and projects. Many of the supported projects fall completely or largely outside of the strategy's recommended themes. Some of them do not even embody a rights-based or an indigenous perspective.

The partner organizations are also highly varied, spanning indigenous organizations, NGOs, state institutions, university institutes and cultural organizations, and working at different levels, from the very local to the national.

In sum, then, the current program portfolio is fragmented and fails to provide a focused strategic approach.

### **4.2 Main recommendations**

The Embassy should take ownership of the program strategy and make clear its status by revising the strategy document, building on the framework of the previous strategy and the specific recommendations of this report. Some of the key points are:

- The strategy should have an explicit rights orientation.
- The strategy should be oriented towards achieving significant impacts. To this end, it is of fundamental importance that partner organizations are selected on the basis of their potential for being strategic actors at the regional or national level.
- Projects should be selected according to the thematic orientation (land rights and bilingual education) and crosscutting dimensions (gender and participation) of the existing strategy.
- For the stronger and nationally significant partner organizations, more binding forms of cooperation and longer-term projects should be considered.
- In order to achieve maximum impact from the program, the program should consider funding those kind of components or activities that other donors are reluctant to fund – such as for instance core funding.

When applying this strategy in practice, more emphasis should be put on developing the appropriation document (BD), so that it reflect the strategic assessments and decisions made. The BD and the individual contracts and project descriptions should also be developed with more coherent goal hierarchies that allow them to be used as practical tools in the dialogue with the partner organizations.

More emphasis should be put on coordination and information exchange with other Embassy programs addressing the same themes as the Indigenous Peoples Program.

Of the 15 organizations reviewed, we recommend that five receive continued support, while more information is needed about two of the others. For the remaining organizations we recommend that support be terminated, in a couple of cases with a phase-out period.

## **5. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 Terms of Reference NORAD REVIEW Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala**

#### **Background:**

The Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program in Guatemala was transferred from NORAD/Oslo to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Guatemala in June 2002. The focus of the program at that time was mainly on two topics: Bilingual Education and Sustainable Development. The portfolio was fragmented and a more coherent and focused approach was needed. A review of the program was conducted by an external consultant in 2003 with the purpose to give recommendations for a future strategic approach for the program. The recommendations from this review were considered very broad and not helpful enough in determining the way forward.

An internal review was conducted in 2004 with the purpose to help the Embassy in establishing a more focused and relevant program. The report from this review describes the framework for indigenous peoples policy in Guatemala. It also discusses the main challenges for indigenous peoples in their efforts to achieve their rights and an improvement of their present situation. The report gave recommendations on how the Embassy should approach direct support program for indigenous peoples and could respond to the situation described. The report suggested a strategic approach with thematic focus, crosscutting issues and kinds of partners. Bilingual education and territorial issues were suggested as the most important and relevant thematic areas to address. Further it was argued for giving attention to participation and gender as crosscutting issues in the program.

Guidelines for Norway's efforts to strengthen support for Indigenous People in Development Cooperation were published in 2004 and were taken into consideration in the writing of this report.

#### **Purpose:**

To assess the relevance of the program in reference to the strategic approach chosen.

To elaborate recommendations for an action plan for the program

#### **Implementation of the Review:**

The team should interview the partners of the program, indigenous people's actors at national, regional, local level, as well as government officials using efficient methodologies such as:

- Group interviews
- Individual unstructured interviews
- Relevant documents review:
- AIDIDPI
- ILO 169 Convention

- Country Strategy 2003–2004
- Stavenhagen's Report
- Norwegian guidelines for support to indigenous peoples
- Beate Thorensens' report, (2003)
- The report from the Review in 2004 (GUH and TJA 2005).

**Scope of Work:**

Assess the relevance of the program portfolio in reference to the strategic approach chosen for the program.

Assess the relevance of the portfolio in reference to the situation of indigenous peoples in Guatemala, the peace accords, the ILO 169 convention, Norway's guidelines for support to indigenous peoples

Provide suggestions for a program strategy / action plan for the actual portfolio.

**Review Team:**

1 Norad Advisor

1 external Advisor (team leader)

1 Program Assistant, local (observer)

The external advisor is responsible for the writing of the report

**Timetable:**

Logistics and document review: March 6 to March 10 conducted by the local assistant. Agenda and coordination of activities: March 13 until March 17 conducted by Program Assistant in co-ordination with NORAD advisor.

Field Evaluation: March 20 to March 31<sup>st</sup> conducted by the review team including a wrap up meeting with the Ambassador and Minister Counselor.

Schedule for the external consultant

Preparations and study of documents: 1 week

Fieldwork in Guatemala: 2 weeks

Writing of report: 1–2 weeks

Total: 4–5 weeks

Consultations in the field:

Counterparts: 13 projects

Relevant Indigenous Leaders

Representatives from governmental authorities

**Reporting:**

The report should be written in English and consist of maximum 30 pages, with a summary. Deadline for final report: April 28, 2006.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Institutions and people interviewed**

#### ***March 20th***

**CNEM** Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya  
Julián Cumatz, Andrés Cholotío and others

**DIGEBI** Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe, MINEDUC  
Rodrigo Chub Ical, Asesor de la Dirección Lingüística.

#### **Editorial Cholsamaj**

Ulmil Joel Mejía Ortiz y Raxche' Demetrio Rodríguez

#### ***March 21st***

**COPMAG** Consejo de Pueblos Mayas de Guatemala  
José Domingo, Director Técnico – Miguel Ceto, Director de Proyectos –  
Juan José Escobar, Encargado de Finanzas and others

**CNP Tierra** La Coordinación Nacional Permanente sobre Derechos Relati-  
vos a la Tierra de los Pueblos Indígenas  
José Apolinario, Director – Otto Peralta, Advisor , Bonifacio Martín Chávez,  
Coordinator and others

#### ***March 22nd***

**Kiej de los Bosques**, subproject Aj Patnar Chortí, Jocotán  
Maria Pacheco, Iván Buitrón and others

#### ***March 23rd***

**AEPDI** Asociación Estoreña para el Desarrollo Integral  
Daniel Vogt and others

#### ***March 24th***

**FUNDAECO** La Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación  
Marco Cerezo, Byron Villeda, and representatives of *Defensoría Q'eqchi'*

#### ***March 26th***

**PAPXIGUA** Parlamento del Pueblo Xinka de Guatemala  
Santos Latín, Ever Benito, Lorena López and others

#### ***March 27th***

**FUPEDES** Fundación de Periodismo para el Desarrollo  
Susana Kamper, Directora –Erick Cáceres, Asistente and others

***March 28th***

**CADISOGUA**, La Coordinadora de Asociaciones de Desarrollo Integral del Sur Occidente de Guatemala

Oscar Cabrera, Director – Leonardo Cabrera, Asesor – Jacinto García Coordinador de Derechos Humanos, – Efraín Chamorro, Sub-Director and others.

***March 29th***

**CODISRA** La Comisión Presidencial contra la Discriminación y el Racismo contra los Pueblos Indígenas en Guatemala

Commissioner Ricardo Cajas, Assistant Carlos Pac

**UNDP, Formalization project**

Otto Peralta, Consultant

**Teatro Rayuela Independiente**

Ricardo Jovel, Coordinador – María Mercedes Fuentes, Directora and others

**La Cambalacha**

Gabriela Cordón, Coordinadora General

Alvaro Pop, NALEB (Analyst of Maya movement)

***March 30th***

**INTRAPAZ** Instituto de Transformación para la Paz, Universidad Rafael Landívar

Mayra Barrios Coordinadora de la Investigación

Elena Doucolay, Directora del Instituto and others

**UNDP**

Hugo Ayala

Oficial de Programa

Programa Participación de la Sociedad Civil

**IDEI** Instituto de Estudios Interétnicos

Eduardo Sacayón, Aura Cumes y las becarias del programa

***March 31<sup>st</sup>***

**Royal Norwegian Embassy**

Minister Counselor Håvard Austad