UNOPS IN GUATEMALA: FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT

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1. Introduction

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has carried out post-conflict rebuilding programs in Guatemala for the last eleven years. Currently, it also has an office in Guatemala, the so-called *Unidad Guatemala*. This case study examines functioning of UNOPS in this country and its role in bringing about peaceful development through implementing programs. It places them in the broader context of civil conflict and social exclusion in Guatemala and the rest of Central America. As a consequence, it also indicates the practical problems and opportunities for bridging relief, rehabilitation, and development in a war-torn society. While describing the programs and their impact, the study asks two central research questions:

1. What were the main practical problems and conceptual challenges of UNOPS in Guatemala?
    - ➢ Moving from relief to development;
    - ➢ Integration of different types of project activities, such as health, education, human rights, and economic infrastructure, in area-based projects;
    - ➢ Local participation.
2. How and why did UNOPS´ management change over the course of these programs?
    - ➢ Relationship between administrative and substantive matters;
    - ➢ Relationships with other organizations.

With these questions, this study not only details the evolution of the programs; it also indicates concomitant changes in their management.

Dispersed throughout the text, there will be boxes with exercises, suggestions, and questions for the students. *The answers to these questions will be indicated in italic.*

Table 1 Student information

2. The United Nations Office for Project Services

When the programs in Guatemala and other Central American countries started, UNOPS was not yet an independent UN organization. It was part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the Office for Project Services, commonly known as either UNDP/OPS or just OPS. In 1973, UNDP set up this office to carry out projects that specialized agencies could not do well enough, for example, because they would not have a mandate or expertise in a certain area, or the project would cut across several mandates. OPS was the only part of the UN system that was self-financing, which meant that, whereas other UN organizations received donor government contributions, OPS had to earn its living by fees for services rendered. In addition, it was not given a mandate, which practically meant that, unlike other UN organizations, it could span all kinds of functional sectors varying from health and education to physical infrastructure. It was thus the closest approximation of a private enterprise in the UN system. Its main focus was always program/project management and services.[1] In other words, sometimes, UNOPS is responsible for the complete execution of a project. At other times, it has more a back-office role, carrying out specific services such as procurement,

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[1] A program is a set of related projects, for example a program for children in a certain country can

hiring staff, as well as arranging training, logistics, and payments. The discussion of the programs in Guatemala shows that while the focus on program/project management and services may be a constant, the actual operations vary widely.

3. Background: Conflict and Social Exclusion in Guatemala

History has not been kind to most Guatemalans. Like the other Central American countries, Guatemala has suffered from social exclusion and conflict since the Spanish conquest.[2] Guatemala has probably even suffered more than its neighbors, because the majority of its population has been made up of *Indigenas* (native Americans currently about 55 per cent of its total population), who remain largely unintegrated into the economic mainstream and have retained much of their original Mayan culture and languages.[3] The other part of the population mainly consists of Ladinos, the Spanish-speaking descendants of mixed relationships between Indians and Europeans.[4] Generally, both groups have had an antagonistic relationship, with rich Ladinos dominating both poor Ladinos and *Indigenas* in an oppressive manner.[5]

In colonial times, large parts of Central America were characterized by an economic system of large land ownership, forced Catholicism, racism, and slavery. Independence weakened the position of the *Indigenas* in Guatemala. They lost their last vestiges of protection from the Spanish crown. For example, a system of forced land labor of the *Indigenas* at the large farms intensified and they often lost their commons. In general, political and economic power was concentrated in the hands of a small oligarchy. Often the national governments were feeble, which led to coups and military-based dictatorships. Guatemala, like most other Central American countries, has developed a strong tradition of authoritarian rule (see CEH, tomo I, 1999: 82-97).

Figure 1 Map of Central America with PRODERE Regions (Source: ID)

In 1944, it looked like Guatemala would be able to modernize its society, when a long-lasting dictatorship was overthrown and a democratization process was initiated. The country was industrializing and the mostly *Indigena* land laborers, as well as the growing urban working class, became increasingly literate and organized. The government attempted to steer economic development and initiated land reforms

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[2] The exact definition of social exclusion and its relationship with conflict and violence have not been satisfactorily elaborated in the literature. Social exclusion is more than just poverty. It is a multidimensional concept also includes lack of employment and lack of opportunities for participation in public and economic life (Figueiredo, de Haan, 1998). Social exclusion is closely related to authoritarianism and concomitant impunity and inequality (Uvin, 1998: 103-139, see also Biekart, 1999). Mac Clure (1994) relates exclusion closely to disintegration of society. Uvin (1998) describes for Rwanda how exclusion contributed to the 1994 genocide. The literal opposite of exclusion is inclusion, which is rarely used in the literature. Integration is far more common and will be used in this text. It has the added advantages that it is a more dynamic concept, which is also used in rebuilding war-torn societies.

[3] Some observers state that the *indigenas* have been mainstreamed into the economy through continuing exploitation (IV).

[4] The other much smaller population groups are the whites, who are more or less integrated with the rich ladinos; the Garífunas, descendants of Caribbean slaves; and Xinkas, a group of non-Mayan *Indigenas*, who arrived after the Spanish conquest (see Raxché, 1995: 7; Van de Perre, 1998: 3).

[5] Ladinos and Latinos should not be confused. Latinos are all people who share Latin cultural roots, the term especially focuses on Spanish and Portuguese speaking people in Latin America, but it can also

(Torres-Rivas, 1998: 12-15). Uncultivated land from the United Fruit Company, a US company that was the largest landowner in Guatemala, was also expropriated. The need for social reform was very strong; in 1949-1951, the life expectancy at birth of the *Indigena* population was still only 39 years (CEH, tomo I, 1999: 79). Nevertheless, the changes threatened social structures and power relations that were still rooted in the 19th century (Torres-Rivas, 1998: 13).

The then President, Arbenz, who had played an important role in establishing the land reforms, had friendly relationships with some communist leaders. In the traditional elite, the Catholic hierarchy, parts of the military, the (land-owning) oligarchy, and upper-middle classes, this raised exaggerated fears of the end of private ownership, which also reinforced suspicion in Washington, where the start of the Cold War deeply influenced security policy.

A severe counteraction followed in 1954 (Torres-Rivas, 1998: 13). The conservative forces, backed by an extensive CIA campaign and military intervention, carried out a coup, and Arbenz resigned after an ultimatum by the army. Many of the social changes of the 40s and early 50s were turned back. However, military rule was unstable at first. Nine years of coups, increasing corruption and a fraudulent election followed in which five juntas and three presidents only ruled for brief periods (Torres-Rivas, 1998: 16). Only in 1963, four years after the Cuban revolution, a strong regime was installed with firm US backing. It increased the role of the military in Guatemalan society. In the meantime, the opposition to military rule could not participate in the political process and radicalized (CEH, tomo I, 1999: 123). Some drew the conclusion that pacific change had become impossible and started a guerilla movement.

Fear for communism or at least the pretense of it played an important role in the government reaction to the guerillas. However, there was no direct military threat of a foreign communist intervention, nor did Guatemala play a crucial role in international power politics. The main threats were thus internal, and the military-organized counter-insurgency campaigns made it impossible for the guerillas to establish a strong power base. Fighting the internal enemy became the overriding objective of the military governments (Arévalo, 1998: 130). However, this objective had a pernicious effect on Guatemalan civil society. Civilian demands for social change were seen as expressions of the internal enemy and were repressed. As a consequence, social participation and democratic change deteriorated gravely. By maintaining elite interests, military governance was "repressive, exclusionary, non-adaptable" and fostered inequality (see O'Brien, Catenacci, 1996: 438).

In the 70s, under the influence of liberation theology, the Roman Catholic Church had increasingly taken up the cause of the underclass. As a result, many priests were prosecuted. After a military coup in 1982, the counter-insurgency campaign reached its horrible crescendo with a scorched-earth strategy. Whole *Indigena* villages were massacred and opposition was persecuted. In addition, many refugees fled to neighboring countries and many forms of organization in civil society were destroyed. The regime also forcefully installed armed vigilante committees (*Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil — PAC*), which had to fight the guerilla movement.

During the 1980s, the Guatemalan regime became isolated internationally. The US put a higher emphasis on human rights and ceased supporting the military. The bad economic

situation of the 80s, as well as growing corruption, made the business world increasingly weary of military rule that was insufficiently able to react to global economic changes. Moreover, it had become clear that, unlike the Nicaraguan *Sandinistas*, the Guatemalan guerilla was not strong enough to win an armed struggle. After another coup in 1983, military officials started looking for other ways to continue their counter-insurgency strategy.

To end the international isolation of the regime, it at least had to look more democratic. To take away support from the guerilla movement, it had to respond to the socio-economic needs of the population. If civilians were responsible for addressing the economic crisis, the military would also be less vulnerable. Still, the military wanted to continue their counter-insurgency campaign on the same footing. In 1985, democracy was reinstalled with a Christian Democratic government, but the military controlled and could veto many democratic decisions. Negotiations for peaceful solutions were out of the question.

The new government pragmatically had to accept the role of the military, but used international pressure and international conferences to foster peaceful change. In particular, it worked through the Esquipulas agreements, which were signed by all Central American governments and committed these governments to peaceful negotiations and democracy. On their own, the Central American governments could hardly make peace, but through their regional initiatives they could move ahead.

In 1987, the government and guerilla movement started negotiating directly. The fall of the Wall, two years later, decreased the ideological aspects of the conflict. Eventually, the process towards peace would last ten years. Democracy needed to gain force, but in 1996 the full Peace Accords were signed. They provided a framework for national reconciliation, democratic governance, and rebuilding.

In addition to regional initiatives, other external actors, such as the United Nations, played an important role in the transition towards democratic governance. Yet, this process is not finished and can still be reversed. The army continues to play an important role in Guatemalan society (Arévalo, 1998). In addition, the consequences of the armed conflict and the counter-insurgency have left deep wounds in Guatemala. Not just in terms of trauma, a culture of fear, and missed economic opportunities, but also in terms of governability. Guatemala has a weak civil society, a centralized government, and low participation in political life (Hegg, e.a., 1999). Hence, the procedural aspects of democracy, such as regular elections, are now being fulfilled, but the substantive aspects still need to be strengthened. In addition, most *Indigenas* still suffer from marginalization and many refugees need to be integrated further into society. Extreme poverty and malnutrition remain rampant. Currently, government and civilians confront a crime wave, while the economy is deteriorating. As a result, many ordinary Guatemalans do not perceive the peace benefits in their daily lives and social exclusion is still strong.

UNOPS and other actors function against this background. What can they do to foster peace and development? And what does addressing these issues imply for their management? In part, development theory has addressed these questions. Over the last few years it has put a higher emphasis on (local) capacity building (Klingebiel, 1998: 200-201). Especially after conflict many tasks, such as economic rebuilding,

reintegration of refugees, addressing social trauma, and strengthening national democratic institutions compete for attention and require comprehensive and coordinated action. The main practical problem in this respect has been bridging relief, rehabilitation, and development, which often involves three simultaneous forms of social integration: 1) security, a transition from war to peace and non-violent ways of conflict resolution; 2) political, a transition from an authoritarian or totalitarian system to an open, participatory system of governance; and 3) economical, a transition to (re-)building economic capacities, often with a higher degree of equity (see Forman, Patrick, Salomons, 1999: 9). These transitions take time. Aware that this is a multidisciplinary task, which cannot be addressed by functionally specialized organizations alone, international organizations have slowly started to look for new ways of cooperation.

Many people, and for that matter organizations, active in international development find it difficult to design and carry out projects that are sensitive to the local circumstances. Just understanding the history of a region is not enough. The history described above left different impacts in different regions of Guatemala. For sound development it is important to understand cultural roots and personal experiences, and to learn from them. In this way, development becomes a two-way street. Some literature that can help you on the way is:

Popol Vuh, this book is the classic account of Mayan mythology and history. The culture it describes is still vibrant in many ways. While reading the book, you will notice how intelligent and alien the culture is to Western eyes.

The book by Burgos, **Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchú y Así Me Nació la Conciencia** is available in English. It has become a classic account of recent Guatemala history based on the personal experience of Rigoberta Menchú, an Indigena woman who gained the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. In recent years, it turned out that parts of the book are more fiction than fact (Stoll, 1999). The intensity of the ensuing debate shows how important the influence of the book has been.

In **Don't Be Afraid, Gringo: a Honduran Woman Speaks From The Heart**, a Honduran peasant woman, Elvia Alvarado, tells about the poor farmers´ struggle in Honduras. Many farmers in Central America still share similar conditions. The book also shows the negative impact of the Cold War on their lives.

Table 2 Suggestions for further reading

4. PRODERE

4.1 Origin

The roots of PRODERE (*Programa de Desarollo para Desplazados, Refugiados y Repatriados en Centroamérica* Development Program for Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Returnees in Central America) lie partly outside of Guatemala. In the 1980s, the Italian Agency for Bilateral Cooperation was looking for a more active role in direct execution of projects. In 1986, after a heavy earthquake in El Salvador, it took on an important role in reconstruction (IV).

Like Guatemala, El Salvador was mired in a civil war, yet it had a much stronger guerilla movement. Based on its experience with the Italians after the earthquake, the Salvadoran Government asked whether they could help with repatriating Salvadoran refugees from Honduras. When an Italian high official visited one of the camps to prepare a possible repatriation project, he heard shooting. It turned out that a Honduran soldier guarding the camp had been shooting at a refugee, for fun (IV). In the end, the Italians decided not to support the refugee project because it would have included forced resettlement. Yet, after his experience in the camp, the Italian official felt

personally committed to improving the plight of the refugees. In addition, Christian Democratic parties led the national governments of Guatemala and El Salvador. The Italian foreign minister, Andreotti, a Christian Democrat, wanted to support these governments (IV). Yet, the Italians could not do a rebuilding program alone. Fortunately, other actors such as the Central American governments and several UN organizations, were also searching for ways to foster rebuilding and reconciliation.

Officially, PRODERE emerged from the International Conference on Central American Refugees (*Conferencia Internacional sobre Refugiados Centroamericanos* — CIREFCA), which was part of the international follow up and support for the Esquipulas agreements. It was obvious that the situation of refugees in El Salvador and Honduras was closely linked to the situation in the other Central American countries. Broadly speaking, the conflicts "were the result of a failed development model that gave privilege to minority interests and excluded the majority" (O'Brien, Catenacci, 1996: 438). Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua had all experienced armed civil conflict. Belize, Honduras, and Costa Rica had to confront the refugee flows, militarization, and other consequences of these conflicts, such as missed opportunities for trade and development. About two million people had been forced to abandon their homes. A simple national program would not suffice to address these problems. In addition, rebuilding and reintegrating refugees could not be done by one international organization on its own. The refugees needed integrated support in functional areas as diverse as resettling, agriculture, education, human rights, and health. Hence, cooperation with the supra-national institutions, such as those of the UN system was necessary. The program had to become a supra-national effort that integrated different functional sectors.

4.2   Design

4.2.1   Design of the PRODERE program

In 1986, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNDP had started a small area-based project in El Salvador that worked in 12 marginalized and displaced communities in the east of the country and in the capital, San Salvador. Since international law centered largely on refugees outside their country of origin, most international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), could not focus on refugees who remained inside the country, the so-called displaced people. The focus on displaced people was thus quite novel. The project attempted to improve living conditions through income and employment generating activities. It innovatively used a participatory action methodology, which allowed the communities to take charge of their own future instead of being passive recipients.

In addition, managers and project officials conducted monthly meetings in which other UN organizations joined in. Several initiatives in the areas of health, local credit, and sanitation originated from these meetings (IV). As a result, the small project had some strong characteristics. It was area based, participatory, and integrated several functional sectors such as health and employment generation in an inter-agency effort. Frequently, UN organizations stick to their own mandate in one functional area, such as labor or

health, and carefully guard their autonomy. In this case, they superseded this typical UN behavior. In 1989, the ILO project became an example for the design of PRODERE.[6]

> Although the purpose of aid is to help, it can also reignite or prolong conflict, as for example happened in Somalia. For a good overview of how aid can promote or reduce conflict, and how international organizations can manage such processes, see Mary Anderson, **Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace — Or War**.

Table 3 Suggestions for further reading

After a first mission during the last two months of 1988, the Italian government, UNDP and all Central American countries[7] signed a letter of intent (preparatory assistance document) to set up a large regional peacebuilding and development program. The central objective of PRODERE became *"to contribute to the peace process in Central America, by providing assistance to populations affected by military conflict to enable them to successfully resettle in their places of origin and by providing development support to the communities in which they live"* (ID). The design process took a year of consultations with national and international experts, the Central American Governments, and other organizations.

PRODERE was largely funded by the Italian Agency for Bilateral Cooperation and it would work with several UN organizations, in particular UNDP as co-financing partner, as well as the Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), ILO, and UNHCR. It was set up as an autonomous development program. The UNDP Office for Project Services (UNDP/OPS) was selected as the executing agency because UNDP was represented in every PRODERE country. Furthermore, UNDP/OPS had an added advantage in that it could also work on the regional level, instead of only a country-by-country basis like most other UN organizations.[8]

NGOs and other UN organizations, such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, would also join PRODERE. The cooperation of all these organizations was necessary in such a broad program. In particular, NGOs could play a useful role because they generally stood close to the local people and provided services that the weak state could not yet provide.[9] Moreover, for most organizations, the Italian support was tempting because it came with a big bag of money. The Italians pledged US$ 115 million, while most large UN development projects do not exceed five million dollars. Still, there was a catch; none of the UN organizations could work by itself. They had to work with UNDP/OPS, which thus got a central implementing and therefore an implicit coordinating role.

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[6] Some of the PRODERE staff had a background in integrated rural development programs. This form of development cooperation attempted to integrate several functional sectors and was especially popular in the seventies (e.g., Krishna, Brunch, 1997).

[7] Except Panama, which was not part of the Esquipulas agreements.

[8] Not all UN organizations are represented in all countries. UNDP is officially the central coordinating agency of the UN system and it has offices in virtually all countries. If a UN organization does not have field representation, UNDP normally represents them and they may send an official to work in the UNDP office. Sometimes, these UN organizations have a regional office that does backstopping to the national representatives. Even in this case, the projects of these organizations generally still function on a country-by-country basis. Institutionally, UNDP/OPS was freer to establish a regional network. It had UNDP backing, but was not confined to a specific mandate or a traditional approach.

The selection of the areas was one of the main design issues. The program opted for areas
- with a large concentration of displaced people and refugees,
- who were living in extreme poverty,
- in communities that had suffered from intense political violence, destruction of the social fabric, and destroyed productive capacities,
- where some land was available for the displaced people and refugees, or where non-agricultural activities were possible,
- and where a minimum basic infrastructure would be available,
- but, with little or no international support.

In other words, the program focused on communities that had been marginalized economically, politically, and territorially. Indicators of social exclusion, such as illiteracy, unemployment, and child morbidity were all very high. In Guatemala, PRODERE concentrated on municipalities in the Quiché department, which had the lowest per capita income in the country ($150), an illiteracy rate of almost 80 percent, and child mortality varying from 23 to 120 for each 1000 births. About 40 percent of the population had access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Most families had members who had fled, disappeared, or been killed. Out of 121 settlements, 118 had suffered from destruction (ID). In particular, the municipality of Ixcán had many Mayan returnees from Mexico.[10] In addition, the municipal governments were weak and had often been instruments of oppression under strong military control.

The reinsertion of displaced persons, refugees, and returnees required the creation of conditions of development, or more generally rebuilding implied local capacity building. In this respect, PRODERE focused on "the whole person" by promoting inter-agency, multi-sectoral projects aimed at expanding opportunities for access to health, education, and employment while supporting initiatives for the protection of human rights and the preservation of the environment.

In a similar vein, PRODERE put emphasis on non-discriminatory intervention   no discrimination between population groups such as displaced persons, refugees, repatriated persons, demobilized former soldiers, and the local population. Such an approach was necessary because an exclusive focus on refugees normally leads to resistance from the local non-refugee population, which in turn hampers the reintegration process. Moreover, such resistance would also have hindered local reconciliation in an already polarized atmosphere.

The PRODERE organizing principles intended to:
1. Focus on communities that shared the same needs;
2. Concentrate the resources in defined geographic areas to avoid spreading them too thinly, while working solutions can be integrated into national policies;
3. Analyze basic needs with the local community to jointly program the most adequate solutions;
4. Intervene at the same time for several basic needs, such as health, education, economic development, and human rights. Only such integration can foster community development.

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[10] In addition, the program addressed the situation of displaced Guatemalans, as well as Salvadoran and Nicaraguan refugees in Mixco, close to Guatemala City. This was done on the initiative of UNHCR in order to integrate refugees directly into the local society, instead of setting up special camps as the government originally intended. The Program helped with setting up small enterprises and community

5. Select participatory action methods in order to strengthen local development taking into account the local cultural values and habits;
6. Undertake environmentally sustainable projects. Otherwise, the overall sustainability of the project will be limited;
7. Work with state agencies without creating parallel structures;
8. Disseminate the information to share experience among communities and organizations and stimulate the peace process.

Table 4 Guiding design principles of PRODERE (source: ID)

Both the area-based and "whole person" focus reinforced each other and fostered a strategic integration of sectoral activities. Local participation was both the end and means of the program. As a consequence, the local community became the starting point for development.[11] Hence, PRODERE established area-based, inter-institutional Development Committees (DCs), which provided a mechanism for joint decision-making and simply bringing together local governments, state institutions, and most of all, participants of civil society. The first DCs all started at the community level.

> DCs are representative organizations of a quasi-corporatist nature, whose intention was to practice a participatory methodology in the identification, management, and implementation of projects; to integrate the institutional system in territorial development plans; and, to improve the capacity of local organizations involved through technical and financial assistance. The DCs … provide an alternative [broadly based] channel to influence policy, thereby offsetting the tendency of more powerful interest groups to dominate policy formation … An important aspect of the promotion of the DC network was the establishment of linkages between the political and administrative jurisdiction and actors (O'Brien, Catenacci, 1996: 447).

In line with WHO/PAHO policy, PRODERE also wanted to set up Local Health Systems (*Sistemas Locales de Salud* ― SILOS). In the 1970s, these systems had been developed to promote decentralized health services and strengthen primary health care (see Mulholland, et al., 1999: 8). PRODERE would set up local health committees in one or more municipalities that comprised community representatives, mayor(s), representatives of the Ministry of Health, and NGOs. It was hoped that determining local priorities this way would lead to better access, higher quality care, and greater efficiency. This system functioned well in many parts of the world.

With its principles and tools, PRODERE attempted to foster peace and reconciliation by developing local capacities and institutions. It hoped to lay the foundations for sustainable and lasting development by addressing the root causes of conflict and increasing the number of beneficiaries.

Area-Based Development ― Which Area?

Spatial Analysis:
Areas and settlements differ in several ways. In order to understand how local development takes place, it is important to study their characteristics, in particular
1. Historical and geographic forms of land settlement and use.

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[11] One project document formulated this in more abstract terms: "the local dimension is the space where human options and subjects meet, that is to say the place for expression and coordination among individuals, population, and state, in which persons exercise their rights, have (or have not) access to

2. Structure and growth of the population, its migratory movements, and spatial distribution.
3. Agricultural and ecological features, availability and distribution of natural resources, as well as methods of use and conservation.
4. Access and set-up of the population centers; roads, localization, coverage and quality of basic social services, such as schools, health centers, etc.
5. Economic activity, spatial distribution, and forms of integration of markets.
6. Special risk and/or environmentally deteriorating areas that can lower the quality of life/living conditions of the local population.

Spatial Arrangements of the Area
In order to understand whether the division and organization of the area is in line with the planning and development objectives, the main outcome of this analysis should be a map that contains:
• a geographical definition of the complete planning area, which should coincide with the limits of a political/administrative unit: a municipality, department, region, or other entity. For example, PRODERE Nicaragua mainly worked with municipalities, but other units may also be feasible;
• an outline of the specific areas according to the spatial analysis (between 5-7 areas for each municipality; geographical size of 100-150KM2; total population between 1,000 and 1,500 families;
• an identification and outline of the communities and land-use within the area;
• a definition of the area´s economic epicenters and their importance, according to criteria such as population density, urbanization level, road access, and basic social services.

The map can look like this
Provide Illustration

Spatial Legitimization
The purpose of this part of the exercise is to guarantee that the communities agree with the map, definition, and importance of the economic epicenter(s) that form the total area. The most practical approach is to visit each area and invite all community leaders to discuss the proposed map and its contents. The main results of this activity will be:

• An agreement on the borders of the areas
• A definition of where communities with an ambiguous localization belong within/among different (sub-)areas.
• An agreement on the localization of the epicenter(s). (It is common that the definition of the epicenter presents conflicts of interest among the communities, but the communities need to reach a consensus on this for further planning).

Eventually, this should result in one map on which local consensus exists. For the final design of the map, it may be desirable to use geographical and cartographic specialists. Similarly, it may be useful to adopt a geographical reference/data system, which will be very useful for further planning and decision-making.

Question:
Make a similar map of a city block, village, community, or another spatial formation, such as the university campus. Indicate the main economic centers, basic social services, centers of power, main access roads, settlements (habitation) patterns, and so on. Can you see whether or how your area is developing as a whole? And for specific economic sectors or actors? Why? When you are working in a city, it may be useful to split up into several groups that focus on several city blocks that form one neighborhood. The presentation of the groups can also include written material or other forms of presentation. It is useful to compare the different presentations and assess and explain the differences among them.

Table 5 Analyzing Land Use and Spatial Development (based on Morales Nieto, 1996: 65-66)

4.2.2 Design of the Management of the Program

The program would last three years, starting on January 1, 1990. Its main management support would come from UNDP/OPS headquarters in New York. In line with its emphasis on area-based development, it would operate in a decentralized manner. It worked with eight subprograms: six national subprograms, a regional coordination program and EDINFODOC (*Educación, Información, Formación, Documentación, e Investigación* — Education, Information, Training, Documentation, and Research).

The subprogram for coordination, management, and regional backstopping functioned as the central management unit for the whole region.[12] It supervised, coordinated, and supported the national subprograms. For example, it checked their operational plans, which indicated which specialized activities would be carried out by which UN organization. Each organization had one main technical advisor at the Central Coordination Unit. The manager of the Salvadoran ILO project became the first manager of the coordination unit.

EDINFODOC was set up to support the systematization, sharing, and dissemination of information on program population, techniques, and results, not just in the Region itself, but also with Italian counterparts. These included the Italian Government, other development institutions, universities and experts. EDINFODOC had two seats: an operational office in San Salvador and a liaison office in Rome, Italy. The Italians did not just want to spread the word about the program   they also wanted to learn and use its results in their other development activities.

Every national subprogram would have a national coordinator (main technical advisor) responsible for daily management and the operational plans, as well as technical advisors from each UN organization involved. These were also responsible to their advisor in the Central Coordination Unit. PRODERE thus worked with a functional/regional matrix structure. The offices of the national subprograms were located in the national capitals and had field offices   implementing units   in the selected departments.

Of course, there were also several regular meetings that brought the program organizations together to work out strategic, monitoring, and other management tasks. First of all, there were regular, formal tripartite meetings that included UNDP country offices, UNDP/OPS, the other UN organizations, Italian representatives, as well as national governments. These meetings are a regular feature of UN programs and are called tripartite because they unite coordinating, executing, and funding organizations. In addition, the UNDP/Italian Consultative Committee was the highest PRODERE organ and officially approved the annual operational plans. Yearly interagency meetings prepared this committee.

The final program design was unique in UN history. With its funds administered by UNDP/OPS, it represented a new form of interagency cooperation. The organizations did not just coordinate   which often only happens in name   , instead, they were to operate in an integrated manner. A large decentralized program encompassing six countries and four UN agencies working with one strategy in joint execution addressing some of the most difficult international management issues imaginable: solving the twin problems of social exclusion and violence.

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[12] Originally, backstopping was a separate subprogram. In 1992, it was integrated into the regional

4.3 Implementation

4.3.1 Evolution of the Program

In 1989, conflict was still ongoing in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. PRODERE thus started operating before the signing of the complete peace accords. During the first few years, PRODERE mainly had to focus on resettlement and providing relief to repatriated refugees and their communities.[13] Basic needs, such as food, clothing, and housing required immediate action. Still, relief by its very nature is rarely sustainable; continued relief normally means that the recipients have become dependent on foreign aid. Nevertheless, relief provided an entry point for the local population, because it offered services of immediate benefit. A sole focus on rebuilding often offers too little benefit in the short term for the locals who cannot wait a few years until the program bears fruit. Yet, long-term action on social change, i.e., local capacity building in its broadest sense, is needed to ensure sustainability. To minimize the risk of dependency, the local population was actively involved in relief provision, for example, by helping to build new houses. The initial focus on basic needs had the added benefit that PRODERE could establish itself as a neutral entity addressing the needs of the different social actors, which facilitated its rebuilding role considerably.

Gradually, PRODERE focused more on participation and service delivery at the local level to strengthen health, education, economic development, and human rights. The peace processes in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala also facilitated rebuilding. Still, in Guatemala, (limited) armed conflict and negotiations would last the whole course of the project.

As noted, the first DCs were set up at the community level. The communal committees included 50 to 100 families belonging to one community and helped to organize a social system in which former refugees, former combatants, and other community members could participate directly in taking decisions close to their hearts, such as provision of social services, community development, and security. These committees generally functioned well and strengthened the articulation of the interests of weaker groups. They helped "to break down the psychological barriers to organizing that military rule had ingrained" (O'Brien, Catenacci, 1996: 447).

In Ixcán, Guatemala, the municipality was so large that the community development committees needed an intermediate level to interact with the municipality. As a result, a committee that combined several communities at the so-called micro-region level was set up. In part, these micro-region committees also provided a counterbalance to the armed vigilante committees (PAC)   commonly known as death squads   in which the army (often) forced local people to fight the guerillas and control the population. These micro-region committees thus helped to re-establish social trust (IV). More officially, these committees had a double function. On the one hand, they had to bring together the communal committees and the municipal authorities, but on the other, they had to promote economic self-management. Other parts of PRODERE replicated the micro-region committees by following socio-economic, ethnic, and geographical

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[13] This included both the communities where the refugees and displaced people had lived, e.g., in Belize

boundaries. A logical area for a micro-region would, for example, be a group of communities located in the same (small) river basin.

Later, the reach of the development committees was further extended with the development of municipal committees. These committees had a broad participation of the mayor, council members, other public authorities, judicial representatives, civil society representatives, members of micro-regional committees, local business and religious leaders, as well as former combatants and other local groups. Because of their self-management, the role of these committees differed considerably from each other. The municipal committees often focused on conflict resolution, land ownership, public investment, and administration of local development (Morales Nieto, 1996: 69-70).
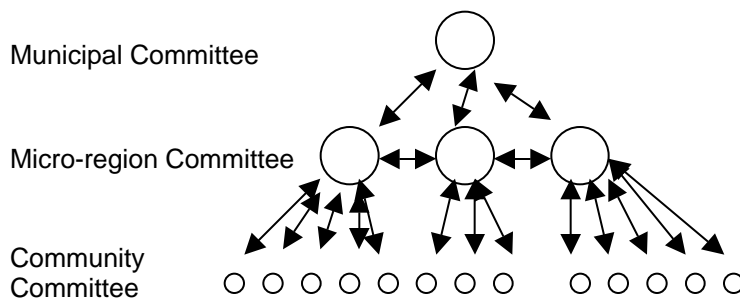

Figure 2 Three Types of Committees

Ultimately, the program also established departmental committees. These committees worked with sectoral subcommittees. As a result, PRODERE not only fostered horizontal communication and integration at the community level, it also attempted to open vertical communication among different communities and levels of state for people who used to have small or no opportunities to express their needs and interests. This also strengthened local planning processes and contributed to the formation of a stronger social fabric.

Starting in 1993, the Italians increasingly promoted more action at the national and international level, partly because they preferred a higher visibility for PRODERE (and themselves).[14] In addition, many considered such a shift necessary to ensure sustainability at the local level. Still, the Italians did not provide more money for this expansion. In the end, PRODERE succeeded in obtaining such visibility, but some staff members felt uncomfortable with this shift in attention. They doubted whether the work at the community level was already sustainable enough. They preferred to expand the program at this level (IV).

In addition to the different types of development committees, PRODERE developed tools that aided participation of the population and NGOs. Special tools for land use planning identified the main economic constraints, as well as environmental problems. Sometimes, national staff, technical advisors, and consultants helped to develop social investment plans or socio-economic baseline studies for municipalities or departments. In several cases, this led to the foundation of small enterprises. In other cases, a clean

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[14] According to one observer, the Italian government officials also needed to strengthen their political position in Italy in order to ensure installments in accordance with the original financial commitments. In other words, the Italian Ministry of Development Cooperation needed to secure visibility, and therewith

drinking water system was set up, or people were trained about their legal rights, schools were built, and so on.

As time progressed, the program also focused increasingly on strengthening the functional sectors by using joint planning. First, the functioning of the Local Health Systems (SILOS) was improved and extended to the regional and national levels. Similar institutions were also set up in the areas of human rights (*Sistema de la Protección para los Derechos Humanos* — SIPRODEH) and education (*Sistema Local de la Educación* — SILED). These systems frequently involved several municipalities and (parts of) departments.[15]

SIPRODEHs fulfilled four functions by providing local legal assistance. First, through a documentation campaign, they re-established citizen rights for returnees and their children born in refugee camps. Without proper documentation it is almost impossible to enjoy citizen rights, for example, with voting, inheritance, credits, and social entitlements. In addition, people could only move about freely with their personal documentation, because the military held regular road checks at which you would end up in severe trouble if you could not show documentation. Second, SIPRODEHs helped to establish property rights for land for the returnees, most of which were small farmers. This also had an important environmental effect. Most poor farmers could and would not invest as long as they were not sure that they would reap the benefits, for example with soil protection. Now that they had secure land entitlements, they could invest in long-term improvement of their property and (subsistence) farming. Third, SIPRODEHs helped local organizations and micro-regions with their legalization. Obtaining a legal status facilitated institutional sustainability of these organizations, because they could now officially work with other organizations and negotiate and receive support. Finally, the SIPRODEHs also facilitated debate about human rights without fear of retaliation from the Army (see O'Brien, Catenacci, 1996: 449-450). With their activities, SIPRODEHs did not treat human rights as a separate project component, but integrated these into the other program activities.

SILEDs operated along similar lines as the SILOS. Health and education are services that can directly influence the lives of the poor. If the government functions well in these areas, it strengthens its legitimacy and builds trust. Most SILEDs operated at the municipal level, where they united community members with NGOs, teachers and principals, as well as municipal and other education officials. They improved the use and increase of resources, provided and generated information, increased coverage, and improved technical capacity (see O'Brien, Catenacci, 1996: 451).[16]

PRODERE also started setting up and supporting Agencies for Local Economic Development (*Agencia de Desarollo Local* — ADEL). Based on experiences with similar bodies in Italy and in one of the program regions in Nicaragua in 1991, the number of ADELS grew rapidly. In 1996, 12 ADELS were fully active and 4 more were

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[15] The program did not develop separate local environmental systems. Wherever possible, environmental concerns would be integrated into the other activities, in particular in territorial planning in the municipal and departmental development plans.

[16] O'Brien and Catenacci (1996: 450-452) describe how in El Salvador, SILOS and SILEDs helped with the integration of guerilla and state systems of health and education. In Guatemala, such separation never existed, because the guerilla movement had not been strong enough to establish itself as a territorial

being set up. Together, they involved about three hundred institutions such as municipal governments, central governmental bodies, NGOs, small enterprises, and other local organizations. They helped to increase economic activities in the regions by providing credit, to which the local population rarely had had access. In other words, even if people had ideas for economic initiatives they could not realize them because of a lack of capital. ADELs also took initiatives for economic diversification so that the population would be less dependent on agriculture. In some regions they set up "material banks", so that people who had no access to tools or other materials could now use them. In this way, they would also avoid the higher prices of middlemen. By improving economic opportunities, the ADELs addressed economic inequality, which was especially important for some weaker groups, such as ex-combatants — often a destabilizing force when unemployed — and women — who often have less access to economic opportunities.

In the course of the Program, it also fostered peace in an often unnoticed manner. PRODERE brought public officials from the Capital to the field. These people gained a new understanding of the local situation, social exclusion, and the desire of many local people for peace. The insurgents could see that there were practical activities on the ground, and that (parts of) the government had become more responsive. In short, PRODERE helped to break stereotypes that reinforced violence by generating a better knowledge of local circumstances and confidence among actors.

All DCs, as well as SILOS, ADELs, etc. were set up locally. Due to this decentralization, they could adapt to local circumstances. As a result, these bodies displayed considerable differences in the way in which they operated. Still, they all received training and technical support, and they all had general assemblies and joint directorates that linked political, administrative, business, other local actors with international support. The members of these bodies monitored the use of financial resources and activities. In principle, the joint work in these bodies bridged several functional sectors and levels of society. As a result, they reduced social exclusion, contributed to healing the divisions from the war, and created the conditions for government decentralization from the bottom up.

4.3.2   Evolution of PRODERE management

Getting the program going required a great effort from organizations that had little experience in working together. UNHCR sent its representative to the Central Coordination Unit half a year after PRODERE's establishment, which caused delays and frustration. In addition, logistical problems with setting up offices in remote areas, as well as with transport and communication also caused delays (ID).

There were also differences in organizational culture. Whereas the Central Coordination Unit had more UN people and was closer to the UN system, EDINFODOC was more deeply influenced by the Italians. In the course of the first year, however, the cooperation among the different participants improved markedly. Since the program was such an unusual undertaking, the advisors of the Specialized Agencies did not receive much support from their headquarters. In a similar fashion, UN and EDINFODOC staff discovered that it was often harder to deal with the people at the respective Headquarters and capitals. Slowly, the PRODERE staff members came to

depend on each other and as they increasingly understood the operations in the field, they developed an *esprit de corps* (IV).

Cooperation with the UNDP country offices differed from country to country. Due to its autonomous set up and large financial resources, the program worked rather independently from the UNDP offices. In most countries, PRODERE was bigger than the regular UNDP program. Some UNDP country offices felt threatened by PRODERE, others worked together very well.

During the course of the program, the relationship between UNDP and UNDP/OPS changed considerably. On the initiative of the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Ghali, UNDP/OPS became an independent UN organization under the name of UNOPS. This process did not directly affect of the functioning of PRODERE. One of the advantages of the program approach is that the programs can function in a relatively autonomous manner. Moreover, the regional design of PRODERE had already created a stronger than usual program autonomy.

After its separation from UNDP, UNOPS ran the risk of going out of business. In response, it had to reform its management considerably. For an overview of these processes and the politicking that went with them, see Dijkzeul **Reforming for Results in the UN System: A Study of UNOPS**.

Table 6 Suggestions for further reading

To become more effective, UNOPS management tried to foster decentralization by granting more authority to the field offices. For example, they used specific types of accounts, so-called imprest accounts, which allowed for faster accountability and faster disbursement without interference from UNOPS headquarters and UNDP country offices. In a similar vein, the program developed a system for evaluation and follow-up with indicators for efficiency and effectiveness, as well as information on inputs and solutions for operational problems. A related system provided information on, *inter alia*, local mechanisms, resource use, training activities, and program studies.

Several times, the ongoing violence obstructed the functioning of the program. From 1990 to 1992, the Central Coordination Unit was located in El Salvador, but due to escalation in the civil war, it had to move to Guatemala City. In Guatemala, the program continued during a coup in 1993.[17] After the signing of the peace accords in El Salvador in 1994, the Central Coordination Unit returned to San Salvador.

The relationships among the UN organizations also changed during the course of the program. Traditionally, a specialized agency or UNDP would do the design of the program, and (then) UNDP/OPS was being called upon to do only the

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[17] This was the so-called *auto-golpe* by President Serrano, who wanted to disband the judicial and legislative bodies. However, he overplayed his hand; Guatamalan civil society united and eventually the

implementation.[18] The specialized agency or UNDP would then have the responsibility for the political and related policy aspects of the program, and UNOPS would focus on administrative and technical aspects, such as procurement and arranging training. This division of roles was possible in relatively stable situations where implementation problems, mostly in one functional sector, could be foreseen. However, in the complex context of rebuilding Central America, this role distinction did not hold anymore. Different functional sectors, as well as relief, rehabilitation, and development aspects needed to be integrated, which also implied closer linkages among program design, implementation, and evaluation. The role distinctions said more about the actual set up of the UN system than about the situation at the ground. With PRODERE, UNOPS was involved in design; the local population had a much larger say in program formulation and execution; and different organizations   UNDP as well as specialized agencies needed to integrate and adapt their work on a continuous basis. As a consequence, the parties needed to form an alliance during the whole program and jointly focus on administrative and policy aspects. UNOPS thus took on a broader and more substantive management role than before.

All in all, the management of PRODERE and the Italian donor adapted flexibly to changing circumstances. PRODERE also broadened its scope. It expanded in size with more money and areas; several municipalities, neighboring on the initial areas, were included into the program. It also extended with other and scaled-up activities at different levels of society, such as micro-regions and agencies for local development, and in time from three to almost six years. In the end, the Italians covered more than US$ 3.55 million in additional expenses.

4.4   Impact

A program the size of PRODERE can be evaluated from many different perspectives. The first one focuses on the results of its service delivery, the second on the conceptual changes, and the last one on the management of the specific organizations involved. In general terms, PRODERE was a large program, but certainly not large enough to address all Central American problems. In many ways, it was also a pilot project, because it introduced new approaches to relief, rebuilding, and development that helped address social exclusion and violence.

1.   *Direct Results*
The first perspective concerns the direct effects of the program's service delivery in its five attention points. In all five points there were major improvements for the local population. All in all, PRODERE directly reached a population of over 570,000,

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[18] Historically, the difference between administrative and policy tasks reflects the sectoral set up and mandates of the UN system. Originally, standard setting and international policy making were important tasks of the specialized agencies and other UN organizations. But when UN organizations started delivering development cooperation after the decolonialization waves of the 1940s and 1960s, the use of this distinction declined. In a simple development project, the distinction between administrative and policy tasks sometimes has shielded the implementation of the project from political interference. Nevertheless, most development and rebuilding situations are far more complex and change more often, which means that there is a continuous need to reconsider how policy and administrative tasks influence

indirectly its service delivery had an impact on 1,700,000 Central Americans.[19] Generally, SILOS and ADELs functioned best. In the areas of human rights, education, and the environment, there were significant initiatives, but the institutional structures were less strong.[20] The departmental and municipal development committees also made strong progress with area-based development (ID).[21]

DESCRIPTION	Total Regional
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Intervention areas	10
Total surface of areas	44,306
Population of the areas	1,706,800
Intervention municipalities	137
Direct Beneficiaries	574,048
HUMAN RIGHTS	
Repatriate and refugee beneficiaries of legal assistance	54,397
Persons helped with legalization	138,328
Beneficiaries of legal advice	7,558
PRODUCTION	
Number of credits granted	36,595
Credits granted for production projects (US$)	11,509,602
Credit beneficiaries	32,569
Jobs improved or generated	40,943
Number of ADELS set up	16
Technicians trained	1,105
Beneficiaries of training (productive capacity building)	25,203
EDUCATION	
Schools constructed/rehabilitated	371
Schools equipped and advised technically	763
Beneficiaries of primary education	80,903
Education advisors/staff trained	7,879
Beneficiaries of alphabetization	44,311
HEALTH	
Health centers constructed/rehabilitated	114
Health centers equipped	166
Beneficiaries of health networks	805,031
Beneficiaries of environmental health projects	269,577
Aquaducts constructed	99
Aquaducts constructed (Kms)	423
Beneficiaries of drinking water	117,634
Children vaccinated in campaigns supported by PRODERE	129,800
Health advisors/staff trained	4,457
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT	
Rural roads constructed/rehabilitated (Kms)	1,544
Beneficiaries of rural roads	51,170
Areas covered by soil protection programs	1,589
Number of Development Committees at community, municipal, and departmental level	1,486

Table 7 Synthesis of the Main Program Results (Source: Informe Final, 1996: 5)

[19] For all development programs it is difficult to determine the impact of national and international policies and events on their functioning and impact. This is especially true for PRODERE because it operated in six countries at the same time.

[20] With the current information, it is not possible to assess both the synergy and contradictions between the development and environmental aspects of PRODERE. War and poverty cause severe environmental degradation, for example with subsistence farming, and many of the PRODERE regions were ecologically vulnerable. Still, economic development also causes new environmental problems.

[21] One additional problem in evaluating PRODERE is its large size; most NGOs and other civil society organizations never have the amount of resources and presence that this program had. As a consequence,

In Guatemala, PRODERE was active in the Quiché area (see **3.2.1**)[22], where it had two decentralized offices. In total, the subprogram spent US$ 26,307,473; about US$ 170 per beneficiary. It helped the return of refugees and displaced people, and identified local counterpart organizations that could help with reconstruction of the social fabric. In 1990-1993, the program mainly worked with small local organizations and community committees. The program put considerable effort into strengthening the local *indigina* culture by supporting the development of *Casas de la Cultura*, cultural community centers in which various population groups participated actively. Bilingual education was also promoted.

Over time, PRODERE expanded its scope to other governmental levels, starting with the municipality. It also facilitated setting up decentralized offices in the program areas by the UN human rights observers and the Ministries of Health, Education, and Agriculture. In addition, SILOS, ADELs and human rights education were set up. Independently from PRODERE, through government and local initiative, a SILOS and an ADEL were also set up in Huehuetenango.

Credit programs helped strengthen local economic activities. One bank also opened its doors in the Ixil municipality, a primer for the program area. Local producers received specific training and capacity building, for example with vanilla and garlic production.[23] In addition, the program carried out road building and repair so that 84.1 percent of the local road network was rehabilitated. Small local enterprises took part in this reconstruction. Similar initiatives were also undertaken in the areas of health, sanitation, and education. In all these efforts, local decision-making and participation in implementation were part and parcel of the program.

Other institutions also took up the PRODERE methodology. The Guatemalan National Reconciliation plan was based on the PRODERE strategy of local sustainable development. Unlike other Central-American countries, the Guatemalan government had already enshrined the departmental and municipal development committees as official institutions in law before PRODERE started. Still, PRODERE fostered the move from a law on paper to operational bodies.[24] The program also attempted to foster decentralization to its departments and municipalities. By the end of the program, the Quiché departmental development committee functioned as its local counterpart. At one time, the Guatemalan government even asked for PRODERE's support in the peace negotiations, because its staff had better connections with the guerilleros than many other organizations. In addition, UNDP Guatemala revised its own activities in order to harmonize its activities with PRODERE and its counterparts. Still, in Ixcán there was also some disappointment with PRODERE, because expectations were higher than the final outcomes, which is a general problem of rebuilding programs like PRODERE (IV).

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[22] In 1993, at the height of its activities, the Guatemalan subprogram employed 3 international experts, 3 United Nations Volunteers, 20 national technical advisors, and 22 administrative and logistical staff members. The program activities also involved 340 technical advisors from state institutions and 67 advisors from civil society organizations as support from the national counterparts.

[23] This was not always a success. A Dutch NGO gained more success with organic coffee production.

[24] In many developing countries, the legal problems are not so much incomplete laws, but more a lack

Some staff members argued that PRODERE should, in fact, be evaluated in two rather separate stages. The first focused on area-based development; local communities played an important role. In the second, attention shifted more to policy-making at the (inter-)national level. Not everybody was convinced that this shift, as advocated by the Italian government, was positive. They preferred working with the participatory methodology at the local level(s) and did not really believe that, without extra money, this shift would ensure greater sustainability. Instead, it diverted attention. Still, by going international, PRODERE did gain higher visibility. In other words, the donor reached its goal, but whether it truly strengthened the program remained an open question (IV). In any case, the final program evaluation did not distinguish between the two stages.

2. *Practical Problems, Conceptual Changes*
A second perspective transcends a focus on the directly measurable physical output, and centers on the social fabric of societies devastated by war, which is also a more conceptual issue.

Relief was not a separate stage in PRODERE; through participation the program integrated short-term relief activities in a long-term development perspective. In addition, PRODERE contributed to the decentralization of institutions and to democratic decision-making processes in Central America. All functional sectors, health, education, human rights, and economic infrastructure knew a lack of state investment; therefore, joint planning provided a mechanism for the local management of resources. This is important because development activities generally need to enjoy the material and moral support of the local beneficiaries in order to be sustainable. Joint planning also helped to overcome the innumerable legal, political, and institutional obstacles   that often lead to marginalization of local population groups   by creating consultative capacity-building mechanisms, such as development committees, micro-regions, ADELs, SILOS and SIPRODEHs. With these mechanisms, PRODERE also expanded the institutional toolkit for international cooperation in relief, rebuilding, and development.

A central characteristic of all the consultation mechanisms was that they joined various social and political actors, sometimes former opponents, who discussed options and decided, whenever possible, by consensus. This fostered reconciliation and lessened exclusion. In addition, efforts to coordinate and connect the various projects made it possible to more clearly define overall and systemic problems and solutions. This happened at many levels, starting with the community level, but increasingly extending and linking micro-region, municipality, department, national, and regional levels. As a result, the program transcended the simple distinction of private enterprise, public sector, and civil society.

In addition to Guatemala, several other Central American countries accepted laws that fostered decentralization and incorporated PRODERE principles. In this way, the program linked procedural changes towards democratic governance that emanated from the peace negotiations, such as open elections and decentralization, with substantive changes in functional sectors through direct investment and local participation. In other words, it combined top-down and bottom-up governance processes.

3. *Management Changes*

A third perspective focuses on the impact the program had on UN organizations and other international actors. For UNDP it led to a deepening of its Sustainable Human Development policies. The ILO and UNHCR put increasing emphasis on local participation. ILO also started working with ADELs in other areas of the world. The Italian donor also made a concerted effort to incorporate PRODERE lessons into its other development activities. In principle, all organizations can draw form the expanded toolkit. Unfortunately, many UN organizations have a hard time applying the lessons learned from PRODERE because they cannot transcend their own sectoral mandate, such as health or agriculture, and cannot easily integrate other sectors, such as education or economic infrastructure.

For UNOPS, PRODERE meant a move away from simple implementation of projects to helping with design and evaluation. As stated, the strict dividing lines in traditional UN projects between political/policy and administrative tasks were not useful in the program. Decentralization and participation in rebuilding and development required fast adaptation to local circumstances, which required simultaneous administrative, technical, and political/policy action. Program design was normally seen as part of the policy function. However, this traditional UN distinction hampered many UN organizations, because it slows operations down and can also lead to turf battles. PRODERE offered an alternative approach: the joint strategy fostered intersectoral cooperation among the UN organizations, and provided UNOPS with a broader role that integrated design and administrative tasks into substantive management at the field level.

PRODERE offered valuable experience in administration and for decentralization to other parts of the world, for example for a new office in Malaysia. It also contributed to the intellectual capital of the UNOPS Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability (RESS) Division, which designs and executes integrated rebuilding programs. In this way, PRODERE operated as a pilot program that provided fertile ground for several offshoots. It inspired similar programs in other war-torn societies, such as Cambodia, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Somalia. The Social Summit in Copenhagen (1995) and the OECD Development Assistance Committee´s guidelines on Conflict, Peace, and Development incorporated many PRODERE elements. In both cases, UNOPS assisted with the dissemination and incorporation of these ideas and experiences into the final documents (IV).

With its twin strategy to promote capacity building by direct investment and social integration/participation in specific areas, PRODERE tested new and practical ways for linking relief, rehabilitation, and development.

5.   PDHSL/PROGRESS

5.1   Origin

When the PRODERE program ended in 1995, UNOPS continued providing project services in Guatemala and other Central American countries. Violence and social exclusion still required action.

In addition, the international community paid increasing attention to the concept of sustainable development in the 1990s. UNDP published its Human Development Reports and the Social Summit further put sustainable human development (SHD) high on the agenda. Briefly, sustainable human development held that poverty was not just an economic problem; its social, environmental, gender, and legal aspects also needed to be addressed. In response, UNDP set up a Trust Fund for Sustainable Social Development, Peace, and Support for Countries in Special Circumstances. The Italians provided most resources for this Fund, but they could not provide as much money as with PRODERE (IV).

In the meantime, the Central American governments attempted to further strengthen regional integration in the hope of promoting peace and economic growth. To this end, they set up the Alliance for Sustainable Development (*Alianza para el Desarollo Sostenible* — ALIDES). However, a related program that focused on regional integration did not start. Once again, UNDP, UNOPS and the Italians were involved. The Italians were even ready to provide financing, but they required that UNDP would (continue to) back a Regional Development Strategy for Central America in support of ALIDES. UNDP choose not to do so.[25] The program was stillborn (IV). However, a smaller program called Program for the Promotion of Sustainable Human Development at the Local Level in Central America (*Programa para la Promoción del Desarollo Humano Sostenible a Nivel Local en Centroamérica* — PDHSL) did take off.

5.2   Design

5.2.1   Design of the Program

In January 1996, the Italian government and UNDP, with UNOPS as witness, signed a letter of intent to implement PDHSL. This program essentially provided a bridge between PRODERE and possible successor programs. It functioned as an umbrella for several development programs, such as PROGRESS, which stood for *Programa para Rehabilitación y Sostenibilidad Social* (Program for Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability) PROGRESS was thus officially called PDHSL-PROGRESS. Program design took place in 1996. In line with the Social Summit and ALIDES, PROGRESS had three general objectives:

1. Strengthening poor population groups and local actors through several strategies and mechanisms, in particular participatory decision-making.
2. Promotion of development initiatives through joint priority setting of governments, civil society, the private sector, and international actors.
3. Strengthening Central American integration, by creating networks for cooperation and communication with particular attention to economic benefits.

Specifically, the operational objectives of PROGRESS were:

1. Building consensus in and among the countries in the region on the problem of poverty and the strategies and methodologies to address it, using regional, national, and local bodies and reinforcing their institutional capacity.

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[25] The reason for this is shrouded in clouds. It could be that the UNDP country offices did not cooperate well enough out of fear for a new more powerful regional program would diminish their role. It could also

2. Strengthening technical capacity for planning and promotion of SHD programs at the national level.
3. Promotion of development opportunities and resource mobilization for the program.
4. Support for development actors and mechanisms at the local level, and connecting these with the processes of national development and regional integration.
5. To expand, systematize, inform, and diffuse the knowledge and experience of the program and its strategy for sustainable human development.

With these objectives, PROGRESS would put less emphasis on the areas and communities, and more on departmental, national, and regional policy-making than PRODERE. It tried to create the policy conditions for local development. Although the language of the program changed towards SHD, its concepts and tools were in many ways a follow-up of PRODERE. In addition to the PRODERE countries, PROGRESS also included Panama, where it would work in three municipalities. In Guatemala, it would follow up in two departments, where PRODERE had already been active: El Quiché and Huehuetenango. In addition, it would also work in four other departments: Chiquimula, Zacapa, Izabal, and El Progreso. PROGRESS would work mostly with municipal and departmental development councils, as well as with ADELs. Practically, the program would carry out several program activities:

1. Consensus building, including advocacy at local, national and regional levels.
2. Strategic planning also as a form of training and promotion of the SHD methodology.
3. Local economic development in order to increase productivity and competitiveness, as well as promotion of instruments to increase business activities, and increase local access to goods, work, and capital.
4. Local public investment, also to foster decentralization.
5. Setting up an inventory of projects in Central America (the so-called Regional Project Database).
6. Regional Statistics, which were often absent but necessary for sound planning and policy decisions.
7. Geographical Information Systems.
8. Decentralized cooperation between Italian cities and regions and local Central American organizations, mainly at the municipal level, on specific projects.
9. Systematization and elaboration of the program experiences so that other programs in the region could benefit from PROGRESS.
10. Building human and social capital to continue the SHD strategy.[26]

In July 1996, the Italian government and UNDP decided to co-finance PDHSL/PROGRESS for USS$ 2.424.000 and US$ 1.000.000 respectively. UNOPS became the implementing agency. Several other UN agencies, such as ILO and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) would also cooperate. Although the total amount of US$ 3.424.000 was thus much smaller than for PRODERE, PROGRESS was an ambitious program that hoped to influence governments and donors directly. In this way, it was both a regular program and an experiment to see what policies it could influence (ID).

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[26] These ten activities were carried out in 4 complementary cycles: 1) creation and/or strengthening of institutional capacity and techniques for the promotion of the strategy; 2) the identification (and opening) of opportunities for development, such as investment and financing sources; 3) implementation; and

PROGRESS focused on the departmental, regional, and international level, ostensibly to strengthen the institutional capacity and sustainability. As a consequence, the program had a double nature. First, it supported policy formation through regular program activities, such as consensus building, strategic planning, and systematization of its experience, and with tools to improve the policy process, for example with the Regional Project database, regional statistics, and building human and social capital. Second, it focused on instruments to foster local economic development, for example with so called "decentralized cooperation", where local Italian authorities sponsored specific activities, such as a regional radio station and psychiatric care for war-affected children. Still, decentralized cooperation looked more like an add-on to the other activities than a regular program part. The policy and area-based components were insufficiently linked.

All in all, the program document neither distinguished clearly the different natures of the program activities, nor did it elaborate the relationships between general and specific objectives. It did not detail what it meant to be an "experiment". For such an ambitious program, the design could have been much clearer.

5.2.2   Design of the Management of the Program

1996 was important to get the management of the program up and running. PROGRESS set up its Headquarters in Guatemala City with one international coordinator and four national consultants in the areas of local public investment, project database geographical information systems, and regional statistics. An ILO expert was responsible for local economic development. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) provided, from its own resources, a human resource management professional. The Forum of Italian Cities for Decentralized Development also provided for an expert.

At the national level, PROGRESS operated with national coordinators, who were accompanied by an expert on local economic development and an expert on statistics and geographical information systems. In some countries   but not in Guatemala local technical experts also became part of the team, and were financed locally.

As all UN programs, PROGRESS worked with national counterparts. In the case of Guatemala, it was the national planning agency, SEGEPLAN (*Secretaria General de Planificación*). The national PROGRESS team was also located in the premises of SEGEPLAN. This planning agency also represented Guatemala in the Social Integration Council of Central America (*Consejo de la Integración Social Centroamericana* — CIS), which formed the international counterpart of PROGRESS.

In each country, PROGRESS worked with either a Joint Directorate or a Coordination Committee, in which national and local entities participated in order to promote the program strategy. These directorates/committees determined the course of action and helped with resource mobilization. In addition, the normal tripartite meetings also kept track of program progress. Internationally, a UNDP/Italian Consultative Committee was the highest organ for approval of funding.

5.3   Implementation

5.3.1 Evolution of the Program

On 29 December 1996, the Guatemalan government and the guerilla movement signed the complete Peace Accords. These accords were far more than the official cessation of hostilities, they promoted economic and social change, such as strengthening human rights, the establishment of a Guatemalan Truth Committee, and strengthening civil society. As a result, Guatemalan society could concentrate on reconciliation, rebuilding, and regular development. The specter of armed conflict finally faded away.

In the meantime, program preparations had continued. By spring of 1997, all cooperating parties, governments and UN organizations, had signed their cooperation agreements. In March 1997, PROGRESS began working in Guatemala. In all countries, the program carried out its ten program activities:

1. Consensus Building
PROGRESS needed to establish consensus on poverty as a social problem, as well as on the SHD strategy to address it. PROGRESS staff worked with CIS, its national counterparts, departmental and municipal councils, ADELs, and departmental associations of municipalities and mayors to raise awareness. It held "strategic orientation" workshops in which about 3100 people participated.

2. Strategic Planning
Strategic planning was important to both identify local activities and as a form of training and promotion of the SHD methodology. To further elaborate and explain this methodology several meetings were held. Then, national teams worked out their own operational plans. In addition, several methodological guides were developed, for example, on micro-regionalization, local economic development, regional project databases, and decentralized cooperation. It was hoped that these guides would also be useful outside of PROGRESS. The program also published other documents to explain and disseminate its strategy.

3. Local Economic Development
ILO played a pivotal role in promoting local economic development and provided US$ 150,000 to this end. The program helped to strengthen the Central American Network of ADELs, so that it could help its member ADELs better. In addition, support was also tailored to some specific ADELs. For example, the ADEL in Cobán, Guatemala, improved its information system, and other Guatemalan ADELs were helped with the identification of financing opportunities, project formulation, and so on. The program held several workshops and was also instrumental in the identification of clusters for economic development, such as coffee and eco-tourism, for certain program regions. In a similar fashion, the program attempted to strengthen departmental and municipal development councils.

Local Economic Development Agencies

The idea for the ADELs originated in PRODERE. Generally, ADELs operate at the departmental level. As public-private partnerships, ADELs promote a sound business environment, which was often lacking in PROGRESS intervention areas. An ADEL brings together many actors central government, local government, private sector, and NGOs   to develop a strategy and build capacity for economic growth. As such, it is also a form of democratic governance. It attempts to develop consensus on:

1. Promoting sustainable economic growth.
2. Stimulating investment and savings.
3. Creating opportunities for productive employment.
4. Creating and strengthening enterprises, in particular small- and medium-sized ones.
5. Mobilizing funds for public and private investment.
6. Human resource management training/capacity building.

In principle, ADELs identify specific sectors (be it industrial, agricultural, commodities, tourism, or others) and its partners cooperate in planning for and strengthening these sectors. For example, ADELs develop plans that indicate opportunities and problems for production and distribution, as well as an analysis of possible consumers. In addition, these plans also emphasize how different actors (governmental, non-governmental) are dependent on each other for achieving success, how they can work together, and what the bottlenecks are. ADELs have been instrumental in providing micro-credit, as well as other forms of financing. They have also functioned as incubators for establishing new enterprises, for example, for road construction and mining of precious stones.

Table 8 The Role of Local Economic Development Agencies (Sources: La Estrategia del Desarollo Local, 1998: 34-36, Morales Nieto, 1996: 81-82)

4. Local Public Investment

Civil conflict reinforced highly centralized state structures, which impeded local participation and democracy. In some cases, the Army had been the only strong state institution at the local level. Fostering peace implied strengthening local state structures and the Central American governments put a premium on decentralization. It was hoped that such decentralization could lead to faster and more effective decision-making based on a better understanding of local needs. Nevertheless, decentralization could also lead to hijacking of the democratic process by traditional elites. In addition, the tools for successful decentralization needed to be developed further. Public investment and support to the departmental and municipal development councils played a pivotal role in this respect.

The program developed a diagnostic system for analyzing public investment in Central America, which showed the need to soundly base departmental investment plans on municipal investment plans. In addition, the program also developed a methodological guide for the participatory formulation of municipal investment plans. The guide did not just define sectors for investment or project management, it also indicated how to strengthen local democratization and governability. The national teams supported specific departments and municipalities with formulating and carrying out their investment plans. Unfortunately, a special workshop on public investment planning had to be canceled because of lack of money.

5. Regional Project Database

As the program progressed, it also created a regional database of local development projects with a twofold aim: 1) to provide a regularly updated inventory of projects; and 2) to assist with promoting projects to financial institutions. All kinds of actors could contribute their project ideas to the project database. By September 1998, the Project Database had identified 221 projects. It distinguished between pre-investment costs (US$ 3 million) and the total foreseen investment value (US$ 141.2 million). Many initiatives came from ADELs. In addition, PROGRESS identified special projects essential for its own success in the program departments/municipalities. In a similar fashion, PROGRESS supported the identification of economic clusters with growth potential, such as coffee, palm oil, and eco-tourism. It also cooperated closely with the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (*Banco Centroamericano de*

Integración Económica ─ *BCIE*) for project formulation, pre-investment studies, and project funding.

6. Regional Statistics

The absence of good quality statistics hampered policy formulation and evaluation at all levels of society. Moreover for SHD, statistical information requires more than just economic data, it also needs to include social and environmental indicators. Statistics could also indicate differences among the Central American countries. PRODERE showed that the dispersed and discontinuous social and environmental statistics were a pervasive problem in policy design, which, in turn, hampered regional integration.

7. Geographical Information Systems

Related to its statistical work, PROGRESS also was instrumental in setting up geographical information systems. Specifically, the program created an institutional structure for bringing together data users and providers from different levels of society. It also began to set up a digital statistical and geographic information system for the whole Central American Isthmus based on the French Environmental Information System. In addition, it supported the creation of political/administrative maps and provided workshops on the need for and use of geographical information systems.

8. Decentralized Cooperation

PRODERE already had instituted decentralized development cooperation in which Italian cities and regions sponsored local development activities in Central America. PROGRESS formed the institutional framework for carrying out this form of international cooperation. It helped to institute and continue contacts between the Italians and their Central American counterparts. Both parties and PROGRESS covered some of the costs of these projects. The following figure shows the cooperation agreements between the Italians and their local counterparts.

Central America	Italy	Type of Project	Amount in US$
Costa Rica • Brunca Region	Bolzano	• Comercialisation • Basic Sanitation • Education • Human Rights	129,856
Nicaragua • Nueva Segovia • Jinotega	Carrara Rome	• Marble Exploitation • Penitentiary institution (prison)	235,000 74,276
Honduras • Ocotepeque	Turin	• Business Capacity Building	37,200
El Salvador • Chalatenango • Morazán	Genoa Milan	• Storage Center • Education • Children's Ward • Maternal-Child Health Center	184,857 118,327 52,450 73,300
Guatemala • Ixcán • Ixil	Venice Veneto	• Radio Station • Mental and Environmental Health	113,890 46,967

Table 9 Decentralized Cooperation Agreements between Central America and Italy (Source: La Estrategia del Desarollo Local, 1998: 31)

In about half of the decentralized cooperation projects, ADELs were the main local counterparts. For example, the ADEL in Ixcán was involved in setting up a cultural and educational radio station. In Chalatenango, El Salvador, the ADEL supported the commercialization and storage of farming and livestock products. Other projects focused on addressing the traumas of war, health, and recuperating *Indigena* culture.

9. Systematization and Elaboration of Program Experience

PROGRESS aimed to make its strategy an example for government institutions, as well as other development programs, so that more people could benefit from its experience. The program publications, such as the aforementioned methodological guides and a strategy evaluation, were distributed widely. PROGRESS also investigated the legal-institutional frameworks for local development and strengthening municipal associations in the region. This type of study was necessary to determine the best form of legalization for these associations. In addition, PROGRESS cooperated with universities, UNDP, statistical offices, ADELs, and national ministries in disseminating its strategy and results. PROGRESS also presented its work to donor countries in the hope to gain more project funding.

10. Building Human And Social Capital

PROGRESS staff intended its SHD strategy to become a continuous process that would not end once the program formally ended. Training, or broader capacity building, was crucial to ensure this continuation. Almost 10,000 people (38% women and 62% men) received training in topics such as building consensus, strengthening technical capacity, and promoting development opportunities, as well as systematization and elaboration of program experience.

5.3.2 Evolution of Program Management

In contrast to PRODERE, program management was rather easily established. Many people had already worked with each other and were familiar with the problems that Central America faced. In addition, it was a smaller program with fewer staff and a large part of the equipment was inherited from PRODERE. For a program that covered seven countries, its initial operational costs were relatively small. Similar to PRODERE, PROGRESS integrated administrative and policy tasks into substantive management. It did however face its own set of managerial problems.

One problem was that PROGRESS could not work well with its regional counterpart. In 1998, the governments of the region substituted the Social Integration Council of Central America (CIS) for the new Social Integration Directorate, which was part of the Secretariat for Central American Integration (SICA) in El Salvador. Unfortunately, the governments did not name a manager responsible for the new Directorate, which hampered regional coordination. Central American governments could also have supported the program more by indicating a strategy or policy towards regional integration.

Another big problem also surfaced in 1998. UNDP suffered a steep decline in donor contributions.[27] As a result, it had to cut down its program support substantially. In July 1997, during a consultative committee of the Trust Fund, it had pledged one million US dollars above the original program budget, but in 1998, it could only donate 30 percent of this pledge. As a result, the program was in limbo and staff had to work with considerable uncertainty. Finally, the national teams were closed prematurely in October 1998. Some of the regional activities continued until the end of December of the same year. Many project activities, especially the later ones such as Systematization and Building Human and Social Capital, could only be partially implemented. As a consequence, the impact of the program was smaller than expected. For example, mobilization of resources for new projects, one of the hoped for multiplier effects, was only in its preliminary stages.

Hurricane Mitch, one of the worst environmental disasters ever in Central America, further compounded the premature end of the program. Twenty-five percent of the population of Nicaragua and Honduras suffered from damage. Guatemala experienced most devastation in Izabal, Zacapa, Chiquimula and El Progreso. As a result, national governments and departments had to re-arrange their priorities. Capacity building, as advocated by PROGRESS, often needed to be put on the backburner for more immediate reconstruction tasks. For example, PROGRESS staff felt that local development was too often seen as municipal development, rather than as a way to involve various actors (public, market sector, civil society), many of whom had hitherto been excluded from participation in economic, social, and environmental policy making. PROGRESS staff proposed a regional workshop, but it was canceled because of Mitch.

As a program that focused on creating and strengthening capacities, PROGRESS was especially vulnerable when it could not continue its activities, and when its target groups suddenly had other priorities. In both cases, its sustainability suffered. Only full evaluation of the change in the beneficiaries' behavior and possible follow-up can ascertain that the program had sufficient impact, but PROGRESS did not reach this stage.

Still, the program refused to die. The national governments and local counterparts expressed their disappointment, while staff tried to save what it could. Noting that the results could be improved, and taking into account the impact of Mitch, another part of UNDP called the Emergency Response Division (ERD) stepped in. Combining the few unspent resources from PROGRESS with contributions from decentralized cooperation and ERD provided US$ 662,326 in resources. An updated PROGRESS restarted at 1 April 1999 and would continue to 31 August 1999. It focussed on four components:

1. Support for decentralized cooperation initiatives.
2. Strengthening local development actors and mechanisms.
3. Support for the preparation and local response to emergencies.
4. Documentation and diffusion of experiences.

Decentralized cooperation activities continued as long as the Italians contributed resources. The main local development actors and mechanisms were, as before, the

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[27] According to some observers, this decline was a consequence of UNDP's failure to develop a

ADELs, as well as the Central American networks of ADELs and of local development councils. However, field representation was cut down to headquarters in Guatemala City, and only three local offices, one in El Salvador and two in Costa Rica.

PROGRESS supported the regional network of ADELs so that it could help its member ADELs with strategic planning. Several ADELs participated in capacity building to address weaknesses in their functioning, for example with credit recuperation.

The development councils also received support to improve their strategic planning. On the basis of such planning, one development council in El Salvador put its priority on electrification of its department. In one case in Guatemala, equipment for a computerized statistical information system could not be bought because SEGEPLAN withdrew its initial support.

The third component focused on an ILO/UNOPS pilot project for rehabilitation after Mitch through technical coordination of local institutions already supported by PROGRESS. However, a lack of money delayed the start of this project. In contrast, PROGRESS played a role in the formulation of a national disaster prevention and mitigation project in Costa Rica.

Finally, PROGRESS continued documenting and disseminating its experience in fighting social exclusion through participation and better cooperation between state institutions, market sector, and civil society. This will also be useful for the evaluation of the outcomes of the Copenhagen Summit at the regional level. Still, a regional dissemination meeting with other UN organizations was ill attended.

Due to Mitch and late payments in decentralized cooperation, the extended program also suffered from delays. As a result, it was further extended to 15 October 1999. Even after that date, decentralized cooperation continued. In addition, UNDP in Costa Rica organized a further extension until Spring 2000 to offer preparatory assistance to the government with setting up a new program for the strengthening and consolidation of SHD at the local level. This national program aimed to build on the PROGRESS experience of the last few years.

5.4   Impact

Just like PRODERE, PROGRESS can be evaluated from three different perspectives:

1.   *Direct Results*
Program output was checkered, because implementation became an unexpected roller coaster ride with a few stops and extensions. Through its extensions, PROGRESS was able to regain the confidence of its counterparts and bring more of its projects to a good end. Still, its complete impact cannot be assessed fully, because at the time of this writing, the program had not fully been completed and the final tripartite meeting still had to take place. Also, the project documents did not provide a quantitative assessment as the PRODERE documents had. It is therefore hard to estimate the total number of beneficiaries. For example, some ADELs still operate sub-optimally (IV).

In Guatemala, PROGRESS held strategy-training sessions for 450 representatives of the departmental development councils. Total program training involved 1,617 persons

(72% male, 28% female). Several program guides were fine-tuned for implementation in the program regions. UNDP used the program's statistical data for calculating its Human Development Indicators. The program also set up the Project Database in its region and the Canadian Embassy decided to support environmental studies and an environmental project. As noted earlier, the program also supported several ADELs and development councils. Two municipal development councils received support for micro-regionalization, public investment, and development planning. PROGRESS also offered support to UNDP and the Italian government with developing a separate project for strengthening departmental development councils in some of the program areas. Finally, the government expressed interest in the replication of the methodology in other parts of the country. Still, the premature end of the program precluded institutional strengthening and resource mobilization for the technical support units of several development councils. Because of the program's unexpected interruption, it could not help in the response to Mitch, and staff felt that this was a lost opportunity. With the re-opening of the program, it continued its decentralized cooperation projects; for example, the radio station in Ixcán has started broadcasting. PROGRESS also provided additional help to ADELs and development councils, but this was not large-scale support.

2.   *Practical Problems, Conceptual Changes*

Methodologically, impact assessment was hard because the program worked with institutions that had to reach their own (i.e., the final) beneficiaries. Ideally, the impact on the program should be measured by the changes that these final beneficiaries experience.[28] This is also difficult because PROGRESS did not carry out investment in substantive sectors, such as health, in the way PRODERE did. To put this differently, PROGRESS was insufficiently area based and did not take the intersectoral "whole person" perspective. In addition, PROGRESS insufficiently built up institutional capacity at the local level. For example, the experience with the geographical information systems was disappointing, because there was insufficient local follow-up. The further one moves away from the community level, the more pervasive the problems in reaching the final beneficiaries can become. Decentralized cooperation projects did carry out some of this work, but their linkages with the other program activities were insufficiently articulated. In contrast, in PRODERE, area based integration of different functional sectors had been one of the main achievements.

A related evaluation problem is that PROGRESS management saw the program as both a regular program and an experiment. The program certainly attempted to be innovative in promoting sustainable human development, but it could not make sure that it had the critical mass to succeed. It insufficiently indicated why its combination of activities was valid. Nor was the synergy among the program objectives clear. In addition, the pilot project with the ILO still needs to find resources, and the follow-up of the BCIE on its pre-investment studies is not clear. That is unfortunate, because such a follow-up would constitute an important success. It is even more difficult to assess how much the program has contributed to Central American integration. Since so many of these evaluation issues hinge on action by the Central American governments, it would be interesting to evaluate their policies.

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[28] In itself the word "beneficiaries" already conjures up the image of passive recipients. Hence, most programs nowadays use the word partners to stress their active role. The question then becomes do these

These evaluation problems could have been addressed more prominently in the selection and linking of program objectives and activities. It is, for example, not clear why the community level received far less attention. Was that because of a lack of resources? Still, the program was very ambitious, geographically and substantially. The same staff members who felt that PRODERE lost some of its strength by moving away from the community level, also felt that this was one of the basic weaknesses of PROGRESS (IV). PROGRESS addressed poverty, but it rarely worked directly with the poor. This all suggests that the design of PROGRESS should have been based on a more thorough evaluation of PRODERE and the situation at the ground in the program areas.

3.   Management Changes
Other UN organizations did benefit from PROGRESS; UNDP maintained some PROGRESS staff for specific in-country projects. In particular, in Costa Rica there was sound cooperation with UNDP. In other countries, such as Guatemala, cooperation was more difficult. In addition, ILO and UNOPS continued working with ADELs in about ten countries worldwide (IV).

Unlike PRODERE, PROGRESS had become a smaller and more regular part of UNOPS's activities, and thus left a much smaller organizational impact. UNOPS had already gained considerable experience with facilitating rebuilding and its participatory toolkit in other parts of the world. PROGRESS did not substantially enlarge the toolkit, but UNOPS continued to increase its emphasis on substantive management.

In one practical way, however, UNOPS benefited considerably from PROGRESS. An organization that wanted to take democratic decentralization and participation seriously also had to decentralize itself. In addition, there were interesting business opportunities opening up in Guatemala, for example with the management of the Historical Clarification Committee (*Comisión para el Esclarecímiento Histórico* – CEH), the Guatemalan truth committee, and the UN observer mission in Guatemala, MINUGUA (*Misión de las Naciones Unidas para Guatemala*). In July 1997, UNOPS set up a Guatemala office. The office premises were the same as those of the international PROGRESS team.

1.	What could have been done differently in the program design stage? How could evaluation have been anticipated? Could part of the design be adapted on the basis of information collected later during the program?
2.	Map out the program partners and other stakeholders.

Table 10 Questions

6.   PDHSL/FIDHEG

6.1   Origin

After his election in early 1996, the Guatemalan President, Arzu, wanted to consolidate the peace process. He attended a European donor conference in support of the peace process, and also spoke with the Dutch Prime Minister and the Minister of Development Cooperation. After this conversation, the Dutch cabinet decided to open an embassy in Guatemala City. The Dutch diplomats were also responsible for overseeing Dutch development cooperation to Guatemala. Since they were new in the country, they did

not have a huge field experience and decided to work with multilateral organizations instead of going it alone. In particular, they wanted to strengthen the peace process.

In early 1996, the signing of the complete Peace Accords looked like a matter of time. Several parts of the Peace Accords had already been signed in the preceding years. They entailed strengthening human rights and civil society, as well as devolution of the highly centralized state institutions. In addition, gender and multiculturalism were cross-cutting themes of these accords (Vives, 1999: 16). As a consequence, the Peace Accords were not just a set of documents that signalled the end of armed conflict, they required intensive follow-up action.

At the time, profesionals in UNOPS and PROGRESS played with the idea of setting up a program to promote decentralization and democratization in support of the peace accords. In close cooperation with FONAPAZ (*Fondo Nacional para la Paz* National Peace Fund) officials, they developed a program for institutional stengthening that fitted under the PDHSL umbrella. FONAPAZ was a capital investment fund that had based parts of its working methodology on PRODERE. FONAPAZ and UNOPS management knew each other well (IV). The program was called *Programa de Desarrollo Humano Sostenible a Nivel Local/Fortalecimiento Institucional, Derechos Humanos y Enfoque de Género* (Program for Sustainable Human Development at the Local Level/ Institutional Stregnthening, Human Rights, and Gender Focus PDHSL/FIDHEG). The Dutch decided to fund this program.

6.2 Design

6.2.1 Design of the Program

Program design showed several possible areas of attention: weak diffusion of the Peace Accords, low level of female participation in local decision-making, low capacity for identifying, priority setting, and formulation of programs, projects, and development agendas, weak functioning of municipal and departmental development councils and their technical support units, as well as lack of access to legal advice. The central objective of the program thus became: "To support the fulfillment of the Peace Accords by facilitating civil-society participation in decision-making, in particular through strengthening of local institutions, protecting human rights, and focusing on gender" (ID). However, there was only scant data on the exact magnitude of the problems, in particular on the development councils. A German program in another department, Alta Verapaz, offered some comparative material, but the quality of the data for design was very weak (IV).

The program would work in nine municipalities in the Huehuetenango department, which suffered from high levels of social exclusion.[29] The majority of the people in this department are *Indigena*. In line with its problem identification and central objective the program operated with three basic themes:

1. **Decentralization and strengthening of local institutions**. Since the national government had already embarked on a decentralization process (in line with the

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[29] These municipalities were Jacaltenango, Concepción Huista, San Juan Ixcoy, Todos Santos

Peace Accords), FIDHEG paid attention to capacity building at the departmental, municipal, and micro-region level.

2. **Education on peace, human rights, and democratic participation**. Many people simply did not know what their rights and the exact outcomes of the peace negotiations were. For many, democratic participation was still a young and relatively unknown concept.

3. **Gender focus on human development**. Given the fact that social exclusion was generally even worse for women than for men, the program wanted to promote gender equality and improve the living conditions for women by strengthening their organizations and increasing participation of female representatives in local decision-making bodies.

In sum, the program wanted to strengthen both civil society and local government in order to improve their relationships, which in turn would foster the implementation of the Peace Accords. Still, the relationship between the three areas could have been worked out further.

6.2.2 Design of the Management of the Program

FONAPAZ became the national counterpart of the program. During the design stage, the question as to who could be the executing agent for the project became a contentious issue. Now that UNOPS was an independent organization, UNDP did not directly benefit from its execution. Instead, UNDP preferred to carry out the project itself, as this would mean more work and income for its country office. UNOPS, of course, preferred its own strong role in implementation. As a consequence, project preparations got into a stalemate for almost fourteen months. The tensions created the strong impression that both organizations were more concerned about their fees than about development work. In the end, FONAPAZ, the government, and the Dutch decided that UNOPS would become the executing agent. Officially, UNDP was called the implementing agent and UNOPS the executing agent. In practice, UNOPS carried out most of the implementation of the program and the UNDP country office administered the funds.

Eventually, the program began in July 1996 and was supposed to last two years. The Dutch provided an initial budget of US$ 1,061,000. In contrast to PRODERE and PROGRESS, FIDHEG worked only in one department in Guatemala: Huehuetenango. Unlike PROGRESS, it focused more strongly on municipal and micro-region level.[30] Yet, it did not possess enough money to carry out substantive investments in the way PRODERE had. All three programs shared their emphasis on participation and bringing state and civil society actors closer to each other. In this way, FIDHEG used many instruments of the PRODERE toolkit, in particular micro-regions and development councils. In Guatemala, law had institutionalized the departmental and municipal development councils, although practically the country was still a centralized state. Law, however, did not officially recognize the micro-regions. According to the Peace Accords, the Guatemalan government would propose a law to do so in the near future.

6.3   Implementation

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[30] This emphasis on different societal levels may explain why there was no more interaction between

6.3.1 Evolution of the Program

In December 1996, after ten years of negotiations and nudged by the international community, Guatemala was the last country in the region to sign comprehensive peace accords. Finally, the chances on violence reduced substantially, which was a boon for all programs in Guatemala.

The program operated relatively smoothly in its municipalities. Only one municipality, Todos Santos, rejected further cooperation with the program after the establishment of the micro-regions. As a consequence, the program only worked with civil-society representatives on peace education and gender in this municipality.

Many people in the department did not have access to legal support. The limited legal support available was often far too expensive. To remedy this situation, FIDHEG set up a legal advice counsel in the town of Huehuetenango (the capital of the Huehuetenango department). Still, the counsel had to operate in a self-reliant manner. The program was able to get support from other parties: the Catholic Church would take care of funding and management, the departmental association of lawyers and notaries provided legal backing, and the University of San Carlos would let students help with giving advice. As a consequence, the legal advice counsel could continue without FIDHEG support when the program ended. The program also worked on improving the position of women. It helped to establish a departmental women's forum that could work on gender issues.

6.3.2 Evolution of Program Management

Just like PROGRESS, FIDHEG could build on the available capacity of PRODERE. Staff was familiar with the department, tools were available, and the organizational structures and procedures were much better established than when PRODERE began. Moreover, FIDHEG was a relatively small program, which facilitated internal communication and coordination. Similar to PRODERE and PROGRESS, UNOPS program management combined administrative and substantive management.

The whole FIDHEG team consisted of 26 persons: consultants, technical advisors, and administrative and other support staff. A program director led the team. In addition, two Dutch Junior Professional Officers (JPO)[31], one staff member financed by the Basque region, and one participant from the Canadian Center for Research and International Cooperation (CECI) provided additional support to the program. The program office was located in the town of Huehuetenango.

The program encountered several problems in its existence that in the end greatly dissatisfied the Dutch donor. The degree of integration of most program activities peace accords, gender, human rights, and development councils   was low. As a consequence, most activities were small and lacked synergy. In addition, FONAPAZ was a capital investment fund; its strength did not lie in participatory development. And it did not succeed in fulfilling its counterpart role well (IV). Nor did UNDP give the program much support (IV).

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[31] These officers are officials paid for by their governments and work in the UN system. A JPO-ship is an entry-level job at in the UN system. Many JPOs become regular UN staff once their JPO-ship has

Inadvertently, the government also caused a problem. It was frequently slow in the implementation of the Peace Accords. Legal changes to strengthen the development councils were delayed until 2000 and later. In other words, long after the project would end (IV). In addition, a national referendum on constitutional change, which would also have promoted a stronger legal status of micro-regions, was voted down.[32] Although this did not make the work on the micro-regions impossible, it certainly did not strengthen them. Fortunately, law did provide space to establish micro-regions, for example as associations, but the process was slow. A later program in the region, DECOPAZ, suffered from the same problem.

Doubts also grew on the value of the micro-regions for local governance. With FIDHEG local communities did not determine their micro-regions, instead they were set up by the government. As a result, various people asked whether the micro-region idea respected local culture. Moreover, some people argued that they just added another level of hierarchy into society. Also the program did not have much money: the micro-regions could not carry out their own investments. In addition, the program only had two years to reach it goals.

In July 1998, however, the Dutch allowed for an extension till the end of the year without new resources. Later, they also provided US$ 217,248 for a new extension from January to March 1999. New Dutch staff in the Embassy had realized that many of the problems should have been addressed in the design and that some problems, such as the tension between UNDP and UNOPS and the role of FONAPAZ could not be overcome. Still, they recognized that local staff worked very hard to make the program a success.

Recognizing that the program was too dispersed, program management attempted to refocus it. The legal advice counsel was able to operate independently and the program staff wanted to pay more attention to improving the functioning of the development councils at both the municipal and departmental level. Gender would receive less attention, but program officials wanted to strengthen the micro-regions further. They also argued that two years was too short to create the desired social change. Working in the local culture and integrating all the new tools required more time. However, the Dutch embassy was too skeptical about the methodology, the tensions among UNDP and UNOPS, and the role of FONAPAZ. They decided not to fund further extension.

6.4   Impact

According to a program evaluation, the program had a notable impact on capacity building, both in training of the local population, and in the three central themes. In particular, the continuation of the legal advice counsel was a strong point. In other parts of Guatemala, people struggle to set up and maintain similar counsels (IV). The program also legalized the development councils and micro-regions, and carried out training and capacity building. In the end, decentralization was more successful at the departmental level than at the municipal level. The departmental development council already had stronger capacity for development and better access to information (IV).

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[32] The main reason was that the legal position of the *Indigenas* would have been strengthened by the reform. Some argued that this would have led to two types of citizens in Guatemala. Others simply feared

One of the central problems of FIDHEG was its lack of substantive investment. The legal advice counsel could be seen as a substantive investment, but it operated rather independently from the other program activities. Hence, the program could not piggyback its work on the peace accords, human rights, and gender on such investments. To a large extent, gender and environment can have their own projects. To a lesser extent, this also holds true of human rights, but promoting the Peace Accords does not easily lend itself for separate projects for the local population.[33] Most program investments centered on the functioning and procedures of micro-regions and councils. The general problem that assessment of these bodies should be measured by their impact on the final beneficiaries recurred.

Some of the micro-regions established by FIDHEG were incorporated into another program, DECOPAZ (see **7**). When DECOPAZ started operating there was a gap of about a year in the operations of these micro-regions. None of them still operated and new volunteers had to be found. FIDHEG was successful in legalization and awareness creation, but not in follow-up. This lack of sustainable impact raises an important question: could this have been prevented with an extension or was the design of FIDHEG to weak from the start? Both options have a grain of truth to them. A better designed program would have had an easier time to gain an extension. Most micro-regions needed more time to accept and adapt the methodology to their own circumstances.

In October 1999, the Dutch embassy still had not received the final evaluation of the program from UNDP and UNOPS.

7. DECOPAZ

7.1 Introduction

As its name indicates, DECOPAZ (*Desarrollo Communitario para la Paz* Community Development for Peace) had its roots in the Peace Accords. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) wanted to support the peace process and help to address the root-causes of the conflict: social exclusion and violence. In the meantime, UNOPS Guatemala was looking for new projects and ways to extend its methodological experience with rebuilding and development. Since the IDB wanted to strengthen the Guatemalan peace process, it intended to use the participatory methodology and combine it with its traditional strengths in public investment, especially in infrastructure. Such a project would be a novelty for the IDB, but the growing interest in social and human capital and trust in relation to economic growth eased acceptance of a program that focused on participation and civil society (e.g., Putnam, 1993).

7.2 Design

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[33] There is one big exception with human rights, namely during relief and the early stages of rebuilding. In this period, it is often necessary to have separate projects for reestablishing citizen rights and land entitlements (without a recurrence of conflict, these normally do not need to be repeated). Generally, legalization of local organizations is a more continuous process, but it rarely is worth a stand-alone

The DECOPAZ program document referred explicitly to PRODERE as a relevant experience. UNOPS had helped, mainly behind the screens, with the formulation of the program document.[34] The program followed the twin strategy of social integration and substantive investment. The central objective of the program was the "the human, physical, and social recapitalization of the areas most severely affected by the armed conflict" (ID). In this way, the objective worded the goals of rebuilding in acceptable banking terms. The program used three project elements new to the IDB, namely:

1. Delegation of decision-making power about selection, implementation, and financing of investments to the local beneficiaries.
2. Training in the execution of project management.
3. Incorporation of participatory planning to foster a culture of collaboration in a peaceful environment.

7.2.1 Design of the Program

The program not only established its objectives in line with the PRODERE experience, it also used area-based programming. Like PDHSL-FIDHEG it also worked in the Huhuetenango department with micro-regions.

The IDB provided US$ 50 million in loans. The local population had to bring in US$ 5.6 million through costsharing; which would mainly consist of unpaid cooperation in project management and carrying out specific project activities, such as helping to construct schools. The program would last a period of three years.

The program document delineated three main types of program activities that combined the normal investment activities of the IDB with social integration for rebuilding. First, the program would invest 50 percent of its non-administration resources in health and education infrastructure. Second, it would have 25 percent of these resources for "free allocation" projects on which the micro-regions could decide themselves. Third, it would also provide 25 percent for credit for productive projects that the beneficiaries would formulate themselves. To further strengthen the peace process, the program also used four crosscutting themes that it incorporated as much as possible into the regular program activities, namely:

1. Strengthening democracy.
2. Diffusion of and capacity building for the Peace Accords.
3. Environmental protection.
4. Gender.

All local project proposals would be checked on their impact on women and the environment. In addition, special projects, sensitization, and training were necessary on these four topics, so that people could understand them better.

7.2.2 Design of the Management of the Program

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[34] The main reason for this lack of visibility lies in the programming process of the IDB. It works with several (draft) documents before the final program document is approved. In these earlier documents, the

Setting up the program required action at the national and local level. At the national governmental level, the national counterpart to the program would be formed as a trust, called DECOPAZ, administered by a Board of Directors and its secretariat. The FONAPAZ chairperson would be the chair of this Board. The Directors and secretariat would set up and guide a DECOPAZ technical unit at the local level in Huehuetenango. In contrast to FONAPAZ, DECOPAZ would be stronger at local participation.

However, neither the national bodies, nor the technical unit or the local governments possessed sufficient expertise to carry out the program by themselves. Hence, the micro-regions, or broader the local population, would be supported by international organizations (these were literally called first level entities   *entidades de primer piso*). These supporting organizations officially worked for DECOPAZ. They would both delegate and strengthen local decision-making about selection, execution, and financing of the program activities to the beneficiaries organized in the micro-regions. The supporting organizations would also provide technical services, such as procurement. The DECOPAZ technical unit would monitor and coordinate the international supporting organizations.

The money for the program would be spent within six fixed categories (in millions). Three concerning the management support and overview of the program, and three specific sets of program activities:

Central Administration (Board of Directors, Secretariat, and Technical Unit)	4.9
Services by Supporting Organizations	10.6
Productive Credit Projects (25 %)	9.7
Free Allocation Projects (to be decided by the beneficiaries 25%)	9.7
Health and Education Projects (50%)	19.4
Local Administration and Overview	0.5
Unforeseen (5 % of Central Administration and Services by Supporting Org´s)	0.8

Table 11 Program Budget

The program did encounter some problems identifying the international supporting organizations. Not surprisingly, given its history and its work in program preparation, only UNOPS combined the ability to organize local communities with technical services. As a consequence, UNOPS was preselected as supporting organization.[35] The other organizations would be selected through a bidding procedure and would probably have to strengthen some of their internal capacities. In October 1997, UNOPS started with the program execution in five municipalities, before the other two organizations would commence their operations.

The elaborate set up of the whole program reflected the local institutional weaknesses, the need for national government cooperation, the technical banking procedures of the IDB, and the role of international organizations in local execution and administration.

7.3   Implementation

7.3.1   Evolution of the Program

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In the field, UNOPS set up one program office in Hueheutenango and decentralized implementation teams in each municipality. The implementation teams consisted of a manager and technical advisors, who were first selected.[36] Since the municipalities were so large, they possessed several clusters of communities that could form micro-regions. Each micro-region would get its own local technical advisor. In other words, UNOPS decentralized its operations all the way to the micro-region and community level.

1.   Promotion

The next step was to go to communities and local government officials to inform them in detail about the program. At this stage, the implementation teams focused on promotion of the strategy and methodology of the program. According to some program officials, the methodology was an improved version of the PRODERE methodology. The local population, however, felt skeptical. To them, the methodology seemed quite esoteric, which was complicated by the low levels of education and the history of violence that had instilled a culture of fear that hampered social integration. Moreover, other development programs had promised much, but failed to deliver or to live up to expectations (IV). The program would have to overcome this skepticism.

2.   Micro-regionalization

Despite their initial misgivings, each community selected three or four representatives. Most communities were small enough to identify local leaders without great problems. All the representatives then came together to determine the micro-regions and their borders.[37] The implementation teams had developed several maps on climate, agricultural production, ethnicity, and roads to inform this process. Simultaneously, the teams worked with the communities on a participatory diagnosis of their situation. The diagnosis covered economic and social characteristics, local production, and basic services. For example, the indices of illiteracy were very high.

In two municipalities, it was not necessary to set up micro-regions, because FIDHEG-PDHSL had already done so. However, in the course of one year, these micro-regions had already ceased to be active. Only a few local people knew how the micro-regions actually functioned. These regions had to select new representatives.
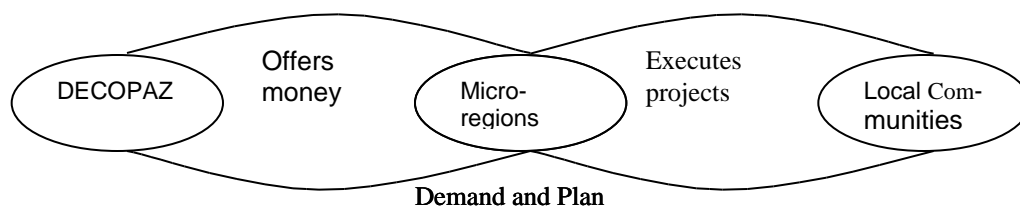

Figure 3 Basic workflow of DECOPAZ

As a next step, the community representatives selected their own joint directorates, which would administrate the capital they were to receive from DECOPAZ. Generally, the micro-regions paid together for an administrative assistant, who would work in the office of the local implementation team.

3.   Legalization

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[36] Currently, UNOPS DECOPAZ employs 64 people.

[37] Here DECOPAZ improved on FIDHEG. However, in the two FIDHEG municipalities, it simply took

Next, the micro-regions had to establish themselves as legal entities, which happened in the form of associations. This was necessary because only a legally established body could receive IDB money through DECOPAZ. Unfortunately, the national government took a long time to establish a new law on civil association. As a consequence, legalization took about a year longer than expected.

4. Capacity Building

Depending on local circumstances, capacity building focused on different themes, such as the four central program themes. In addition, project planning and execution were generic themes. The program would operate with three partly overlapping cycles of nine months that covered project design, implementation, and evaluation. In other words, after three project cycles, the micro-regions had to be able to function independently in a sustainable manner.

For each cycle, members of the local communities, for example united in a women's group, would present their ideas. These would then be prioritized by each community with the help of the local advisor of the implementation unit. Each micro-region had a committee for each program category. The joint directorate, micro-region assembly, and committees would then decide on the prioritization for the whole micro-region following the 50-25-25 rule of project categories. After which, the community members, committees, and the local advisor further elaborated the ideas into full-fledged plans. For each project the community members would set up a special project-labor commission that would arrange and monitor the input, mainly hand labor, from the local communities. All project proposals provided at least

1. The project name.
2. The project justification.
3. The project objective.
4. The project description.
5. The project budget with planning.

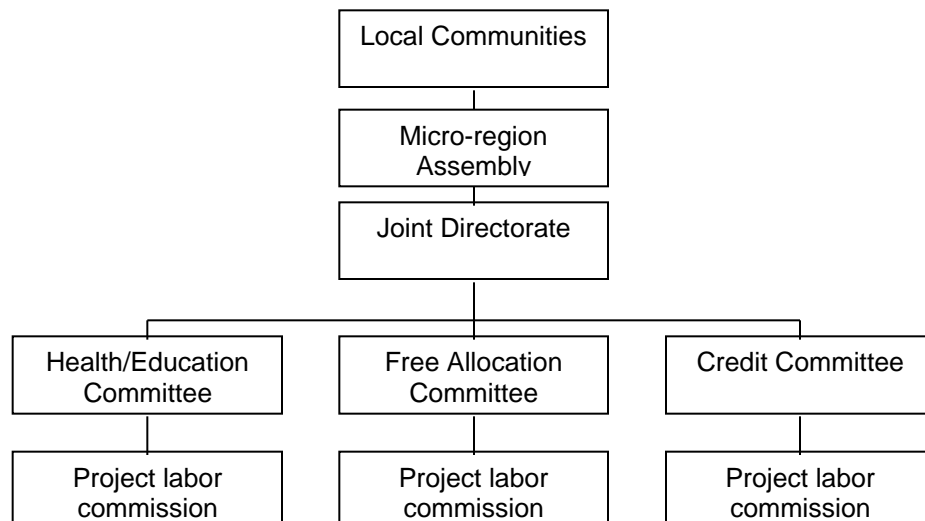The following figure shows the organizational set up of DECOPAZ at the local level.

Figure 4 Local set up of DECOPAZ

Community participation in project preparation and joint implementation were forms of costsharing. Hopefully, such involvement would also foster a sense of ownership and reduce skepticism.

7.3.2 Evolution of program management

By October 1999, the first cycle and the planning for the second cycle had been completed. The first project cycle consisted of 82 projects that responded directly to local needs and generally had a very small size. Currently, the micro-regions and implementation teams focus on implementation and supervision of the projects. In the areas of health and education, as well as with "free allocation" many small projects have been implemented with the local communities working in the execution. For example, health centers and schools have been built. Many communities used their "free allocation" money for electrification, drainage, and drinking water. They have also invested considerable amounts in concrete sinks, and in aluminum roofs to replace the traditional leave roofs. The actual implementation of the projects took away most of the skepticism and increased the enthusiasm for DECOPAZ. In the provision of credit there were substantial delays. The organizational design for these credits was more complicated, because it also had to involve a local bank.

The provision of productive credit caused additional delays; for credit the first project cycle cannot even begin yet. First, there were the problems with the national law that caused delays in legalization of the micro-regions. Second, according to IBD rules, a local bank should administer the funds and check the viability of the micro-credit projects. However, it took a long time to find a bank. Only *Banco Rural* made a bid. If no bank had reacted, there would have been even further delays. Community representatives accepted the *Banco Rural* bid in October 1999.

Second, most credit proposals concerned agricultural projects, but these projects can only start in the sowing season of May/June 2000. Hence, credit will only have one full project cycle, before the program officially ends. An amount of money up front, distributed with a more flexible interpretation of the rules, could have countered this situation. The fact that most projects concern agricultural improvements also indicates how difficult it is to foster economic diversification. Such diversification would make the local population less dependent on producing basic crops, such as corn, peanuts, and coffee, which generally do not receive high prices.

In addition, it is important that development programs respect local culture and opportunities. In this case, the flow of seasons hampered the opportunities of the local population to benefit from the program. Similarly, the design of the project cycles was faster than local decision-making processes.

Table 12 A Study in Delay (source: IV)

For project cycle two, the project design process was changed a bit. Although gender was one of the program's crosscutting themes, women were less vocal in expressing their demands and men occupied most representative functions. In preparation of the micro-region assembly, the technical advisors now worked with separate female and male groups. Each group presented its own proposals in the assembly, which led to an increase in women's projects. In one village, Nenton, a women credit committee established more project proposals than any other group (IV).

Another problem in the implementation of the project was the lack of cooperation of the local municipalities. DECOPAZ meant an influx of resources that the mayors, used to

idea of micro-regions, others categorically opposed this idea, because they considered it a loss of power. The program now tries to work more closely with the mayors and municipal development councils, but this still requires considerable persuasion. One promising solution is placing special assistants in social organizing as permanent staff within the municipality. In addition, program officials increasingly engage the mayors and their staff in joint planning (IV). The program design should probably have spent more attention to fostering cooperation, and therewith building institutional capacity, beforehand.

The lack of municipal cooperation also brings up questions on the utility of working with micro-regions as a governance mechanism. Although program personnel and participants generally consider the experience positive, there are also doubts similar to those in FIDHEG: "People don´t live in micro-regions, they live in communities" (IV).[38] Some people raised the question whether micro-regions are an alien concept that does not respect the local culture well enough. Traditional forms of organization, such as the so-called auxiliary mayors that the *Indigena* population traditionally appoints, religious brotherhoods, or cooperatives may also offer venues for further cooperation. For example, a cooperative plays an active social role in Ixcán (IV). Others argue that in the past auxiliary mayors and religious brotherhoods also functioned as instruments of oppression. Furthermore, they contend that the scars from the conflict as well as new economic and social changes require new forms of social integration. The final evaluation will have to treat this issue in detail.

Internally, UNOPS did not have to change its management significantly. Similar to the PROGRESS and PDHSL-FIDHEG, the program management task was more that of a facilitator than that of an executor. This will happen in most capacity building projects.

7.4   Impact

DECOPAZ is still on ongoing program, and can thus not be evaluated fully. Most of its results still have to mature. Furthermore, the other two selected supporting organizations, CARE Guatemala and CECI have started at a later date.[39] It is, however, possible to point out some issues that merit further attention.

Generally, the local population judges the program positively. They attend the assemblies enthusiastically. Sometimes, they provide a greater local input than required by the cost-sharing arrangements. They also use DECOPAZ meetings to manage other local business, such as financing and building a village meeting hall.

In contrast to FIDHEG, the local communities determined the micro-regions, and they had resources to invest. As a result, the program is able to deliver tangible results, such as schools and health centers, which in turn increases confidence in the opportunities for social integration. In principle, the program can thus strengthen the social fabric. Staff members also feel positive and think that this type of programs, with their combination of substantive investment and participatory action towards social integration, offer an important trend towards more effective development cooperation. CARE, for example,

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[38] In this respect, it is not clear why the PRODERE follow-up programs focused more on micro-regions than on the local communities with which PRODERE started.

[39] Each of these organizations also works in two FIDHEG municipalities. Out of the nine FIDHEG

intends an evaluation of the micro-regions to see whether it can use the concept in its operations in other parts of the world.[40] It is also looking for follow-up resources (IV).[41]

Still some issues in the design of the program deeply impact its operations. First, many people remark that the IDB could become more flexible, which will entail a strategic choice for the Bank. Will it continue with programs that contain DECOPAZ's novel elements? Or will it turn back and focus on its public investment activities? If it answers the first question positively, then it should become more flexible, especially with local credits. Donors, such as the Italians, the Dutch, and the IDB do influence the operations, and therewith impact, of their programs. Unfortunately, their role is rarely to never evaluated from the perspective of the participants (Biekart, 1999: 293)

Second, social integration generally takes a long time. The delays with the provision of credit are instructive. The program should have taken the seasonal nature of agricultural work better into account. Generally, the activities have taken more time than expected. Most people asked for an extension of the program so that its methodology of social integration would be ingrained more deeply and alternative resources could be found. Many people where also afraid that without resources the micro-regions would fade away.

Third, no volunteers in the joint directorates and other committees earn money. Since the program volunteers are poor people, this hampers their participation and affects institutional sustainability. At times, they also have problems with providing and receiving feedback from their communities. Together with the former issues, this implies a need for a longer time frame for projects that focus on social integration.

However, an extension is still unsure, although it will probably improve the program's sustainability. The IDB has not taken a decision yet. In addition, it is an open question whether the supporting organizations will play a similar role in it. Perhaps, they should only be hired for specific program aspects. For example, UNOPS for participatory social organization, CARE for investments in environmental projects, and so on. This would also imply a stronger government role, especially of its DECOPAZ technical unit. Nevertheless, the respective strengths of the supporting organizations and the technical unit still need to be determined.

If the technical unit takes on such a stronger role, this both closes and opens opportunities for organizations such as UNOPS. On the one hand, they loose a part of the rebuilding/development market, but this should be part and parcel of development cooperation that fosters self-sufficiency. On the other, they gain a new market of supporting government units with management expertise, for example with auditing and monitoring. Once again a move towards a more facilitating role for UNOPS.

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[40] Concerning evaluation, it is also important to see DECOPAZ in a broader context. Next to FIDHEG, many other programs in, for example, forestation and social integration operate(d) in the Huehuetenango department. These should be evaluated simultaneously to learn more about the role international organziations play locally and how they should cooperate better with the local population and counterparts.

[41] CARE is an NGO. When UNOPS became an independent UN organization, it was not allowed to receive direct donor contributions like the Specialized Agencies. As a result, UNOPS cannot look for

8.   Comparison of Program Management and its impact

Armed conflict in places as diverse as Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia, and East Timor is one of the most horrible and mind-boggling problems of our age. In all these cases, the relationship between relief, rehabilitation, and development is one of the main conceptual problems. In one way or another, new forms of social integration need to overcome social exclusion and concomitant violence. The Guatemalan experience offers some valuable indications in this respect. Looking at PRODERE, PROGRESS, FIDHEG, and DECOPAZ, which together cover a period of more than a decade, shows shared problems as well as differences. This section analyzes these in order to understand UNOPS and its program management better. The introduction asked two central research questions:

1. What were the main programming problems and conceptual challenges of UNOPS in Guatemala?
    ➢ Moving from relief to development;
    ➢ Integration of different types of project activities in area-based projects, such as health, education, human rights, and economic infrastructure;
    ➢ Local participation.
2. How and why did UNOPS´ management change over the course of these programs?
    ➢ Relationships with other organizations;
    ➢ Relationship between administrative and substantive matters.

This section provides the analysis for answering these questions.

8.1   Direct Results

Many internal and external factors played a role in achieveing program results. The programs benefited greatly from the changes in international and regional politics, such as the end of Cold War controversies and the ending of US support to the Contras, which also facilitated the national peace processes. After PRODERE, the other programs functioned in a more conducive international context.

While the programs differed in attention to functional sectors and societal levels, they by and large shared the same type of methodology. By addressing social exclusion, they bridged the divides between relief, rehabilitation, and development, and made the three transitions of 1) making peace and fostering security; 2) socio-economic rebuilding; and 3) moving from a repressive system to an open, participatory system of governance.[42] None of these transitions can bring about social integration independently. The programs mainly focused on socio-economic rebuilding and governance, through which they indirectly contributed to the peace process. Put positively, promoting one transition can simultaneously foster another.

Three programs started before the conflict ended and continued afterwards, which implies that these types of programs can lessen the impact of the conflict, or even help to solve the conflict. Nevertheless, peace is often feeble. Violence and social exclusion,

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[42] Still, the Guatemalan case does not present some of the issues that have been difficult in many other peacebuilding efforts, such as the role of international military intervention, security arrangements, and

as causes of conflict, intensify during conflict and persist after the signing of the peace accords.

The basic assumption behind the PRODERE strategy was the recognition of local participation as a starting point for further development and the concomitant need to address the dynamics that immobilized or impeded the use of human, technological, financial, and natural resources. A better, integrated   in other words, non-exclusive use of all these resources was key to rebuilding and therefore development. Many rebuilding programs center at the central government level, which is necessary but not enough to kick-start local development in a self-sustaining manner. Essentially, the programs provided tools and started a participatory dynamic (IV).

The regional effects of PRODERE and PROGRESS are hard to gauge. For sure, they promoted Central American integration, but this process already had a momentum of its own. Working at the local level and regional cooperation are not contrary aims. In many regions, such as Central America, several countries share the problems of violence and social exclusion, which can only be solved when a PRODERE-like strategy is part of the final solution of the conflict.[43] At a minimum, one should look at the conflict country and its border with the neighboring countries, for example with refugees.

None of the programs was either a total success or failure, but the two programs that combined substantive investment with local participation, PRODERE and DECOPAZ, had a larger, more sustainable reach. Most change has occurred at the departmental level, in particular Huehuetenango and El Quiché. There is more security, but not enough, governance has definitely become more democratic, economic activities have been instigated, and the local fabric has been strengthened. Still, violence and social exclusion require long periods of time to heal. Many program participants and people working within the programs have a strong perception that this is the way relief and development should go, but that the overall environment is insufficiently conducive to change the whole country.

In discussing impact, it is also important to note the factors that the programs cannot influence. Guatemala currently suffers from an economic crisis, high population growth, and a crime wave. Many people have not benefited sufficiently from peace. In December 1999, Guatemala chose a new president, Portillo, an unconvicted murderer. He hails from a party founded by one of the former dictators, Ríoss Mont, who was in power during the worst of the genocide in the early eighties. It is, as yet, an open question whether this marks a return to authoritarian governance (compare Hakim, 1999: 116; Stanley, Holiday, 1997: 36). Guatemala has made progress over the last few years, but it still has a long and insecure journey ahead.

In this respect, it is important not to overstate the impact of the programs. They can introduce valuable new resources and methods in a department, but they need sufficient critical mass for national change. It is difficult to ensure such a multiplier effect, all programs aimed at this, but actual experience is mixed. With or without program, the local population is the first and foremost determinant of their own lives. On average the four programs have done a good job, but criticism on, for example, the micro-regions, credit, lack of sustainability, and questions about going (inter)national show that these

programs also had their share of problems. Such problems are likely to come up in many other programs.

Still, through the OECD-DAC guidelines, the Social Summit, and similar programs in other parts of the world, PRODERE had a large spin-off.

8.2   Conceptual Changes

8.2.1   Relief

PRODERE helped to redefine the relationships between relief, rehabilitation and development.

1. PRODERE used its relief provision to returning refugees for focusing on "hard" basic needs, such as food, housing, and clothes, as an entry point for cooperating with the local people. Already in these early stages it used participatory mechanisms, for example, with building housing.
2. The emphasis on an area-based, no-discriminatory, whole-person, and participatory strategy allowed for setting into motion a dynamic towards social integration and capacity building, which is the crucial "softer" aspect necessary for ensuring eventual sustainability. Put differently, this is a way to integrate development activities with relief early on.
3. The initial focus on relief and the non-discriminatory approach helped to establish trust and neutrality, which were pre-conditions for the later stages of the program, and follow-up programs. It also helped to bring former opponents, returnees, as well as the remaining population, together in joint endeavors

The integration of participatory development mechanisms into relief provides a basis for activities later on. In this sense, the difference among relief, rehabilitation, and development reflects more the make up and mandates of the international community than the reality on the ground. Relief is what external actors do as long as they do not know the best course of action to address the root causes of conflict and social exclusion. Once, they know these root causes, they can link relief, rehabilitation, and development in comprehensive long-term programs.[44] Ideally, relief does not exist as a separate stage in rebuilding.

8.2.2   Integration of Functional Sectors

1. Human rights are at the heart of rebuilding. They do not just form high-minded concepts, but also function as practical tools and guidelines. Civil rights, documentation and land entitlements need to be ensured early with relief. Later, legalization of participatory bodies is a crucial precondition for their sustainability. This has the added benefit that it supports economic activities.
2. It has become common knowledge that different sectors, such as education, health, and agriculture are interdependent. However, bringing about such integration has bugged many development and rebuilding efforts. Just like the distinction between

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[44] Notice that this difference goes further than the description of relief as a separate stage that centers on a few immediate basic needs, while rehabilitation and development take a more extensive capacity-building approach towards the conditions for fulfilling these needs in the longer term. This description is

relief, rehabilitation, and development reflects the institutional make-up of international organizations, many international organizations, especially those of the UN system, have mandates in only one sector. Still, at the local level, community members do not live in separate sectors. The area-based, integrated "whole-person" strategy fostered integration of sectors and different organizations.

3. In addition, PRODERE and its successors, developed and used an impressive set of tools   micro-regions, development councils (from the community to the departmental level), ADELs, SILEDs, SILOS, and SIPRODEHs   that allowed local participation and bridged social divides. These tools also functioned as sectoral integration mechanisms within a program. Many, but not all, of these tools survived after the programs.

4. The twin strategy of substantive multi-sectoral investment and setting up a participatory dynamic mutually reinforced each other. PROGRESS only had a small, decentralized cooperation component and FIDHEG did not have a substantive investment component. As a result, it became harder to ensure a broader impact and sustainability for these two programs. Making substantive investment in a participatory manner allows for learning — in other words, capacity building — that strengthens a positive dynamic towards social integration. Former opponents, as well as actors at different levels of society get to know each other. Powerful elites now have to deal with a countervailing power. Decentralization from higher state levels gets bottom-up support.

5. Substantive investments can also be vehicles for learning about crosscutting themes, such as promoting Peace Accords and gender. However, it is often easier to work with themes that can become projects in themselves, such as environment and to some extent human rights. Themes as promoting democratization and promoting Peace Accords are harder to implement and lead to a focus on procedural change. Crosscutting themes are more effectively implemented once they can be piggybacked on substantive investments.

6. Nevertheless, just providing substantive investment alone does not suffice either. Good programs require the participation of the local population to set their own priorities through joint decision-making and execution. Otherwise, one is just throwing money at problems.

7. The participatory nature of the programs takes time. Accepting this is one of the key decisions and contributions that international organizations can make. Learning new skills, overcoming a culture of fear, participatory decision-making and execution, developing a sense of ownership, establishing a multisectoral approach, and experimenting are all necessary. No quick fixes apply and considerable donor flexibility is required.

8. As discussion on PRODERE and PROGRESS showed, it is difficult to determine when the program should go national, or even international. Going national is necessary to ensure sustainability, yet it can also decrease attention to sustainability at the local level. In other words, the activities at national and international level must remain rooted in (local) support to targeted areas. One central issues in the shift in attention in PRODERE, as well as in all of PROGRESS was that they had to go national and international with relatively small budgets.

9. In all four programs, participants hoped for extensions. In many ways, current program duration (two to four years) is too little to foster change. A period of five to seven years, as in PRODERE, is more realistic. In this way, it is possible to train more people and let several "generations" of local leaders gain experience, so that

the participatory dynamic towards social integration and economic growth is not cut short.[45] [46]

Substantive investments, multi-sectoral integration, and participation need each other. Together these elements foster learning and trust in a dynamic that the people can use to further build their own society.[47] This fosters sustainable program outcomes in all three transitions: 1) they bring antagonistic and/or excluded parties together in joint decision-making and resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner; 2) they foster activities for socio-economic rebuilding; and 3) they strengthen democratic modes of governance and decentralization from the bottom up. After PRODERE, all programs could build on a great tool-kit to achieve these transitions towards social integration.

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[45] The opposite is also true. After a period of about seven years a program should be sustainable. If a program is sustainable after this period, the local or national participants should have taken over and the donor should leave. If a program still is not sustainable, it is necessary to clearly understand why it was not sustainable and does not deserve more donor support. Once again, these five to seven years should not be interpreted in a mechanistic way, local preferences and reactions to political change, as well as environmental disasters, can both prolong or shorten the need for a program. After all, rebuilding processes can take more than a generation.

[46] A related factor that should receive more attention is the role of teamwork and continuity in team management, as this facilitates interaction and coordination among organizations at the field level.

[47] Longer programs also prevent the bureaucratic hassle of arranging extensions.