
1 Introduction

Learning from our experiences
to enrich future results

The "Canada-Japan Joint Peacebuilding Learning Project" brings a new and unique dimension to development cooperation. Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have agreed to work together to gain a larger understanding of what is being learned from the efforts of Japanese and Canadian NGOs in peacebuilding. This represents the first time that CIDA has partnered with another donor nation to strengthen their mutual capacities to contribute to peacebuilding activities.

This project evolved from a "Canada-Japan Symposium on Peacebuilding for Development" held in Tokyo in September 1999 that brought together the Canadian and Japanese NGO peacebuilding communities, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and CIDA officials, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), JICA, research institutes and the media. At a follow-up workshop in Winnipeg in September 2000, JICA and CIDA reached agreement on the joint project and set out to visit countries where Canada and Japan have significant peacebuilding experience and strong development interests. On this basis, Guatemala and Cambodia were selected for field missions. Canada led the first learning mission to Guatemala from February 26th to March 9th, 2001. Japan is to direct the joint mission to Cambodia.

Guatemala Mission

The primary objectives of the Canadian/Japanese joint mission to Guatemala were to:

- Draw lessons learned by jointly reviewing peacebuilding projects of JICA, CIDA and Canadian/Japanese NGOs
- Field-test the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Methodology (PCIA) by using it for reviewing peacebuilding projects, and
- Develop joint Canadian and Japanese thinking on future cooperation in peacebuilding and identify possible areas for joint interventions.

Team members visited Guatemala to learn first-hand from local partners about their peacebuilding experiences. The mission was structured to optimize group learning,

with a range of opportunities being provided to observe peacebuilding in the field, and consult with front-line practitioners and stakeholders. Information collection relied primarily on presentations, project visits and stakeholder consultations. The mission team learned about the context for peacebuilding in Guatemala, what is being done and the results being achieved. Dialogue between members helped to enrich the learning process.

About this Report

This report brings a focus to how future peacebuilding interventions can be made more effective through the identification of what has worked in modifying Guatemala's adversarial conditions and what initiatives are contributing to the building of a representative/enduring democracy.

It describes:

- The situation in Guatemala, past and present
- The disparate conditions that characterize the country
- How the Guatemala mission was carried out
- What was learned from our project visits and consultations, and
- The challenges facing peacebuilding in Guatemala.

2 Guatemala: Yesterday and Today

Legacy of turmoil

The Mayan civilization flourished throughout much of Guatemala and southern Mexico long before the Spanish arrived, but it was already declining when Pedro de Alvarado conquered the region in 1523-24. The history of Guatemala following the Spanish conquest was one in which the Mayan indigenous population suffered virtually continuous tyrannical rule by a small elite. The Mayans periodically rose up in rebellion but were quickly crushed by the well-armed forces of the oligarchy. Guatemala gained independence from Spain on September 15, 1821; it briefly became part of the Mexican Empire and then, for a period, belonged to a federation called the United Provinces of Central America.

From the Spanish colonial era, Guatemala developed as a society that was anti-democratic in nature and marked by authoritarianism and despotism. From the mid-19th century to the mid-1980s, Guatemala passed through a series of dictatorships, coups and stretches of military rule with only occasional periods of representative government. Throughout this period, the Mayans gained little benefit from the assets of the state, were severely exploited, had limited access to land and were excluded from all aspects of local and national decision-making. As a result, there were constant insurgencies, particularly from the beginning of the 1960s, and the indigenous population suffered brutal repression from the Guatemalan military.

2.1 The Civil War

By the early 1960s, leftist guerrilla movements and US-supported government troops were locked in violent conflict. Counterinsurgency campaigns by government forces and right-wing death squads caused an estimated 30,000 deaths by the end of the decade. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Guatemalan military sustained a violent campaign of terror aimed at wiping out all "subversive" elements. This period is known as the "Silent Holocaust". Extreme torture became commonplace as a method of coercion and intimidation. The union movement in the capital was crushed, and literacy and rural health movements were also destroyed. Repression against leaders of the Catholic Church was particularly intense and the clergy were forced to abandon their activities in the rural areas.

Hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans either sought safety outside the country or fled into the jungles, forming Comunidades de Poblacion en Resistencia, or civilian resistance populations. Three of the major guerrilla groups (M-13/Rebel Armed Forces, Organization of People in Arms and the Guerrilla Army of the Poor) united

with other rebel factions in 1982 to form the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). The Guatemalan military reacted with massive violence against civil society and gross violations of human rights. The civil war is estimated to have caused some 400,000 deaths or disappearances and driven another 1,000,000 people into internal and external exile.

2.2 The Peace Accords

A long process of negotiations over many years, leading to a gradual transition away from armed conflict, was required before the settlement reflected in the Guatemala Peace Accords was reached. Specifically, in 1983, the Contadora Group of states (Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela) launched an international effort to assist in the search for peace throughout Central America. In 1987, the presidents of the Central American states signed the Esquipulas Accords that established mechanisms to achieve peace and reconciliation in the region through political means. In 1991, the government of Guatemala, then headed by President Jorge Elías Serrano, decided to open direct negotiations with the URNG.

An agenda was established, and talks were moderated by the president of the National Reconciliation Commission. The United Nations participated as an observer. The Partido de Avanzada Nacional (PAN), or National Advancement Party, under the leadership of President Alvaro Arzu, was elected in January 1996. Important advances were made which made it possible to finish the discussion of the issues and the Peace Accords were signed on December 29, 1996, marking an end to Latin America's longest and most painful civil war.

*See Appendix I for key points of the
Peace Accords*

2.3 Post-Conflict Political Developments

During its time in office, PAN succeeded in demobilizing the URNG and civil patrol members, cutting the military budget by one third, and the National Civilian Police and a new elected Supreme Court were created. PAN failed, however, to get important reforms passed in a national referendum in May 1999. The reforms would have removed the military from any role in internal security and limited its mandate to national defence. They would also have granted constitutional status to the Mayan languages and traditional forms of justice for the first time in Guatemala's history. The defeat of the referendum has been blamed in part on intimidation of the Mayan population in the rural areas by right-wing opposition forces.

In the run up to the 1999 general election, various corruption scandals, lack of transparency, disappointing progress in the peace process and poor economic performance led to an erosion of support for the PAN. The electorate essentially split into left-wing and right-wing factions with the leftist elements being represented by the Alianza Nueva Nacion, or New National Alliance, comprising the URNG and dissident members of the Frente Democratico Nueva Guatemala (Guatemala New Democratic Front), and the rightists turning to the Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG), or Guatemalan Republican Front, party under the charismatic leadership of Alfonso Portillo. The FRG offered a platform of uncompromising law and order and Portillo portrayed himself as a reformer who would end corruption. The FRG was elected with a strong majority in what is widely accepted as having been a fair democratic process. Portillo is the current president of Guatemala but his leadership has faced intense pressure from the supporters of the founder of the FRG, former General Efraim Rios Montt. Rios Montt was the military dictator of Guatemala during the 1980s, when the worst human rights abuses occurred, and is now the leader of Congress.

The elite groups who have ruled Guatemala for so many centuries - the military and the economic elite - continue to resist making meaningful changes to the power structure of the state. The FRG, which gains most of its support from former military officers and civil patrol leaders, has staunchly opposed many measures to implement the Peace Accords. Most worrisome, the military has once again become involved in domestic security, in clear contradiction of the intent and purpose of the Peace Accords. Human rights violations have increased and intimidation against judges and witnesses sustains the impunity of the perpetrators.

Despite the end of the war, the transition to democracy, peace and stability remains fragile. FRG's commitment to the peace process can be legitimately questioned. There remains a growing crisis of governance and the country's deteriorating economy is not meeting the needs of the largely unemployed rural population. Rule of law is not consistently evident and public security is characterized by rising crime rates as criminal elements take advantage of the chaos. The surge in violent crime, murders and kidnappings has led to increases in vigilantism with the citizenry assuming the need to protect itself. Human rights organizations, Mayan activists and the political left remain under threat, weak and marginalized. In November 2000, Portillo's approval rating had fallen to a low of 19% and his political future seems tenuous. Given this situation, implementation of the Peace Accords has been seriously compromised and minimal legislation has been passed.

**Fifth Report of the UN Secretary General
Verification of the Guatemalan Peace Accords
(September 2000)**

This report, prepared by the UN Verification Mission to Guatemala (MINUGUA), highlights serious deficiencies in the implementation of the Peace Accords. It points to “notable delays”, “lack of sufficient funds”, “no registered advances”, “paralysed proposals”, “numerous difficulties”, “the exclusion of fundamental themes”, “lack of compliance”, etc. in describing the implementation process.

3 Inequalities in Development

Peacebuilding hinges on resolving
root causes of the conflict

Viewed optimistically, Guatemala now has a comprehensive framework of measures to address the cultural, economic, political and social root causes of the conflict. Obligations on the Guatemalan government (including major constitutional reforms) are clearly articulated and subject to verification by the UN. Yet, although the armed conflict is over, unresolved inequalities continue to dominate Guatemalan society.

The following provides a sense of the prevailing conditions in post-conflict Guatemala:

Economic Conditions

Guatemala is the largest and most populous country in Central America with an area of 108,889 square kilometers (42,042 square miles) and some 11.6 million inhabitants. According to official statistics, 48% of the population is indigenous.

Compared with other Central American countries, Guatemala is favoured with fertile agricultural land, oil reserves, a relatively well-developed industrial sector and substantial tourism earnings. It would therefore seem to have relatively good prospects for relieving most of its poverty problems by implementing a number of structural reforms in social and economic areas. However, economic growth has been limited by an inefficient public sector that has been unable to plan or coordinate investment programs and by low education levels, poor standards of health and armed conflict.

Poverty

Guatemala has one of the highest poverty indices in the Americas and ranks 120th on the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index with a GNP per capita of US\$1,640 (1998). As a result of the inequitable distribution of wealth and limited access by the population to agricultural land and to education, Guatemala has the highest levels of poverty in the region.

Approximately 70% of Guatemalans live in poverty, just over half of these in extreme poverty. The worst affected areas are the ex-conflict zones in the highlands of the

country - Huehuetenango, El Quiché and Alta Verapaz - which also have the highest concentration of indigenous people.

Social Conditions

The country's social indicators are among the worst in the hemisphere and national averages mask even sharper inequalities between ethnic groups and genders. At 4% of GDP, Guatemala's expenditures on the provision of social services lags drastically behind the average of 15% for Latin America. Less than half of rural Guatemalans have access to running water, only one quarter have access to electricity and less than one tenth have access to modern sanitary facilities.

These indicators reflect the country's persistent under-investment in social services and basic rural infrastructure. This is a legacy of past practices of political and socio-economic exclusion of the indigenous population and a lack of political will to increase the required tax base to provide for social investment.

Education

Guatemala is among those countries with the lowest level of public funding for education in the world and has the second lowest schooling coverage in the hemisphere after Haiti. Education indicators in Guatemala are deplorable due to a continued lack of investment as well as an unequal ethnic coverage. The number of years of schooling for an indigenous woman is 0.9, while that of a non-indigenous man is 4.5 and a non-indigenous woman is 4.0. Overall adult literacy is estimated at 65%, but literacy among Mayan women is estimated to be as low as 30%.

Health Services

The limited coverage of health services, low spending on health (1% of GDP), the concentration of medical treatment resources in urban areas and limited safe water supply coverage (serving only 40% of the population) have together created a lamentable health situation. Some progress has been made in the institutional reform of the health sector and immunization coverage has been greatly expanded, but preventable disease is still prevalent. These problems are aggravated by malnutrition. Under-nourishment affects 29% of children under four years of age and 75% of all indigenous children.

Environmental Issues

Man-made environmental degradation is increasingly becoming a major threat to Guatemala. Tremendous pressure is being exerted on the natural environment due to massive population growth and accompanying economic demands.

4 Guatemala Mission Profile

Benefiting from group learning

The field mission to Guatemala enabled participants to:

- Learn from the experiences to date from a wide variety of peacebuilding projects
- Identify, as a group, lessons learned and consider their impact for future peacebuilding projects in Guatemala (and other countries), and
- Develop joint Canadian/Japanese thinking on future cooperation in peacebuilding and identify possible areas for joint interventions.

In late February 2001, the team met in Guatemala City to prepare for the project visits. Three days of formal sessions provided for invaluable exchanges of information. Local experts gave briefings about the Guatemalan situation and the socio-political and historical root causes of the conflict. Representatives from JICA, CIDA and NGOs delivered presentations on peacebuilding activities in the country, with an emphasis on the projects to be visited.

Field trips were carried out from March 1st to 5th, with three separate groups of team members traveling to a broad selection of peacebuilding projects throughout the country. In total 24 projects were visited, eight by each group:

- Group 1 visited the western highlands of the country in Huehuetenango, Solola and Chimaltenango provinces
- Group 2 visited the southwestern part of Guatemala, including the departments of Esquintla, San Marcos, Totonicapan and Quetzaltenango, and
- Group 3 visited projects in the departments of Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz, in the northern highlands, and El Progreso, Chiquimula and Jutiapa in the south eastern plains.

The wide variety of projects visited in Guatemala addressed the social fragmentation and polarization that contributed to the war by targeting human development in all its aspects. Projects ranged from those responding to clear conflict-generating issues, such as disputes over access to land and exclusion on ethnic grounds, to interventions targeting deep-rooted structural problems in Guatemalan society, such as gender issues, justice and the requirement for economic development.

Following the field trips, the groups reassembled in Guatemala City to review their field experiences and share what was learned from the project visits. This proved very rewarding, as participants were able to explore the merit and impact of various peacebuilding strategies and practices in a collegial setting.

While the mission proved a significant learning opportunity, our findings should be viewed in context. They reflect what was learned during a relatively short period of time in only one country.

Appendices

Appendix II: Mission Agenda

Appendix III: Group 1 Project Profiles

Appendix IV: Group 2 Project Profiles

Appendix V: Group 3 Project Profiles

5 Lessons Learned

Adversity continues to threaten
the peace process

Team members were provided with first-hand exposure to the social fragmentation and economic polarization that gave rise to the civil war and that still characterizes Guatemalan society. In this section, we derive lessons learned from the information collected during our project visits. Further elaboration can be found in the detailed project profiles set out in Appendices III, IV and V.

The presentation below lists lessons learned for individual development factors that are key to peacebuilding initiatives. In this way, our main findings are distilled to provide strategic guidance for shaping future peacebuilding efforts.

5.1 Stakeholder Participation

Team members were consistently impressed with how the peacebuilding interventions have helped historically marginalized groups (women, indigenous groups, rural poor) to: 1) enhance their prospects for inclusion/participation within society; and 2) develop access to technical/financial support for implementing community development projects. Indigenous organizations have been able to build on their new-found self-esteem to effectively participate in national fora and to promote their cultural values.

This is undoubtedly a positive outcome of peacebuilding. However, it is the perception of some groups that international donors have focused on indigenous people to the detriment of ladino communities who have also suffered from the conflict. Disenfranchised peoples can become resentful and obstructive.

- a) An inclusive approach to stakeholder participation helps to ensure fair representation and promotes wider endorsement of the peace process. Donor/NGO coordination is key to the building of effective approaches that are equitably distributed throughout the population.

The main challenge is to solve the root causes of the conflict (e.g. socio-economic inequality, poverty, discrimination) and to create a shared vision of peace amongst all the participants in the process. In addition to material reconstruction, the social and psychological consequences of war must also be addressed.

This requirement was demonstrated in the PREAPAZ community-building project in Malacatan, San Marcos. This project contributed to the improvement of communities and people's lives through a number of complementary activities with the participation of the local population and civil society organizations.

b) A comprehensive approach to peacebuilding that thoroughly addresses the root causes and impacts of conflicts is essential.

Guatemala's western-style system of justice has often failed indigenous groups and other marginalized elements of the population. Access to the courts and prospects for fair, just rulings have been constrained by a lack of financial resources, language difficulties and other socio-economic factors.

Both the Santa Eulalia Justice Center and Defensoria Maya Projects demonstrated the valuable role that traditional forms of justice can play in helping to resolve conflicts in indigenous communities. These projects showed how traditional ways and western-style justice systems can work together to achieve better results.

c) The value of traditional ways of justice should be fully respected and prominently considered in indigenous cultural settings.

The peacebuilding process challenges traditional power structures and often gives rise to resistance and intransigence. This was the case in the COJUPO project in Magdalena where powerful individuals and municipal authorities had taken land from the community over the years that was unlikely to be returned without their cooperation.

d) It is important to involve the elite (politicians, high-level bureaucrats, municipal and business leaders) as participants in, and beneficiaries of, peacebuilding so that they will actively support projects.

5.2 Capacity Building

Our observations indicated that all of the projects visited had contributed to capacity-building and helped to promote dialogue between stakeholder groups. This was seen, for example, in the CARE UK Post-Conflict Democratization project in San Ildefonso Ixtahuacan, which had helped indigenous women assert their rights. This type of project enables different factions and individuals to discuss their problems and reduce the likelihood of violence in the future. When empowered people have the capacity to access resources, they can work more effectively together for community development, leading to the peaceful resolution of issues.

- e) The importance of helping people to see their potential and building self-confidence cannot be over-emphasized as a peacebuilding priority.
- f) International NGOs can play a catalytic role in promoting the peacebuilding process through support for change and confidence building.

Through training and hands-on participation in community development planning and implementation, a strong and growing body of individuals capable of taking a leadership role at the grass roots level is emerging in Guatemala. Team members were very impressed with the quality, commitment and dedication of the local staff that was demonstrated during our visit to the Counselling Services Project in Chimaltenango, and during our meetings with the mayor, municipal officials, and NGOs in both Chiantla and Cuilco to discuss local governance projects. These attributes may very well represent the single most important strength of these projects and their most important linkage to success.

The mission team found that projects aimed at building the capacity of civil society benefited when the public sector was involved in the planning of activities and in strategic decision-making. The involvement of local mayors, municipal officials, and NGOs helped to facilitate the realization of project goals and objectives.

Many of the groups organized under the projects had identified and attached priorities to their needs. It should be noted, however, that the lack of concrete, follow-up activities had become a source of frustration for several groups of beneficiaries.

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- g) The dedication of local project staff is one of the most critical determinants in the effective implementation and eventual success of peacebuilding projects.
 - h) Efforts to engage local mayors, municipal officials and NGOs in projects dedicated to the strengthening of civil society will help facilitate the achievement of results.
 - i) Interventions should balance plans for developing civil society with the meeting of the pressing, everyday needs of local populations.

5.3 Gender Equality

Women's traditional roles changed during the war as their husbands were killed, fled to safety, or went to Mexico or the US to work. This led to women playing a larger and more significant socio-economic role within the state. Projects such as the Women's Leather Production Association in Chiantla, and the indigenous women's education project run by the Grupo Mujeres Mayas del Norte in Coban illustrate the crucial role women must play in any sustainable peace and the importance of seeking a gender-balanced approach to development.

Although it was evident that gender issues are now widely accepted in Guatemala, constant vigilance must be maintained to ensure results. The long-term impact on peace consolidation of the full participation of women in society should not be underestimated.

- j) The issue of gender equality is fundamental to peacebuilding.

5.4 Education

Efforts of the JICA-funded girls education projects in Solola and San Juan Chamelco to introduce human rights education into the curriculum demonstrate the kind of projects that will have a longer-term impact on sustainable peace in Guatemala. These projects have helped to broaden the perceptions of girls within the Guatemalan education system. Girls are gaining a larger understanding about the importance of education and issues are being more widely discussed.

- k) The focus on peace education and a culture of peace in the educational curriculum is a crucial component in the process to ensure that conflict resolution will be a sustainable option for communities in the years to come.
- l) Educational benefits are realized when schools, homes and communities work together to ensure a coordinated and congruous approach to learning.

5.5 Monitoring

Public support for the peace process has to be carefully nurtured to ensure that there is no reversion to violence. Yet, in an unstable post-conflict environment, funds for peacebuilding projects can easily be re-directed for political reasons. Donors need to be aware of what is happening at the grassroots level, where there is the greatest need for funding. A coordinated approach to donor funding facilitates monitoring and remedial responses.

- m) There is a need to monitor closely how peacebuilding funds are used and to ensure that recipient governments provide financial stability for peace consolidation.

5.6 Poverty Reduction

Smaller income-generating projects are particularly important in the transition to peace as they allow communities the opportunity to provide for their own needs. For example, support from the Canada Fund to the women's pottery group in San Luis Jilotepeque has facilitated the fuller participation of local women in society, in turn broadening the peace process.

Our consultations revealed that peace was the key factor that gave the people the confidence they needed to invest in the future of their communities. Growth in economic activity was clearly linked with the peace process.

- n) Economic development is central to the peacebuilding process and an important avenue for engaging the private sector in peace consolidation.

5.7 Sustainability

The Guatemalan experience demonstrates that, to sustain the process of conflict resolution, peacebuilding requires a long-term commitment of all the parties to the conflict as well as the external actors involved. Many of the projects clearly demonstrated that there had been changes in attitudes towards a more cooperative approach to peace and development. This will inevitably help to build peace although the effects will be localized at first.

Peace has brought an increase in the influx of foreign assistance to Guatemala, but such levels of assistance may not be reliable or sustainable over an extended period of time. No one donor is able to meet all needs and each donor has preferred areas of intervention.

- o) Sustaining the peacebuilding process requires a long-term commitment of all stakeholders, both internal and external.

The mission attributed particular value to the CECI projects in Totonicapan and Cineguilla that are addressing the problem of sustainability by teaching women's groups how to write project proposals and to seek their own funding. This is a practical and demand-driven way to ensure that the various types of ODA available to Guatemala will be used effectively at the local level.

- p) It is essential that civil society organizations learn how to access funds and develop proposals to submit to various donors.

Donors and NGOs should not impose their views on the population, but rather provide guidance and support, especially to those groups and individuals long marginalized in society.

- q) Successful peacebuilding strategies come from the people themselves.

6 Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Model

Field-testing PCIA

Canada's International Development Research Centre designed PCIA to systematically examine the impact of a development intervention on the dynamics of peace and conflict. IDRC's Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Unit was asked to produce a methodological guide for PCIA for presentation at the Winnipeg Workshop in September 2000.

Prior to departing on the mission to Guatemala, and during the preparation of the briefing book, it was recognized that it would not be appropriate to apply the PCIA methodology as discussed at the workshop. As a result, it was decided to adopt a more 'issue-driven' approach. Nevertheless, numerous attempts were made to integrate the methodology into the joint field activities during the three days of preparation in Guatemala City.

The following points are offered as observations on the use of PCIA:

- PCIA seems more appropriate as an up-front analytical, planning and project identification tool and more applicable for establishing a solid basis for monitoring
- The macro-level national peace/conflict indicators were difficult to link to micro, project-level peacebuilding interventions, and
- Peacebuilding projects in Guatemala were already operational and lacked baseline data.

Further attempts to adopt the PCIA for the Cambodia mission will be assessed.

7 Future Joint Cooperative Efforts

Building on our respective strengths
to work together

The third objective of the field mission to Guatemala was to develop joint Canadian and Japanese thinking on future cooperation in peacebuilding and identify possible areas for joint interventions. A number of ideas were put forward that take advantage of: 1) Canadian expertise in mainstreaming peacebuilding into development assistance programming, and 2) the technical skills and resources Japan can apply to meet project-specific requirements.

Suggestions for further consideration included:

- A proposed project for Drainage Wells in Chimaltenango to match a need for infrastructural development with the peacebuilding objective of improving the socio-economic condition of the people
- Establishing a reliable water supply for the health centre in Cineguilla (built with Canadian support) to permit operations at full capacity
- Exploring opportunities to integrate Japanese/Canadian volunteers into the peace process by placing individuals in ongoing projects
- Canadian/Japanese cooperation to influence government support and decision making on specific projects. For example, FONAPAZ (a Guatemalan Government Social Fund) could be pressured to consider projects complimentary to "Proyecto de Re-activacion socio-economica de San Marcos - PREAPAZ".

8 Challenges Ahead

Sustaining a difficult peace process
one-step at a time

On balance, the mission team found that the CIDA and JICA investments in Guatemala have made a positive contribution to building peace and stability. We observed a pervading sense in most of the communities visited that peacebuilding was being sustained one-step at a time.

Our interventions and resources at crucial turning points in the peace process have helped people find their own peaceful solutions to disputes and taught them how to participate in societal decisions. Peacebuilding activities have given hope to communities and individuals that a peaceful future is a possibility.

It was also very evident that the results achieved hinged on the cooperative efforts of CIDA's and JICA's partners, both internal and external. It is important, therefore, to realize that successes should not be attributed solely to the efforts of any singular party. Also, contributions should be recognized within the context of the much larger international effort to bring peace to Guatemala.

Facing Reality

It is abundantly clear that the link between the end of war and actual improvements in the lives of the majority of the people of Guatemala remains tenuous. Fundamental weaknesses remain in the structuring of Guatemalan state and society. There is an urgent need for the government to demonstrate the value of peace through basic improvements in areas which most impact on people's lives, namely employment, housing, social security and food. The government lacks the capacity and the resources to deliver the kinds of programs that would level the playing field and create equal opportunities for all citizens of Guatemala.

Often, marginalized groups lack the organizational experience and knowledge of democratic political processes that, in turn, hinder their participation in post-conflict Guatemalan society. There continues to be a pressing need to strengthen levels of participation, especially amongst women and indigenous people. Traditionally, a process of exclusion of indigenous peoples, enforced through violence, has prevented their participating fully in society.

The Guatemalan experience confirms that peacebuilding interventions, by themselves, cannot eradicate the root causes of conflict or ensure peace and

stability in any given situation. Peacebuilding requirements in Guatemala are complex and multidimensional, encompassing cultural, ethnic and ideological issues, and rural-urban divides.

What Guatemala Needs

Peacebuilding requires a long-term commitment on the part of all parties to sustain a process that will lead to permanent conflict resolution. Reconstruction after a conflict is not just about the rebuilding of physical infrastructure; the mending of social fabric destroyed or fragmented and the strengthening of civil society can offer a more difficult challenge. The situation in Guatemala requires an ongoing response to a complex set of inter-linked, conflict-generating events (e.g. intransigence, acts of violence, land disputes).

In essence, Guatemala requires what countries and individuals most often require in the immediate aftermath of conflict, namely:

- Basic human security, both physical and economic
- Development opportunities beneficial to the whole community
- A priority to rebuild human and physical capacity
- Cooperative inter-communal relations
- Decentralized leadership/decision-making, especially through participatory democracy, and
- Institutional frameworks supportive of civil society proponents, marginalized groups and minorities.

Support for these kinds of outcomes has contributed to the pursuit of an enduring peace in Guatemala. Everywhere in the country, mission members met people who had high expectations of what peace would bring to them and their communities. There is clearly a process of change underway in Guatemala that is characterized by a distinct and growing momentum that is dedicated to the achievement of a sustainable peace.