Swedish Democracy Promotion through NGOs in Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru

Outcome-Oriented Evaluation of Diakonia's Latin America Programme

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Preface

This evaluation of Diakonia's Latin America programme was initiated by the Department for Evaluation, UTV, in cooperation with the Regional Department for Latin America, RELA. The evaluation is part of Sida's enhanced effort to assess and understand the results of democracy and human rights support.

Diakonia is one of the largest of the Swedish frame organisations and Sida has a long history of supporting Diakonia's programme in Latin America. Taken together Sida's agreements with Diakonia, concerning Latin America, amounted to approximately SEK 380 000 000 for the period 2004 to 2007.

The evaluated Latin American programme, with its focus on training and capacity development, includes commonly used strategies in Sida's support for democracy promotion at the local level. Hence it offers an opportunity for wider learning in one of the prioritised areas of Swedish development co-operation.

The evaluation has been conducted with a fairly innovative design and methodology. It looks at intermediary outcomes broadly defined, and adopts a strict beneficiary perspective. An adapted anthropological methodology has been employed to offer a more in-depth collection of views from beneficiaries than is often the case in evaluations.

Findings are generated on a number of different issues. The evaluation contains valuable insights into the working of Diakonia's Latin America programme; it offers important lessons on strategies of democracy promotion and in particular capacity development; and it provides fuel for the continued process of methodological learning at Sida.

Stefan Molund

Acting Director

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Sida

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1. Acronyms[1]

ADOSCI   Asamblea de Delegados de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil
(Assembly of Delegates of Civil Society Organisations), Peru

AFIN   Asociación Forestal Indígena Nacional
(National Indigenous Association of Forestry), Bolivia

AFIL   Asociación Forestal Indígena de Lomerío
(Indigenous Association of Forestry of Lomerío), Bolivia

AFIR   Asociación Forestal Indígena Regional
(Regional Indigenous Association of Forestry), Bolivia

ALBA   Alternativa Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América
(Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of America)

APCI   Agencia Peruana de Cooperación Internacional
(Peruvian Agency of International Cooperation), Peru

APCOB   Apoyo Para el Campesino-Indígena del Oriente Boliviano
(Support for Peasant-Indigenous People of Eastern Bolivia), Bolivia

APRA   Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana
(Popular Revolutionary American Alliance), Peru

ASC   Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil (Civil Society Assembly), Guatemala

Asdi   Agencia Sueca de Desarrollo Internacional
(Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency)

BID   Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo
(Inter-American Development Bank – IDB)

B48C   Junta Directiva de los 48 Cantones
(Executive Board of the 48 Communities), Totonicapán, Guatemala

CAFTA   Central American Free Trade Agreement (El Tratado de Libre
Comercio para la República Dominicana y Centro América – TLC)

CCL   Consejo de Coordinación Local (Council of Local Coordination), Peru

CDM   Comité para el Desarollo Municipal
(Municipal Development Committee), Nicaragua

CEADES   El Colectivo de Estudios Aplicados para el Desarrollo Social
(Collective of Applied Studies for Social Development), Bolivia

CEDAP   Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario de Ayacucho
(Centre of Agrarian Development of Ayacucho), Peru

CEDEHCA   Centro de Derechos Humanos, Ciudadanos y Autonómicos
(Centre of Human, Citizenship and Autonomy Rights), Nicaragua

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[1]   Only acronyms mentioned more than once are listed.

CEH	Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico (Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission)
Cocodes	Consejos Departamentales de Desarrollo (Departmental Development Councils), Guatemala
Codedes	Consejos Distritales de Desarrollo (District Development Councils), Guatemala
Comudes	Consejos Municipales de Desarrollo (Municipal Development Councils), Guatemala
COR	Confederación de Obreros Regionales (Regional Workers' Confederation), Bolivia
CPD	Centro Pluricultural para la Democracia (Pluricultural Centre for Democracy), Guatemala
CPMGA	Centro de Promoción de la Mujer "Gregoria Apaza" (Centre for the Promotion of the Woman "Gregoria Apaza'), Bolivia
FEJUVE	Federación de Juntas Vecinales (Federation of Neighbourhood Organisations), Bolivia
FRG	Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (Guatemalan Republican Front)
FUNDAR	Fundación para el Desarrollo del Área Rural (Foundation for the Development of the Rural Area), Guatemala
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (The Sandinista National Liberation Front), Nicaragua
GANA	Gran Alianza Nacional (Grand National Alliance), Guatemala
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo – BID)
IDRC	Canadian International Development Research Centre (Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo)
IIDH	Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (Inter-American Institute for Human Rights)
ILO	International Labour Organization (Organización Internacional del Trabajo – OIT)
IMF	International Monetary Fund (Fondo Monetario Internacional – FMI)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics), Bolivia
IPADE	Instituto para el Desarollo y la Democracia (Development and Democracy Institute), Nicaragua
JENH	Jóvenes Estableciendo Nuevos Horizontes (Youth Creating New Horizons), Nicaragua
LPP	Ley de Participación Popular (Law of Popular Participation), Bolivia
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism), Bolivia
MINUGUA	Misión de Verificación de las Naciones Unidas en Guatemala (United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala)

MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement), Bolivia
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization (Organización No-Gubernamental – ONG)
OAS	Organization of American States (Organización de Estados Americanos – OEA)
OEA	Organización de Estados Americanos – Organization of American States (OAS)
OFC	Organización Forestal Comunitaria (Communitarian Forest Organisation), Bolivia
OM	Outcome Mapping
OPM	Oficina de Planificación Municipal (Office of Municipal Planning), Guatemala
PAN	Partido de Avanzada Nacional (National Advancement Party), Guatemala
PGMF	Plan General de Manejo Forestal (General Plan of Forest Management)
PLC	Partido Liberal Constitucionalista (Constitutionalist Liberal Party), Nicaragua
PNC	Policia Nacional Civil (National Civilian Police), Guatemala
PND	Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (National Development Plan), Nicaragua
PNUD	Programma de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (United Nations Development Programme – UNDP)
PODEMOS	Poder Democrático y Social (Democratic and Social Power), Bolivia
RAAN	Region Autonoma Atlantico Norte (North Atlantic Autonomous Region), Nicaragua
RELA	Sida's Department for Latin America
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TCO	Territorio Comunitario de Origen (Original Communal Territories), Bolivia
TLC	El Tratado de Libre Comercio para la República Dominicana y Centro América (Central American Free Trade Agreement – CAFTA)
UCA	Unión de Cooperativas Agrícolas (Agricultural Cooperatives Union), Nicaragua
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme (Programma de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo – PNUD)
UPEA	Universidad Popular de El Alto (Popular University of El Alto), Bolivia
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity)

2. Executive Summary

The unsteady process of democratisation in Latin America is of acute concern for international development cooperation. It was noted in a recent UNDP report that despite the fact that democracy has now taken root in Latin American societies, "many basic civil rights are not safeguarded, and … levels of poverty and inequality are among the worst in the world" (UNDP 2005:33). Democratic governance has thus developed unevenly since the days of the military regimes. The achievements in the formal spheres of general elections and the official acknowledgement of citizenship rights correspond poorly to the quality of democratic political participation on the grass-root level. Nor does such participation seem to generate the results required for people to continuously invest hopes and efforts in political work for democratic change.

Sweden, through Sida, has long been supporting efforts to enhance a qualitative democratic change by contributing to capacity development of partner organisations. One major method has been guided by the assumption that capacity development should be professional in character and involve the preparation of individuals for the pressing task of democracy work (Sida 2005). This early focus has later been combined with an approach to organisational capacity, and most recently to capacity building, in complex processes of change stirred by structural adjustment in contexts of radical political and economic transformation. The capacity development under study in this evaluation represents a fourth kind, or perhaps a combination of all those mentioned above. It targets local-level political life and, in particular, leaders in civil society organisations. The knowledge, work, and legitimacy of local leaders are promoted through training on topics of citizenship rights, gender, and poverty alleviation (among others). This evaluation aims to assess the outcome of such capacity development for the people involved in the activities and its impact on local processes of democratization.

This kind of capacity development occurs within frameworks of decentralisation, and for this task, Sida works through non-governmental organisations with a record of reaching out through partner networks established over a long period of time. Accordingly, Sida has a long history of supporting Diakonia's programme in Latin America, currently by financing the activities in the region through two different channels. Sida's Department for Latin America, RELA, has had an ongoing agreement with Diakonia for the period 2004–2006 which amounts to SEK 219,000,000. In addition, Sida's Unit for Non-Governmental Organisations, SEKA, has an agreement with Diakonia on a global level for the same period. In total, this agreement

amounts to SEK 273,000,000 globally, of which the approximate size of the programme in Latin America financed by SEKA is SEK 66,000,000.

The intended users of the evaluation are representatives of Sida's Latin American Department and members of Sida's Project Committee. The results will be presented to Diakonia, as well as to Sida's Departments for Co-operation with Non-Governmental Organisations and Democracy and Social Development. The evaluation is commissioned by Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, whose interests lie mainly in the methodological approach developed and employed.

Diakonia regards its activities in Latin America, whether financed by SEKA or RELA, as included in one single strategy plan, based on programmes at the country level. Examples of strategies used by Diakonia and its partners include education, awareness raising, promotion of dialogue, and advocacy. The organisation puts special emphasis on the knowledge of citizenship rights, gender, and poverty. An overall aim of its programme is to change attitudes and raise levels of knowledge and awareness so that people can contribute to a democratic change of their own societies. The present evaluation has thus placed a particular focus on the results achieved by education and awareness-raising efforts, and has enquired into whether efforts in this regard have actually made a change in the behaviour of the members of the target group.

National NGOs carry out the studied interventions. They aim at promoting democracy in different ways. Two leadership schools train social leaders in urban areas with the aim of strengthening people's capacity to influence processes of popular participation and democracy on both local and national levels. Other projects target local democracy and a culture of rights by supporting social organisations representing communities, marginalised groups or local indigenous authorities, and by strengthening the formal municipal structures through the education of local authorities and delegates to decentralised state institutions. One project, finally, aims at promoting the political work of communitarian forestry organisations.

Objectives and scope of the assignment

The most central objectives of the assignment are:

• to evaluate a small yet sufficiently large number of Diakonia-supported projects aimed at capacity development through the training of local leaders in Latin America;

• to focus on an intermediary level of results encompassing changes in the behaviour, activities, and actions of the primary target group;

• to try and gauge the extent to which their behaviour undergoes transformation and change as a result of the activities supported by Diakonia.

The evaluation focused on a selection of eight interventions supported by Diakonia, two in each of the following countries: Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru. A sample of thirty interventions was first provided by Diakonia, based on the criteria of representativeness of Diakonia's full programme. The evaluation team finalised the selection of projects in consultation with Sida, with a view to maintain the focus on democracy promotion as well as the practical aspects of the assignment.

In order to assess outcomes at the level of users, the team of evaluators carried out three visits to the participants in each project, interviewing between 15 and 25 persons at each site. The visits took place in February and November 2006, and June 2007. Here, efforts were made to interview the same individuals on three occasions, with the aim of enquiring into perceived changes in their capacities as social leaders and the extent to which such capacities could be interpreted as a result of Diakonia-funded training. Two immediate problems arose in relation to this planned methodology. Even though it was possible to identify changes that could be interpreted as a result of the training, (a) the time span of one and a half years, in most cases, proved to be too short to account for observable, let alone significant, changes among the target group members during the observed period, and (b) Diakonia-funded programmes did not always overlap directly with the time of the evaluation, meaning that many beneficiaries, if locally elected for one year in office, were replaced by others during the time of the evaluation. To compensate for this, a smaller number of re-encounters with beneficiaries over time had to be combined with the inclusion of new voices, both within and outside the programmes.

Considering expectations and constraints discussed above, the team of evaluators sought answers to the following questions:

- *How do individuals and groups change?*

- *Why do individuals and groups change?* Here, we sought to isolate the role of Diakonia-funded involvement in observed changes. We asked to what extent changes can be attributed to Diakonia-funded training alone, and how the effects of Diakonia-supported interventions can be separated from other factors that influence change.

- *What are individuals and groups able to change after having changed themselves?* This question was developed in response to the Diakonia slogan "people changing the world" and addressed the outcome in society more generally. We enquired about local institutions, the local or regional political system, and political culture. This question also addresses the issues of impact and relevance of the objectives of the interventions.

Outcomes and Future Challenges

The outcomes

- The outcome of Diakonia-funded training of local leaders from February 2006 to June 2007 is an observable *improvement in the levels of knowledge* among individuals regarding their citizenship rights and the ways such rights can be exercised and legally defended. This corresponds to both Diakonia and Sida conceptions of capacity development in a context of local-level democracy promotion. A general conclusion of this report is that the studied programmes in Latin America do what Diakonia says they do and that they are successful in relation to stated aims.

- In terms of individual performances, behaviour, and attitudes, the outcomes are (a) an improvement in self-esteem, especially among poor and previously not organised women who, through the programmes in all the four countries, have learned the skills of organising and presenting projects and demands and, in the process, been able to establish new social bonds; (b) an emerging reason for many to invest hope in democratic laws and practices which, in turn, provide them with a buffer zone in their still vulnerable positions against the attraction of clientelist relationships; and (c) a reorientation of women's roles in public spheres, from having been representatives of their men when acting politically to becoming proud spokespersons for their own interests (even if those interests are difficult to separate from the interests of their children and, on occasion, their men).

- At the group level, such individual changes have different outcomes in different regions. They lead to the sustainability of local institutions in regions where the partner organisation is running a focused project involving a large percentage of the population. In these cases, we have also seen a strengthened sense among the partners of ownership of projects and ideas. We have noticed changing relations between organisations at the local level and municipal authorities – leading, in this first instance, to more open and adoptive municipal governments, and, on other occasions, to a regression into a more defensive authoritarian practice by the municipality or state structure.

- The Diakonia-supported activities contribute to the emergence of new political opportunities for the beneficiaries. In the inquiries about the networks established by the beneficiaries, a large number of donors and different support groups like families, parties, and churches were often mentioned. Through training, local leaders are now able to manoeuvre in an NGO-dominated landscape and to make themselves less dependent on one single donor.

- However, successes – in terms of an improved knowledge and practice of rights – did not necessarily contribute in producing changes on a political

or institutional level, due to the persistence of hierarchical power structures and corruption at the municipal and departmental levels of national political life. This problem is also acknowledged by Diakonia and is approached in terms of being a "risk" or exogenous obstacle to partner-induced change. Whether Diakonia, or Swedish development cooperation at large, compensates for the limited social and political outcomes of leadership formation by working at other institutional and political levels in other programmes is outside the scope of this evaluation to assess.

- Named changes in behaviour or performance did, on occasion, lead to the emergence of an NGO-connected sphere of social and political agents at the local level with a problematic relationship to the base. It is our impression that this predicament is not acknowledged as a problem or responsibility of the donor. This finding cannot be viewed as an exogenously imposed risk or constraint, but, on the contrary, it is a direct result or outcome of some of the studied interventions.

- A positive chain of both individual and social or political outcomes was also noticeable, as trained leaders in some places seem to have successfully contributed to the decentralisation of power and the emergence of a culture of rights, i.e., the experienced change from using rights discourses as a means of resistance or complaint to the reliance on presently existing norms of conduct in political life.

The limited number of programmes studied, and the limited number of beneficiaries interviewed, makes it impossible to generalise further about a dominance of any of the observations mentioned above. In the report we specifically discuss the organisations and places that displayed those tendencies.

National contexts frame the work of the NGOs studied, but several differences transcend nation-state boundaries and provide for comparisons on a Latin American level. In the report we analyse the tendencies and potential consequences of a number of such differences and whether some elements in these cases have been particularly influential in shaping the outcomes of democracy promotion through building the capacity of local leaders.

The differences discussed refer to:

1. The approach of the partners to the state

2. The relationship between partners and beneficiaries

3. The relationship between beneficiaries and the base

4. Diverging ways of promoting gender equality

5. The (often implicit) promotion of individualism

We conclude by noting the difficulty (and lack of sustainability) in promoting individual and even organisational empowerment without also, by various means, attacking the structures sustaining authoritarian traditions.

Future challenges

Future challenges for partner organisations and their beneficiaries

- The major future challenge for beneficiaries of leadership training among the poorest sectors of the populations is doubtlessly the economic, and how to manage the scarce resource of time when it has to suffice for both work for subsistence and political participation, i.e., the challenge of how to combine being politically active with the pressing needs of supporting a poor household. Some organisations in this study worked explicitly on combining the sacrifice of participation with different kinds of "rewards" in both economic and social spheres, and even though such rewards are symbolic at best, we believe the approach could serve as an interesting example for other partner organisations to learn from and follow.

- The challenge for the leader of being accountable to both the community and the partner organisation that supports or runs the training. Here, we found a paradox at times, since the transformation of perceptions and the increasing knowledge among trained leaders threatened to work against their legitimacy and authority in the local sphere.

- The selection of leaders is sometimes arbitrary, and sometimes it challenges local norms of authority (with the aim of reforming leadership), or, again, it promotes local traditional authority (elder, male, etc.). We see it as a major challenge for the partner organisations to engage in a critical discussion with beneficiaries on ways to broaden the selection of leaders, primarily in order to counteract the emergence of local and continuously re-elected elites.

Future challenges for Diakonia

- The selection and ongoing monitoring of partner organisations should be attentive to tendencies and changes in their work and not rely on official statements and project descriptions often "performed" to adjust to the wishes and demands of the donor.

- For beneficiaries and the grass-roots, politics and economy are intimately connected. Changing people's knowledge and perceptions may have some results for poor people, as we have seen, but in many cases it is not enough and needs to be combined with a strengthened position in the economic sphere as well.

- If the obstacles to poor people's participation are to be found in the structures more than in individual capacities, a challenge is to find ways of forming leaders that address both the individual and the structure *in the same place at the same time*.

- It is important to consider that what the donor perceives as risks are an integrated part of the dynamic of each programme and not to presuppose that interventions are neutral engines of empowerment without political, social, and economic effects.

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Future challenges for international development cooperation

- We argue that even though both Sida and Diakonia are working for institutional strengthening on various levels of the political administration, those efforts have not sufficiently helped the beneficiaries interviewed here to contribute to democratic developments beyond changes in their own attitudes and behaviour. The vast array of projects and programmes run by Swedish development cooperation in other places is of little help to an individual beneficiary who struggles to make ends meet while confronting all sorts of undemocratic restrictions on her or his freedoms of voice, movement, and association.

- The criticism of the notion of capacity building as an instrument of top-down control of development projects is convincingly deconstructed in Sida (and Diakonia) policy documents. The notion of capacity development is introduced to mark a shift towards an increased ownership of projects among partner countries and organisations. We have found the open-ended approach of Diakonia to the differences in culture, context, and capacities of partner organisations, to actually reflect or empirically prove this discursive shift (if yet with a few negative consequences). A challenge, however, would be to preserve or, perhaps, develop this stance further by encouraging Diakonia and other donor agencies to keep working towards a more full partner ownership of programmes.

- The point above could very well be connected to the most important challenge for beneficiaries and partners – the economic. We found convincing and sometimes frustrated arguments for means to accomplish an economic decentralisation and to combine the political side of democratisation with opportunities in the economic sphere. A developed ownership on the part of those organisations would, for Sida (in dialogue with Diakonia), imply lending an ear to such argumentation.

Future challenges for outcome oriented evaluations

- Time constraints and the need to balance the number of studied interventions with a coverable distance, a manageable number of evaluators, and a sufficient amount of days for both travel and study.

- The importance of choosing a period of observation long enough to able to assess changes. The period needed should vary with the aims and activities of the projects.

- The importance of selecting programmes that run parallel to the evaluation, so that one programme does not end and another one start in the middle of the process. If that occurs, conversations with beneficiaries will necessarily be interrupted, since individual beneficiaries will be exchanged for others.

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- The need to balance the number of interventions studied and the number of interviewees on the one hand with intended results and achievements on the other.

- The challenge of keeping the conversation with partner organisations going between visits in order to carefully and repeatedly explain the nature of the evaluation and also to announce the visits as early as possible to give them enough time to see to the practical arrangements of contacts with beneficiaries.

Methodology

The evaluators developed a methodological approach at the intersection of quantitative outcome mapping aims and techniques and a "short version"of qualitative ethnographic research. This did not modify the original objective, but combined the original approach regarding the expected changes in behaviour and attitude with a focus also on:

- changes in social relationships within and beyond the target groups (based on the hypothesis that induced change in behaviour through training does necessarily have social consequences for the beneficiaries);

- the sociological concept of performance, in combination with or in place of the more psychological concept of behaviour (based on the hypothesis that a focus solely on the more profound notion of behaviour might obscure issues of strategising, adjustments, and possibly manipulation on the part of beneficiaries);

- an inductive approach which puts emphasis on issues in the lives and experiences of beneficiaries that emerged in open-ended interviews as crucial or relevant;

- a qualitative evaluation of observed changes, i.e., the level of programme success if measured against a combination of project aims, beneficiary expectations, and, finally, the point of view of the grass-roots that named leaders were trained to lead.

According to the assignment, conclusions with regard to programme outcomes were to be limited to "what has actually happened" in the projects, with special attention given to what has been outlined above. Providing recommendations to involved parties was not a primary task of the assignment. Particular attention should be paid to whether the stated goals of each intervention, and of Diakonia's regional programme, are being achieved.

The teams were composed of a gender-balanced group of academics (sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists) residing in the studied countries and in Sweden. The deep contextual knowledge of the national consultants made it possible to gauge the effect of events and outside factors that are not connected to the intervention under observation. All of the consultants were fluent in Spanish.

2. Resumen Ejecutivo

Promoción Sueca de la democracia a través de Organizaciones No-gubernamentales en Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua y Perú.

Evaluación centrada en los alcances ("outcome-oriented") de los programas de Diakonia en Latinoamérica

El inestable proceso de democratización en Latinoamérica es una fuerte preocupación de la cooperación internacional para el desarrollo. En un reciente informe, el PNUD indicó que si bien la democracia ha echado raíces en las sociedades latinoamericanas, "muchos derechos civiles básicos no son salvaguardados, y los niveles de pobreza e desigualdad están entre los peores del mundo." (UNDP 2005:33). Desde los regímenes militares hasta nuestros días las formas democráticas de gobernabilidad se han desarrollado desigualmente. Los logros alcanzados en esferas formales, como son las elecciones generales, y el reconocimiento oficial de los derechos ciudadanos corresponden pobremente con la calidad de la participación política democrática a nivel de base. Además, dicha participación no parece generar los resultados necesarios para que la población continuamente dedique sus esperanzas y esfuerzos al trabajo político en pro de cambios democráticos.

Desde hace mucho tiempo Suecia, a través de Asdi, viene apoyando esfuerzos que lleven a cambios democráticos cualitativos por medio de su contribución al desarrollo de las capacidades de organizaciones socias *(partner organizations)*. Uno de los métodos principales de trabajo es guiado por la suposición de que el desarrollo de capacidades debe ser de carácter profesional e involucra la formación de individuos para la urgente tarea de trabajar por la democracia (Sida 2005). Este enfoque inicial fue posteriormente combinado con un acercamiento al desarrollo de capacidades organizacionales, y recientemente a la construcción de capacidades, que se dan en complejos procesos de cambio provocados por ajustes estructurales en contextos de transformación política y económica radicales. El desarrollo de capacidades estudiado en esta evaluación representa un cuarto tipo, o talvez la combinación de todos los antes mencionados. Este enfoque tiene como meta incidir en la vida política a nivel local y, particularmente, en líderes de organizaciones de la sociedad civil. El conocimiento, trabajo y legitimidad de líderes locales es promovido a través de entrenamiento en temas como: derechos ciudadanos, género y reducción de la pobreza (entre otros). El objetivo de esta evaluación es de apreciar los resultados del desarrollo de las capacidades para la gente involucrada en las actividades y su impacto en los procesos locales de democratización.

Este tipo de desarrollo de capacidades se enmarca en procesos de descentralización. Para esta tarea Asdi trabaja con organizaciones No-gubernamentales que poseen el record de incidir a partir de redes de colaboradores establecidas hace largo tiempo. De igual forma, Asdi tiene una larga historia de apoyo a los programas de Diakonia en Latinoamérica, actualmente financiando actividades en la región a través de dos canales distintos. El Departamento de Asdi para Latinoamérica, RELA, tiene un acuerdo vigente con Diakonia para el período 2004–2006 que llega a SEK 219.000.000. Además, el Departamento de Cooperación con Organizaciones No-Gubernamentales y Asistencia Humanitaria de Asdi, SEKA, tiene un acuerdo con Diakonia a nivel global para ese mismo período. Dicho acuerdo es de un total global de SEK 273.000.000, del cual el programa financiado por SEKA en Latinoamérica es de SEK 66.000.000.

Los usuarios a quienes va dirigida esta evaluación son representantes del Departamento Regional para América Latina de Asdi y miembros del Comité de Proyectos de la misma organización. Los resultados serán presentados a Diakonia, al igual que a los Departamentos de Cooperación con Organizaciones No-Gubernamentales y de Democracia y Desarrollo Social de Asdi. La evaluación fue encargada por el Departamento de Evaluación y Auditoria Interna de Asdi, cuyos intereses se centran fundamentalmente en el enfoque metodológico usado y desarrollado.

Diakonia considera sus actividades en Latinoamérica, ya sea aquellas financiadas por SEKA o por RELA, como parte de un mismo plan estratégico, basado en programas a nivel de país. Ejemplos de las estrategias utilizadas por Diakonia y sus organizaciones socias incluyen educación, concientización, promoción de diálogo y defensoría. Diakonia pone especial énfasis en el conocimiento de derechos ciudadanos, género y pobreza. Uno de los objetivos principales de su programa es lograr un cambio de actitudes e incrementar los niveles de conocimiento y conciencia de manera que las personas puedan contribuir a cambios democráticos en sus sociedades. La presente evaluación, por lo tanto, se ha centrado especialmente en los resultados alcanzados por los esfuerzos educativos y de concientización, y se ha preguntado si los esfuerzos en estas áreas han llevado a un real cambio en el comportamiento de los miembros del grupo meta.

ONGs nacionales ejecutan las intervenciones estudiadas, las que apuntan a promover la democracia en diferentes maneras. Dos escuelas de liderazgo están entrenando líderes sociales en áreas urbanas con el objetivo de fortalecer la capacidad de la gente para influenciar procesos de participación popular y democracia tanto a nivel local como nacional. Otros proyectos están dirigidos hacia la democracia local y la cultura de derechos, mediante el apoyo a organizaciones sociales que representan a comunidades, grupos marginalizados o autoridades indígenas locales, así como al fortalecimiento de las estructuras municipales formales a través de la educación de autoridades y delegados locales de las instituciones estatales. Finalmente, un

proyecto tiende a promover el trabajo político de las organizaciones comunitarias forestales.

Objetivos y alcance del trabajo

Los objetivos centrales del trabajo son:

- Evaluar un pequeño, pero suficientemente amplio, número de proyectos apoyados por Diakonia enfocados en el desarrollo de capacidades a través de entrenamiento a líderes locales en Latinoamérica;

- Centrarse en un nivel intermedio de resultados que abarquen cambios de comportamiento, actividades y acciones del principal grupo meta;

- Comprobar y evaluar hasta qué punto su comportamiento experimenta una transformación y cambio como resultado de las actividades apoyadas por Diakonia.

La evaluación se enfocó en una selección de 8 intervenciones apoyadas por Diakonia, dos en cada uno de los siguientes países: Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua y Perú. Una muestra de 30 intervenciones fue primeramente proporcionada por Diakonia, basada en el criterio de representatividad de su programa. El equipo de evaluación finalizó la selección de proyectos en consulta con Asdi, basado en la promoción de la democracia y los aspectos prácticos del trabajo.

Con el fin de evaluar los resultados a nivel de los usuarios, el equipo de evaluadores llevó a cabo tres visitas a los participantes de cada proyecto, entrevistando entre 15 y 25 personas en cada lugar. Las visitas se realizaron en Febrero y Noviembre del 2006 y Junio 2007. Se hicieron esfuerzos para entrevistar a las mismas personas en las tres visitas, con el objetivo de indagar sobre cambios que ellos percibieron en sus capacidades como líderes sociales y en qué medida dichas capacidades pudieran ser interpretadas como resultados de la capacitación financiada por Diakonia. Dos problemas inmediatos surgieron en relación con la metodología planteada. A pesar de lograr identificar cambios que podían ser interpretados como resultados de la capacitación: (a) el lapso de un año y medio, en la mayoría de los casos, probó ser demasiado corto para lograr dar cuenta de cambios perceptibles, menos aún significativos, en los miembros del grupo meta durante el período observado, y (b) los programas financiados por Diakonia no siempre coincidieron con el período de evaluación, esto significa que muchos beneficiarios, cuando electos para un cargo por el período de un año, fueron sustituidos por otros durante la evaluación. Para compensar esto, a lo largo de la evaluación un pequeño número de reencuentros con los beneficiarios tuvieron que ser combinados con la inclusión de nuevas voces, tanto dentro como fuera de los programas.

Consideradas las expectativas y limitaciones discutidas arriba, el equipo de evaluadores buscó responder las siguientes preguntas:

- *¿Cómo los individuos y grupos cambian?*

- *¿Por qué los individuos y grupos cambian?* Aquí, buscamos aislar el rol de los programas financiados por Diakonia en los cambios observados. Preguntamos hasta qué punto los cambios pueden ser atribuidos solamente a las capacitaciones financiadas por Diakonia, y cómo los efectos de las intervenciones apoyadas por Diakonia podían ser separadas de otros factores que influyen en el cambio.

- *¿Qué logran cambiar los individuos y grupos una vez ellos mismos han cambiado?* Esta pregunta se formuló en respuesta al eslogan de Diakonia "gente cambiando al mundo"y abordó los resultados logrados en la sociedad de manera general. Indagamos sobre las instituciones locales, el sistema político local o regional y la cultura política. Esta pregunta también aborda el tema del impacto y relevancia de los objetivos de las intervenciones.

Resultados (outcomes) y retos futuros

Los resultados

- En el resultado de las capacitaciones a líderes locales financiadas por Diakonia de Febrero del 2006 a Junio del 2007 es perceptible el *mejoramiento de los niveles de conocimiento* en los individuos en relación a sus derechos ciudadanos y las formas en que dichos derechos pueden ser ejercidos y legalmente defendidos. Esto coincide con las concepciones que tanto Diakonia como Asdi tienen sobre el desarrollo de capacidades en el contexto de promoción de la democracia a nivel local. Una conclusión general de este informe es que los programas estudiados en Latinoamérica hacen lo que Diakonia dice que ellos hacen y que éstos son exitosos en relación con los objetivos indicados.

- En términos de las "actuaciones" *(performance)*, comportamientos y actitudes individuales, los resultados son: (a) el mejoramiento del auto-estima, especialmente entre mujeres pobres y anteriormente desorganizadas. A través de los programas en los cuatro países, estas mujeres han aprendido técnicas para organizarse y presentar proyectos y demandas, logrando en el proceso establecer nuevos vínculos sociales; (b) una razón para que muchos depositen sus esperanzas en leyes y prácticas democráticas que, a su vez, les proporcionen una "zona colchón" en su aún vulnerable posición ante la atracción que ejercen las relaciones clientelistas; y (c) la reorientación del rol de las mujeres en esferas públicas. Ellas han pasado de ser representantes de sus parejas cuando actúan políticamente a convertirse en orgullosas voceras de sus propios intereses (aun cuando estos sean difíciles de separar de los intereses de sus hijos y, en algunas ocasiones, de sus parejas).

- A nivel de grupo, dichos cambios individuales tienen diferentes resultados en diferentes regiones. Estos llevan a la sostenibilidad de instituciones

locales en regiones donde la organización socia dirige un proyecto enfocado en involucrar un alto porcentaje de la población. Hemos notado cambios en las relaciones de organizaciones a nivel local y las autoridades municipales. En primera instancia estos cambios llevan a gobiernos municipales más abiertos y receptivos pero, en otras ocasiones, conducen a la regresión a prácticas autoritarias y defensivas por parte de las municipalidades o de las estructuras estatales.

• Las actividades apoyadas por Diakonia contribuyen al surgimiento de nuevas oportunidades políticas para los beneficiarios. En las indagaciones acerca de las redes establecidas por los beneficiarios, un alto número de donantes y diferentes grupos de apoyo como la familia, partidos políticos e iglesias fueron muchas veces mencionados. A través de capacitaciones, los líderes locales son capaces de maniobrar en un panorama dominado por ONG y depender menos de un solo donante.

• Sin embargo, los éxitos—en términos de un mejoramiento de conocimiento y prácticas de derechos—no contribuyeron necesariamente a producir cambios a nivel político o institucional, debido a la persistencia de estructuras jerárquicas de poder y corrupción en la vida política nacional tanto municipal como departamental. Diakonia también reconoce este problema, el cual aborda como un "riesgo" o un obstáculo exógeno al cambio inducido en los socios. Si Diakonia, o la cooperación sueca para el desarrollo en general, compensan los limitados resultados sociales y políticos de la formación de líderes con un trabajo a otros niveles institucionales y políticos en otros programas, está fuera del ámbito de la presente evaluación.

• Los mencionados cambios en comportamiento o actuación *(performance)*, en ocasiones, condujeron al surgimiento de una esfera de agentes sociales y políticos a nivel local, conectados a ONG, con una relación problemática con las bases. Nuestra impresión es que esta difícil situación no es reconocida como un problema o responsabilidad del donante. Este hallazgo no puede ser visto como un riesgo impuesto exógenamente o una limitante, al contrario, este es resultado directo de algunas de las intervenciones estudiadas.

• Una cadena positiva de impactos tanto individuales como sociales o políticos fue notaria cuando percibimos que ciertos líderes capacitados por las organizaciones socias parecen haber contribuido exitosamente en la descentralización del poder y la emergencia de una cultura de derechos, por ejemplo: el cambio experimentado cuando pasan de usar el discurso de derechos como un medio de resistencia o reclamo, a un sentido de confianza en las actuales normas de conducta en la vida política.

En síntesis, el limitado número de programas estudiados y el limitado número de beneficiarios entrevistados, hace imposible generalizar más aún acerca del predominio de cualquiera de las observaciones arriba mencionadas. En

el informe analizamos específicamente las organizaciones y los lugares que presentaron dichas tendencias.

El contexto nacional enmarca el trabajo de las ONG estudiadas, pero varias diferencias trascienden las fronteras estado-nación y permiten comparaciones a nivel latinoamericano. En el informe analizamos las tendencias y potenciales consecuencias de una serie de diferencias. Observamos si algunos elementos en dichas diferencias han influido de forma particular en la construcción de capacidades de líderes locales, impactando así los resultados en la promoción de la democracia.

Las diferencias discutidas son:

1. El acercamiento de organizaciones socias con el Estado

2. La relación entre organizaciones socias y beneficiarios

3. La relación entre beneficiarios y la base

4. Formas divergentes de promover la equidad de género

5. La (muchas veces implícita) promoción del individualismo

Concluimos apuntando la dificultad (y falta de sostenibilidad) de promover el enseñoramiento individual y hasta organizacional sin a la vez, y por varios medios, atacar las estructuras que sostienen tradiciones autoritarias.

Futuros retos

Futuros retos para las organizaciones socias y sus beneficiarios

- Para los beneficiarios de capacitaciones en liderazgo, que se encuentran entre los sectores más pobres de la población, el mayor reto futuro es sin duda el económico. A esto se añade el cómo manejar el tiempo, un recurso tan escaso que debe ser suficiente para trabajar para su subsistencia y la participación política, por ejemplo: el reto de cómo combinar el ser políticamente activo con la apremiante necesidad de mantener un hogar pobre. Algunas organizaciones en este estudio trabajaron explícitamente en combinar el "sacrificio de la participación" con diferentes tipos de "incentivos" tanto en esferas económicas como sociales. Aun cuando en el mejor de los casos dichos incentivos son apenas simbólicos, consideramos que este acercamiento sirve como un ejemplo interesante que otras organizaciones socias pueden aprender y seguir.

- Los líderes confrontan el reto de responderle *(be accountable)* a su comunidad y a las organizaciones socias que apoyan y dirigen las capacitaciones. Aquí, algunas veces encontramos una paradoja ya que en ciertos casos la transformación de percepciones y el creciente conocimiento de los líderes capacitados amenazó con perjudicar su legitimidad y autoridad en la esfera local.

- La selección de líderes es algunas veces arbitraria y algunas veces desafía normas locales de autoridad (con el objetivo de reformar el liderazgo) o,

nuevamente, promueve autoridades locales tradicionales (ancianos, hombres, etc.). Vemos esto como uno de los mayores retos que enfrentan las organizaciones socias para lograr entablar una discusión crítica con los beneficiarios. En particular en cuanto a formas de ampliar la selección de líderes, sobre todo con el fin de contrarrestar el surgimiento de elites locales que son continuamente re-electas.

Futuros retos para Diakonia

- La cuidadosa selección de las organizaciones socias de forma a monitorear las acciones reales y las tendencias en sus trabajos, en vez de basarse en comunicados oficiales y descripciones de proyectos muchas veces "actuados" *(performed)* para ajustarse a los deseos y demandas del donante.

- Para los beneficiarios y miembros de base, la política y la economía están íntimamente conectadas. Cambiar el conocimiento y percepciones de la gente puede tener algunas consecuencias para la gente pobre, como hemos visto, pero en muchos casos no es suficiente y necesita ser combinado de igual manera con una posición reforzada en la esfera económica.

- Si los obstáculos para la participación de la gente pobre se encuentran tanto en las personas como en las estructuras, el reto es encontrar formas de capacitar líderes que aborden tanto al individuo como a la estructura en el *mismo lugar y al mismo tiempo.*

- Importancia de considerar aquello que el donante percibe como riesgos como parte de la dinámica de cada programa y no presuponer que las intervenciones son engranajes neutrales para empoderar, sin efectos políticos, sociales y económicos.

Futuros retos para la cooperación internacional para el desarrollo

- Argumentamos aquí que si bien tanto Asdi como Diakonia trabajan en el fortalecimiento institucional a varios niveles de la administración política, estos esfuerzos no han ayudado suficientemente a los beneficiarios entrevistados para que alcancen un desarrollo democrático más allá de los cambios individuales de actitud y comportamiento. El amplio conjunto de proyectos y programas dirigidos por la cooperación Sueca para el desarrollo *en otras áreas* es de poca ayuda para un/a beneficiario/a que lucha por sobrevivir económicamente a la vez que confronta una serie de restricciones no democráticas en su libertad de expresión, movimiento y asociación.

- La crítica a la noción de construcción de capacidades como un instrumento de control vertical, de arriba hacia abajo, en los proyectos de desarrollo es convincentemente deconstruida en los documentos de políticas de Asdi (y Diakonia). La noción de desarrollo de capacidades se introduce con el fin de marcar un cambio hacia el aumento en la apropiación de los proyectos por parte de los países y asociaciones socias. Hemos encontrado que el enfoque flexible *("open-ended")* de Diakonia en

cuanto a las diferencias culturales, de contexto y de capacidades de las organizaciones socias, es un reflejo o una prueba empírica de este cambio discursivo (aun cuando tenga algunas consecuencias negativas). Un reto, sin embargo, será preservar o, tal vez, *desarrollar* más esta postura al incentivar a Diakonia y otras agencias donantes a continuar trabajado hacia la apropiación completa de los programas por parte de los socios.

- El punto antes mencionado puede vincularse con lo que consideramos una de los más importantes retos para los beneficiarios y las organizaciones socias—el económico. Encontramos algunas veces convincentes y otras veces frustrantes argumentos cuyo fin es lograr la *descentralización económica* y combinar el lado político de la democratización con oportunidades en la esfera económica. Un sentido desarrollado de apropiación por parte de las organizaciones socias, para Asdi (en diálogo con Diakonia), implicaría prestar atención a este debate.

Futuros retos para evaluaciones centradas en alcances ("outcome-oriented")

- Limitantes de tiempo y la necesidad de balancear el número de intervenciones estudiadas con la distancia que puede ser cubierta, un número manejable de evaluadores, y suficiente cantidad de días para trabajar y realizar la investigación.

- La importancia de escoger un período de observación suficientemente largo para lograr evaluar cambios. El período necesario seguramente variará según los objetivos y actividades del proyecto.

- La importancia de seleccionar programas que se llevan a cabo de forma paralela a la evaluación, de manera a evitar que el programa termine y otro inicie en medio del proceso. Si eso ocurre, las conversaciones con los beneficiarios serán necesariamente interrumpidas, ya que los beneficiaros cambiarán.

- La necesidad de lograr un balance en cuanto al número de intervenciones estudiadas y de entrevistados por un lado, con los resultados y logros esperados por el otro.

- El reto de mantener conversaciones con las organizaciones socias en medio de las visitas; explicar cuidadosa y repetidamente la naturaleza de la evaluación y comunicarles nuestras visitas lo más temprano posible, dándoles el tiempo necesario para realizar arreglos prácticos, por ejemplo el contactar a los beneficiarios.

Metodología

Los evaluadores desarrollaron un enfoque metodológico en el cruce entre los objetivos cuantitativos del mapeo de alcances *("outcome-mapping")* y una "versión corta" de una investigación etnográfica cualitativa. Esto no modificó el objetivo original, sino que combinó el enfoque original en cuanto a los cambios en comportamiento y actitudes esperados con un enfoque en:

• Cambios en las relaciones sociales dentro y más allá de los grupos meta (basado en la hipótesis de que los cambios de comportamiento inducidos a través de capacitaciones no necesariamente tienen consecuencias sociales para los beneficiarios);

• El termino sociológico de *"performance"*/"actuación", en combinación con o en lugar de el concepto más psicológico como es comportamiento (basado en la hipótesis de que el enfoque único en una noción tan profunda como es "comportamiento" puede oscurecer temas como son el crear estrategias, hacer ajustes, y la posible manipulación por parte de los beneficiarios);

• Un enfoque inductivo pone énfasis en temas de la vida y experiencia de los beneficiarios que en las entrevistas-abiertas surgieron como cruciales o relevantes;

• Una evaluación cualitativa de los cambios observados, por ejemplo: el nivel de éxito del programa medido en contraposición a una combinación de los objetivos del proyecto, expectativas de los beneficiarios, y, finalmente, los puntos de vista de la base que escoge a los líderes a ser capacitados.

De acuerdo con la investigación, las conclusiones con respecto a los resultados del programa debían limitarse a dar cuenta de "lo que realmente pasó" en los proyectos, con especial atención en los temas enumerados arriba. Ofrecer recomendaciones a los grupos involucrados no era una de las principales tareas de esta investigación. Se debe dar atención especial al cumplimiento de los objetivos de cada proyecto, y del programa regional de Diakonia.

Los equipos estaban compuestos por un grupo de académicos (sociólogos, antropólogos y politólogos), con una representación equilibrada de género, que residen una parte en los países estudiados y otra en Suecia. El conocimiento profundo que los consultores nacionales tenían del contexto local permitió medir los efectos de eventos y factores externos que no estaban ligados a las intervenciones observadas. Todos los consultores dominaban el castellano.

3. Introduction

Processes of democratisation in Latin America seem to have successfully replaced authoritarian governments and brought peace to war-shattered countries. However, free and competitive elections and the division of power between two or more parties are formal criteria that, in violent societies still struggling for substantial societal changes, tend to obscure rather than reveal the nature of current democracy. Contributing to democratisation in Latin America by adding another quality to the formal or structural success of democracy is therefore of central concern to international development cooperation in the beginning of the 21st century. Participation and the equality of opportunities are core issues in this effort, to which the Swedish organisation Diakonia contributes with programmes aimed at teaching local leaders of social organisations and formal institutions about rights and the workings of democratic governance.[2]

1. The aim of the evaluation

The overall aim of this evaluation is to assess the outcome of Diakonia's Latin America programme. Outcome is interpreted and used as an open concept contrasted to more temporary effects and not (necessarily) determined by, in this case, Diakonia's policy and intentions[3]. Earlier evaluations concerned with the achievement of this organisation (e.g., Tibblin et al. 2003) have focused mainly on organisational factors and methods for guaranteeing transparency and quality within Diakonia itself and/or its partners. In contrast, this work aims at going beyond such aspects and enquiring instead about the *actual changes over time* induced by Diakonia-funded projects. Its focus, as originally stated in Terms of Reference, is on the extent to which interventions contribute to changes and reorientations with regard to the behaviour and relationships of the members of the target groups, in this context referred to as the beneficiaries or the users.

This focus has been maintained throughout the process of evaluation, and the original aim has eventually been reached. The result emerges in this report as, in many cases, a significant change of both individual behaviour and

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[2] We want to thank all of the beneficiaries or users of the studied projects for taking the time to talk to us. We are also grateful for the support from Diakonia and its partners in order to arrange for the visits to the areas of intervention and the interviews and for expressing their views. We have benefited from their profound knowledge. We have also appreciated the efforts of the members of the reference group (see note no. 2), especially for their rich commentary towards the end of this work. Several other persons have supported the evaluation in different ways. Here we especially want to acknowledge the contributions by Maria-Thérese Gustafsson, Gustavo Hernandez, John-Andrew McNeish, and Fredrik Uggla.

[3] It should be noted that the terminology in this evaluation does not strictly follow Sida's "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management", found in the Sida Evaluation Manual. Adhering to the terminology of the Glossary was not a requirement when this evaluation was initiated.

the social relationships within and between target groups. In this report we will detail such changes and discuss both the promises and the problems or obstacles they imply. In short, we will assess the nature of change, how it is perceived, whom it benefits and how.

The report also takes on the implications of observed changes in wider social and political contexts and, ultimately, the extent to which change can be attributed to Diakonia-funded programmes alone or whether they are due rather to the influence of other agents and processes. In this last sense, the result of the evaluation is less positive. The intended changes in people's behaviours, in the following referred to as *performances,* are running the risks of either (a) having little or no impact on a still problematically undemocratic distribution of power and opportunities in Latin America, or (b) contributing to dramatic processes of change with outcomes that appear to be far from what Diakonia originally intended. A third and, in relation to the stated goals of Diakonia, positive development – the bridge connecting changed attitudes among people with their eventual capacity to make a change for others – has also been noticed, namely (c) the likely role of Diakonia-funded programmes in contributing more structurally to the sustainable decentralisation of power through the training and education of local leaders. The limited number of projects studied in the evaluation makes it difficult to argue for the prominence of any of these outcomes. Each one of them will be exemplified and the discussion around them expanded in this report. The results and recommendations will be summarised in terms of future challenges for Diakonia, its partners, and for Swedish development cooperation at large. Final remarks on the challenges for future evaluations of this kind will also be provided.

2.   Evaluation design

The evaluation focuses on eight interventions supported by Diakonia in Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru. Based on the criteria of representation of its full programme, a sample of thirty interventions was first provided by Diakonia itself. The final selection of eight interventions was made by the evaluators and representatives of the Sida Regional Department for Latin America and its Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit. Several criteria were used for the final selection, such as location and thematic line of work. All of the projects selected had the aim of promoting democracy at the regional or local level, but in different ways.

Sida also set up a reference group that has consisted of two representatives from Diakonia and one representative from the concerned departments within Sida: Regional Department for Latin America; Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit; Department for Democratic Governance; and

Department for Collaboration with NGOs.[4] The reference group met periodically to discuss the progress and tentative findings of the evaluation. The inception reports, progress reports, and the evaluation report were discussed in the reference group. The intended function of the reference group was, first, to give input to the evaluation by providing the team of consultants with feedback and opportunities for discussion throughout the process, and, ultimately, to disseminate the results. The reference group met as planned during the whole process, but it was not possible to monitor the process as closely as planned due to recurrent changes in personnel and representatives from Sida's different departments. For future evaluations the value of such a group must rest on a stronger continuity in the participation of, in this case, the same representatives of the Department for Evaluation and Audit and the Regional Department for Latin America.

3. Introduction to the activities studied

The overall goal of Diakonia's programme is: *"To change unjust political, economic and social structures generating poverty, repression and violence"*. The specific goals on the intervention level are, for Central America, to provide the target group with *"more capacity to exercise qualitative participation in processes that contribute to change social structures and systems creating and maintaining inequality and poverty and constitute an obstacle for a socially sustainable development, primarily on the local level"*.

For South America, the goals are that the target group will increase *"its qualitative participation in the democratic structures through which they practice and demand their human rights and act for a sustainable development"*.[5]

Examples of strategies used by partners and promoted by Diakonia include education, awareness raising, promotion of dialogue, and advocacy. The present evaluation has particularly focused on the results achieved in education and awareness-raising efforts. The projects studied in the evaluation will be introduced briefly below. More comprehensive descriptions and analyses are provided in the chapters on each country.

3.1 Bolivia

CPMGA – *Centro de Promoción de la Mujer "Gregoria Apaza",* located in El Alto, Department of La Paz. El Alto has been the centre of harsh political struggles during the past five years. The selected project is called Urban Programme: Leadership training for women and young people *(Programa urbano: Capacitación en liderazgo a mujeres y jóvenes)*. The Office of Citizen Action *(Geren-*

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4   Members of the reference group were Fredrik Uggla and Karolina Hulterström from the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (presiding over the group); Cecilia Ängelid, Mattias Jonsjö, and Gitt Karlsson from Diakonia; Teresa Rovira, Eva-Lotta Gustafsson, and Karin Olofsson from the Regional Department for Latin America; Ingemar Arnmyr, Birgitta Danielsson, Tiina Heino, and Maja Tjernström from the Department for Democratic Governance; and Karin Zetterlund-Brune and Lisa Hellström from the Department for Collaboration with NGOs.
5   See Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

cia de Acción Ciudadana), in charge of the programme, was created in 1996 with the aim of influencing processes of popular participation and municipalisation initiated in the country in those years. The focus was on introducing gender demands to be subsequently included in the Annual Operative Plans of the municipality of El Alto. In 2002 the focus of this office was changed in relation to the political unrest on a national level, and a process of politicisation took place, highly influenced by the politics of the social movements. The aims and objectives of the leadership course have varied according to the national political conjuncture. During our visits a new process of change had been initiated in relation to the conceptualisation of the leadership courses and in the executive teams. The beneficiaries of the project were found among women and young people in social organisations in El Alto, such as the *Federación de Juntas Vecinales* (FEJUVE) and the regional labour union *Central Obrera Regional* (COR), neighbourhood committees, professional associations, students' organisations, leaders at the *Universidad Popular de El Alto* (UPEA), and cultural centres.

CEADES – *Colectivo de Estudios Aplicados al Desarrollo Social* in Santa Cruz. Our focus here is on the formation of AFIN – *Asociación Forestal Indígena Nacional* in the area of the Chiquitanía, situated about four hours from Santa Cruz. The project is part of CEADES' activities for organisational strengthening of indigenous peoples of the Oriente, especially within the *Central de Organizaciones de Pueblos Nativos Guarayos* (COPNAG) and the *Organización de Indígenas de la Chiquitanía* (OICH). The Association was founded at a congress in August 2005, where the first national committee was elected and a five-year strategic plan for 2005–2010 was elaborated. Thus, at the time of our first visit, AFIN had only existed for about six months.

The aims of AFIN are to strengthen and develop the technical, political, economic, and social sustainability of the communitarian forestry organisations on a national, regional, and local level. It also wants to influence public politics and to represent the sector vis-à-vis social and economic organisations as well as the international cooperation. For CEADES, the most important aspect of the project is that it will give the indigenous groups in the forestry sector a space for political action on the national level.

3.2   Peru

Alternativa is an NGO that has worked in Cono Norte for more than 20 years. It offers multiple services to popular and social organisations and to families with small-scale businesses. The Leadership School, *Escuela de líderes*, is one of seven offices of *Alternativa*. The programme of the *Escuela de líderes* trains social leaders who are then expected to contribute to the development and strengthening of people's capacity to construct and influence local and national public politics. This in turn is aimed at contributing to an integrated development and a strengthened democracy, as well as consolidating the pedagogical base for the five-year plan of the school.

Escuela de formación de líderes del Cono Norte de Lima was founded in 1997, but builds on experiences since the mid-1980s. In 2004 and 2005 approximately 40 leaders were selected for the training each year on the basis of a number of criteria. The participants are selected through a process of evaluation of the general skills of the applying student, who has to be appointed or recommended by her or his base organisation. The training runs for one year and is organised in four modules. The beneficiaries of the *Escuela* are quite heterogeneous in relation to the educational level, and although the leaders who were interviewed came from popular layers, there were differences between the leaders. Some came from *zonas* of extreme poverty and others from districts or barrios with a growing economy.

CEDAP – Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario, located in the area of Ayacucho, works in the area of rural development in the province of La Mar, where it is implementing rural development projects in the provinces of Anco and Chilcas, both classified as districts of extreme poverty. The general objective of the CEDAP project in these districts is to promote citizens' participation and their claim to civil rights. The central component of CEDAP's activities in this project is to strengthen local democracy and to promote a culture of rights. To fulfil these goals, CEDAP has organised a number of capacity-building activities, workshops, and support for the communal development plans. The other important component of the project is the promotion of the *Concurso Pachamamanchikta Waqaychasun,* a contest that encourages families to improve the management of their smallholdings. The target group is the municipal authorities and civil society organisations in the districts. The evaluation focused on the formation of ADOSCI – *Asamblea de Delegados de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil* in the district of Chilcas. The composition of the authority for civic participation, *Consejos de Coordinaciones Locales* (CCL), allows only a minimum of delegates from social base organisations; ADOSCI-Chilcas was formed with the aim of guaranteeing increased participation from the population in a broader and more representative way.

3.3   Nicaragua

IPADE – Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Democracia

In the Northern Autonomic Atlantic Region of Nicaragua, IPADE centres its programme in the Mining Region (Siuna, Rosita, and Bonanza) and focuses on strengthening formal municipal structures. Its objective is to make the process of decentralisation more democratic, transparent, and open to citizens' participation by educating municipal authorities on their responsibilities and obligations and by supporting communal members and civil society organisations to participate and have a say in decision-making processes. This support is both educational and financial. IPADE promotes workshops about municipal laws, decentralisation law, leadership, and autonomy, among others. The workshops are offered to communal leaders and municipal authorities *(concejales)*. The organisation also funds the participation of com-

munal leaders in workshops and municipal *cabildos,* lends technical support to communal leaders to elaborate communal projects, and, in an effort to strengthen the organisations of civil society, supports the formation and work of two organisations: the *junta territorial* and the *Coordinadora Civil.* At the municipal level, IPADE works to strengthen municipal processes. It has been able to create alliances with other institutions active in the area and has integrated the *Coordinadora Civil.* Beneficiaries of these programmes, like municipal *concejales* and other members of the municipal government in Rosita, emphasise the importance of the technical, financial, and allegedly non-political support to the municipality.

CEDEHCA – Centro de Derechos Humanos, Ciudadanos y Autonómicos

This organisation does not centre its programme in municipal structures as IPADE does, but on social organisations representing traditionally marginalised groups such as youth, women, and ethnic minorities. Its goal is to organisationally strengthen those who have been traditionally excluded and provide them with some of the necessary instruments to challenge the structure of unequal relations. CEDEHCA works mainly in training and lending legal support to people exposed to injustices. As a member of civil society, the organisation participates in the municipal *Comisión Sectorial* of children, women and youth. It also promotes the formation of a youth organisation called JENH *(Jóvenes en busca de nuevos horizontes)* and offers workshops to the members on topics like HIV, gender equality, STDs, racism, sexuality, and autonomy.

CEDEHCA also works with communal judges from Bilwi and with the police department. Communal judges participate in workshops about human rights issues. In the case of the police department, CEDEHCA promotes a regional meeting every three months between its staff and the chief of the police departments in the region. It also monitors police activities and denounces any case of human rights abuse. Moreover, it coordinates activities with the women's police office in cases of domestic abuse, and undertakes inspections of nightclubs and bars to deter sexual exploitation of youth and children. Finally, CEDEHCA offers free legal support to the general population, but most of its work is with poor women.

3.4   Guatemala

FUNDAR – Fundación para el Desarrollo del Área Rural

This organisation operates within the boundaries of the municipality of San Andrés Semetabáj, in the department of Sololá. It promotes the formation of social and political leaders in a project of "local development" which was initiated within the framework of the 2002 decentralisation legislation as a means of re-establishing accountable and participatory civilian municipal government in the wake of the internal armed conflict. The training sessions – *capacitaciónes* – with delegates to the newly formed Cocodes and Comudes

– community and municipal development councils – seek to establish workable parameters through which effective participation in community development can be institutionalised, namely education, citizen participation, economic development, women and children, environment, and infrastructure. According to many interviewees, a continuing problem remained the de facto centralisation of power in the office of municipal mayor, and the possible opposition that the mayor could wield against these new instruments of citizen participation in local community development. The position of trained local leaders within an undemocratic wider context, as well as their, in many cases, increasingly problematic "rootedness" in the local sphere as they become propelled into new social formations through political careers, are major issues of concern for the organisations and thus for our evaluation.

CPD – Centro Pluricultural para la Democracia

This organisation, with programmes in the two departments of Quetzaltenango and neighbouring Totonicapán, seeks to strengthen local traditional power through the training of civil society organisations, with an explicit focus on the strengthening of local indigenous authorities. It also promotes research on pertinent themes relating to multiculturalism and forms a vital part of the wider coalition of indigenous organisations called *Movimiento Tzuk Kim-Pop*. CPD seeks to build the capacity of local indigenous authorities through, as it says, strengthening their relationship with the state at local, departmental, and regional levels, and improving their political, judicial, and administrative functions. The general objective of the programme in focus in this evaluation is described as the strengthening of the communal Maya authority through a process of training (capacity building), with the purpose of improving the socio-political participation. The notion of cultural sustainability is central to the work of CPD and signifies a revival of Mayan values with regard to justice, and the development towards social equity. More specifically, this objective is believed to contribute to the emergence of a counterforce to impunity and corruption within official institutions. In practice, this part of CPD activities includes financial and educational support of the organisation of indigenous mayors in the county of Totonicapán in the municipio of San Francisco el Alto. In the case of *municipios* where indigenous authorities (communal mayors) have lost legitimacy, CPD is involved in the promotion of formal municipal structures like the Cocodes and the municipal government.

4. Timeframe for the evaluation and the field visits

The field visits were carried out in three phases during a period from February 2006 to July 2007 as follows:

First phase 2006	
17–18/2	Joint meeting in Lima
19–24/2	Field studies in Peru
27/2–3/3	Field studies in Guatemala
6–10/3	Field studies in Bolivia
6–10/3	Field studies in Nicaragua
Writing of reports	
Second phase 2006	
23–28/10	Field studies in Bolivia
29/10–2/11	Field studies in Peru
1–7/11	Field studies in Guatemala
8–14/11	Field studies in Nicaragua
Writing of reports	
Third phase 2007	
11–16/6	Field studies in Bolivia
17–22/6	Field studies in Peru
18–22/6	Field studies in Guatemala
11–20/6	Field studies in Nicaragua
23–24/6	Joint meeting in Lima
Writing of country reports	
Writing of final report	

Some of the organisations and many of the beneficiaries who were to be interviewed were engaged in national election processes. The dates of the field visits therefore had to be slightly adjusted from the original plan due to national elections in Nicaragua and Guatemala. In Bolivia the field visits were adjusted so as not to coincide with the expected culmination of the process of the Constituent Assembly in Bolivia.

The evaluation was carried out by seven persons divided into two teams (see next section). During a period of 18 months, each evaluator had 10 days to visit four projects in two countries on three occasions, which means in total 30 days of field visits per person. The evaluators based in Latin America had 3 days for the writing of the country reports after each visit, in total 9 days. The Swedish evaluators had in total 30 days each for the writing of the progress reports and the final report. Two joint evaluation seminars were carried out by all of the evaluators, before the first field visits and after the final field visits.

5.   The composition and experience of the teams of evaluators

The evaluation has been coordinated by two researchers at the Institute of Latin American Studies, Stockholm University. Dr Charlotta Widmark has assumed responsibility for the practical coordination of the whole evaluation. Widmark, with extensive experience from anthropological fieldwork in Bolivia, has also coordinated the work of the South American team while Dr Staffan Löfving, whose research experience derives mainly from Guatemala, has coordinated the work of the Central American team. Both Swedish researchers are anthropologists trained in qualitative research methods. They brought to the table an emphasis on a holistic approach to the object of the evaluation, and suggested means to understand how beneficiaries manage to integrate the training they receive in Diakonia-funded programmes in a larger context influenced by individual life histories and people's positions in social structures locally. As we discuss in the next chapter, "outcomes" are necessarily influenced by social, political, and economic transformations of contexts in which people in capacity-building programmes are placed. An evaluation of outcomes must therefore take into account the array of historical and social influences on beneficiaries, accessible to the evaluators through interviews. Another anthropologist, Honduran MA and PhD student Fernanda Soto, residing in Nicaragua, who joined the Central American team during the first visit to the Nicaraguan organisations, contributed greatly to this concern with the interpretation of life stories and the accounts of beneficiaries.

The other members of the teams broadened the disciplinary competence and provided methodological and theoretical skills from the fields of sociology – Bolivian MA Cecilia Salazar and Peruvian BS Victor Caballero – and political science – British Dr Roddy Brett, residing in Guatemala, and Nicaraguan MA and PhD student Miguel González, residing in Canada. As will become evident to the reader of this report, the text is a result of the different perspectives and the different nature of the expertise of all of these scholars. The most important contributions were made by the Latin American experts, whose thorough knowledge of and insights into the national contexts and the regional as well as local developments where the Diakonia-funded programmes are realised proved to be an essential compensation for the limited amount of time assigned to the evaluation.

The evaluators were thus organised in two teams with a representative of each country involved in the evaluation (two representatives in the case of Nicaragua). They were:

Bolivia and Peru

Victor Caballero, BS Sociology, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, IEP, Lima

Cecilia Salazar, MA Sociology, Centro de Investigación de Desarrollo, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, CIDES, La Paz

Charlotta Widmark, PhD Cultural Anthropology, Institute of Latin American Studies, Stockholm University

Guatemala and Nicaragua

Roddy Brett, PhD Political Science, FLACSO, Guatemala

José Miguel González Pérez, BA Social Anthropology, MA and PhD Candidate in Political Science, Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC), York University

Staffan Löfving, PhD Cultural Anthropology, Institute of Latin American Studies, Stockholm University

Fernanda Soto, MA and PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, University of Texas, Austin

As mentioned, all of the evaluators met in the beginning and the end of the evaluation, but in between, each team worked independently. Even though the Swedish evaluators exchanged experiences of field visits and interpretations in between, the evaluation processes in the teams evolved differently. We do not see this as a problem but rather as an asset, providing different perspectives that in the end could be compared, especially in terms of methodology.

The aim of measuring changes for people involved in capacity-building training is somewhat problematically positioned at the intersection of the two methodological "highways" of social science research – the quantitative and the qualitative. That position is problematic since those two approaches do not easily mix, and when they do, one usually tends to gain prominence at the expense of the other. The irreconcilable difference could be summarised thus: Adherents of a qualitative approach would argue that measurements of social change reduce complex processes to causal chains by means of commensuration. Instead, qualitative studies propose a focus on interpretation. As mentioned above and as explored more deeply below, the terms of reference encouraged a methodology of "outcome mapping", with roots in and methods from a quantitative research tradition. Therefore, this work is also an attempt to develop techniques of evaluation with the purpose not so much of measuring as of understanding changes and their causes. We conclude in the last chapter with remarks on future challenges as well for evaluations of this kind, the achievements of this one (according to its authors), and the points in need of improvement.

In sum, what we are able to say based on the method we have employed in this evaluation, is both less and more than originally intended. It is less, since we have not been able to follow individual beneficiaries over time to the extent that we had first hoped. Difficulties in maintaining contacts between evaluators and organisations, difficulties in maintaining contacts between organisations and beneficiaries, and the fact that beneficiaries in many cases did not remain in the training programme provided by the organisations for the whole time period covered by the evaluation, all played a part in gradually redirecting our methodological efforts to focus more deeply on a more limited number of beneficiaries and/or to consult and to cover a wider range of sources and social agents. From a quantitative perspective we have thus not been able to follow a representative sample of beneficiaries over time. From a qualitative perspective, however, we claim to have succeeded in illuminating the core issues regarding the outcomes of Diakonia's democracy promotion through capacity building in Latin America.

4. Methodological framework

1.   Introduction

Drawing on discussions in contemporary studies of aid and development (see e.g., Mosse and Lewis 2005), this evaluation examines the practices of democracy promotion through the training of local leaders in Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. In an attempt to move beyond the more conventional aim of measuring results and effects against explicit project aims and policy discourse, it is concerned with processes of social and political change among the beneficiaries of democracy promotion as such processes appear and evolve, regardless of aims explicitly stated in projects of democratisation. The question we have posed is primarily not *whether* but *how* democratisation projects work, *why* and for *whom*.

In critical studies of the policies and practices of international development cooperation it is sometimes argued that policy conceives of, and legitimises, certain interventions as social processes, which calls for a critical discourse analysis, i.e., the question "not whether a project succeeds, but how success is produced" (Mosse 2005:8). Our attention has not been sufficiently focused on the democracy discourse of Diakonia to be able to contribute to this field of study and evaluation. We have, however, kept the possible discrepancy between policy and practice in mind with the purpose of being able to better distinguish between intent and effect. For us, then, "success" and "failure" adhere to the same terminological and methodological toolkit, as presumed causal relationships between input and measurable results. They are policy-oriented judgements that might obscure broader and significant project *outcomes*.

The evaluation looks at the role played by Diakonia-funded NGOs in complex processes of social change, where a variety of players interact in open-ended social processes. What is framed as an apparent failure in the summary of a quantitative evaluation assessing causal relationships might here prove to be good or positive effects within a broader context. Yet what appears to be a success might, of course, also prove to be negative consequences if a narrow project aim proves to be altering social balances and/or consolidating undemocratic authority, or if, in the process of promoting political participation, it creates relationships of economic dependency. We have thus seen our main focus to be the role of Diakonia-funded programmes in supporting the infusion of a specific project into regional and historical processes of change.

In grappling with the difficulties of measuring a certain agency's influence on change in changing contexts we have drawn from various sources, among them the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and its adoption of Barry Kibbel's Outcome Engineering approach. The IDRC model is called Outcome Mapping – henceforth OM (Earl et al. 2001). This model is described and hailed by its many practitioners as a methodology capable of assessing outcomes over time rather than evaluating results at specific moments in time. In the following we will measure this approach to evaluations against central strands in qualitative research. Our aim in this chapter is to provide a background to the methodology used in the evaluation, a description of how it has worked in practice, and an analytical conclusion of what we are able to say and what we are not able to say based on it.

2.   Outcome mapping meets qualitative research

The main thrust of the OM method is, according to our view, its inclusiveness – holistically going from an organisation's vision, mission, practices, and an identification of its counterparts in an intentional design phase, to monitoring and evaluating performances in relation to named intentions. However, the method has been used to map very particular sequences of change and seems to be most adequate when working with single interventions or organisations. The number of partner organisations in focus in this evaluation, the limited number of days devoted to each visit (two per organisation), and the geographical coverage of each, working with members of remote rural communities in four different countries, has made it necessary for us to develop an approach with a much less quantitative and a less donor-oriented focus.

To say that OM represents or even resembles ethnographic (or qualitative) research would not be accurate. We therefore view the methodological interface of research and outcome mapping techniques as an interesting challenge. First, the time frame offered by the OM approach is similar to an extended fieldwork, but the three-phase division of this evaluation is a problematically interrupted version of conventional field research. By recruiting two national researchers to the South American team and three to the Central American team, we believe that a significant advantage has been gained which has compensated for some of the "time lost". In the chapters that follow, we have thus been able to make use of a country expertise not available in Sweden, and sets of data and information not possible to produce in the limited time frame of the evaluation. The number of team members and the expertise provided by them make possible a much more encompassing research practice than what is usually the case. Our colleagues' abilities to maintain contacts with Diakonia's partner organisations in between our visits have varied, but their know-how and capabilities to put NGO work in relevant context historically and politically in each country has been an invaluable source in our work. Joint fieldwork is another factor con-

tributing to the sense of having studied the organisations in more depth than would have been possible in a total number of no more than six days in all per organisation. It is positive in the sense that evaluators gain time and are able to share insights and questions. It should be recognised that this can also complicate matters in the field, since it is more difficult for a visiting group to "blend in" without altering the situation under study than it is for individual investigators. We argue, in sum, that this evaluation exemplifies a kind of ethnographic perspective on trajectories of social change in its mimicking of extended fieldwork practices.

Second, one stage of the OM procedure is aimed at adjusting studies to the changes in projects and their environment through the keeping of outcome, strategy, and performance journals. We view this way of "learning by doing" as exemplifying a variant of inductive methodology, particularly suitable in studies based on extended interviewing. The inductive approach adds new knowledge to preconceived assumptions and allows that knowledge to redirect central facets of the study. Ideally, the time frame (the first aspect above) and inductive methodology (the second) are mutually constitutive in most ethnographic research.

Third, whereas changes in the *behaviour* of people are emphasised as the very essence of OM, it has seemed inappropriate to prioritise a focus on such changes in this evaluation. Indeed, according to Diakonia representatives interviewed by the evaluators, changes in behaviour and attitudes are needed for democratisation to occur and evolve on the local level. Instead, however, we will argue that such a focus on individual behaviour might be more appropriate beyond the grass-root level, in societal arenas where agents gain from preserving or reproducing undemocratic structures. A change in grass-root "behaviour" might very well make people stronger in coping with undemocratic dilemmas, or make them more effective in resisting or struggling to change power relations, but it is nevertheless our assumption that Swedish support for changing behaviour results primarily in transformations of *social relationships* within and between "target groups". This is the key to our understanding of project outcomes. We would also like to add here that our initial focus on social relationships emerged as central together with another behaviour-related facet of project outcomes, namely people's *performance*. By turning focus away from the psychologically informed notion of behaviour, and instead attempting an exploration of the socially conditioned way in which partners and users act, or say they act – according to the norms they found relevant in different contexts – in short, the way they performed rather than behaved, we have reclaimed this discussion as the social scientists we are (and not attempted a study of behaviour as the psychologists we are not).

If the discussion above serves to modify the OM method and reveal its partial applicability in this evaluation, we also need to comment on aspects that proved to be less relevant.

OM serves as a frame both for evaluations and for developing new pro-grammes for change through the intervention of a "participatory approach" in which target groups should engage with the purpose of achieving a "self-assessment". It is therefore of vital importance to emphasise that we, in our capacity of teams of evaluators, do not see ourselves as agents of change in any direct sense and therefore did not aim to conduct the kind of group dis-cussions and workshops proposed in the OM approach. Our contribution here rests on highly conventional procedures in a qualitative methodology where we rely on individual interviews as called for by Sida, as opposed to dynamic workshops and group discussions. We have elaborated on the inter-view technique and combined formal interviews with conversations on topics central to the Diakonia support; with life histories in order to trace changes beyond the time frame covered by the evaluation; and with participant obser-vations in specific settings, like political meetings, and *talleres*. Our initial goal to participate "to the greatest extent possible" in the social practices of the everyday life of the beneficiaries was regrettably impossible to achieve due to the time constraints of the evaluation. Instead, we opted for an approach to the everyday mainly through the interviews, by gradually pushing the inter-viewee on topics and aspects emerging as central to the concern of each country and each organisation. We explore this theme in the country studies that follow.

Finally, the OM methodology is concerned both with organisations and with the so-called target groups, whereas Sida has called for an evaluation that more directly engages with issues on the grass-root or target-group level. In this case, our first intention of finding a middle way gradually turned into a sole focus on the target groups. In three of the countries, Bolivia, Peru, and Nicaragua, interviews were made with staff at the national Diakonia offices. These interviews served to contextualise each project nationally and region-ally, but they also provided us with information on Diakonia's approach more generally. In the case of Guatemala, extended interviewing with representa-tives of the different organisations, also on topics related to their relationship with Diakonia and the ways in which they perceived issues of policy and con-ditionality, represent, together with Diakonia documents and discussions in the reference group, the sources of information on Diakonia proper. We took an increasing interest in exploring how the users and "partners" of Diakonia viewed the relationship with the Swedish agency. As feelings of trust devel-oped over time and revisits, people were surprisingly frank in this regard, and shared with us their joy but also their frustration over the management of payment, or unrealistic or culture-insensitive demands for the adjustment of the NGO's approach to gender issues to better fit the policy of Diakonia.

The downplayed, yet unavoidable, approach to Diakonia itself stems from the assumption in the ethnography of aid and development that long-term involvement of NGOs and foreign donors in local-level strategies of develop-ment fosters relationships and dependencies that make a sole or exclusive focus

on either highly problematic. By methodology we refer not only to the practical proceeding of getting information, like interview techniques, participant observation, etc., but also to the identification of issues to be examined, in turn determining the selection and development of methodological techniques. We will not go into much detail here, but simply state that Diakonia's explicit aim of strengthening an allegedly weak or "fragmented" civil society by lending support to struggles for gender equality and for indigenous rights offers a range of interesting questions to be posed. We argue that this is an instance where Diakonia's above-mentioned role in processes of social change becomes observable. We have been interested in seeing what specific content Diakonia's involvement gives to the abstract concept of "civil society" and to what extent the agency's definition corresponds with people's perception of their society and their own role in shaping it. When gender equality and indigenous traditions of leadership and authority collide, we have tried to understand how people negotiate such a contradiction, and how Diakonia's counterparts influence the conversations and negotiations on the local level.

3.   The qualitative interview

The qualitative interview gives the evaluator access to people's opinions and points of view as expressed by themselves, an insight into people's perception of their own constraints and possibilities, their hopes and expectations (see section on problems, progress, promises in each country chapter). This form of interviewing is in fact more a conversation in which the researcher makes efforts to create an atmosphere of trust. The aim is to collect empirical data – including statements and "soft issues" like expectations and fears. With the programme aims and objectives in mind (but necessarily not on the table), we have recorded the experiences and opinions of individuals in the target group, and deepened our understanding of the processes at work within the programme and in relation to the local community.

The first round of interviews assumed more of an exploratory character. We looked for ways to understand how the programme was viewed and interpreted by individuals in the target group; what other experiences they had of similar programmes; what actions they had taken in relation to the programme; why they took or refrained from taking a certain action; and what social changes were produced, if any.

Our inductive point of departure implied that we brought themes from one conversation to another – turned the answers in one interview into questions in the next. We also explored and verified facts that were mentioned by the interviewees, for example, with what aim a meeting took place, who took part, what happened during the meeting, how the activity was perceived by the participants, what came out of it, and so on. The second and third rounds of interviews were less open-ended and were aimed rather at testing hypotheses and validating our data.

4.   Teamwork and the problematic selection of interviewees

The team worked together during the visits, dividing the interviews and other tasks between the evaluators. Prior to the visits to Diakonia's partner organisations we were studying their annual reports. This information was later supplemented by other publications and documents collected during the visits and also by evaluations of some of the organisations. We proposed an interview schedule including 18 to 20 individual members of the target group of each intervention at each visit. These interviews were originally intended to be performed individually (one interviewer, one interviewee), and we kept stressing the importance of this technique in our communication with the organisations. On occasion, however, many people had gathered and could not spend time waiting to be interviewed. In such cases we did perform group interviews. The number of beneficiaries varied between the organisations and between our visits.

The researchers should ideally do the selection of persons to be interviewed, but, as stated above, due to the time limits of the assignment we had to ask the organisations to pre-select 10 to15 members to be interviewed in the first phase. Through these initial contacts we identified and approached additional interviewees, including other persons involved in and external to the intervention. We strove to approach as broad a range of persons as possible in order to assess or map project outcomes.

An aspect which we came to regard as a limitation in the procedure, and one that limited our ability to draw far-reaching conclusions, has been the way in which both the choice of organisations (involving a first selection made by Diakonia, i.e., a central part of the object of evaluation) and the choice of beneficiaries to be interviewed (involving a first selection made by the NGOs, or Diakonia partners, i.e., another central part of the object of evaluation) was made. In both cases, the evaluation became constrained by a process of selection controlled by those who were supposed to be evaluated. In the beginning of the development of this work, we settled for this solution as "the best that could be done" given the time and budget constraints. We now regret that other ways of going about this were not explored. The reason is important to mention, already at this stage. We have found that the training of leaders in all four countries has led, albeit to different degrees, to a remarkable result in terms of a growing knowledge of rights and rising levels of political participation for those individuals who have been trained. These changes are noticeable in the short run. We also encountered, in all four countries, the tendency among beneficiaries to praise the organisation and tell the stories they thought would contribute to "good" results – in short, we were dealing with performances rather than with behaviours. We note, without being able to back this up with data, that this phenomenon might be one of the reasons why "democratic" changes are much more difficult to observe

in the political culture, among institutions, and in the long term. Since this difference between changes on the individual level on the one hand, and changes on the collective or societal level on the other is one of our main conclusions, we need to reveal the possibility that the very selection of organisations and individuals might have influenced the "positive" results.

5.   Our method in practice

The recurrent interviews with the same persons over a time period of one and a half year were very useful for understanding the nature of the outcome and the implications or effects for the target groups. In several cases, our view of the importance of an outcome identified in the first round of interviews changed after round two or three. Some of the outcomes would not have been detected in only one visit. Being able to revisit the projects and the beneficiaries thus gave an added value to the possibilities of understanding changes in time, albeit not necessarily during the observed period.

We have already presented the notion of performance (instead of behaviour) as crucial to our investigation, and it relates to the method and the interviews. One conclusion we draw in this report is that the empowerment achieved in leadership training does not necessarily come without a price or a "disempowerment". People's social isolation as leaders made them wary about how to behave. To cope with this they seemed to develop different performances depending on contexts – one in relation to the political sphere and the partner organisation (and to us evaluators, especially so in our initial encounters), and one in the communities, where some expressed an eagerness not to be authoritative and thereby make things (that is, their social isolation) worse. We thus included a "performative view" on the interviews and, by increasingly discussing the dilemmas of leadership, we asked beneficiaries to tell us about their roles in different contexts and different social and political milieus. Thereby, our move away from a psychological assessment of people's behaviour to a more sociological one of their contextually determined performances had implications for how to conduct and how to interpret interviews.

Interviews were conducted with groups and individuals. Group interviews or discussions with staff of the partner organisations served in the beginning of the visits to inform and later to update the team of evaluators on recent activities, achievements, and problems. Towards the end of each visit, we usually gathered again to discuss the evaluators' questions and concerns. Interviews with staff were also conducted individually. We identified those with special responsibilities or experiences that we believed could highlight central issues in our study. Apart from the benefits of having time to talk to individuals, it was sometimes difficult to separate the views and opinions of individual members of a partner organisation from its more official line. Since all organisations proved to be very dynamic, however, we tried to use discrepan-

cies and differences in statements as indicators of where the organisations are heading and how they struggle to overcome difficulties associated with both means and content of capacity development.

Group interviews with beneficiaries were sometimes necessary due to the fact that people had gathered in groups to talk to us. Demanding individual interviews on some of those occasions would have meant placing unrealistic demands on their time. Group interviews, in this sense, generally told us much about hierarchies within groups of beneficiaries (where men usually – but not always – spoke and women were quiet), but less about outcomes of the training they had received. Therefore, and to the greatest extent possible, we sought to break up groups and talk individually to beneficiaries. Some general comments on how this worked are in place:

- Language problems were sometimes evident in discussions with indigenous beneficiaries. An exaggerated politeness or respect added to this dilemma on occasion, so that revisits and re-encounters with the same individuals were especially important in these cases. What had appeared as a language problem in the first meeting proved, in the second, to be an issue of a certain amount of distrust, or suspiciousness. When re-encountering non-indigenous beneficiaries, of course, conversations became more open and revealed more. We conclude that indigenous people involved in leadership training were generally bilingual.

- Given the gender focus of the partner organisations, we did not experience a lack or under-representation of female interviewees; on the contrary. Given the mixed gender compositions of the team of evaluators, we believe that encounters were relatively open and honest. This often meant letting the women in the team of evaluators talk to the women among the beneficiaries and the men with the men. However, we would like to stress the importance of altering that procedure, which we often did, since same-sex conversations do not necessarily become more open or informative than cross-sex interviews. This fact became an issue of discussion in the teams, and we consciously experimented with the interview form in order to continuously learn more from the beneficiaries.

- The interview sequence turned out to be less important a method for understanding changes during the observed time period than we had first expected. Given the complexities of organising the interviews, and the difficulties for partner organisations in getting hold of the same individuals for three consecutive meetings (for a number of economic, logistical, and time-related reasons), we many only once or twice. Those who did come back to see us three times proved to be very "good informants", though perhaps not because time passed between our meetings, but rather because we got to know them, and because they were able to reflect ever more independently on their situation, on the partner organisation, and on the effect of their training over time. This method would have

been even more effective had we been able to select more freely among the interviewed persons for the follow-up. The time that passed between our meetings gave us a time perspective on some of their lives and the outcomes of the activities, but to "measure" change in their knowledge and ability to act was close to impossible.

- We should also add that we extended our search for interviewees beyond the immediate group of beneficiaries and talked to local politicians and mayors, staff of other NGOs, police officers and judges, and other people who could often reflect more critically on the work of Diakonia's partner organisation than the beneficiaries or the partner's own staff.

5. Democracy promotion and its challenges: Sweden and Latin America

This chapter aims at introducing Swedish policy in the realm of democracy promotion through capacity building, or capacity development, with a specific focus on the core activities studied in this evaluation – the training of local leaders in Latin America.

In the following we will recall what we view as the history of Sida's and Diakonia's work most relevant in relation to capacity development and remark on the central debates around the core concepts of this work.

1. Swedish development cooperation in Latin America

Poverty reduction is the overall goal for Swedish development cooperation. In Latin America the aim of the cooperation has, since the beginning, been focused on a democratic development of society as a means to social and economic equality. This focus implies a strengthening of citizen participation in political processes and support for the building of democratic institutions.

Development cooperation with South America started in the 1970s with humanitarian aid to victims of the military regimes. The character of the cooperation changed with the transition process from authoritarian regimes to democratically elected governments, towards the aims of poverty reduction and peaceful and democratic development in the region. The regional strategy for South America has been focused on the Andean region, with a special focus on Bolivia and Colombia. Support to Central America also started with a focus on humanitarian aid in the 1970s and 1980s. The development cooperation increased and changed character after the peace agreements were signed. Development cooperation with Central America has changed from humanitarian aid to long-term interventions aimed at maintaining peace, reducing poverty, and promoting democratic development. The regional strategy for Central America and the Caribbean has been focused on Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras; cooperation with El Salvador was important during the peace process. On a Latin American level, Sweden has also supported the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights (IIDH), which

works with development projects in the areas of human rights and democracy. In the Andean region Sida has supported the *Comisión Andina de Juristas,* which aims at strengthening respect for human rights and "democratic values". Swedish non-governmental organisations have played an important role in shaping Swedish support to Latin America since its inception. Many of the organisations that are supported by Sida's Division for Cooperation with NGOs have a presence in the region, where they work together with local partners.[6]

Diakonia has been present in Latin America for 30 years, which was before the official Swedish development cooperation began to develop in the region. A group of NGOs with roots in Swedish social movements, among them Diakonia, received funding for small-scale solidarity projects within the framework of an ad hoc committee for humanitarian assistance attached to Sida. By channeling resources through NGOs the Swedish government could avoid criticism concerning political intervention in the internal affairs of other sovereign states, and thus comply with international law. Among the first beneficiaries of Diakonia *(Frikyrkan hjälper* until 1984) were Latin American refugees, their families, victims of torture, and human rights groups in alliance with the Catholic Church in Chile. During the military dictatorships and civil wars of the 1980s, Diakonia, being close to its partner organisations, was seen as having a favorable position for the efficient channeling of financial support to the affected civilian population as well as the organised opposition. At the time, funding through NGOs was considered to be the principal means of supporting democratic development, which made Sida interested in supporting Diakonia's involvement in Latin America (Tibblin et al. 2003).

2. Democracy promotion through civil society assistance and capacity development

Bilateral donors engaged in democracy and governance work began to give attention to civil society development in the beginning of the 1990s, realising its importance for democratisation. With the goal of strengthening an independent civil society, the idea of "civil society assistance" arose. This development had started in the mid-1980s when the U.S. and other countries increasingly focused on what is known as "democracy assistance". This support was directed towards democratisation processes in non-democratic countries or in countries that had initiated democratic transitions for a consolidation of their democratic system. At the outset, civil society assistance was not a major component of democracy assistance. To put it briefly, in a first phase, from the mid-1980s to early 1990s, donors concentrated on elections. In the second phase donors became more interested in reform of major state institutions to help render them more competent, accountable, and representa-

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tive. In the third phase, from the mid-1990s, donors began to focus on strengthening civil society, and "civil society assistance" aimed at promoting democracy (Ottaway & Carothers 2000). Since then, "the general notion that civil society development is critical to democratisation has become a new mantra in both aid and diplomatic circles" (ibid.:6). According to Ottaway and Carothers, two main factors prompted the "democracy aid boom". On the one hand they point to the global democratic trend itself, and to donor countries' idealistic beliefs that democracy is the best political system and that democratic regimes are better political and economic partners over the long run. On the other hand they point to the end of the Cold War in combination with the increase in democratic openings, as a factor that very much facilitated the democracy-oriented aid efforts (ibid.).

There is no consensus around the concept of "civil society" in academic circles. What is important here is thus to analyse what aid providers and democracy promoters mean when they talk about civil society. According to Ottaway and Carothers,

> …the view that has most influenced donors, especially in the U.S. government, is one according to which civil society consists only of voluntary associations that directly foster democracy and promote "democratic consolidation". These are associations that specifically seek interaction with the state, whether to advocate interests of the citizens, to oppose nondemocratic behaviour of the state, or to hold states accountable to citizens for their actions. (ibid.:11)

This view resides in a normative conception, that to be part of civil society a group must actively promote democracy as well as follow internal democratic procedures (ibid.). It is common that aid donors equate civil society with the development NGOs they already know, and thereby never consider other types of civic organisations that may well have more legitimacy and political efficiency (Van Rooy 1998).

What has democracy promotion via civil society meant in practice? A review of donor literature provides a short list consisting of civil society as an antidote to state power, civil society as democratic institution builders, and civil society as creators of a democratic culture (ibid.).

Sweden is no exception to this general trend in development cooperation. According to the policy, "Sida's support to civil society" (2007) can come in four different ways: (1) to an organisation that has been chosen because of its competence to carry out an assignment of importance to Sida, (2) to an organisation with the aim of strengthening its capacity as a democratic actor in civil society, (3) to organisations and networks in order to strengthen civil society as an *arena* for citizens' engagement and organisation, and (4) support for the development of an *enabling social environment* to strengthen the structures that create conditions for civil society to take action. In Sweden and

elsewhere, the contributions to the activities of non-governmental organisations increased in the 1990s and the attitude towards this sector became more positive. The comparative advantages of civil society assistance through NGOs were seen to be that (a) it is easier for them to reach out to the local level, (b) they have a better knowledge of development on this level and can therefore contribute with information about "grassroot-level realities", (c) they are more flexible and faster in, for example, emergency situations, and (d) they can work in countries where a bilateral cooperation is difficult due to the government's development policy. Throughout the years, Swedish NGOs have influenced Swedish development policies. One example is their strong critique against the social and economic effects of the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s. Swedish NGOs today generally cooperate in networks between organisations in the North and the South (Odén 2006).

The idea that civil society is always a positive force for democracy, even the most important one, has rarely been questioned by the different actors in development cooperation. "An active … civil society is both the force that can hold governments accountable and the base upon which a truly democratic political culture can be built. There follows from this assumption the related idea that promoting civil society development is key to democracy-building" (Ottaway & Carothers 2000:4). According to Sida, in recent years the view of civil society on the donors' part has become more neutral.

These authors agree that democracy requires continuous, active participation in public affairs by citizens organised in a great variety of interest groups, that democracy requires civically aware citizens' understanding and confidence in political system, that it is valuable to work bottom-up rather than top-down. What they question is the donor's promise of far-reaching results produced by the activities carried out in the name of "civil society assistance". The problem is not that donors' efforts are limited in scope and thereby produce a limited impact (this is normal in any development assistance); "rather, the problem resides both in the conception of civil society that donors build into their assistance programmes and the methods by which they implement such aid" (ibid.:4).

Silander defines democracy promotion in the widest sense in terms of "prodemocratic policies towards domestic actors" (2005:89), but he also adds that such promotion works normatively on group formation and "community". For an understanding of such normativity we have looked at the outcomes of Diakonia-funded democracy promotion and explore the specific means used in seeking to strengthen civil society. This is achieved in this case through the training of local leaders, in a more general policy context of capacity building. The popularity of the notion of building capacities from afar has been analysed and critically discussed. In line with Silander's recognition of a normative dimension of democracy promotion, Jeremy Gould argues that a certain measure of disciplining is always involved, even though the many proponents of cooperation aimed at building capacities emphasise the more

positive, but at the same time less sociological, notion of empowerment. By studying programmes of capacity building as they take place in real situations, involving social actors in political contexts, this evaluation aims at measuring the extent to which empowerment is conditioned by certain behaviours and performances, in short, the extent to which capacity building also disciplines the beneficiaries, and what the social and political outcomes of such a process are. Gould explains:

> The core point of capacity-building is that it is embedded in interventions with specific goals that are almost always about conforming to formal demands or expectations of aid-related actors and processes … The ideology of capacity-building has a wide range of power effects, all the more effective due to its niche in development-speak as a pervasive, virtually uncontested normative ideal. The rhetoric of capacity identifies a lack which needs to be corrected, an emptiness to be filled that can provide entry into virtually any domain or arena: any subject, irrespective of other qualities, can be described with reference to its (lack of) capacity. The ideal norm of capacity implies a hierarchy of authority and expertise, overseen by aid managers. It also affirms the infinite improvability of the subject: there is no end to the extent to which one can acquire new capacities. (Gould 2005:70–71)

The value of such a critical approach to capacity building is not taken for granted in this project, but rather seen as an object of study in its own right. In its Policy for Capacity Development (in Sida 2005:13, see also Fiszbein 1997), Sida defines capacity as "the conditions that must be in place, for example knowledge, competence and effective development-oriented organisations and institutional frameworks in order to make development possible". This definition differs from that of organisations like UNDP in that it emphasises the particular "conditions" on which a programme can have an effect, and makes a distinction between them and those external conditions which it cannot influence. Furthermore, Sida emphasises the move away from the more technical notion of capacity building to one of capacity development.

> Today the concept of capacity development is used more to describe the process that has the aim of enhancing the skills of individuals and organisations and of changing formal or informal standards and regulations, i.e., institutional frameworks. This has the consequence that capacity development principally entails the process of learning and organisational and institutional change that takes place among different actors and in the interaction between them. (Sida 2005:13)

This is expressed in more concrete terms in Diakonia's application to RELA for 2004–2006, where the expected result of the programme is defined as a deepened knowledge and raised level of consciousness among members of the target group, so that they can contribute to a socially sustainable development.[7] Diakonia explains in discussions with the team of evaluators that education or training should be added to knowledge and consciousness as cornerstones in a qualitative participation. The ability to contribute to change is also emphasised in terms of an ability to transform "structures of society and systems that create and sustain inequality and poverty" (see Diakonia 2004:66–77). Furthermore, participation is not primarily promoted in quantitative terms, but rather qualitative, and when specifying what this quality is all about Diakonia states: "Necessarily, this has to do, for example, with attitudes and how [beneficiaries] see their own role in relation to the specific programme objectives of each country"(ibid.:23). Such expectations of target group members are then extended to include more specific objectives. Target groups are expected, after having been trained, to be able contribute either to local development, or to gender equity, or to the defence of human rights, or to improved economic conditions, or to the transformation of racist and oppressive structures. Target groups are also expected to have improved their organisational capacity.

On an operational level, the programme objectives are (1) improved knowledge in order to transform reality in above-mentioned directions, (2) improved organisation and exercise of leadership for the transformation of reality, and (3) knowledge put into practice in order to achieve named transformations.

Against these objectives (on both levels), Diakonia outlines a number of so-called risks, or obstacles that could hamper the expected results. These risks are listed as divisions within civil society and its organisations, insufficient funding of partner organisations, corruption, repression or persecution of partners, lack of security in general and in economic and social terms, fear of participation or lack of motivation, increasing violence against women, social structures violating human rights, low levels of capacity and competence among authorities, influence of party politics on democratic institutions, and finally, effects of globalisation as obstacles to an active citizenship.

While all of these risks emerged as highly relevant in the studied context, we note two things of special interest to us. First, in this particular line of work of the partner organisations, Diakonia objectives give responsibility for change to target groups and target-group members. Secondly, risks are conceptualised as being positioned outside the programmes, i.e., as obstacles in the way of desired achievement and results.

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[7] Diakonia 2004. *Solicitud de Diakonia a RELA: Período 2004–2006.* Parte B. America Central. This document has been referred to by Diakonia when both general and programme objectives have been discussed with the team of evaluators.

Swedish development cooperation is actively seeking ways to make capacity and its development a property of people in partner countries and organisations. When we now turn to the country chapters of this report we will explore the extent to which the studied programmes fulfil this aim and, since in general terms we conclude that they do, what such a fulfilment implies in terms of outcomes for individuals and their social and political milieu.

6. Bolivia: People's efforts to reconfigure a state in crisis

During the period of time covered by this evaluation, Bolivia experienced a process of social and political transformation, with recurrent conflicts in regard to the relationship between state and society, with demands for a reconfiguration of the state. The evaluation has focused on two organisations, *Centro de Promoción de la Mujer "Gregoria Apaza"* (CPMGA) and *Colectivo de Estudios Aplicados al Desarrollo Social* (CEADES), and their work of promoting participation and democracy through training and guidance aimed at increased social and political participation at both the local and national level.

The following study is an analysis of the activities and perceptions of people in Diakonia-funded training in the city of El Alto in the department of La Paz, and in the Chiquitanía in the department of Santa Cruz. In El Alto we have found that many social leaders have received training and guidance from CPMGA that has increased their critical analytical capacity for the purpose of understanding the unequal structures of society and of gender relations. These leaders state also that they have been given tools that enable them to insert themselves in their local political context and take initiatives for activities and actions. They have improved their ability to speak and express themselves in public. Whether or not they have managed to realise their intentions has varied due to different factors beyond the reach of the school. In the case of the formation of the National Association of Indigenous Forestry (AFIN), promoted by CEADES, the association has made important advances in relation to communitarian forestry, but so far the influence of Diakonia-funded training and guidance over time on the lives of the end-users is limited, which does not mean that there are no potentials in a longer perspective. Though AFIN answers to claims from below, it is developing in a top-down manner, which means that it is difficult to see changes in individual and group behaviour at the base level as a direct outcome of its actions and activities.

In the following we will first provide a background to the current Bolivian context before we present the evaluation of the impact of the capacity-building programmes of CPMGA and CEADES in 2006 and 2007.

1. A process of social and political transformation

Since the beginning of this decade Bolivia has been going through a difficult process of social and political transformation. The factors that contribute to this situation are found in the framework of the neo-liberal process that the country has been experiencing for twenty years. Firstly, in the field of economy, the core of the problems has been the labour conflict, that is, lack of employment, and the deterioration of the productive economy and the internal market. As a result, the informal economy was opened, mainly to women and especially in the field of services. This informal labour market emerged under precarious and temporary conditions, and without the social protection that had characterised the State of 1952.[8] The emergence of a countless number of social organisations, stimulated by the social fragmentation that replaced the traditional forms of unionism on a national level, was the political expression of this development. The process also brought with it a new focus on ethnic-cultural issues in the national arena.

Secondly, there has been a political crisis of the elite in Bolivian society. It developed within a system of political parties based on permanent pacts of governance. The distribution of political power derived from practices of corruption within the state administration, a process leading to a de-legitimisation of institutionalised democracy, especially in relation to the national parliament.

In short, it could be said that the current crisis of the country is characterised by a lack of integration. Instead, alternatives to formal institutions have emerged, which opens up new niches of mediation and interpretation of social demands. These mediations are based on private initiatives and practices which, in a context of a free market, resulted in a major social inequality. In the case of the impoverished sectors, subsistence necessities and the support from formal and informal associational arrangements, either for economic-productive aims or for the development of political practices, ended up shaping the social conflicts that started in the year 2000.

The indigenous-peasant organisations and neighbourhood committees that were replacing the unionist organisations played an important role in this context. The indigenous-peasant organisations have grown since the beginning of the 1990s and became more important as political actors around 2000. An interminable number of acts of political violence finally contributed to a change in state administration from 2006, when *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) came to power, a government perceived as representing the social

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[8]   In Bolivia the "State of 52" is known as the period that was initiated with the nationalist revolution of that year which brought aspects linked to a process of citizenship for the indigenous population, their rights to private property, and, in other fields, to the politics of structured employment which was promoted by the richness of the nationalised mining and the subsequent social policies on health and education. Its cycle ended in 1985.

movements of the country. With the support of 54% of voters, this has been seen as a historic moment in which for the first time in Bolivian history an indigenous person exercises the presidency. The principal slogans with which this victory was won were the promise to nationalise the natural hydrocarbon resources and the call for a constituent assembly.

An extensive range of accumulated demands have been put forward in public debate and in the agenda of the Constituent Assembly, installed in August 2006. A series of proposals regarding cultural recognition have been put forward. In some cases they point to the idea of enforcing the plurinational character of the country and in others to the establishment of indigenous autonomies, combined with generalised expectations in relation to redistributive politics linked to the state administration of natural resources (promoted by the nationalisation of natural resources by MAS in May 2006), and finally, a dispute about the location of the seat of the government, be it the historical capital of the country (Sucre) or the actual seat of the government (La Paz).

The city of El Alto was very important during the popular mobilisation of October 2004 that ended not only in the fall of the government of Sanchez de Losada but also of the power of his party, *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR). MNR led the national revolution of 1952 and was later the main proponent of neo-liberalism in Bolivia. Today, the eastern region of the country, where the dominant movement of resistance to MAS is found, especially in the department of Santa Cruz, seems to be developing into a new centre of political violence. The resistance comes from agro-industrial sectors, upon which the current government is exercising pressure to redistribute land in favour of indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers. Organised as "civic committees", so called, these sectors have taken advantage of the need for mediating bodies, replacing the right-wing political parties. These sectors have managed to establish themselves in a position of regional power based on an imaginary division of the country between Occident and Orient (western and eastern parts). Demands have been made for departmental autonomy, especially by the civic committees of the East that led the movement for a "Yes" in the referendum of July 2006 on departmental autonomy (CNE 2006), against the demands for indigenous cultural recognition aiming for a plurinational state with indigenous autonomies, proposed by the MAS government.

The crisis of the state and the efforts to reconfigure it have opened up to a series of disputes about social, economic, political, and cultural mediations, and subsequently, to the question of how to interpret the relationship between state and society as well as between participative/direct democracy and representative democracy. Bolivian society is very deliberative and politicised, but it has not yet experienced new forms of national cohesion. A serious risk of violence is imminent, and internal confrontations are looming in the country. Bolivia is characterised by weakened political institutions and a lack of trust in the formal political system.

Diakonia has not changed its position due to these changes, but continues to support the "civil society" through promoting dialogues between organisations and the government, between civil society and the state. It wants to support exchanges of all kinds, and it sees its role as listening to a multitude of voices. In that respect, it has not changed or adapted its strategy to changing contexts. In terms of programme content, however, in order to strengthen the democratisation process from below, there is an increased emphasis on the themes of gender and the formation of leaderships.

It is in this process of social and political transformation that the cases studied in the evaluation are to be found: one of them, CPMGA, situated in the western (Occidental) part of the country, and the other, CEADES, in the eastern (Oriental), in each case subject to contrasting environments and political correlations. In what follows, the description and analysis of the projects and their contexts have been informed by the perspectives of project staff and users.

2.   The school of political leadership in El Alto

The municipality of El Alto

With a population of approximately 700,000, the municipality of El Alto is situated in the Murillo province of the department of La Paz (Map 2). Being of a predominantly urban character, it acquired administrative municipal autonomy in 1984. Before that it was part of the municipality of La Paz, where the administrative centre of the government is located. Both El Alto and La Paz are part of the department of La Paz and are connected by a highway of about 5 kilometres which is highly trafficked, especially by public transport. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that a high proportion of the inhabitants of El Alto work in La Paz, and that the international airport, used by public and private functionaries and the elite of La Paz, is located in El Alto. In addition, the city of El Alto is the gateway for all vehicular transportation from La Paz to the rest of the country, which places it in a strategic position.

During the neo-liberal process, the municipality of El Alto was one of the most important receivers of rural-urban migrants (at its highest, the level of annual increase was 9% (now 5%)), who came from indigenous Aymara highland villages close by. But it was also the receiver of workers dismissed from the mining centres that collapsed in the mid-1980s with the fall of international market prices in raw materials.

These factors yielded a paradoxical development that made this municipality one of the most vulnerable in terms of economic and social rights, but at the same time one of the most important in terms of popular manufacturing of economic initiatives. In recent years El Alto has emerged as the most vital centre of small industry in Bolivia, with more or less 80,000 families depending on it.

Department of La Paz, Map 2

El Alto, as already mentioned, became the protagonist of the popular mobilisations that brought about the fall of the second government of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in October 2003. El Alto was characterised by an enormous degree of politicisation through which the natural resource policies of the recent governments were called into question.

The most important catalyst for the politicisation of the population of El Alto was the presence of the neighbourhood organisations, organised in the powerful *Federación de Juntas Vecinales de El Alto* (FEJUVE-El Alto) (Federation of Neighbourhood Committees of El Alto), which brings together representatives of more than 400 barrios of the urban centre. In alliance with peasant sectors, it was FEJUVE that led the mobilisations of 2003 and later, in February 2005, when the municipality demanded the transferral of private water and sewage services to public management, this time in the context of the government of Carlos Mesa, constitutional successor to Sanchez de Lozada. The demands for public administration of water, together with the demands for autonomy from the eastern part of the country, led to the fall of the Mesa government in June 2005. After 18 months in power, the government finally had to give in to a new constitutional change when the

president of the High Court of Justice took charge of a temporary government that called for the elections which eventually led to the triumph of MAS in December the same year.

In consideration of all of this, it is necessary to make a note about the nature of democracy in El Alto. Political analysts questioned the authoritarianism detected in the neighbourhood organisations of this city and, to be more specific, in FEJUVE. Forms of coercion by the leadership in relation to the bases were clearly visible. Such suppression of individual rights was justified in a discourse of collective rights. Processes of mobilisation served to achieve the personal interests of neighbourhood leaders, gaining them public posts, for example, and making them candidates for the Senate, positions as municipal deputies, or representatives in the Constituent Assembly, or getting them employment in the state apparatus.

Another important aspect to consider in the city of El Alto is its political relations with the city of La Paz, a factor that must be noted in order to establish a point of comparison with the municipality of Concepción in the department of Santa Cruz, which is the context of the second case we consider in Bolivia. The populations of El Alto and La Paz favour leftist tendencies, which means that there are no confrontations between them except occasionally when there are roadblocks on the highway connecting the cities,[9] or when the people of El Alto "descend" on La Paz to make their demands, creating a complete traffic jam in the city centre. Strictly speaking, this political affinity has led to a situation where MAS dominates conveniently in both of the cities (and at a departmental level) in alliance with similar political groups.

In sum, El Alto is a profoundly politicised city, with problems of democratic institutionalisation but at the same time with aspirations to modernise its economy.

Centro de Promoción de la Mujer "Gregoria Apaza"

The interviews showed clearly that the *Centro de Promoción de la Mujer "Gregoria Apaza"* (CPMGA) (Centre for the Promotion of the Woman "Gregoria Apaza"), enjoys local legitimacy in the city of El Alto due in great part to its political promotion and action in favour of gender equality since 1989. The radio station it operates, "Pachamama", played an important political role in relation to the mobilisations of 2003, being one of the few media that transmitted in real time from the acts of state violence in El Alto.

Its impact area is the 6th district of the city. This is a central barrio with a commercial character and contains the most important market of second-hand products in the country *(la Feria 16 de Julio)*. There is no institution in the area that competes with the scope of CPMGA's activities and coverage.

We could observe that the institution has developed within the context of the political cycles of the country and the city of El Alto, travelling from themes

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[9]   Roadblocks are recurrent on the highway connecting the two cities in relation to any social protest. The highway is strategic, since it connects La Paz with El Alto and subsequently with the rest of the country.

focused on micro enterprise capacity building, passing by the local municipal administration when the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) was at its height, then moving towards politicisation within the context of the social turmoil in which the country has lived since 2000. In most recent years it has tended to go back to its initial tasks of micro enterprise promotion, always accompanied by activities aimed at promoting women's right. Some activities are emphasised more than others in the four offices of the institution departments: *Gerencia Radio* (Office of Radio), *Gerencia Acción Ciudadana* (Office of Citizen Action), *Gerencia Desarrollo Productivo Laboral* (Office of Productive Labour Development), and *Gerencia de Fortalecimiento Personal y Familiar* (Office of Personal and Family Strengthening). These departments work under an executive director who works under the board, which consists of the founders of the institution and other associated persons. The board is supported by an advisory body of academics, the *Asamblea* (Assembly).

Since 2001, the institution has had an important place in relation to capacity building for political leadership with the aim of strengthening women and young people. The project studied in this evaluation is *Programa Urbano: Capacitación en liderazgo a mujeres y jóvenes* (Urban Programme: Leadership training for women and young people), and it is supported financially by Diakonia. The evaluation team visited the organisation on three occasions and each time interviewed the personnel in charge of the project and a selection of current and former students of the leadership school.

In 2001, the CPMGA Office of Citizen Action initiated a programme of empowerment which, as we noted in interviews, was managed with relative autonomy and also a growing rapprochement to left-wing activists, especially since 2003. This replaced an earlier approach to local administration that was particularly notorious in the initial phases of the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) established in 1994.

At the present moment there seems to be an improved balance between the offices, probably a result of the development during what could be called the "politicised" phase of the CPMGA (2001–2005). The ambience of political violence that placed the country on the brink of civil war and/or a military coup in the last phase of Carlos Mesa's government in June 2005 gave way to a new institutional order. Meanwhile, the crisis seemed to lead to anti-democratic practices, attributed also, as mentioned before, to the mobilised social organisations. The CPMGA reorientation since 2006 involved the exclusion of personnel considered too radical,[10] in turn changing the focus of the office in question towards citizenship formation,[11] with a major emphasis on the relationship between democratic rights and obligations.

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[10] In fact, during the three visits to the institution we found different personnel each time. Only a few persons were kept in permanent positions.

[11] The institution has again been giving more importance to the Office of Productive and Labour Development. At the moment, the Office for Citizen Action consists of the Observatory of Social Control, the School of Leadership and Citizenship (which was previously called School of Political Leadership), and the Area for Strengthening and Advising to Women of Social Organisations.

The leadership school

Between 2001 and 2004, CPMGA's school of political leadership developed within the framework of the *Gerencia de Gestión Local* (Office of Local Administration) – now *Gerencia de Acción Ciudadana* (Office of Citizen Action). Created in 1996, initially to produce an impact on the processes of popular participation and municipalisation, the most well-known result of the Office of Local Administration was to take charge of the Municipal Gender Agenda in 2000, a process through which it developed three axes of administration: (a) employment and income generation with dignity, (b) prevention of intra-familial violence, and (c) participation (Loza 2006). Beginning in 2000, this department of CPMGA changed its orientation to focus on national problems, and it moved towards a higher degree of politicisation in its activities. This new orientation was influenced by the emerging politics of the social movements, under the assumption that it is not possible to understand the situation of the women and men inhabiting this municipality if the national situation of the country is not understood (Gonzales & Sotelo 2005; Loza 2006). Accordingly, the work of training for leadership was based on the development of "critical and analytical skills" and "skills for political action" (Gonzales & Sotelo 2005), a task that in turn demanded not only more information, but also the necessity to "understand the oppression in collective and comprehensive political terms" (ibid.). The consequences of this orientation were particularly noticeable during our first visit, when we were interviewing people who had participated in the school during the years of social turmoil.

> "I particularly liked the module "Critical Analysis of the Reality". It made me change my point of view and I felt that I could better understand the protests and the roadblocks, and why they had to be done. If we all unite we can change things. Now I feel very much represented by the government of Evo Morales."
>
> *Young woman, User of the school, February 2006*

The training that was offered was organised around the thematic module called "Critical Analysis of the Reality", accompanied by others called "Communication and Oratory", "Participation in Social Organisations", "Gender", "Culture and Identity", "Techniques and Dynamics of Administration", and finally "Organisation and Leadership".

> "We talked with X about capitalism and what it is. There are some, a few individuals, who hold on to the money. And the rest of the people, we are many, are the ones who do not even have secure work opportunities with a good salary. I think this is the big problem in Bolivia".
>
> *Young woman, User of the School, El Alto, February 2006*

The course, understood as "popular education", lasted for 9 months and was divided into three levels, each one with 62 hours of training carried out in 21 3-hour sessions. Finally, the curriculum presented practical content related to the formation of leaders and the development of their public capacities, such as oratory, leading assemblies, motivation, etc. In fact, as a culminating requirement of the course, students were to conduct "replicas" of important aspects of the course, which could be translated into public presentations. According to the interviews, these included participation in street meetings, in unionist or neighbourhood assemblies, or in formal spaces such as secondary schools, with emphasis on the theme of the Constituent Assembly.[12]

That said, it is not our impression that the school was only a school of political cadres with an obvious ideological inclination. In the context of the paradox mentioned earlier, the politicised face of El Alto contributed to this direction, under the assumption that the struggles for rights were associated with the struggle against capitalism. This is a major dilemma in relation to the productive reality of this city, which is characterised, as mentioned above, by family-based micro enterprises. Anti-capitalism was translated, to a large extent by the city's inhabitants, including important groups of women, into a strongly anti-imperialist and nationalist discourse that even today questions the reach of what is perceived as the moderate policies of the MAS government and also questions CPMGA's change of perspective, something with which some interviewees were not in agreement.

Some of the older members and trainers in the technical unit of the office did not hesitate to call the political turn of CPMGA since 2006 "in favour of neo-liberalism". They pointed to the centre's tendency to favour local productive development and the maintenance of North American markets for the manufacturing production of the micro enterprises of El Alto. The major problem of CPMGA in this process, accordingly, was the dissociation between its offices and their political perspectives.

It is common in Bolivia for there to be a lack of correspondence between political transformation and economic transformation. The political transformation tends to be prioritised, something that has led to a very high (or even extreme) degree of participation, keeping even a popular government like MAS in check. Furthermore, all of the energy is focused on this practice, with the idea that participation will inevitably lead to transformation. There is a risk that in the process the end is valued more than the means, and mechanisms of coercion may be established to reach the goals (as has been seen in relation to the protests of 2005).

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[12] A preliminary review of the contents of the courses of the axis "Critical Analysis of the Reality" showed a clear dominance of the concepts of historical materialism, especially with reference to an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist focus strongly linked to the idea of a popular/workers' government. Another important axis was the one developed in relation to the cultural themes to which the inhabitants of El Alto should be sensitive, proposing a dissociation between "Andean" culture and "Occidental" culture.

> [With reference to a former trainer]
>
> "She was my teacher. Thanks to her I have been able to move forward. She has pushed me forward, and thanks to her I came to form the group that we had in FEJUVE."
>
> *Adult woman, Leader of an organization, User of the School, El Alto, February 2006*

It is not our intention to make the institution directly accountable for these events, but it is necessary to point to the lack of self-critical spirit that was obvious in the process in question.

In other words, the CPMGA seems to have shared a perspective with other organisations lacking a long-term vision of the construction of democracy. To this must be added the excessive autonomy of the office in question, of the Leadership School, and the channelling of expectations onto the women of El Alto through some of the technical personnel, that is, through the personal mediation between the personnel and the users.

The users also indicate that in many cases the links with the institution were strengthened because, in the exercise of sustaining a political work, the emotional and personal links with the personnel were their most important affective support to confront problems of administration and participation in their social organisations. Many of them say of the CPMGA "Now it's not the same" without the old personnel of the school. Some of them justify their distancing from the institutional activities with reference to this phenomenon.

Now, with the indicated changes in the leadership course in question, there is an emphasis on the development of capacities of citizenship and its links to the exercise of human rights of women. Besides that, through its Office of Citizen Action CPMGA is promoting the Observatory of Social Control, which seeks to generate and spread information to facilitate the exercise of social control and vigilance in the municipality of El Alto in order to recuperate ethic and civic values, as well as emphasising the relationship between rights and obligations to society and demanding that the municipal representatives make the administration transparent. The establishment of *Grupo Impulsor de Mujeres para el Control y la Vigilancia Social (Initiative-taking Group of Women for Control and Social Vigilance) is als*o in process; this organisation will work with women of the base on aspects of the internal democracy of social organisations.

The institution has also recently entered into a process of expanding its activities to other municipal districts in La Paz, Cochabamba, and Sucre, through resources proceeding from BID *(Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo)*, with the aim of generating opportunities and leadership capacities in women for the purpose of gaining them access to public political spaces.

The target group

The group of beneficiaries/users was identified among adult women and young women and men in the social organisations of El Alto, such as the Federation of Neighbourhood Committees (FEJUVE) and the Regional Workers' Union, neighbourhood leaders, unionist associations, student centres, leaders at the University of El Alto (UPEA), and cultural centres. On average, 400 people have been trained each year in the courses of political leadership (Gonzalez & Sotelo 2005; Loza & Vargas 2006).

During the field visits, 14 female and 2 male users were interviewed. We were able to observe, from the sample of people to interview, that the target group is diverse, and it deals with a diverse universe composed of political and social leaders active at the local level, predominantly in neighbourhood organisations. Some have middle-level professional training with some knowledge of leadership practices. Another group is composed of young men and women with a fan of activities, of which the leadership training is just one more. As in other training spaces, the leadership courses seem to cover the absence of labour activities for this group which, with the intention of "doing something", looks for all offers of activities that can be found.

This is a group very motivated by the interests of the neighbourhoods, and it has a large receptive capacity that gives it a large social potential. That said, the subject the school looked for was without doubt a subject with a capacity for social mobilisation and transformation. Among the most politically motivated one could find students of the University of El Alto. In turn, among the older women we could observe a major interest in problems linked to the barrio, in the generation of income, in health and education. Among the young people a major inclination could be found in favour of gender equality in their daily lives, in the context of their more intimate relations, an element they saw as a result of their participation in the Leadership School. CPMGA has a beneficiary with a profile that is not clearly defined; this complicates the teaching, since the objectives of the students are very dispersed.

"Methodologically, we divided the course because it was really difficult for the trainer. She is a heroine, because sometimes she really had to combine techniques, sometimes deepen the content more, because the demands were very different. Sometimes the women said, "Well, the young people dominate, they don't let us participate," sometimes the young people said, "No," etc. Yesterday we decided to divide them and, well, we said that the group that was there initially will be kept, and those who have inserted themselves later will form a new parallel group. We explained that this separation was not done according to capacities, but simply because of technical and methodological reasons to work in groups, but the reactions came immediately. The young people said, "No, I don't want to leave this group," "I want to be with the ladies," "I am here precisely to learn from their experience," others said, "I am doing my thesis on female leaders." So, now we don't know what to do. Do we unite them again or do we just keep them separated?"

Staff, CPMGA, El Alto, June 2007 (in relation to the new groups of students)

3. Problems, progress, and promises from the perspective of the users

"Talk" as a democratic conquest

One of the most important problems for the possibilities of having a gender-sensitive democracy in Bolivia is the severe difficulties women find when they want to act and express themselves in public arenas. These arenas have been constructed in a context of male dominance, and thus they are infused by dominant values and practices, which, among other things, are based on the unequal access to education of women and men. Several studies show that a series of stigmas weigh heavily on the women, and their discourses are associated with resources that lack credibility; they lack elements that articulate ideas in rational ways and their speeches are often perceived as loaded with emotions (see Aillón 2003; Costa Benavides 2001). Affected by these obstacles, the women of the social organisations are often introverted and they do not often take the challenge of talking in public because, when they do, they constantly become objects of booing and mockery from the audience.

> "The leadership course has been extremely useful because it has helped me to express myself, to talk, to break away from my fears…. Now I see myself as a little bit more open, I find it easy to converse with the others. Before, I don't think I was closed but I was a bit shy to talk with other people, I felt afraid to talk. "What shall I say, and if I make a mistake?" But I have also learned that it is human to make mistakes, and little by little I have lost the fear that I felt."
>
> *Young woman, User of the School, El Alto, October 2006*

Among the women who went through the leadership school of the CPMGA, one of the elements that stand out the most is that the school had promoted the women's individual capacity to act in public, and with that, a fundamental step towards democratisation and deliberation has been taken. Without attributing it exclusively to the CPMGA, it is important to point out that in recent years the leadership of El Alto and its more effervescent discourse has been performed by women with a great capacity for political analysis. This aspect is also valued in their private life, where the women say they have moved forward, at least in the articulation of their problems within the couples they are part of, something that was unimaginable until recently. Starting from this, and thanks to the feminist focus of CPMGA, the struggle for the rights of its users seems to have penetrated their daily lives, where it is interwoven with various forms of feminine solidarity, and this permits resistance to, if not the counteracting of, abuse by the men. This is another factor that is revealed in the experience of the Leadership School, indicating the effect it has had at the level of individual rights of the women.

> "The teacher taught me how to lose my shyness, because when I was a vice-president I did the work alone, not the president, who was a man, … his word was law and he managed me through his cell phone, I had to go from one place to another. When I came to the assemblies it was he who took the flower with him and I very silent, as if I hadn't worked. This experience I told them in class one Saturday afternoon. It was a big group of women with different posts. So, it was my turn to talk about my work and everybody quarrelled with me that day – "As a comrade, how come you are not talking? You have to talk!" I thought, "Why did I come, why did I open my mouth? I shouldn't have said anything," and the teacher said that my next homework would be to talk in the next assembly, that I had to learn, and she brought me in front of the class. "If you don't talk now you will stay silent for ever and you are dead," she said… From then on is when I learned to talk."
>
> *Adult woman, Leader of a neighbourhood organisation,*
> *User of the School, El Alto, October 2006*

The training allowed the women to achieve things in their organisations and also to articulate demands in their name, especially those oriented towards the improvement of their barrios. In other cases, it served to develop training capacities applied in other contexts, such as adult literacy. In addition, the women value the fact that the courses have contributed to creating a collective consciousness in relation to the country's natural resources and the necessity that their administration be state controlled. The users indicate that because of this, the courses have helped them transcend a localist point of view linked to the municipal management in favour of a more national horizon. It was the people of El Alto who were the vanguard of the nationalisation of gas, and the more radical among them associate this fact with the fall of the government of Sanchez de Lozada and the forging of an identity for El Alto, which, until a few years back, was invisible in the country.

> "The leadership course is useful in order for me to express myself. I am now working, apart from my ordinary work, as a voluntary trainer of literacy for women. There I am using the methods I have learned, I have overcome my fear, I socialise more with the women, in this way it has been useful."
>
> *Young woman, User of the School, El Alto, October 2006*

> "More than anything [it has been useful in order to] know my reality and my rights, and that we know how to act, if the police treat us like ignorant people, because they treat us badly and we don't say anything, but if we know our rights we can stop them."
>
> *Young woman, User of the School, El Alto, February 2006*

From the individual's point of view, the users testify that the Diakonia-funded training and guidance at CPMGA has increased their critical analytical capacity for the purpose of understanding the unequal structures of society and gender relations. They also say that they have been given the tools (such

as knowledge of their rights, how to go about starting a project of change, management of speech, and increased self-esteem) to insert themselves in their local political context and take initiatives for activities and actions. All of the interviewed graduates had initiated actions of various kinds in the organisations they represented.

The users who had recently started or finished the Leadership School were generally very enthusiastic, full of confidence and ideas about what they wanted to do to lead a change in their local environment. In several cases, coming back after a year, some of the young, inexperienced leaders showed a remarkable change in relation to their ability to express themselves and assert their opinions. In other cases, it was clear that many of the intentions had not been realised. This was due to different factors such as lack of economic resources, the time that had to be devoted to making ends meet, sudden changes in personal life (family member fallen ill or unemployed) on which all energy had to be focused, power structures in society being stiffer than expected, stronger male resistance than expected against female initiatives of change, lack of interest and support for the project from neighbours and local organisations.

> "Since then [when we met last time], almost all of the projects I was planning resulted in nothing, I did not manage much. The neighbourhood committee has reorganised, it has been a chaos … it is difficult to find people who want to participate … we meet twice a week, sometimes one, sometimes two people with the president. Now that we have everything in the zona, water, electricity, and so on, now people don't want to participate. Before it wasn't like that, for example, when there was work to do in the street the people came, but now they don't come."
>
> *Female leader, Former student of CPMGA, El Alto, June 2007*

For the users (mainly women), the awareness promoted by the school has led to an increased commitment to their local environment, amplifying their focus from their own family and closest neighbourhood to having a feeling that something could be done that would affect a wider range of people. Several of the users said that they have widened their worldview. There were several of the women who were interviewed, for the first time, shortly after having finished the courses, who in the second and third interview showed proof of having moved on to other organisations and spaces of participation, without leaving CPMGA completely behind.

> Before I started the course I was organising workshops on women's rights in my zona. Now I am doing them in other zonas as well. It is a big challenge. In the future I don't know whether I will keep on working in other zonas or work more in my own zona. It is a difficult choice.
>
> *Adult woman, Former leader of a neighbourhood committee,*
> *User of the school, El Alto, July 2007*

The cost of being a woman: Politicisation and de-socialisation in El Alto

According to the interviews, one of the experiences that stand out most in relation to the female participation in El Alto was acted out in the spheres of FEJUVE, more or less in the beginning of the year 2006, when several women, some of them trained by the leadership school, took on posts in the hierarchy of this organisation due to the departure of its highest leader and his closest collaborators, who had been called by the new government to carry out state responsibilities. In these circumstances, the direction of the organisation was exclusively in the hands of women during a transition period, until a new leadership was determined through elections. The experience of administering an organisation as important as FEJUVE was carried by the warmth and strong solidarity between them, and they set the goal for themselves of planning for a leadership that was faultless in its results. Of course in these efforts they had to solve a number of difficulties that heralded the crisis that would take place later on in FEJUVE, among other things because it was an organisation that, even if it has rules of functioning, is exposed to manipulation by personal interests or groups that enforce their power.

> "… the cost that we the women paid for being leaders, is that the female leader when she acts rightly is unjustly criticised, and not being able to buy her consciousness, they slander her, they threaten her with death, and for that the male leaders look for female allies, women whose consciousness can be bought easily with a few presents, and these corrupt persons then look for methods to erase persons like me from the map …"
>
> *Adult woman, Former leader of FEJUVE, User of the School, June 2007*

It turned out that after the elections in the organisation, the new leadership arranged that these women, accused of corruption, go before the Tribunal of Honour. This act must be understood as a mechanism of reprisal against the former *caudillo*[13]-like administration that had now left for the government, but it fell on the women, among other reasons because they were culturally more vulnerable to the political struggle, especially when it is engaged with in an informal way. In the flurry of responding to the accusations, these women found themselves involved in legal proceedings with costs that, far more than the monetary ones, involved a profound emotional loss, which they had to go through, as they said, alone with only the support of their families.

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[13] *Caudillo* is the common name of a kind of authoritarian leadership inspired by the military headmen that ruled the Andean countries in the beginning of the republican era.

> "… many comrades, when they are presented with adverse situations, they leave, they don't want to know anything more, because they found frustration. Always, when corruption is present, this has been the worst damage…. There are no contemplations, there is no respect for women; if it is about getting there, anybody can be walked on. In addition, there are abuses of authority. Unfortunately all of us are not just. When they are up there they abuse the authority, harm the people, in order to satisfy their personal appetites in politics…"
>
> *Adult woman, Former leader of FEJUVE, User of the School, El Alto, June 2007*

This process vividly portrays the conditions in which political participation in El Alto is carried on, in the midst of organisations that do not have their norms and regulations clearly stipulated. This deficiency is mirrored in a large proportion of the political and social institutions in the country and ends up casting a shadow on their democratic character. To our understanding, this is a historical dilemma of Bolivian society and is related to the tension between political rights and social rights. The Bolivian state has been reinforcing and promoting deliberation and participation through reforms and actions. The first reform was the recognition of the universal vote for indigenous people in 1952, followed by the Law of Popular Participation in 1994, and, in recent years, the recognition of groups of citizens and indigenous people as eligible groups in municipal elections. The state has also consulted the citizens through referendums on different issues, some with technical implications difficult for an ordinary person to grasp. In recent years the practice of using the cabildo (town council) to impose state agendas has increased; the society considers the town council to be a legitimate mechanism of collective consultation.

FEJUVE seems to be a social and political organisation that reflects this situation of historical tension very well. Because of this, it is understandable that it constitutes itself as a much disputed instance of power in El Alto. In the course of the three visits, we could observe that the women in question seem to have reacted differently to the experience, ranging from never ever wanting to take on responsibilities and participate again, to using the experience as a source of strength for future actions against what is perceived as an unjust structure of politics.

The women who went by the leadership of FEJUVE under the above-mentioned conditions testified to the misstatements about their intentions and actions, but their conditions as women also exposed them to the culturally accepted male dominance of the country's social organisations. In spite of years working against it, little effect has been achieved.[14]

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[14] The methodology of the evaluation was very useful for the purpose of observing this case. In the first phase, we met the women being leaders of FEJUVE. In the second phase, the same women were subject to prosecution by the Tribunal of Honour. In the third phase, the accusations being diluted, they were still in the process of living with bad memories, in some cases wanting to continue with leadership, in others not.

> "In reality, it can be disappointing, what I can contribute because, more than good things, bad things happened to me and I regret in my soul, sometimes, that I took on the leadership of my committee, having been in FEJUVE, because I never imagined that the people who were going to be there could suddenly begin to accuse you of everything. I had heard them talking, often there were smaller critiques against persons…I could never imagine that this could happen to me. I have done many things, too many. In less than two and a half years I have carried out 27 projects in my zona, between transactions, projects accomplished, jobs, and there has been a lot of suspicion that I was receiving help, money, resources and that I was committing thefts, but I have always given information in the assemblies about the activities that I had…, …with the best of intentions, wanting to serve, without any problem I have invested money, I have thought about doing good for the education of the children – they are not even my children, they are not of my family – I have fully taken on the administrative costs. But now the fundamental problem is that I am typified as one of the criminals, maybe even worse than Goni Sánchez de Lozada. I am accused of having embezzled 250,000 dollars …but I think that they are judging me badly because I didn't think like they do, that is, it is a crime to think differently in this world, democracy is worth nothing, therefore I say, after 24 years of democracy we don't know anything of democracy.
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> "… This is what FEJUVE doesn't know and doesn't want to know, and when they talk about me they say that I am a liar and that I am inventing these things, but I am not inventing, they are in the book of records (*libro* de actas), which at all costs they want to take away from me and I will not give it to them, because when all is said everything that they have in my zone, status as juridical person, resolution of the school, zoning plans, all of the projects, it is mainly done with my money. At the moment they owe me something like 12,000 bolivianos for expenses during the almost four years that I was in charge, first as vice-president, after my work they named me president, and it wasn't because I wanted to,…
>
> "… I regret having participated because my home, during these three years, seems like a mad house, …nothing is in its place, everything is full of dust, I don't have time to organise, and in the end I dedicated myself entirely because this zona needed my help, but things will not continue like that…"
>
> *Adult woman, Former leader of FEJUVE, User of the School, El Alto, October 2006*

The experiences related to CPMGA give the impression of an activity that tended to form individual cadres, without the support of an action to foster democratisation of the social organisations, hence without social and collective back-up. In the same way, the action stands out as one based only on aspects related to the combination of political circumstances without projection into the long term.[15] All this is understandable, however, because of the general context in which this city found itself during the last years, and it seems that the institution saw itself with a moral obligation to accompany this process.

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[15] This experience seems to have been assimilated by the centre. It is now encouraging the creation of an organisation of women that has as its objectives to exercise social vigilance in the organisations they represent, but more than anything, to focus their work on guaranteeing democratic practice within them. This group is called *"Grupo Impulsor de Mujeres para el Control y Vigilancia Social"*. Its principal aim is to work with grass-roots women and, also, to have an impact on the municipal government.

4.   The National Indigenous
   Association of Forestry (AFIN)

The Political Context of the Lowlands

As we already mentioned, in the eastern part of the country a tough opposition to the government has been formed, linked to the most important opposition party *Poder Democrático y Social* (PODEMOS) and the departmental civic committees. Together, the departments of the lowlands form what is commonly called the "Half Moon" (*Media Luna,* because of the shape the region forms on the map), and this is where the claims for departmental autonomy are strongest.

The leadership in the department of Santa Cruz is held by elite sectors that represent the agro-industrial and cattle-raising sectors, hence a social class whose reproduction depends on its access to land and the natural resources of the lowlands, which is also where the main wealth of natural gas deposits are found. For a country that has not managed to generate projects of industrial transformation, the core of the disputes is found here: on the one hand an industrial sector that maintains strong relationships to the countryside, and on the other the indigenous peoples in the Amazonian area, subject to the condition of not being a numerically large population (INE 2003: Gráfico 1),[16] but with symbolic capital, as they are associated with having natural abilities to preserve the natural environment (García Linera et al. 2007). The disputes for territory, linked to the expansion of industrial agriculture, involve two different kinds of autonomic administration – departmental and indigenous. These disputes have turned into the axis of a dilemma that at the moment engages a large part of Bolivian society, especially in the East where there is a strong tension between classes, hence a fragile balance between MAS and the business elite.

The productive activities of the region are focused on cattle raising, soy agro-industry, and forestry exploitation. In relation to the two first areas there exists a consolidated infrastructure with comprehensive management of capital and temporary labour forces, thus their elite character. The communitarian forest exploitation seems to be the activity closest to the possibilities of the Communitarian Original Lands, *Territorios Comunitarios de Origen* (TCO),[17] even if it means participating in a productive chain in which the indigenous people occupy second place, mainly as providers of "standing trees" which

[16] In Eastern Bolivia there are 39 indigenous ethnic groups that started becoming visible from the 1990s onward. However, in spite of this diversity, the population they unite is relatively small, in comparison with what happens in the western part of the country, where there is a majority presence of Aymara and Quechua speakers, even if the process of *mestizaje* is much more comprehensive than in the eastern part.

[17] The TCOs were established by the INRA reform, which gave indigenous groups the right to receive title to their territories. The law establishes communal territories of origin, which are controlled and administered by communities or federations of communities (Postero 2007).

are purchased by private enterprises.[18] Working under the conditions of being providers of raw material has changed the expectations of the indigenous people, who now want to proceed into the area of production and commercialisation. With their current aspirations, they are seeking and arguing about the financial resources they need to strengthen their position, resources that, to a large extent, are available only to private businesses.

The exploitation of forest resources is regulated by the Forest Law of 1996, which incorporates new actors, such as local social groups, TCOs, and peasant communities, into the exploitation of wood, beside the private actors.[19] The law stipulates that each forest activity requires a general plan of forest management, *Plan General de Manejo Forestal* (PGMF). The cost of such a plan often makes it inaccessible to the indigenous people; at any event, in many cases it delays their possibilities to exploit their forests. Another problem for the indigenous groups is lack of experience in negotiating with intermediary contractors in the production of logs and their commercialisation in the internal and external market. They do not have access, either, to the networks of commercialisation that would allow them to get out of the condition of being providers without a capacity to transform the raw material.

> According to the Forest Superintendence, in 2006 there were more or less 8.2 million hectares under sustainable forest management. The main portion is assigned to the private domain. Close to one million hectares are designated for indigenous-communitarian management.
>
> *www.sforestal.gov.bo*

In sum, in the lowlands of eastern Bolivia, the problem of democratisation is linked to access to land, and advances in relation to indigenous rights are subject to power correlations that are very fragile, characterised by the limited political capacity of the indigenous elite and the limitations presented by the indigenous peoples' status as minority.

CEADES

El Colectivo de Estudios Aplicados al Desarrollo Social, the Collective of Applied Studies of Social Development (CEADES) was founded in 1991. It bases its work on concepts associated with the struggle against dependency, giving emphasis to indigenous communities and their economic, political, and ideological empowerment (CEADES 2003). The work it carries out on the basis of these objectives is directed towards actions around the defence and exercise of economic, social, and cultural rights for the indigenous peoples' ter-

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[18] The indigenous people say that they have continuously detected the illegal use of forest resources of the TCO by private agents, a practice that is called "piracy". This practice presupposes an irrational use of the natural environment, in the sense that it is done without consideration for strategies of forest management. Sometimes it is practiced by the private dealers who do not exploit the land they have been ceded but practice illegal exploitation in the indigenous people's territory.

[19] This law, though it guarantees a rational and sustainable management of the forests, has a vague set of regulations that, according to the indigenous people, when applied, tend to benefit the private concessionaries.

ritorial administration and management of natural resources, with the aim of affecting public policies. The work aims to achieve normative changes in the policies dealing with hydrocarbon resources, minerals, and forests. Its radius of influence is mainly in the department of Santa Cruz, where its office is located, though it has links to other areas of the country.

One of the objectives of CEADES is to strengthen the organisation of the National Indigenous Forest Association, *Asociación Forestal Indígena Nacional* (AFIN), created under its influence in August 2005 as a national association. AFIN is the second of the projects evaluated. In order to study the possible outcomes of the association's work at the level of the beneficiaries, one region of influence (the area of Concepción) was chosen for the evaluation, in consultation with the director of CEADES.

The project is part of the activities that CEADES is developing among the indigenous peoples in eastern Bolivia in relation to the unionist-like organisations *Central de Organizaciones de Pueblos Nativos Guarayos* (COPNAG) and the *Organización Indígena Chiquitana* (OICH). The focus is on the province of Ñuflo de Chavez, where the TCOs of San Antonio de Lomerío and Monte Verde are situated, the places where the fieldwork for this evaluation was carried out. The time frame of the evaluation and the inaccessibility of the TCOs did not allow us to visit both of the TCOs at each visit. Consequently, for the first visit we visited the area of Lomerío and met with people "at home", so to speak, but asked the people of Monteverde to come to Concepción for the interviews. Concepción is the closest town for both of the TCOs. On the second visit we visited the people from Monteverde "at home" and asked the representatives from Lomerío to come to Concepción. On the third visit we all gathered in Concepción. We interviewed a total of 5 female and 23 male users, but there were more people present at the joint gatherings we had in relation to the meetings.

The Formation of AFIN

The formation of the National Indigenous Forest Association, *Asociación Forestal Indígena Nacional* (AFIN) was preceded by a national analysis of the subsector of indigenous forestry. The analysis was the base on which the Foundational Congress of the association was created. The committee in charge, *Comité Impulsor,* organised the election of AFIN's first national board and the elaboration of a five-year strategic plan 2005–2010. AFIN has organised activities in order to disseminate information on the plan, to create a committee of indigenous forestry enterprises, and to gather testimonies in relation to their experiences (Benneker 2005; AFIN 2007).

The analysis that was conducted within the institutional framework of AFIN refers to the problems indigenous peoples encounter in their exploitation of the forest, especially in relation to management of the market, access to credit and technology, and the conflicts of illegal exploitation. The aim of AFIN is to be a body capable of confronting these problems, based on the increased

political power it will acquire in making use of the current political state of affairs, which is favourable to the strengthening and empowerment of social organisations (AFIN 2005). In this sense, it is hoped that AFIN will be a parallel to what the Agrarian Peasant Corporation, *Corporación Agraria Campesina* (CORACA) was in the 1980s when it constituted an economic and productive branch of the Peasants' Union, *Confederación Sindical Ùnica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB). In other words, the aim of the project is to constitute a subject with the capacity to insert itself into the workings of public political decision making in the country and make major access to the market possible for the forest products of the indigenous peoples.

> "There has been a tendency this year (in which the communitarian forestry has begun to emerge as an option of development for the indigenous peoples), in both the cooperation and the private sector, and in the administration of the government, to want to localise forest management in phases of the productive chain, … and again they have been discriminated against and put in the phase of providers of raw material. Supposedly in these policies the private enterprises are the ones in charge of the transformation of the wood … that is, the indigenous peoples could not have saw mills nor industries for furniture, nor tables … so they say, "We will finance, but we will only finance the forest production, we will not finance nor approve credits for the other areas." There has to be specialisation, but the result is that this specialisation has a racist component because the private enterprises, dominated by white groups, are the ones that manage the chain of added value, and the indigenous people are doomed to stay in their position, that is, implicitly there is this discrimination …"
>
> *Technician of CEADES, Santa Cruz, June 2007*

The project of the creation and consolidation of AFIN is expected to lead to improved management of the channels of internal and external commercialisation and market practices for the indigenous peoples. It is also expected to strengthen the communal systems of health security and to give work to indigenous technicians and the population in general, which has happened, for example, in the community of Santa Monica, in the TCO of Monte Verde. The organisation's mission is stated in its statutes: "To strengthen and develop the technical, political, economic, and social sustainability of the communitarian forest organisations on a national, regional, and communal level. To influence public policies, to be a presence vis-à-vis economic and social organisations and the international cooperation, to improve the conditions of commercialisation and the formation of human resources, to capture financial resources, and to facilitate technical, legal, communicational, and administrative assistance benefiting its member OFCs [communitarian forest organisations] and AFIRs [regional forest associations]" (AFIN 2005). Another aim is to stop the rural-urban migration that is affecting the communities, especially in relation to the younger population that lacks work resources in the areas.

The role of CEADES in the organisation and development of AFIN is to permanently follow up on its activities, but without a determining influence, respecting the decisions that the leaders must take autonomously. In this sense, a qualitatively different mediation can be observed compared to that developed in CPMGA. In the case of CEADES, its mediation is situated between AFIN and the state, a process that nevertheless has only been possible due to the MAS government, to which the institution has access and a point of entry given its unquestionable ideological affinity.

For the people involved (10 to 15 persons), representatives of a number of indigenous communities, the experience of supporting the creation of AFIN has been a source of capacity building. For the members of the Committee of AFIN who have been involved in discussions at a national level, it has been particularly useful. In this context, the interviews reveal that AFIN has managed to penetrate some of the structures of the state bureaucracy. It achieved certain compromises on its part in order to rethink forest policies, for example, by introducing the concept of communitarian forestry in the National Development Plan, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* (PND), a very important conceptual political achievement for the current government. Among other things, these new relations are intended to facilitate access to external resources to finance the communitarian management plans of the forests and gain access to viable credit. Other achievements are the formation of an indigenous forest committee and the work to facilitate achievement of the status of juridical person for the affiliated communities, the lack of which is another problem of the local associations. AFIN has also established relations to the Superintendence of Forestry, with the aim of making possible a future set of regulations developed by the indigenous peoples and the state for the forestry sector. Finally, in talking about their course of action, the leaders of AFIN mention with much pride the fact that they have been called to a working meeting by the Forest Chamber of the East, *(Cámara Forestal del Oriente)*, which seems to have given them symbolic legitimacy vis-à-vis the other business actors (interview with leaders of AFIN, Santa Cruz, June 2007).

[In reference to the community of Santa Mónica]
"The PMF gives work to the people, the people receive a small payment, their money, the people are paid 30 bolivianos per day. It is the young people of the community, especially, who do the specific tasks, for example, in relation to the sale, to locate and mark all of the wood. The majority of the people are also working in opening roads. We also have an open account in the cooperative where we deposit our resources from the forest management. Last year (2005) we deposited 6,000 dollars in the cooperative, this serves to carry out the plan once again…. we are also paying for the health of all of the community members. We have an agreement with the medical centre of Concepción, where we send the people so they can be checked there, and when there are serious illnesses we send them to be treated at the hospital and later we come and pay. Then there has to be a small percentage for the organisation itself and for the technicians. It is divided by percentage; we have 30% … for the operation, another 30% for the capacity development, another 30% for communal benefit, 5% for the CIC, and 5% for the costs of administration of the community."

Indigenous Leader, Community of Santa Mónica, Monte Verde, October 2006

The target group

Structurally, AFIN is supported by 13 regional forest associations (AFIR) which in turn are sustained by 43 communitarian forest organisations (OFC).[20] It has a pyramidal structure. It is observed, however, that even if AFIN has a national committee, in some places there are not yet any base or intermediate structures, or they are in the initial processes of creation. This makes one think of a top-down organisational process; that is, the national association is not the culminating process of an organic accumulation. This situation is in reality quite common in many social organisations in Bolivia, lacking support from the base but with political influence at the level of the state. It is common that organisations of this kind create overlappings of different levels of social and political representation at the local level. In the case of AFIN, the fact that several communities already had forest committees had created tensions, according to the interviews, since the committees faced the risk of being replaced by the local forest associations. The leaders of AFIN said, however, that the situation is improving, as AFIN has the advantage of being able to (or having the intention to) generate articulated links beyond the local level.

Organisational Process of AFIN
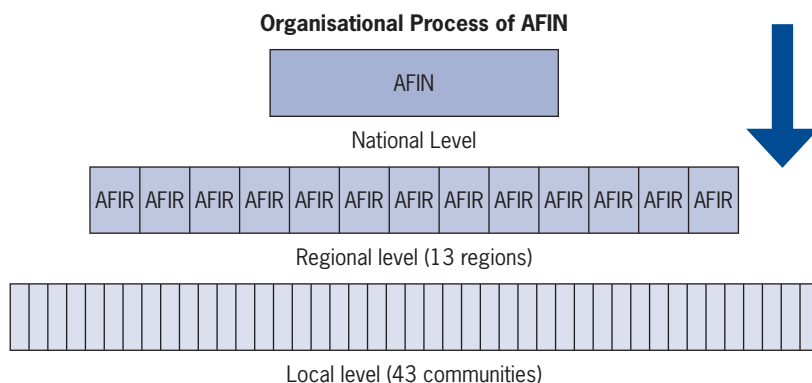
In this sense, AFIN has more influence in some regional organisations of Santa Cruz than in other places with forest resources. This gives the impression of an association that, in practice, is more a departmental manifestation than a national one, at least so far. In fact, according to its pamphlets, of 43 communitarian forest organisations (OFC), 27 pertain to the department of Santa Cruz, thus constituting 63% of the OFCs associated with the institution. Not all of them, however, have forest management plans or plans that are actually working.

In light of the way AFIN has developed, we consider the target group of AFIN to be under construction, a situation that is complicated by the fact

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[20] In the last interview with the CEADES team (June 2007), they recognised 9 regional sections. The diagram presented above is based on a pamphlet by AFIN, 2006.

that its leadership cannot rely on financial resources, infrastructure, or equipment for its work in relation to the grass-roots. It is able to work only through intermediate events such as information workshops and the like, which it occasionally organises. Not all of the indigenous communities have a strong cultural sense of belonging, being more interested in the economic-productive enterprises of forest management. This is the case of the Ayoreos, who present a history of dramatic individual disaggregation of their ranks, but even so they belong to the AFIN through the general forestry management plan (PGMF) (interview with Guillermo Posorajai, June 2007). Some communities also gave us to understand, through their leaders, that in spite of the breadth of the project, the programme of forest exploitation is *one* component among other economic activities that they carry out (most of which are strictly for auto-consumption).[21] The forestry activity, even if its future projection is recognised, does not yet occupy a privileged place among these, due to various factors such as lack of experience and lack of financial resources and contacts with the market.

Communitarian Forest Organisations Associated with AFIN

Departament	Region	OFC
Santa Cruz	Guarayos	7
	Monte Verde (*)	4
	Lomerío (*)	2
	Ayoreo	2
	Chiquitano	11
	Guarasug'we	1
Santa Cruz, Chuquisaca y Tarija	Guaraní	1
Beni	Sirionó	1
	Tsimane	1
Beni y Cochabamba	Moxos	6
	Yuqui/Yuracaré	2
Beni, La Paz y Cochabamba	Mosetén	1
La Paz	Tacana	4
Total		**43**

Source: AFIN, 2006 and Teijeiro, 2007
(*) Places where the fieldwork was carried out

Another factor that contributes to this internal weakness has to do with the precariousness of the roads between affiliated regions of the association, a lack that is structural in the north of Bolivia. The precariousness of the road network is an even more serious difficulty with regard to the indigenous com-

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[21] In general, every household has a small piece of land where rice, yucca and other products are grown.

munities' possibilities of transporting wood. The network, being unable to connect regions, has even greater difficulties connecting smaller localities, and this constitutes a major obstacle to making links to internal and external markets. This problem is so serious that, as was mentioned in one of the interviews, there are indigenous peoples who do not even know the boundaries of their TCO, as, for example, in the department of Beni where there are serious problems of communication (interview with leader of AFIN, Santa Cruz, June 2007).

It should also be mentioned that there is a cultural factor which works against the indigenous peoples, and this is the tendency towards individualisation, which is manipulated by business sectors to deprive the indigenous peoples of their traditional communitarian feelings and ways of doing things. This problem becomes visible in relation to the commercialisation of territorial spaces and indigenous leaders ceding resources of those spaces to private entrepreneurs, as has been the case in Guarayos, where there is also a significant peasant and small-scale agricultural population. The issue of individuation also came up in the interviews with leaders from Lomerío. This is related, of course, to the aspirations of modernity that have penetrated into the local society, especially among the younger generation for whom urban migration is the main expression of self-realisation. In relation to gender relations the project has not done much; interviewees refer to the character of forest activities being primarily male due to tradition and the need for more physical strength. According to a female leader, the cooperative character of the project is a safeguard that women will benefit anyway. Other interviews, however, show that women are more involved in forest activities than appears at first glance, and that their contributions are generally made invisible in written and oral reports.

> "Yes, the women also go into the forest. Of course they don't do the same things as the men. The women go in to measure the trees, to mark them and look for sticks…. In fruit times, we go to look for fruits."
>
> *Female leader, Monteverde, February 2006*

All of these complicating factors give the impression that AFIN as a project, even if it has political influence today due to the particular current political circumstances, is depending on a series of long-term factors if it is to be effective and succeed in its aims. The political lobbying that is now being done is not enough to deal with the institutional mechanisms that have to be developed in order for the organisation to function. Among other things, the association has not yet achieved the important status of juridical person.

For the association to be strengthened it seems necessary to promote a gradual process of consolidation of the local capacities of wood production, guaranteeing the links with other actors, indigenous and non-indigenous,

and bearing in mind that those who have the capacity to negotiate in terms of technology and markets also have the economic capital that the indigenous groups lack. In other words, it is a matter of guaranteeing inter- and intra-communitarian cohesion through improving the local administration. Otherwise the national organisation has no meaning, except for the fact that it could become important as a promoter of the persistence of a collective sense of belonging among the peoples. Without that, and without economic administration, the sustainability of the indigenous autonomies is not probable, especially considering the strong migration present in these impoverished areas. In other words, a political administration has to take on an economic administration, which is, as we understand, an undertaking of enormous scope and will not be realised without the support of other actors, such as the Bolivian state. In its work towards its grass-roots, AFIN could also take advantage of the mediations of other institutions such as *Apoyo Para el Campesino-Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* (APCOB), which, in the case of Santa Cruz, has technicians in Apocó, Lomerío, and Monteverde.

5. AFIN at the local level

The presence of AFIN's activities in the area of the supposed beneficiaries is limited to a couple of workshops of an informational character.

> "The workshop AFIN organised was good. It was about the writing of statutes and juridical person. There were people. We have to support the work of AFIN, but there are no resources."
>
> *Representative of Asociación Forestal Indígena de Lomerío, AFIL, November 2006*

The work of CEADES and AFIN is not well known at the local level, and if it is, it is sometimes associated with the problems of wanting to introduce a structure parallel to the existing indigenous social organisation. At the second visit of the evaluators, pamphlets were distributed in the name of the regional association of Monteverde (AFMV). In interviews with community members in the district of Monteverde there was no agreement about whether or not AFMV had actually been founded, and some members did not know about the regional association. In spite of that, the need for an organisation that promotes indigenous forestry is recognised at the local level, but there are different opinions on whether it should be promoted by the indigenous social organisation or through an association specifically for forestry.

> [Referring to the work of AFIL]
>
> "We want to work but there is no way, it is difficult to meet regularly because of lack of resources. During this period of leadership we want to present a few projects so that the members will have something to move around with... We want to elaborate statutes, juridical person, to be able to access some projects."
>
> *Male member of AFIL, Concepción, June 2007*
>
> "It [AFIL] was part of the organisation [refers to the TCO or CICOL, Central Indígena de Comunidades Originarias de Lomerío] before, but when the financing ended it wanted to be independent without talking to the highest leader, cacique general. They want to obtain juridical person so that we cannot interfere in their issues, but we don't want to let them. If they obtain juridical person, they can obtain resources on the side. We are trying to slow down the process. We want them to be part of the organisation. The same thing has been seen with other groups that want to be independent, cattle-raising groups, forestry groups, and so on."
>
> *Male leader of CICOL Lomerío, Concepción, June 2007*

Economic equality and cultural justice

The indigenous peoples of the East are minority populations, and not being able to control their territory they are pressured by other social groups demanding access to it. Because of this, the democratic claims that sustain their rights are based on cultural justice and recognition, aspects that go well with the idea of "development with identity" promoted in the country. In this sense, the advances that have been achieved in Bolivia in favour of the lowland peoples are important and supported by the Bolivian society's recognition of being intercultural (PNUD 2007). In spite of this, these are values that will not be sustained unless processes of collective economic well-being are developed behind or alongside the cultural claims. The communitarian ways of doing things are threatened, giving way to more individual visions, as is seen in the area. The interviewed persons testified to the presence of a certain tension between the communitarian aims of the indigenous organisation versus more individual and family-based aspirations. The expansion of commercial agriculture is one of the major threats to the indigenous groups, considering that the pressure comes not only from the agro-industrial enterprises but also from other peasant groups and poor small-scale farmers looking for new ways to expand their livelihoods.

> "Why should we not have this vision, the capacity to manage a communitarian forest enterprise? And then, sell not only planks but furniture as well, this is the vision of AFIN. But first the most important: we have to make the bases conscious that we will not let ourselves be cheated by third parties who wants to steal our forest resources … and … we have to make propositions to the businessmen, that if they want to make an alliance with us, it has to be real, that we sit down on equal terms, not that the businessman who is talking to me face to face now, but inside he is saying "I will convince him in order to cheat him." So this is where we are struggling, so that that businessman will be conscious: because in the end we are all Bolivians and we are living in the same house."
>
> *Leader of AFIN, Concepción, June 2007*

The fulfilment of the law is a demand from below

The democratisation of the eastern part of Bolivia depends on the relations and actions of the dominant class. The wealth of this class has been based on forms of accumulation provided by state favours, especially when it comes to distribution of land during the periods of dictatorship, that is, without legal bases and based on manipulations against the indigenous peoples. These practices have persisted, in spite of advances made through agrarian reform. That is why this class is the main opponent to the current government.

The indigenous peoples, having taken on their minority condition at a regional level, seem to be conscious that their social and cultural survival is intimately linked to the state and the values that have been incorporated by the state for the exercise of their development practices with cultural justice. It is very significant that it is the indigenous people who are claiming the legal order, which they feel is necessary despite the solution of the proprietary status of the TCOs, at least on paper. In sum, the indigenous peoples linked to forest production are struggling for the legal status of their property, for an equitable exchange in the market, for access to technological resources that will make their activities possible, and for these to lead, in the end, to collective well-being.

> "We are always looking for legality, a legal instance that can give us security…. Well, exactly, before that, it was left like that, and we said, "No more, now we are going after the legal issues, he who will give us a green light will stay or you leave, it will be the Tribune…""
>
> "We will not threaten or anything like that, but with strong pressure, we will pressure so that the law will be accomplished …in accordance to what is established. But on the contrary the business side, they will threaten first, then they offer money … here the one that offers the most is the winner. And we as we cannot offer money, we pressure so that the law will be followed, that they act according to the law…"
>
> "… on behalf of the Superintendence of Forestry, we have been the ones to do the work in order for them to attend our demands, because if we don't manifest ourselves they will not know, they will not do any investment, a control … if anything happens, immediately we go to the Superintendence of Forestry. We start to try to get attention there, we send them letters with well-founded accusations. Not until then do they move, and they are also a bit hesitant, they are afraid, worse if it is an enterprise or a cattle raiser that is taking the land by force, then they ask us for help. The important thing for us is that they act according to the law."
>
> *Leaders of AFIN, Santa Cruz, June 2007*

6.   Understanding outcomes

The Leadership School in El Alto

As we described earlier, the line of work that the school has been developing has changed over the years and kept changing in the period of the evaluation. During our second visit the aim had changed slightly, towards the development of capacities of citizenship and their links to the human rights of women. The institution also wanted to facilitate the exercise of social control and vigilance in the municipality of El Alto to recuperate ethic and civic values, as well as to emphasise the relationship between rights and obligations of citizens in society. Through the evaluation process we could observe this process of change and the capacity of the school to adapt and change its line of work in relation to external changes and lessons learned. In general, the Diakonia-funded training and guidance have had an influence on the lives of the end-users of CPMGA. From the individual's point of view, the users testify that the Diakonia-funded training and guidance at CPMGA has increased their critical analytical capacity for understanding the unequal structures of society and gender relations. Many also say that they have been given tools that enable them to insert themselves in their local political context and take initiatives for activities and actions. They have developed their capacities to speak in public. Whether or not they manage to realise their intentions has varied due to different factors beyond the reach of the school. For the users (mainly women), the awareness promoted by the school has led to an increased commitment to their local environment, amplifying their focus from their own family and closest neighbourhood to other parts of El Alto.

Increased gender awareness seems to have found its strongest expressions at the individual, private level, where the gender order has been questioned in relation to boyfriends and family members with varying results, in the short perspective sometimes with conflicts as a result. There are also results at the local level, where the women have acted as groups. As mentioned earlier, CPMGA has promoted, and its users carried out, actions towards gender equality at the municipal level, for example, the elaboration of the municipal gender agenda. Local social and political actions have first and foremost been carried out at a level of neighbourhood, but in some cases been brought to the level of local government or other influential organisations, such as FEJUVE. The male-dominated gender order is very strong within the social movements and in local politics and extremely difficult to change. In the case of the women who were engaged in FEJUVE, strengthened by their newly won leadership skills and support from CMGA they assumed a large responsibility, challenging prevalent authoritarian structures. This may serve as an example but, unfortunately, for these women it turned out to be detrimental for their possibilities and willingness to participate in the future.

When it comes to women's increased political participation and major expression though speech in El Alto, CPMGA has obviously been important as part of a larger movement of change due to the institution's important role in El Alto. It is therefore difficult to separate the influence of the Diakonia-funded training from the work of other organisations that have contributed, as well as a particular political state of affairs with state-led gender measures (quota laws) that have increased (by obligation) the number of female actors on the political arena of the country. The CPMGA is and has been an important part of a process of political empowerment of women in the local political system. Its influence has mainly been local, and it is too early to say whether its new, wider approach will leave marks in other contexts. However, the work of the institution does not seem to have managed to change the overall political culture of the social movements (of personal interests, corruption, and authoritarianism), which might be more decisive for the possibilities of weaker groups (including women) to participate on equal terms.

The National Indigenous Forestry Association
AFIN should become an organisation that will be able to confront the problems indigenous peoples encounter in their exploitation of the forest, based on the increased political power it would acquire in making use of the current political circumstances, favourable to the strengthening and empowerment of the social organisations. The project is expected to improve management by indigenous peoples of the channels of internal and external commercialisation and market practices. It is also expected to strengthen the communal systems of health security and give work to indigenous technicians and the population in general. So far, the influence of the Diakonia funded-training and guidance over time on the lives of the end-users of CEADES support to AFIN is limited, which does not mean that there are no

potentials in a longer perspective. Because AFIN is a project that, though it answers to claims from below, is developing in a top-down manner, it is difficult to see changes in individuals and groups at the base level that are due to its actions and activities. Generally, the presence of AFIN's activities in the area of the supposed beneficiaries is limited. There are some collective actions that stand out, such as the experiences from the community of Santa Monica. A general impression, however, is that the work of CEADES and AFIN is not well known at the local level and if it is, it is sometimes associated with problems of wanting to introduce a structure parallel to the existing indigenous social organisation. In spite of that, the need for an organisation that promotes indigenous forestry is recognised at the local level. At the national level, AFIN has managed to establish itself to a certain extent as an organisation capable of negotiating with authorities and so forth, and for the people involved, representatives of a number of indigenous communities, the experience has been a source of capacity building and strengthened awareness of how to confront the problems of the communitarian forestry sector. The results of these discussions are not yet felt at the local level.

To what extent can these changes be attributed to Diakonia-funded training? As mentioned earlier, AFIN's advances and major access to authorities at the national level has been facilitated, or even made possible, by the particular political state of affairs and the interests of the current MAS government. It is important to point out, however, that the support from Diakonia through CEADES has made it possible to take advantage of the current opportunities, something that may very well have long-term results. To be recognised as an actor within national forestry is a necessary but not sufficient condition for being able to participate on the same terms as the other actors in the sector. One of AFIN's problems is the lack of own financial means, which leads to a dependency on the bases to support its activities, but lack of funds is also the obstacle for them to anchoring their work at the local level. We found a certain reluctance towards AFIN and its regional sections at the local level, due, it seems, to the fear that the forestry associations will develop too much independence in relation to the indigenous social organisation, which wants to control all organisations and resources within its territory.

The project of AFIN has the potential to have an impact at the national level. The problem is that there are so many obstructing factors and so much work needed at the base level to match its expectations at the national level and to change the unjust structure within the forestry sector and between social classes in the lowland area.

Political Democracy and Economic Equality

In both cases, the problem of participatory or direct democracy and formal representative democracy could be solved through increased economic equality that would give material support to the actors. The city of El Alto is characterised by a tension between the market potentials of textile production and the politicisation of its anti-imperialist actors who reject interna-

tional trade. It should be remembered that one of the benefits of the micro enterprise is that it involves female initiatives and women's empowerment.

The forest activities could amend the economic precariousness of the indigenous peoples, but for them to do so, AFIN, representing the local and regional forestry associations politically, would have to take more responsibility for the economic issues. AFIN's work is subject to long-term plans that would include making alliances with other actors, in conditions of equality, which is what the indigenous leaders strive for.

In both cases, there is a lack of correlation between formal political democracy and economic equality. It is only through economic equality that the actors of these processes, women and indigenous peoples, could achieve a full recognition of their rights.

7. The tensions between state and "civil society" in Peru

During the time period of 2006–2007 covered by this evaluation, Peru experienced both regional and national elections, a process that rather than bringing stability to the country has changed the working conditions of the national and international NGOs functioning in the country. The evaluation has focused on two organisations, *Alternativa and Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario* (CEDAP), and their daily work of promoting participation and local democracy through training and guidance aimed at increased social and political participation at the local level.

We have focused in this study on the experiences and activities of people in Diakonia-funded training in the city of Lima and in the department of Ayacucho. In the barrios of the Northern Cone of Lima *(Cono Norte de Lima)* we found that many social leaders have benefited from the training they have received from the Leadership School of Alternativa. New insights and knowledge have changed their perceptions of leadership and democracy, and with these as a base they have initiated activities and actions in their local organisations. The extent to which individual students managed to realise their intentions has varied. In Ayacucho, in the district of Chilcas, the most remarkable change is the establishment of a dynamic relationship between the municipality and the social organisations in the district. This is a good example of civil society accompanying and overseeing the municipality. In both cases, the Diakonia-funded training has made it possible for the participants/the social organisations to take advantage of the opportunities (such as participative planning) presented by the country's decentralisation process.

1. New government, conflicts, and frustration

After ten years of authoritarian methods under President Fujimori, Peru has been, since 2001, in the process of democratisation. The process has been slow, and there are obvious shortcomings in the political and democratic structures. The economic politics of Alejandro Toledo led to a macro economic success with a yearly growth of 5–6% (Oxfam 2006:67). Despite economic growth, 50% of the population still lives in poverty and 20% in extreme poverty, predominantly in the rural areas (ibid.:152). According to official figures from the National Institute of Statistics and Information of Peru (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática*, INEI), poverty has been reduced only in zones where there has been major private investment (e.g., in Lima). The economy is growing in the sense that there are investments in

infrastructure, but administration continues to be deficient. In reality, the social cleavages are growing. The wealth is concentrated in coastal cities and regions, but for the large rural population of the sierra and Amazonian areas, the conditions of poverty are maintained at the same level they stood at a decade ago.

In relation to the process of democratisation an extensive decentralisation reform was initiated, through which the regional level was instituted as a new level of state structure. Several functions were passed down from the national level in order to strengthen local capacities. The legal framework involves a gradual transfer of responsibility for the sectors of education and health. The decentralisation process also means that participatory budget *(presupuesto participativo)* and planning mechanisms *(mesas de concertacion)* have become obligatory on the local and regional level. These processes have been implemented with varied results. A general criticism that has been put forward is that the focus on participation reforms has been carried out at the cost of institutional reforms to strengthen the weak representative system of civil and political society (see, e.g., Grompone 2005; Remy 2005). Another problem is that the processes of dialogue depend on the willingness of the mayor to share his power. In a national perspective, mayors have rarely shown that willingness, and it is this that has been the largest obstacle to the participation reforms (Gustafsson 2006).

The evaluation covers the period of February 2006 to July 2007. During this time the most important processes in the country's social and political life have been the national and regional electoral processes for the election of a new president of the republic and the Congress, as well as presidents of regional governments and mayors for the provinces and districts of the country. The electoral result showed the demand of Peruvians for changes. In spite of the country's economic growth, according to opinion polls the majority of citizens perceive that their life conditions and their social rights have not varied substantially.

In a context of tough neo-liberal policies, social frustrations and conflicts have increased in many regions. During the past year the government has increased its repression of groups that question its policies. Political analysts and leaders of public opinion consider the frustrations of the population to have been fed by a series of attitudes and gestures from the national government as well as the regional governments. Among them we find the campaign against NGOs which were considered to be generating conflicts and financing protests against mining and oil investments, among other things. This campaign reached its major expression and culmination with the approval of the so-called "anti-NGO" Law 27692 in Congress. This law stipulated that the new state organ, the Peruvian Agency of International Cooperation (*Agencia Peruana de Cooperación Internacional*, APCI), will govern the technicalities international cooperation and supervise the cooperation in accordance with national development policies and the public interest. The law

has been questioned by the social development organisations, which have appealed to international organisations to defend their right to participate in social development and watch over human rights and the well-being of citizens of the most unprotected populations. The governing party, *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (APRA), has systematically distanced itself from the NGOs (those that are associated with the left-wing opposition).

Another example of repressive governmental policies is the discussions that have been held about reinstating capital punishment; according to the Constitutional Tribunal, it is compatible with the country's constitution.

An important factor behind the instability and the frustration felt by the citizens is the crisis in the system of representation (a product of decades of civil war and an authoritarian political regime). Many civil-society actors turn to the "politics of streets" instead of the formal political arena. This has negatively affected the processes of dialogue at the local and regional levels. There are signs of fragmentation, and the municipalities lack the institutional capacity to carry out the dialogue processes (Gustafsson 2006).

There have also been confrontations with regional governments. The regional and municipal elections yielded quite negative results for APRA, the government party. It lost in 23 regions and won only 2 regional governments (La Libertad and Piura); it could be noted that from 2001 to 2006 it had won 12 regional governments. But what should have been assumed as a regular process of relations between institutions and competencies shared between the central government and the regional government was soon transformed into a contradictory relationship. The central government proceeded to de-activate the National Council of Decentralisation *(Consejo Nacional de la Descentralización)* and curtail the process of regionalisation. This has been generating friction since January 2007, and there have been conflicts between the national government and some of the regional ones. Since January there have been regional strikes in which the presidents of some regional governments have had an active role (these are Loreto, Ancash, Pasco, Huanuco, Huancavélica, Cusco, Puno, Arequipa, Tacna, and Ucayali).

The presidents of the regions have also channeled their claims through the Coordinator of Regional Presidents *(Coordinadora de Presidentes Regionales)* with the aim of creating a political counterweight to the government, ignoring the second-level Secretary of Decentralisation *(Secretaria de Descentralización)*. All of the regional presidents have demanded major resources, and even if confrontations were promoted only in the regions mentioned above, it is certain that these clashes led the government to look for ways to make the terms of negotiation with regional presidents stricter. This is why the national government has proceeded to criminalise social protest, focusing on a penalty – the imprisonment or removal from office – for presidents and mayors who promote strikes or mobilisations.

The country is moving dangerously towards a confrontation spurred by the newly approved laws on crime and violence through which the government is taking advantage of the extraordinary powers granted it by the Congress. The government has chosen coercion directed towards persons who promote conflicts, above negotiations about the serious problems affecting the populations in the regions, or dialogue about the policies that the population and its regional authorities consider unjust.

During the period of 2006–2007 covered by the evaluation there have been increasing numbers of social conflicts in the country. The principal sites of conflicts are:

– The areas of mining and petroleum exploration, where peasant communities and Amazonian indigenous groups are in conflict with mineral and oil companies concerning the rights of exploitation, employment conditions, or rights of these groups in relation to the exploitation or compensation for environmental damages. In other cases the peasant communities are in conflict with informal miners around resources and environmental damages.

– The district municipal governments, backed by the parties that lost the elections, are now announcing their discontent and reluctance to accept the winning mayors and urging their replacement.

– Workers demanding the recuperation of their lost labour rights.

– The social organisations and bodies promoting a campaign against penalising the exercise of citizens' rights.

Peruvian civil society is generally local, sectorial, and fragmented, and it has not been able to transform the different claims into one national movement. This was evident in July 2007 when unrelated groups entered the streets demanding a variety of locally based claims.

## 2. The work of Diakonia in the new national context

The work of Diakonia is focused on strengthening civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. It also focuses on the third generation of human rights. Several of these rights, as we have seen, are once more at the centre of political polemics because of the new means of coercion approved by the central government. The work that has mobilised Diakonia's counterparts is more what relates to the defence of NGOs affected by the norms approved by Congress that are oriented towards controlling activities which promote organised protest. The NGOs do not oppose being subject to oversight and being held accountable, something that has been pointed out by the Peruvian Agency of International Cooperation (APCI); they question what they interpret as an intention to intervene in the content of activities of social organis-

ing and the defence of citizens' rights. Diakonia-Peru shares this concern, which regards the government as lacking any positive view of the work of the organisations of civil society and being incapable of establishing an alliance with them. The government's action is interpreted by the NGOs as an entrapment based on creating unnecessary conflicts and polarisation vis-à-vis the resources of cooperation. The agencies of cooperation, both bilaterals and multilaterals, interpret the law also as an attack on fundamental rights. A very intense debate was conducted in Congress, after which some changes were incorporated, but the result was an even more contradictory law. The civil organisations have appealed, and the resolution is now in the hands of the Constitutional Tribune, which declared in September 2007 that parts of the "anti-NGO" law were unconstitutional.

Everything points to a continuation of the conflict because, in effect, the NGOs in Peru are working with highly sensitive issues that will alter the initiatives of the government in relation to such themes as human rights, mining and environmental protection, racism and exclusion, and democracy. Diakonia and its Peruvian partners are working together with the aim of making themselves more visible and showing what they are doing with the money from the cooperation. This will make them more visible not only to APCI, but also to the population and neighbourhood organisations. The officers in charge of Diakonia-Peru say that Diakonia's strategy is the same despite the changes that have been produced in the country, but it does recognise the introduction of some modifications. To begin with, Diakonia-Peru has reviewed the themes at the centre of the national political debate, like the investments in mining. The social conflicts, another new area of interest, have led it to share experiences with other organisations in order to strengthen local capacities. One instance is the experiences of the miners' observatories that are already functioning in Bolivia and Chile. Sharing experiences is one of the themes that Diakonia could reinforce, because the role of Diakonia, in effect, is to look for where there can be synergies with other countries, and to be more attentive to new themes presented by its counterparts as a complement to the closeness it seeks to the reality of the "partner" organisations whose work it funds. Because of strong demand, one new theme it wants to explore is the management of conflicts. In the middle of the theme of conflicts are problems related to mining exploitations in very fragile zones. The mining theme is vital, and it is related to campaigns for the protection of the natural environment and the defence of social rights. In any case, it is clear that the strategy of the work Diakonia develops is not confrontational but integrational, and that it requires a number of tools that can be used in different contexts.

3.   *Alternativa* and the context of the Cono Norte de Lima

Alternativa is an NGO that has been working in *Cono Norte* for more than 20 years. *Cono Norte* is a geographic space that integrates nine districts of metropolitan Lima; it encompasses more than a third of the metropolitan population and has become a zone of major economic growth. One of the spheres of influence of *Alternativa*-trained leaders is the Ciudadela Pachacutec, which is situated in the district of Ventanilla in the province of Callao. In the Ciudadela Pachacutec different public institutions and organisations of development intervene and cooperate through dialogue. They constitute an extended network of social organisations, neighbourhood committees, groups, and committees with other strategies. Other districts in which leaders trained in *Alternativa's Escuela de líderes* (Leadership School) participate are the districts of Comas, San Martín de Porras, and Puente Piedra, which belong to the municipality of metropolitan Lima. In the course of the evaluation we visited the three districts of Ciudadela Pachacutec, Comas, and San Martín de Porras on each of our three visits and interviewed a total of 17 female users and 8 male users.
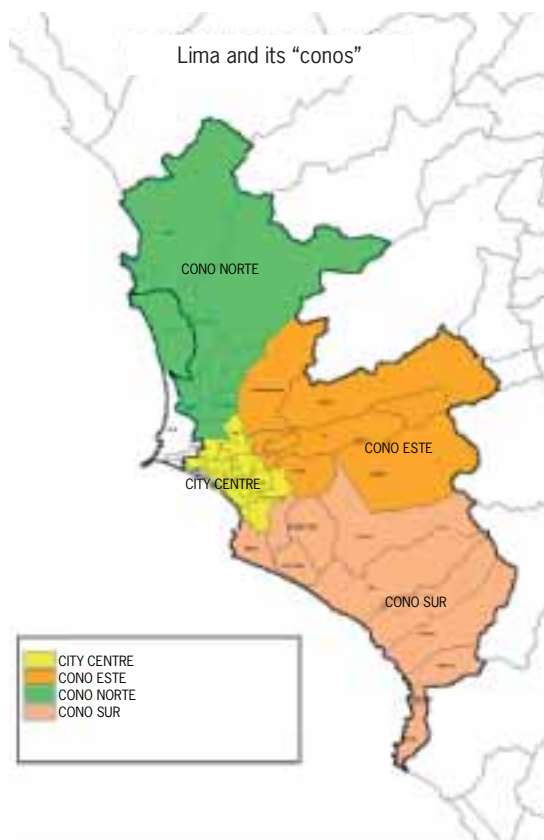
Alternativa offers multiple services to popular and social organisations and to families with small-scale businesses. *Escuela de líderes,* (the Leadership School) is one of seven offices of Alternativa, has two branches with different objectives: *La escuela de líderes y proyecto EDUCAL en Quispicanchi* in Cusco, and *las Escuelas del Cono Norte* (the Schools of the Northern Cone) in Independencia. The Leadership School trains social leaders who are then expected to contribute to the development and strengthening of people's capacity to construct and influence local and national public politics. This in turn is aimed at contributing to an integrated development and a strengthened democracy, as well as consolidating the pedagogical base for the school's five-year plan. The evaluation has considered only the activities of *Escuelas del Cono Norte* (the Schools of the Northern Cone). *El proyecto EDUCAL* focuses on the quality of the formal education and has a different target group. There seems to be a very weak link between the two branches in terms of aims, methodologies, and target groups.

Escuela de formación de líderes del Cono Norte de Lima (the School of Formation of Leaders of the Northern Cone) was founded in 1997 but builds on experiences since the mid-1980s. *Alternativa* initially offered training, designed in a more experimental manner, focused on the defence of rights and the political participation of adults in popular sectors. Today it has elaborated a programme with a group of teachers and a methodology adapted to the characteristics of the leaders of the social organisations and the national context. The project has developed three lines of action: (1) formation of leaders selected from the Cono Norte, (2) social investigation, and (3) participation in national and regional institutional networks.

In 2004 and 2005 approximately 40 leaders were selected for the training each year on the basis of a number of criteria. The participants are selected through a process of evaluation of the general skills of the applying student, who has to be appointed or recommended by her or his base organisation. The training runs for one year and is organised in four modules: (1) democracy for an integrated development; (2) national, regional, and local development; (3) planning of integrated development and systems; and (4) political ethics and philosophy. According to the informants, the training is supposed to be equivalent to "the university level".

The hope is that the Leadership School will contribute to the formation of new "classes" of social leaders with the capacity not only to interpret their reality but also to be able to transform it. The beneficiaries of the school are quite heterogeneous with regard to their educational level, and even if the leaders who were interviewed came from popular layers, there were differences between the leaders. Some came from *zonas* of extreme poverty (such as the recently formed Ciudadela Pachacutec de Ventanilla) and others from districts or barrios with a growing economy (such as the district of Comas).

The actions of the school are focused on the social base organisations and the social leaders who participate in these spaces. Thus, *"Alternativa* is based on a politics of formation of leaders, with conceptual, procedural and attitudinal knowledges that allow for them to take on the local and national development in a sustainable way with major commitment."[22] Among its specific objectives, the school wants each participant to acquire a major capacity for an improved understanding of his or her reality over and above an integrated perspective on development and democracy, as well as being endowed with theoretical and methodological tools for diagnosis and participatory planning, and for strengthening the capacity to propose and reach agreements for developing his or her organisation and community as well as for the public spaces of development in the districts or in the larger area.

What kind of leaders does the school want to form? On the basis of its own material we can point to the following:

– According to its conception it wants to form social leaders, more than political leaders *(líderes más que dirigentes),* making the distinction that the "leader is the one who educates, motivates, looks for agreements and orients. The leader should discover and develop what is best about the people and the institutions. We want leaders with a human vision of development, with commitment, ethics and solidarity as well as a political will to change our reality."[23] (This perspective is in the process of changing, as we will discuss below.)

– It values the relationship between the social organisations and the local municipal governments. The leaders are trained to construct and collectively influence local and national public policies that will contribute to the integrated development and the strengthening of democracy.[24] – The formation of a network of graduates. The construction of an identity with the group and with an orientation of service to the social organisation to which each belongs.

– The strengthening of critical capacity without its being related to party politics. It is more a formation of civil society and strives to be a counterweight to the local government.

We have been able to recognise a formation based on the culture of citizenship rights and the active participation of female leaders in the different spaces of citizen participation. In fact, the majority of the interviewees were women with strong links to their respective federations and base organisations.

The profile of the users

According to reports and documents published by *Alternativa – Escuela de Formación de Líderes,* the profile of the participants is as follows: the majority comes from a social base organisation, and the majority are women.

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[22] *Alternativa: Programa Educativo Escuela De Lideres Del Cono Norte De Lima. Abril de 2004*
[23] *Alternativa, 2001."Sistematización y Fortalecimiento de la Escuela de Líderes del Cono Norte*
[24] Ibid.

The social base organisations have different manifestations, and the partici-
pants fulfil a function in all of them. This guarantees, as they mention, that
after finishing their cycle of formation, these leaders will go back to their
base organisations.

Organisations and sectors from which the leaders come
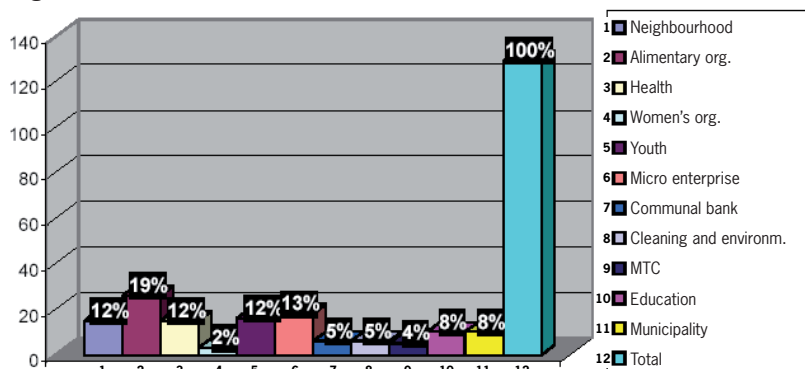
*Source: Alternativa: Escuela De Líderes Del Cono Norte De Lima Sistematización De Las
Escuelas De Formación De Liderazgo. Lima 2001.*

The particularity of the leaders, according to the registries of Alternativa, is
that 23% have a secondary education, 22% have completed a university edu-
cation, and 55% have been trained at the university level.

Educational level of the students

Educational level of the student of the leadership school

The leadership school	97	98	99	2000	Total
Unfinished secondary school			1	2	3
Finished secondary school	3	7	9	9	27
Unfinished superior education (non university)		1	1	1	3
Finished superior education (non university)	12	12	15	6	45
Unfinished university education	8	3	4	7	22
Finished university education	7	9	4	8	28

*Source: Alternativa: Escuela De Líderes Del Cono Norte De Lima Sistematización De Las
Escuelas De Formación De Liderazgo. Lima 2001.*

Given the differences in educational level, certain criteria have been estab-
lished for selecting participants. Among them could be mentioned:

– Experience and potential as a leader, belonging to and relationship with
an organisation or institution of the *Cono Norte*.

- The actual post is not as important as whether the applicant has a concrete area of interest and a firm commitment.

- A coherent and viable idea for a personal project of intervention in a specific field which the applicant will work with and develop throughout the year.

- Located in a prioritised social and territorial place. It is preferred that applicant be from the more dynamic social sectors and districts of the *Cono Norte.*

- Basic academic training. To have the capacity and qualification for sustained intellectual work. At least a secondary education.

When it comes to the participation of female leaders, though *Alternativa* proposed to manage a balance in regard to gender, this was only fulfilled in the first group to graduate. In the following year-groups, the numbers varied, and nowadays there is a predominance of female leaders in the school.

The Leadership School is in the process of changing its direction from the formation of social leaders to political leaders. The environmental theme will be reinforced and the school will be oriented towards the theme of the environment. This implies new allies and other programme components. In relation to funds, the school has been very dependent on Diakonia. Diakonia officers believe that with this new direction the school will have less difficulty in finding other donors.

4.   Problems, progress, and promises from the perspective of the users of the Leadership School

All of the interviewed students or graduates of the Leadership School of Alternativa testified that the training had been very useful for them in their exercise of leadership in their base organisations, and that they had transmitted parts of their new knowledge to their organisations. This had helped them improve their leadership qualities and increase their base organisation's recognition in the community. The newly trained students were enormously enthusiastic about what the training had given them, while the graduates from a few years back had a longer perspective and could also point to limitations.

One result of this work that the graduates of the school recognise is the affirmation of their personality as leaders and the revaluing of their strengthened self-esteem. They said that the Leadership School had given them tools to elaborate development projects, to move without fear in assemblies and negotiations. Through this they have been affirmed as leaders; they felt that they had gained more confidence and more independence. Their new in-

sights related to human and citizens' rights, the functioning of the local political system and how they could participate and influence decisions, and to understanding the gender order and how they could act to change it. The module of ethics and philosophy was also generally much appreciated.

> "The most practical part is to be able to make good relations, to be able to approach a person, to be able to talk in a more fluent manner and more adequate, to be able to listen. It is important to not only talk oneself, the people get tired, so it is important to listen to them to be able to look for solutions to their problems."
>
> Did you learn this in the Leadership school?
>
> "Yes. Before, I generally participated very little in these types of actions. I was always enemy to politics, I didn't like to be involved. But now I see that it is necessary to participate in different spaces to learn more, which in turn allows me to express myself in my organisation at the local level."
>
> *Male leader, User of the Leadership School, Lima, February 2006*

Other statements by beneficiaries mentioned that the school had taught them "to be democratic, and to lead an organisation". They could appreciate the manner in which the participants assimilated and re-created debates about democracy and politics. This is a product of the academic training that the school imparts, of the selection of lectures and the encouragement of working in groups, accompanied by good management of the methodology and selection of lectures.

Their view of leadership and democracy had changed, and they generally experienced it as if they had become more democratic and sensitive leaders. Several of the leaders expressed a sense of becoming truly informed of the meaning of leadership. In their earlier experience they had associated leadership with the power to impose one's will on others, but through the training their view had changed.

> I have learned what it means to be a leader, what the main tasks of the leader are. It is different from caudillismo[25], and the difference has to do with the social leadership. Before I entered the school I looked at the concept differently, I did not see it in a collective way, I saw it almost in a vertical manner. In the School I learned that it has to do with transmitting knowledge in a horizontal, collective way.
>
> *Male leader, Graduate of the Leadership School, Lima, February 2006*

> Rather than being a specialist, the leader has a feeling of where the tendencies are, where the processes are, so that the community can convert itself into a subject of progress, not an invited passive actor.
>
> *Graduate of the Leadership School, Lima, February 2006*

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[25] See note 12.

Whether these new insights actually seemed to have led to actions in the local community varied. Some of the leaders could describe the process of their actions throughout the three phases of interviews. In other cases, the same discourse came up in the three interviews about "intended" actions that had not yet been realised.[26] Factors like "having to devote oneself to making a living" instead of social and political activities were mentioned, or the fact that resistance and obstacles in the context which they were trying to change were overwhelming.

> Actually, I haven't been able to go on with the environmental project we talked about. I have had economic problems. But I am still interested in organising it, maybe in the future.
>
> *Male graduate of the Leadership School and the University, Lima, November 2006*
>
> (He did not turn up for the third interview. His wife said he was working as a driver for a private company.)

The trained students had generally developed a higher degree of self-esteem and trust in their own capacity. This also implied a certain process of individuation, which could be noted in the interviews. The graduates from earlier years acted more confident and expressed their ambitions in relation to what they as persons would want to accomplish. Some of the interviewed beginners were uncomfortable with the individually focused questions and responded, for example, that what they intended to do "depends on the wishes of my organisation", or "What we decide depends on the results of our analysis."

Just as in the case of CPMGA in Bolivia, they generally expressed a sense of experiencing a widening of their worldview because of what they had learned, as well as a widening of their social network due to their participation in *Alternativa*'s Leadership School and increased knowledge of and access to other spaces of participation, which they also made use of. One of the characteristics of the school is that it encourages the students of each graduating group to maintain contact after the course has ended, and it also has a "network of graduates" that communicates through the Internet. In this way, a sense of belonging and identity seems to be promoted by the school, something that on the one hand works positively as a reminder to the graduates to keep on developing as leaders, but on the other hand risks creating a well-informed elite of former students, which would distance them from their base organisations.

The problem of graduates distancing themselves from their organisations was brought up by a woman who had graduated several years before. She asked for more efforts on part of the school to help the students anchor their activities in the base organisations.

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[26] The methodology was very useful for detecting these cases.

> "What I have seen is that some of the people who participated in the school, encouraged by the school to be active from Monday to Friday, began to distance themselves and de-anchor from their base organisations. Instead of being an achievement it can also be seen as a risk. The time that has passed since I graduated has allowed me to see this. Through the school the students get access to new spaces of participation at other levels. This may actually destabilise the social organisation."
>
> *Female leader, User of the School, Lima, June 2007*

In some of the interviews it could be appreciated that the leaders established goals, that is, that they were not thinking of staying as leaders in the same organisation but hoped to advance into other levels and spheres in order to develop their capacities.

> You graduated in 2004. It was already a year ago, you are already trained. What changed after having finished the course?
>
> "Since I graduated I am no longer leader of my organisation, but I am working in other spaces. Now I am a delegate of the Union of Merchants of Northern Lima, *Central de Comerciantes de Lima Norte.*"
>
> Is it on a higher level?
>
> "Yes, it is higher. It is where ten municipalities participate, that is, ten districts, and in these ten districts there are more than 50,000 informal merchants. So it is as a representative of them.that I am now in the Council of Economic Development, *Concejo de Desarrollo Económico de Lima Norte.*"
>
> Did they elect you?
>
> "Yes, the board of the *Central de Comerciantes* assigned me to this post. One, because I was a graduate from the Leadership School, two, because I had close knowledge of the problems, and also because of the demands I had made to the authorities."
>
> *Male leader, User of the Leadership School, Lima, February 2006*

According to the interviews, the aspired-to advancement normally belongs to the sphere of social organisations. Some of the leaders have participated in the election processes, but up to now the majority have stayed in the sphere of social organisations, with only a few cases of people moving into the political sphere of the parties.

In the case of *Alternativa* we noted that the time frame of the evaluation was too short. It was not until after a few years that a trained leader could formulate the ways in which the training had really involved a change for him or her, and the way the skills could be developed in the social organisation to which he or she belonged.

On a collective level, there are reasons to believe that the formation of leaders has strengthened some base organisations and made them more confident in making their demands, and more skillful and realistic in their planning of projects for their *zona*. For example, in *Ciudadela Pachacutec* one of the trained leaders had been involved in several successful projects concerning water and sewage for the community. In the district of Comas several women, former students, had been active in the achievement of a "women's house" for the district's *Mesa de Género* (Committee on Gender), a fact that seemed to increase the importance of their work and the status of the gender issue. Over the years some organisations have also been able to get several members trained by the Leadership School, which obviously increases the possible impact. Having said that, we want to point to the fact that there are probably not yet enough leaders trained to really make an impact. This was also suggested by one of the "older" female leaders: "In my *zona* there are only so many graduates from the Leadership School, there is just so much we can do…" (Lima, Nov. 2006).

A strong opinion that was found among both graduates and technical personnel was the appraisal of the participation of women. They consider that the participation of women has contributed to strengthening the base organisations and mentioned cases or experiences when the female leader has been reappraised even by her own family, and has been trained to take on productive tasks.

They appreciate that their labour as leaders has not stayed only at the level of demands but has developed into the elaboration of plans and projects, as the interviewed leaders mentioned. They put forward as examples the work carried out for the elaboration of their respective District Development Plans *(Planes de Desarrollo Distrital)* and the construction of Associations in Defence of Interests *(Asociaciones de Defensa de Intereses)* in their districts, as well as the Association of Networks of Promotors of the North of Lima *(Asociación de Redes de Promotores de Lima Norte, del Cono Norte)*.

The students have also disseminated their new insights to their organisations.

Have you been able to disseminate any of the results of your training? You said, for example, that "Here I have learned to be more tolerant, more democratic." Do you transmit these ideas in other contexts?

"Yes, I think so, not only in daily life, but also with the disabled persons [with whom I work], there are a lot of conflicts among them. There I transmitted these ideas. Also, because the Church is vertical, it is not easy to promote democracy. Thus without having the need to be contradictory I promote these ideas with my work as a starting point, there I put forward the theme of democratisation, of the decisions, without leaving a clear image of the doctrine."

Have you managed to influence the priests?

"Yes, in some way we have encouraged them to be less dogmatic."

Male leaders, Users of the Leadership school, Lima, February 2006

In the same way, they value the education they received because, as they said, thanks to it they have widened their understanding and vision of the social problems not only localised in their barrio or district, but also in a major space such as Lima and the districts of the Cono Norte.

Some participants mentioned their interest in wanting the school to pay more attention to courses and practices and the management of information (programs, Internet) and a major emphasis on the oratory courses. Maybe this was a necessity that came up through the intensity of the debates and meetings in which they participated, as well as the necessity to have more information or feel integrated in larger networks.

A critical aspect in this respect pertains to the target group of *Alternativa*. Surprisingly many of the leaders we interviewed were well educated, with more than secondary education or university degrees. This indicates that for many of the students, the Leadership School is an alternative in a situation of lack of alternatives for employment, or is seen as one component in the portfolios they are creating for their careers. It was noted in the interviews that the aspirations and future plans of students varied according to their level of education and place of origin. The leaders with a university degree could see more options and showed more interest in developing themselves in order to take on responsibilities in other spaces than their social base organisation. The leaders without a university degree had more limited options and tended to limit themselves to their local environment. The same kind of differences could be detected between the leaders residing in more consolidated areas with emerging economies, like Comas and San Martín, compared to the leaders from the recently formed Ciudadela Pachacutec, classified as a zona of extreme poverty. It is possible that the leaders with higher education, living under better social conditions, had there not been any school, would have found other ways to develop their leadership skills and participate in social and political contexts anyway. In that case the impact of the school would be more important in the weaker, more impoverished areas.

5.   Ayacucho and the process of decentralisation

The armed conflict between the Peruvian military and the Maoistic guerrilla Sendero Luminoso has left deep traces in the civilian and political society of Ayacucho. The significant losses among the civilian population have made it very difficult to organise politically and socially in the region, which is one of the most important factors behind the weak representative system. Many indigenous and peasant representatives were among the victims of attacks by the government-led army and the guerrilla for strategic and ideological reasons.

Almost fifteen years after the civil war ended, the region is partially pacified, but there are still evidences of serious internal conflicts in the provinces. The traces of violence have left more marks in some provinces than in others.

Map of Ayacucho

This is particularly visible in the provinces near the *Valle del Río Apurímac* zones that produce coca leaves, and the presence of drug traffic and the illegal commercialisation of coca leaves have emerged again with force. In spite of these developments, there is a gradual recuperation of the regions' institutions and forms for conducting politics, as well as the promotion of political participation by their citizens.

> Recently, common criminality appeared, assaults, there have even been deaths. Sometimes when they go to Ayacucho with cattle, they are obliged to walk, and on the road around the peak appear 5 or 6 armed people and they assault. That is also where they transport drugs. Now there is no security to travel any longer. It is preferible to go back to Ayacucho by car to prevent [the assaults].
>
> *Male councillor, Municipality of Chilcas, Chilcas, November 2006*

The national processes of a representative system in crisis are reflected in Ayacucho, in an intensified form due to historical factors and exclusionary socioeconomic structures. The last year has been characterised by increased social protests in which different groups have advanced different claims without coordination between them.

The regional elections in Ayacucho gave the victory to an independent political force whose president had an earlier experience of administration during the government of Alberto Fujimori. Even if he distanced himself from the political party of the *fujimoristas*, it was clear that his triumph was due to a complex alliance and agreements between different parties, unions, and local leaders. In addition, his party did not win the majority of the votes in

the provinces, which means that the new local government cannot count on strong provincial support. The fact that the local government is in a weak position has turned out to be a factor of political instability in the provinces. The weak operative capacity of the local government generated criticism from the population, especially in Huamanga and Huanta, who demanded attention to their urgent matters. The problems of political representation and the weakness of the parties soon opened the way for manifestations of discontent that were promoted and organised by different civic or defence fronts. The existing conflicts are basically demands for more resources for social investments. It is clear that the regional authority has not managed to administer and distribute resources efficiently.

Other fundamental problems in the region are related to environmental conflicts. The environmental problem has begun to be an issue for mobilisation, more so since the explosion of a pipeline in the area which had generated problems due, among other things, to the errors committed in negotiating with the population. The construction of infrastructure for the pipeline, which passes though communal lands, generated new conflicts involving the impoverished communal families. The communities have been affected in two ways: firstly, because there was no transparency of information on the part of the enterprises in charge of constructing the pipeline, and secondly, because negotiations were not carried out on the basis of correct information about the land where the pipeline was going to pass. The communal authorities and district mayors where the pipeline passed were not included in the process of negotiation between the enterprise and the affected communal families.

Another theme is coca leaves and the presence, stronger every day, of the production of coca for drug production and trafficking. The organisation of coca-leaf producers intended to organise protests against the government-led eradications, but it did not manage to succeed because its demands against eradication did not get support from the population. The Federation of Agricultural Producers of the Rio Apurimac Valley (FEPAVRAE) is currently having internal disputes that affect its capacity to mobilise and negotiate. This has led to increasing severity in the violence in the region. One way of counteracting the high levels of violence has been to reactivate the committees of self-defence, but it has not been particularly successful.

In this process, the construction of spaces of democratic agreement is very important as a counterweight to, and source of oversight of, the local authorities. The inclusion of new issues in the regional political agenda, such as the theme of the natural environment, has led to the formation of new associations for the promotion of dialogue, where the social organisations and the local authorities can participate in the debates about the natural environment.

CEDAP – Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario de Ayacucho

The second Peruvian organisation, Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario, CEDAP), is located in the area of Ayacucho where it has been working for 25 years, mainly within the area of rural development. It has long experience in development projects and can count on a number of professionals and technicians with relationships to communal and social organisations. Its engagement in the province of La Mar is more recent, and at the moment it is implementing rural development projects in the provinces of Anco and Chilcas, both classified as districts of extreme poverty.

The work that CEDAP has been developing in the area has taken two aspects into account: strengthening citizen participation in spaces of local agreements and strengthening the capacity of the municipal authorities for negotiation vis-à-vis TGP *(Transportadora de Gas del Perú)*, the enterprise which owns the pipeline that passes through the area, especially in the district of Anco. On the basis of this, a demand arose in the public institutions and base organisations for capacity building in resource management, for elaboration of project profiles, and for the inclusion of regional and district demands in development plans. Thus, due to the region's environmental problems, CEDAP's work had to include a new theme: the defence of the natural environment and the strengthening of the abilities of the communal authorities and district mayors of La Mar province to negotiate.

The project is being carried out in the districts of Anco and Chilcas in the province of La Mar, Ayacucho, which are considered poor and extremely poor; the evaluation focused only on the district of Chilcas. The general objective of the CEDAP project in both districts is to promote citizens' participation and their claim to civil rights. The central component of CEDAP's activities in this project is to strengthen local democracy and promote a culture of rights. To fulfil these goals CEDAP has organised a number of capacity-building activities, workshops, and support to the communal development plans. The other important component of the project is the promotion of the contest called *Concurso Pachamamanchikta Waqaychasun*, which encourages families to improve the management of their smallholdings.

The target group consists of the municipal authorities and civil society organisations in the two municipal districts: Anco and Chilcas. The population in these districts consists basically of *comuneros* with family economies dependent on agriculture. There are 29 communities *(anexos)* with 900 peasant families of both districts that live in the ecological niches of highlands and tropical valley. The communities in the area are interconnected by tracks and bridle paths. The incomes of the rural families come from agricultural activity (through the management of gardens and parcels of land) and animal breeding in the higher zones, mainly on the communal lands. Other income derives from temporary work done via migration to the Amazonian areas or to the cities. The project, unlike *Alternativa*'s school, is directed towards the communities and their populations in general without emphasising individual leadership.

We focused our attention on ADOSCI – *Asamblea de Delegados de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil* (Assembly of Delegates of Civil Society Organisations), a project of CEDAP in the district of Chilcas in the province of La Mar, about four hours' drive from Ayacucho. There we interviewed 12 men and 3 women, users, in one way or another, of the services of CEDAP. The comparatively smaller number of interviewed persons was due to the long distances and total lack of public transportation in the district. We also experienced some language problems in relation to this project, several of the users being monolingual Quechua speakers.

According to CEDAP, one of the problems of the district has been the weak local organisations, a result of the violence that strongly affected the district in past decades. In 1984 Chilcas was almost abandoned, and one of the communities in the district was recurrently attacked by Sendero Luminoso. Many people migrated to the tropical areas, to Ayacucho, and to Lima. With the re-establishment of democracy and the reconstruction of institutions in the rural areas, a process of reorganisation was initiated among the population. The training has been organised to promote popular participation in overseeing local and regional governments. This process has not been easy, due to the low level of confidence in the local authorities.

The communal organisation is weak, threatened by socio-political problems and the acts of individualistic authorities. The organisation of communities into annexes where individual property dominates also tends to weaken the communal organisation. According to CEDAP, the soils are often deteriorated and affected by erosion. The pasturage for the animals has little sustainability and because of this the quality of cattle-raising is low and generates little income.

Civic participation has been promoted in Peru through the general communal law and the norms that regulate civil participation in the management of local government. But, as we experienced in several rural areas, civic participation has been limited. The composition of the authority for civic participation, the Councils for Local Coordination *(Consejos de Coordinaciones Locales,* CCL), allows only a minimum of delegates from social base organisations. ADOSCI-Chilcas was formed with the aim of guaranteeing increased participation from the population in a broader and more representative way. What the Municipality Law establishes is the creation of the CCLs; what CEDAP has done with the creation of ADOSCI is to widen the CCL to include the whole civil society. A problem still to be solved is that the association lacks legal status.

ADOSCI corresponds to an initiative of the population, but the mayor's decision to formalise and legalise it has also been important. With what is described as a harmonious relationship between the local authority and the social organisations, a modification of the composition of the CCL was accomplished, with major representation from the social base organisations.

ADOSCI has also taken on several functions in relation to oversight of the local government and in the promotion of productive projects and plans for the economies of peasant families and communities.

CEDAP's objective is to strengthen the peasant communities and the social base organisations to make the construction of a democratic and participatory society viable. It has taken the decentralisation process as a point of departure to promote the population's participation in the administration of the local government. The basis of the work has been the communal families and activities oriented towards revaluing peasant knowledge, for example, through contests and markets to systematise and improve techniques of production and animal breeding.

The aim of citizen participation in overseeing the local administration has been promoted through the creation of initiative groups where leaders take on serious, responsible, and coherent oversight of local administration to answer to the demands of the population. The strategy has been to go further than the Municipality Law in promoting the exercise of citizenship.

This strategy has been successful in Chilcas, where CEDAP contributed to the constitution of the *Asamblea de Delegados de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil* (ADOSCI). In collaboration with local leaders, CEDAP promoted the association, branching off from the work linked to the productive experiences of the peasant families with which it had won presence and legitimacy. The design of CEDAP's strategy for intervention involved identifying communal leaders through whom what CEDAP calls inter-learning could be applied, "from farmer to farmer", and, through contests, stimulating the development of a new generation of productive leaders. It developed a way that promotes family development and communal development in combination, working with such themes such as organisation and planning; management and conservation of soils; management of pastures and cattle; adequate management of water; health; and the ordering of the compound; education and family.

> "[The lives of the families] are changing. With the intervention of CEDAP they have now been working three years. CEDAP has oriented them on how to organise themselves as families and communities, in what way they can associate between farmers, and all that. There is a male promoter and a female promoter and they are in permanent contact with CEDAP and they coordinate the visits. It also takes them to other communities to see what advances they have, there are exchanges of ideas, of work, and one begins to worry about advancing oneself. Before, it wasn't like that, each one worked in their own manner. We didn't even visit Rumi Rumi, there were no exchanges. Today there is familiarity, exchange of ideas. Recently they have produced biogas in Rumi Rumi and from here they are going there to see how they have done, exchanging ideas.
>
> *Male councillor, Municipality of Chilcas, Chilcas, November 2006*

In order for the association to become accepted, willingness was required on the part of the mayor of the district of Chilcas, who was very favourable and permissive towards the constitution of ADOSCI. It has been a good experience that has managed to continue in time, that the new municipal authorities have sustained. Though there are other municipalities that have put together more comprehensive associations of agreements under other names, these experiences have generally lasted only as long as the administrations of the mayors who promoted them.

> "The role and contribution of CEDAP has been to propose the question, the problem to be dealt with. It has clarified the themes and the concepts. It also has an understanding of the rights of the person. We don't have personnel in the municipality to work with these issues, who have their ability to move around. The people are motivated by the exchanges, by seeing examples in other places."
>
> *Male mayor of Chilcas, Chilcas, February 2006*

In the opinion of Carlos Alviar, director of CEDAP, the experience of ADOSCI has replaced the *Mesas de Concertación (*Reconciliation Committees), but the mayor also considers it an instance of communication with the population. In the process he began to value the fact that there are representatives from the whole civil society in this association.

What are the limits of this experience? In Chilcas, ADOSCI has been very successful and has managed to work closely with the municipality. This has created a dynamic participative environment for the district's development. The leaders of CEDAP recognise that this association for maintaining civic oversight and a space of agreements has begun to take on functions that do not correspond to it. There are things that an association of this kind does not have the competencies to do, such as deciding about the budget of the district or the employment of personnel, among other things. Whether ADOSCI will manage to keep its independent role of vigilant civic oversight is critical and perhaps difficult, since the local elections resulted in the new mayor's being someone who is a local community member and former president of ADOSCI. Another area of doubt is whether this experience is possible to duplicate in other areas. The exact experience as such is not replicable. This is recognised by Carlos Alviar, although he thinks that similar experiences could develop in other districts. In one nearby district the space of agreements is called J*unta de Vecinos.* The important thing is that this experience of CEDAP's in Chilcas is a good example of what is called the acompañamiento (accompanying) of the municipal government by civil society. Clearly, it works if the mayor is interested in the promotion of citizen participation; it is where these conditions do not exist that one finds the internal conflict around governability that is very common in the rural areas.

> "No, it has not been formed in any other district. But the idea of ADOSCI was born from an experience that came from Limatambo … that is, they didn't want to do it in the same way, but it is born from that experience.We invited the mayor so that he and other leaders could go and see the experience … and they came back and said, "Look, why don't we do this and form an association here in order for us to develop actions?" Thus it is not a replica … and we want to evaluate the experience in order to see how it will work with the change of governement."
>
> *Carlos Alviar, Director of CEDAP, Ayacucho, November 2006*

The strategy of CEDAP has been successful in Chilcas in the context of the growing importance of spaces of citizen participation for the oversight of local government administration. It adapted its strategy of rural development to citizen participation so that the community members would be able to participate in the elaboration of local development plans. The strategies of CEDAP have not always been as successful. It recognises that there are municipalities like Chungui, for example, where there is resistance to promoting sustainable development based on adequate management of their resources: on the contrary, the authorities and even the population are very fixed on the idea that development is the same as concrete results, and if they are made of cement, even better. This vision is predominant in many authorities, where criticism has been advanced a number times, and municipal authorities have been accused of valuing these kinds of results too highly.

The aim of CEDAP is that the women and men, leaders who encounter the experience of its workshops, be educated with a different conception of what rural development is, not only demanding concrete results but also appreciating the processes behind development, and in some cases converted into promoters of agreements so that the local governments can invest in the conservation and management of natural resources. CEDAP's vision is that the leaders it forms will have an intersectoral working vision that tries to unite efforts rather than to work unilaterally. With this orientation CEDAP indicates that the characteristic of leadership is above all its communal nature; leaders seek the promotion of associative initiatives on all levels, more conscious of their rights as well as more dedicated to vigilance towards public administration.

6.   Perspectives of the users of CEDAP

In the case of Chilcas we interviewed only a few women. When asked about the activities of CEDAP all of them were most appreciative of the capacity development they had received in relation to their agricultural and reproductive tasks. They also referred to the workshops about women's and citizens' rights in which they had participated.

> What did you learn that you didn't know before?
>
> "We didn't know about improved stoves and toilets, these did not exist, now we know."
>
> Did you recieve any teachings about rights of the person? … What do you remember?
>
> "Now we have a law for the women. There is also a law of rights, it is not allowed to beat. The women who are abused by their husband must immediately report it [to the police]."
>
> And about democracy, electing your authorities, what did they say?
>
> "To participate, together with the authorities…. anything that they do badly has to be changed, they say."
>
> *Interview with female leader of Adosci, Chilcas, February 2006*

> "I have been a councillor for four years. I have three children. It is difficult to work and participate with children, it is a lot of work. I live far away. It takes two hours to walk to the municipality. My husband stays and looks after the children when I am gone. I have learned about participatory budget in the municipality. Rights of women, which was new to me. From CEDAP I appreciated most the improved stoves and gardens."
>
> *Female councillor, Municipality of Chilcas, February 2006*

Some women say that they have gained confidence through their participation in the family-based contest, and in some cases, when they have won a prize, their position in the community has been strengthened since they have been able to show their smallholding as a kind of example of diligence and hard work. The female councillors *(regidoras)* or representatives of social organisations say that they have been encouraged to talk and participate at the ADOSCI meetings, and even if the number of female representatives is still low it is higher than it used to be. From what we could see and hear, the women were not in any way playing prominent parts within the association; this fact, in combination with information received in the interviews, gives the impression of very little change so far in the political sphere. It is reasonable to believe that the women have more to say in the communal sphere in relation to the agricultural activities. Therefore, the links between the political and the economic sphere, which CEDAP actually encourages, are very positive and important.

The men, too, testified to having increased their knowledge concerning citizens' rights.

> "Through the workshops of CEDAP I learned about rights and obligations for everybody. It is equal for all, for rich and poor. We are all Peruvians and have the same rights. Before, there were injustices…. but now it is not like that. The authorities have to be impartial. It is the same with the obligations we have to fulfil … here in Chilcas we defend our district."
>
> *Male leader of ADOSCI, Chilcas, February 2006*

The interviewed men did not talk much about their individual gains but mostly about what ADOSCI had gained as an association. A characteristic very typical of the users of the CEDAP project is that they feel identified with their community and their district. As we could see in all of the interviews, it is identification with the community and its future, to the point where one of the interviewed leaders expressed not having personal expectations but only those of his community. Another leader talked more about it as a family project than as an individual project, but within the communal logics. This perspective of communal work is also very marked in CEDAP and is adapted to the cultural practice of the region and the communal population.

> "I always come to these meetings. I have come more than anything because of a proposal about drinkable water and the technical study that has to be conducted in the area. The amount of money we asked for is not enough, which made them opt for another project which consisted in the creation of a mill. It would give us income in the community. We did not manage to channel the project because it was a joint decision though voting. We didn't manage to get enough votes."
>
> *Community member of ADOSCI, Chilcas, November 2006*

What could be seen is that this is a work that generates loyalties. In the interviews of the peasants this is highlighted.

> You say that you work well with the support of CEDAP, that your production is increasing thanks to the support of CEDAP. In what way is CEDAP supporting you?
>
> Translator: He says that they are helping us, with getting water to our lands so that the production will turn out well, this is what he is saying. He says that he is the first delegate of his community and whatever meeting ADOSCI calls for he is always there to be able to communicate to his community what they are doing and in what way they are helping.
>
> *Male member of ADOSCI, Chilcas, February 2006*

One former president of ADOSCI also said, "We always feel proud and content about the institution of CEDAP." Even if this is not a desired effect, it is certain that the process of accompanying so closely, that the support is linked to people's own family and to the family land, undoubtedly generates loyalties like that expressed by the person interviewed above.

The interviewed persons saw very concrete results related to the improvement of the quality of life and their incomes. But it is also noted that they refer to activities related to the space of ADOSCI. The platform that ADOSCI offers is linked to the institutional dynamics of the community and the peasant families.

When the evaluation team visited for the third time, Chilcas had a new mayor. The previous mayor had not wanted to run for a second term, and for the

first time a local representative, ex-president of ADOSCI, was elected to the post; this was something else that could be seen as a positive result of Diakonia-funded activities. Meanwhile, ADOSCI had also been reconfigured. It did not appear as strong as it had during the first two visits, but it was still functioning. Apparently there had been something of a power struggle in relation to the election of the president, perhaps a sign of the association's continuing importance in the eyes of the community members.

The higher self-esteem achieved by the members of ADOSCI seemed to have had repercussions, in a positive sense, on the way the poor district of Chilcas is looked upon. Some of the interviewed persons mentioned that the district of Chilcas had had a stronger presence than usual at the latest festival at the provincial level; that is, the current mayor had promoted active participation, with the result that the district had a dance troupe impressive in both numbers and performance, which is what is valued for social prestige in this context. Thus they had been met with more respect than they were used to.

7. Understanding outcomes

In this section we discuss the outcomes of the Diakonia-funded training and guidance by *Alternativa* and CEDAP on three different levels – individual, collective and societal.

Alternativa

The Leadership School trains social leaders who are then expected to contribute to the development and strengthening of people's capacity to construct and influence local and national public policies. This in turn is aimed at contributing to an integrated development and a strengthened democracy. The hope is that the Leadership School will contribute to the formation of new "classes" of social leaders with the capacity not only to interpret their reality but also to be able to transform it.

All of the interviewed students or graduates of the *Alternativa* Leadership School testified that the Diakonia-funded training had been very useful to them in their exercise of leadership in their base organisations, and they had transmitted parts of their new knowledge to their organisations. Their new insights related to human and citizens' rights, the functioning of the local political system and how they could participate and influence decisions, and to understanding the gender order and how they could act to change it. In many cases they had been able initiate projects in their local organisations, but the degree to which these new insights had actually led to actions in the local community varied.

Their view of leadership and democracy had changed, and they generally experienced it as if they had become more democratic and sensitive leaders.

Just as in the case of CPMGA in Bolivia, they generally expressed a sense of experiencing a widening of their worldview because of what they had learned, as well as a widening of their social network due to their participation in *Alternativa*'s Leadership School and increased knowledge of and access to other spaces of participation, which they also made use of.

Each generation of newly trained leaders belongs to a network that exchanges information and proposes new actions. In this way, a sense of belonging and identity seems to be promoted by the school, something that on the one hand works positively as a reminder to the graduates to keep on developing as leaders, but on the other hand risks creating a well-informed elite of former students, which would distance them from their base organisations.

The trained students had generally developed a higher degree of self-esteem and trust in their own capacity. The newly trained students were enormously enthusiastic about what the training had given them, while the graduates from a few years back had a longer perspective and could also point to limitations. In the case of *Alternativa* we noted that the time frame of the evaluation was too short. It was not until after a few years that a trained leader could formulate the ways in which the training had really involved a change for him or her, and the way the skills could be developed in the social organisation to which he or she belonged.

On a collective level, there are reasons to believe that the formation of leaders has strengthened some base organisations and made them more confident in making their claims, and more skillful and realistic in their planning of projects for their *zona*. In general, the interviews testify to active participation by female leaders in different spaces of citizen participation. Over the years some organisations have also been able to get several members trained by the Leadership School, which obviously increases the possible impact.

We could also see that there was practically no participation of these leaders in the municipal governments of the districts of the *Cono Norte* of Lima. The participation is given in their social base organisations. Their social leadership will give them a certain legitimacy in relation to the authorities, but their possibilities for negotiating are not yet significant.

So, to what extent can the changes identified be attributed to the Diakonia-funded training of *Alternativa?* There is no doubt that the Leadership School is an important actor in the areas of its influence. In many cases, due to increased knowledge of citizen's rights, the school may be the determinant factor that actually makes people able to exercise their rights of participation, but in spaces of participation that have been created by the Peruvian state. In the case of Peru, the participation that is promoted, by both Alternativa and CEDAP, is directed towards the formal political system.

A critical aspect in this respect pertains to the target group of Alternativa. Surprisingly many of the leaders whom we interviewed were well educated,

with more than secondary education or university degrees. This indicates that for many of the students, the Leadership School is an alternative in a situation of lack of alternatives for employment, or is seen as one component in the portfolios they are creating for their careers. It was also noted in the interviews that the aspirations and future plans of the students varied according to their level of education and place of origin.

CEDAP

The general objective of the project of CEDAP in the districts of Anco and Chilcas is to promote citizens' participation and their claim to civil rights. The central component of CEDAP's activities in this project is to strengthen local democracy and promote a culture of rights.

What is the influence of Diakonia-funded training and guidance over time on the lives of the users of CEDAP? Users testify that the Diakonia-funded activities have strengthened their capacity to improve their agricultural production and to participate in local politics. Through the contest of *Pachamamanchikta Waqaychasun* the farming families have achieved tools to gain control over their own situation, improve their agricultural production, and gradually improve their life quality. The family unit has served as a base for further work in strengthening communal links and reinforcing the social organisations in order for people to exercise their rights as citizens through overseeing the local government administration. A new space, ADOSCI, has been created, through which the communal farmers of the district of Chilcas can express their demands and negotiate with the district mayor. In this case the relations between civil society (that is, the social organisations of the district) and the state (in the form of the mayor and his office) have changed substantially. The question is whether this will last in the future.

Some women say that they have gained confidence through their participation in the family-based contest. The female *regidoras,* or representatives of social organisations, say that they have been encouraged to talk and participate at the meetings of the ADOSCI, and even if the number of female representatives is still low it is higher than it used to be. Despite these achievements, the impression was of very little change so far with regard to female participation in the political sphere.

To what extent to can these changes be attributed to Diakonia-funded training? When it comes to the increased political participation and major expressions of the communal leaders in the district of Chilcas, it seems that the lucky combination of CEDAP's presence, communal leaders eager to participate, and a mayor interested in establishing communication with the inhabitants of the district has been decisive. CEDAP's presence has been very important in facilitating the meeting between the two counterparts, and it is probably fair to say that the personalities of the responsible technician(s) of CEDAP and the mayor in charge during the formation were very important, both parties extremely dedicated persons with knowledge and entrenchment

in the local area. Another important factor has been the decentralisation process in Peru which has established organisations such as the *Mesas de Concertación* and Participative Communal Plans that invite the local population to participate. Here, the local population could make use of these municipal mechanisms, something that is not the case everywhere in Peru. These factors influence the fact that the experience might be difficult to duplicate. Difficult but not impossible, and necessarily adapted to the local conditions of each context.

What is the influence of achieved goals/changes on the society at large – on local institutions, the local political system, or political culture? It is clear that the strengthening of the farmers' productive capacity coupled with the formation of ADOSCI has changed the level of participation and probably the political culture in the district of Chilcas, at least in the short run. The school teacher of the district testified that ADOSCI had also been important for the demand for rights and improvement in the area of education. In relation to the political culture and traditions in the province, it is difficult to point to any substantial changes. There is a need for several positive experiences of this kind in order to change the overall structure. The higher self-esteem achieved by the members of ADOSCI seemed to have had repercussions, in a positive sense, on the way the poor district of Chilcas is looked upon.

8. Nicaragua: Challenging authority by institutional means

Nicaragua experienced both regional and national elections between 2006 and 2007, bringing back the Frente Sandinista (FSLN) to positions of national political power. The elections on both levels were monitored by the two organisations in our focus, IPADE and CEDEHCA, but rather than covering this aspect of their involvement in the practice of democracy, the evaluators have focused on the everyday work of democracy promotion through human rights and autonomy rights work, and capacity building aiming at increasing political participation at the local level.

In this study of the activities and perceptions of people in Diakonia-funded training in the Caribbean Coast region of Nicaragua over time, we have found a remarkable change among the "beneficiaries" with regard to improved knowledge of rights and of the workings of local governance. This change on the individual level is also contributing to a strengthening of local organisations and to the innovative ways in which they are currently conquering a space for political participation.

Such a process, however, cannot be attributed to Diakonia-funded activities alone but must be understood in a larger context in which the users learn the skills of creating political alternatives by establishing contacts with other NGOs or local institutions, among them the organisations studied here.

While we have found differences between the two organisations in terms of the extent to which the improvements result in a structural political change in the longer term, we reach the conclusion that their efforts have led people to question and even challenge authoritarian rule by institutional means.

1. Political development relevant to the objectives of the study

In the last 18 years, both in search of and in adjustment to new forms of governance, Nicaragua has experienced changes in the political realm through democratic transition and in the economic realm through market liberalisation (see Montenegro et al. 2005).

In the political realm, elections have been regularly implemented since 1990, favouring democratic elections, especially in local governments. Similarly, basic accords to establish civil control of the army and the rule of law have been signed. In the economic realm, governments have implemented programmes of structural adjustment that include privatisation of state-owned enterprises and liberalisation in a general move towards implementing a free market economy. The state, social welfare programmes, and public services have been drastically reduced in the process.

The population has also seen a move from a public discourse that valued solidarity to one characterised by individualism. This change is in part a consequence of the scarce employment opportunities and social mobility among the working class, peasants, indigenous people, afro-descendants, and middle-class sectors in the country. Based on 2002 data, Cepal calculates that nearly 70% of the Nicaraguan population lives in conditions of poverty (Cepal 2006). Many Nicaraguans have found a solution to their frail economic condition in migration, both internal and international. Urban-rural disparities have become acute.

While, on a general level, we can see advances in the exercise of political rights in the last decades, the economic conditions in Nicaragua have deteriorated steadily. It is important to underline that the political accords signed by the main two parties, PLC and FSLN, at the end of the 1990s, have affected democratic processes. They have shut down spaces of civil participation, reduced the independence of social and political organisations at the national, regional, and local level, and ignored the mechanism of accountability.

The two regional councils of the autonomous regions were established in 1990. They represent the aspiration for self-determination of indigenous people and ethnic communities in the Northern and Southern Caribbean Coast (Ortega Hegg 2004). The regional councils were created under the Statute of Autonomy, signed in 1987, that put an end to six years of armed conflict between the FSLN and indigenous organisations in arms. Among its functions are to pass policies and development programmes to benefit the autonomous regions, to coordinate the public policies of the state in relation to the Coast, and to create and manage a regional development fund.

However, regional councils have faced the opposition of national governments since the 1990s. This has, to a great extent, impeded the institutional consolidation of the councils. Today the regional autonomous institutions are politically toothless. In turn, regional councils have also experienced internal difficulties, particularly in the achievement of consensus and unity among the political organisations that compose them. The councils have also failed in creating effective channels of representation for rural communities that, in the end, dissolve politically in the autonomic system.

Many municipal governments in the region lack administrative experience and have little institutional capacity. Their reach, like that of the regional councils, does not include rural communities – particularly not those farther away from the capital of the municipio. The deficit in social development and the gaps in human development in the autonomous regions are greater than in the rest of the country. According to the Human Development Report of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Regions (UNDP 2005), the area has a low human development rate. In 2001, 12 of its 19 municipalities were considered to be trapped in conditions of extreme poverty.

Corruption is another negative element that worsens the administration of the regional and municipal governments. This topic emerged during the interviews with beneficiaries: "I don't like the leaders of the Miskito people. Look at the municipal investments in the *municipio,* they are of a poor quality. Part of the money contractors get has to go back to people in the municipal government. The result is sidewalks, bridges, and streets of bad quality" (Bilwi, Nov. 2006).

In conclusion, regional councils have faced difficulties in achieving institutional status. At the same time, they have done comparatively little in matters linked to the improvement of the quality of life for the population of the Caribbean Coast.

Citizenship and political participation

The Law of Municipal Autonomy and, later, the Municipal Law (created in 1987 and 1988), were the first legal instruments implemented to create spaces of participation at the municipal level. They gave form to the municipal councils *(cabildos)* and the CDM (Municipal Development Committee) – spaces where the population could express its opinions, demands, and questions to municipal authorities. Three subsequent laws were fundamental for the purpose of correcting previous gaps and legitimising spaces of participation; among them is the Citizenship Participation Law (Law 475), approved in 2003. The law supports legal forms of citizenship participation. Thus it strengthened spaces of participation that were already in place but had worked without the recognition of many municipal governments.

In 2007, the FSLN government decided to create, through an executive decree, the Council of Citizenship Participation *(Consejos de Participación Ciudadana)* as part of its programme to promote social participation and direct democracy (La Gaceta Diario Oficial 2007). The citizen councils represent a new instance of social participation, different from the previous ones. Up to a certain point the councils can become parallel to the structure established by the law of citizenship participation *(Ley de Participación Ciudadana)*. The formation of the councils has been controversial. Certain groups consider it unnecessary to duplicate efforts and resources; for them, it is wiser to take advantage of the participatory spaces that were created through previous efforts of civil society (Law 475) (Conpes 2007). Others see the councils as

party structures to support the president and the FSLN (Chamorro 2007). For many it is not clear if the councils will be a part of a party structure or if, once in effect, they will be a form for influencing state policies vis-à-vis the autonomous territories.

The autonomous regions and the central government in 2006 and 2007

From 2002 to 2006, the autonomous regions saw the continuation of previous national government approaches to the Coast – the design from afar of policies of importance to the region. This happened in areas like development, natural resource conservancy – especially forest, and the demarcation of indigenous land. Another case in point is the unfruitful attempt of the regional council from 2003 to 2005 to insert regional development into the national development plan (PND), promoted since 2002 by the national government. In the end, their efforts failed and many of the Caribbean Coast's demands were, once again, left outside national political processes.

Today the Caribbean Coast seems to play a relevant role in state policies and the decision making of the national government. Four actions are evidence of this:

i. The inclusion of people from the Caribbean Coast *(Costeños)* in the national government. This is an unprecedented event in the history of relations between the Coast and national governments. Today around 42 women and men from the Caribbean Coast work in the government: from ministers and directors of institutions to vice-ministers and general and executive directors of institutions. In addition, the Coast has the largest number of deputies (five) in the National Assembly, all from different parties.

ii. The formation of a Development Council/Citizenship Council for the Caribbean Coast. One of its tasks is to formulate the conceptual framework and conduct the coherent functioning of the different governmental authorities in the region.

iii. The support for demarcation of indigenous people's and afro-descendants' land. The new authorities stated that the recognition of indigenous people's land and the implementation of the property law (Law 445) are some of their main concerns in the region. In April 2007, the government made adjustments to the procedure manual for demarcation with the intent of simplifying the mechanism for communities to present their claims and obtain their titles.

iv. The approval of important infrastructure projects for both autonomous regions. Among the major infrastructure projects planned is the construction of a better road to link Managua and Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas). Construction of the road is planned for 2008 with Venezuela's support. For now, funds from an IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) loan are invested in the rehabilitation of certain parts of the existing dirt road to Bilwi.

In March 2006, elections for the Regional Autonomous Councils were held for the fifth time. The elections were characterised by high levels of political polarisation between the PLC and the FSLN. Besides the polarised environment, the lack of discussion in political parties of themes related to the autonomous regime was notorious. Since the Coast elections preceded the national elections by only a few months, national candidates used them to project their candidacy and ignored the themes of the Coast.

Some of the issues that were of interest for diverse local actors were the implementation of Law 28 (the Statute of Autonomy), the demarcation of indigenous land, the strengthening of education, poverty reduction through employment, citizenship security, control of drug traffic and consumption, and the improvement of infrastructure.

The 5th of November 2006 saw the national elections for president, vicepresident, regional and departmental deputies to the National Assembly, and deputies for the Central American Parliament. Although political polarisation characterised the process, its level has diminished considerably in each election (for instance, violent incidents were not registered in the 2006 national elections).

After 18 years, the FSLN once again presides over the national government. In the economic realm the government criticises international financial institutions at the same time that it searches for new accords with organisations such as the IMF. This is also seen in relation to commercial treaties. Criticisms of the US are accompanied by support of CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement), while Nicaragua has become one of the members of ALBA (Alternativa Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América), an initiative led by Venezuela.

2.   Diakonia and its partners in national and local contexts

Diakonia maintains that the essence of its work in Nicaragua is to support a national project defined by national actors and not to impose an agenda. To contribute to national processes involves a series of steps before choosing local partners. Diakonia first identifies the most relevant processes of a country, looking at both themes and territories. It then identifies the actors intervening in those processes, like NGOs or grass-root organisations. Finally, it asks how it can contribute to their successful development.

Since 1998, Diakonia has prioritised the support of democratisation and human rights in the region. While Diakonia identifies important national processes that could gain from its support, it chooses partners whose agenda coincides with some elements of its own agenda.

Accompaniment, sustainability, and ownership

Diakonia's programme in Nicaragua pays particular attention to the three issues of accompaniment, sustainability, and appropriation. First and foremost, it defines its relation with Nicaraguan organisations as one of accompaniment. In addition it also offers its own perspective on certain topics, articulates spaces for discussion, provides resources, and analyses "current conditions". However, as its representative in Nicaragua affirms: "The fact that our goal is to offer accompaniment does not mean that we are not interested in what these organisations do. It means that our goal is for them to view the process (project) they are undertaking as their own. The sustainability of the programmes depends on that" (Moises Moraga).

The strategy of achieving sustainability is justified as a reaction against traditional development projects that, by imposing their own agenda, have discouraged local processes and fostered dependency. For Diakonia, such projects are viewed as problematic, due not only to the waste of resources and lack of consistent results, but to the way in which Nicaraguans have "got used to them and play their game" (Moises Moraga).

Diakonia considers a sense of ownership – perceiving projects as one's own – not as a given but as an important transformative process and one that requires its support. While a sense of ownership can never be imposed, in the case of Nicaragua it needs to be promoted since traditional development projects have undermined it. In many cases, local organisations regard themselves as having to obey those who provide financial support instead of conceiving of the relation as one of coordination. The Diakonia representative in Nicaragua expresses an awareness of the risk of reproducing this fallacy.

However, the notion of ownership and coordination is also fraught with contradictions. One of the strategies of Diakonia to strengthen a sense of ownership among its partners is the promotion of spaces where they can discuss certain themes, see the value of those issues, and start organising around them. Diakonia asserts that the process has to be one that respects the rhythm of the organisation. "We do not want to push too much; that can be negative…these are changes in attitudes, in certain structures. Some organisations might go fast, others are slower, but it is important to value improvements" (Moises Moraga).

The strategy does recognise and support local propositions, but only to a certain extent. The themes partners should work with ought to coincide with the ones already acknowledged as relevant by Diakonia.[27] Diakonia also stresses the need for local partners to perceive the programme they undertake as their own. In turn, those partners insist on the need of "beneficiaries" to perceive the projects they promote as their own. This is believed to be ac-

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[27] In its commentary on the first draft of this report, Diakonia responded to this critical point by emphasising that the organisation does not construct strategies in isolation but in dialogue with partners and based on studies of contexts and needs. The same commentary also attests that partners are chosen on the basis of values already "shared" with Diakonia.

complished through accompaniment and in the name of sustainability. And just as in the past, when Nicaraguans learned to play the game of traditional development projects, some of them now adapt to a new development jargon. This does not mean that everybody plays a game as opposed to being truly committed to the actions they undertake. However, some include certain themes in their projects or accept taking on certain actions because it will be rewarded with some sort of support, either economic or educational. A meeting we attended in Bonanza proved to be a case in point. IPADE insisted on the incorporation of women in communal and territorial organisations. In response to that, male leaders invited women, most of whom were their wives, to the meetings. However, as soon as this meeting started, some of the women – who counted as women participants in the activities – left the room to prepare lunch for the rest of us.

Diakonia lists four spaces of importance from which they accompany their partners:

1. One annual meeting with "partners" – a space of "exchange of information" regarding the activities undertaken by partners.

2. Two annual visits to regional projects. Here, Diakonia converses with promoters, team members, and local project coordinators. According to Diakonia, the visits should not have an interventionist "tint" but should convey accompaniment.

3. Support for communal spaces where different "partners" meet to discuss important themes. Diakonia partners meet to receive training in workshops, they propose issues to be discussed, and they express their opinions and experiences. At this moment Diakonia prioritises three themes in such workshops: institutional strengthening to increase the influence of the organisation, gender, and HIV.

4. Feedback in the form of comments on the partner programme report.

The inclusion of IPADE and CEDEHCA in Diakonia's programme is linked to a thematic and territorial "expansion" of the organisation in Nicaragua that harks back to the implementation in 1998 of Diakonia's new policy, where themes like democracy and human rights rose to prominence and the decision to develop a country programme expanded the work to the Pacific region of the country. In previous years Diakonia had worked exclusively in the Caribbean Coast region of Nicaragua.

The decision to include Pacific regions influenced Diakonia's decision to work with IPADE, an organisation from the Pacific that, at the time, was extending its work to the mining region in the Caribbean Coast. The emphasis on human rights influenced Diakonia's collaboration with CEDEHCA, one of the few Coast organisations with a focus on human rights.

Diakonia initiated its support to IPADE and CEDEHCA in 2000 and since then has maintained relations with them for four consecutive periods: 2000, 2001–2003, 2004–2006/7.

Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Democracia (IPADE)

IPADE was founded in 1990 as a non-profit organisation. It defines democracy and governance as constituting the fundamental axis of development and centres its efforts on those themes (see www.IPADE.org.ni). The organisation develops programmes in three main areas: (a) electoral processes, training volunteer electoral observers, and conducting workshops on civic education; (b) local democracy programmes, developing and strengthening local capacities to increase participation at the local, municipal, and regional level; and (c) production programmes: agricultural diversification, implementation of agro-forestry systems, artisans' support, and forestry certification to Mayagna communities.

The IPADE project in the mining region belongs to the second set of programmes. The goal is to strengthen democracy and local development through the support of citizenship participation. This goal is believed to be achieved through legitimisation of local, municipal, and regional organisations, the building of local actor capacities, and the institutionalisation of spaces for participation. IPADE also identifies three main beneficiaries. They are communal leaders, civil society members who are part of an umbrella organisation created by IPADE in the region called *Coordinadora Civil*,[28] and finally, municipal and regional authorities. IPADE works mostly with Mestizo communities and to a lesser extent with Mayagnas.

Centro de Derechos Humanos, Ciudadanos y Autonómicos (CEDEHCA)

CEDEHCA was founded in 1994. It presents itself as a communitarian NGO whose programme centres on promoting the "construction of a culture of autonomy and peace on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua" (see www.CEDEHCAnicaragua.com). To achieve its goals, the organisation is focused on two issues: the defence of human rights (linked to monitoring and advocacy) and the defence of autonomy rights through proposing laws and through training people in the region on such themes as the meaning of autonomy, institutional racism, and collective rights, among others. The CEDEHCA projects in Puerto Cabezas and Waspam follow those two approaches, with a focus on the monitoring of human rights, advocacy, and the support and training of a youth organisation called JENH – *Jóvenes Estableciendo Nuevos Horizontes* (Youth Establishing New Horizons).

The CEDEHCA beneficiaries are communal leaders, communal judges, youth in general, municipal and regional authorities, and civil society organisations. Project beneficiaries are mostly Miskitu people, but also Creoles (afro-descendants) and Mestizos.

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[28] It coordinates the work of different organisations, institutions, and NGOs that are active in the municipality. The goal is to create a space for member organisations to talk about planned activities, find ways to coordinate their actions, and propose issues to discuss and coordinate with municipal authorities.

3. Problems, progress, and promises from the perspective of the users

The evaluation team visited the region three times in the span of a year and a half. Our objective was to interview the same beneficiaries on each visit in order to record and analyse important changes over time. Despite a few set-backs, we were able during each visit to interview some of the same beneficiaries. The following section is based on the analysis of those interviews, placing particular attention on changes over time, both personal and institutional. The section is organised in six subsections based on the problems faced by organisations and beneficiaries: (i) political polarisation and communal organisation; (ii) cooptation of communal leaders by political parties; (iii) from private to public gender politics; (iv) land and communal authorities; (v) racial categories of social difference; and (vi) customary law. Each subsection describes the problems faced by beneficiaries, the progress they have made towards solving or managing those problems, and the future prospects.

Political polarisation and communal organisation

For Doña B. (the initials used here do not correspond with people's real names), a communal leader now in her late fifties, from Santa Fe, Siuna, the 1990s were a violent time when community members were afraid of participating in local activities. She recalls: "They were afraid of even giving their names." During the post-war period of the 1990s, new armed groups, some with no clear political affiliation, operated in the mining region. Ex-members of the *Resistencia* (the Contras) returned to their communities, and people who lived in cooperatives left the organisations in fear of political revenge. The word "organisation", which was associated with the *Sandinistas,* was rejected by many in this region. Municipal and national governments made the situation even worse by privileging communities politically linked to them when distributing resources.

Such a high level of political polarisation was an obstacle to democratisation. The solution found was to work on strengthening institutionalised forms of governance: municipal governments, communal and territorial organisations, and civil society groups. These were necessary steps, since municipal structures and decentralisation efforts were relatively recent.

It is clear that many have seen results. Levels of polarisation have decreased compared to the 1990s. Today, Doña B. is not afraid of being a communal leader and communal members appreciate the technical and non-political character of organisations like IPADE and CEDEHCA. A man from Rosa Grande, Siuna, and one of the communal leaders working in IPADE programmes since its beginnings, said: "The first time I heard about IPADE was in 1999, on the radio. They said they were a non-political organisation. So, when they invited me to a meeting in Wani I decided to participate" (June 2007).

The president of the UCA (Agricultural Cooperatives Union) and member of the *Coordinadora Civil* in Siuna concluded: "To change a culture is a transformation that takes time, it is a process. But I see that polarisation has decreased. Compared to the 1990s, during this election (i.e., the national elections of 2006) we did not see high levels of social or political polarisation between ex-members of the *Resistencia* and ex-members of the Sandinista army" (Nov. 2006).

However, even if political polarisation has decreased at the communal level it persists in municipal and national spaces. It is expressed in the high levels of political party involvement and polarisation. In March 2006, during our first visit, comments like these were recurrent: "We haven't been able to certify our leader, since the municipal government is only certifying authorities from communities that voted for them. That is bad, because we are not recognised as communal authorities" (Siuna, March 2006). "I'm not interested in collaborating or working with the Regional Council because they only offer you a job if you have influence or due to your party's affiliation" (El Cocal, Bilwi, March 2006).

At the municipal level, discrepancies between institutional laws and the realities of political decision making are common. In general, the population considers that the actions of municipal governments depend on the goodwill of politicians and not on procedures anchored in law. The planning director in the Rosita municipality put it in this way: "In the area of municipal power and influence there is still much to be done in Nicaragua because at the municipal level things are more political than they should be" (Nov. 2006).

By June 2007, the national government had created new communal organisations, called Councils of Citizenship Power, as part of its programme to increase local participation and direct democracy. However, these new organisations compete with those already established in law, i.e., the ones with which IPADE and others have worked. In reaction to this, the opposition party is also forming alternative communal organisations to represent its interests.

IPADE and local leaders of the Liberal Party fear that parallel organisations linked to the FSLN might increase the levels of political polarisation, which could also lead to local conflict. However, a leader of Rosa Grande is confident that communal members will be mature enough to continue to make their voices heard through authorities who have gained "social and institutional recognition" (Siuna, June 2007).

Cooptation of communal leaders by political parties

IPADE supports local leaders through training and accompaniment. Even so, in some cases municipal authorities reject local civil authorities or other civil society organisations. They perceive the independence of the organisations as a threat to a municipal system that, in most cases, is centred on authoritarian conceptions of power and political clientelism. In order to

legitimise communal and territorial authorities, IPADE members have participated in the election as electoral *observers*. Nevertheless, it has been standard practice for the municipal government to appoint its own representative at the communal level, particularly so in poorly organised communities, rather than to support the community in electing the candidate of its choice. A woman from Sislao Paraska describes the situation: "We have tried to elect a new communal leader. IPADE taught me how we should form a new communal board. It looks nice, with an assembly and all that. But the present leader doesn't want to move on. He told me two days ago that I shouldn't come to the municipal council. He said he is the one who is in charge of that because he belongs to the Liberal Party" (Nov. 2006).

In cases where communities have elected their own representative, some municipal authorities tend either to disregard them or to question their legitimacy. However, in places like Siuna, the vice-mayor says, they have found a better way to improve the relationship between territorial representatives and municipal authorities. "In some regions, we agree that the *alcalde auxiliar* should be the same person as the territorial representatives" (Nov. 2006).

In 2007, in preparation for the 2008 municipal elections, municipal authorities contracted territorial leaders. Their goal was to strengthen their municipality's presence at the territorial and communal level. This decision is perceived by some communal members as a strategy to politicise non-politicised institutions, since municipal authorities are considered to be linked to the political party they represent. IPADE members and other leaders have expressed concern regarding these actions. In particular, they fear that the non-political spaces that communities are building become means for political proselytism. IPADE itself faces problems in this realm. Despite its efforts to be perceived as a non-political organisation, IPADE is generally associated with the FSLN. Its history – it was founded by an ex-member of the FSLN board of directors – and its support of Sandinista ex-cooperatives influence such perceptions. Even when liberal communal leaders are approached by IPADE, some liberal municipal governments are reluctant to cooperate with the organisation due to it apparent "political affiliation". That is the case of Mulukuku, a municipality close to Siuna, where municipal authorities ignored IPADE's invitations to meetings.

From private to public gender politics

A school teacher and human rights promoter in Kisalaya, Waspam, affirmed that one of the biggest problems in his community alongside poverty is the violence inflicted on women (June 2007). In Kum, local leaders recognised that women and children are the ones who suffer most from the violence triggered by increasing levels of drug consumption among (mostly) men (June 2007).

CEDEHCA-Waspam has been successful in making some human rights promoters and communal members aware of the vulnerability of women and

children. Evidence of this is the fact that the male leaders and promoters mentioned above were willing to talk about "domestic issues", a theme generally underemphasised by communal leaders in other regions. However, CEDEHCA-Waspam has mostly centred its work in advocacy efforts – legally advising women who seek their help in cases of rape, domestic abuse, and children's custody. Due to the small staff in the region (only one person) and the extensive territory they have to cover, CEDEHCA has not been able to accompany human rights promoters or to support a sufficient number of workshops at the communal level, where levels of violence against women are considered high.

When discussing the work of CEDEHCA, one man affirmed: "I'm a Catholic, and during our church meetings I talk about women's and children's rights. But I talk only with those who come to the church. I cannot reach all Kisalaya's population" (Kisalaya, Waspam, June 2007). At the end he concluded: "If we continue to work like we do now we won't be able to advance much." On the other hand, in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas), where CEDEHCA works closely with a youth group, the approach to gender, in particular women's rights, is all-encompassing. They openly discuss common sexual and gender stereotypes, converse about problems faced by women and men in their region, and support the active participation of young women in spaces of leadership. In most cases young women expressed changes in their self-concept. They affirmed that they are now more assertive than they were before, and less fearful. In talking about the issue, a 27-year-old member of the JENH youth group gave an example of how such changes have impacted her life: "I first studied what my parents wanted me to do, accounting; but I realised that I have to study what I like, so I decided to start a new major in forestry engineering" (March 2006). Men expressed a sense of great respect in relation to the women in the group. The youngest member of JENH (a boy of 14) said: "Nobody here says that you can't talk or can't do something because you are a woman" (Nov. 2006).

While the importance of the CEDEHCA programme at the subjective level can be noticed, in "public" spaces the situation seems less clear. The municipal government of Puerto Cabeza withdrew its support for the municipal commission on women, children, and youth. By doing so it closed one of few spaces of institutional coordination. Although CEDEHCA has been able to coordinate actions with some local NGOs and with the women's police office, the efforts of these organisations as a whole are not influencing municipal approaches towards gender, not to an extent that could be observed or verified by us.

IPADE has a different approach to gender. It makes a distinction between "public" and "private" issues, concentrating its efforts on the former by promoting women's participation in communal and territorial organisations. Higher levels of female participation are seen in areas where other NGOs have also promoted women's organisations, as in the case of Siuna. In

IPADE-Bonanza, although peasant women are present in territorial and communal meetings they do not participate much. In many cases, their nomination as candidates for positions in the organisation's leadership is recommended by the IPADE staff.

A 28-year-old school teacher, a mother of three and member of the communal organisation of Rancho Alegre, affirmed that participating in a group helped her gain self-esteem and overcome her shyness. She said: "I have changed so much. At the beginning I was so shy, I was afraid of even talking, but the church helped me a lot. I worked there for seven years and at the beginning even to sing embarrassed me, but at the end I didn't have a problem. That's why I tell women that they should participate in organisations, so they can lose their fear and shyness" (Siuna, June 2007).

In the narrative, the woman's intention was not to motivate other women to participate in church activities, but to underline that being part of an organisation is an important step in changing self-perceptions and, thus, in becoming increasingly active in communal life. Her comment also points out that even when the word self-esteem did not come up explicitly in conversations with women, it is a fundamental issue linked to their participation in communal processes. The importance of this issue is reflected in the response a woman in Bonanza gave when she was nominated to a communal position: "I can't take that responsibility. I have too many children and very little capacities…" (June 2007). This interview also reflects the difficulties young women with children face when trying to participate in organisations. With the exception of the woman quoted above, who thanks to her job can pay somebody to take care of her children, in many cases only older women are able to participate in meetings because their children are grown.

In 2007, Siuna was the only place where both women and men said they felt secure enough to recommend a change in the IPADE approach to gender issues. Their comments are documented in the context of a local evaluation of IPADE, promoted by the same organisation. An ex-territorial leader, now working as a municipality's communal promoter in El Ocote, Siuna, said: "I have seen a transformation in women's participation from when I started working with IPADE in 1999 to this day; but you really see that one needs to work harder in order to change people… Many times, when I go from house to house inviting people to the communal meetings, women tell me "If my husband is not here I can't go', and there I see that women have very few options. One possible solution is that gender workshops be given to the couple so that both can see together that things have to change" (June 2007).

Land and communal authorities

Even though Law 28, approved in 1987, recognises indigenous peoples' communal property, traditional authorities, and organisational forms, it took 20 years for the demarcation law to be officially approved. Among the reasons for this delay was lack of political interest on the part of the Nicaraguan

governments in the issue of property in general and indigenous property in particular, and also a lack of consensus in the regional government about the meaning of the legislation. During the 1990s, for indigenous people and afro-descendants this meant new invasions of their lands, particularly in regions that have historically received peasant migrants, and illegal exploitations of their natural resources by private owners and some multinational companies.

In the regions where IPADE and CEDEHCA undertake their projects, indigenous peoples' land demarcation is a central concern. Tensions around access and control of resources have grown between indigenous peoples and Mestizo migrants. Property rights cannot be separated from topics like participation, human rights – both individual and collective, and local leadership. Indigenous communities have come to rely on their territorial titles as an affirmation of their rights and identity as a nation and as a mechanism to deter further invasions. A Mayagna leader from Bonanza said: "I'm Mayagna from Sauni Arunka territory. We have a communal title, but we are going to ask for a territorial one too as a strategy to defend ourselves from "third party" land occupation" (Nov. 2006). New migration waves to the region have also affected Mestizos from the Caribbean. A young leader (24 years old) from Pioneer, Bonanza, described the problems faced by "local" Mestizos. "In my community we haven't seen much land conflicts between Mestizos and indigenous people. On the contrary, the problem has been between Mestizos who live here and those who have come later searching for land and have taken property that already has owners" (Nov. 2006). However, not all the non-indigenous population, nor all municipal authorities, understand the social nature of the land claims of indigenous peoples and the scope of the law. This was made evident by Bonanza's municipal councillor: "Indigenous people are not the only ones who need their titles, Mestizos do as well. By giving titles to indigenous people only, the law increases the racist attitudes of indigenous peoples. Now they tell us arrogantly, "We are the owners and lords of these lands"" (Nov. 2006).

However, land is not the only problem, as the planning director of Bonanza's municipal government explains. There are also important differences between the organisational forms of indigenous and Mestizo communities: "Some Mayagnas are organised around Masaku, which represents indigenous communities in the Mayagna Sauni As territory. Mestizos are organised in territorial organisations called *juntas*. The Mayagnas have their own territory and their own models for health and educational support which are culturally different" (Nov. 2006).

The differences indicate that the institutional strengthening of people in this region ought to be culturally or ethnically informed. This is an important challenge to municipal governments and other organisations – including IPADE – in their relations with communities. However, as discussed in the next section, indigenous communities consider that IPADE has failed to respond to this challenge.

Racial categories of social difference

In the last two decades, the large number of Mestizo peasants migrating to the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua transformed the region demographically. It also brought to the forefront the conflicts around the ownership and management of natural resources, participation in political spheres, and reception of financial aid. CEDEHCA and IPADE have taken different approaches towards the issue of racial identity and inter-ethnic conflict. The particular context in which each organisation works can account for some of their differences.

The mining region, where IPADE operates, has become increasingly Mestizo dominated due to the migration of peasants. The ongoing movement of peasants is propelled by the misguided idea that land in the Caribbean Coast region of the country is inexhaustible and national (meaning that it is owned by the state and not by indigenous peoples). Mestizos carry with them narratives about nation and race that explicitly reject racism while, in practice, perpetuating racial exclusions. The main projects of CEDEHCA are undertaken in two municipalities, one where indigenous people are a majority (Waspam) and another where three ethnic groups interact (Puerto Cabezas). In those two cases, race and racism have been discussed openly.

In the mining region, Mestizos, particularly from municipalities where they are a majority, reject the existence of racism. They point as evidence to the inclusion of indigenous people in the CDM (Municipal Development Committee). In other instances, the interviewees mention their good personal relations with indigenous people or the inclusion of indigenous communities in local projects as evidence of a lack of racism. However, in cases where Mestizo and indigenous people are in conflict (particularly around land tenure) the discourse changes. There, Mestizos talk about "reverse racism". They assert that NGOs now favor only indigenous people, that they are being left aside, and that indigenous people are not trustworthy.

Faced with this situation, IPADE has decided not to get too much involved. It has invited both groups to the same workshops on law and territorial rights without, it seems to us, considering how each group understood such an action. In addition, IPADE has not discussed how the institutional structures it supports in Mestizo communities affect indigenous people. This position has had the following consequences. In June 2007, the tension between democracy and participation on the one hand and the cultural and historical particularities of the Caribbean society on the other, emerged clearly. The president of Matumbak (a Mayagna organisation) and member of the community of Mukuswas in Bonanza affirmed: "On some occasions we reject the work that NGOs and organisations like IPADE promote, they want us to meet with the "third party" [29] to discuss the law…. Work with the "third party" is like putting dogs and cats together, like enemies. IPADE favors the

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[29] The term "third party" refers to Mestizo communities that occupy land claimed by indigenous people.

"third party" and gives it full rights, but those aren't communities, those are farms. We, indigenous people, lose strength. We are a nation, a people, and we have rights as autonomous citizens" (June 2007).

IPADE recognises this problem. However, staff members are unsure about how to approach the issue. A staff member of IPADE-Bonanza said: "Migration has increased over the last 10 years and it is affecting social relations in rural areas. Migrants have conflicts with indigenous people because they are invading their territories, but also with the municipal government and older habitants. We need to confront that situation in order to promote organisation instead of division, but I think we still have to work on finding the right methodology to do so" (June 2007).

In Waspam and Puerto Cabezas, CEDEHCA invites young people to participate in workshops about race, racism, and institutionalised racism. As the following reflections show, at the individual level young people are currently challenging racism, both at home and in the community: "My father is very racist, super racist, and I have tried to talk to him but he doesn't change" (March 2006). Some of them also disrupt traditional narratives that blame only "others" as fundamentally racist. A man from the Miskitu community Maniwatla and JENH member considers that: "…in Bilwi racism exists between ethnic groups. They almost never get together, and they are always trying to get benefits only for their group" (Maniwatla, March 2006).

The examples above show that for these young people racial identities are mainly the property of others. As such they are fixed but can be altered, or questioned in social interaction. The frequently flexible frontiers between racial identities in Nicaraguan Caribbean society represent a challenge to the project, since they require an approach that does not consider identities to be essentialised categories of difference.

Customary law

As described in the previous section, differences over cultural conceptions about organisational structures and property rights have led to conflicts in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN). The relationship between individual and collective rights is another theme that merits discussion. The issue is of particular relevance in indigenous territories where CEDEHCA is running a project. In Waspam, discussions about collective rights emerged in talking about the use of customary laws to solve local problems. The most mentioned case was the rape of minors. As Kisayala's human rights promoter said: "Families prefer to use the *Tala-mana,* which means that the aggressor has to pay the offended family the damage he has done. They pay with either money or a cow" (June 2007). In some cases, human rights promoters consider that it is better to solve certain problems in traditional ways. They affirm that the financial cost of doing otherwise can be too burdensome for communal members. It is only when families cannot solve the problem through traditional laws that they seek help from national institutions or

authorities. CEDEHCA, however, rejects the *Tala-mana* because it does not take into account the interest or voice of the victim: "The arrangement to solve the problem is made between her father, the wihta (judge), and the aggressor. The opinion of the girl is never heard" (CEDEHCA, Nov. 2006).

CEDEHCA has openly emphasised the need to respect human rights and "official legal channels" when solving certain cases. This is expressed by a communal judge and human rights promoter from "El Muelle" in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas): "CEDEHCA teaches us how to treat the victim and the aggressor. They teach us this because there are communal laws that allow us to punish aggressors, but it can be a human rights violation" (Nov. 2006). Nonetheless, these decisions bring up important questions for CEDEHCA. Customary laws are part of indigenous peoples' collective rights, part of their autonomous rights. These are rights that CEDEHCA considers need to be respected in order to further democratic processes in the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. However, they clash with another of CEDEHCA's goals: the defence of human rights, which consider the individual, not the community, to be the sole repository of rights. While Miriam Hooker, director of CEDEHCA, recognises a "conflict" and asserts that CEDEHCA today is working more than before on the defence of collective rights (March 2006), it is not clear how that move is being made at the local level.

The police chief of Waspam, Santos Benavides, brought to the table the problems that arise when national authorities disregard traditional authorities and norms. He said: "Our approach today is one of respect and cooperation." This decision was taken after a case of communal violence where police officers were abducted and beaten by communal members in the struggle over the control of drug traffic routes. Santos Benavides affirms: "We need to coordinate activities with community leaders, otherwise violence will unleash against us (the police)" (June 2007).

Recent changes in Miskito communities also raise issues about local organisation. The involvement of Miskito people in drug traffic and consumption has impacted communal life. Local people complain about the increasing levels of violence and insecurity in communities. Young people are losing respect for traditional norms and authority figures; communal life is fragmenting. Communal leaders express despair when faced with this new scenario. They also assert that working with young people is essential since, as the judge from "El Muelle" in Bilwi said: "…they are consuming more and more drugs". He later added: "CEDEHCA has centred its work on young people, not on poor people without jobs, but we adults thank them for doing so" (Bilwi Nov. 2006).

4. Understanding outcomes

This section analyses changes among the beneficiaries over the time period of the evaluation in order to draw some conclusions about how Diakonia-funded capacity development has impacted their lives and the local processes in which they participate, furthering democratic practices. The analysis will revolve around three main questions: (i) How do individuals and groups change? (ii) Why do individual and groups change (in other words, to what extent can their changes be attributed to Diakonia-funded training)? (iii) What are individuals and groups able to change after having changed themselves?

Individual changes due to participation in the IPADE programme

In the mining region, many beneficiaries affirmed that participating in the IPADE project helped them build security and strengthen their self-esteem. They described their learning process as one of transformation, where IPADE "opened their eyes and minds" or "awakened them". Doña E., now in her late sixties, arrived in Wani in the early 1980s, when it became a cooperative. Today she is member of the communal *junta* of Wani, Siuna, and considers that IPADE: "…has opened our minds with their workshops about how to make projects and how communal leaders should work. That is the most beautiful thing they have given us, knowledge. Because I started working without knowing many things and now I feel I can better explain what we want as a community" (June 2007).

The transformation has also entailed a change in many people's self-perception. Now, many beneficiaries see themselves as holders of rights, as citizens. A man from Danlí Central, Siuna, affirmed this when he said: "…sometimes we think that we are nobody. And workshops help us to participate, to consider ourselves people with rights" (March 2006). This aspect seems to be of particular importance in Bonanza, where peasant migrants struggle to be recognised by municipal authorities.

Beneficiaries affirm that changes in their self-perception are the result of IPADE's workshops, the accompaniment, and the respectful way in which the IPADE staff is treating them. IPADE recognises the abilities of leaders and fosters horizontal relations. We saw an example of that in Siuna, where in May–June 2007 communal leaders participated in a local diagnostic to extend IPADE's work in the area and in a self-evaluation.

Contrary to the positive perception of Mestizo peasants, indigenous communities in the *municipio* of Bonanza expressed disappointment with this organisation. Indigenous leaders consider it inappropriate for IPADE to legitimise the authority of Mestizos who have taken their communal land and who already from the beginning find it easier to express their demands in municipal spaces. A communal judge of the Mayagna community of Españolina, Bonanza, asserted: "We have our own territorial organisation

called Matumbak, and we want to work directly with national organisations because the municipal government is not giving us any response and the organisations that come here only make surveys and see our needs but we continue in poverty" (June 2007).

Municipal authorities value the IPADE workshops, and some affirm that IPADE has helped them gain knowledge about municipal mechanisms and their responsibilities. A Siuna municipal councillor in her late fifties said: "Before, we thought that once a project was accepted we did not have to participate any longer.… Now we have more knowledge about municipal laws [than we had before]" (Nov. 2006). Bonanza's municipal councillor, too, emphasised the importance of IPADE support to organised territorial organisations in Mestizo communities. However, he was concerned with what is perceived as too heavy an involvement of IPADE: "IPADE has to redefine its roles and responsibilities. We see their support of local actors as an important thing, but some times they also become an actor" (Nov. 2006).

Collective changes due to participation in the IPADE programme

At the collective level, individual changes have led to a growing "sense of ownership" of recently established organisations. This is also expressed in people's desire to see that these organisations are sustainable and independent, to strengthen territorial organisations, and to promote productive projects. Secondly, we have seen an increasing participation in the public spaces of the *municipio*. Today, communal organisations have been able to increase levels of participation in municipal affairs and the CDM, but also in the *Coodinadora Civil*. Thus, they see themselves as organisations of civil society and not as extensions of the municipal government.

However, changes have not been uniform. IPADE-Siuna is the most successful case, mostly due to the previous organisational history of these communities. A growing sense of ownership was perceived in the last two visits to IPADE-Siuna. In June 2007, communal and territorial leaders were particularly enthusiastic about the three issues mentioned above. A communal leader from Waspuko arriba said that one of their goals for next year is: "…to continue working with the support of IPADE, but eventually we want to be self-sustainable, in other words, we want to come up with funds to be able to mobilise without depending on this organisation or any other" (June 2007).

Up to a certain point, the changes we saw in a year and half are the reflection of the IPADE insistence on the sustainability of the organisations. However, they are also a consequence of the (IPADE independent) consolidation of territorial organisations and their leadership. Meetings between the IPADE staff, territorial leaders, and the *Coordinadora Civil* – to which they belong as territorial organisations – has constituted an important space for discussing strategic goals for the near future. Through the participation in those meetings, territorial leaders also have started to see themselves as agents beyond communal spaces, envisioning the strength their organisation can have.

Finally, territorial leaders are moving beyond presenting small infrastructure projects to think about economic ones. This effort is being done in coordination with another national organisation and is the result of their own efforts in the search for options for local development. This move is definitely an important step in consolidating territorial organisations not only as a space to voice the needs of the territory but as active participants in the political transformation of the region.

Can changes be attributed to Diakonia-funded training?

The impact of IPADE has not been uniform. Some communities in certain municipalities present higher organisational levels that cannot be solely attributed to the IPADE programme. IPADE has nevertheless played a fundamental role in legitimising, sustaining, and strengthening communal organisations that were already in place. This is illustrated by an ex-territorial leader in El Ocote, Siuna: "I got involved in a communal organisation in 1997 when *Medicos del Mundo* came to design a development committee. Before *them* there was a communal organisation, but it wasn't legitimised by the municipal government. After *Medicos del Mundo* came IPADE, and they continued helping us" (June 2007).

Siuna is the *municipio* where the outcome of IPADE activities is most obvious: communities are better organised, they participate in municipal meetings, and have generally achieved an independent position. The "most successful cases" are those of communities that have an organisational history – they were cooperatives during the 1980s. These are comparatively older communities, and although in the past they received many migrants, today they have fewer than the communities of Bonanza. Because these communities are close to the main road we find schools and, in general, higher levels of education among peasants in the region. They are also frequently visited by other NGOs and governmental institutions.

As mentioned in the subsection on women's participation, women from Siuna have worked with various NGOs and have organised small groups in their communities. They were outspoken and expressed a stronger sense of security compared to women interviewed in Bonanza. The communal organisations visited in Bonanza are still frail, and local organisation is incipient. One of the reasons is that communities tend to be very recently formed (around three years ago). Furthermore, most local inhabitants do not share a sense of communal space, since they live far away from each other. It is also a region with high levels of migration. Few organisations know about them or visit them.

In contrast to Siuna, in Bonanza communal members feel they depended on IPADE to be organised. In addition, IPADE staff in Bonanza work with a migrant population whose work ethic differs from that of non-migrant peasants from *municipalities* like Siuna. In Bonanza, migrants stress an ethic of "freedom" and individuality that, at some point, leads them to perceive "or-

ganisations" as hindrances to the achievement of their personal goals. An IPADE staff member said: "…you can see that the ones who want to be part of communal organisations are the poorest ones because they have nothing to lose and think that they can gain something. Once their economic condition changes, they leave the organisation because they have these ideas about freedom and working individually" (Bonanza, June 2007). As the comment above illustrates, communal members in many cases get organised to achieve a specific goal, generally a particular infrastructure project. Once the project is achieved the local organisation disintegrates. Thus, to be organised can be seen as a means to achieve something in the moment, and not an end in itself.

In Siuna, while most communal members see the organisation as a means to achieve something, some of them also see it as an end. It was as organised groups that many of the ex-cooperatives with which IPADE works in Siuna were able to keep going after the 1990s. To be organised was a conscious decision to confront political and economic changes. "After the FSLN defeat we felt in despair, we wondered "What is going to happen now?" But then we gained strength and we thought, "If we separate, if we leave the cooperative, we can lose, otherwise we won't. And so we continued here" (Las Quebradas, Nov. 2006).

Conclusions

Thus, IPADE has given local leaders the necessary tools and the sense of security that is gained from increased knowledge and from acquiring means to defend their interest in new municipal spaces. The pressure that organisations like IPADE exert upon municipal authorities has made it difficult for municipal governments to simply disregard communal organisations and demands.

However, IPADE's programme has also presented some weaknesses. According to statements of the beneficiaries and the experienced lack of progress in the field of ethnic relations, it has not developed a culturally sensitive programme and it has not adapted its programme to strengthen communities that are organisationally weak. Dominant political perceptions about IPADE continue to weaken its work with certain municipal governments. For Mayagna communities in Bonanza, IPADE is a racially biased organisation that is accused of having supported Mestizos.

Furthermore, communities with weaker organisational structures, though demonstrating some levels of progress, have also presented an increasing dependency on Diakonia's partner organisation. IPADE needs to re-evaluate its programme in that area, since differences in beneficiaries' ethnicity, but also migratory history, educational background, and organisational experience (particularly relevant in the case of women), demand a different approach than that utilised in better organised communities.

Despite its efforts to dissociate itself from political parties, IPADE continues to be perceived as a Sandinista organisation that belongs to the FSLN. This is a difficult issue, especially because the organisation cannot simply escape its own history. IPADE has tried to overcome this impediment by emphasising technical aspects and underlining its non-political stance. Nonetheless, it has been easier for it to work with Sandinista ex-cooperatives due to their organisational levels and their proximity to Siuna than to include in its programme more remote communities that happen to be liberally oriented or dominated.

In conclusion, IPADE's programme has been fundamental to consolidating local organisations and strengthening spaces of municipal participation. However, it has faced problems due to the organisation's political origins and the "replication" of its programme without taking into account important differences among beneficiaries.

Individual changes due to participation in CEDEHCA's programme

As in IPADE's case, people participating in CEDEHCA's programme, particularly the young members of JENH, affirmed that working with the organisation has changed the way they perceive themselves, their role in society, and their capacity to make a difference. Many interviewees said that the experience of being part of JENH made them grow up: "When you participate in the groups you develop as a person, you can see other points of view and you grow up. I also have learned many things, like how to organise people and conduct workshops because we organise the training we have received for young people in other communities" (Bilwi, March 2006). We could see part of a process of becoming adult and also becoming a political subject, particularly after national elections in November 2006. Compared to our first meeting (March 2006), on the second one (November 2006) many expressed a deeper interest in the participation of JENH in municipal processes and the discussion of what autonomy is.

In November 2006, one man described the actions JENH's members had undertaken:

"We proposed to municipal authorities the need for JEHN to meet with the municipal council to present a project. Municipal authorities said that it wasn't necessary for us to meet them, that they could present the project for us. We didn't like that…" (Nov. 2006).

Debating political issues within the group before national elections, participating in local workshops about autonomous rights, and working as volunteer electoral observers in national and regional elections contribute to developing the members' sense of becoming "democratically useful", reaffirming them as more than a group of young people who "hang out".

Human rights promoters have also emphasised the importance that acquiring knowledge through CEDEHCA's workshops has had in their work. A

woman from the "El Cocal" neighborhood in Bilwi said: "…I promote meetings with people from our neighborhood to talk about individual human rights.… People know me in the neighborhood and they know that the workshops in which I participate can help us solve local problems" (March 2006). Furthermore, CEDEHCA's positive coordination with municipal authorities in Waspam has also improved relations between human rights promoters and the Waspam municipal government. "We have learned to discuss issues with local authorities, and they have learned about our role as human rights defenders. Now people look us up more often than they did before, the report of abuses has increased, and we have much more to do" (Waspam, March 2006).

The position that human rights promoters hold in their communities and the respectful relations they have with CEDEHCA's staff member play a fundamental role in their communal work. On the one hand, human rights promoters feel respected by CEDEHCA because the organisation is not imposing on or bypassing them but recognising their leadership. On the other hand, communal members respect human rights promoters and listen to them, to a great extent because they are also local leaders.

In Miskito communities, local leaders are elected by the community and, ideally, they are removed by the community should people not be satisfied with their work. In that case, CEDEHCA would have to start working with another human rights promoter and train him or her. Human rights promoters perceive CEDEHCA's workshops as a space where they can learn other ways to try to solve local problems. However, particularly in the case of rural communities, promoters have also felt helpless due to the poor accompaniment that CEDEHCA gives them. Although they understand the reasons why CEDEHCA has not been able to increase its presence in the region, they ask for a change.

Collective changes due to participation in CEDEHCA's programme

At the collective level, one can see that some members of civil society in Waspam and Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi) have gained knowledge about individual human rights, in particular rights as women, children, and youth. In addition, young people are aware not only of their rights, but also of their obligations. For instance, as mentioned above, they are exerting pressure at the municipal level to create spaces of participation for young people. However, one of CEDEHCA's weaknesses, as we see it, is the limited impact it has at the institutional level.

CEDEHCA's relations with the municipal government in Waspam have been positive. Together they have supported the formation of a commission on women, children, and youth. Through that commission, and with the support of other local NGOs, they promote programmes for youth groups, women, and children. However, the municipal government is frail and has difficulties in extending its attention to rural communities. CEDEHCA, local

NGOs, and the local government cooperate financially with each other to be able, in emergency cases, to travel and visit rural communities. Still, on a daily basis most of their work is in the centre of the municapilty, while the most pressing problems are found in rural communities: plagues, flooding, hunger, poverty, violence against women, and drug traffic, among other things.

CEDEHCA's experience with the municipal government in Puerto Cabezas has been different. The chief of the women's police office in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas) describes the problem: "The municipality has tried to control the commission on women, children, and youth, where our institution and CE-DEHCA participate. The members reject that, since all of us have the right to decide, not only the municipality. That's why at the beginning they didn't support the commission … but I think now they understand that our goal is not to take their space but to support each other's work" (Bilwi, Nov. 2006). Although this woman described a change in authorities' attitudes regarding local organisations, members of CEDEHCA and of JENH still felt that local authorities maintained an antagonistic relationship with them. This hindered the cooperation between both organisations and, to a certain extent, limited CEDEHCA's training and advocacy activities.

The coordination with the local police force in both municipalities has been very positive. The police force underlines two important changes after working with CEDEHCA: (i) it conceives of human rights as an issue to be taken into account; (ii) it attempts to work with activities that legitimate its role not as a repressive force but as one that cares about citizen security. The change has been one of moving from conflictive to non-conflictive relations between CEDEHCA and the police force over the time span of the evaluation. The police chief of Waspam affirmed: "We have come to see CEDEHCA as an ally that helps us improve our work" (June 2007). This cooperation has been particularly successful in respect to the women's police office; various activities have been coordinated, from mutual legal support to "…accompanying us on night rounds to check if alcohol is being sold to minors and if child prostitution is going on in some night clubs. CEDEHCA helps us to close those centres, even if only temporarily" (chief of women's police office in Bilwi, Nov. 2006).

Can changes be attributed to Diakonia-funded training?

Changes in the beneficiaries' knowledge about democracy and human rights, or their increasing participation in local spaces, cannot be attributed solely to CEDEHCA. However, CEDEHCA has played a fundamental role in building local capacities and fostering people's participation in relevant local processes: from communal legal support to training human rights promoters, to conducting workshops about children's rights or sex education at school. CE-DEHCA has also been fundamental in educating the young generation about the meaning of autonomy and the discussions that hinder national democratic processes, among them institutional racism.

In the case of the police force, changes within its organisation regarding issues such as human rights can be attributed to its work with CEDEHCA, but also to external pressures from other institutions (other human rights groups, women's organisations, etc.) as well as internal ones. As in the other country chapters of the report, we stress that this does not downplay the role CEDEHCA has had in changes within local police stations. In the case of Waspam, it is partially thanks to local demands made by organisations like CEDEHCA that a women's police office will soon be opened in the region.

Human rights promoters, particularly in the capitals of both municipalities (Waspam and Puerto Cabezas), have also been supported by other organisations, like the OEA *(Organización de Estados Americanos* – Organization of American States). However, as in the case of the police, the CEDEHCA role has been fundamental in their training as human rights promoters. CEDEHCA's office has also become a place where promoters can look for advice and support in their work.

In the case of young members of JENH, CEDEHCA promoted their organisation. Members of JENH have participated in workshops given by other local and national NGOs; however, it has been mainly CEDEHCA that has motivated them to get involved in communal activities. JENH's members have engaged in discussion ranging from political parties to sexual preferences. They have talked about racism within their own homes and institutional forms of racism expressed in national laws. They openly express the need to talk about domestic violence and the necessity to let young people participate in municipal spaces. Through their work in JENH, young women and men have learned to value who they are and what they do. The educational process has offered them other "leadership roles", other ways to confront authority, other spaces where they can have fun and from which they can also help their community. However, despite such important achievements, CEDEHCA has not been able to coordinate municipal actions that would have a larger impact in society as a whole.

CEDEHCA has faced problems in two areas: sustainability and institutional impact. It is not clear to us how CEDEHCA-Puerto Cabezas and Waspam are influencing regional and national organisations to coordinate actions. This is particularly the case in advocacy work and training of human rights promoters. In addition, collective changes need more than support in training and advocacy work; they are also a matter of influencing local actors to participate in institutional processes. It is through their participation in such processes that the knowledge of local actors can be used to improve local projects, to exert new forms of leadership, to propose new actions, and to learn by doing. Working at the institutional level also means coordinating actions with local governments and other organisations in order to push for institutional changes that will have an impact in society as a whole. Although the weaknesses in this is area are also due to the reluctance of municipal governments to open spaces for participation, it is important to ask by what

means CEDEHCA and its beneficiaries can press for more openness in local governments.

General conclusions

Through the analysis of interviews with beneficiaries and the observation of changes at the national, regional, and local level during a year and half, this chapter has attempted to illuminate three overarching concerns:

How do individuals and groups change?

At the individual level, it could be argued that the beneficiaries of Diakonia-funded programmes display an increased knowledge about their rights and obligations in democracy. They demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem and, in IPADE's case, a greater understanding of how municipal governments work and how spaces for political participation can be used.

At the group level, such individual changes (particularly linked to self-esteem and training) led to increasing sustainability of local organisations in certain regions and to a strengthening sense of ownership, i.e., the local organisations are conceived of as their own instead of as impositions from above. We have also noticed changing perceptions of what organisation can achieve by moving beyond traditional organisational work and agendas to propose new projects. In the case of CEDEHCA this can be seen in JENH, a youth organisation that aims at opening up new spaces of participation (political and social) for youth.

Why do individual and groups change?

Changes in the beneficiaries' perception about democracy, participation, or human rights cannot be attributed solely to the programmes supported by Diakonia. However, those programmes have been fundamental in sustaining local organisations, training new leaders and promoters, forming new organisations, and disseminating information about novel ways of exercising leadership.

What are individuals and groups able to change after having changed themselves?

The programmes of IPADE and CEDEHCA are fostering three fundamental changes in local political culture: (i) the appreciation of non-political spaces; (ii) the emphasis on the importance of capacities rather than influences; (iii) challenging authority through institutionalised channels.

Indications of this are the comments of a leader in Siuna and of a member of JENH in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas). From the former: "We insist that the territorial organisation has to be non-political as well as that all the communal leaders be involved in it. In that way we can work better, we can exert pressure on political candidates so that they will commit to development goals, and we can put pressure on the municipal government to take us into account" (Nov. 2006). From the latter: "For many young people, one of the

only options they have to get involved in activities is through a party's youth group. I don't like that. I believe one has to be recognised because of one's capacities and not because of your political affiliation. That is why I come to CEDEHCA's youth group" (March 2006).

For communal leaders, the municipal government is no longer an untouchable institution. People have come to see the organisations in which they participate as groups that have a say in municipal affairs. At the institutional level, municipal governments have had to open municipal spaces of participation. IPADE is playing a fundamental role in that process by supporting local organisations and civil society groups in exerting pressure. In the case of CEDEHCA, work on promoting advocacy has not translated into observable changes to the same extent, due, as we argue, to the fact that it does not offer ongoing support. The impact of CEDEHCA's work can mainly be seen in its work with human rights promoters. At the local level, people consider that the greatest impact of CEDEHCA's programme is with its youth group. At the institutional level, although it has been essential in giving attention to the rights of children, in offering women a space where they can receive legal support, and in promoting the organisation of young people, CEDEHCA-Puerto Cabezas has faced difficulties in coordinating activities with municipal governments. In addition, advocacy work, although important, when it is not accompanied by other programmes does not satisfactorily produce the necessary transformation of the actual structural causes of the problem.

9. The continuous search for alternatives in Guatemala

"The law is like the cholera – only the poor are dying from it."

Totonicapán, June 20, 2007

When we meet again in June 2007, Don Carlos,[30] indigenous ex-mayor and beneficiary of Diakonia-funded training, is upset by the current tendency among politicians in Totonicapán, Guatemala, to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor. Politics in Guatemala is going through a process of economisation, he says, through the buying and selling of political posts. Despite post-conflict democratisation, clientelism prevails. He implicates the current government of the GANA party in one of his examples. People in his community were recently offered subsidised fertilisers. They paid in advance and then lined up to collect what they had been promised only to find that GANA made the delivery conditional on membership in the ruling party. This had happened just a few days before, on Sunday, 18 June, but is nothing new. The same thing occurred under the previous government. Moreover, the current mayor of Carlos' community is with the FRG party, and he has set up an association in the village, *Associación Parcialidad Velasco*, through which he tries to increase his influence. It has sought to control the communal water supply, and Carlos, referring to legal rights and freedom of association, has fought it and refuses to enlist. For him, learning how to manoeuvre in the legal system so that the post-conflict reforms of the Guatemalan state will be of concrete benefit to the poor is key to an alternative development. He laughs sarcastically and says: "You know, in Guatemala the law is like the cholera – only the poor are dying from it."

This chapter of the report deals with democracy promotion through both the formation and the successive training of grass-root leaders, as performed by the Guatemalan non-governmental organisations *Centro Pluricultural para la Democracia* (CPD) and *Fundación para el Desarollo del Area Rural* (FUNDAR). Whereas the CPD promotion of local structures of Mayan law and authority in the county of Totonicapán is informed by an opposition to the continuously Ladino-dominated state, FUNDAR works to consolidate the legal framework established by recent reforms. It organises the poor in the communities of San Andrés Semetabaj, Sololá, in associations of various sorts of production and trains them with the aim of making them active participants

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[30] The names of the interviewees in this chapter are pseudonyms.

in community and municipal councils aimed at decentralising power and promoting local political participation. The aims, methods, and objectives used by these two organisations converge in several respects, like the work in indigenous areas with local leaders and the efforts to promote political participation in the new development councils. However, some obvious differences between the aims of CPD and FUNDAR point to the pragmatism of Diakonia in what has seemed to us an ideologically unconditional support of local initiatives over time and flexibility when it comes to accepting political diversity among the partners. It also demonstrates that such an open-ended support might contribute to aggravating both political and social tensions within target groups without necessarily producing the intended political outcomes over time.[31]

In the following we will outline recent political developments in Guatemala before we return to an analysis of the outcome in 2006 and 2007 of the work of CPD and FUNDAR. As it is for Don Carlos in Totonicapán, the law, how to interpret it, and also how to value and relate to it will be our central concerns.

1.   Political development relevant to the objectives of the study

Democratisation since the peace accords – Decentralisation and indigenous rights

In 1996, the last in a series of fourteen peace accords was signed between the Guatemalan government – at that time presided over by President Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen, of the National Advancement Party *(Partido de Avanzada Nacional,* PAN) – and the guerrilla army, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity *(Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca,* URNG). The peace accords, signed between successive Guatemalan governments and the URNG in the 1990s, were aimed at terminating the 36-year internal armed conflict and establishing a firm and lasting peace in Guatemala. The accords, at least in theory, were aimed therefore at addressing the roots of the armed conflict, and at establishing the framework for future democratic governance.

The challenges facing Guatemalan state and society in the aftermath of the internal armed conflict were grave, however, and presented serious obstacles to the construction of a firm and lasting peace, obstacles that were intensified by the lack of political will of elite actors from a variety of social and political sectors to take democratisation and peace-building seriously. The principal

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[31] In its commentary on the first draft of this report, Diakonia correctly emphasised that CPD is working within the current legal framework of Guatemala. Our aim in highlighting the difference between CPD and FUNDAR in this respect stems first from extended interviews with CPD staff on three occasions in 2006 and 2007 in which a to us very interesting critique of the Guatemalan state and Guatemalan racism was explained to be the basis for developing new strategies of organisation and political mobilisation. The roots of the organisation in the armed left were also openly discussed, both with CPD representatives and with beneficiaries. To this we will return below; suffice it to mention here that such a politicised past cannot be ignored in this study due to a fear of de-legitimising the organisation. What interests us is precisely the way in which such a past is perceived, both by CPD itself, the beneficiaries, and Diakonia.

factors included: extreme levels of poverty compounded by social, cultural, economic, and political exclusion (particularly of Guatemala's 40% indigenous population); a weak, corrupt, and unrepresentative political party system; centralisation of power; polarisation; severe discrimination against marginalised groups (including women, indigenous peoples, and youth); a weakened and disarticulated civil society; a severely weak justice system guaranteeing impunity for human rights violations; continuing military control over civilian affairs; and the legacy of the internal armed conflict. It left 200,000 victims, at least 83% of whom were indigenous; 45,000 disappeared; severe levels of internal displacement – approximately 1.5 million people within Guatemala; and at least 45,000 refugees who fled to neighbouring countries.

Significantly, Guatemala's democratisation process was distinct from those of other Latin American countries. Unlike the processes of political transition in Argentina and Chile, for example, organised civil society mobilisation in Guatemala did not occur until the late 1980s, *after* the end of military rule. As a result, civil society did not, as it had done in the Southern Cone, play any role in Guatemala's political transition, which took place between 1982 and 1985 and brought with it the return, albeit nominally, to civilian government. In the initial stages of the democratic transition, even after the election of civilian President Vinicio Arévalo Cerezo in 1985, the process remained strictly under the control of the armed forces, and, as such, severely limited in its scope: it was, above all, an "authoritarian" transition. Only by the late 1980s did the transition take on a more "democratic" character. It was from this moment onwards that civil society began to assume an important role in Guatemala's democratisation process. The norms of political engagement were stabilised most evidently, however, after the initiation of the formal peace process in 1994, which was accompanied by the presence of a United Nations Verification Mission (MINUGUA), increasing financial commitments from the international community, and the formalised role of civil actors and their participation in the peace process through the Civil Society Assembly *(Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil, ASC)*.

The end of the 1990s represented an important turning point in the consolidation of democracy in Guatemala, after a very brief period of optimism and demonstrated possibilities of real change after the signing of the accords. Moreover, deep-rooted structural problems remained almost unchanged in the country, compounding the aforementioned obstacles to democratisation. In this context, with the serious urban-rural division, democratic consolidation remained partial and disjunctive at best.

Historically, there has existed a weak and hierarchical relationship between civil society and political society in Guatemala, and political parties have systematically not fulfilled their role as mediators between civil society and the state. Rather, political parties, representing the narrow interests of social groups or sectors, have lacked legitimacy within civil society and been tem-

porary vehicles for personalistic politics, emerging and disappearing from one political administration to the next. In this context, no government has ever been re-elected, and politicians shift from party to party, seeking to extend their opportunities and influence.

Moreover, civil society organisations, with the exception of those far-right groups representing business and land interests, have not demonstrably been able to influence political parties with regard to the development of a national political agenda founded upon human rights protection, the rule of law, policies oriented towards integral human development, and citizen security. Almost without exception, in the run-up to elections political parties develop populist policies at local, regional, and national levels that address problems specific to the locality, rather than articulating an integral vision or agenda. In this regard, Guatemalans have historically placed more significance on their municipal authorities than on the governing national party, given that local government has had the responsibility overall of providing them with more tangible results on a daily basis, for example, roads, schools, and irrigation. However, local government has been far from democratic and transparent in Guatemala, and authorities have historically been run on a network of favoritism and nepotism, lacking democratic practices and accountability. For this reason, as we shall see below, the development of legislation concerning decentralisation and local community development, and reforms to the Municipal Code resulting from the peace accords, have, at least on paper, been of considerable importance in redressing these problems.

An important aspect of the assistance programmes of Diakonia in Guatemala has focused on the newly introduced or reformed legislation oriented towards decentralisation and municipal reform. The legislation, introduced in 2002, sought to establish the administrative and fiscal conditions for more transparent, accountable, and democratic local governance at the municipal level, including the legal mechanisms to permit citizen participation in public decision making, particularly through reformed community, municipal, and departmental development councils – the Cocodes, Comudes, and Codedes, as they are called. The new Municipal Code aimed to reorganise municipalities, including the establishment and strengthening of planning and finance offices, combined with the introduction of Offices of Municipal Planning *(Oficina de Planificación Municipal,* OPMs) as a means of facilitating the relationship between local authorities and communities. Legislation established the foundation and strengthening of community, municipal, and departmental development councils, as well as the introduction of concrete instruments for joint stakeholder planning in order to create conditions for greater citizen participation and for the development of new decision-making processes at local levels. These instruments seek to institutionalise improvements in transparency, accountability, decision making, and participation, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of local government.

President Oscar Berger, of the Grand National Alliance Party *(Gran Alianza Nacional,* GANA), a coalition of right-wing parties, representing above all the business elite, was sworn in as president in January 2004 under a proposed platform of citizen security and anti-corruption. The coalition included various hardline ex–military officials, such as Otto Pérez Molina, who was commander of the Nebaj military base in the highland department of El Quiché during the internal armed conflict. Despite heavy-handed *(mano dura)* security measures, such as the mobilisation of combined police and military patrols called *Combined Forces,* in direct contravention of the peace accords, and alarmist rhetoric by the government and the press, violent crime has not declined since January 2004; in fact, it has slowly been on the increase, particularly the killings of young women and the violence generated by street gangs throughout the country. In this context, under the GANA government, evictions of peasants from their land, sometimes in contexts of land occupations, have increased dramatically, and have very often been carried out illegally with the corroboration of local judges. Security has now become one of the key daily concerns of Guatemalans, and the Berger government continues to implement measures that contravene the demilitarisation measures set out in the peace accords. However, the government refuses to engage seriously in the debate concerning the roots of the violence and criminality in Guatemala, particularly the issue of poverty and marginalisation and the lack of important legislation, including laws to govern Guatemala's 80,000-strong private security police (there are 20,000 police officers), and a law to regulate the carrying of arms.

The two assistance programmes in focus here are situated in the highland departments of Sololá, Quetzaltenango, and Totonicapán. A high proportion of the population of these departments is indigenous, and rural poverty remains an urgent and extreme issue in both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. The regions experienced high levels of political violence during the internal armed conflict, although repression and military violence in these areas did not reach the same intensity as in other highland departments such as Huehuetenango, Chimaltenango, El Quiché, and the Verapaces. For example, according to the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission, 4% of all forced disappearances took place in Sololá between 1962 and 1996, while a figure for the department of Quetzaltenango was not presented (CEH 1999: Vol. II: 210). Similarly, of a total of 626 recorded massacres, 14 took place in Sololá, and 5 took place in Quetzaltenango, as opposed, for example, to 327 in El Quiché and 83 in Huehuetenango (CEH 1999: Vol. III: 257). Furthermore, and significantly, traditional authority structures in these communities, while having suffered from the effects of the internal armed conflict, were perhaps not quite as decimated as in the Ixil and Ixcán regions of El Quiché, where militarisation and political violence destroyed the social fabric within indigenous communities and subjected them to unprecedented levels of military control.

In this regard, of all highland departments in Guatemala, perhaps Sololá, Quetzaltenango, and Totonicapán, while demonstrating levels of extreme poverty and exclusion typical of other highland departments with majority indigenous populations, present comparatively less grave, although still extremely concerning, historical, and contemporary socio-political and economic conditions.

The national political processes in 2006 and 2007 and
their local repercussions in the areas of Sololá, Quetzaltenango, and Totonicapán

Between 2006 and 2007, the political context in Guatemala was determined principally by the upcoming 2007 presidential, congressional, and mayoral elections, and elections for the Central American Parliament. Consequently, during the pre-electoral period, as has historically been the case in Guatemala, the country increasingly faced growing levels of violence, political electioneering, and uncertainty, as political parties and social sectors struggled to maintain informal and formal influence over decision-making structures and participation in the formal channels of power, above all in Congress.

Of grave concern during 2006 and 2007 were the growing levels of citizen insecurity in the country, including an escalating murder rate and an overall increase in levels of crime, including organised crime. Systemic institutional weakness, including that of the judiciary, the National Civilian Police (PNC), and the public prosecutor's office, has brought with it an unprecedented level of impunity, meaning in practice that the ongoing and now escalating crime wave has continued unchecked and little disincentive exists to dissuade criminals from engaging in criminal activity. Criminal and social violence in Guatemala, therefore, have reached unprecedented levels across all areas. Notably, according to a range of national and international institutions, 98% of violent crimes, including murder, remain unsolved in Guatemala.

During 2006 and 2007, threats, attacks, and acts of intimidation against human rights defenders intensified; in this context, there were continuing threats against organisations working to clarify the grave human rights violations committed during the internal armed conflict, and a marked increase in attacks against those individuals and organisations working on economic, social, and cultural rights issues. In this regard, there have been widespread demonstrations against different government economic policies, including protests against the Central America Free Trade Agreement.

There was little progress achieved in Guatemala between 2006 and 2007 in terms of human development for indigenous peoples. Consequently, the realisation of indigenous peoples' economic and social rights, including access to land and state education and health services, is characterised by an extreme deficit. Moreover, for indigenous peoples the exercise of the fundamental human right of access to justice, including both access to the state justice system and the promotion and protection of traditional systems of indigenous justice administration, is severely limited.

In other areas, however, most emphatically indigenous peoples' civil, political, and some cultural rights, there have been some important advances in the last few years. There have been important steps taken in recent years to consolidate the participation of indigenous people in the Guatemalan state, most significantly through the decentralisation laws and reforms to the Municipal Code of 2002. Indigenous peoples have taken advantage of these measures, as well as of the relative political spaces open to them at the national level, to construct an important although still incipient participation in the state. In this regard, there now exist over thirty specific units or institutions in the Guatemalan state that give direct or delegated attention to indigenous peoples; it is the mandate of the Inter-Institutional Coordinator for Indigenous Peoples to coordinate these entities. However, the lack of an adequate budget, and ongoing institutional racism within the state, have meant that these entities are not able to function effectively and appear to be nothing more than symbolic forms of representation and participation. Moreover, the actual structure of the Guatemalan state in itself remains unchanged, meaning that participation is very much based upon the goodwill of particular state actors, and is therefore temporary, contextual, and individual, rather than being an institutionalised, systemic, and delegated participation and representation of *peoples*.

2. Diakonia and its partners – Aims and contexts[32]

In the Diakonia application to RELA for 2004–2006, the expected result of the programme is defined as a deepened knowledge and consciousness among members of the target group, so that they can contribute to a socially sustainable development.[33] Diakonia explains in discussions with the team of evaluators that education or training should be added to knowledge and consciousness as cornerstones in a qualitative participation. The ability to contribute to change is also emphasised in terms of an ability to transform "structures of society and systems that create and sustain inequality and poverty" (see Diakonia 2004:66–77). Furthermore, participation is promoted not in quantitative but in qualitative terms, and when specifying what this quality is, Diakonia states: "Necessarily, this has to do, for example, with attitudes and how [beneficiaries] see their own role in relation to the specific programme objectives of each country" (ibid.:23). Such expectations of tar-

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[32] This section draws to a lesser extent than the other country chapters on the views and visions of Diakonia itself. For unfortunate and unintended reasons, no interview was ever conducted with Diakonia staff in Guatemala. Therefore, we want to make clear that views, even on Diakonia, are mainly restricted to coming from partner staff and beneficiaries. However, we have benefited from detailed and critical commentary from Diakonia on a first draft of this report and have included a response to those comments in the text and in footnotes when we have found reason to do so. In order to compensate for a lack of focus on the donor agency in the analysis below, we will begin with some brief remarks on Diakonia policy in relation to the area (Central America) and the theme under study here (capacity development through training of leaders).

[33] Diakonia 2004. *Solicitud de Diakonia a RELA: Período 2004–2006. Parte B. America Central*. This document has been referred to by Diakonia when general and program objectives have been discussed with the team of evaluators.

get-group members are then extended to include more specific objectives. Target groups are expected, after having been trained, to be able to contribute either to local development, or to gender equity, or to the defence of human rights, or to improved economic conditions, or to the transformation of racist and oppressive structures. Target groups are also expected to have improved their organisational capacity.

On an operational level, the programme objectives are (1) improved knowledge in order to transform reality in above-mentioned directions, (2) organisation and exercise of leadership for the transformation of reality, and (3) knowledge put to practice in order to achieve transformations.

Against these objectives (on both levels), Diakonia outlines a number of so-called risks, or obstacles that could hamper the expected results. These risks are listed as divisions within civil society and its organisations, insufficient funding of partner organisations, corruption, repression or persecution of partner, lack of security in general and economic and social terms, fear of participation or lack of motivation, increasing violence against women, social structures violating human rights, low levels of capacity and competence among authorities, influence of party politics on democratic institutions, and effects of globalisation as obstacles to active citizenship.

While all of these risks emerged as highly relevant in the studied context, we note two things of special interest to us. First, in this particular line of work of the partner organisations, Diakonia objectives give responsibility for change to target groups and target-group members. Secondly, risks are conceptualised as being positioned outside the programmes, i.e., as obstacles to desired achievement and results.

In what follows, our discussion will revolve around those two aspects, and we will investigate the relevance of placing such a responsibility on target groups of the kinds we have visited. We will also combine a focus on risks exogenous to the projects with factors that hamper or contradict expected results but that are endogenous to, or created by, the intervention or programme itself.

In one of the projects of one of the organisations analysed below, trained leaders disappear from community work after a year, which leads us to the conclusion that there is a lack of sustainable effects in this particular case. Diakonia's comment on this critique is interesting, since it highlights other similar dilemmas in relation to participation and democracy. One is the very nature of democracy and the actual point of replacing old leaders. The other aspect brought up by Diakonia in this regard is migration. Diakonia, in its commentary on this chapter of the report, argues that those who have been trained in Diakonia-funded programmes are those who tend to leave communities because now they can – they have acquired a capacity that might be used in a way other than the one desired. We agree empirically, but instead of seeing this negative development as proof of beneficiaries' empowerment (and thus an unavoidable price to be paid for knowledge and consciuosness),

we also see it as proof of the desperate economic needs of the beneficiaries – needs that are ever more difficult to meet if time has to be spent on unpaid political participation.

Centro Pluricultural para la Democracia – CPD

CPD developed out of the URNG, and was founded by ex-members of the insurgency in a direct response to the peace agreement of 1996 with the purpose of reintegrating ex-guerrillas. This is not part of the official history of the organisation, as the Diakonia commentary on this report remarked, but for several reasons we found it increasingly relevant to highlight. The issue of war legacies, in many ways hidden, "silenced", and difficult to interpret in the Guatemalan material, emerged here. An organisation with roots in the insurgency, and moreover, as we argue, with an explicitly progressive political agenda, did provide us with an interesting point of departure. This political agenda, also hidden from Diakonia's sight if we judge by their comments on this report, as well as beneficiaries' and others' perception of the organisation in Totonicapán, stood out as observable war legacies in our study. To this we will return below.

The organisation seeks to strengthen local power through providing trainings, strengthening local indigenous authority structures and civil society organisations, creating spaces for political dialogue, promoting research on pertinent themes related to multiculturalism and indigenous authorities, and having a more general impact in the formal political and legal spheres. It further seeks to build the capacity of local indigenous authorities through strengthening their relationship with the formal state authorities at local, departmental, and regional levels, and through concentrating integrally on the political, judicial, and administrative functions of local indigenous authorities, what CPD calls the "maximum authority". The strengthening of local indigenous authorities is achieved not only through the training of local leaders, but also by the consolidation of the practice of indigenous customary law.

CPD is also running a parallel programme aimed at strengthening the local state authorities at the community and municipal levels, particularly through training and the consolidation of citizen participation in the recently formed development councils. While we were able, in the first visit, to talk to a large number of beneficiaries in this programme, we gradually directed our attention to the work with indigenous authorities. The reasons for this were several. We understood the CPD work with representatives of the Cocodes in Quetzaltenango to be trapped in a difficult position, since the practice of the legal reform in the area of Quetzaltenango was effectively resisted by local mayors and political parties, indeed one of the "risks" outlined by Diakonia (see above). An even more important reason for our selective focus on this part of the programme, however, was the view expressed by leading members of the CPD staff that the indigenous authority structure in Totonicapán represents such an interesting alternative to state law that CPD not only pro-

moted it, but also used it as an example in its work in other areas, as well as in the nationwide and even international work on indigenous issues in which CPD is an active player. Crucial to the approach of the organisation is the position that democracy cannot be measured solely on the basis of the inclusion of indigenous peoples in governmental structures, but also on respect for the coexistence of traditional forms of governance, parallel to the state form. This was discussed by the ideologues of CPD as the first step in an attempt that would later result in a further and much more far-reaching reform of the state itself. We emphasise that there is nothing illegal, militant, or revolutionary in the practices of this organisation – but we undeniably did find the profile and activities of CPD to be something else than "pluricultural" (the "P" in "CPD"). It explicitly, consciously (and interestingly) worked to promote and politically consolidate one of Guatemala's "cultures" (provided we refer to the Maya indigenous majority of Guatemala as one culture).

CPD works with financial and educational support of the organisation of indigenous mayors in the county of Totonicapán, known as the *junta de los 48 cantónes* (Board of the 48 Communities, henceforth B48C) of San Francisco el Alto. A "cantón" is a territorial unit with roots in colonial administration. Considering the culture- and community-promoting work of CPD and the local mayors, we opt for a translation of *cantón* as "community" in the following.

CPD also promotes education of incoming authorities so that they can be versed in the laws of what it refers to as "the Other", i.e., the Ladino state. CPD lends logistical support; it pays for office material, meeting expenses including the leasing of meeting venues, food service, and technical support like the preparation of Powerpoint presentations or the elaboration of financial reports, projects, or budgets. CPD also lends legal advice. Its strategic goal is to find the legal mechanism to transform municipal laws so that, in the near future, municipal authorities can be elected based on indigenous laws, i.e., so that indigenous authority is no longer restricted to the community sphere alone.

"Our main interest is to try to find the connections between municipal instruments and traditional law – to work in and with the municipality without breaking with traditional norms and, in that way, search for ways to influence public policy…We want to democratise the state from positions within communal space" (CPD, Nov. 2006).

In the case of *municipios* where indigenous authorities (communal mayors) have lost legitimacy, as in Quetzaltenango, CPD works with formal municipal structures like the Cocodes and the municipal government. In *municipios* where communal mayors have not yet formed an umbrella organisation such as the B48C, CPD supports them to do so. It was striking, however, that over the course of the 18 months that we were able to follow events and the activities of CPD, Cocodes in and around Quetzaltenango were not developing

according to state expectations; on the contrary. For example, CPD is in-
volved in training members of the Cocode in the Quetzaltenango municipio
of Cantel. In June 2007 Doña Isabela tells us about the problems with the
municipal mayor, whom she describes as an authoritarian character. Isabela
was elected a member of the Cocode four years ago, and in our first meeting
in 2006 she was still optimistic. But there is no work going on now. This is not
an "innocent" conflict or an issue of simple neglect, according to Isabela.
The *denuncias* she and the others were able to make turned the Cocode into a
politically troublesome entity in the eyes of the mayor. This reflects a ten-
dency evident in many interviews that a successful training of grass-root
leaders, one that has made them articulate and outspoken, has had the para-
doxical effect of producing a counter-reaction that has closed the newly
opened spaces for political participation.[34]

Fundacion para el Desarollo del Area Rural – FUNDAR

FUNDAR, on the other hand, was able to demonstrate remarkably success-
ful work within the new legal structure, successful in terms of grass-root par-
ticipation in Cocodes in San Andrés Semetabaj. According to the staff, the
project was established as a means of re-establishing accountable and par-
ticipatory civilian municipal government in the wake of the internal armed
conflict, within the framework of the 2002 legislation. The training sessions
with delegates to the newly formed councils sought to establish workable
parameters through which effective participation in community develop-
ment could be institutionalised, particularly bearing in mind the need to
strengthen the local commissions within the Cocodes: education; citizen par-
ticipation; economic development; women and children; and environment
and infrastructure. However, and as in Quetzaltenango, a continuing prob-
lem remained the de facto centralisation of power in the municipal mayor's
office and the possible opposition that the mayor could wield against these
new instruments of citizen participation in local community development.

FUNDAR's objective is thus to support people in the communities to par-
ticipate in formal municipal structures – the Cocodes and the Comudes. The
concomitant improvement of their socioeconomic condition is seen as a
means to the end of political participation, and not an end in itself. Since
membership in the councils draws on the legalisation of associations in the
communities (you become a representative in your capacity as member of an
association) this work two ways – i.e., participation improves the economic
condition, and being or becoming legalised as an economic association is
also a precondition for participation.

FUNDAR thus offers council members training in legal issues like the decen-
tralisation law and the ILO convention 169. It offers logistical support so that
council members can participate in meetings at the municipal level, and

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[34] Diakonia's commentary on this outcome implies that such a paradox is viewed as a proof of successful
training and therefore intended.

technical support and advice in matters to do with presenting communal projects to the municipality: "We have to influence processes from the state structures through the state, not outside it" (FUNDAR, Nov. 2006).

While identity politics are less central to FUNDAR than they are to CPD, economic development takes a much more prominent role. The reasons for these differences are several, but one relevant to our discussion is the proportion of Diakonia funding in the work of the two organisations. Whereas FUNDAR depends entirely on Diakonia funds in order to be able to carry out its project, CPD combines Diakonia support with that of other agencies (the organisation budget for 2006 was 3 million Quetzales, of which 1 million was provided by Diakonia; for 2007 it was 2.5 million, of which 40% was provided by Diakonia). This might influence the extent to which FUNDAR "goes by the Diakonia book" and the certain level of freedom noticeable in the work of CPD. We will return to this below.

The more "technical character" of FUNDAR does not mean that it does not engage beneficiaries in discussions about relevant social and political issues. Two of the workshops it teaches point in that direction; they are called *"incidencia política"* and *"coyuntura nacional"*. There, FUNDAR engages in discussions about issues like the TLC (CAFTA), political reforms in Guatemala, the war in Iraq, and the erection of the "migrants' wall" on the US border with Mexico.

Finally, although FUNDAR is not as politically belligerent as CPD with issues like the indigenous movement, it has taken a much more proactive role around gender issues. FUNDAR supports local women's organisations and builds much of its work on organising women in economic associations. It has pressured community assemblies to include women in the Cocode, and it has built a space where these women find the confidence to voice their opinions.

3. Problems, progress, and promises from the perspective of the users

In this section we will describe the local political context of each place before we move on to analyse the problems, progress, and promises of Diakonia-funded support for political participation as experienced and expressed by the users. That discussion is divided into the sub-themes of (3.2) leadership, (3.3) economic foundations (poverty, land, migration, subsistence), and (3.4) gender.

3.1   Introducing local contexts

Local authorities in Totonicapán (CPD) and San Andrés Semetabaj (FUNDAR)

Communal mayors in Totonicapán are elected once a year in a communal assembly. The mayors have judicial responsibilities in their communities. They solve communal conflicts in accordance with indigenous law *(derecho consuetudinario)*, working, on occasion, with the *Ministerio Público* (government office in charge of legal issues) but also, on occasion, against it. Several legal disputes in which indigenous authorities were implicated as offenders were going on in June 2007. Communal mayors are also in charge of punishing those who fail to fulfil their communal obligations or who are accused of misdemeanours. It is in some of those cases that the accused file a complaint with the *Ministerio Público*. The communal *alcaldias* are also in charge of protecting communal resources like land or water.

The communal mayors of the municipio of Totonicapán, organised as the B48C, elect a *"junta directiva"* in their annual assembly. It represents the 48 communities in meetings with municipal authorities and governmental and non-governmental organisations. It is also in charge of planning actions regarding issues of relevance to the communities. For instance, in August 2006 it organised the seizure of the American Highway linking the region to Guatemala City. On two occasions, accompanied by hundreds of people, it made demands for regulation of the price of electricity, currently in the hands of a private company; it supported the demands of the union of teachers; and it positioned itself against the privatisation of the health system.

The second visit of the team of evaluators luckily coincided with the general assembly of this organisation, and we were able to participate as observers and guests. What follows is a brief description of the event.

> Saturday morning, 4 November 2006, the newly elected communal authorities of the 44 communities and 4 neighbourhoods *(zonas)* that constitute the municipality of Totonicapán meet on the outskirts of the *cabecera municipal*. At least 400 people gather in the communal hall to elect the new *junta directiva of Los 48 cantones de Totonicapán*. Each one of the 48 cantones has had to appoint either its communal mayor or its vice-mayor to run for office in the *junta*. The levels of participation cannot go unnoticed; only 3 cantones are absent. Men, women, children, and elders are crowding the hall in what, for CPD's members, is one of the strongest expressions of the legitimacy of communal authority.

> The election begins with a Mayan ritual. Two priests from Chichicastenango have been invited to lead the ceremony, accompanied by a couple of men playing the *chirimía* and *tambor*. Afterwards, the members of the resigning *junta directiva* walk to the

podium carrying the banner of the *48 cantones* and the municipal and the national flag. Members of the traditional authorities of Chichicastenango and San Francisco el Alto and representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations in support of the *48 cantones* are present on the podium, invited as *observers* of the electoral process.

The national hymn is followed by the blessing of members of both the Catholic and the Protestant church. One of the priests and the resigning president address the assembly, giving emphasis to the importance of the moment, the responsibilities of future authorities, and the legitimacy of the process.

The 45 candidates, representing their *cantones,* walk to the podium; each gives a two-minute self-presentation to the assembly. All the candidates are men. Some introduce themselves in K'iche, but the majority in Spanish. Some are eloquent and outspoken, even to the extent of talking like mainstream politicians. That is the case for most candidates from urban areas.

After the presentations, closely followed by the assembly, each community meets to discuss who they will vote for. They have to elect 9 people to occupy the different offices in the *junta*. By midday the assembly has elected its new authorities. All the representatives of the *cantones* vote in what seems to be a highly participative election. One of the members is a vivacious young man who had impressed the assembly during his two-minute presentation. For CPD, his election is a positive step in the direction of opening up political spaces to younger generations.

We see a couple of indigenous women holding the vara in the assembly, meaning that they probably were mayors in their *cantones* (the *vara* symbolizes *alcalde* authority). It can also be that they have stepped in to represent an absent husband or father.

Because of the numbers of people in the assembly and the number of candidates, it seems plausible that people base their voting judgement on the verbal abilities of the candidates and their educational background. The self-confidence with which the candidates talked to the assembly, their ability to express themselves, and the audacity to go beyond what was required appeared to be important assets. Similarly, it seems as if the president of the new *junta* was elected based on his professional experience, which cannot be separated from political experience since he also is the director of the biggest school in the *cabecera municipal*.

The election ends with a lunch. While most people in the assembly have lunch in the hall, the newly elected *junta directiva*, the old *junta*, religious leaders, special guests (including us), and CPD's

members are invited, by CPD, to have lunch in town. During lunch, charged with official protocol, the outgoing authorities talk about issues the new authorities might confront. The new authorities thank the opportunity given and promise to honor their commitment to the communities.

This experience helped us (the evaluators) in our focus and interviews to explore topics closer to beneficiaries' concerns. It showed that a traditional authority figure enjoys considerable respect and takes on functions of both judge and police in the communities. That power, however, is not backed up by violence, but by the support of the community. This is important to mention, since it is in this sphere that CPD explores alternatives to state power (backed up by violence). The functions are those traditionally associated with the state (judge and police), but the methods differ. Proof of the tremendous impact of this form of governance is that there are very few instances of lynchings in this area. In stark contrast to prevailing rumours and misinformation in Guatemala, saying that lynchings are examples of the rule of Mayan law, the work of the *alcaldes* in Totonicapán shows that violence is instead a function of the absence of Mayan law. The work of CPD in relation to local authorities should be viewed and valued in that context.

According to the beneficiaries (and here it was difficult to find a continuity, since people stayed in office only for one year), CPD support was essential in both the actual training it provided local mayors (in the areas of law and economy, primarily), but also in a moral sense. CPD was the agency that, more than anyone else, made the connections between this local organisation and other indigenous organisations in Guatemala, making it part of the indigenous movement.

We find another kind of authority structure in the work of FUNDAR. The Cocode (communal development council) is a communal structure around which local people have to organise to present their projects to the municipal government. The Cocode is annually elected by the community assembly and is integrated by at least nine people (depending on the community size). The Cocode is a new communal structure put in place with the implementation of the decentralisation law of 2002 (see above). Unlike the *municipios* of Totonicapán, in San Andrés Semetabaj communal mayors (also called *alcaldes auxiliares)* have a more limited function: they solve minor conflicts and represent the community as *delegados* of the Cocodes. The Comude (municipal development council) is the organisation in which representatives of the *municipio's* Cocodes and municipal authorities meet to discuss communal issues. The communities elect a Cocode delegate to participate in the Comude. Although, ideally, the delegate presents his or her community's project to municipal authorities, in reality it is the municipal authorities who present to delegates the projects they can implement in the *municipio,* from which they have to choose. At the municipal level there are also commissions with members in the municipal governments and civil society. FUNDAR participates

in two of those commissions: Women, children, and youth and *Participación ciudadana*. The commissions are spaces in which members of civil society can discuss relevant municipal issues with municipal authorities and coordinate actions to attend to them.

The two strategies chosen by CPD and FUNDAR pose important questions to the organisations themselves and to organisations interested in promoting democracy in Central America. For CPD, "democracy building" is also about the transformation of unequal power structures. This means, for CPD, the active attempt to find ways of changing dominant forms of governance that have historically excluded the indigenous majority of the population. CPD, in its critique, questions not only the Ladino state but the very mechanisms it has used to build "democracy". CPD's solution is to support the enforcement of indigenous forms of governance at the municipal level.

FUNDAR is more focused on supporting local groups in technical issues pertaining to the sphere of state institutions. However, it works with all communal members, not only with organic intellectuals or social leaders. In that sense, it seems to be closer to the realities of common indigenous people, something that lends strength to its work. Like most organisations working in democracy promotion, FUNDAR centres most of its efforts on a single area: to promote participation in municipal structures. In order to do so, it supports members of local organisations to build "know how". The idea is that one has to support local groups not only to occupy the spaces assigned to them by law, but to have the instruments to truly influence processes at the local level. Democracy is believed to be strengthened in the process.

The indigenous authorities in Totonicapán are a strong force, to the extent that it seems much harder for the municipal government to bypass communal interests (which does not mean it does not happen). Indigenous authorities, organised around the 48 communities, are a strong force not only because they have technical instruments but also because they have the capability of, for instance, mobilising hundreds of people to seize a highway.

CPD thus supports a confrontational position vis-à-vis the state. However, the organisations it works with do not necessarily share that position. That is the case of the B48C. Its president described its goal as electing municipal authorities in accordance with indigenous laws. However, he later concluded: "but to achieve that is a big problem"; a big problem because members of the organisation have different opinions about how to work with the state. As an example he described the case of a *junta* member who was recently sanctioned because he did not agree with a decision they had taken. Instead he tried to get involved with a local party, which is seen by the members as representing the state, its corruption and violence.

"He was sanctioned because he is pushing us to take a bigger step, a political step, that not all of us are ready to take … I will give you an example. Yesterday we were preparing the agenda for Saturday's election. The *junta* decided

that we should not include the national hymn because it is a militaristic ritual and an imposition that has made us suffer. Also we believed that only Totonicapán's flag should be used and to put aside the Guatemalan flag. Well, when the 48 communal mayors met and saw the agenda they said, "How is it possible that we don't play the hymn and don't use the national flag if we are Guatemalans!" … Then, with all those differences among us there is a lot of work that needs to be done before jumping to national politics" (Totonicapán, Nov. 2006).

3.2   Leadership

The marginalisation and, in many cases, the humiliation of communal mayors in municipal space impacts their communal authority. "We are still fighting to legitimise communal authorities. It has been a struggle to do that because in the past communal mayors were seen by municipal governments only as decorative figures…" (Totonicapán, Nov. 2006). This humiliation gradually took on a greater significance. In response to the questions concerning the qualities of a legitimate leader, many interviewees brought up an issue that we had not, at first, considered relevant. One man said that his appointment as communal mayor was a punishment: "Because I was always criticising everything, the community decided to elect me as a mayor to silence me" (March 2006). This stirred debates among beneficiaries, since others said that people refrain from using elections to bully and punish those they dislike. As one communal mayor of *El Alto* said: "If the community sanctions people by giving them the mayor's office then they run the risk of having a bad mayor" (Nov. 2006).

An interviewee said that in most cases, the communal mayor is chosen based on his natural abilities as a leader. She added: "What the communities seem to truly consider is that the communal mayors should not be influenced by local political parties, because they have to serve the community and not a political party" (Nov. 2006). In general, people from Totonicapán consider that political parties have fragmented indigenous communities and used them for personal benefits. Thus, local indigenous leaders gain legitimacy by emphasising their non-political position (regarding party politics) and their commitment to work in the interest of the community.

Another element favoured by communal members when electing leaders is their educational background. People tend to elect those who have most years in formal educational, i.e., people who are more fluent in Spanish, who will not be as easily manipulated by the state, and who ideally have more instruments to defend community interests at their disposal. However, in many cases "more educated" members of the community do not want to fulfil their communal obligations. They are known as the "the untouchables". It seems that those who "depend less" on the community are also less willing to fulfil their communal obligations.

The case of communal leaders in San Andrés Semetabaj, where FUNDAR works, is quite different. There, a communal mayor is not an important communal figure. On the contrary, mayors have lost legitimacy, to the extent that in the communities where there is still a traditional authority figure, mayors are called only to solve minor conflicts. We asked one member of a Cocode who people in his community went to in cases of conflict. He responded: "…instead they go to the church leader, and if they aren't Catholic they go to the *alcalde auxiliar.* The *alcalde auxiliar* is chosen by the community, but his work is voluntary and sometimes people don't want to take that responsibility" (Nov. 2006).

The critique does not mean that a structure like the Cocode has not worked for local people.

In November 2006, Don José recalled a story of his youth: "I remember that a long time ago we chose a deputy for Sololá. He came here to make his campaign and tell us to vote for him. We supported him and then, when we needed him we went to the congress. There he told us he was too busy and could not talk to us; he said we should leave. The only thing he left us was the church bell that he brought during his campaign. Today, however, it is not like that, now we can bring *our own projects* to the municipality." This was a reflection on the longer-term perspective on change, but in almost all interviews we made, FUNDAR was the agency credited with having brought substantial and qualitative change with regard to people's possibilities to influence and make a difference.

Even though the present municipal government in San Andrés supports the Cocodes, some communities have not been interested in forming one. In other cases, Cocode members chosen by the community leave their responsibilities to other people. That is the case with one woman, who became the delegate of her community at the age of 29. She had the opportunity to do this work because: "The *alcalde auxiliar* said that he did not have time to work for the community and the Cocode, so they chose me." She later added: "But the community where I come from is dead. Nobody wants to participate in anything. They say that they don't have time, but I give my time because I have the willingness *(voluntad)* to do it … it is for the future of my children" (Nov. 2006).

This woman proved to the community that she was able to present proposals and gain projects from the municipal government. However, at some point in the interview she implied that she had been offered the office basically because nobody else seemed willing to take it. This was a frequently occurring ambivalence in the interviews. Most beneficiaries, though, were keen on telling us about their new status as empowered leaders. The notion of performance (instead of behaviour) is crucial here in two respects. First, people's social isolation as leaders made them wary of how to behave; instead, they seemed to develop different performances depending on contexts, one in

relation to the political sphere and the partner organisation (and, initially, to us evaluators), and one in the communities, where some expressed an eagerness not to be authoritative and thereby make things (that is, their social isolation) worse. Secondly, we included a "performative view" on the interviews, and by increasingly discussing the dilemmas of leadership, we asked beneficiaries to tell us about their roles in different contexts and different social and political milieus.

However, in most communities in San Andrés, communal mayors or *alcaldes auxiliares* and the Cocode appear to enjoy increasingly greater respect. One man said that thanks to the Cocode they have been able to have many projects to improve his community. His interview, however, brought up another issue: the manipulation of such structures by municipal authorities. When talking in 2006 about the 2007 election he said: "The mayor told us that the Cocode depends on the municipal government. If the new municipal government doesn't like the Cocode it is going to be bad. They might choose not to support the Cocode" (Nov. 2006). This issue points precisely to the reasons why indigenous organisations in Totonicapán reject the relationship with political parties. Communal authorities, whose main goal is to serve the community, end up serving party interests. In the case of San Andrés Semetabaj, the municipal mayor might see the Cocode as an instrument for gaining votes.

This issue also points to the lack of institutionalisation of these processes. The Cocodes are still seen as structures that depend on the goodwill of municipal authorities, and not as part of a national policy that has to be enforced. Contrary to what the municipal mayor of San Andrés was implying in our interview in 2006, Cocodes cannot simply disappear if the next mayor does not approve of them. Lamentably, people know that in reality things work quite differently.

Another issue, to do with the role of legitimate leaders in Guatemala, is the legacy of armed conflict. For instance, the CPD staff emphasises that the organisation "achieved independence" from the URNG and from the old rebel leadership. However, the current staff admits that the old affiliation with the rebels colours people's perception in a negative way and that the link is consciously not emphasised today.[35] When we confront users with this issue, we get either the response that even though the legacies of the left are known, nobody really cares anymore, or that the roots in the struggle are, in fact, seen as positive. It goes to show that the people in CPD have a long history of challenging a despised state (currently referred to as a "Ladino state" by the CPD staff). In relation to this, it is interesting to note that, indeed, the beneficiaries represent a still polarised social landscape. Those who deny the importance of leftist legacies tend to also be those mayors (the majority) who are pro-state and even pro-authoritarian traditions. This showed in the debate between the more radical elements of the group of mayors, supported

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[35] Diakonia puts a considerable amount of emphasis on this point, and it is also supported in official documents of the organisation.

by CPD, and the others over the issue of the national flag and the national anthem as part of the procession in the meeting in Totonicapán.

In the San Andrés case it was noticeable that many local leaders, even though trained by FUNDAR to challenge authorities by democratic means, had roots in the paramilitary civil patrol system of the 1980s. Many patrollers or military commissioners in the villages continued in positions of leadership after the dismantling of their organisation. In discussions about this with the team of evaluators, most claimed to have participated reluctantly in the war, and they now claimed to always have been neutral. In not a single interview did we hear an open commitment to counterinsurgency, but we did note the frequency with which older leaders had their roots in the military. This was less pronounced in the Totonicapán case, due to the fact that Sololá was considerably more militarised during the conflict.

In sum, there are two contradictory tendencies regarding ways in which local leadership is legitimised today. While the new legislative framework provides spaces for the participation of a broad section of actors and social sectors representing a diverse network of interests within communities, there is still a severe limitation on the numbers of actors with the capacity to engage with these issues in an active and effective way. Moreover, it appears to be those who have historically been involved in community development who take advantage of the new spaces, rather than new and potential leaders who are directly trained to enter them. In this context, the opportunities for effective participation are not fully taken advantage of, permitting the continuation of Guatemala's authoritarian and clientelist culture.

However, a direct impact of the work of CPD and other organisations has been that in the communities it is no longer necessary for a person to be much older, married, or historically recognised in the community, for him or her to become an authority. Now young, unmarried people can be authorities, and the criteria instead become credibility and "capacity". This was brought up in many interviews in relation to the general assembly in Totonicapán in 2006, and also by the beneficiaries of FUNDAR. If young age and education were central to the transformations in Totonicapán, it was rather gender and womens' political participation that stood out as the key change in San Andrés Semetabaj.

As can be seen from interviews, beneficiaries stated how the work of organisations such as CPD has begun to transform the historical norms that determine the criteria shaping what a leader in indigenous communities is and should be. According to this view, the training of young people by these organisations, and the emphasis placed on capacity and experience, is challenging traditional criteria. It is relevant for us to conclude as well that such a change means that you can become a leader in the capacity of "yourself" and not, as before, as a mere representative of a pre-existing group. The power to appoint a leader has thus changed from previous positions within

communities to current positions outside of them, where NGOs could be said to appoint through training and capacity development.

We must also note the large number of interviewees who were critical about their role as leaders. We will come back to the economic hardships associated with leadership, but the most relevant aspect of their lament, for this section, was the frustration of being elected and re-elected against one's will. Being a leader was seen, in these interviews, as a punishment by the people for having committed a communal sin of some sort. Such a punishment was sometimes also associated with having acquired the skills of a leader in FUNDAR or CPD training. This implied not only the emergence of a limited number of people in local leadership positions but, also, the social alienation of this group from people in the communities.

3.3   Economic foundations

Communal authorities in Totonicapán want to transform municipal administrative procedures and propose that 50% of the municipal budget be managed by the communal mayors, so that projects are designed or "given" not on the basis of "client relations" but on the need of the communities proper. However, the struggle is not only to receive a part of the municipal budget. The struggle is also about the management of natural resources: forest, water, and minerals. Communal mayors emphasise that indigenous people need to be consulted by municipal authorities about the use of natural resources in their territory. That has seldom been the case. Right now the Indigenous Regional Council and the B48C have been particularly involved in cases where mining concessions were given without consulting local people. CPD lends legal advice in this regard and struggles for what the members outlined in interviews as an "economic decentralisation". We will exemplify this below.

In November 2006, the B48C wanted to put sanctions on those who do not respect the indigenous ownership of land or forest. For some, the issue is not only one of control but also of how communities can benefit economically from *their* resources. "We know that is a double-edged sword," said a CPD member and ex-mayor. The inclusion of communities in a market economy was not seen to risk leading to the loss of indigenous identity, but was rather seen as something desirable, even necessary for cultural survival. Entering a market economy, however, entails having a coherent project, including the dimension of how to distribute the profits in the community. He concluded: "We don't want to separate ourselves from the globalised world. We want to participate but also to make a profit…"

Today technical decisions about the forest continue to be made by governmental or municipal forestry engineers. Communal mayors are uncertain as to the location of this power and whether it has a technical or political foundation. Though the state appears in this discourse to be the only enemy,

people in the region recognise that it is not the only one interested in controlling their resources.

In San Andrés Semetebaj indigenous people do not own communal land, and many do not even own land at all. People in FUNDAR affirm that most people in the *municipio* own less than 1 *manzana* of land, and some only own the terrain where their house is. Despite that, most people work in agriculture. Those who do not own land rent it. On average they pay 250 *quetzales* (US$32) for 1 *manzana*. The *municipio* was known in the past as a wheat producer; today, however, people mainly cultivate non-traditional vegetables: broccoli, Chinese peas, and zucchini. Until a few years ago, the organisation CARE supported many groups and associations, lending money at low interest. It prioritised women's activities in the region. Today, CARE is no longer there and people's credit options are limited. However, for those interviewed and for FUNDAR members, the biggest problem people face is not credit but how to commercialise their products. Agricultural commerce in the region is in the hands of one company, CORSE, with all the consequences that follow from the ability of any monopoly to press prices. Many women find a source of income in handicraft, but they too receive low prices, since they depend on the closest market in Panajachel, an important tourist town in Guatemala. One woman said: "We can sell our weavings in Panajachel, but they want to pay us too little" (June 2007).

Another economic option, and one that is more attractive to many, is to migrate to the US. One woman said that at least half the men in her community had migrated to the US, including her husband, and when we followed this up in other interviews, migration proved to emerge inductively as one of the most central themes in discussions and interviews with users in San Andrés Semetabaj. The migratory wave of people leaving poverty-stricken regions of Central America for illicit markets and job opportunities in the United States is analysed from different perspectives, and different views on the effects of migration on communities and households in the countries of origin are polarising the debate. Most commonly, and in very general terms, the relatively free movement of capital and assets and the relatively constrained movement of people is seen as one of the dilemmas of globalisation as it undermines the attempts of grass-root organising to mobilise politically and build or "strengthen" community. The general argument here is that migration is both a product and a producer of individualism and consumerism, and that the physical loss of the most "able-bodied" members of communities represents a demographic transformation with severely negative effects on community organisation. Others, however, point to the benefits of mobility, not only for those who make it in the US, but also for those communities that are on the receiving end of remittances. According to this view, strong communities manage to both distribute and invest remittances.

Sadly, the Guatemalan communities in the areas where CPD and FUNDAR are working do not exemplify this latter argument. People go into debt to pay

the coyotes that will "help" them to cross the Mexican and US borders. Men not only leave debts behind, they leave their wives and children, and, as a FUNDAR staff member told us: "Far from everyone sends money back. Some just start a whole new life in the North" (June 2007). Family fragmentation has led to social instability in many communities. The consequences for the economy are striking in San Andrés. In June 2007, many complained abut the lack of manual labour in the communities and that the price of a *mozo* – a day worker – had risen from 20 Quetzales only two years ago to 50 this year.

Economic hardships are salient. Many people misunderstand economics and think that the interest rate in micro-credits is 2% a year, and they are taken by surprise when they realise they have to pay 2% on a monthly basis. One woman compares the effects of engaging in micro-credit schemes and those of migrating – and the promises of migration are so much more appealing to people. She herself has seriously considered going.

FUNDAR recognises that migration is today one of the "biggest issues" in the *municipio,* and it acknowledges the need to work on that theme more specifically that it has so far. It has begun including migration as a topic of discussion in training sessions but says it needs to learn more in order to develop a strategy. As an increasing number of people are currently leaving the communities, such a focus seems to be one of the main challenges for the near future.

3.4   Gender

Whereas FUNDAR has incorporated gender as a core in its training of local leaders, CPD, in interviews with the team of evaluators, regards it as a neo-colonial imposition of the international cooperation, one that can be counterproductive if used with an overtly feminist approach.[36]

"We have seen that gender is a very delicate topic … In the past many organisations had a feminist discourse, and because of that, indigenous men from the communities believe that gender is about women giving orders. When we speak about gender we try not to use a feminist discourse. Instead we centre our discourse on a Mayan worldview *(cosmovision)* of equilibrium and balance. To talk about gender, for us, is to talk about the balance between man and woman" (CPD male representative, Nov. 2006). Gender, in this account, is understood to be a synonym of women and women's rights and not as an issue involving both men and women.

The experience of Doña Ana, the only woman from the B48C of 2006, can illustrate some of the difficulties women face. She is a traditional doctor, and also a teacher by profession. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in

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[36] Diakonia representatives, when reading about this, argued that such a critical view is usually an expression of ignorance and a fear of changing power relations.

mental health. She comes from a well-known family in her community; her father held many communal offices (including that of communal mayor). Ana was one of the most important figures during the August strikes, where she took the lead. During her period in office she was one of two women mayors in the municipio and the only woman in the *junta*.

Ana says that at the beginning she did not want to accept the office in the *junta*. She also thought that people would not respect her work as a communal mayor because she was a single woman (in most cases people prefer that communal mayors have a family). "But I found I was wrong. I believe my academic degree helped me to gain legitimacy" (Nov. 2006). She later added: "However, what gave me the confidence to accept the office was the fact that in the Mayan calendar my sign is one of authority. My spiritual guide told me that to be appointed to that office was not casual, it was already written in my life and I had to do what was meant for me to do."

On the other hand, the readiness or eagerness of FUNDAR to discuss gender issues and to prioritise women in its programme shows that gender is not of necessity a bad word in rural areas of Guatemala. Although FUNDAR members affirm that the transformation of gender relations is a slow and difficult process, they do not consider it to be impossible. They have focused their work in four main areas: (i) gender equity within the Cocode; (ii) pressure for Cocodes to elect women as their representative in the Comude *(delegadas);* (iii) supporting women in decision-making processes; and (iv) teaching women about their rights.

When FUNDAR talks about gender it talks about the unity of the family and the strength of the couple. "We tell them that when the couple participates in different activities in the community they can help their own family to develop, and from the family we go to the community. We tell them that for both to participate is not about taking different roads but working together for the same goal" (FUNDAR, Nov. 2006).

Today migration plays an important role in the gender processes at play in San Andrés. Some women now have a greater freedom economically (due to the remittances) and less control from their husband, something that allows them to participate in local organisations. Furthermore, the increasing number of men migrating might be leaving empty spaces at the organisational level that need to be filled.

As mentioned before, FUNDAR not only gives talks about gender but works with women's organisations and supports women to participate in the Cocodes. Most of the women we interviewed said that they got involved in a local organisation for economic reasons. Through their involvement they have faced multiple challenges, starting at home. For example, one woman said that her husband simply left her after her continual involvement in FUNDAR training sessions. She later said: "Many of the other women in the commu-

nity have left the organisation because their husbands dislike their participation" (June 2007).

It is not only husbands who do not like women to participate in organisations; other women in the community also oppose their work. One woman said: "It is very hard to have an office in the community and on top of that some women say that when we go to meetings in reality what we're doing is looking for a husband" (Nov. 2006). Another says: "How can she dare to give orders if she is so young?" (Nov. 2006). Gossip is a social deterrent to women's involvement in "public" activities.

FUNDAR has been able to "translate" to the local population a theme (gender) that is frequently vilified. Furthermore, it contributes in strengthening women's perception of themselves (their self-esteem and confidence) in order to change, even if partially, their lives. One woman said: "When I finish this (being a delegate in Cocode) I want to find a job that awakens my mind. I would like to do more things; but I don't want to work as a servant because that would be doing the same I do at home. I want something different" (June 2007).

The institutional structure that has been developed as a means of strengthening the decentralisation process seeks to consolidate the participation of women through the Women's Commission in the Cocode and in the development councils at other levels. While this provides the formal framework for participation, FUNDAR has worked to change the subjective barriers that limited women's participation, as a means of taking advantage of the political opportunity that the new legislation represents.

While the political system has now been formally broadened to *legally* promote the participation of women in local institutional structures, as we see from the interviews there remain cultural and historical factors that strongly limit the participation of women in said institutions. In this case, it appears that the institutional nature of the state has overtaken the capacity of local communities and municipal life to take on board the incremental and necessary changes in political culture that would accommodate and give life to the new institutional arrangements. The machista culture remains a clear factor here: men are jealous and do not permit their wives to participate; women are scared to confront their husbands; it is mainly single mothers or widows who participate; women's interests remain marginalised as a result. When no impact is achieved as a result of women's participation, women are blamed doubly for wasting their time – for not making a sufficient impact, and for negligence in the domestic sphere. However, some changes are becoming evident in some communities with the careful work done by FUNDAR with both men and women: men do let go of their fears, particularly when they start to see the benefits of participation.

4.   Understanding outcomes

"Now I know these things. I can participate better, knowing my rights…"

Knowledge of rights

The decentralisation mechanisms which were established through legislation and legislative reform processes in 2002 that resulted from the peace process clearly put in place the institutional framework for the legitimate participation of community members in the creation and implementation of a local community development agenda. The knowledge of one's rights in this context is critical for various reasons, not least because it provides one with the conscious legitimacy that, in making demands before a historically violent and exclusionary state, one is doing so legally and within one's rights. The legality of participation could, through its daily exercise, lead to a decrease in fear and exclusion, and in so doing, strengthen the institutions in themselves and contribute to their legitimisation.

The exercise of citizens' rights is leading to further claims to rights as people realise their rights and understand profoundly the responsibility of the state in protecting them: the consolidation of one right inevitably leads to the demand for others. This is important in the context of the development councils, because we see demands not only for political participation, but also for the promotion of a broad spectrum of rights – economic, social, and cultural (ESC), suggesting the integral link between political and civil rights and ESC rights.

CPD has focused on a series of interconnecting rights in its work with beneficiaries in the region. These rights have included political and civil rights-related issues (political participation and the right to freedom of association, etc.) as well as cultural rights of indigenous peoples (the right to exercise one's own form of authority and judicial system). To promote these rights, the organisation has mobilised national and international legislation, including the Guatemalan Constitution, ILO Treaty 169, and other non-binding accords, such as the Accord Concerning the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this way, it has sought to bring about changes in the norms and practices within state institutions, to strengthen indigenous traditional authority structures, and to ensure that indigenous leaders and community members are aware of their human rights (broad range/integral spectrum) and "empowered" as such. This process can contribute to the strengthening of state and community institutions, if and when such institutions are seen to respond to the claims of citizens, thus consolidating their legitimacy in the perception of citizens.

While there has been a series of important achievements in the consolidation of norms and practices based upon adherence to national and international human rights standards in the region (manifest in important cases worked on and won by CPD, including cases where indigenous law and judicial norms have been recognised by the legal system), there remains an embedded resistance to such socio-political and cultural transformations, particularly from the justice sector and from local government authorities. This is evident not only with regard to the difficulties in achieving full recognition of indigenous rights as guaranteed in national and international legislation, but also with regard to the consolidation of the new institutional arrangements aimed at establishing democratic norms and practices in local development. However, it was made very clear in interviews that the beneficiaries themselves have gained in important respects from their work with CPD, which includes trainings and actual support in legal cases where necessary.

Participation

As we have seen from the interviews, although the possibility exists for the Cocode to have an impact on the development of the municipal development strategy and plan, the municipal mayor is principally in charge of determining the execution of the plan; as a result it is subject to his goodwill and political interests, in many cases. Moreover, the entire decentralisation process and structure may at times be bypassed by the departmental deputy, if there are possibilities for gaining political capital or a need to repay political debts. Furthermore, on many occasions, representatives of the Codede are appointed by the mayor without consultation, and in many cases, these same representatives have not participated in Cocodes and are not aware of the democratic processes.

Far from all communities have established Cocodes; of those that have, some have done so merely to comply with the new legislation, and the traditional forms of nepotism and *caudillismo* continue to determine the political process; as a result, in these communities, the Cocodes lack legitimacy. Moreover, in many cases, the community assemblies that are responsible for electing the Cocodes are not legitimate, and the process remains undemocratic.

The establishment and strengthening of the community and municipal development councils and municipal institutions has created conditions for greater citizen participation and for the development of new decision-making processes. However, historical factors continue to limit the possible impact of the new legislation, particularly with regard to the tension between "new" and "old" authorities. The capacity of the Cocodes to influence the Comudes is very limited, and thus power and decision making remain limited to the conventionally powerful historical actors at the municipal level. In particular, in many cases, the municipal mayor limits the participation of communities in the democratic process, as well as being unaware of the legislation. So there remains a serious difference between the will of the mayor to cede a degree of his "authority" and the legitimate participation of the

communities in defining the municipal development agenda. Moreover, there is a serious problem concerning the politicisation of the development councils at all levels.

Opinions and experiences of beneficiaries varied as to whether the Cocodes and Comudes were providing real opportunities for making an impact on the local community development agenda. Whereas we could see a disappointment in this regard while we were with CPD in Quetzaltenango, the beneficiaries of FUNDAR displayed a much more positive view of their newly won capacity to participate and exercise influence. However, other interviewees spoke of how the right to participate, and even participation itself, did not translate into direct change or impact. Rather, historically powerful sectors retained control of the decision-making apparatus, particularly at the municipal and departmental levels, signifying ultimately that the councils themselves were meaningless: "We have a vote, but no voice" (June 2007).

The historically exclusionary and authoritarian political system has been challenged to permit a series of interventions from the community level upwards, interventions that, if successful, should inevitably break traditional forms of clientelist and nepotistic political norms and practices. While there has been a certain positive response to this challenge, serious obstacles remain to be overcome, not least the invisibility of community-level norms and socio-economic development agendas. Furthermore, while there appears to be an increasing recognition in the region of the *existence* of indigenous traditional community practices, and thus their visibility is increasing, the relationship between development councils and said authority structures remains as yet unclear. CPD insists that there is a fundamental contradiction between the two, and the troublesome view of the incompatibility and incoherence of the organisation's two central projects emerges as such.

Conclusion

CPD, in its project in focus in this evaluation, has established itself as an important entity of support for the traditional local authority structure of Totonicapán by providing legal, financial, and "ideological" support both through training and by being present and ready to lend advice to local mayors in office. As a support group of this kind, it combines the members' own notions and views of Maya culture with the same members' professional expertise in the fields of law, economy, and sociology. As a consequence, however, their influence on the local authority structure of Totonicapán transcends that of passive support for what already exists in the communities. The evaluating team has found an explicitly progressive agenda in the sense that CPD makes efforts to have the organisation of mayors, as well as individual mayors, adopt a view of political organisation that is not always in accord with the views held among the users. Since the local authority structure of Totonicapán shows a remarkable strength, passing through the years of the internal armed conflict relatively unchanged, the efforts of CPD are on occasion debated, resisted, or rejected. An example during the time of the

evaluation was the debate in the organisation of mayors about whether the symbols of the nation, the national flag and anthem, should be used in the inauguration of the general assembly of the mayors. CPD argued against it, very much in line with its struggle in all aspects of its work to keep the Guatemalan state at a distance, legally, politically, and economically. But the majority of the mayors opposed this and CPD had to withdraw its claim. Another example is represented by local sanctions against one of the CPD staff who, in his double role as NGO staff and beneficiary (by both recruiting beneficiaries and encouraging staff to participate in local elections, CPD consciously works towards a blurring of the lines that separate "partner" and "beneficiary" in Diakonia parlance), was accused of having misused communal funds for (party) political purposes. A third example is the development of the notion of "economic decentralisation". CPD nourishes ideas of radical new ways of bypassing state control of economic life in rural communities by taking direct control of the exploitation of communal resources with the aim of producing economic profit for the direct benefit of the communities. When asked if people are ready for such an adjustment to market principles, the CPD representatives argued that implementing ideas of this kind takes time and builds on consciousness-raising training and discussion.

Such a discrepancy between the views of the Diakonia-supported organisation and the users it is supported to "benefit" speaks to the complexities of democracy promotion and indicates that the notion of what a legitimate authority is and how it should operate varies to a great extent, even within the same localities. It also varies within organisations, as we found out in individual interviews with CPD members. For this evaluation, then, it is relevant to conclude thus:

Without denying or downplaying the cultural competence of CPD, it is important to recognise the differences between culture as lived practice and culture as a concept in political (NGO) discourse. Supporting or promoting "local culture" is far too often used to cover up interventions or legitimising a certain practice. For example, "local authority" – a core element in the CPD effort to promote local culture – sometimes displays views on gender roles that are incompatible with those of western donors like, in this case, Diakonia. In such a case, the attempts to interfere and transform the "behaviour" and "attitude" of the beneficiaries are also attempts to influence the very "culture" sustaining or legitimising such behaviours. If so, such an effort should be openly admitted and discussed in the programmes of the donor and not concealed in a jargon of multiculturalism. On the other hand, in the case of CPD, we found such differences, in terms of views on gender, not necessarily to be a line separating the donor (Diakonia) and the beneficiaries (the local mayors) – implying that the partner (CPD) is nothing but a neutral channel through which attempts to promote the emergence of democratic subjects flow – but to be also a matter of divergence and contestation "within local culture". When we confronted CPD representatives with this issue,

the response was that both they and Diakonia, in a tacit agreement, paid lip service to the gender mainstreaming policy of Swedish development cooperation in order to admit flexibility and innovation on the ground.[37] We conclude that such a response should be followed up in dialogue and stress that the result of such a dialogue could very well be a re-evaluation of universal categories in the gender approach of the donor agency (Diakonia), and not necessarily a demand on the NGO (CPD) to further conform its approach.

In the case of CPD, we found the lack of an approach to the sustainability of local authority promotion to be a problematic aspect of its work in Totonicapán. Mayors received advice and legal training during their year in office, but then the overwhelming majority of them disappeared from the spheres of CPD activities (which placed certain demands on our methodology – see below). This was consciously reflected upon by CPD representatives, and efforts have recently been made to form a council of ex-mayors to function as a more sustainable and institutionalised local back-up to the organisation of mayors. The evaluators could not verify the extent to which this initiative actually worked.

The political context in San Andrés Semetabaj and the nature of FUNDAR's work, differ in some crucial aspects from those of Totonicapán and CPD. While levels of poverty are alarming in both places, exposing people who are encouraged to "participate" to similar demands and hardships, and the political context represented by the institutions and structures of the state are equally corrupted and undemocratic in both places, FUNDAR operates more directly within the framework of the new laws of decentralisation. In fact, we believe that it has become one of the reasons why community and municipal development councils are able to operate in this region while they must be described as a huge disappointment in other regions, including those of Quetzaltenango and Totonicapán, and also the other *municipios* in the very department of Sololá. This is, in fact, one of the few instances of the evaluation where a more structural or systemic change can be noted, not merely a change in behaviour and relationships at the local level. This is also interesting as a comparison to CPD work, in which, as we discussed above, a successful training of members in the community development council in Quetzaltenango seems to have led authoritarian mayors to sabotage their work and paralyse the system in order to keep political control. While the beneficiaries have been able to make use of their newly gained knowledge in other spheres, it could be concluded that a one-sided support for grass-root participation, without added pressure on the political system above, might prove devastating and counteract earlier achievements.

Local authority structures exist in San Andrés, but their nature is more religious (the *cofradía)* and less political than in Totonicapán. Due partly to this, the organisation of community and municipal councils within the new legal

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[37] Here, we refer to statements made by CPD staff on several occasions. Diakonia, in its commentary on this report, denies that such a tacit agreement exists.

framework of Guatemala has appeared in a context where the law has been absent, rather than where we can see the existence of two legal systems. The achievements in the work of FUNDAR are therefore easier to assess. We can see a remarkable process of "awareness raising" around issues of rights as citizens, indigenous peoples, and women.

Such observations, however, are not without problems, and the intervention of Diakonia-funded partners in the social, economic, and political life of the grass-roots not without negative effects. The emergence of new social and political performances is accompanied by the emergence of new social groups with access to legal know-how. Individuals in this group (i.e., the beneficiaries) tend to be elected and then re-elected to positions of influence, which, for them, becomes an economic and social problem and, for the others, perpetuates a situation in which political participation and democracy are only for some and not for everyone. The fact that single mothers (widows or divorcees), for economic reasons but also for reasons to do with absence of domestic control by men, take up these posts threatens to further isolate these women from the grass-roots they are trained and supposed to lead. The dismal picture emerging is thus that while people are trained to confront a still very corrupted and undemocratic political system "above" – one that they have little opportunities to influence – they are at the same time socially alienated from below. We are not saying that members of the FUNDAR staff are unaware of this problem, nor that they lack ideas or initiatives to solve it, but we see it as a future challenge for Diakonia to encourage a dialogue with them on ways to broaden the workload of participation – both for the benefit of the leaders and, perhaps more importantly, of those they are trained to lead.

Methodological remarks

The differences between CPD and FUNDAR that have informed this chapter have also influenced the methodology or affected the ways in which we have been able to follow beneficiaries over time. While the work of FUNDAR has "suited" our methodological approach in that beneficiaries have been living and working relatively close to the partner's office, CPD is working with people scattered over large distances. While the beneficiaries in the FUNDAR case have remained in the programme evaluated here, those in CPD training have been in contact with the organisation only during their year in office. When we visited CPD the third time, none of the previously interviewed mayors remained, and CPD argued that it no longer possessed the influence needed to set up interviews with ex-beneficiaries (and even if they had been able to organise such interviews, the talks would not have been with people identified as key informants in this evaluation).

In trying to develop a methodologically pragmatic approach to this dilemma, the team has been focused much more on observing events in relation to CPD activities (like the election of the board of mayors) and on talking to people more directly about what has emerged as critical issues, than on indi-

vidual life trajectories, as we were in San Andrés Semetabaj. We are keen to point out that the conclusions we draw must be related to this methodological difference. We have not intended to evaluate the beneficiaries in a conventional sense. We admit that our focus on CPD has been limited to one branch of its activities – but so has our focus on FUNDAR and all the other organisations in this study. By highlighting the CPD support for local traditional authority structures, and by trying to understand the outcome of *that particular work,* our aim has been to shed light on the diversity of capacity building through leadership training.

In a CPD office interview in June 2007, the difficulty of getting information from the mayors was discussed as a matter of structure and culture, and not as individual behaviour or attitude. Part of *"alcalde* power" is the possession of knowledge to which others lack access (see above). We enter a context in which there is a process of loss of both economic and judicial power, which even enforces the sense among the *alcaldes* of a need to hold on to the power they do, after all, have. This, CPD argues, should be added as a factor in the difficulty of providing us, the evaluators, with interviewees. This dilemma also worked to enforce our sense of not seeing a dimension of sustainability in the CPD work with the *alcaldes.*

10. Conclusions and future challenges

1. In the introduction to this report we acknowledged the outcome of Diakonia-funded training of local leaders in Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala, and Nicaragua from February 2006 to June 2007 to be one of observable *improvements in the levels of knowledge* among individuals regarding their citizenship rights and the ways such rights can be exercised and legally defended. Considering the fact that "knowledge" of this kind is key to Diakonia's own conception of capacity development in a context of democracy promotion, a general conclusion of this report is that the studied programmes in Latin America do what Diakonia says they do and that they are successful in relation to stated aims.

2. In terms of individual behaviour and attitudes, the outcomes of Diakonia-funded interventions are (a) an improvement in self-esteem, especially among poor and previously not organised women, who through the programmes in all the four countries, have learned the skills of organising and presenting projects and demands and, in the process, been able to establish new social bonds; (b) an emerging reason for many to invest hope in democratic laws and practices which, in turn, provide them with a buffer zone in their still vulnerable positions against the attraction of clientelist relationships; and (c) a redirection of women's roles in public spheres, from having been representatives of their men when acting politically and thereby also representatives of allegedly "failed" or "abnormal" households and relationships, to becoming proud spokespersons for their own interests (even if those interests are difficult to separate from the interests of their children and, on occasion, their men).

3. At the group level, such individual changes (particularly linked to self-esteem) have different outcomes in different regions. They lead to the sustainability of local institutions in regions where the partner organisation is running a focused project involving a large percentage of the population. In these cases, we have also seen a strengthened sense among the partners of ownership of projects and ideas. We have noticed changing relations between organisations at the local level and municipal authorities – leading, in this first instance, to more open and adoptive municipal governments, and, on other occasions, to a regression into a more defensive authoritarian practice by the municipality. In both these examples, however, we have also seen changing perceptions among the beneficiaries of what organisations can achieve by moving beyond their traditional work and agendas to propose new projects and alliances.

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4. Changes in the beneficiaries' perceptions of democracy, participation, or human rights must be attributed to the success with which the programmes supported by Diakonia can contribute to a more multifaceted context of political opportunities. In our inquiries about the networks established by the beneficiaries, a large number of donors and different support groups like families, parties, and churches were often mentioned. We do not see this as a weakness but, rather, as proof of the benefits of capacity building. Through training, local leaders are now able to manoeuvre in an NGO-dominated landscape and to make themselves less dependent on one single donor. It should also be mentioned that, for many, Diakonia was not the first organisation with which they had collaborated. Instead, training provided by others either made people seek out Diakonia-funded programmes, or it put them in leadership positions that subsequently caught the attention of the Diakonia partner. In sum, those programmes have been fundamental in sustaining local organisations, training new leaders and promoters, forming new organisations, and disseminating information about novel ways of exercising leadership. They have also been crucial for a limited number of people to be able to take advantage of new opportunities and spaces of participation.

5. However, we also remarked that successes – in terms of an improved knowledge and practice of rights – did not necessarily contribute in producing changes on a political or institutional level, due to the persistence of hierarchical power structures and corruption at the municipal and departmental levels of national political life. This problem is also acknowledged by Diakonia and is approached in terms of being a "risk" or exogenous obstacle to partner-induced change. Whether Diakonia, or Swedish development cooperation at large, compensates for the limited social and political outcomes of leadership formation by working at other institutional and political levels in other programmes is, of course, outside the scope of this evaluation to assess. In presenting our result as a lack of political outcome we therefore leave it up to the readers of this report (Diakonia and Sida) to themselves evaluate its importance by relating this point to other Swedish-sponsored initiatives and interventions. To emphasise this point, and the limitation of the evaluation that it reflects, we argue that even though Swedish democracy promotion is working for institutional strengthening on various levels of political administration, it has not sufficiently helped the beneficiaries interviewed here to contribute to changing local political structures in democratic directions. Outcomes have rather been restricted to changes in their own attitudes, possibly "behaviour", and certainly their social relationships. The vast array of projects and programmes run by Swedish development cooperation *in other places* is of little help to an individual beneficiary who struggles to make ends meet while confronting all sorts of undemocratic restrictions on her or his freedoms of voice, movement, and association.

6. Furthermore, named changes in behaviour were, on occasion, leading to the emergence of an NGO-connected sphere of social and political agents

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on the local level with not only a limited possibility of influencing local politics, but also with a problematic relationship to the base. It is our impression, from interviews with Diakonia representatives in Latin America and Sweden, from discussions in the reference group, and from reading Diakonia policy documents that this predicament is *not* acknowledged as a problem or responsibility of the donor. We consider this finding to be important, also since it cannot be viewed as an exogenously imposed risk but, on the contrary, is a direct result or outcome of the studied interventions, some more than others. It is a social phenomenon produced by the interventions themselves.

7. We have also observed a more positive chain of both individual and social or political outcomes, as trained leaders in some places seem to have successfully contributed to the decentralisation of power and the emergence of a culture of rights, i.e., the experienced change from using rights discourses as a means of resistance or complaint to the reliance on presently existing norms of conduct in political life. Again, we need to stress the processual nature of such change and remember that the interviewed beneficiaries seemed acutely aware of the necessity to keep claiming their rights through participation and study. The emergence of a culture of rights does not mean that beneficiaries are now taking their rights for granted.

By recalling six central themes running through the preceding country chapters and venturing a comparison across organisations, regions, and countries, we will now expand on those conclusions and outline the implications of changes (or lack of changes) among the beneficiaries in terms of future challenges for (a) the partner organisations and the beneficiaries, (b) the donor agency itself, (c) international development cooperation more generally, and finally, for (d) qualitative outcome oriented evaluations.

Comparisons across organisations, regions, and countries

National contexts frame the work of the NGOs studied, but several differences transcend nation-state boundaries and provide for interesting comparisons on a Latin American level. In this section we will analyse the tendencies and potential consequences of a number of such differences and whether some elements in these cases have been particularly influential in shaping the outcomes of democracy promotion through building the capacity of local leaders.

1. The "partners" and the state – rejection, confrontation, or acceptance

In several of the cases – CPMGA, Alternativa, CEDAP, FUNDAR, and to an extent IPADE – the aim of the training or guidance is to strengthen the users' capacity to participate in the formal political structures provided by the state at the municipal level. Participation in social organisations is also promoted, but not as an alternative to state structures. Such an approach in relation to the state has come in part to inform Diakonia-funded work in the

countries where comprehensive decentralisation reforms have been launched during the 1990s and the 2000s. The funding has been important in enabling a limited number of people on the local level to take advantage of new opportunities. In these cases, the promotion of democracy equals the successful promotion of people's participation in formal politics and participative mechanisms established by the state. The political system per se is not questioned nor is the kind of democracy promoted by it. This type of political agency is often discussed in the literature in relation to a neo-liberal focus on consensus as the key mechanism in the formation of democratic governance (see, e.g., Cooke and Kothari 2001:145–6).

The CPD in Guatemala turns out to be an exception, and represents an organisation that promotes an alternative, even though it is one legally sanctioned in recent legislation. Indeed, CPD also works within the structures provided by decentralisation, but the organisation emphasises the need to strengthen local and regional alternatives to state institutions of law and authority. IPADE and CEDEHCA represent a middle way in this regard, since they have come to function not as a structure parallel to that of the state, but, on occasion, rather in its absence, especially so in the case of CEDEHCA in the Waspam region. The CEDEHCA focus on human rights issues also implies an opposition to the state – it is an entity partly aimed at monitoring the police and the legal system. In a context of severely weakened or indeed absent state institutions, CEDEHCA has in a way taken on state-like responsibilities. The same could be claimed for CPD in Guatemala, with the difference that CPD functions as a support group to already existing alternatives to state institutions. It does not itself constitute one.

Work within the framework provided by decentralisation reforms has its limitations, since the formal political system does not always turn out to be the place where the target groups of Diakonia – e.g., impoverished women – find the most appropriate means to articulate themselves. And even if they do, or if they are provided with such means, it could be argued that this is not the most viable way to promote democracy, since the formal system is often characterised by patriarchal, anti-democratic practices, such as clientelism, corruption, and authoritarianism, exposing already vulnerable people to new threats and uncertainties. For example, in the case of CPMGA in Bolivia, matters turned complicated during the time period of this evaluation. It was an extraordinary moment in Bolivian political life, but one could say that the uncritical involvement of CPMGA's *Gerencia de Gestión Local* in the local process of social conflicts that eventually led to the resignation of the actual government, implied too high a cost for the users, even if unintended. In this case, a line of work based on the acceptance of the state (promoting popular participation at the municipal level) made a turn towards the rejection of the state and got involved in a process of social protests that rejected the mediations of the political system. During that process, the negotiations between government and people (in the form of popular movements) literally took

place in the streets while the representative democratic system was out of order. The women trained by CPMGA were encouraged to participate in a local political system, both corrupt and authoritarian, but that participation had severe consequences for the women and their families.

A similar predicament was felt and expressed by many people, especially women, organised and trained by FUNDAR in Guatemala. There, the political participation of women tended to presuppose a fractured social tissue. The members of the economic associations established by FUNDAR with the double purpose of contributing to household economies and making poor people eligible for political posts in the community and municipal councils were almost exclusively single mothers, widows, divorcees, or women with husbands who had migrated. Members of more "intact" or "normal" households generally did not participate politically, which added to the difficulties in changing gender roles in broader spheres of rural community life.

Indeed, the strength of promoting participation and ownership resides, partly, in the open-endedness of outcomes. In a move away from interventionism and the conditionality of development cooperation of yesteryear, Diakonia proves to be (and is hailed by its partners to be) an organisation with a flexible approach to changes on the ground and to local or domestic/endogenous initiatives. This is justified in a discourse of "partnership" to describe the relationship between organisations, and one of "ownership" to describe the right of each partner organisation to explore means and methods itself in order to reach its goals.

In more general terms, however, and as we have seen above, paying attention to *outcomes* reveals a contradictory rather than complementary image of changes promoted by Diakonia through the eight organisations in the four countries. This is the other side of the coin: "ownership" might, in fact, be that which pushes Diakonia-funded activities in not only diverse but also opposed ideological directions. The views on, and the trust invested in, the state, its laws and institutions, are factors in determining the outcome among beneficiaries. In a context where state institutions are either absent or embody a history of repression (as in both Guatemala and Nicaragua), challenging or replacing the state might prove to be good for the social cohesion among the beneficiaries and for promoting the notion that local leaders "represent" the base. Similarly, in such a context, an open commitment to democracy as propagated by the state itself might contribute to isolating the pro-state local leadership from its base.

2. Relationship between partners and beneficiaries

In comparing the different case studies, we have seen that the Diakonia-funded organisations also differ in terms of the relationship they establish with the users or beneficiaries. The kind of relationship established may have consequences for the project's ability to succeed in its aims and for sustainability in a long-term perspective. The sustainability of a project is also a mat-

ter of whether the funds are spent in a cost-effective way. For example, in the case of CPMGA and CEDAP, some of the technical personnel in the project seem to accompany the process closely, create personal relations with the beneficiaries, and invest their own feelings in the success of the project. This differs from the position of the personnel of CEADES, who emphasise the independent decision-making process of AFIN. CEDAP and CEADES are applying two very different methodologies. CEDAP has a plan and is engaged from the beginning to the end in all the elements of the project, while CEADES has a plan but leaves it up to the users to work out the details and find ways of making the project sustainable. There are risks associated with both methodologies. In the case of CEDAP, there is a risk that the NGO becomes too influential and the project becomes too dependent on the work of the NGO to become sustainable. In the case of CEADES, the project is weak and lacks financial means to develop its future independence and sustainability. If CEADES stays too passive there is a risk that the project will fail.

Another issue concerns the relationship between political democracy and economic equality. In our view, economic justice is at least as important a factor as cultural and representative justices, determining people's possibilities for participating and being respected in the political life of their country. Comparing the programmes of CEDAP, CEADES, and CPMGA, we note that one of the reasons CEDAP seems so appreciated by the users is the integrated character of its work aimed at improving both the economic situation of the users and their political position. AFIN, the project supported by CEADES, was created with the aim of strengthening both the economic and political situation of the beneficiaries, but the work deals mostly with the political side. We believe more attention needs to be put on the economic side in order for the aims to be fulfilled

This difference is also noticeable in the Central American cases, and it influences the outcomes in the local sphere. The personal commitment of the staff of CPMGA and CEDAP described above is indeed a marker of all four of the organisations in Nicaragua and Guatemala, but the local-level support given by CEDEHCA in Nicaragua and FUNDAR in Guatemala, and their commitment both to the people they work with and to the project objectives developed in dialogue with Diakonia, make both organisations appear "closer" to the beneficiaries and therefore more capable of directing events and outcomes.

This difference has to do with the "target areas" of the partner organisations. We note that it is easier to observe and analyse outcomes – as conceived in this evaluation – on the individual and local group level, if the scope of the organisation is local as opposed to regional or national. However, the tensions created by the observed change, between informed and subsequently transformed local subjects on the one hand and a still unchanging political culture on the other, are less evident when the organisation operates on sev-

eral levels, both spatially and in terms of activities – in short, when an organisation is able to simultaneously target both grass-root knowledge of democratic rights and the institutions within or against which such new skills are practiced. Having said that, we also wish to bring to readers' attention the difficulties involved in applying standardised programmes and policies on participation when an organisation is operating in many different places. IPADE in Nicaragua represents one example of this phenomenon, and of its positive and negative manifestations. While IPADE has the capacity to influence institutions and politics on regional and municipal levels, it is our impression that its agenda for promoting participation does not take the ethnic or cultural heterogeneity of the Atlantic Coast region sufficiently into account, and that it is therefore running the risk of fomenting conflict instead of participation. This point harks back to the discussion on the perceived morality or legitimacy of the state among the beneficiaries. Local-level organisations, like CEDEHCA and FUNDAR, prove to be more effective in producing intended outcomes on both individual and social levels than regional-level organisations, like – if we stick to the Central American organisations – both IPADE and CPD.

Finally, we have also noted, on a general level, that even if the projects in some cases had evaluative ways of following up activities, the possibilities for beneficiaries/users to participate in the planning, decision making, and follow-up of activities are small, and in several cases even non-existent – a shortcoming with implications for the sustainability of the project and, again, for ownership to reach beyond the partners to include also the beneficiaries and their points of view. Whether this is judged by partners, Diakonia, or Sida to be a legitimate remark, or if beneficiaries should deliberately be excluded from such influence, is also beyond the immediate scope of the evaluation. For the record, however, we note, firstly, that such a discussion was taking place among interviewed beneficiaries and, secondly, that we think it is worth taking seriously, not least since partner organisations could benefit from the added value of "acting democratically" themselves in relation to their beneficiaries when teaching about democracy in political life. There is also the obvious point, relevant in relation to outcomes, that organisations which are able to anchor the novelty of laws and the practicing of democracy in the specific needs, expectations, and desires of the world of the beneficiaries are standing a better chance of succeeding in their aims.

3. Relationship between beneficiaries and the base

One of the critical points of leadership training is, as already discussed, the risk, or even observable tendency in some of the cases, that the educated leaders will distance themselves (or reluctantly become distanced) from their own communities or their base. In several cases, these leaders form "an elite" that talks in the name of the base or the beneficiaries while increasingly becoming alienated from them. In relation to this and in some of the cases (e.g., Alternativa, CEADES, FUNDAR), the selection and position of the

leaders could be further discussed. For example, to be able to participate in the Leadership School of Alternativa the proposed student has to be nominated by his or her social organisation in the neighbourhood or municipality. Some of the tasks of the courses have to be performed and anchored in the social organisation. In spite of these mechanisms, the education creates a gap between the educated leaders and their base organisation. Whether it is good or bad that Alternativa creates an educated elite among the social organisations in Lima is debated. In a conversation with the responsible team at the office, they said that there were ideas behind the school which aimed precisely at that, forming an elite that will initiate change in the area. But the team also recognised the need for activities against the alienation of social leaders. In the case of CEADES, the leaders of AFIN get experiences of negotiation at the national level and learn skills that they seldom have the chance to share at the base level. Alternativa, CEADES, and CEDAP educate leaders as representatives of base organisations. In all three cases, when asked what the organisation could do better, some of the interviewed persons asked that the organisation extend the training to include the base organisations.

In Central America, participation in the Diakonia-funded programmes and training sessions was often described with great enthusiasm. Beneficiaries claimed to have been offered an alternative and a new political and legal "vision". This was observable over time in relation to all the organisations. However, in the Guatemalan cases, participation was always reflected upon in relation to the economic hardships of everyday life, and work for the community was described as an often unbearable burden, severely affecting people's subsistence economy and making them even poorer and more vulnerable than they were before. We could even see the direct connection between this burden and increasing levels of migration from San Andrés (FUNDAR) by measuring the number of representatives in the communal development councils who had recently migrated and abandoned their "responsibilities". This "abandonment" through migration to the U.S. should not be mistaken for social mobility and a recent function of dynamic social networks. Migration was usually condemned as abandonment and even betrayal in our talks with beneficiaries. That is not to say that the interviewees themselves did not aspire to leave, but it meant that they did not associate the always secretive and individual departure from the community with the responsibilities and openness discussed in the training sessions of FUNDAR.

Moreover, and partly because of the hardships, the prestige associated with leadership positions has been transformed into a much more ambivalent status of authority. Being elected (most often, reluctantly re-elected – we saw examples from IPADE, FUNDAR, and CPD) could not, therefore, be seen as a privileged entry into a local elite group, but the contrary. Being elected, for many, meant being placed in a position from which you could not exercise anything resembling political influence, due to a still hierarchical structure

above, and in which you did not feel like a representative of a community but, instead, like someone banned from community.

In Guatemala there are differences between communal forms of traditional authority (supported by CPD) and state-connected municipal organisations (supported by both FUNDAR and CPD). It is notable that there are few or no benefits associated with being part of the latter – and here we mean benefits to include anything from strictly economic compensation or gain to a sense of having been granted a legitimate authority or a new or expanded social network. Even municipal mayors in both Nicaragua and Guatemala testified to the piles of applications and project proposals on their desks – something they had received from "trained beneficiaries" – but noted with frustration that there was simply no money to deliver, and the applicants – the local leaders – returned to their communities empty handed. Whether their projects met the resistance of an authoritarian political structure, or simply could not be funded, as in the example above of an economically drained public sector, the "outcome" among local leaders was a loss of prestige and leadership legitimacy in their respective communities. In Totonicapán (CPD), however, the non-state traditional structure is perceived as a more legitimate form of authority, and people derive a benefit from it in the form of social recognition. We conclude that, at the current moment, there are few or no "benefits" in the sense described above associated with participating in the process of democratisation.

In the South American cases, the burden of participation was also reflected upon in the interviews in terms of the personal economic sacrifices it involved, the need for a supportive family, and the problem of social pressure exercised by the community the person represented. Many people, however, expressed a willingness to take on this burden because of the social prestige, access to new networks, information, and capacity development it involved. In this context it is worth noting the perceived and experienced "risks" involved in participation, where a corrupt system, most clearly noted in the Bolivian CPMGA case, or a critical social organisation, may drastically turn its back on its former representative.

4. Support for gender equality – sameness vs. complementarity

A great concern for unequal gender relations is a key issue for Diakonia and something that can be found in all of the organisations across countries. A majority of them tends to accept the donor's gender policy, even though gender, like other core policy values, is interpreted differently in different contexts and different emphasis is placed on either (universal) "sameness" or (relative) "complementarity".[38] In several of the cases – e.g., AFIN, CEDAP,

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[38] "Sameness" is based on a view of women and men as not only equal but in fact "the same", with the implication that they should also have the same opportunities. The perspective of "complementarity" is based on a view of women and men as different but, importantly, both essential parts of a greater whole in which they are complementing each other. Equal opportunities should be based on a recognition of such differences.

and CPD – we noted a certain amount of contradiction between what is often perceived as western-oriented perspectives on gender equality, and an emphasis on the value of traditional gender roles and relations. The differences between the organisations' ways of handling the contradictions can be interpreted as the varying extent to which cultural values are politicised by the organisations. A notion of and desire for equality (sameness) was indeed sometimes expressed among the beneficiaries even though it was rejected or criticised by the partner organisation.

On a general level, we did find the work of the partner organisations to be somewhat different with regard to the promotion of self-esteem in workshops, to the advantage of men in some cases, and women in others. The positive outcome in the individual sphere, i.e., an increased level of knowledge about citizenship rights, cannot be separated from the notion of self-esteem and the highly emotional aspects of having learned how to use the tools of participation.

The tension between a (western) emphasis on sameness, and an (indigenous) emphasis on difference did come out in interviews and is, perhaps, a matter of methodological concern more than anything else. With beneficiaries who had more or less relentlessly accepted the sameness perspective, the training in the theme of women's rights was most often described as a revolutionary success and the views about the partner organisation were in these cases very positive. An equally observable tendency was represented by the instances when the topic arose with a beneficiary still professing the difference perspective (most often a man) and when the talk of gender roles was silenced in favour of what appeared to be less conflictive topics.

5. The promotion of individualism

There is an agreement between Sida and Diakonia that capacity development should be pursued by working with organisations as groups. Accordingly, the training and guidance that we have studied is directed towards both individuals and groups. There are two issues that we want to discuss in relation to individuals and individualism. First, in these programmes, by promoting individuals through activities aimed at changing their behaviour or performance, the responsibility for a successful democratisation is placed on the individual. Second, even if individualism per se is not the aim, we argue that the supported activities in some cases contribute to the already existing and ongoing processes of individuation in Latin American societies. Both of the leadership schools, CPMGA and Alternativa, are directed towards selected individuals, even if they have to be nominated by their social organisations. The ideas behind these courses are that the more educated the leaders, the more people and organisations will be able to participate, and, in the end, the more democratic the society. In this perspective, democracy is achieved through acts and actions of an aggregate of individuals. It is not that the schools per se promote individualism, quite the contrary in many cases; but when they select individual leaders to work with, instead of, for example,

working with whole organisations, those leaders will be reinforced in their process of individuation. Furthermore, the responsibility for successful democratisation is accordingly placed upon the individual.

We do not wish to question the argument that the responsibility and actions of individuals affect the way society is organised, but the focus on individuals does in itself contain a certain power and ethics that need to be explored, an ethics not taken for granted. The interviews of former students of these schools also provide several examples of when the user was not able to effect any change at all, not because of lack of capacity, but due to factors outside the scope and sphere of influence of the school. The success of the democratisation process may depend more on the social or political structure of society than on the individual's capacity. This focus on the capacity development of individuals might be more effective if it were accompanied by other activities directed towards changing structural conditions in which these same individuals operate, or by which they are constrained. The focus on the individual also contributes to the already existing and ongoing processes of individuation in Latin American societies. This relates to another issue concerning individual vs. collective participation that deals with indigenous peoples in Latin America. The Quechua speakers of Chilcas (CEDAP) and the Chiquitanos of Concepción (CEADES) are rural populations with social organisations that organise many aspects in a person's life, such as access to land, pasture, and water. These groups are often organised on egalitarian principles where every member has the same rights and obligations, the decision-making process is based on consensus, and the well-being of the collective is emphasised before the individual. The collective management of natural resources is in many cases a prerequisite to a sustainable way of living in a particular ecological niche (e.g. Albó et al. 1989). In the case of CEADES and AFIN, a tension could be noted between the goals of the larger indigenous organisation and the aims of AFIN. It is not that CEDAP is directly promoting individualism, but in this context, where the benefits of the collective are emphasised before the individual, CEDAP is using the *Pachamamanchikta Waqaychasun* contest to support the development of the family unit (a family unit with interests limited mainly to the private, individual sphere), without, as it seems, directing an equivalent amount of work to supporting the weak organisation of the communities/*anexos*.

Here, it should also be mentioned that the partner organisations do not work in contexts where collective values or socio-centrism are necessarily dominant. Social, economic, and cultural processes are threatening or challenging communal forms of organisation and identification on many levels, and Diakonia-funded programmes are adapting to such contexts. In the case of CEDEHCA, for instance, the very emphasis on individual human rights points to the problem of individuation in a place where ethnic groups value collective ways of dealing with many issues. However, changes have been occurring at such a fast pace in some of these places that the work of CEDEHCA

is seen by local people as a very legitimate approach to an acute problem.

Having said that, in Diakonia-funded training beneficiaries learn that rights are not free, but come with a set of responsibilities. In accordance with such a focus, if "democracy" does not emerge as a consequence of the training and the actions taken in relation to the training, beneficiaries in many cases expressed the views either that they no longer had the responsibilities (since they had obviously not yet been granted the rights), or that the lack of democratic development was, in fact, *their* responsibility, since their behaviour or attitudes had not changed sufficiently.

The time span covered by this evaluation was too short for us to be able to follow changes in policy due to setbacks or a lack of democratic progress, but we speculate on the risk that unfulfilled expectations, given the focus on individual behaviour in the programmes for leadership formation, will result in new programmes and a new set of core values in order to change individuals in yet another direction. Now, if "responsibility", as we have stressed in this evaluation, most importantly rests with "the system", such possible changes are likely to be ineffective.

Future challenges for partner organisations and their beneficiaries

•	The major future challenge for beneficiaries of leadership training among the poorest sectors of the populations is doubtlessly the economic, and how to manage the scarce resource of time when it has to suffice for both work for subsistence and political participation, i.e., the challenge of how to combine being politically active with the pressing needs of supporting a poor household. Some organisations in this study worked explicitly on combining the sacrifice of participation with different kinds of "rewards" in both economic and social spheres, and even though such rewards are symbolic at best, we believe the approach could serve as an interesting example for other partner organisations to learn from and follow.

•	The challenge for the leader of being accountable to both the community and the partner organisation that supports or runs the training. Here, we found a paradox at times, since the transformation of perceptions and the increasing knowledge among trained leaders threatened to work against their legitimacy and authority in the local sphere.

•	The selection of leaders is sometimes arbitrary, and sometimes it challenges local norms of authority (with the aim of reforming leadership), or, again, it promotes local traditional authority (elder, male, etc.). We see it as a major challenge for the partner organisations to engage in a critical discussion with beneficiaries on ways to broaden the selection of leaders, primarily in order to counteract the emergence of local and continuously re-elected elites.

•	In instances of weak legitimacy of the leaders in the communities, a future challenge for both beneficiaries and, most importantly, partner or-

ganisations is to work on issues of ownership, in order not to have one top-down model of project management (run by the donor for the beneficiary through the partner) be replaced by another (run by the partner for the beneficiary).

Future challenges for Diakonia

- The selection and ongoing monitoring of partner organisations should be attentive to tendencies and changes in their work and not rely on official statements and project descriptions often adjusted to the wishes and demands of the donor.

- Diakonia promotes change mainly through education and training aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour. Focus seems to be on the political or ideological side. A challenge would be to find a more integrated approach. For beneficiaries and the grass-roots, politics and economy are intimately connected. Changing people's knowledge and perceptions may have some results for poor people, as we have seen, but in many cases it is not enough and needs to be combined with a strengthened position in the economic sphere as well.

- If the obstacles to poor people's participation are to be found in the structures more than in individual capacities a challenge is to find ways of forming leaders that address both individual and structure *in the same place at the same time.*

- Diakonia and its partners need to find ways to follow up outcomes and to qualitatively interpret the outcome of their work themselves.

- It is important to consider that what the donor perceives as risks are an integrated part of the dynamic of each programme, and not to presuppose that interventions are neutral engines of empowerment without political, social, and economic effects.

Future challenges for international development cooperation

- Given the fact that Diakonia dispenses Sida funding and could be said to represent an operative branch of Sida in the interventions studied, all of the challenges outlined above count for Sida as well.

- The criticism of the notion of capacity building as an instrument of top-down control of development projects is convincingly deconstructed in Sida (and Diakonia) policy documents. The notion of capacity development is introduced to mark a shift towards an increased ownership of projects among partner countries and organisations. We have found the open-ended approach of Diakonia to the differences in culture, context, and capacities of partner organisations, to actually reflect or empirically prove this discursive shift (if yet with a few negative consequences). A challenge, however, would be to preserve or, perhaps, *develop* this stance further by encouraging Diakonia and other donor agencies to keep working towards a more full partner ownership of programmes.

- The point above could very well be connected to the most important challenge for beneficiaries and partners – the economic. We found convincing and sometimes frustrated arguments for means to accomplish an economic decentralisation and to combine the political side of democratisation with opportunities in the economic sphere. A developed ownership on the part of those organisations would, for Sida (in dialogue with Diakonia), imply lending an ear to such argumentation.

Future challenges for outcome oriented evaluations

- Time constraints and the need to balance the number of studied interventions with a coverable distance, a manageable number of evaluators, and a sufficient amount of days for both travel and study.

- The importance of choosing a period of observation long enough to able to assess changes. The period needed should vary with the aims and activities of the projects.

- The importance of selecting programmes that run parallel to the evaluation, so that one programme does not end and another one start in the middle of the process. If that occurs, conversations with beneficiaries will necessarily be interrupted, since individual beneficiaries will be exchanged for others.

- The importance of adjusting the timetable to the pressing tasks of the organisations, not to interfere when they and their members or beneficiaries are dealing with essential tasks such as the monitoring of national or regional elections.

- The need to balance the number of interventions studied and the number of interviewees on the one hand with intended results and achievements on the other.

- The challenge of keeping the conversation with partner organisations going between visits in order to carefully and repeatedly explain the nature of the evaluation and also to announce the visits as early as possible to give them enough time to see to the practical arrangements of contacts with beneficiaries.

- The challenge of communicating the result to an audience that might be more interested in more conventional evaluation results, such as the fulfilment of project aims or the strictly more organisational aspects of both partners and donors.

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Appendix A – List of Interviewees

Bolivia

CPMGA

Staff

Ana María Kudelka	Director of the Office of Citizen Action
Clotilde Loza	Responsible of the Training
María Luisa Vargas.	Responsible for the strengthening of women's participation
Marco Quispe	Responsible for the Workshop of Investigation
Renée Machigado	Responsible for the Workshop of Investigation
Carina García	Teaching Supervisor
Rosa Maria Balboa	Teaching Supervisor
Ruth Dorado	Coordinator of the project of the leadership school
Nora Quispe	Technician of organisational strengthening

Users of CPMGA

María Cristina Amar	Secretary of "Actas" FEJUVE.
Alcira Godoy	Secretary of Gender, FEJUVE.
Mercedes Condori	Treasurer, FEJUVE
Elizabeth Cuellar	Secretary of Generation, FEJUVE
Luisa Condori	Graduate of the leadership school
Sarah Tito	Graduate of the leadership school
Leonor Portillo	Graduate of the leadership school, former neighbourhood leader
Juana Fernandez	Graduate of the leadership school
Daniel Quispe Murga.	Graduate of the leadership school, coordinator of youth groups
Juana Irene Apaza Condori.	Participant in the Workshop of Investigation
Melisa Ramos Ayaviri.	Participant in the Workshop of Investigation
Hortensia Yana	Participant in the Workshop of Investigation

Miguel Mamani	Participant in the Workshop of Investigation
Zenobia Miranda	Participant in the leadership school
Janett	Participant in the leadership school
Fanny Nuemi Limachi	Participant in the leadership school

CEADES

Staff

Jorge Cortez	Director of CEADES
Jeanett Giné	Responsible for Pedagogy
Rolando Vargas Nina	Responsible for the project of AFIN

Users from San Antonio de Lomerío

Cándido Vivero	President of AFIL
Hugo Faldín Chubé	President of AFIL
Miguel Chuviru Chuvé	Technical Assistant of the Project of Forest Management
Nélida Faldín Chubé	Gender Secretary, CICOL
Mariano Choré	Treasurer, CICOL
Juan Chuvirú	Secretary, CICOL
Ana Parapaino Surubí	Secretary of forestry, CICOL
Maria Cristina Surubí Castro	Secretary of education, CICOL
Anselmo Rodríguez Chuvé	Secretary of Land and Territory, CICOL
Ignacio Soqueré Tomichá	General Secretary, CICOL
Huber Surubí Parapaino	Community of Salinas
Mauro Rozas Ortiz	
Maria Mengari	

Users from Monte Verde

Juan Lira	Committee of Indigenous Territorial Administration
Paulo Chuvé Bailaba	President of Forest Committee
Ignacio Paz	Vice president of Forest Committee
Fermín Velasquez Chávez	Community of Monteverde
Andrés Chuviru Chuvé	Community of Monteverde
Isaias Mangari Chuvé	Community of Monteverde
Felix Chubé	Community of Monteverde
Pedro Guayabe	Responsible of "Aprovechamiento"
Juan Gilberto Chuvé	Community of Monteverde
Pedro Masai Chuvé	Community of Palestina

Miguel Masai	Community of Palestina
Andrés Leigue	Responsible of Commercialisation, Forest Committee, Community of Santa Monica
Pedro Supepi Supayave	Community of Macanate
Juan Pinto Supayabe	Commercialisation Team of APCOB, Community of Macanate

AFIN

| Fabian Rodriquez | President of AFIN, San Miguel de Velasco |
| Guillermo Posorojay | Community of Poza Verde |

Others

Jaime Callisaya	FEJUVE, El Alto
Rosario León	Director of CERES, Expert in Communitaria Forestry
Representative of OICH	Concepción
Iván Orlando Ureña	Representative of APCOB, Concepción
Priest of the Catholic Church	Concepción

Peru

Alternativa

Staff

Maritza Caycho	Director of the Office of the Leadership School
Rubén Grovas	Responsible of follow-up and accompanying of the team of the Leadership School
Ofelia Márquez	Responsible of the pedagogy of the EDUCAL project
Sandro Ponce	Academic Coordinator – pedagogic part

Users of Alternativa

Lily González de Rojas	Graduate of the Leadership School
Reina Isminio	Graduate of the Leadership School
Luis Flores.	Graduate of the Leadership School, Coordinator of the Citizen Vigilance Committee of Comas
Rosalía del Aguila	Graduate of the Leadership School, Organised Union of Women of Collique.
María Bozeta Antón	Graduate of the Leadership School

Richard Paytán	Graduate of the Leadership School, Vice president of Executive Council of Ciudadela Pachacútec
Juana Grados	Graduate of the Leadership School,
Víctor Rojas	Graduate of the Leadership School, President of the Association of Youth in Action, District of Carabaillo
Raúl Jerí.	Graduate of the Leadership School, Secretary of the Committee of the Park Santa Luisa.
Olga Oré	Graduate of the Leadership School, Secretary of the Metropolitan Network of Ambulating Workers and Markets of Lima and Callao
Jesús García	Neighbourhood Organisation, Zapallal
Vilma Segundo.	Graduate of the Leadership School, President of the Central District of the "Comedores Populares" of San Martín de Porres
Maruja Silva	Graduate of the Leadership School, Coordinator of the Committee of Health and Environment of the District of Independencia.
María Inez Torres	Graduate of the Leadership School, Leader, Carabayllo
Daniel Tapia	Participant of the Leadership School, Neighbourhood Organisations of Ventanilla
Sergio Cubas	Participant of the Leadership School, Neighbourhood Organisations, Comas
Sebastián Tello	Participant of the Leadership School, Group of Urban Initiatives
Clara Olaya	Participant of the Leadership School, "Comedores" of Ventanilla
Angélica Agüero	Participant of the Leadership School, President of Gender Committee, Comas
Rosario Calderón	Participant of the Leadership School
Celina Andrade	Participant of the Leadership School, Network of Health Promoters, Independencia
Margarita Riveras	Participant of the Leadership School, Gender Committee, Comas
Maria Barboza	Participant of the Leadership School
Sebastian Diaz	Participant of the Leadership School, Health Promoter, Los Olivos
Rita Valer	Participant of the Leadership School, Gender Committee, Comas

| Brenda Farfán | Participant of the Leadership School |
| Janett Fuentes | Participant of the Leadership School |

CEDAP

Staff

Carlos Alviar	Director
Heraclio Luján	Coordinator of projects of San Miguel
Lorena Hermosa	Gender promoter
Lucy Allasca	Technician

Users of CEDAP

Teófilo Sosa Muñoz	Delegate of the annex of Huinchi
Augusto Guillén Gutiérrez	Peasant Community of Apucanchi, Rumi Rumi. Teacher and councillor of Chilcas
Leónidas Illiscas Guillén	President of ADOSCI
Teodoro Aramburu	Community of Chuchín
Clorinda Loayza Loayza	Community of Esccana.
Faustino Geribas	Former president of ADOSCI
Reynalda Ramirez	Community of Retama
Maria Magdalena	Councillor of Chilcas
Maurino Laurente	Councillor of Chilcas
Gaspar Gutierrez Velarde	Community of Tunas Pampa
Enedina Carpio Gutierrez	Councillor of Chilcas
Andrés Huamán	President of ADOSCI
Mariano Mendoza	

Others

Manuel Cordero	Central Committee, Ciudadela Pachacutec.
Carmen Zevallos	Central Committee, Ciudadela Pachacutec
Efraín Loayza Rojas	District mayor of Chilcas
Custodio Guillén Alcarraz	Teacher of the school of Chilcas

Diakonia

Cecilia Ängelid	Coordinator for Latin America
Marianne Gustafsson	Regional coordinator for Latin America
Nilla Ingstorp	Regional Coordinator for Peru
Edith Montero	National Coordinator for Peru
Milton Soto	National Coordinator for Bolivia
Nina Larrea	Regional Coordinator for Bolivia

Nicaragua[39]

IPADE

Beanira Aguero, coordinator, Ipade-Las Minas

Manuel Ramirez, coordinator, Ipade-Bonanza

Mauricio Zúñiga, national director

Miguel García, Danli Central, Siuna

Alejandrina Lumbí, Santa Fé, Siuna

Marina Araúz, member of MONSEVI
  – *Movimiento de mujeres en defensa de la Vida*, Siuna.

Alejandra Centeno, coordinator of Siuna's women's movement

Juan Gónzalez, Las Quebradas, Siuna

José Ángel López Góngora, Rancho Alegre,
  president of the territorial organization of Rosa Grande, Siuna

Juana López, community member, Siuna

Evaristo Luna Alfaro, Siuna's vice-mayor

Marina Zamora, municipal councillor, Siuna

Juan Herrera, member of the organization health without limits
  – *salud sin limites* – Siuna

Horelia Moody, coordinator Centro Humboldt, Siuna

Leonel Ramírez, project coordinator of UCA
  (Agricultural Cooperatives Union)

Marco Antonio Flores, Waspuko arriba,
  member of territorial organization of Rosa Grande, Siuna

Martín Granados Hernández, Las quebradas,
  secretary of territorial organization Rosa Grande.

Emelina Hernández, the cooperative Pablo Úbeda, Wani 2, Siuna

Francisco Quiroz, Rosa Grande, the communal promoter of the municipal
  government, Siuna

Lilia Quiroz, Rancho Alegre, member of the territorial organization of
  Rosa Grande, Siuna

Medardo Guatemala, Bonanza

Francisco Daniel Hernández Hernández, Santa Rita, member of the
  territorial organization of Cola Blanca, Bonanza

Pedro Luis Pérez, secretary of the territorial organization of Pis-Pis

Marvin Úbeda Guevara, Secretario del Consejo Municipal de Bonanza

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Alejandra, La Gloria, Bonanza

Isaias, Los Cocos, Bonanza

Narciso, Ojochal, Bonanza

Pascual, El Ojochal, Bonanza

Luz Marina Cáliz, Miranda, member of the territorial organization of Cola Blanca, Bonanza

Noe Colleman, president of Matumbak territory, Mukuswas, Bonanza

Armando Edwin, sindico, Españolina, Bonanza

Omar González, La Gloria, Bonanza

Julia Hernández, Los Cocos, Bonanza

Medardo Antonio Leyva, El Salto Grande, Bonanza

Bismark Leiva, La Gloria, Bonanza

Alejandro Peralta, Españolina, Bonanza

Erasmos Taylor, Españolina, Bonanza

Leonardo Garcia, Coordinator of Centro Humboldt-Bonanza

Ernesto Aguirre, member of the Pastoral Social Vicariato of Bluefields.

Neftalia Herrera, member of the women's organization Colectivo Gaviota, Bonanza

Elida Santen Roche, coordinator of the women's movement and the Permanent Congress of Businesswomen, Bonanza

Lucin Gill Colleman, Sauni Arunka territory

Pedro Luis Lanuza Pérez, member of the territorial organization of Pis Pis

Rafael Rivera Hernández, president of the territorial organization of Banacruz

Eugenio Pao, director, Bonanza's municipal government

Francisco Mairena, Coordinator of the BOSAWAS project.

Guillermo Rugama, El Zopilote, Rosita

Anastacio Thompson, Fenicia, Rosita

Marta Gomez, municipal councilor, Rosita

Arsenio Montalban, director, Rosita's municipal government

Brenda Jarquin, coordinator of FURCA-Rosita

Oscar López Frank, Arena Loso, Rosita

Mayron Lopez Frank, síndico, Arena Loso, Rosita

Mariano Rivas Chavarria, Susun Central, Rosita

Guillermo Rugama, El Zopilote, Rosita

CEDEHCA

Romel Calero, youth group coordinator, CEDEHCA

Michael Campbell, coordinator, CEDEHCA

Deborah Hodgson, coordinator Cedehca-Puerto Cabezas

Myriam Hooker, director, CEDEHCA

Ivania Mendez McCoy, member of legal support team, CEDEHCA

Priscilla Thomas, Coordinator Cedehca-Waspam.

Reyna Flores Guido, CEDEHCA coordinator in Siuna

Oscar Aguilar, JENH member, Puerto Cabezas

Aneria Carlson, Human Rights promoter, the neighborhood of El Cocal, Puerto Cabezas

Napoleón Gaitan, JENH member, Puerto Cabezas

Steven Méndez, Maniwatla, JENH member, Puerto Cabezas

Corina Obando, JENH member, Puerto Cabezas

Omar Rodriguez, JENH member, Puerto Cabezas

José Castellón, JENH member

Solanyi Castro, JENH member

Roy Felding, communal judge and Human Rights promoter in El Muelle

Raúl Manzanares, JENH member

José Barrientos Watson, Human Rights attorney for the RAAN, Puerto Cabezas

José Luis Díaz González, preacher, Waspam

Mateo Salmarón, Human Rights promoter, teacher, and catholic delegado, Kisalaya

Florencia Suarez Charles, Human Rights promoter, Waspam

Mirna Cunningham, Puerto Cabezas

Joel Dixon, Mayagna representative in CONADETI

Carmen Poveda, director of women's police office, Puerto Cabezas

Connie Arechavala, Leymus, Waspam

Jubath Bonce Castro, Wis Wis, Waspam

Humberto Lacayo, preacher and human rights promoter, Waspam

Karisilia Lino Panting, Kisalaya, Waspam

Teresa Melgara, Bulkian, Waspam

Sindelina Panting, Kisalaya, Waspam

Inocente Salazar, Saulala (Santa Ana), Waspam

Mateo Salmeron, teacher, human rights promoter and catholic *delegado,* Kisalaya, Waspam

Regino J. Rivas, Koom, Waspam

Gaspar Coleman, municipal councilor, Waspam

Genaro Garcia, municipal councilor, Waspam

Mayra Mueller Chacon, municipal councilor, Waspam

Nemesio Sánchez, municipal councilor, Waspam

Santos Benavides, police chief, Waspam

Laura Hammer, coordinator of Alistar-Waspam

Moises Moraga, Diakonia, Nicaragua

Guatemala

FUNDAR

Martín Matzar Sulugui, director, FUNDAR

Juan Victoriano Bulux Pacheco, project director, FUNDAR

Sandra Isabel Campa, project coordinator, FUNDAR

Carmelina Pakalmatzar, project coordinator, FUNDAR

José Manuel Mendoza, project coordinator, FUNDAR

Manuel Juracan Calel, field and project coordinator, FUNDAR

Felipe, project coordinator, FUNDAR

Eliceo Xep, project coordinator, FUNDAR

Ana Estela Morales, secretary, FUNDAR

Tomas Morales, second spokesperson of Cocode

Juan José Cumes Morales, Cocode member, Panimatzalam

Yolanda Isabel Morales Quino, member of the organization Utzipetic

Josefina Salvador Morales, Choqulec, president of the organization
    JOIMDE

Tomasa Lastor, Cocode and Comude representative, Chutíestancia

Sebastian Morales Tzoc, member of the community organization Utzipetic

Elena Bechan Mendez, member of the community organization Trixano

Juan Baluch Pachaco, member of community organization

Ana Estela Morales, member of community organization

Carlos Manuel García Serech, Cocode and Comude representative,
    Los Robles

Filadelfo Calel Pacal, Tocaché, Cocode and Comude representative

Maria Magdalena Juracán Calel, president of community organization

Romelia Sacuj Locón, leader of the community organization Adiksa,
    Las Canoas Altas

Irena Sacuj Locón, Romelias mother and member of Adiksa

Margarita Perez Castro, Cocode representative

Antonia Morales, secretary of Cocode and Comude representative,
Las Canoas Bajas

Ovidio Paz: Regional Representative of the Human Rights Ombudsman's
Office, Sololá.

Manuel Reanda Pablo, Regional Indigenous Peoples' Rights Defender.

Julio Mendoza, secretary, Nuevo Amanecer, a micro-credit organization

Tomasa Morales Chom, secretary of the community organization Utzipetic

Marta Lydia Choc Sic, first spokesperson of in the organization Trixano

Aparisio Lix Juracán, Cocode president and community mayor

Fransisco Miranda Velasquez, president of Cocode

Diego Perez, Cocode representative in the community of Sucún

Tomas Gonzalez, Cocode representative in the community of Sucún

Ernesto Prez Chum, Cocode representative in the community of Sucún

Tomas Ajanel, Cocode representative in the community of Sucún

Mercedes Astor, Cocode representative in the community of Sucún

Tomasa Pastor Morales, member of community organization

Sonia Cenquino, member of community organization

Lesbia Maria Qoex Zapeta, secretary of Cocode

Juan Tol Morales, president of Cocode and community mayor

Amalia Quino, cocode commision de mujer

Marta Morales Juracán, ex-spokesperson for Cocode och Comude

Rosa Morales, Cocode and Comude representative

Pascuala Quy Morales, member of the community organization ADIMCA

Marcelino Juan, spokesperson for the community organization Nuevo
Amanecer

Tomasa Méndez Morales, vice-president of the community organization
Utzipetic

Juana Pacal, community member

Rubén Darío García, Cocode member

Francisca Corozon, Cocode member

María Morales, Cocode member

Antonia Morales, ex-member of Cocode

Tomas Morales, ex-member of Cocode

Edwin Haroldo Locón, ex-member of Cocode

Antonia Tiu Tzoc, community leader

Ricardo Tol, community leader

Tomasa Calde Morales, community leader

Tomás Chumil Calel, community member

Augosto Quino, community mayor and president of Cocode

Ovidio Paz, regional representative of the Human Rights Ombudsman's
Office, Sololá

Manuel Reanda Pablo, regional Indigenous Peoples' Rights defender.

CPD

Rigoberto García, director, CPD

Edwin Chavez, programme coordinator, CPD

Lidia Cua, programme coordinator, CPD

Julio César, programme coordinator, CPD

Yasmin Sicara, secretary, CPD

Mario Lopez, ex-programme coordinator, CPD

Victor Tum, community mayor

Maria de los Angeles Hernández, community mayor

Antonio Santoy, community mayor, Santa Rita Cacalja

Ciriaco Alberto Estrada, Cocode representative, Cantón Carrucheque,
Sacalja

José Antonio Sancay, community mayor

Carlos García, ex-community mayor, ex-coordinator of the 48 Cantones of
Totonicapán, and co-founding member of CPD

Carmelina Salqaxot, president of the women's group *Todas Juntas*

José Solis Caxaj, Chotacá, Cantón Chotacaj,
ex mayor and ex president of the 48 Cantones of Totonicapán

Carlos Vicente Soch Batz, ex-community mayor

Fortunato Solis Tax,
ex-mayor and ex-president of the board of the 48 cantones

José Antonio Ulin Tuch, community mayor

Victor Fransisco Yax, community mayor

Julian Fransisco Chuc, community mayor

Domingo Alvarez,
community mayor and president of the board of the 48 cantones

Augustin García Perez, community mayor and second spokesperson for the
board of the 48 cantones

Domingo Ramos, community mayor and
first spokesperson for the board of the 48 cantones

Appendix B – Terms of Reference

Mathias Krüger 2006-01-24, RELA

Terms of Reference for the Outcome Oriented Evaluation of Diakonia's Latin America Program

Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) is at the present exploring different alternative approaches to employ in the area of support for democracy and human rights. One of these alternatives consist in applying the method of "outcome mapping", i.e. to focus on an intermediary level of results encompassing changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities and actions of the primary target group.

UTV's attention is focused on efforts of training and capacity building, as such components are central to most programs in the area. There is thus a close affinity to the interest of Sida's department for Latin America (RELA) to evaluate Diakonia's Latin American program. As is well known, the organisation is a prominent actor within the field, with good local contacts and a devotion to the theme of capacity-building initiatives.

Hence, in consultation with Diakonia, UTV and RELA have agreed to make a joint initiative to evaluate a number of Diakonia supported projects aimed at capacity training in Latin America. In line with what has been said above, there are three primary reasons for this undertaking: It provides a suitable focus for an outcome-based evaluation; it coincides with RELA's interest in gaining more insights into the results of Diakonia's activities; and it can contribute to our knowledge of a central component in Swedish aid to democracy and human rights.

1. Evaluation Purpose: to Assess the outcome of Diakonia's work

This evaluation should provide information to Sida regarding the outcome of Diakonia's Latin American program.

The intended direct users of the evaluation are representatives of Sida's Latin American Department and members of Sida's Project Committee. However, the methodological approach employed will also be of interest to Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit.

Diakonia's regional Latin American intervention was presented to Sida's intervention committee in January 2004. At that time, it was noted that in order to be able to assess Diakonia's applications, one would in the future need

more information on the outcome and relevance of the activities that make up the program. Earlier evaluations of Diakonia have mainly focused on organizational factors and methods for guaranteeing transparency and quality within Diakonia and/or its partners. This evaluation, however, aims to look beyond such aspects in order to enquire about the actual results of Diakonia's projects. Hence, it will focus on the extent to which such interventions contribute to changes and reorientations with regard to the behaviour and relationships of the participants/beneficiaries/members of the target group.

2.   Intervention Background

2.1   Intervention description

Sida has a long history of supporting Diakonia's programme in Latin America. Currently Sida finances Diakonia's activities in the region through two different channels/mechanisms. Sida's Department for Latin America, RELA, has an ongoing agreement with Diakonia for the period 2004–2006 which amounts to SEK 219 000 000. In addition, Sida's Unit for Non-Governmental Organisations, SEKA, has an agreement with Diakonia on a global level for the same period. In total, this agreement amounts to SEK 273 000 000 globally. (The approximate size of the programme in Latin America financed by SEKA is SEK 22 000 000 annually.) Diakonia does, however, regard its activities in Latin America, whether financed by SEKA or RELA, as one single program.

The overall goal of the Diakonia's program is; *"To change unjust political, economic and social structures generating poverty, repression and violence"*

The specific goals on the intervention level read as follows:

Central America: *"The target group has more capacity to exercise qualitative participation in processes that contribute to change social structures and systems creating and maintaining inequality and poverty and constitute an obstacle for a socially sustainable development, primarily on the local level"*

South America: *"The target group has increased its qualitative participation in the democratic structures through which they practice and demand their human rights and act for a sustainable development."*

It is changes such as these that the present evaluation will attempt to capture, through a focus on a selection of concrete projects supported by Diakonia.

Examples of strategies used by Diakonia and its partners include education, awareness raising, promotion of dialogue, and advocacy. The present evaluation will particularly focus on the results achieved by education and awareness-raising efforts, and will accordingly enquire into whether efforts in this regard have actually made a change in the behaviour and social relations of the target group.

2.2   Scope of the assignment

The evaluation should focus on a selection of eight to ten interventions sup-
ported by Diakonia in at least three of the following countries: Bolivia, Gua-
temala, Nicaragua, and Peru. A sample of interventions that may possibly be
included in the assignment shall be provided by Diakonia, based on the cri-
teria of representation of Diakonia's full programme.

At the beginning of the assignment, the consultants are asked to finalise the
selection of projects in consultation with Sida, with a view on the practical
aspects of the assignment.

2.3   Time and reporting

The evaluation shall include three visits to each of the selected projects. Ini-
tials visit shall take place before the end of March 2006, subsequent ones
before October 2006, and final ones before the end of September 2007. The
exact timing of the last visits shall be discussed with Sida.

Before the initiation of the visits, the consultants shall present a model of
analysis that clearly indicates the empirical focus of the visits and discuss in-
dicators of the aspects that shall be studied. This model of analysis shall be
discussed with the reference group.

Before each subsequent round of field visits, the team shall present a brief
inception report to the reference group, developing on the model of analysis
and previous findings. The reference group shall have the opportunity to
comment on these reports before the field visits are carried out.

After each set of field visits, formal progress reports should be made. A total
of three of these reports should be presented to Sida during the length of the
assignment;

- The first report, based on a first visit to the selected projects, shall be
  presented before April 15, 2006.

- The draft of the second report, juxtaposing results from the first and
  second round of visits, shall be presented in November 2006. The exact
  date will be defined later, since this second report will be a primary input
  to the upcoming discussions in the Project Committee on the possible
  support for the next phase (2007–2009) of Diakonia's Latin American
  program.

- The third and final report shall be presented before October 2007.

Each progress report should be thoroughly discussed with Diakonia, Sida
and a reference group on a seminar organized by the consultants in Stock-
holm. Results from these discussions could influence the focus of future inter-
vention visits.

The reports shall be presented in either Spanish or English, and a summary shall be presented in the other language. Format and outline of the report shall follow the guidelines in "Sida Evaluation Report – A Standardized Format". The reports shall have been professionally proof-read and edited before being sent to Sida.

3.   The Assignment

3.1   Description of the assignment

The assignment consists of the performance of a number of field visits in order to assess outcome effects in projects supported by Diakonia. This shall result in a thorough and systematic description that fulfils academic credentials. Conclusions shall be limited to what has actually happened in the projects; providing recommendations is not a primary task of the assignment.

Expressed differently, the main task is to provide information to Sida regarding the outcome of interventions and activities supported by Diakonia through its Latin American program.

The term "outcome" here refers to "changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities and actions" taken by the target group for each intervention.[40] Accordingly, the main task of the consultants will be to, through repetitive visits to the participants in each project, try and gauge the extent to which their behaviour and social relations undergo transformation and change as a results of the activities supported by Diakonia.

In order to estimate this, it is vital that the consultants:

- Possess excellent knowledge of the context in which the intervention operates.

- Are able to communicate directly with the members of the target group.

- Are able identify and re-visit individual participants (i.e., use them to construct a panel, methodologically speaking).

- Are able to gauge the effect of events and outside factors that are not connected to the intervention under observation, in order to control for them.

- Are able to minimise the "interview effects", i.e., the effects that arise primarily from having been chosen as objects of study.

- Possess knowledge about the gender and indigenous perspectives applied by Diakonia.

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[40]   Quote from Sarah Earl, Fred Carden and Terry Smutylo, *Outcome mapping* (Ottawa: IDRC, 2001), p. 1.

The consultants are asked to include all apparent effects in their analysis, whether intended or not. However, they should pay particular attention to whether the stated goals of each intervention, and of Diakonia's regional program, are being achieved. For that reason, one of their first tasks shall be to construct an appropriate model of analysis for each intervention.

Moreover, on the basis of their findings, and on their knowledge of local conditions, the consultants are also asked to make estimates of the impact and relevance of each intervention, i.e., to what extent changes at the level of outcome are also likely to generate effects at a more general level, and whether the changes found at the level of outcome can actually justify the cost and effort that has gone into the intervention.

If requested by Diakonia, the consultants shall – after the completion of the final report – be available to make recommendations on how Diakonia and its partners can develop, broaden and improve its performance with regard to capacity building.

3.2   Methodology and team composition

The evaluation team shall perform three visits to each intervention selected, undertaking to re-visit and talk to individual members of the target group during each visit. The material thus gathered shall form the basis for the evaluation. Moreover, the consultants shall undertake to assess how persons proximate but external to the intervention in question perceive of it and the results that it has achieved. Finally, documentation from Diakonia and/or its partner organization shall also be taken into account.

The team shall provide a detailed description of its proposed methodology in its first inception report. Sida foresees an academic, observational methodology with efforts to minimize impact on the objects of the evaluation.

The evaluation team shall be composed of

- A co-ordinator, who shall serve as liaison between the consultants involved, and between the evaluation team and Sida. The co-ordinator shall also be responsible for all practical matters pertaining to the evaluation.

- Local consultants, either nationals of the countries to be studied or persons possessing similar knowledge of the specific contexts to be studied.

All team members must possess thorough knowledge of social sector development in Latin America. They must be fluent in Spanish, and shall document knowledge of other relevant languages. At least one of the team members must be fluent in English. Team members must also document sufficient anthropological or sociological knowledge to be able to undertake the assignment with the necessary scientific rigour.

3.3   Extent of the assignment

The assignment includes the following elements:

- Maintaining a co-coordinative function for the evaluation, and contacts with Sida.

- Overview of relevant literature and previous evaluations.

- Two meetings (one in Latin America and one in Sweden) bringing together all persons involved in the assignment, in order for methodology and relevant concepts to be discussed. Ideally, one of these meetings shall be undertaken prior to the first set of visits.

- A first visit to the projects studied. A first, longer visit of about a week shall allow the consultants to initially assess the projects and the context in which they operate. At this visit, two national consultants and one Swedish consultant (the co-ordinator, or a person acting on his/her behalf) shall co-operate, alternatively one national and one Swedish consultant.

- A second and third visit to the selected projects, each of an estimated length of two to three days. The team shall consist of the same persons as during the first visit.

- Reporting. Inception reports and progress reports shall be filed before and after each field visit. In addition, after the second and third visit, more elaborate reports on the progress of the projects shall be presented, the latter of which shall constitute the final report from the project.

- In addition, the consultants shall undertake to arrange a seminar for the reference group and other concerned persons in Stockholm after each field visit, presenting their foremost results and conclusions.

4.   Stakeholder Involvement

Diakonia has been involved in the design of this evaluation from the very beginning through meetings with Sida staff. Diakonia will continue to be closely involved in the process of evaluation through the following mechanisms:

- Continuous communication with responsible Sida staff

- Permanent participation in the evaluation reference group

- Comments and follow-up dialogue in connection with every report from the evaluation team presented to Sida

- Diakonia is also responsible for providing a pre-selection list of 30 possible interventions to be included in the evaluation. The list shall give the reason for why Diakonia estimates that they represent Diakonia's overall program.

4.1   The reference group

Sida will set up a reference group ideally consisting of the following members:

• One representative from Sida's regional department for Latin America.

• One representative from Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit.

• Two representatives from Diakonia

• One representative from Sida's department for democratic governance.

• One representative from Sida's department for collaboration with NGOs.

• Two external representatives with relevant regional expertise.

The reference group should meet periodically to discuss progress and findings from the evaluation team. Both the inception reports and the evaluation reports should be discussed in the reference group.

The function of the reference group is to give input to the evaluation process, to disseminate results from the evaluation, and to provide the team of consultants with feed-back and opportunities for discussion during the entire process. Moreover, the members of the reference group maintain the right to participate in the field visits in a function strictly limited to observation, and at their own expense.

Recent Sida Evaluations

Democracy Promotion through NGOs

Outcome-Oriented Evaluation of Diakonia's Latin America Programme

Diakonia is one of the largest Swedish non-governmental organisations with funding from Sida. This is an evaluation of its Latin America programme. The overall objective of the programme is democracy promotion and it is centred on strategies of training and capacity development of civil society organisations.

The evaluation includes eight of Diakonia's partner organisations in Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua and Guatemala. The primary focus is on intermediary outcomes broadly defined: what has actually happened as a result of the projects? The methodology includes repeated interviews with beneficiaries during a period of one year and a half and the evaluation consciously approaches results from a strict beneficiary perspective. The evaluation hence produces a more in-depth and holistic understanding of outcomes than is often the case in evaluation.

The report contains valuable insights into the functioning of Diakonia's Latin America programme; it offers important lessons on strategies of democracy promotion and in particular capacity development; and it provides fuel for the continued process of methodological learning at Sida.

This evaluation was carried out by a multidisciplinary team of researchers, led by the Institute of Latin American Studies, Stockholm University.