1-1-1992

Conceptions of success and contextual influences in training for rural community development : a case study of the Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) in Guatemala.

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CONCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS AND CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES IN TRAINING FOR RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE TRAINING CENTER FOR SOCIAL PROMOTERS (CAPS) IN GUATEMALA

A Dissertation Presented

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February of 1992

School of Education

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To my Father Félix Sanchez and the

memory of my Mother María Eva Rabanales for

all your efforts, love, and inspiration

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to all CAPS personnel for their cooperation and immense logistical support during the visits to rural villages. My deepest appreciation goes to all Guatemalan community promoters, field extension workers and trainers of CAPS who participated in this study. Their thoughts and sincerity were an inspiration during the writing process.

My profound gratitude to Professor David Kinsey for his intellectual guidance and friendship during my years at CIE and for his insightful suggestions during the writing of this manuscript. I am also grateful to Professors Robert Miltz, Oriol Pi-Sunyer and Sylvia Forman for their sincere advise and support.

I thank my colleagues and friends at ITD, Linda Abrams, Dan Moulton, Alane Paul-Castro, Pedro Rodríguez and Kaye Sherwood, for teaching me about participatory training and for their unconditional support and understanding.

I will always be grateful to my friends Kathy Searle, Mario Acevedo, Don Graybill, Michael Nowakowski, Marta Dent, Doug Passanisi, Kevan Karbasioun, Juan Aulestia and Juanita Campos, for their sincere frienship and invaluable encouragement.

I am mostly and deeply grateful to my wife Mary L. Gruver, for her editorial assistance, patience, support, understanding and love.

ABSTRACT

CONCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS AND CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES IN TRAINING FOR RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE TRAINING CENTER FOR SOCIAL PROMOTERS (CAPS) IN GUATEMALA

FEBRUARY 1992

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This study reviews the literature on training and community development, and examines conceptions of success and contextual factors affecting it in the case of the Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) in Guatemala. It gives primary attention to views of the voluntary community promoters themselves in order to help remedy a prevailing neglect of participant perspectives on training or the development process in the literature.

The case study is based on some program documents, observation of training, visits in 1989 to twenty six rural villages in four regions of Guatemala and in-depth interviews with forty four volunteer community promoters on location. There also were supplementary interviews on the

same issues with five extension workers and two core trainers of CAPS.

The author presents findings in the form of descriptive narratives, quotations from interviews and comparative tables. It is seen, for instance, that promoters' views of success follow a pattern that reflects their position in society, their indigenous or non-indigenous background, and powerful economic, political and religious factors. Non-indigenous ladino promoters view success largely in terms of individual achievement and economic improvement, while indigenous promoters see it more as a process toward communal advancement, cultural survival and self-determination. There are also contrasts between promoter, extension worker and trainer perceptions of what success is, and what influences it.

In conclusion the author draws out implications of this study for trainers, community developers and researchers, and makes recommendations for each. There are also specific recommendations for CAPS, a twenty four year old non-governmental training and rural development organization that is facing internal changes and external challenges posed by hundreds of new NGOs in Guatemala.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

In many rural villages of Guatemala, hundreds of trained community promoters are volunteering part of their daily time to work in development projects. The hope for a better life with dignity in their communities and families appears to drive these promoters to take on a commitment to work hard with others.

Community promoters are trained rural village leaders who work as coordinators of projects of community development at the village level. Often, they work as volunteers for governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in rural community development programs. They are also known as social promoters, voluntary promoters, front-line workers, community development workers, etc. Sometimes, because of their specialization they are called agricultural, health or bilingual promoters.

The history of the community promoters' participation in programs or projects of community development began with the introduction of community development as a strategy for rural development in Latin America in the 1950s. In Guatemala, the adoption in the early 1960s of the strategy of community development and its integration into national

programs of development led to a systematic training of community promoters by governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Community development, as a theory, method and strategy for rural development, began to gain worldwide acceptance in the early fifties. With the sponsorship of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, community development was introduced as a strategy to deal with the problem of underdevelopment, particularly in rural areas. Community self-help and initiative combined with the assistance of central governments would lead, the theory said, to a harmonious and integral development of rural villages. The combined development of individual villages would, in turn, lead to the harmonious development of a country.

The financial and technical support of the United States government through large-scale programs like the Alliance for Progress in the early sixties, helped community development to get established as a credible strategy for rural development. Governmental programs of community development were instituted throughout Latin America, including Guatemala, as a result of that support and influx of resources.

From the beginning it was believed that a key element of success for programs of community development was the training of village-level community promoters. These

promoters were supposed to be catalysts of change at the village level and a bridge of communication between high level officers of community development and community people.

An exact number for Latin America is not known, but thousands of village-level community promoters received in-country training in the theory and techniques of community development during the sixties. Many other higher level community development workers received both in-country and out-of-country training at special programs of U.S. colleges and universities and at centers like CREFAL, a specialized training center of UNESCO established in Mexico. This trend of training human resources for community development continued into the seventies and eighties.

The historical importance of training community promoters lies in the fact that participation in training programs provided village leaders with one of the first opportunities to have access to adult education. Before the emergence of the community development movement formal education systems in Latin America practically ignored the educational needs of adults in rural areas.

Through training seminars, that were part of the strategy of rural community development programs, thousands of village leaders became social promoters, or specialized promoters in bilingual education, agricultural extension, community health care, etc. Their enthusiastic

participation in small or large programs of community development greatly contributed to the early success of this strategy.

But as early as the late sixties people were realizing that the results of community development programs were not matching the high expectations. The isolated successes of many rural communities were diminished by the fact that most rural areas in Latin America were fundamentally unchanged. The structural causes of rural poverty and underdevelopment were still in place.

Community development reached a crisis in the early seventies when its inability to confront the main barriers of rural development was revealed. The belief in the possibility of reaching a harmonious development in rural areas was also severely shaken by the rising social conflicts in most Latin American countries.

The training of rural community promoters also came into question. Several issues emerged around the rationale for training village leaders. One of the important issues was the one-way policy of integrating indigenous communities into the dominant *ladino* culture, the result of which could be ethnocide. The involvement of indigenous bilingual promoters in these policies of acculturation and cultural destruction became a controversial issue among indigenous groups and critics of community development.

Guatemala is a poor country of approximately 10 million people, about 60% of whom are indigenous. It is ruled by an elite class of people who own or control the wealth of the country and who also have the political power in their hands. Military leaders have helped this minority to protect their privileged status. The majority of the population, the middle and poor classes, own very little and suffer the consequences of this unequal distribution of wealth. Most of the poor work for less than one dollar per day or create micro businesses in order to barely survive. Most of the large numbers of people who are very poor in Guatemala are indigenous.

Political struggle and racial strife have punctuated the last 37 years of Guatemalan history since the right wing counterrevolution of 1954. Successive military governments have repressed the cry for justice and better living conditions of the indigenous and poor ladino majority and their popular organizations. According to reports of human rights groups, over a 100,000 Guatemalans (most of them indigenous) have been killed in that struggle for social and economic justice. As is evident in later chapters, the overall context of the Guatemalan society challenged and affected me as a researcher and as a Guatemalan.

In countries like Guatemala there are many contextual influences or social factors that affect in one way or another the degree of success of either the process of

training promoters or the community promotion work at the village level. Some of these contextual influences are culture, language, ethnicity, gender, religion, economics, politics and political violence.

Contextual influences create important issues in the training of rural people. These issues include: how to respect and learn from participants' culture, language and ethnic background, what language to use during training, how to increase women's representation and participation in training programs, what content and training methodology is most appropriate to stimulate participation and mutual learning, and what would be the location and duration of the training program.

Another important issue is the use of training as a tool of political and religious influence. The act of training rural promoters takes place in a social context, and therefore it is subject to the direct and indirect influence of the beliefs of trainers and sponsoring organizations.

The Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) began its operation in the midst of the generalized enthusiasm for community development as a strategy for rural development. Since its inception in 1967 it has been one of the principal training organizations in Guatemala. More than eighteen thousand social promoters of different backgrounds have taken courses through CAPS.

The Problem

Training rural community promoters has been considered a key ingredient for community development as a strategy of rural development in Latin America since the 1950's. Trained village-level community promoters were seen as cultural links and interpreters between villagers and external community development workers. The growth in support for community development in the sixties resulted in increased support for the training of community promoters.

During the sixties and seventies large-scale governmental community development programs were in place in most countries in Latin America. Evaluating and assessing the immediate impact of community development upon rural communities became very important for political and economic reasons. Assessing the impact and level of success in training community promoters was also an important consideration at that time.

In the early literature of community development the views of success in training and community development programs are primarily those of development experts, social scientists, and administrators. Using traditional social science research approaches, such as the survey method and top-down statistical evaluation methods, community development experts communicated their own views of success in training and community development programs through

numerous books, journals, evaluation and conference reports, etc.

The views of the beneficiaries of community development programs, the rural villagers as well as the community promoters, were rarely expressed in literature of that period. The survey responses of villagers became biased statistical figures that were used by community development experts to justify the existence of community development programs.

By the early seventies it was evident that the community development strategy that had set out to significantly transform rural conditions in Latin America had failed in its ultimate objective. Nevertheless, intellectuals and community development experts continued to dominate the theory and practices of community development.

The current literature on issues of success in training and community development is still essentially dominated by the views of development and training experts. Only through a few recent efforts that use alternative research methods (e.g. Campos, 1990; Aulestia, 1990) have the views of grassroots community promoters and leaders been included in this discussion.

The relative absence in the literature of community promoters' conceptions of success in training and community development contributes to an imbalance of perspectives on rural development; it also reinforces processes where

agencies use non-participatory strategies that usually lead to the failure of a community project and to the waste of needed resources. Because community promoters are true practitioners of community development at the village level, and because of their knowledge and awareness of the criteria for success of a community project, their views should always be included in the planning and implementation of community projects and in the larger discussion on rural development.

In order to find new ways of dealing with rural underdevelopment in Latin America there is a need to use alternative research methods with grassroots personnel. Such research should include a commitment to gathering and presenting the views of community promoters on the degree of success of their own training process, the level of success of rural community development programs, and on the effect of contextual influences on training and community promotion.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to provide an alternative perspective on success in training for rural community development through the conceptions of Guatemalan community promoters and experienced field extension workers and trainers. Through a case study of the Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) this study examines the conceptions of success in training and community promotion of Guatemalan

community promoters and selected CAPS personnel. It also inquires into their conceptions of the influence of selected contextual factors on training and community promotion. Overall it represents a response to the need in the Latin American development literature to include the views of community promoters in the rural development discussion.

One sub-purpose of this study is to provide an overview and analysis of the strategies used in Guatemala to train community promoters, and to analyze the issues that arise from the application of these training strategies. Another sub-purpose is to stimulate discussion on the increasingly important role that non-governmental organizations play in the development of rural areas and communities of culturally diverse countries like Guatemala.

Design and Methodology

To fulfill the purpose of this study, two major approaches of inquiry are used: a) a critical review of the literature; and b) a field case study of the Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS), a Guatemalan non-governmental training and development organization.

The critical review of the literature focuses on strategies used in Guatemala and the rest of Latin America to train community promoters for community development. It also deals with the history, issues and challenges of community development as a strategy for rural development

and as a theoretical framework for training social promoters in Guatemala and other Latin American countries.

The field case study of CAPS has two major objectives: a) to gather the conceptions of success, primarily those of the volunteer community promoters but also those of selected personnel; and b) to collect information on the training and rural development strategy, nature, goals, administrative structure and operation, issues and problems of CAPS.

The two main research methods used during the field phase were observation and interview. I used observation in many situations, especially during actual training seminars conducted by CAPS trainers in Guatemala City and during my trips to rural villages. The interview method was used with the primary sources of information: the community promoters and selected CAPS personnel. A flexible interview-guide approach was used most of the time. For some purposes, I chose to use an open-ended interview format. Methodological procedures such as entry, sample strategy and criteria, data gathering process, contextual considerations, logistics, issues and challenges in conducting this field study in Guatemala, are described in Appendix "A".

Assumptions and Limitations

It is assumed in this study that conceptions of success in training and community development are not exclusively owned by community development experts, social scientists, and training specialists. Rather, this study assumes that

the conceptions of success of community promoters are as important and perhaps more important in the efforts to ensure a true process of participatory rural development and authentic social change.

This study also assumes that conceptions of community promoters on how certain contextual influences (i.e. culture, language, ethnicity, gender, economics, politics and religion) affect the success of their own training and that of their village-level community promotion work, are very important in determining the role and variations of each contextual influence on success in training and rural community development programs.

As already noted, this study is based on a case study of one training and rural development organization in Guatemala, and on the conceptions of success of community promoters of the same organization. This limits the degree of generalization that can be made about the level of success in training promoters of other NGOs operating in Guatemala, and about the conceptions of success of community promoters who are not associated with CAPS. It does, however, produce findings and raise issues that may be germane to other cases and should be considered more widely.

Community development as a strategy of rural development in Guatemala, and Latin America at large, is examined in this study insofar as it provides the original theoretical framework to the training strategy of CAPS.

Nevertheless, the purpose of this study is not to do an in-depth examination and analysis on the success of community development as a strategy of rural development in Latin America. Although some conclusions and generalizations have been drawn on community development based on the review of the literature and on data obtained in the field, such conclusions should not be taken as comprehensive.

Organization

In addition to the introductory chapter, the contents of this dissertation are organized as follows.

The early chapters (II to IV) deal with broader issues based on literature and research context encountered in Guatemala. Chapter II deals with community development as the theoretical framework of training community promoters in Latin America and with the issues that surround rural community development and the training of community promoters. Chapter III deals with a historical overview of training community promoters in Guatemala, the types of strategies used to train community promoters, the role of NGOs in training, and the issues and challenges that arise from training promoters. Chapter IV is an account and analysis of the social context encountered upon arrival, the steps taken to do the field research, and the important challenges faced by the researcher.

Chapters V to VIII deal with the case study of CAPS and with the examination of findings in the field. Chapter V is

an account of what CAPS is in terms of nature, goals, organizational and administrative structure. It also includes a description and analysis of the evolution of its training strategy and the characteristics of its promoters. Chapters VI and VII are a presentation and analysis of the actual conceptions of success in training and community promotion, firstly of the community promoters and secondly of some trainers and field extension workers of CAPS. Chapter VIII focuses on how contextual influences and program factors affect training and community promotion. Again the views of community promoters and selected CAPS personnel are presented and analyzed.

Chapter IX provides the conclusions and recommendations. Discussed here are the patterns of conceptions of success in training and community promotion, views on how contextual influences affect success in training, an overall assessment of the training strategy of CAPS, and the implications and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER II

TRAINING FOR RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Training human resources for rural community development has a long history in Latin America. This practice has been part of local, regional or national development plans for at least the last fifty years.

Training human resources did not appear as an isolated method to fight poverty and social inequality in Latin America. It is rather a historical spinoff component of larger processes, "methods of intervention", or approaches to rural development in Latin America.

There are theories of development that deal with the larger issues of why the so-called Third World countries have fallen behind industrialized or developed nations of Europe and North America, and what they need to do to catch up with them. Plenty of literature has been written on these theories. This study will not examine these theories in depth.

However, I will explore the nature and evolution of one strategy that has been used in Latin America to promote or achieve rural development: community development. I will also examine the role that training community promoters plays in the implementation of this strategy.

Since the early fifties, several strategies have been used to confront the problem of rural underdevelopment and to increase the standard of living of rural populations. Gianotten (1987), notes that since the early 1950's the strategies used to foster rural development in Latin America are "1) community development; 2) technological modernization and the theory of diffusion; 3) agrarian reform; 4) cooperativism; 5) green revolution; and 6) appropriate technology" (p. 130).

Of these six approaches, community development was one of the most favored and widely utilized. Together with agrarian reform, cooperativism, and technological modernization, community development was adopted as a viable strategy that had the support of international organizations like the United Nations and powerful governments like the United States. For that reason, it received a lot of funding from international banks and governmental agencies.

In this chapter, I will briefly describe and analyze community development and related issues. This information is relevant because the establishment and existence of CAPS is closely related to the introduction of community development in Guatemala in the early 1960's.

Therefore, I will focus on what the literature has to say about training human resources, particularly community promoters, as part of programs of community development. I will concentrate on clarifying what training community

promoters means, and on describing and analyzing the strategies that have been used to train community promoters for tasks of community development or community organizing. Issues in training community promoters will also be discussed.

Finally, conceptions of success and the role that contextual influences such as culture, language, ethnicity, gender, politics, economics, and religion play in the training of community promoters will be discussed and analyzed.

Community Development: A Strategy for Rural Development

To understand the importance of training community promoters for rural development, it is important to study and understand why, historically, community development was accepted and embraced in Latin America as a method and sometimes a panacea to face and possibly eliminate rural underdevelopment.

Community development as a theory, practice and strategy of rural development had an enormous influence on the regional and national plans for development of Latin American countries since the early 1950's. A lot of faith was put in its value and impact, and a lot of money was spent in promoting it. As a result, a great number of governments and agencies adopted it as the method to fight rural poverty and social and economic inequality.

Numerous governmental and non-governmental agencies were created as a result of the introduction, emergence, and early successes of community development. The Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) of Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala, was one of those new institutions created at the height of community development in the 1960's.

Brief History and Evolution of Community Development

The origins of community development can be traced back to the 1920's when Great Britain was a dominant colonial power in parts of the world such as Asia and Africa. The British were the first to use the term "community development" to describe a policy and method to supposedly help communities in their modernization process. In practice, this policy was a refined method of control and domination. In the 1920's, Bonfiglio (1982) notes that "the British Colonial Office was the one in charge of instigating and stimulating the programs that the regime required to organize a better control over the subjugated populations. Even though other colonial powers resorted to similar policies and techniques, it was the British who applied them the most and who disseminated the term".[1]

In the 1930's the internal movements toward decolonization of nations in Asia and Africa continued to grow. The British increased the use of community

development techniques as a way of continuing its control and domination in spite of the emergence of new nations.

Since the early 1940's, the new independent states started dealing with their problems of modernization and underdevelopment. In India, under the inspiration of Mahatma Ghandi and Rajendra Prasad, an important program of community development was initiated in 1941. It was called "Constructive Program" and it had three key objectives: a) the improvement of the agricultural and industrial production with priority to the increase of the production of food; b) social justice, distribution of land and adequate income; and c) democracy (Bonfiglio, 1982:17).

In 1952, India launched a national project with similar objectives based on the experience of the 1940's. The United Nations studied India's experience of 1952 and adopted it as a model program to be applied in other countries. What it is important to remember, Bonfiglio (1982) says, is that "community development as a technique (or set of techniques) of intervention, has its immediate origin in the crisis of the colonial system of the twentieth century. With decolonization, these techniques are reformulated attempting to overcome the paternalism of the initial programs and from the perspective of independence and national construction" (p. 17).

In the early 1950's, community development was embraced by international development agencies as a method of

intervention in problems of modernization and underdevelopment not only in Asia and Africa but also in Latin America. The United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the specialized agencies of the U.N. such as FAO, UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF and CEPAL, are only a few of the most widely known organizations that since the early 1950's adopted community development as a conceptual framework and method to address the problems of rural underdevelopment in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

The most accepted definition of community development in the fifties and sixties, is provided by the United Nations, which describes community development as "the process whereby the efforts of the people are joined with those of governments to improve the economic, social and cultural situation of communities, so that they may be incorporated into the life of a nation and be equipped to make their full contribution to the nation's progress."

Community Development and Community Organizing

Community organizing first appeared in the field of Social Service in the U.S. in the early 1920's. It emerged as a response to the social contradictions created by the capitalist system in the United States. Social inequalities and manifestations of them such as

discrimination, racism, etc., were rising problems that needed to be addressed.[2]

By the 1950's, both community development and community organizing are recognized and accepted as methods of intervention appropriate to deal with social and economic underdevelopment in rural areas of poor countries and even in wealthy countries like the United States. Community organizing was the preferred method in the U.S. because it developed as a product of the U.S. Social Service.

Community development and community organizing have a separate history and evolution. However, according to Bonfiglio (1982), they share two key common elements. The first common element is the unit of intervention: the community. The basic conception of those who contributed to the creation and promotion of these two methods of intervention was that social problems could be treated at the level of each "community", because it was a cell or unit of the larger society. The implicit assumption is that society is an aggregate of communities and that the solution to social problems can be addressed at the level of each separate community.

The second common element is the fact that both community development and community organizing collect and utilize a variety of techniques, particularly those that result from the predominance of applied social science during the forties and fifties. Techniques such as those

used in statistics, demography, social psychology, group dynamics, leadership utilization, and others, combined to form the group method in social service. Applied anthropology (kinship systems, study of native languages and dialects, etc.), education and adult literacy techniques were also utilized.

The commonality of characteristics between these two methods of intervention made it difficult sometimes to distinguish them, creating some confusion in the early 1950's. To compound the confusion, new terms such as "fundamental education", "community education", "rural development" and others appeared in the development scene. Somehow in Latin America, the term "community development" or "*desarrollo de la comunidad*"[3] was the term that became accepted through the decades.

Community Development and the International Agencies

Since the establishment of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in the late 1940's, community development and community organizing were promoted enthusiastically in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The premise was that policies of international cooperation could secure peace through the advancement of underdeveloped nations.

The United Nations declared the 1950's as the "decade of development" and endorsed community development as its preferred method of intervention. Numerous studies were

commissioned and new specialized agencies were created such as UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, WHO, etc., to deal with specific components of development programs throughout the world. Specialized agencies of the United Nations were created to deal with the particular problems of development in Latin America, two of which are the CEPAL (research, economics) and CREFAL (education and training).

The Organization of American States (OAS), created in 1948, influenced by the U.S. Social Service, introduced and promoted "community organizing" in Latin America through its Panamerican Union secretariat. The OAS (OEA in Spanish) sponsored a series of three regional Latin American seminars in 1950 and 1951. The themes of the seminars were: Social Service, Cooperativism, Planning and Housing, Labor education. But the central focus of those seminars was to define and discuss community organizing.

As a result of the promotion and sponsorship of community development and community organizing, numerous studies appeared in the 1950's and before trying to systematize the theory and principles of these methods. Some of the most influential writers of this decade were T.R. Batten (1957, 1962) who wrote on community development and training of community development workers; Ross Murray (1955) on theory and principles of community organizing; Caroline F. Ware (1952, 1954), wrote books on community organizing that became very important in Latin America due

to the scarcity of literature in Spanish on this method. The OAS and United Nations also contributed numerous materials and documentation on these two methods with their own reports, annals, resolutions (Annals of OAS, 1951; U.N., 1953, 1955).

Community Development from the 1960s to the 1980s

In the early 1960s, the strategy of community development for rural community development enjoyed some successes in Latin America. Programs of national community development appeared in many Latin American countries. In Guatemala, for instance, the de facto government of Colonel Peralta Azurdia created in 1964 the "National Program of Community Development of the Presidency of the Republic". It is with this governmental program that the official history of community development begins in Guatemala.

Programs of community development at the national level were ambitious in the 1960s. They intended to achieve economic and social development in Latin America in a relatively short period of time through a combination of local and international resources. Large-scale community development projects funded by banking institutions like the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, or by governmental institutions like the U.S. Agency for International Development were common during this decade not only in Latin America but also in other poor, less developed nations of Africa and Asia.

The decade of the 1960s was one of enthusiasm and belief in community development as a strategy for rural development. It's been well documented that many countries like Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala[4], Honduras[5], Colombia, Venezuela and others, created national programs of community development with the technical and financial assistance of international organizations.

These national programs of community development had the common characteristics of being all encompassing, "directive", and centralized. Encompassing, because they aimed at tangible and intangible goals of social and economic development at the national level; directive, because they were planned and programmed from the top down; and centralized, because they had a bureaucracy of "experts" who controlled the several phases of each national program.

Another characteristic of national programs of community development in the 1960s was that they contained hundreds of small projects at the community level that were a direct result of planning and programming from the top. These hundreds of infrastructural and agricultural projects were financed mostly with international aid.

Other key elements of the philosophy of community development programs was the concept of "self-help" through active popular participation. To attain popular participation in community development projects, local leaders were trained in the theory and practice of community

development. These local leaders or social promoters[6], were responsible for initiating and coordinating projects at the local level and for being the bridge between the rural village and the regional and/or national coordination of community development.

Community development as a method and strategy of rural development had documented successes in the first half of the 1960s. The round-table sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank in 1966, shows that national programs of community development were achieving relative success in many countries. Based on those early successes of community development in Latin America, there was a lot of enthusiasm and high expectations for what lay ahead.

By the late 1960s, however, community development was losing support and momentum in Latin America, due to the minimal impact that national programs were having on the process of changing traditional social, economic and political structures, and to the substantial withdrawal of funds from the United States. This reality had a negative effect on the credibility of community development as a viable strategy of rural and national development in Latin America.

In 1970, an Inter-American Conference on Community Development was organized in Santiago, Chile, by the Organization of American States to discuss the shortcomings of community development in Latin America in order to find

new conceptualizations. The "Declaration of Santiago" of 1970, concluded among other things that,

> community development should not be conceived only as an instrument at the service of economic growth or as a corrective for the imbalances produced in society by this growth. The particular contribution of community development to over-all development is the incorporation into the latter of the popular sectors by way of a strategy of organized participation in the crucial phases of will, decision, and action that characterize the development process as a dynamic task for the entire society (p. 5).

Community development was redefined by this Inter-American Conference as "a comprehensive process of social, cultural, and economic change; it is, at the same time, a method of achieving mobilization and structural popular participation, for the purpose of providing full satisfaction of economic, social, and cultural needs" (p. 5).

This conference recognized that key structural, administrative, and implementation problems and barriers to community development actually existed. It was suggested that failure to face and overcome these problems would lead to a crisis in national and regional programs of community development. In fact, Bonfiglio (1982) adds that, "the lack of follow-up of these conferences programmed by the OAS, marks the crisis and in a way the rupture of this process, which is also an expression of the crisis of '*desarrollismo*' in general" (p. 11). "Desarrollismo" is a Spanish term used by Latin American critics of community development to

describe an overemphasis on community projects without addressing underlying structural problems.

In the seventies, community development took a backseat to other strategies of rural and national development such as cooperativism, integrated rural development[7], agrarian reform, and even the more radical strategy of armed struggle. Many governments in Latin America continued to have national programs of community development but they had very limited success in confronting or solving the increasing rural poverty.

Throughout the seventies, strategies of armed insurgency and counterinsurgency dominated the political and social scene in many countries of Latin America. A product of internal social and economic contradictions, notable guerrilla movements appeared in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Their aim was to overthrow the people in power and radically change the uneven social and economic structures in each country.[8]

The political violence and repression that resulted from the armed confrontation of the seventies, left little room for a strategy like community development that advocated "harmonious" development and sometimes "political stability"[9] in rural areas. The concept of "conflict"[10] of interests in rural areas may have been more appropriate.

During the worst years of confrontation between the national armies and the guerrillas in the late seventies,

doing any kind of community development work in rural areas of Guatemala or elsewhere was considered a very dangerous activity.[11] In this kind of circumstances, Gondolf (1981) suggests that "practically speaking, community development, in the conventional sense, may have to be suspended until the violence is curtailed" (p. 234).

In the eighties, Latin American countries fell into economic recession, due to external debt[12], economic austerity plans, and a fall in the price of agricultural and industrial (esp. oil) exports. High rates of unemployment, hyperinflation, and across the board impoverishment combined with political violence and armed struggle, painted a desperate picture of life conditions for most people in Latin America.

Given the dire social, economic, and political conditions of most Latin American countries in the eighties, national community development programs were not high on the priority list of governments because they did not have the money to support them. To respond to the needs and demands of rural people, they relied on external aid and on private, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)[13] to take over that responsibility.

This transfer of some development responsibilities from governments to NGOs, led to an increase in the number of these organizations operating in Latin America in the eighties, and to their more visible and expanded role in the

task of rural and national development. Some of these organizations like Catholic Relief Services and Save the Children are well established and have more than forty years of history in Latin America as agencies that distribute food and philanthropic help from the U.S.

Other NGOs were created in the in the seventies as a result of the creation in 1971 of the Inter-American Foundation by the U.S. congress, as a mechanism to channel foreign aid directly to poor people through private entities operating in Latin America. Jordán (1989) points out that in this new policy of channeling resources directly to the poor, "the stated objective is to prevent that resources be diverted from the ultimate beneficiaries. The departure point is then an implicit diagnostic of inefficiency and/or corruption of the state agents of the Latin American countries" (p. 56).

A process of involvement of NGOs in community development that started in the fifties, continued in the sixties and seventies. In the eighties, as their number grew dramatically, NGOs had an important role in rural community development programs in Latin America due mainly to the amount funds and resources that they bring in and channel, and also to the variety of goals and specialization that they have. Sometimes, their alleged ties with local and national governments make their work controversial. The

specific role and examples of NGOs in Guatemala are discussed in Chapter III.

Even though community development lost support in the late sixties, and became less relevant in the seventies and eighties, its theory and practice made some important contributions to the discussion and methodology of rural development in Latin America. Jordán (1989) notes that some of those relevant contributions of community development to rural development are:

> the strengthening of the communities through the development of leaders, who received special training to manage the relations between the community and the external world, and also the action taken to give more independence to the communities in the face of traditional local powers. These aspects were important for the participation of these sectors in posterior actions tied to the processes of agrarian reform and rural development (p. 11).

Gianotten (1987) adds that on community development "many reports, articles, case studies, evaluation and theses have been written, each one contributing some opinions about the reasons and ways to improve even more. Until today, much importance is given to this approach, since it appears to continue to be the most appropriate to achieve integration of marginal population into the current national economic system" (p. 3).

Issues in Community Development

Even before the 1950s, rural underdevelopment became an issue and problem for Third World countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Industrialized nations recognized

that the gap between rich and poor nations was widening, and within those poor nations the sector most affected by this uneven distribution of wealth and resources was the rural sector.

Thus, with the creation of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in the late 1940's, rural areas of Latin America became the focus of countless programs of community development. One of the main arguments for using community development in rural areas was that the gap between the modern urban sector and the 'backward' rural sector of Latin American societies was preventing them from becoming developed nations.

Soon after community development was adopted as a strategy for rural development and incorporated in local, regional and national programs of development in the early 1950s, some issues and criticism started to emerge in the development literature.

One of the first issues in community development was that of "harmony" in rural communities. It was believed that individuals, groups and classes in the communities had strong common interests that would bind them together, and that because of this bond, it was possible to reconcile most conflicts of interest. As illustration, Méndez Guillén (1969) in a description of programs of community development in Honduras, states that "generally these programs are

carried out in small communities where there is unity of interests, needs and aspirations" (p. 87).

The concept of harmony, assumed that due to this already existing lack of conflict in the rural communities, community development programs were going to produce accelerated educational, social and economic positive changes, and that these changes would lead to a 'harmonious development' of communities, and to the 'integration' of the mostly indigenous rural poor into a process of 'nation-building'.

By ignoring the existence or the possibility for existence of social conflict in rural communities, governments, agencies, and community development workers made some serious mistakes. Huizer (1984) comments that because of the prevalence of this harmony model of development, "it was generally accepted in community development circles that working through the established traditional leaders in the villages, generally the better-off, would automatically benefit the whole community. This did not prove to be the case, and the approach was, therefore, called 'betting on the strong'" (p. 14).

Conflict was not one of the principles on which the theory of community development was originally based, and that is why contradictions started to appear in the field when local or outside community development workers found

out that rural communities were not homogeneous social entities.

Huizer (1984), adds that by assuming,

> that harmony of interests existed in the village and ignoring the existing unevenness in the distribution of resources, new inputs were channelled through the top, and remained there to strengthen the top. This could only widen the gap between poor and rich at the village level. Thus the harmony-biased strategy of community development, ironically enhanced and sharpened the potential for conflict (p. 14).

Another issue that is directly related to the issue of conflict vs. harmony, is the issue of the existence of powerful social, economic and political structures at the national and local level. Community development experts, by embracing the principle of harmony and the goal of harmonious development, ignored unjust social and economic structures in Latin America. By negating conflict in rural communities, they also negated the existence of opposing social classes and relations of power between them.

In his analysis of programs of community development in colonial Rhodesia, Africa, Kinloch (1972), concludes that "it has been evident that community development policies operate not *in vacuo* but within the context of a particular power structure, particularly in the case of a colonial society. 'Communities' are political definitions while 'community development' plans are matters of political policy designed to serve a political elite, regardless of general social change" (p. 193). Although Kinloch is not referring to Latin America, his conclusion about the role of

power structures in community development programs in Africa also applies to Latin America.

By the late sixties and early seventies, theorists and practitioners of community development recognized that the unjust social, economic and political structures were indeed crucial barriers to attain rural development. By the time such acknowledgment was made and reconceptualizations[14] of the strategy attempted, considerable faith in community development and financial backing for it had been lost. New strategies like Integrated Rural Development sponsored by the World Bank were being put to the test.

Another issue that appears in the literature of community development since the 1940s, and that becomes an important feature of the discourse of community development through time, is the issue of rural people being apathetic, backward, and resistant to change human beings. The behavior of rural people, especially indigenous, was blamed for the underdevelopment of rural areas in Latin America. This issue was labeled in the literature of development as the "Indian problem".

One of the early theoretical justifications for the use of community development to achieve economic development and to bridge the gap between the rural and urban areas in Latin America was the theory that many Latin countries had social and economic "dual structures"[15] that prevented them from achieving rapid development. The "dual structure" theory

contended that there were two societies in countries of Latin America: the backward, isolated, mostly indian rural structure with its own economy and culture, and the modern, dominating, industrializing urban structure.

The crux of this theory was that the lack of "integration" of the rural society to the modern, urban society was one of the major causes of underdevelopment within a country. Community development was perceived as one of the methods that would help bridge this gap through programs of "integral action" that would eventually eliminate the "barriers of integration" between the urban and rural societies. Transfer and application of superior western science and technology were seen as the tools for assuring a social and economic transformation.

The theory of dual structuralism, also called "culturalism", and its concept of integration[16] advocated the rapid assimilation of indigenous peasants into the "modern" society. The problem with this theory and concepts was that it clearly implied that the culture, language, values, knowledge and technology of "traditional" societies, i.e. indigenous, were inferior to those of the western, modern societies, characterized by a high level of industrialization and possession of advanced technology.

Community development was supposed to be an important method that would greatly contribute to the **acculturation**[17] of indigenous peasants into the new developing society. The

role of the trained social promoter was of vital importance to eliminate resistance to change and to accelerate the success of this scheme of rural development.

In the name of modernity, unity, integration, and progress, national programs of community development may have contributed to the further suffering, destruction and disappearance of indigenous communities and cultures. This process of elimination of indigenous cultures, deliberate or not, is called cultural genocide or **ethnocide.**[18]

In Bonfil (1982), the "Declaración de San José" of 1981, spells out the meaning of ethnocide: "ethnocide means that an ethnic group, collectively or individually, is being denied its right to enjoy, develop and transmit its own culture ant its own language. This implies an extreme form of massive violation of human rights, particularly of the right of ethnic groups to respect of their cultural identity..." (p. 23).

Cultural genocide, perhaps an unwanted consequence of the theory and practice of community development, has its roots in racism. The existence of racism as a social instrument to rationalize domination and exploitation of the indigenous people has been denied for a long time. As far back as the 1940s, Sol Tax was refuting the assertion by Morris Siegel (1941)[19] that a racial problem existed in Guatemala between 'whites' and 'Indians'. He rejects that notion and goes on to say that the problem of the Indians is

a problem of education. Tax (1942) concludes that "it should ever be borne in mind that in Guatemala, at least, the special Indian problem is not, and is not fundamentally thought to be, and must not by analysts be treated as, a race problem" (p. 47).

Racism has been one of the most important instruments of domination and exploitation of indigenous people by their European conquerors and their descendants. By rationalizing the inferiority of the Indians, the dominant groups justified the social and economic exploitation of them. Barre (1982) tells us that "nowadays, racism presents itself in other ways; it's no longer said that the indians are 'inferior', but that they are 'underdeveloped', and that they constitute a 'restraint to development', that they are 'ignorant' and that it is necessary to 'educate them', etc." (p.72).

Ethnic groups have resisted and fought ethnocide in Latin America for five hundred years. In some countries they were almost totally exterminated, and in others like Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico, some groups survived. In the last forty years, indigenous groups have resisted some strategies or programs of rural development as they realized that the main goal of these programs or strategies was to, intentionally or unintentionally, destroy their culture and language.

Ethnic groups in Latin America have formed international alliances to protect themselves from ethnocide. In 1975, in Port Alberni, Canada, the World Council of Indigenous People was created. Within this World Council, there are two Latin American regional councils: the Regional Council of Indigenous Peoples of Central America (CORPI) and the Indian Council of South America (CISA), created in 1977 and 1980 respectively.[20]

To counteract ethnocide, these international indigenous councils have proposed a new way of looking at development in Latin America: **ethnodevelopment.** Bonfil (1982) defines ethnodevelopment as the "autonomous ability of a culturally differentiated society to guide its own development" (p. 142). The "Declaración de San José" of 1981, defines ethnodevelopment as "the broadening and consolidation of the bounds of own culture, through the strengthening of the autonomous ability of decision of a culturally differentiated society to guide its own development and the exercise of self-determination..." (Bonfil, 1982:24).

The quest for autonomy, decision-making power, and self-determination characteristic of the ethnodevelopment proposal should not be interpreted as an aspiration for isolation and reductionism. In this respect, Barre (1982) clarifies that, "the notion of ethnodevelopment should not be conceived as reductionist, but instead as open to the exterior: that is to say, a self-centered ethnic development

but open to other groups of society, Indians and non-Indians, according to an integral and global development within a plurinational state" (p. 76).

Another issue that appears in the literature of community development is the role of politics and political violence in community development and vice versa. This issue is abundantly discussed in the general development literature, and to some extent in the community development literature.

The important role and involvement of the government in community development was emphasized from the inception and adoption of this strategy of rural development in the early fifties. The problem was that many Latin American countries, including Cuba, had authoritarian governments. The United Nations and the Organization of American States could only hope that these governments would act in good faith when adopting community development and community organizing as strategies to help the rural poor. But the only country that was radically changed was Cuba through the armed revolution of 1959.

In the early sixties, the United States committed a great amount of resources to community development through the Alliance for Progress and Peace Corps programs. Latin American governments, dominated by the military, adopted national programs of community development. The results,

encouraging in the beginning, were frustrating and disappointing by the end of this decade.

The military governments of the sixties and seventies in Latin America did not represent the interests of the peasantry but those of the elite classes and themselves. Therefore, it was an unfounded expectation that they would use community development as a strategy to gradually and "harmoniously" transform the social and economic structures that oppressed the peasantry. It cannot be denied that some of the money[21] was invested in infrastructure projects at the local level: schools, health posts, roads, potable water, electricity, sanitation, literacy projects, etc., but these projects rarely addressed the structural problems of the rural areas and of the countries at large. They were just a palliative, not real change.

When the leadership of the rural poor demanded more substantial changes such as land reform, suppression and repression followed. The reality of confrontation and struggle that has taken place from the late sixties on in Latin America, has replaced any illusion of the possibility of development with harmony.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to bring back a question that was asked in the introduction to the report of the round-table on community development that took place in Mexico City in 1966 with the sponsorship of the Inter-American Foundation, and that might still be valid today:

"Can Community Development be the instrument for structural transformation and social change in Latin America, or should it be used only as a substitute to check the urge for change, and carry out social welfare extension services without definitely solving the structural problems that imprison marginal populations and zones?". Most Latin American governments, history shows, chose the latter alternative.

Most of the critique to community development as a strategy for rural development in Latin America comes from the fact that in practice it had a reformist character (Mayo, 1975; Bonfiglio, 1982; Gianotten, 1987; Plaza, 1986), and biased ideological content (Ammann,1980; Riofrío, 1980).

Training Community Promoters for RCD

As we mentioned before, community development was among the strategies used since the 1950s to address the problem of rural poverty in Latin America. It was said from the beginning that the success of rural community development required the active participation and initiative of rural people. How to convince rural people to trust community development programs and to actively participate in their own development was one of the main challenges. This is where the concept of the "village worker", "community development worker" or "social promoter" comes in.

Batten (1962), notes that already in the early 1950s, governments with institutionalized programs of community development such as India, Pakistan, Ghana and West Bengal were preoccupied with their own conceptions about the role that village workers had to play in community development. They wanted a type of village worker that had desire, enthusiasm, ability to adapt and improvise, and one who "must be able to get along with people and must have 'the common touch'".[22]

Batten (1962), argues that desire, enthusiasm, liking and respecting people, and being genuinely interested in helping others is not enough. He says that,

> The worker also needs a wide range of knowledge and skills. He has to be able to stimulate, educate, inform, and convince people who may initially be apathetic or skeptical. He has to be able to win the confidence of local leaders, heal their rivalries, and get them to work together for the common good. He has to be skilled in working with groups and with whole communities. And to succeed in all this he needs to know a great deal about each community in which he works--customs and beliefs, attitudes and relationships, local needs and local material resources. (p. 5)

On the importance of the relationship between community development and the community worker, Batten (1962) concludes that "community development work is primarily concerned with helping people where they live, and it depends for its success on the worker winning the people's confidence and willing co-operation" (p. 13).

In 1955, the United Nations concludes that one of the fundamental elements of community development is "the

identification, motivation and training of local leaders".[23] National programs of community development since then have included the training of local leaders as an essential objective of such programs.

It seems important to clarify at this point that the early literature of community development in the fifties and sixties referred to community promoters with different terms. It appears that the term **community development worker** was the most generally used to describe all types of workers involved in community development tasks regardless of their position, education, salary, responsibilities, etc.

There were different types of community development workers: the senior planning and supervisory community development organizers, the community development officers, and the village workers.[24] The first two were high-level, salaried officials in community development programs; the village workers were assistants in the field who, among other things, "should have knowledge of what goes on in the minds of village people and of the village society".

Batten (1962), further distinguishes two types of village level workers, the "paid workers" and the "non-professional or voluntary workers". The paid workers were salaried, village-level rural development workers who were at the bottom of a hierarchical structure typical of the community development programs of the fifties and sixties. The non-professional or voluntary workers were people (local

authorities, teachers, spiritual leaders, etc.) from the rural community with leadership qualities, who donated time and labor to community projects.

In the sixties, two terms were used extensively to name community development workers at the village level: the extension worker, and the social promoter. The extension worker was the salaried worker who came from the outside to work directly with social promoters in rural communities. Social promoters were trained villagers with leadership qualities who worked as volunteers in community projects and in close coordination with the extension worker. In Mexico, social promoters were also called "cultural promoters".

In the seventies and eighties, a great number of terms were created to describe promoters working at village level. Names such as front-line worker, change agent, community health worker/promoter, facilitator (out of the nonformal education field), monitors, auxiliaries, aides, animateurs[25], etc., became popular in different academic and practical fields. To ease the confusion of so many descriptive terms, or maybe to compound it more, the all inclusive "paraprofessional" term was created and used during these two decades (Brekelbaum, 1984).

It is important to clarify that throughout this dissertation I chose to use the term **community promoter** to describe a trained person, indigenous or not, who is voluntarily committed to working with his/her rural

community in programs of development that are born preferably within the community, and which are created to benefit most or all members of the community.

The ideal community promoter is a person who, through appropriate training or self-training, has knowledge and consciousness about the social, economic and political conditions that prevent her community from reaching its full development potential. The ideal community promoter is also a person who possesses leadership qualities and skill to lead his community through a process of consciousness raising, education, critical dialogue, and action about the social and economic conditions in which they live.

Strategies for Training Community Promoters

As a strategy that from the beginning adopted the principles of popular participation and mobilization, local initiative, and self-help efforts combined with those of the government, community development needed local leaders who would work as persons coordinating and guiding efforts of development at the village level. Through appropriate training, local leaders became community promoters.

There was consensus among the early proponents of community development that for community promoters to have the knowledge and skills required to be effective in promoting change and development, and to perform according to what was expected of them, they had to receive training

in the concepts, goals and techniques of community development.

In the context of the history of community development in Latin America in the last four decades, at least three main strategies for training community promoters can be identified: a) the governmental; b) the international agency-based; and c) the non-governmental.

The governmental strategy for training community promoters in Latin America followed guidelines suggested by the United Nations. With the assistance of international agencies like FAO, CREFAL, ILO, WHO, etc., governments concentrated on out-of-country or in-country training of high-level development officers who, in turn, would train village-level community promoters.

Within this governmental strategy of promoter training, community promoters became workers who had to produce quick results at the village level to satisfy political goals associated with the interpretation that each government had of community development. The ministries of health, agriculture, and education in each country were very influential in training peasants to become health promoters, agricultural extension promoters, adult education and bilingual promoters. Since these specialized community promoters were part of governmental programs of community development they were usually paid but at low wages.

An early emphasis of governmental programs of community development, especially in countries with large indigenous populations (e.g. Andean countries, Guatemala, Mexico), was to address the "Indian problem". Following the culturalist theory, governments trained indigenous promoters to be the bridge between the "archaic" and the "modern" societies, and the ones in charge of promoting integration and acculturation.

There are examples in the literature about these governmental programs in Latin America such as in Perú (Martínez, 1965); Guatemala (Stahl, 1964); México (Aguirre, 1979); Puerto Rico (Wale and Isales, 1964); Colombia (Cape, 1962), which describe the training, role and responsibilities of the community promoter in such programs.

In Perú for instance, 629 indigenous "social promoters" were "formed" or trained between 1957 and 1963, as part of a National Plan of Integration of the Aborigine Population (PNIPA), which was carried out in the Aymara and Quechua communities of Puno, Perú (Martínez, 1965:245). The social promoter in these Peruvian programs was defined by Martínez (1965) as "the element selected by his own community to receive a training seminar in general activities of promotion, and who would later serve as liaison between the indigenous and mestizo worlds...; his objective is to serve as catalyst of spontaneous or induced acculturation processes..." (p. 249).

In México, indigenous community promoters were called "cultural promoters" who worked within a special program of "coordinating centers". Aguirre (1979), describes the role of cultural promoters in México this way:

> These promoters, bilingual Indians from the communities where they work, are trained in professional skills in order to act as auxiliaries to high level technical staffs. Upon their shoulders falls the responsibility for translating proposed innovations in education, health, agriculture, livestock breeding, business organization, legal defense, urbanization, and recreation in terms of the community's cultural values (p. 8).

In Guatemala, there were governmental programs in the sixties and seventies with the objective of integrating and aculturating indigenous people. The Ministry of Education through the office of "Socio Educativo Rural" launched a National Program of *Castellanización*[26], which utilized indigenous promoters called "bilingual promoters". Within this educational program that targeted the main indigenous regions in Guatemala, bilingual promoters were responsible for three tasks: "teach children to read and write in Spanish, literacy programs for adults, and activities of social promotion in the community" (Juárez and Alfaro, 1972).

The training of community promoters within the governmental strategy of community development, reflects the secondary role that they had in those programs. Their training was usually conducted using traditional methods of training such as "charlas" (lectures) given by the

governmental experts in each field (Martínez, 1965: 251). This non-participatory method of training community promoters only served to reinforce the top-down structure of these governmental programs in the sixties.

In the seventies and eighties, with the emergence of new training methodologies centered around the trainee or participant, the governmental training strategy of community promoters adapted to these new influences, with the help of NGOs that specialized in training.

The second main training strategy of community promoters in Latin America in the last forty years is the **international agency-based strategy.** In the last forty years, international agencies like the United Nations, Organization of American States, International Labor Organization, Inter-American Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development, Ford Foundation, etc., have supported and sometimes implemented the training of Latin American community promoters as well as high level officers of community development programs.

The United Nations has been instrumental in promoting and funding training programs through its specialized organisms: UNESCO, CREFAL, WHO, FAO, UNICEF. Since 1951, the Regional Center for Fundamental Education of Latin America (CREFAL), a specialized regional center of UNESCO based originally in México, has been preparing thousands of leaders and technicians in adult education, fundamental

education and community development (Bonfiglio, 1982). The FAO was instrumental in promoting the concept of "agricultural extension", and the World Health Organization (WHO) has been involved in supporting programs related to the training of community health workers in Latin America.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has been involved in training community promoters and high-level community development officers since at least the 1960s. USAID has supported in-country and out-of-country training programs of Latin American community promoters, sometimes in cooperation with NGOs that specialize in training.

In the early eighties, the U.S. congress, based on a report on Central America of the so-called "Kissinger Commission", approved funds for training scholarships to be given to "disadvantaged" Central Americans. Since approximately 1985, USAID has funded and coordinated the out-of-country training of thousands of Central American community development promoters, health promoters, small business owners, etc., through the Central American Peace Scholarships program.

Later on, the Andean Peace Scholarships program was established in the Andean countries (Ecuador, Perú, Bolivia, Colombia) to benefit almost the same type of participants, and with similar training objectives. Some members of the formally educated middle class in Central America and the

Andean countries, and sometimes even the upper class, have also benefitted from these USAID scholarships through long-term attendance of undergraduate and graduate programs in U.S. colleges and universities.

The main characteristic of the training strategy of international agencies in the sixties and seventies, is that they favored the "training of trainers" strategy (i.e. training high-level officers of community development programs) over the training of village-based community promoters. This attitude and action contributed to what was later known as the "directive approach" in community development programs (Batten, 1974; Long and Winder, 1981).

The third strategy for training community promoters is the **non-governmental strategy**. It pertains to all the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are involved in training for community development. These non-governmental organizations were also called until recently private voluntary organizations (PVOs).[27] There are several types of non-governmental organizations, and that is why their strategy of training community promoters can be sub-divided into three main categories that reflect such variety: a) university-based; b) church-based; and c) "independent".

The university-based NGO has a strategy of training community promoters influenced by the association that the organization has with the host university. Examples of this strategy are: the CAPS training organization in Guatemala,

associated with the private Universidad Rafael Landívar; the Peasant Training Center (CCC) of the Universidad de Ayacucho in Perú (de Wit and Gianotten, 1980); the Training Program of Popular Educators of the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia[28]; the Santo Domingo Integrated Development of the University of Piura, Perú (Zabala, 1982), etc.

In the seventies, some departments of American universities worked as NGOs in Latin America during the emergence of the theory and practice of nonformal education. An example is the Center for International Education (CIE) of the University of Massachusetts, which participated in a long-term adult education project in Ecuador that trained a new type of adult education and community development promoter called "the facilitator" (CIE, 1975).

The training provided by university-based NGOs to community promoters varies according to the goals, history, commitment and orientation of the organization, and to the purpose of the training itself. The theory of "university extension" (Bralich, 1986; Araujo, 1985; Shannon and Schoenfeld, 1965; Anaya, 1975) might have also influenced the participation of private and public universities in community development and rural development activities in general.

The church-based NGOs are the oldest type of NGO working in Latin America. The Catholic church and Evangelical churches of different denominations have been

involved in training different kinds of community promoters. In the seventies, when the theory of liberation theology and education for consciousness became popular, NGOs associated with the Catholic church, like the Maryknoll Association, became involved in the training of health promoters in Guatemala and other countries.

Large, church-based NGOs like Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the evangelical Central American Mission (CAM International) and the also evangelical World Vision operate in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and have their own training programs of community promoters. The community promoters of evangelical NGOs are usually called "voluntary promoters".

Independent NGOs are those that are neither influenced by religion nor by the association with a university. There are hundreds and hundreds of these NGOs in Latin America. Of them, not all are involved in training community promoters. The ones that are, usually specialize in training certain type of community promoter. World Neighbors, for instance, is an NGO that trains agricultural extension promoters (Bunch, 1982); World Education trains women's groups leaders (*animadoras*) in Brazil and other countries (Hunter, 1985); OEF International works primarily with women's groups and trains women community promoters in Guatemala and several other Central American and South American countries.

In the field of community or primary health care, we can find very good examples of NGOs involved in the training of a special kind of community promoter: the health promoter. Fundacao Esperanca in Brazil trained community health workers or "paramedics" in the eighties in the Amazon region (Offenheiser, 1986); The Behrhorst Clinic in Guatemala, an outcome of the Chimaltenango Development Project (Behrhorst, 1975), has trained more than one hundred indigenous health promoters in the Cackchiquel area of Chimaltenango, with the objective of making medical care more affordable and appropriate to the needs of local people. In 1980, it was renamed the Behrhorst Development Foundation because it expanded its efforts "to raise living standards by developing community resources and thereby indirectly improving health" (Horton, 1987).

One of the most outstanding examples of an NGO involved in community health care is that of Project Piaxtla initiated by David Werner in Ajoya, Mexico in 1964. The project became famous internationally with the publication by the Hesperian Foundation of "Where There Is No Doctor" in 1973, a villager's medical handbook that is now in print in forty languages. The work of Project Piaxtla is important because its successes and challenges in training community health promoters in Mexico have been well documented. Project Piaxtla has been a source of information and discussion on the larger social issues surrounding the

training of health promoters in Mexico and elsewhere (Werner and Bower, 1984; Werner, 1983, 1982, 1977, 1976).

One important feature of some independent NGOs is that since the sixties they have experimented with different methodologies to train community promoters of different kinds. With the demystification of formal schooling methods in the seventies, and with the acceptance of the concepts of popular participation and participatory development, a number of NGOs involved in training community promoters gradually changed their training methodology from a trainer-centered to a more participant-centered methodology that would take into account the learning needs of training participants, and would apply the principles of adult learning, popular education, and even participatory research.

Independent and progressive NGOs like Project Piaxtla, World Education, OEF International, CAPS and others, now use the theory, methods and techniques of **participatory training** (Srinivasan, 1990). Participatory training has proven to be more effective when working with rural people because it recognizes the knowledge and skills that they have. Through techniques that promote open discussions and critical thinking, it provides them with the opportunity to increase their self-respect, leadership skills, and their level of critical consciousness.

Issues in Training Community Promoters

There are several issues that arise from the literature on the practice of training community promoters for rural community development in Latin America. Some of them relate to whether or not the nature and purpose of the sponsoring training organization has an influence in the process, content and outcomes of training community promoters.

Other issues relate to the role of methodology, follow-up training, participation selection, training promoters vis-a-vie the social, economic and political structures, the role of some important contextual influences (culture, language, ethnicity, gender, religion, economics, politics, etc.) in training community promoters, and the issue of whether training is a neutral activity or not.

Influence of Nature and Purpose of Sponsoring Organization

The first issue in regard to training promoters for rural community development is whether the nature and purpose of the sponsoring organization affects the type of training that promoters receive. As we already stated, organizations that sponsor training can be governmental, non-governmental, or intergovernmental. The question is, do sponsoring organizations have a particular agenda when training community promoters?

In the case of the governmental strategy, the early literature regarding the training of community promoters shows that using local people as village-level promoters in

national programs of community development was a priority. The theory was that they were best suited to be catalysts in a "bottom up" process of change and community development. But it was later found out that the bureaucratic nature of national programs of community development did not allowed a bottom up process of rural development, and instead a "top down", "directive" approach was more prevalent (Taylor, 1967; Batten, 1974; Long and Winder, 1981).

The nature and purpose of international agencies like the United Nations, ILO, OAS, Inter-American Foundation, USAID, World Bank, etc., have also influenced the training of community promoters for rural community development in Latin America. Sometimes, because they have provided the funds for overall projects of rural development, they have influenced decision-making in terms of what kind of training is to be provided to local people.

In the case of NGOs, each of them has a peculiar nature and purpose that inevitably influences the training process. Each training NGO has its own overt and/or hidden agenda when it comes to training community promoters. Also, their training agenda may be ideologically aligned with the government, or it may be completely separate.

Selection of Participants

This is an important issue in training. Within the context of a community development program, **who** selects the

candidates to be participants in a training program for community promoters: the community, the agency, or both?

This is a controversial issue that has a lot do with the issue discussed immediately above, and with the training methodology chosen to implement the training. If the organization believes in a participatory training methodology, then it would allow for the community's exclusive selection of participants using their own criteria, or perhaps following a selection criteria suggested by the agency. If participatory training is not wanted, or not appropriate for the situation, then the agency might select training participants (Brekelbaum, 1984).

Certainly, appropriate or inappropriate selection of participants has a lot to do with the success or failure of a training program. If bad selection occurs, there is a waste of time and resources for the training organization, and also participant frustration and disappointment with the training.

Training Community Promoters and the Power Structures

This an important issue that relates to the fact that the task of training promoters takes place within the larger social, economic, and political power structures of a country. If these structures are unjust and oppressive to rural people, changing them becomes the goal and challenge

of a progressive NGO. The trained community promoters also face the same challenge.

In several Latin American countries where political violence and social polarization has existed as a result of gross disparities in the distribution of wealth, the work of community promoters who try to change that reality becomes a dangerous one. Often, they become targets of violence, just because they are seen as the "germ of social change" (Werner, 1977).

Training Community Promoters, a Neutral Activity?

Based on what has been discussed in the above sections about the varied nature and purpose of training and development organizations, and about the influence that they exert on participant selection, content and methodology of training; and based on the reality of pervasive social and economic, and political structures, which are, in most cases, oppressive rather than supportive of the work of NGOs and community promoters, it is important to ask: is training a neutral activity?

The act of training human resources happens within a social context and is carried out by and for human beings who possess values, beliefs, ideology, knowledge, skills, emotions, attitudes, etc. Training, then, because of its human and social nature, is not a neutral activity. Training is an intentional educational activity, and because of its educational character, it is also a political act

(Freire, 1985).[29] But whether training serves the interests of the poor or those of the dominant class, depends primarily on who does and funds training, what methodology and content is chosen, and especially, what is the purpose of training.

The Promoters' Conceptions of Success in Training

From the very start of the introduction and adoption of community development as a strategy of community development in Latin America, it was stressed that the role of the village-level worker or community promoter was very central to the success of the whole strategy. Throughout the last four decades, the history and evolution of community development in Latin America has been well documented in books, journals, conference reports, field reports, and in evaluations and assessments done by sponsoring governmental, non-governmental, and international agencies. The period of the sixties and seventies seems to be very prolific in that respect (Bonfiglio, 1982).

The vast majority of that body of literature was written by professionals or scientists, experts and consultants of diverse fields: sociologists, economists, political scientists, anthropologists, educators, psychologists, agriculturalists, training specialists, financial experts, etc. The literature that they produced reflects their views and conceptions on the success, challenges, changes, options, methods, outcomes, mistakes

and failures of community development. Seldom, in this literature written by professionals, we can find an accurate account of the opinions and views of the community promoters.

The community promoter's voice and views on community development and training is largely missing in that literature, except perhaps, and only indirectly, in project evaluation and impact assessment reports written by expert consultants working for funding or sponsoring organizations. It is only in the last few years, with the emergence of qualitative research and related disciplines such as action and participatory research, participatory evaluation, and ethnography, that the views, conceptions and knowledge of the poor peasantry have been acknowledged, recorded and validated.

The use and application of these disciplines and of popular education in the rural Latin American context, has produced a new body of literature that is based on the experiences, knowledge, life and views of rural people themselves. One of the objectives is to try to balance the process of creation of knowledge[30]: to give as much importance and place to the views, experience, and analysis of community promoters ("organic" intellectuals), as that given to the views of "traditional" intellectuals.

What follows is an account of what I found in this limited literature about the community promoters'

conceptions of success on community development and their own particular training, and on the contextual influences that affect their training and their community promotion work.

It is difficult to find examples in the literature where the views of community promoters are stated explicitly in relation to their conceptions of success or their views on contextual influences in training and community promotion. In an article written by Tandon (1979) he describes in detail the responses of villagers during a training session for "village peer groups", in which issues of organization, power relations, decision-making process, strategies for confronting problems, etc., were discussed.

Morgan (1986) describes the life of a peasant leader who is a former participant of a CAPS training program, and as of 1986, the president of a large federation of coffee production cooperatives called FEDECOCAGUA. In 1964, he received a six-week leadership training course with CAPS in Guatemala City. This is what Juan had to say about the course: "'CAPS changed my life', says Juan more than two decades later. 'In those six weeks, I learned whole new ways of thinking. I learned the value of education...of love for your community...of caring for your fellow men... CAPS awakened my awareness of the social conscience'" (p. 32).

Campos (1990) used the participatory evaluation theory and method to gather and present the views of Guatemalan

community development workers who attended short-term training programs in community development during the Spring of 1987 in Arizona, United States. These programs were designed and delivered by the Institute for Training and Development (ITD), a private, non-profit training organization. The post-training experiences of community promoters on the success of training upon their return to Guatemala are examined through their detailed personal accounts. Their views on contextual influences that affect the promoters' work, such as workplace situations, community response to new ideas, ethnic and gender relations, etc., are also examined through the words of the community promoters themselves.

Aulestia (1990) documents and examines the experiences of indigenous people in the formal and informal education system of the Andean Region of Ecuador. In this study, through in-depth interviews, themes of subordination and resistance emerged from the actual voices of indigenous people.

Unfortunately, studies like that of Campos and Aulestia are not common in the available literature. Therefore, by doing a study that examines the views of Guatemalan community promoters on success and contextual influences in training for community development, I hope to make a contribution to this scarce development literature that documents the "view from below".

Summary

Community development was introduced in Latin America as a theory, method and strategy of rural development in the fifties. With the sponsorship of the United Nations and other international organizations, Latin American countries adopted community development as a key strategy in their national programs of rural development. This adoption was particularly strong in the early sixties when the United States government fully supported community development through the Peace Corps and Alliance for Progress programs.

One of the important elements for its success was supposed to be the training of human resources at all levels, particularly of village leaders. Training community promoters became a goal of programs of community development in all countries. The idea was that training local leaders would facilitate the process of "integrating" the rural and backward peasantry into the more advanced urban culture and society. The trained community promoter would be like a bridge between both cultures.

The key principles of community development as a strategy of rural development in Latin America and in other Third World regions, was that through self-help efforts of rural communities and people, combined with the technical expertise and material help provided by government agencies, it was possible to achieve a process of "harmonious" development in each country.

The revolutionary armed movements of the late sixties and especially the seventies in many Latin American countries, exposed the shortcomings of this and other strategies of rural development. Community development failed to recognize in its early conceptualization, that established social, economic and political power structures in each country constitute a great barrier to any strategy of rural development, even today.

The historical evolution of the strategy of community development and the several issues that emerge from the implementation of it in Latin America are examined in this chapter. In addition, since the training of human resources was a main part of the strategy of community development, the types of strategies to train community promoters are examined, as well as the conceptions of success in training of community promoters, and the issues that emerge from training village leaders.

Endnotes

1. Bonfiglio (1982), goes on to say that "the initial programs of community development implemented by the British Colonial Office should not be considered as mere concessions -even though they had some of that-, but as basically strategies of domination and of state control of the social contradictions, since on the one hand they attempted to contain the liberating tendencies of the colonies, and on the other to redefine the colonial ties.." p. 17.

2. Robert Lane (1939), Arthur Dunham (1940, 1945), Mcmillen (1945), Newstetter (1947) and McNeil (1951) were, among others, important contributors to the theory of community organizing.

3. In Brazil, where the official language is portuguese not Spanish, community development translated into *"desenvolvimento de comunidade"*.

4. See Stahl, Elisa de. Programa Integral de Desarrollo de la Comunidad para Guatemala. Secretaría de Bienestar Social, Guatemala, 1964.

5. See Méndez Guillén, Napoleón. El Desarrollo de la Comunidad. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras. 1969.

6. In the 1960s, social promoters were also called village workers, community development workers, rural extension workers, etc.

7. For a description of this strategy or rural development sponsored mainly by the World Bank, see Jordan, Fausto. Comp. La Economía Campesina: Crisis, Reactivación y Desarrollo. San José, Costa Rica, 1989. pp. 20-27.

8. Of all the insurgency movements of the seventies, only the Sandinista guerrilla movement in Nicaragua was successful in materializing a revolution in 1979. Against tremendous odds, including an economic embargo and political pressure from the U.S. Reagan administration during the eighties, it survived for slightly more than ten years. In 1990, Daniel Ortega, the incumbent president and candidate of the FSLN party was defeated by Violeta Chamorro of the coalition of opposition parties UNO, in the first open presidential elections since 1979. The Sandinista Revolution, nonetheless, made notable contributions to the Nicaraguan society in the aspects of education, health, and agrarian reform.

9. See article by A. M. Phillips, "The Contribution of Community Development to Political Stability", Community Development Journal, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1969. p. 186-189.

10. For a better understanding of what the concept of "conflict" means in community development, see Gerrit Huizer's article "Harmony vs. Confrontation", in Development: Seeds of Change, No. 2, 1984. Pp. 14-17.

11. See Ed Gondolf, "Community Development amidst Political Violence. Lessons from Guatemala", in Community Development Journal, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1981. pp. 228-236.

12. For a discussion on the issue of debt and development, see H. J. Wiarda. Latin America at the Crossroads: Debt, Development and the Future. (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1987).

13. For a discussion on the roles of NGOs in development, see Paul Streeten, "The Contribution of Non-governmental Organizations to Development", in Development: Seeds of Change, No. 4, 1987. pp. 92-95; also, see FAO/FFHC, "NGOs in Latin America: their contribution to participatory democracy", in Development: Seeds of Change, No. 4, 1987. pp. 100-105.

14. Some of the most important reconceptualizers of social work and community development were Herman Kruse, Un Servicio Social Comprometido con el Desarrollo. 1969; Natalio Kisnerman, Práctica Social en el Medio Rural. 1976; and Ezequiel Ander-Egg, Metodología y Práctica del Desarrollo de la Comunidad, 1976, and El Servicio Social: Del Paternalismo a la Conciencia Social, 1970.

15. See Aguirre Beltrán, Gonzalo. "Community Development", in Community Development Theory and Practice, Inter-American Development Bank, 1966, pp. 1-9; see also Aguirre Beltran, Gonzalo. Regions of Refuge, The Society for Applied Anthropology, Monograph No. 12, 1979.

16. Dual structuralism and the concepts of "integration" and "integral action" were born mainly within the anthropological thought of the fifties and sixties.

17. Beltrán (1957) defines acculturation as "the process of change which emerges from contact between groups with different cultures and is characterized by the continuous conflict between opposing life styles tending toward total identity with each other". However, when the integrationist policy is the conception of just one of the two cultures, the dominant one, then integration becomes

a "one-way" process, of which the result is not acculturation but ethnocide.

18. Stavenhagen (1987) explains that "ethnocide, entails two principal aspects; one is economic and the other is cultural. Economic ethnocide is embedded in the theory and practice of development. It means that all pre-modern forms of economic organization must necessarily disappear to make way for either private or multinational capitalism or state-planned socialism or mixes thereof. Cultural ethnocide (perhaps a tautology) means that all sub-national ethnic units must disappear to make way for the over-arching nation-state, the Behemoth of our times" (p. 74).

19. See Morris Siegel, "Resistances to Culture Change in Western Guatemala", Sociology and Social Research, 25:5, pp. 414-430, May-June, 1941.

20. For an in-depth view of the indigenous resistance movement in Ecuador see Aulestia (1990) From the Voices of the Oppressed: Cultural and Educational Experiences of Indigenous People in the Andean Region of Ecuador. Unpublished dissertation. University of Massachusetts.

21. Most of the money was invested in large infrastructure projects such as ports, airports, highways, hydroelectric plants, etc., that would benefit mostly the economically rich in the long run.

22. Du Sautoy, P., Community Development in Ghana, 1958. p. 160, quoted in Batten, T.R. , Training for Community Development, 1962, p. 4.

23. Bonfiglio, G., Desarrollo de la Comunidad y Trabajo Social. 1982, p. 39.

24. See Robert Leaper, "Training--An Evaluation", in Community Development Bulletin, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1961.

25. See Ben Mady Cisse, "Animation Rurale, Sénégal's road to development", in Community Development Bulletin, Vol. XV, No. 2, 1964. pp. 42-51.

26. The goal of the program of "Castellanización" in Guatemala was to teach children to read and write not in their native language but in Spanish or Castillian, with the ultimate goal of accelerating their acculturation to the "national culture" (the dominant 'ladino' culture, that is). Literacy programs for indigenous adults had the same objective.

27. See Gorman, R., Private Voluntary Organizations as Agents of Development, 1984.

28. See Reflexiones Pedagógicas, No. 9, 1984. p. 91.

29. For Freire (1985), "education is a political act, whether at the university, high school, primary school, or adult literacy classroom. Why? Because the very nature of education has the inherent qualities to be political, as indeed politics has educational aspects. In other words, an educational act has a political nature and a political act has an educational nature" (p. 188).

30. Hall (1981) argues that knowledge has become a "commodity" produced mainly in the universities of the First World, using primarily the survey method, and reflecting the views of intellectuals there, and not the views of Third World people. He suggests that using participatory research the process of creation of knowledge can be shifted to the poor. He also states that "knowledge is essentially a social product" and concludes that in the process of creating knowledge it is important to ask "**who** produces knowledge and with **what** purpose" (p. 66).

CHAPTER III

TRAINING COMMUNITY PROMOTERS FOR RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN GUATEMALA: AN OVERVIEW

My first memory of community development efforts in Guatemala goes back to the early seventies when I was a high school student studying to become a primary school teacher.[1] I participated in one of the "programs of development" of the Arana administration. As a student of one of the teacher training schools in Guatemala, I was required to participate in a new national literacy campaign launched by the Ministry of Education. Between 1971 and 1973, I taught reading and writing to a number of illiterate people from outlying areas of the town of Retalhuleu. That was my first experience in helping poor rural people in my own country.

Rural development efforts in Guatemala, however, go back further in time. The most encompassing efforts started with the October Revolution of 1944, in which a democratic and reformist labor and peasant movement forced the dictator Jorge Ubico to resign after fourteen years in power. From 1944 to 1954, Guatemala enjoyed its only period of authentic democratic progress.[2]

Dr. Juan José Arévalo, the first popularly elected president (1945-1950) of that "revolutionary" period, gave priority to the promotion of education as well as other important social reforms such as the new labor law, a social

security system, open political participation, etc. His government was progressive but not radical. It gave Guatemala many reforms and laws that change the social and economic relations of the country. Internationally, Guatemala gained prestige as a modernizing nation.

The second "revolutionary" government of popularly elected Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán (1951-1954) wanted to go farther and deeper. Its political platform was to convert Guatemala into a "modern capitalist state". To do that, it enacted laws that favored the peasantry and urban workers. It started large-scale projects to modernize the infrastructure of the country, particularly the roads, electric power and ports.

The controversial Land Reform Act (Decree 900) of 1952 benefitted about one hundred thousand landless peasants and their families, but at the same time angered powerful landowners from Guatemala and other countries. The one incident that brought the Arbenz government and this democratic period to a close was the daring expropriation of unused land owned by the then powerful United Fruit Company of the United States.

At the height of the East-West Cold War and anti-communist sentiment in the U.S., expropriating land from a powerful U.S. company by the government of a small country was considered a provocative act. Accusations of communist influence and condemnations in international forums led to

the 1954 overthrow of the Arbenz government by a U.S.-backed "liberation movement". This brief era of democracy, hope, and struggle for self-determination ended right there in 1954.[3]

I believe that the seeds for future indigenous programs of rural development were planted during those ten years of experiencing democracy in Guatemala. Legalization of labor unions in the cities and peasant organizations in the countryside greatly contributed to increase people's awareness of their rights and of existing social inequalities.

From 1954 on, U.S. foreign policy has influenced the internal affairs and history of Guatemala through the infusion of economic and military aid. Many of the large-scale rural development programs of the late fifties and specially the sixties had their origin in the United States.

Training Community Promoters in Guatemala: A Brief History

The training of community promoters for community development started in the early 1950's. Government programs in India, Pakistan, Ghana, Burma and others were emphasizing the need to train "village workers" or "community development workers" to carry out the multiple tasks of community development at the village level.

Although introduced in Guatemala in the 1950's, it was not until the early 1960's that the concept of community development was adopted as a government policy. The idea of

training village workers or social promoters to be front-line workers in rural development projects practically came with the whole concept and method of community development as well.

The Guatemalan society of the early 1960's was still suffering from the trauma that the U.S. intervention of 1954 had caused in the population and from the military repression that followed it. In addition, the promising land reform law enacted by President Arbenz was nullified and essentially rolled back in the years that followed the "counterrevolution" of 1954.

U.S. President Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress", the Peace Corps, and other U.S. development programs of the early 1960's, coupled with financial support of large-scale development projects by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, etc., were strategies to counterbalance the perceived influence of socialist countries like Cuba and the Soviet Union, and to contain the enormous pressure of social unrest building up in many countries of Latin America.

With the sponsorship of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, community development and community organizing were introduced in Latin America as theory, practice, and methods to deal with problems of rural underdevelopment. Governments were encouraged to adopt

these strategies as part of their national development plans. Guatemala was no exception.

In 1964, the de facto government of Colonel Peralta Azurdia established the National Program of Community Development of the Presidency of the Republic.[4] With this first community development program, Guatemala officially adopted *"desarrollo de la comunidad"*, not only because it was in fashion but also because it guaranteed that financial and material resources would come from the U.S. and other industrialized countries.

Through this first national program of community development in Guatemala, "Local Centers" of development were created, and the first Center for Training of Promoters was created in Chimaltenango in 1964. Elisa Molina de Stahl (1964) and Dr. Salvador Hernández were two of the most influential government official and intellectuals during this period of introduction of community development in Guatemala in the mid sixties.

In that same decade of the sixties in Guatemala, a guerrilla movement spread through the Eastern region. This insurgency movement led to a period of repression by the Army and to a virtual war in that part of the country. The Guatemalan Army with assistance from the U.S. government defeated that insurgency movement in the late sixties. I was a child during that decade but I remember the fear of living under a state of siege for undetermined periods of

time and of running home at night to beat the "*toque de queda*" or curfew.

In this kind of socio-political context, where polarized social forces are struggling for either social justice or to maintain the status quo, it is difficult to imagine that community development meant the same to all people in Guatemala in the 1960's. Community development as a concept, theory and practice was interpreted and applied according to each organization's beliefs and ideology.

Different programs of community development were founded during the first years of the 1960s. Even the national University of San Carlos and the private University Rafael Landívar started their own academic programs with focus on community development, particularly the School of Social Work of the Universidad de San Carlos where the goal was to train and educate social workers capable of working in the rural areas of Guatemala.

One of the first efforts for the systematic training of community promoters or social promoters for rural development in Guatemala was the founding of the **Centro de Autoformación de Promotores Sociales (CAPS)**, or the Training Center for Social Promoters, a non-governmental organization created within the structure and sponsorship of the Rafael Landívar University. For a more detailed description of the history, goals, methodology and strategy of CAPS, see Chapter V.

During these first enthusiastic years of the establishment of community development as a rural development strategy, plenty of U.S. funds were allocated to support training and education programs for community development, mainly through the U.S. Agency for International Development in the 1960s. CAPS received original funding from USAID during the first phase of its history.

Government agencies like the SFEI which trained bilingual and craftsmanship promoters, the National Program of Community Development through its center in Chimaltenango, and the Ministry of Agriculture were also involved in preparing personnel for the task of rural development. According to Ramón, a veteran extension worker of CAPS, other non-governmental organizations training promoters in the sixties in Guatemala included World Neighbors, which trained agricultural promoters[5] in the province of Chimaltenango. In the late sixties, the catholic Maryknoll Association trained health promoters in Jacaltenango, Huehuetenango.

In the decade of the 1970s, community development programs continued even in the context of increasing social disparities and unrest. Political violence never really stopped during this decade, it only got worse as time passed. A new guerrilla movement was born in the mid seventies and operated mainly in the highland provinces of

Guatemala. Counterinsurgency measures were again used to try to crush a movement that seemed to have the support of labor, peasant and student organizations.

Ironically, while the popular sectors were demanding better social and economic conditions for the majority of people in Guatemala, the economy of the country itself was growing at a rate of 5 to 6% annually.[6] The problem with that economic growth based on agro-exports was that few Guatemalans were benefiting from it.

In the seventies, CAPS continued to be an active training organization, along with the National Community Development Program and its center for training of promoters in Chimaltenango. World Neighbors continued to train agricultural promoters until the end of this decade, when it was forced to leave the country. Also, the cooperative movement trained its own human resources through training organizations like EACA in the late sixties and early seventies, and later through CENDEP, which still trains people in cooperative leadership and management.

In February of 1976, a powerful earthquake struck most of Guatemala and exposed the miserable conditions in which most people lived in. In the aftermath of that earthquake which killed more than 30,000 people and left homeless tens of thousands of families, material and financial resources poured into Guatemala, and many international non-governmental organizations came to work in the

reconstruction of the country, and stayed thereafter. That earthquake of 1976 signaled the beginning of what later would be a mushrooming of NGOs operating in Guatemala.

In the eighties, CAPS continued its training of community promoters but changed its strategy of rural development. The Ministry of Health became involved in training community health promoters.[7] Several NGOs were also training agricultural promoters. The newly arrived evangelical NGOs started training their "promotores voluntarios". CENDEP, an independent and cooperative oriented organization, continues to train cooperative managers. The Ministry of Agriculture is active in training agricultural promoters through its specialized centers, ECA (agricultural promoters) and EFA (agricultural guides). The new Ministry of Urban and Rural Development of the past civilian Cerezo administration (1986-1990) was also involved in training social promoters, duplicating the efforts of other governmental agencies.

The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Training

During the post-earthquake period of the mid seventies, training community promoters became a great need because it was obvious that rural areas of Guatemala were marginally served or not served at all by the social and community service agencies of the central government of Guatemala. Several national and international NGOs like World Neighbors, Berhorst Clinic, CAPS, and others started

training local ladino or indigenous people in community development tasks.

In the mid seventies, community development was still a popular strategy of rural development in Guatemala. Community development was still a subject of study in the Social Work schools of the two main universities in the country, San Carlos and Rafael Landívar. Students aspiring to become licensed social workers were required to spend between six months to one year working in rural villages of Guatemala as part of their training.

The word "promoter" became a buzzword among people involved in rural development. Training organizations like CAPS concentrated on training "social promoters", who were supposed to be generalists in community development and catalysts in a process of consciousness raising with local leaders and people of rural communities.

Other non-governmental organizations concentrated on training specialized promoters. The Berhorst Clinic trained local people to become health promoters or "promotores de salud". World Neighbors trained people to be agricultural and livestock promoters or "promotor agrícola" and "promotor pecuario". Some organizations including the Ministry of Education were training local people in both Spanish and their native language to be bilingual promoters or "promotores bilingues".

One of the most important characteristics of these community promoters was that they were doing their community promotion as volunteers. With some rare exceptions, community promoters did not get paid for their work. Their only reward was to gain respect from their community and satisfaction from the success achieved in a given project.

The work of these volunteer community promoters was made more difficult by the war between the government and the guerrillas operating in the highlands and elsewhere. Community promoters were often caught in the middle of this war. Because they worked organizing people and promoting change, the Army suspected them of collaborating with the guerrillas, and the guerrilla forces suspected them of being agents of the government. Between 1976 and 1980, some of these committed community promoters paid with their lives for simply trying to better the conditions of their fellow people.

As the war went on, more international development organizations came to Guatemala to fill the void of a series of military governments that were, in general, more preoccupied with the threat of the insurgency groups and their own survival than with providing social welfare to the population. Non-governmental organizations like CAPS, World Neighbors and others with a progressive philosophy, were working as independent entities promoting change and rural development in Guatemala. Others, ideologically

conservative, worked either independently or in direct cooperation with government agencies.

Even before 1980, but specially between 1980 and 1984, arguably the worst years of political repression since the 1960s, many international non-governmental organizations suspected of "subversive" activities, were attacked and forced out of the country. Some of the national ones, like CAPS, had to maintain a low profile during those violent years. A few of those NGOs returned to Guatemala when Vinicio Cerezo was elected president in 1986.

The number of NGOs working in development keeps growing in Guatemala. In 1989, according to the executive director of CAPS, there were over seven hundred NGOs operating in Guatemala. Perhaps this growth of NGOs in Guatemala is the reflection of the great infusion of development funds from 1980 on.[8]

In 1989, when I was doing field research in Guatemala, I became aware of the myriad of NGOs working in rural areas of Guatemala. I realized that there was a struggle between the progressive NGOs and the conservative NGOs. The progressive NGOs worked independently from the Guatemalan government and get their funds from a number of national and international funding agencies. They usually know who the other progressive development organizations are and try to coordinate resources and efforts with them. The conservative NGOs may or may not be working in collaboration

with the central government. Several of these conservative NGOs are sponsored by international churches.

One thing that I realized while being in rural Guatemala in 1989 is that NGOs are not neutral in the struggle to eliminate the causes of poverty and disenfranchisement in Guatemala. In reality, most NGOs working in Guatemala, in addition to having a stated development agenda, also have either a political or religious agenda, or both. Several of these NGOs approach rural communities with the guise that they want to support development projects there, but what they really want is to convert rural communities to a particular religion or to convince them to acquire or maintain a given political or ideological belief.

In that light, the role of non-governmental organizations operating in Guatemala is very complex and heterogeneous. They can have either a positive impact in the struggle of rural people for self-determination and for better socio-economic conditions, or they can be a very negative influence on rural people, one that can divide, manipulate and deceive them.

Strategies for Training Community Promoters in Guatemala

Since the 1950s, it was understood that to be effective and successful in carrying out community development programs, such programs would need the involvement of local people at various levels to insure proper communication and

the cooperation of the people themselves. It was suggested then that training local leaders to become "village workers" or "community development workers" was an important factor in the success of such programs at the grassroots level.[9]

Training human resources was considered important also in large-scale development programs supported by financial institutions like the Inter-American Development Bank. In a report titled "Community Development Theory and Practice" of a conference sponsored by the Inter-American Bank that took place in Mexico City in April 1966, Bank personnel and consultants agree that training human resources at all levels is an important factor in the success of community development programs.

Thus, one of the strategies for training community promoters in Guatemala has been that of large-scale community development projects in which the training of local people is proposed. Local people are trained to perform specific tasks within the framework of large, complex projects. The idea is not so much to train people to be promoters of grassroots development, as it is to use local people to insure the success of a given project. In this strategy, the role of the promoter is not as important as the one of the educated technical advisor. The role of the promoter is not central in a top-down, bureaucratic project.

Another approach to training community promoters in Guatemala has been the one used by the church organizations. In the early 1970s, the Catholic church trained hundreds of promoters to work in what they called "comunidades de base" or base communities. The idea was to promote social and economic development as well as spiritual development in the communities served. It was a major departure from the policy of noninvolvement in social and political affairs.

These new attitudes and conceptions of the Guatemalan Catholic church in the 1970s were correlated to the emergence and influence of Liberation Theology's theory and practice, the progressive nature of the declaration of bishops and archbishops meeting in Colombia, and the theory of "critical consciousness" and liberating education of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire.

Liberation Theology theory advanced the notion that the Catholic church should side and "opt for the poor". Many priests and bishops heeded the call and started a controversial multinational movement which included the training of selected lay workers who implemented church programs of community development at the village level. In Guatemala, the Instituto Católico de Capacitación (Catholic Training Institute) contributed to this effort by training social promoters from 1967 to 1980.

This new "opting for the poor" position of the Catholic church placed the institution in an awkward and difficult

position with the ruling groups. The Catholic church was accused of collaborating with "subversive groups". Catholic priests and lay workers were attacked verbally and physically. Many of them died while doing what they thought was the right thing to do.[10]

To counteract the progressive influence of the Catholic church, conservative evangelical churches were encouraged to come to Guatemala from the U.S. and other countries. Their number and influence grew dramatically in 1982 during the military government of General Ríos Montt, an evangelical Christian himself. These evangelical churches also started training local people to carry out their development programs with a clear and conservative political and religious agenda. The evangelical Instituto Biblico Quiché and especially CONCAD were instrumental in training evangelical "promotores voluntarios".

By training community promoters, the Church (Catholic, Evangelical, or otherwise) has directly intervened in the process of development of Guatemala. The church's contribution can be beneficial or detrimental to poor people in rural areas depending on where they stand ideologically and politically. In any case, no matter what religious organization does the training, the community promoters' work will almost always be influenced by a religious agenda. The impact of the rise in evangelical activity has been community division and an increasing belief that tolerance

of suffering and support of the status quo are somehow related to godliness.

Another strategy to train community promoters has been the governmental one. As part of their development policy for rural areas, successive governments, constitutional or not, have used rural people to carry out their programs at the local level. One of the main differences is that these community promoters are state employees. Their training is traditional and concentrates on technical areas such as health, agriculture, and education. These government promoters serve as a sort of liaison between the villages and bureaucratic agencies of the government that provide technical or financial assistance.

The governmental strategy to train social promoters became more systematic in 1976 with the creation of the *Comité de Reconstrucción Nacional (CRN)* after the earthquake. Created as an emergency organism to channel the material and financial help received from international sources following the earthquake, this Committee of National Reconstruction became a permanent institution thereafter and has been an important arm of the government to implement its rural development policies. The CRN trains its own salaried or volunteer social promoters to carry out government-sponsored development projects.

The Guatemalan Army also created its own training organization through the Section of Civil Affairs, also

known as S-5. The S-5, probably created in the 1970s, trains "social promoters" to work in war zones of Guatemala. The S-5 implements development projects that obviously follow the guidelines of the Army. They contribute to policies of counter-insurgency and political control.

In 1986, Vinicio Cerezo, the Christian Democrat Party (DCG) candidate, won a runoff election and became the first civilian president after many years of military governments. The Cerezo government created the Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Rural (MDUR) or Ministry of Rural and Urban Development. This new Ministry was supposed to implement some aspects of the "Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (PDN) 1987-1991" of the Cerezo Administration. AVANCSO (1988), states that "the function of the MDUR according to the Political Constitution is to organize the population so that it participates in the policy of development of the government... The MDUR also has been assigned the main responsibility to promote the Development Councils, particularly at the municipal and local levels, through the training of social promoters..." (p. 65-66).

The newly created Ministry of Development conflicted with organizations like the CRN and the S-5 which were already performing these functions for many years. But the confrontation did not last very long because the MDUR, CRN and S-5 all respond to the same governmental policies and goals. It was just a matter of accommodation.

The governmental strategies in training social or community promoters is one that has to do more with the goals of specific organizations like the CRN or the S-5, or with general social and political strategies spelled out in National Development Plans, and probably less with the sincere will to help rural communities or regions.

For instance, the National Development Plan (1987-1991) of the Cerezo Administration considers social promoters as important elements in attaining the goals of the political and ideological plans of the government. AVANCSO (1988) summarizing the social, economic, political and ideological aspects and goals of Cerezo's Development Plan, states that,

> ..In the political realm: it intends to promote organization and popular participation through several mechanisms, such as the Councils of Rural and Urban Development... Such action will be the responsibility of a great number of **social promoters**, from those trained by the Ministry of Development to those of the Army's Civil Affairs Section, or S-5... In the ideological realm: it intends, on one side, to promote *concertación* and dialogue, and on the other side, to inculcate in the population concepts such as democracy, justice, freedom, identity and national unity, with the goal of reestablishing the legitimacy of the politician, and the acceptance of a tutelary democracy... This would be achieved through the use of the mass media and the **social promoters** themselves, within the process of organization... (pp. 49-50)

In essence, the governmental strategies in training community promoters are more preoccupied with providing the promoter with enough skill and content to be successful in materializing the goals of government plans at the village level. In this strategy, the social or community promoter is only an instrument of government policy.

Finally, in addition to the church and the government, there are many nongovernmental organizations that have specific programs or departments of education and training. Their strategy to train community promoters varies according to their experience in rural development work, their goals and philosophy of rural development.

As of 1989, there were hundreds of NGOs operating in Guatemala. Some of them executed development programs independently from those of the Guatemalan government, others cooperated willingly with governmental programs, mainly through the CRN.[11]

The strategy of NGOs aligned with the development programs of the Guatemalan government and with conservative international funding agencies is to train social promoters to be intermediaries and overseers of mostly infrastructural development projects that may or may not be responding to the needs of the communities. They do not promote empowerment, self-reliance, and critical thinking. They promote 'desarrollismo'.[12]

In contrast with this strategy, CAPS, ASECSA and other progressive non-governmental organizations, possess a strategy that goes beyond the "project syndrome" and attempts to establish authentic communication and dialogue with rural people. They train community promoters not only in technical areas but also in human relations, leadership, critical thinking, etc. In this alternative strategy,

community promoters are not just instruments of development projects. They are an essential part of a whole understanding of rural community development as a process of empowerment where people can strive for self-reliance, self-respect and dignity. It is a process of gradual transformation of oppressive social, economic and political structures.

The training methodology employed by "desarrollista" NGOs is based on the traditional, banking model of education and training. Since the goal is not to change people's conceptions of their own reality then it is not necessary to train the social promoter to do that. The top-down, "teacher-knows-best" approach is used to that effect. Consequently, the promoter goes back to rural communities and uses the same paternalistic, alienating approach when he works with his own people in community promotion.

On the other hand if the goal is to train local leaders to become community promoters that go back to their communities to promote change and authentic development, a non-traditional, horizontal, experiential and critical methodology needs to be used. A participatory training methodology combined with principles and techniques borrowed from Adult and Popular Education is best suited to accomplish this task.

Usually, the use of participatory training during a seminar for community promoters has a positive influence in

the community promotion work that is done after they go back to their home communities. This is because during the participatory training experience they may have learned more about equal participation, respecting the opinion of others, women's rights, self-esteem, joint decision-making, popular participation, human relations, self-reliance, needs assessment, how to work with groups, reality consciousness, etc. Participants are usually astounded that their views and opinions are valued, and that their knowledge has validity in this training methodology.

This participatory training and learning experience helps community promoters to better understand their own role in rural community development and to better guide the community towards a process of development that is democratic, reaffirming, and respectful of the culture, values, needs and hopes of the community.

CAPS, as a Guatemalan NGO committed to the training of social promoters as its original and primary goal, incorporated participatory training almost from its very inception in 1967. The first phase of training social promoters was, in the words of founders and experienced CAPS personnel, rather paternalistic and dependent upon foreign funding. They used participatory training techniques, but outcomes were contradictory. Thousands of rural participants were trained to be social promoters, but the results at the rural community level were not consistent. A

good number of the trained social promoters did not come back to work in community promotion.

In subsequent phases, CAPS training strategy continued to be participatory even though it went through several changes prompted by internal and external conditions. For more detail on the evolution of CAPS' training strategy, see corresponding section in Chapter V.

Summary

Training community promoters as a component of governmental or nongovernmental strategies of rural development in Guatemala started in the early 1950s with the daring 1952 Land Reform Law of President Jacobo Arbenz. It continued, after his overthrow, with the introduction of the United Nations-sponsored community development strategy in the mid 1950s.

In the 1960s, community development as a rural development strategy had some success in promoting change and development in rural areas of Guatemala. However, in the early 1970s, it became evident that those changes were not deep enough and therefore did not reach the great majority of the rural or urban population. It became clear also that government agencies had a tight control on community development efforts. Political struggle was inevitable.

From 1974 on, intense political struggle, armed or otherwise, has been a fact of life in Guatemala. In spite

of the struggle, or maybe because of it, community development continued to be a controlled governmental strategy of rural development for the rest of the 1970s and all of the 1980s.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have participated in community development and in training of social promoters since the 1960s. Their role was not very significant until 1976 when hundreds of NGOs came to Guatemala to help in the reconstruction effort caused by the earthquake of that year.

Today, there are over seven hundred non-governmental organizations in Guatemala. There are so many that is difficult to distinguish them. Some of them are simply "ubicadores de recursos" (locators of resources), as one experienced field extension worker put it, and conduct their work contrary to the principles of participatory development.

One of the reasons for the increase in the number of NGOs is the continuing infusion of aid and the belief of donor countries and agencies that their contributions are actually reaching the rural poor in countries like Guatemala. But as one experienced field extension worker put it: "Not everything that comes reaches the poor".

Training community promoters is not a neutral activity. The goals, methods and content of the training are influenced by the nature, philosophy and purpose of the training organization. Training can be manipulated to serve

the interests of the training organization or it can be designed to serve the real interests and needs of promoters and rural communities.

In general, three main strategies for training community promoters can be identified in Guatemala today: the governmental, the one utilized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the one use by churches of any denomination. Within each of these strategies for training community promoters, there are some variations according to the degree of ideological progressiveness or conservatism present in each government agency, non-governmental organization or church.

Endnotes

1. Primary school teaching certification is awarded at the high school level in the Guatemalan education system.

2. For more historical detail on the 1944-1954 period in Guatemala, see "Guatemala 1500-1970: Reflexiones sobre su desarrollo histórico" by Fernando González Davison, Editorial Universitaria de Guatemala, 1987, pp. 67-83; also see "Pensamiento Económico y Social de la Revolución de Octubre" by Alfredo Guerra Borges, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 1989.

3. See Schlesinger, S. and Kinzer, S. "Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala", 1982, for more insight and historical details of what and who caused the overthrow of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán.

4. In Spanish: Programa Nacional de Desarrollo de la Comunidad de la Presidencia de la República.

5. They were called "promotores agrícolas" in Spanish.

6. See Barry, Tom., et. al. "Dollars and Dictators: A Guide to Central America", The Resource Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1983. p. 123.

7. In 1986, the newly elected Cerezo Administration took power. One of Cerezo Arévalo's first actions was to create the Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Rural (Ministry of Urban and Rural Development), which got involved in training its own community promoters.

8. See Gondolf, Ed. "Community Development amidst Political Violence. Lessons from Guatemala". Community Development Journal, Vol. 16, No. 13. p. 230.

9. For 1950s and early 1960s views on importance of and methods to train community promoters, see Batten, T. R. "Communities and Their Development: An Introductory Study with Special Reference to the Tropics". London, Oxford University Press, 1957, pp. 187-216; and Batten, T.R. "Training for Community Development". London, Oxford University Press, 1962.

10. One of the assassinations was that of Padre Hermógenes López. See "Guatemala: Represión y Resistencia", National Lawyers Guild, 1980.

11. According to AVANCSO (1988), in 1986 there were only seven NGOs working with the CRN; in 1987, that number of NGOs cooperating with the CRN went up to one hundred and two.

12. "Desarrollismo" or "Developmentalism" means that an NGO or governmental organization does community development projects, mostly infrastructural, without any attempt to educate about, critique and change the social, economic and political structures that prevent rural communities and the country from reaching its true development.

CHAPTER IV

DOING A FIELD-BASED CASE STUDY IN GUATEMALA: CONTEXTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

During the time period that I was in Guatemala, mid July to the first week of October, 1989, there were several circumstances and events that influenced the course and nature of the proposed field research: a national public employees strike, political violence, the research agreement with CAPS, changes in culture, language, ethnicity, climate, etc.

The purpose of this chapter is to give the reader information and insights in regard to contextual and methodological factors that influence the nature of field research in a multi-ethnic and politically unstable country like Guatemala. The entry process into Guatemala is presented in chronological order to emphasize the drastic change in contextual circumstances encountered upon arrival and the influence they had on the research process.

Contextual Considerations

Before going to Guatemala I did not know how returning to my own country would affect me and the research process. I had been to Guatemala only for short periods of time and mainly to the urban areas. It had been many years since I

visited remote rural communities. I had excitement but also apprehension when I arrived in Guatemala.

On July 14, 1989, I entered Guatemalan territory. I entered through the Tecún Umán border post in the Southwest region of Guatemala. It is a familiar region to me since I was born in the southwestern province of Retalhuleu. It is a tropical, lush, hot and very humid region during this time of the year (from May to October we have the rainy season in Guatemala).

From the border I took a three-hour bus ride through the plains of the south coast and then through the ascending mountains of the highlands, to Quezaltenango, a beautiful city, 2,333 meters above sea level, which was going to be my preliminary base at my sister's home.

The change from the sea level hot and humid plains to the high and chilly valley of the highlands is quite dramatic and affects you in many ways because it happens so fast. I got to "Xela" (nickname for Quezaltenango) around 11:30 p.m. that same July 14. I was totally exhausted but very happy to see part of my family again.

During the following days after my arrival, I started to assess the social, economic and political conditions of the country, and other factors that together would comprise the context in which I was supposed to engage in field research in rural areas of Guatemala.

Socio-economic and Political Conditions Encountered

For better or for worse, upon my arrival I immediately realized that the timing to do research in rural areas in Guatemala may not be the most auspicious. In the first place there was an ongoing strike at the national level of approximately 80,000 public employees, most of them teachers and postal workers. When I arrived in Quezaltenango, my own sister and most teachers working for the state were on strike.

The strike had started about mid-June, a month or more before my arrival, and showed no signs of being resolved in negotiations between the Christian Democrat government and representatives of the strikers. In fact, the Cerezo government had vowed not to give in to the pressures and salary demands of the strikers. A dangerous impasse was created and a lot of people were nervous about the consequences of a long term strike by public workers.

The cause of the strike was squarely rooted in the hard economic situation faced by a large majority of families in the country. Teachers, who five years before could afford adequate food, now were struggling to afford the most basic necessities (corn, black beans, rice, sugar, bread, milk, etc.) due to the inflated prices of these and other products and due to what was generally believed to be a "high cost of living". The Quetzal (the national currency) had been devalued and teachers salaries had not been increased for

several years. Other public and private employees were facing the same reality.

At the time of my arrival, I did not know how the political situation was going to affect my intended research plan. A lot of scenarios began to take shape in mind, all of which were dependent upon powerful events and factors totally out of my control.

My best scenario was that in spite of these difficult political conditions, I would be able to go the rural areas and conduct my field research as planned, with the consent and assistance of CAPS administrative and field personnel. My worst scenario was that, within the next two months, political conditions would worsen, spiral, and ultimately produce a coup of the Cerezo government by the Guatemalan Army.

It turned out to be a mixture of my best and worst scenarios. I was able to start the process of collecting data in rural areas as I had planned it, but the difficulties, risks, and dangers that I had to face were much greater than the minor problems anticipated in my best scenario.

In my opinion, the reasons why I was able to complete the research were, a) Cerezo's Christian Democrat government was not overthrown by the Guatemalan Army in spite of numerous rumors to that effect, and b) although political violence spiraled and reached an incredibly high level in a

short period of time (especially in August and September of 1989), I did somehow work within that kind of context and, more importantly, followed the advice of CAPS experienced field extensionists who would give me a "reading" of what villages and regions were relatively safe to visit and which ones were not. In addition, the extension workers served as a liaison between me, the community promoters and local authorities.

I have to admit that trying to work within or around this ongoing and increasing wave of violence took an enormous toll on my emotions and energy as time went by. It was inescapable. Every time I opened the newspaper or watched the local TV news or talked to some friend or even strangers there it was: Another person machine-gunned, another person disappeared, another kidnapping, another tortured body found by the side of a deserted road, another prominent leader killed, another large demonstration, another increase in food prices, another day.

As a Guatemalan who has not been in the country for a good number of years except for short annual visits, this situation of violence was very hard to grapple with. It was hard for me to comprehend it or to want to comprehend it. It was hard to accept the reality of my own country.

I had to convince myself, however, that my research work had some meaning and importance for the future, and that it was worth pursuing it. I remember telling myself

that I had a commitment with CAPS and myself. Certainly, my first contacts with community promoters in the rural areas were inspirational and convinced me that it was worth doing it.

To describe specific events that would serve as examples of the general state of the political context during my time in Guatemala (July-October, 1989) would be lengthy and maybe not appropriate to mention here. I will just limit myself to summarize those events that better characterized that period of time.

First of all, the general strike of the public employees continued through the first weeks of August. In August, the government started dismissing striking employees and hiring replacements. The teachers and their leaders were tired and fearful of being replaced. They finally agreed to a one-time token bonus and went back to work by mid August.

Of all the acts of violence, the assassinations of Danilo Barillas and Ramiro Castillo Love shook the country. On August 1, Danilo Barillas, one of the original founders and ideologue of the Guatemalan Christian Democrat Party (DCG) and at the time of his death a dissident from the governing party, was assassinated in front of his home by heavily-armed men. As of October 1989, nobody had been arrested for his killing.

On August 23, 1989, Ramiro Castillo Love, President of the Industrial Bank, business leader and prominent member of the Castillo Sinibaldi family, arguably the richest family in Guatemala, was also murdered by several armed men at his luxurious home in Guatemala City. His assassination created a strong and vocal protest by the upper class of Guatemala who saw this murder as a signal that they were not immune to the current wave of violence. Again, nobody claimed responsibility for this crime or was arrested for it.

Between July, August and September, 1989, dozens of other less known people (student leaders and organizers, peasants, teachers, union members and organizers, merchants, politicians, etc.) from the middle or poor classes were also killed or kidnapped and disappeared, and numerous acts of sabotage and bombings on buildings and homes took place.

As a way of illustration, more than 20 bombs or grenades exploded in Guatemala during that time. At the Rafael Landívar University, where CAPS is housed, a bomb had exploded on their campus the night before I had one of my first meetings in July with CAPS personnel. As a result of that bombing, the Landívar university authorities decided to close the campus, and we had to hold our meeting elsewhere.

Eleven university students (mostly from the National University of San Carlos) were kidnapped and disappeared, between August and September, 1989. By mid September, four of them reappeared near the national university entrance,

tortured and assassinated. Also, a good number of people received death threats and chose to go into exile with their families.

People outside Guatemala City, in the provinces and rural areas, were not faring any better. Numerous killings, kidnappings and disappearances of known and unknown peasants and farmers were reported during that same period of time (July-September, 1989). While doing research in several rural regions of Guatemala, I realized that being there was as dangerous, and sometimes more, as being in Guatemala City. It was difficult during that time to feel secure anywhere.

Although the strike of teachers and other public employees was blamed for the political instability, the real causes of the violence seemed to be the exasperating social and economic conditions (unemployment, high cost of living, shortages, etc.) in which most Guatemalan people lived at that time. Historically, crisis situations resulted in demonstration and organized protests by the popular sectors, followed by systematic repression by governmental and paramilitary forces.

By mid September, it was apparent that the civilian Cerezo government had lost control of the situation and could no longer, admittedly, guarantee the protection of anybody's life. A sense of chaos and personal insecurity was the general feeling by the end of September 1989.

Other Contextual Factors

Besides the overwhelming and adverse socio-political and economic conditions of the country, there were other factors which contributed positively or negatively to the implementation and completion of my research.

One of those "other" contextual factors was the variety of languages and cultures that can be found in Guatemala. Since I did research in several distinct regions of Guatemala, culture and language was both an enriching and limiting factor. Enriching, because it is exciting to go into indigenous villages where they speak both their native ancestral language and Spanish, and sometimes no Spanish at all, and be able to explore during informal conversations a different frame of mind, and a different way of life and view of the world, and a possible different perspective on training community promoters and rural development. Limiting, because when I found community promoters who only spoke their native language, I knew I was losing some of their original thinking in the translation done by the extensionist. Also lost was the rapport that one is able to establish when speaking the same language to one another.

In spite of that, multilingualism and multiculturalism in Guatemala was much more a positive factor than a negative one, because it made my inquiry much more interesting and challenging, and also allowed me to explore some of the

related research questions that I had developed before going into Guatemala.

Another factor was the climate. The rainy season had already begun when I arrived in Guatemala (it goes from May to October), and I knew that August and September are two of the most difficult months because the rain is constant and floods are common during these two months.

The almost constant rain made the logistics of my research difficult, and it became an important factor as the time went on. Sometimes we (the extensionist and I) had to cancel trips into rural villages because the dirt roads that lead to them were muddy, and not even four-wheel drive vehicles could go through. I learned to be flexible and patient during this time. Rescheduling trips became normal during this time.

I should point out that even though climatic conditions were a disruptive and a "slow-down" factor in conducting the research, it was by no means a determinant factor. I learned to work around it, and I learn from the extension workers that rain is just something that you have to work with and take into consideration when you make plans.

Methodological Considerations

When I arrived in Guatemala I realized that my research methodology was going to be affected by the reality encountered. First, doing a case study of CAPS implied that I had to meet with their personnel, get their support and

finalize a research agreement. And second, I had to adjust my sampling strategy and research methods according to the real circumstances of CAPS and the country.

As expected, I met with CAPS personnel on July 21 and July 28, 1989. I provided them with a summary of my research proposal and discussed it with them. They all agreed to cooperate with me. I agreed to write a report in Spanish on the findings of the study that had to do with assessing CAPS training strategy and recommendations for improvement.

During one of the meetings, the extension workers were concerned about future communication with me (most of them do not have phones in their homes) since they were in Guatemala City only for one day and later were going back to their provinces and far away towns. To avoid that problem, we drafted a tentative schedule of my visits to each region starting in the Southeast of Guatemala. Those with home phones were going to be the "*puente*" (liaison) between me and those who did not have phones because they often see each other. In some cases I would send telegrams to their home addresses to advise them in advance of my visit.

When I talked to CAPS personnel I realized that CAPS had substantially changed its organizational and operational structure. Between 1976 and 1989, the number of provinces attended was reduced, but the number of communities served had increased considerably. Likewise, the number of

extensionists was gradually increased to cope with the growth of communities served.

I adjusted my sampling strategy according to the number of extension workers who were willing to help me (nine) and the number of provinces where they worked (nine). I made sure that I was going to see communities and promoters of four identifiable regions of Guatemala.

As far as research methods, I used the observation and interview methods. I could not use document analysis because CAPS did not allow me to look at their archives for, they said, "security" reasons. I adjusted to that situation by having in-depth interviews with the director, veteran extension workers and trainers to get information about the history and evolution of CAPS. For more specific information on this study regarding data collection methods, sampling strategy, and research agreement with CAPS, see Appendix "A".

Logistical Challenges in Doing Research in Guatemala

Anybody who embarks upon a research mission in rural Guatemala should be aware of the enormous challenges that s/he will undoubtedly encounter. Varied climate, rugged terrain in the highlands, lack of roads and transportation to villages and towns, lack of an effective communication system (esp. phones), distance between villages and towns, and multiple cultures and languages in several regions are

only some of the most important logistical challenges to be reckon with.

As a Guatemalan, my feeling during the research period was that I was lucky because, I did not have to deal with culture shock or with understanding the culture(s) of the country. I could "relax", at times, even during the peak of the political violence (August-September, 1989), because I have been in those situations before and I know what to do and how to proceed.

I should point out that, logistically speaking, I would have not been able to accomplish so much in such a short period of time without the help of CAPS personnel. Without them, I would probably have visited 50% or less of the villages I visited, and I would have interviewed 50% or less rural community promoters than I did. They took me in their 4x4 vehicles or motorcycles to distant and isolated rural villages.

But even though I had CAPS personnel help, I still had to overcome problems of communication (i.e. using telegrams instead of phones), transporting myself by bus from one of my bases to another town, matching schedules with the extensionists, working around bad weather situations (rain) that would affect roads and communications, and working within a socio-political climate that was affecting everything that I was doing.

All of these were factors that definitely affected the outcomes of my field research in Guatemala. Nobody should underestimate their importance when doing field research there.

Summary

In this chapter I described what it was like to be in Guatemala doing field research from July to October of 1989. I believe it is important to relate this information so that the reader gets at least some understanding of how contextual factors affected me and the field research I was doing, and how the research methodology was adjusted according to the reality encountered. The provision of this background information may help the reader to better understand the nature of data presented in succeeding chapters.

When I was planning the last details of my trip to Guatemala, I did not suspect that political violence, as a manifestation of social and economic conditions, was going to spiral so quickly during the time I was there to a level reminiscent of the dark years of the early eighties, and that it was going to have such an enormous effect in what I did or did not do.

I learned through this experience that in order to go into the rural areas of a country like Guatemala to do field research, you have to be prepared for the unexpected. You have to be able to adjust and make difficult decisions.

I learned that is better to be prepared for the worst scenario than to assume that everything is going to be okay.

Changing cultural and linguistic contexts was indeed a challenge, but also one of the most interesting and enriching facets of this research. It was exciting and inspiring to communicate (even through interpreters) with people of different cultures and languages and to get to know something about their lives and thinking.

Coming to a final research agreement with CAPS was not very difficult. We all understood the potential importance of my research for the future of CAPS, and the significance of the research for possible improvements in their training of rural community promoters. Once they understood the nature of the study, they fully cooperated with me.

It became obvious to me that practice is always different from theory, and that I had to adjust the research methods to respond to the constraints and reality encountered. I had to do that in order to make the best use of the proposed methods and to obtain relevant data from community promoters and other CAPS personnel.

CHAPTER V

THE TRAINING CENTER FOR SOCIAL PROMOTERS (CAPS) IN GUATEMALA: A CASE STUDY

Background

In the early stages of planning my research design, I considered doing a comparative study of at least two development organizations operating in Guatemala with the intent of analyzing and contrasting their goals, projects, and more importantly their strategy to train rural community promoters. I soon realized that doing this kind of comparative field research implied and enormous commitment of time and resources from my part as a researcher.

Faced with the reality of two major constraints, namely time (three months) and resources, I realized that given those real constraints if I decided to go ahead with the comparative study plan, I would run the risk of doing a field study which would compare two training institutions in Guatemala in a rather superficial and ineffective manner, which would be contrary to the kind of qualitative study that I wanted to do. Thus, with the advice of members of my dissertation committee, I planned to do an in-depth study of one Guatemalan institution committed to both training community promoters and to rural development.

The rationale was that doing an in-depth qualitative case study of one training institution, instead of two or

more, would allow me to spend more time with their grass-roots community promoters and to collect valuable data in regard to their own conceptions of success in training community promoters, and on the influence that several contextual factors have on community promotion and training.

The main criteria for selecting such institution would be a) the institution would possess a history of and commitment to training poor rural people to become community or social promoters; b) would have a consistent record and commitment to rural development; and c) would have a commitment to social change in Guatemala.

The Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) at Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala City met the above criteria, and after getting their consent, I selected it to be the focus of my case study. The selection process was helped by the fact that I have been somewhat familiar for years with the work and goals of CAPS because one of its original founders is a personal friend.

The purpose of the case study on CAPS is to be able to talk to and interview with their rural community promoters in order to collect first-hand data from them, organize and analyze such data, and consequently, find answers to the research questions of my study. Also, the purpose is to document the history and evolution of a university-based, non-governmental institution committed to training social promoters and to rural development in Guatemala.

In addition to that, the study set out to find out how and why several contextual influences such as culture, language, ethnicity, gender, and others may affect the training of community promoters and the efforts and process of community promotion at the village level.

What is CAPS?

A brochure published by the Rafael Landívar University in 1976, stat that "the creation of the Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) was the initiative of a group of graduates of the Inter-American Center of Loyola University of New Orleans, after a seminar held in Guatemala City in May 1966, at which the main sponsor was the Reverend Father Louis J. Twomey... On January 16, 1967, CAPS opened its doors officially, to begin its first training course for Social Promoters with the participation of 36 peasants...".

One of the most important original goals of CAPS was "the training of base leaders who would carry out an important task in the organization of popular groups, and the promotion of a new society in which men truly participate in the determination and construction of their own future, since the individual, as a social being, is the basis and foundation of every liberating promotion" (pg. 1).

The training of "base leaders" is still a goal of CAPS, but their strategy is less idealistic than the original one. They have learned hard lessons in the last ten or twelve years about the high price that one has to pay for promoting

change in Guatemala. They have learned to adjust their strategy to the unpredictable and cyclical political context of Guatemala. Their approach is much more realistic and cautious now.

Nature and Philosophy

Since 1967 CAPS has been a part of the Rafael Landívar University organization. THIS is the second largest in Guatemala. It is a private and selective university attended mostly by students of wealthy families from Guatemala City and the provinces. It is small in number of students and faculty when compared to the 50,000+ students and faculty of the San Carlos National University. Rafael Landívar University enrolls about 4,000 students.

This affiliation with Rafael Landívar University has influenced the nature of CAPS since its creation. For instance, in the booklet published by Rafael Landívar University (1976) we can find the following statement:

> CAPS is an educational extension of Rafael Landívar University which contributes to the integral development of Guatemala's rural communities in a regional and national scope...CAPS is based on the philosophical principles of an integral humanism: the dignity of the human person, the solidarity of all men in a common destiny and the common good as the objective of our humanizing action...The trilogy of CAPS is: the dignity of the human being, change and a liberating integral development (pg.4).

The overall intention and purpose of CAPS, at least as of 1976, may have been summarized in the same brochure with the following words:

> CAPS is an educational program aimed at training and preparing change agents capable of furthering the integral prosperity of the country's rural communities; contributing to human promotion so that Guatemalans actively participate..in achieving their communities well being ...(pg.4).

Although the basic nature and philosophy of CAPS as a training and development center that functions within the formal structure of a private university has not changed since 1967, it is important to mention that significant administrative and operational changes have occurred during the last 23 years, substantially modifying the relationship between CAPS and the Landívar University. Some of those changes will be discussed later section in this chapter.

Methodology for Social Change

CAPS training and development methodology has been the cornerstone of the center's successes and failures. As such, it was obviously influenced by the educational and philosophical thought of the late sixties and early seventies in Latin America (Freire, Illich, Liberation Theology, etc.).

In the already mentioned booklet of Univ. Rafael Landívar (1976) the following is stated in regard to methodology:

> The methodology used by CAPS in adult education has done away with the scheme of the traditional methodology: paternalistic, imposed, receptive, and alienating. The new methodology is participative, creative, critical and liberating, and **based** on:.... The principle that any person, regardless of training or social status, possesses a culture worthy of being

> respected and has something to teach and a lot to learn ..... (pg. 4).

This training methodology was influenced by the new theory and practice of education proposed by Paulo Freire in the early seventies. That is evident when they state that their new concept of education is one in which "the classic concept of teacher and student does not exist, but in which the teacher -in this case a group animator- and the students constitute a teaching and learning educational unit". The embracing of some of Freire's ideas coupled with the emergence of group dynamics as an educational tool, obviously had great influence in their training methodology.

As of 1989, the essence of CAPS training methodology and rural development strategy was still there. But a lot of minor and also substantial changes have been suggested, integrated and implemented as a response to the changing context of rural development, to the evolving attitudes of Guatemalan peasants and promoters, and particularly to the evolution of the socio-political and economic context of Guatemala. A discussion of the most important changes in the life of CAPS, based on data collected in Guatemala, will be presented later in this chapter.

Goals

As of 1976 and using the non-directive and participatory methodology, CAPS had the following general goals:

1. To analyze and create an awareness of the national reality, and in particular of the rural reality.

2. To increase personal search for the Guatemalan identity and of one's personal values.

3. To provoke a profound change of mentality with a view to the integral, liberating development of Guatemalans, without discrimination based on ideology, race or creed.

4. To further human promotion with the values and characteristics inherent to Guatemala, for its citizens to participate actively in the search for a common good by finding their own solutions.

5. To provide the conditions for all Guatemalans to promote and liberate themselves integrally.

6. To train rural leaders integrally to acquire an awareness of the reality and thus project themselves towards their own communities.

7. To integrate our human and technical resources of basic social promotion with other public and private institutions that seek structural change with a view to technical and scientific development of the rural areas (pg. 5-6).

Specific Objectives. In addition to the general goals and objectives described above, CAPS had specific objectives that can also be found in the 1976 brochure by Rafael Landívar University. These specific objectives are stated as follows:

> Through the methodology of group participation and creativity, CAPS makes a special effort to:
>
> 1. Further a greater ability to analyze the problems of development now faced by the rural communities.
>
> 2. Analyze and set the priorities of the rural inhabitants' aspirations and needs, with a view to harmonious development within the nation.
>
> 3. To discover capabilities and abilities in planning, setting priorities and implementing the community's

projects in order to achieve an integral, liberating development.
.....

5. Become aware of the fact that all Guatemalans can stand on their own and that a solution to their problems can be found through mutual help and the cooperation of other institutions.

6. To train and activate community groups in order for them to grow as persons, evaluate activities, and solve the community's problems.

7. Motivate and train individuals for them to work as a community, through the formation of groups and leadership, and achieve the development of their own capabilities and potentials, and at the same time understanding the obligation to respect and be respected.

8. Give people an opportunity to acquire a series of skills and attitudes that will enable them to ascend progressively toward higher standards of living (pg. 6-7).

These goals and objectives have naturally evolved together with the significant changes that CAPS has experienced over the years, but most of them can still be considered CAPS goals and objectives. Yet, some of them are no longer up to date.

From 1976 to 1989, the administrators, trainers, extensionists, and community promoters of CAPS learned that trying to achieve their ambitious and idealistic goals was not going to be easy in a country that traditionally has resisted social change. They learned harsh personal lessons in the late seventies and particularly in the early eighties about the power of the counter forces opposed to change and "liberation".

Certainly, the concept and possibility of a "harmonious development within the nation" stated in one of their objectives suffered tremendously during that time, and today most core personnel interviewed do not believe in that possibility. The innocence was lost.

CAPS goals and objectives today reflect the historical crises and phases that the institution has gone through over the years. They are realistic, focused, and down to earth. They are discussed in the final part of this chapter.

Organizational Structure and Staffing Pattern

CAPS possesses its own organizational structure and enjoys relative autonomy from the university. CAPS organizational structure as of 1976 is shown in Figure 1.

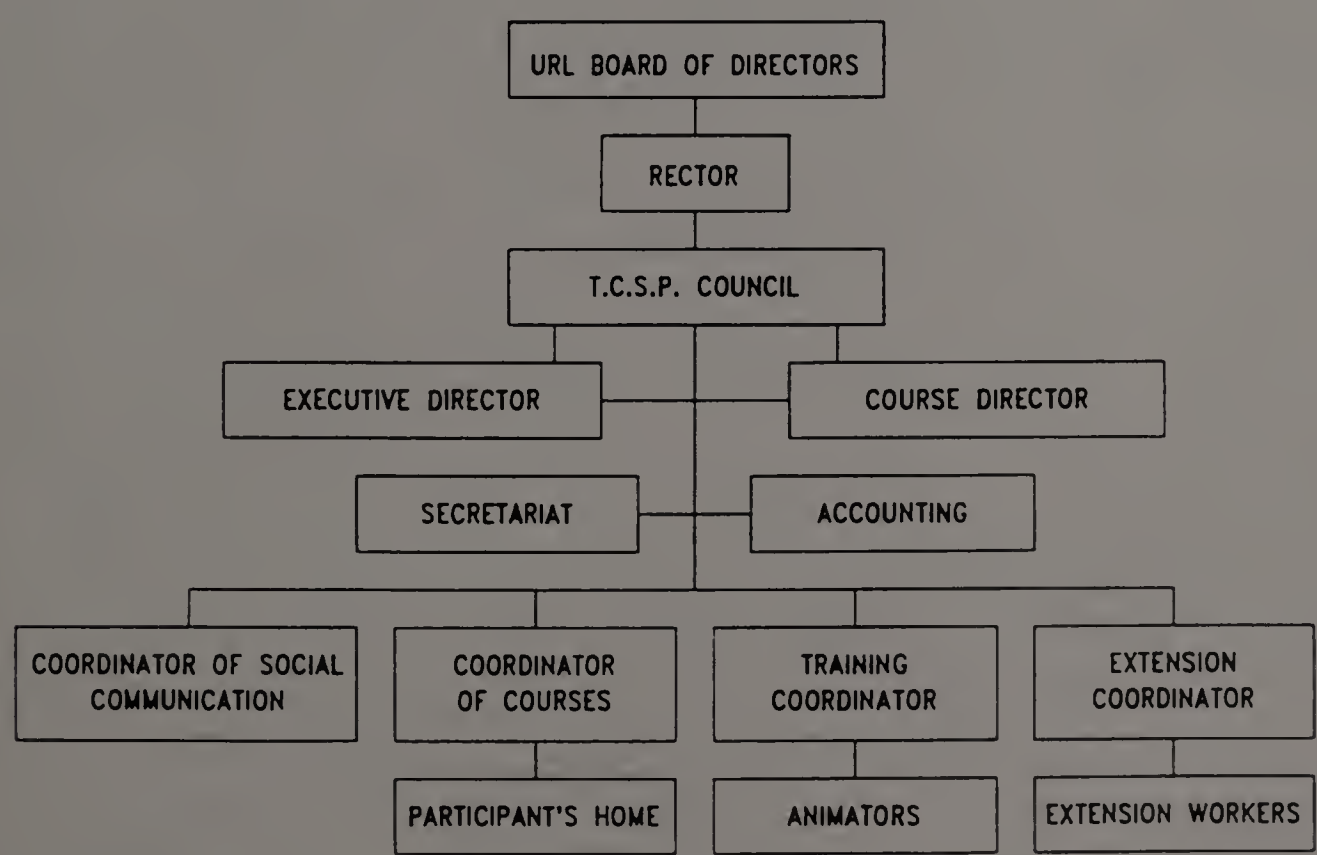

Figure 1 **Organizational Chart of CAPS**

Operation. This is how the different units of CAPS coordinated and carried out their individual and collective operation, as stated in the 1976 publication:

> The CAPS Council, main authority at the Center, in conformity with the philosophy and methodology of the program, shares the work load with the CAPS team, both in planning and implementation, and in voicing the promoters's concerns, as well as in the continuous and periodic evaluation of the program and each of its activities.. The Council holds regular meetings once a week... All of the CAPS team meets several times a month to report plan, convey the promoters' concerns and those of the communities, and to evaluate the activities... CAPS works as a team, not individually... The coordinator of each of the groups: administrative, of animators and extension teachers, is ultimately responsible for his group and keeps in constant communication with it through work in common and in meetings... (pg. 7).

In 1976, CAPS had a second organization chart that supposedly "represents the life of CAPS, the mutual influence of the bodies, groups and persons. There is a continuous interaction among all of its members (university, CAPS, promoters and communities)... By following the direction of the arrows one sees a flow, like a river and its tributaries, that runs through the University, CAPS, the Extension Auxiliaries, Promoters and Communities. In turn, there is a reflux, also with its tributaries, which flows through the communities, Promoters, Extension Auxiliaries, CAPS, and the University" (pg. 8).

I had the opportunity to interview the Executive Director of CAPS and I asked him this question: **What is the current administrative and organizational structure?** This was his response:

> Right now.. we have at the top the **University Rectory**, the **Advisory Council** ... the **executive director**, the **administrative and course director**,...the **kitchen department**,.. the **house coordination** department, we have the support of an **accountant** and of a **secretary**, and then we have the **training** and **extension** departments, and **the communities and promoters** who are also part of the CAPS structure. We can also put it upside down because actually the latest organizational charts that we have... are communities, committees, extensionist, training department, extension department, administration and rectory. We can put it upside down, can't we ? ...

The Advisory Council (Consejo Consultivo) of CAPS is the maximum decision-making body composed of the executive director, the financial/administrative and course director (who is also the representative of the Board of Director of the University and has always held this position), a representative of the training department and a representative of the extension department. This Advisory Council meets at least once a month, and is responsible for all policy-making and administrative decisions.

One of the new things that I observed and learned in the field in regard to CAPS organizational structure is that their extension department has been expanded to include what they call pre-extensionists. These are community promoters who because of their special qualities and talents have been hired to be in a kind of in-service training for 2 to 3

years, at the end of which they become full-fledged extensionists in charge of a specific number of communities in, most likely, his own province.

This gradual expansion of the number of field personnel does not surprise me, since CAPS now serves 92 rural communities throughout the country, and for that they only have about 10 experienced extensionists. So they have added 10 to 15 pre-extensionists to take up the slack and thus provide a better extension service to the promoters and their communities. Another reason for this increase in field personnel is that at least three of the most experienced extensionists will retire soon, due to illness or age. This an effort to have somebody ready to replace them. A benefit of the increase in field personnel is the possibility of providing better follow-up.

At the operational level, CAPS has become a dynamic institution which has evolved from an earlier stage of being just an educational and training organization to a development organization committed to rural community development through concrete projects at the village level that truly make a difference in the lives of the villagers. Those projects are now socio-economic, infrastructural, cultural and educational.

They now have a revolving loan program which is directly benefiting organized groups of various kinds and their families, and providing them with a fair opportunity

to have access to credit to buy land, start their own crops, build their own homes and be able to afford education for their children. CAPS is also trying to achieve financial self-reliance, and the loan program is a major thrust in it.

Because of these new goals and development strategy, the work of the extensionist is now very complex and difficult: first of all, he has to frequently visit "his" communities (each extensionist is responsible for at least 4 rural villages and sometimes up to 8), hold meetings with the community promoters or with organized groups, supervise specific community projects, follow-up on the training courses attended by community leaders, conduct short training seminars, and also participate in the selection process of those participants who go to specific training courses in Guatemala City.

In addition to that, the extensionist is also responsible for keeping track of the loans given to specific groups in his communities, and to make sure that the individual or collective repayment plan of those loans is honored. He also has to attend monthly meetings with the other extensionists and the executive director (who is himself an extensionist in one of the highland provinces), in which they report out the status and progress of their community projects, their problems, their needs, etc.

They may also have meetings with the training staff to suggest potential content topics of future training courses

or attend meetings with the whole CAPS staff on occasion. Coordinating efforts with governmental agencies or with other private institutions, is also part of their job.

The duties of the pre-extensionist are very similar to those described for the extensionist, except that he may have less communities and less responsibilities. They also have monthly meetings with the executive director and with the experienced extensionists.

Who Are CAPS Community Promoters?

Community promoters carry out village-level human promotion and community development. In 99% of cases were born in the community that they serve. They are villagers of equal status with others but, they possess qualities of leadership, volunteerism, honesty, and a strong desire and commitment to the progress and development of their own community. Most are married with children. The vast majority are male but, women's groups run by female promoters are becoming more common in some indigenous communities.

CAPS promoters are usually literate but, their formal education is at the elementary school level. Their non-formal education and training may include participation in several CAPS training courses or courses and seminars from other institutions. A small percentage of them have attended training courses in foreign countries.

Most are volunteers. Their motivation to be volunteer promoters of CAPS varies. Most are self-motivated community leaders who want to serve their communities. The community rewards them with recognition and respect. Other are motivated by the potential benefit that a project might bring to themselves and their families. Others are motivated by the potential reward of participating in training programs in Guatemala City.

Volunteering time, however, puts strain on their income-generating time. A good number of promoters trained by CAPS are not working as volunteers anymore, perhaps due a lack of economic or educational incentives. A few of them have become salaried promoters for government agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, or for the new Ministry of Development.

Training Needs and Selection Process

The training needs of community promoters vary according to their personal needs as individuals and as promoters/leaders of specific community development projects. Usually, at the personal level they need training in community promotion, working with groups, leadership and human relations. For community or group projects they need training in community organizing, planning, project development and implementation, budgeting and basic accounting, proposal writing, evaluation and follow-up techniques, and others.

The process of selecting participants for the training courses taking place in Guatemala City is done democratically. The extensionist announces the schedule of courses several weeks in advance and then asks the village development committee to think about potential candidates to be participants in these courses. After a week or so, the community decides who they are going to send to the training program, based on the qualities of the candidates, on project needs, and the needs of the community. They usually can send one or two representatives per village. Sometimes they send promoters who have attended previous seminars.

Issues in Training Community Promoters

There are several issues in training community promoters for rural development in Guatemala. The ones that I described below have been selected based on my direct observations of training programs for promoters and on the views of community promoters, trainers, administrators and field extensionists of CAPS.

Purpose of Training

This is one of the most important issues in training community promoters in Guatemala today. It is important because among the hundreds and hundreds of development organizations working in Guatemala, there are quite a few that are involved in training villagers to be community promoters. The question is, why are all these organizations

involved in training community promoters, what is their purpose in training them? The answer to that question may lie in an analysis of the nature, philosophy, methods and goals of the training organization.

This issue is important to NGOs because they need to find out what development organizations have a similar purpose and methodology in training promoters in order to form coalitions or associations. By exclusion, they also find out which ones are not compatible in philosophy, purpose and methods of training.

Selection of Participants

This is an issue that several interviewed community promoters and CAPS personnel singled out as one of the main problems in training community promoters. They argued that even though communities and extensionist are supposed to carefully choose candidates to participate in training courses, in many instances the trainers ended up with participants who were poorly selected and who did not fit the selection criteria.

When I observed a one-week CAPS training program for rural promoters in Guatemala City, I was able to confirm that a few participants did not belong in that course. Some told me that they did not represent any rural community. They were just guests. Promoters in rural areas think that this situation is not fair to those rural people who want to

get a chance to participate for the first time in a training program but who are never given one.

Who to select, with what criteria, for what training course, are some of the most important questions to be asked during the process of selecting participants for a training course. The success in selecting participants for a training program depends heavily on the precision and detail with which these questions are answered.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Guatemala has many cultures and languages coexisting in the same territory. At the CAPS training site in Guatemala City, selected participants usually recognize that their group is not homogeneous. There are participants from the ladinos of the East to the indigenous of the Western highlands to the Kekchí and Cackchiquel indians of the Northern and Central regions respectively.

Cultural and linguistic diversity becomes an issue for participants and trainers alike. Trainers have to be sensitive and skillful in dealing with this issue during the training. Participatory methodology allows participants and trainers to deal with diversity through open discussions, consciousness raising, small group work, problem-solving techniques, human relations and leadership training.

Ethnicity

This is an issue not only of training but also an important social and political issue in Guatemala. Ethnic discrimination and prejudice against indigenous people by mestizos and whites is a historical issue in Guatemala.[1] Since colonial days, indigenous people have suffered racial and social discrimination. The Spanish conquerors enslaved the Indians that they did not kill and placed them at the bottom of the colonial social and economic structure.

Independence from Spain in 1821 did not mean much to the Indians. In 1989, when I did research in Guatemala, the situation for the "indígenas" of Guatemala had not changed: still poor, suffering racial, social and economic discrimination. The Indigenous people plan to recognize 1992 as the 500th anniversary of the Indigenous Resistance movement in Guatemala.

I may clarify that a very small number of indigenous families have been able to scape the vicious cycle of poverty, mostly through commerce, and are now affluent and able to provide higher education to their sons and daughters. However, they are only a small minority of indigenous people. The majority of them remain in abject poverty.

In a training for rural community promoters, ethnicity is a very delicate issue because participants bring their racial prejudices with them, a reflection of their education

and position in the social structure. Trainers know that they have to deal with this issue appropriately as soon as it presents itself. Sessions on human relations and ethnic awareness are important here. Ethnic relations in a training program can be an enriching learning experience for participants, provided that the setting is conducive to that effect.

Women's Representation and Participation

Women's representation and participation in training programs for community promoters is a very important issue and will continue to be in the immediate future. What community promoters told me and what I observed, is that very few women are selected to attend training courses in Guatemala. I also observed that there are very few female community promoters in the rural areas of Guatemala.

Women are underrepresented not only in training programs but also in rural community development efforts in general. During my regional visits to villages in Guatemala, I could only find two or three organized women's groups, and almost no representation of women in positions of leadership, such as in community councils, development committees, and community authorities.

Depending on a trainer's consciousness of this issue and on the NGO's stand on it, a training program in rural community development may or may not address this issue. In the case of CAPS, trainers and field extensionists make

great efforts in trying to change attitudes towards women, but confront stiff resistance from people who base their position on stereotypes and tradition.

This issue is one of the most difficult and elusive that trainers and field extension workers of CAPS have to deal with. Progress has been made but a very slow pace. For additional views of community promoters and CAPS personnel on the gender issue, see Chapters VI and VIII.

Follow-on Training

This issue relates directly to the long-term success of a training program for community promoters. Promoters and trainers agree that for a training program to be successful in the long run, follow-on training has to happen at the village level to ensure that the community promoter feels supported and confident in what s/he is doing. Follow-on training may also mean to come back to the central training site for reinforcement courses. The role of the field extension worker of CAPS in follow-on training is a highly debated issue within the organization. There are discrepancies on the conceptualization of it, and also on the methods to accomplish the task. Trainers interpret follow-on training in one way and field extensionists in another.

Ideology

This is perhaps one of the most important issues in any training program for rural community promoters. Whatever the general ideological principles of a training organization may be, they will invariably influence the content, methods, and goals of the training program. The ideology of trainers and participants also comes into play.

This issue is important for CAPS trainers because they try to create an environment where all ideological positions are respected, even the religious ones. Trainers encourage participants to express their opinions and beliefs and to discuss them with an open mind. The trainers themselves, try to be "objective" during discussions or presentation of material, but are not afraid to express their own beliefs when asked.

There are other issues such as content, location and duration of training programs for community promoters. They are discussed in other sections and chapters of this dissertation.

Challenges in Training Community Promoters in Guatemala

The main challenge in training community promoters in Guatemala is the volatile political situation of Guatemala. It is impossible do to anything in rural areas in Guatemala without taken into consideration this political factor.

One of the manifestations of this political factor is the political violence that has ravaged the country since

1954. Somewhere between thirty thousand to one hundred thousand people have died as a result of this violence. Nobody knows the exact number.

The real challenge is how to do training and rural community development work in spite of adverse political conditions. CAPS has had to create strategies to adapt to changing political conditions in order to protect the lives of community promoters and field personnel and to survive institutionally.

One such strategy since the late 1970s was to switch the training of social promoters from the villages and municipalities to Guatemala City. In 1989, the core of the training done by CAPS was done in Guatemala City, with some sporadic training seminars implemented by field extensionists in rural areas.

Another challenge during a training program for community promoters is how core trainers can avoid being biased in discussions related to religion. This is particularly important nowadays when a bitter religious struggle goes on between the Catholic and Evangelical churches for the souls and minds of Guatemalan people.

In the case of CAPS, this is a very delicate issue because it functions within the administrative structure of a private, Catholic university. This affiliation has a general influence in what CAPS does, but they try very hard to be unbiased when dealing with other people.

For the trainers this is a very special challenge because participants will, at one point or another, bring up the issue of religion and its role in community development. If the trainer is not religious, this is a very awkward and difficult situation to deal with. If he is religious, it is difficult for the trainer to be unbiased and balanced when discussing the role of religion.

Another important challenge in training promoters is how to make the training they received relevant to the reality of social and economic conditions in which they live. In more specific cases, the challenge is how to make the training of promoters relevant to socio-economic and income generating projects that are taking place in certain rural communities. Coordination and constant dialogue with field extension workers and promoters, and precise assessments of participant training needs are crucial to have success in training promoters in what they really need.

CAPS Training and Development Strategy

Training community promoters was a major goal of CAPS right from the beginning. The founders of CAPS believed that training community leaders to become promoters of rural development was the right strategy to begin to address the enormous problems of rural poverty in Guatemala. After being trained, promoters were supposed to start a process of profound change in their communities that would start to have a positive impact at the national level.

The problem was that CAPS was training hundreds, thousands of community leaders without an effective follow-on program for those already trained or a clear vision of what was going to happen next. They kept training as many rural people as they could.

The strategy in those first years was too broad and difficult to sustain. The few field extensionists working at the time (late sixties) had too much territory to cover and too many people to assist. CAPS director and core staff realized that their rural development strategy had to be revised and changed.

The training strategy of CAPS has been, then, directly and historically linked to the changes in the larger rural development strategy of the organization. Whenever the overall goals of the Center changed, the training strategy also changed. Thus, we can trace the evolution of CAPS training strategy to the history of the overall development strategy of the Center itself.

Evolution of CAPS Training Strategy

While in Guatemala in 1989, I had the chance to interview some of the most experienced extension workers and trainers that they have. One of them, who has been with the institution for more than 22 years, had this to say about the beginnings of CAPS rural development and training strategy:

> When we started the courses at CAPS they lasted a month and a half because the intention was.. that the promoter had to be given a "big package" of knowledge, but we started listening to them and they would suggest 1) that it was impossible for them to learn everything, and 2) that it was too much time they had to stay in the capital. They suggested that it was better to cover just the essence of the course... We saw that what they said was real, so the course was reduced from one and half months to 15 days only. We were from the beginning of CAPS until the year 1980 in a phase of "formación de promotores" (promoter training)...

The first phase of CAPS training strategy was then one in which thousands of community leaders participated in training courses to become social promoters. Then it was assumed that these promoters would come back to their own communities and take initiative in training other people, forming work groups or even create some development programs or projects.

The support of the extensionist, in this first phase, was sporadic because he had a lot of territory to cover, and also because the philosophy was that the trained social promoter had to find the answers or solutions to community problems by himself or in cooperation with the members of his/her community. This first phase was very dependent upon funding provided by international agencies. Funding agencies such as USAID influenced and conditioned the nature of CAPS training program. The training strategy at this stage was very weak on extension work and follow-on training.

In 1970, a second phase is started in which the course is reduced to 15 days on the average; participants are given

room and board allowances and transportation money but not as much as in the first phase, when participants received large allowances that were a magnet to attend, a fact that was in contradiction with the very nature of the program.

Still in this second phase, CAPS training strategy limits itself to prepare community promoters needed by other institutions without proper follow-up by the extensionists and without a clear strategy of rural community development. By the year 1980, CAPS had trained between 14,000 and 17,000 social promoters.

Then, in 1980 a crisis developed: the community promoters were dissatisfied with the stagnation of their communities and wanted change. This is the way the executive director describes the nature of that crisis:

> We realized that the program was out of focus, the people themselves were suggesting that it was not well focused... and through the periodic evaluations done, they have indicated.. what has been appropriate and what has not.. and.. given us guidelines to get to where we are now ... but coming back a little bit, the peasant told us: **'well, no more training, I am not going to live off training alone, I need to eat!' ...** and then the problem that they have [is] that they are not eligible for credit, they cannot pay back.. and so we gather strength to face the challenge: **to restructure the program...**

Another experienced extension worker described the beginning of this third phase as follows:

> Already in 1980 we started thinking more on the needs and suggestions of some of the promoters. Then in 1981 a new phase takes off. We did not continue to train more promoters but rather more follow-up was given to those who were already trained... we worked in more concrete things, such as bridges, roads, health posts, schools, communal hall...

One of the members of the training staff who has been with CAPS for almost 10 years understood this third phase of the training and development strategy this way:

> From 1981 to this date...CAPS started thinking about Project 81... it was believed that in many communities there were many social promoters, and that it was important for these communities with plenty of promoters to get involved in development programs...Thus the extensionist selected communities to work with them knowing that there were promoters already trained in there... the concept of community development at that time was that **the communities should seek development in an integral way...** people should not only develop in a material sense but also in a spiritual sense...

From 1981 to 1989, this third phase has been basically the same, except for the introduction of a loan program which is supposed to give promoters and their communities access to fair credit and technical support from the extension and training departments.

The current training strategy assumes that each community has a comprehensive development program, and that people working in the specific community projects need specific training as well. The extensionist and the community, then, select the people who come to participate in the training courses that are in accordance with the detected needs of the communities. Examples of past and present themes of these training courses are the "Laboratorio Vivencial" (Human Relations and Human Behavior), community development, agriculture, preventive health, "Civismo" (critical analysis of the Guatemalan Constitution), and others.

The general objective of the current training program of CAPS is that people acquire more knowledge and skills to better face and solve the problems that particular community projects pose to them. Another objective of the training strategy, in the words of one of the core trainers, is that people acquire "more consciousness of what they are, .. that they value themselves, and that they get out of dependency and paternalism".

The best and most recent summary of CAPS rural development strategy was put forward by the executive director himself who said: "The current CAPS strategy of rural development is based on 3 components: 1) basic and determining, is the aspect of **training and "formación" of promoters;** then 2) would be the aspect of **development, promotion and consolidation of community organization;** and 3) as a complement to the other two, **credit support and permanent advisory to any kind of development project..".**

Summary

This chapter examined the nature of the Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) in Guatemala. A description of its philosophy, goals, general methodology, organizational and operational structure, and training and development strategy was provided. A brief discussion on characteristics and role of CAPS community promoters and the issues that arise from training them was also provided.

Community promoters have played an important role not only as learners but also as teachers in the overall training and development strategy of CAPS. Their voices have sparked major changes at different stages of CAPS history. Credit should be given to CAPS core personnel for allowing dialogue to happen when dissatisfied villagers and promoters were asking for justifiable change.

CAPS is a Guatemalan training and development institution that has traveled a long journey from 1967 to the present. Three major stages can be identified in its evolution: 1) Being a funding-dependent institution (esp. on USAID funds) that trained thousands of promoters with an unclear purpose and development agenda; 2) a relatively funding-dependent institution which continued to train community promoters for other institutions, but still lacked a clear rural community development agenda; and 3) from 1981 on, an almost self-reliant and much more focused training and rural development institution that supports a plan of "selected communities" with specific and concrete community development projects to which the work of extensionists, promoters and trainers is applied.

Endnotes

1. See Stephen and Wearne (1984) Central American Indians, Minority Rights Group, Report No. 62, for a historical perspective on indigenous people in Guatemala.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMMUNITY PROMOTER'S CONCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS IN TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction to Rural Extension Education Work

Community promoters who participate in programs of rural community development do not carry out their community promotion work in isolation. Usually, they have the support of the rural extension worker, whose role in following up training seminars and community projects at the village level is a very important element for the success of community development programs.

CAPS has used rural extension workers since its establishment in the mid sixties. In the beginning CAPS had only three or four extension workers but that situation changed as community promoters working with CAPS demanded more support and training at the village level. As of the last quarter of 1989, CAPS had approximately twenty five extension and pre-extension workers.[1]

When I got to Guatemala in July of 1989, I explained the purpose and multi-regional scope of my study to experienced extension workers of CAPS. Once they were convinced of the potential benefits of my study for CAPS as an organization (e.g., I would write a separate report on the status of their training strategy), they helped me visit many rural communities and provinces.

The reasons for doing a multi-regional study instead of concentrating in one region or province were a) by visiting provinces of four different regions I would be able to interview community promoters who possessed varied cultural, ethnic, social and economic backgrounds; b) I could assess how the inherent contextual factors of each region influenced the work of community promoters; c) I could contrast differences and similarities among rural communities and among community promoters; and d) I could gather a wider range of qualitative data on the conceptions of success in training and community promotion of the volunteer community promoters working with CAPS.

Almost as soon I arrived in Guatemala, Ramón, a veteran field extension worker of CAPS, invited me to go with him to have my first visit to rural villages of Guatemala and observe rural extension education first hand. On Wednesday, July 19, 1989, at around 5:45 a.m., we left Quezaltenango for the province of San Marcos. The trip took approximately four hours. The road is paved only one third of the way. From then on, is dirt and gravel. It is trip through the highest mountains of Central America, with spectacular views of the beautiful Sierra Madre mountains and of the Tacaná and Tajumulco volcanoes.

Soon we arrived at Cantón Tuismil, Tacaná, San Marcos. People seemed to be happy to see us. Two local community promoters in charge of agricultural and livestock projects,

spoke about the status of the reforestation and community vegetable garden projects. We were standing right in the middle of hundreds of seedling trees. They emphasized that all projects are intertwined and "integrally" coordinated and that "each project generates another one".

I was very impressed with the participation of women in this community. They have a women's association comprised of 60 people actively participating in the reforestation project as well as the agricultural and livestock projects.

Finally, we reached our destination: Cantón San Pablo, Tacaná, San Marcos. Ramón has been working here for ten years. In these ten years, this community has attained a high degree of organization and has accomplished several projects. They have, for instance, built a full primary school, a cooperative grocery store with its own warehouse, a communal pharmacy, and they were in the process of building a fairly modern health clinic that might be functioning by now.

In San Pablo, we had a meeting with a women's group to that wanted to initiate a pig raising project. The livestock project promoter told them that it would be a good idea for them to participate in a training seminar on how to raise pigs before they invested time and money in the project. They agreed on that, and a date was chosen to conduct the seminar.

I learned from this session that CAPS does not rush people into projects; on the contrary, they try to look at all possible angles and draw on factual examples of success and failure to encourage and caution people at the same time. I was beginning to understand the meaning of one of the slogans of CAPS rural development strategy: *"Lento Pero Seguro"*, which means "Slowly But Surely".

We left the village late in the afternoon under heavy rain. The condition of the road deteriorated quickly, forcing us to avoid holes and obstacles. We finally arrived back in San Marcos. We dropped off the livestock promoter, and then proceeded to Quezaltenango. We arrived around 11:30 p.m. I was tired and sore all over. Ramón told me with a smile: "Welcome to field work. Now you know how it is".

This grueling one-day trip to villages in San Marcos, near the western border with Mexico, was an exploration of actual rural settings, a chance to talk informally with community promoters and to observe first-hand what they do and how they do it.

Interviews with Community Promoters

On August 2, 1989, I initiated an ambitious journey into four major regions of Guatemala: The Eastern, Northern, Central Plateau, and Western Highland regions and corresponding provinces and villages. It was a journey in search for data that would provide answers to my research

questions, and in search for the opportunity to meet and talk with grass-roots community promoters. What follows is an account of those visits to the various regions, and presentation of original data collected from promoters in regard to their conceptions of successful training in community development and related issues. I interviewed a total of 44 promoters. I will present data from representative interviews with promoters of each province and region served by CAPS in Guatemala.

Community Promoters of The Eastern Region

In the provinces of Jutiapa and Zacapa of the Eastern region, I interviewed 16 community promoters, 7 in Jutiapa and 9 in Zacapa. The total of rural communities visited in this region was seven.

On August 2, I went to a bus terminal in Guatemala City. There I found a bus going to Jalpatagua, Jutiapa. I had to wait for a while so I bought a national newspaper. I can remember feeling tense and disturbed reading the details of the murder of Mr. Danilo Barillas the day before.

The trip took about two and a half hours. Víctor, CAPS extension worker in Jutiapa, was waiting for me a crossroad point. He told me that first we would go to his home, have lunch, and then go visit our first village.

After lunch, we were on our way to San Pedro. The road was worse than the one to San Marcos. Víctor told me that sometimes he has to go there on horseback when his 4x4

vehicle cannot make it. The village of San Pedro is located just a few kilometers away from the border with El Salvador.

On our way there, I asked Víctor about the cultural and political context of the Southeast. He told me that people in this region are politically conservative, reserved and suspicious of outsiders. Therefore, I may not get a lot of information out of them. He said jokingly: "here you have to take their words out with a spoon".

When we arrived, I noticed that almost all of the people were *"ladinos"* (a term in used to describe people who are of mixed Spanish and Indian blood), also called *"mestizos"*. They spoke Spanish and wore western-style clothing.

This community is agricultural. I saw corn, black beans and other vegetable fields, cattle and pigs. Black beans is the main cash crop of the community. We found one of the community promoters and Víctor asked him to announce a meeting with the village development committee.

From the beginning I could sense conservatism. When we stopped by the closed gate of the school, people were criticizing the striking teacher for not coming to work. They put two large padlocks chained to the gate of the school to prevent the teacher from entering. They seemed determined to throw him out. They did not understand the reasons for the strike and were not sympathetic. Víctor

thought the teacher had made a mistake by not showing up to explain his side of the story to the community.

During the meeting with the promoters I was introduced as a friend of CAPS doing research with community promoters. I introduced myself too and explained the purpose of my visit to their community. I found out that approximately sixty people of San Pedro have participated in at least one of CAPS's training courses, but of those sixty people only about five of them have received consistent follow-on training.

After the meeting, I had the chance to sit down with Constantino and Bonifacio, two of the community promoters who volunteered to talk to me. I knew this was the first chance to pilot-test my interview guide and also my first chance to try to establish an authentic dialogue. As expected Constantino and Bonifacio were not too eager to answer my questions. They were very reserved and tentative. They did not trust me completely. Nevertheless, we had the following exchange:[2]

MS: How do you define a successful community promoter?
C: It would be like a leader who sees after the progress of the community... through his wisdom,..knowledge,.. gives priority to things that are urgent in the community.
B: He is a leader. He is more trained and capable to do anything. He has foundations to be able to convince people to meet, to present and explain a project...

MS: What are the characteristics of a community promoter?
C: To be democratic; be nice and kind...
B: The same. Not to be egotistical in any form; to always respond to questions; to achieve unity in the community...

MS: What is the role of the promoter in the process of community development?
C: To see how one can promote something that has value so that the community becomes enthusiastic about it.
B: There are things that one cannot develop because there is a lack of knowledge or skill. It is an important work because one participates to do something...

Just when we were starting to feel comfortable, a rainstorm began to fall. Víctor ran to where I was, and told me that we had to leave immediately, otherwise we would get stuck in this village for one or two days due to the bad condition of the road. I thanked the two promoters for their time, got in the car, and left the community.

In the evening of August 2, 1989, I had an informal meeting and dialogue with four social promoters who are not active anymore. They attended training courses many years ago in Guatemala and participated in development projects in several communities but not anymore. They either got tired, afraid of the political violence, or concentrated more on their personal development. Now, even though they are teachers or have other occupations they are still interested in cooperating in rural development projects.

Next day, August 3, 1989, we went to the Azulco village, in the *municipio* of Jalpatagua, Jutiapa. When we arrived, a large group of people, almost all women, was waiting for us. The scheduled meeting started immediately. In my notes for the day, I wrote that there were approximately fifty women present. They were very enthusiastic about present and future projects. There was

no problem here in selecting the person that would represent them in the upcoming "Project Management" training course. In a quick democratic process, they selected the person and gave her name to the extensionist.

In this agricultural village of Azulco, I talked to four female community promoters. They were experienced promoters who have been doing volunteer work for up to six years. After explaining what I was doing, I started talking to them and asking questions. These are the answers to some key questions:

MS: What is the role of the community promoter in the process of development?
* Motivate people, orient, and teach things that they do not know.
* To talk about the benefits that projects have for the community.
* Some men think that women can't do community work.
* Men accept here that women are promoters. The husbands take it well, because they know that it is beneficial for everybody.

MS: In what kind of CAPS training course were you participant and when?
* Preventive Health/Nutrition, 4 years ago
* Civics, 3 years ago
* Preventive Health/nutrition, 3 years ago
* Community Development, 3 years ago

MS: What do you think of CAPS training methodology?
* The method is practical, little theory; it is participatory, and uses group techniques...
* The health course is useful and applicable. It has helped me on a personal and community level...

It became evident during the course of this group interview that several of the questions were not being understood by the promoters. I had to skip or rephrase them during the interview process. I knew that I had to go back

and analyze the wording of the questions to make them more appropriate.

In addition to that, Víctor had warned me that in this area it was very inappropriate to use a tape recorder to interview community promoters. They would be uncomfortable and suspicious. I followed his advice, even though the lack of a tape-recorder made it difficult for me to take note of everything that they were saying.

That same night I sat down and critically analyzed my interview guide. I eliminated questions that were redundant or irrelevant and ended up with a more streamlined guide. I also decided to interview people on a one-to-one basis to have a more in-depth dialogue with each promoter.

The next day, August 4, we went to "El Paraíso", a coastal community that is just a few kilometers from the Pacific Ocean. In this hot village of 3,000 inhabitants, I interviewed community promoter Horacio. He is a young, bright man born in a nearby town. It was easy to establish communication with him because he was eager to tell his story. My interview with him went extremely well. I spent two and a half hours with him. What follows is the essence of our exchange as it relates to his conceptions of successful training for promoters:

MS: How many CAPS courses have you attended?
* I have attended 4 CAPS courses since 1982... in Community Development, Human Relations, Civics, Project Development, and *Laboratorio Vivencial*.

MS: What are the characteristics of a community promoter?

* He knows how to conscientize the community. He knows how to speak in public. He knows how to behave himself. He is self-critical. He and the community treat each other with mutual trust and respect.

MS: How do we know if a community promoter is successful?
* He knows how to lead his community. He knows how to solve the problems without creating new ones. He takes the decision of the majority. He has the support of the community, and is able to motivate and to work with his compañeros. The promoter with training usually has more success.

MS: How can you tell if CAPS's training programs are successful here?
* Well, the compañeros return with new ideas..., at least one third of them return with a lot of enthusiasm. They come back to apply new techniques to work with groups. They are more punctual..".

When I finished this interview, it was already early in the afternoon. It was Friday, and practically the end of my first round of interviews and visits to villages. Víctor was proud to show me the accomplishments of this community: an affordable housing project, a new health clinic, an ongoing energy project that has provided electricity to most houses in the village, a "pila comunal" (a sort of giant washing place where at least 20 people can wash their clothes by hand using tap water kept in a water tank), and small business and income-generation projects. It was interesting to see what a rural community can do with their own effort and the support of CAPS.

The next morning, Saturday, Víctor took me to the border town of Ciudad Pedro de Alvarado, and from there I took a bus back to Guatemala City. In this first trip I

visited 3 rural communities and interviewed 7 community promoters. I was satisfied with my first effort.

I went back to Guatemala City on August 9 and spent the night there. The next morning, August 10, I went to a bus terminal where I could catch a bus going East. Very few buses go to La Unión, Zacapa because it is a far away town. Finally, I got on a bus that took me to Gualán, the town closest to La Unión. When I got to Gualán around 3 p.m., there were no more buses going to La Unión, so I had to hitch a ride in a dilapidated pick-up truck that kept overheating and stalling, but it got me there. The road to La Unión is a winding, ascending road alongside beautiful coffee plantations. It was dark green everywhere. I got to La Unión around 6:30 pm. I walked to Diego's home. Diego is an experienced CAPS extensionist in charge of the area around La Unión, Zacapa.

The next day we traveled to the village of Campanario Progreso. There were a quite a few people, mostly men, waiting for us. I felt more confident than in Jutiapa.

I had the opportunity to talk to two young community promoters, Hernán and Edgar. They have been volunteer community promoters for CAPS since 1988. Hernán has attended 3 courses of CAPS in Guatemala City, all in 1988, on Community Development, Preventive Health, and Project Planning and Management. He has taken a loan from CAPS for an individual agricultural project.

Edgar, also attended the same training courses at CAPS in 1988. He is involved in a project to improve the technology in the production of coffee in his community. He has a personal loan with CAPS for an individual agricultural project too.

These are relevant parts of my conversation with both Hernán and Edgar:

MS: How do we know if a program of community promotion is successful?
H: When people get together and meet..; when they are able to express what they want.
E: implementing projects and knowing how to do them; seeing the end results of a project.

MS: What is your opinion of CAPS training courses?
H: All of the courses are the same. One arrives with fear. There is contact with everybody...; they teach piece by piece. They give participation to all. First they launch questions, then form small discussion groups, then each group presents, and finally, there is a summary.
E: One can never record everything... we learned how to work united..; the content of the course comes out of the people themselves..., groups are formed, and then among all the groups conclusions are reached in regard to an issue or question.

MS: What do you recommend to CAPS in order to improve training courses for community promoters?
H: That the trainers come to see and share with our community.
E: That the training courses and seminars be held directly in the rural communities.

After this exchange with the two promoters, we went to visit a sister community, Campanario Oratorio, not far from Campanario Progreso. There, the extensionist showed me with pride the new multiple-use hall of this tiny village. It serves as a church, cultural hall, meeting place, and party hall. We were looking for some of the promoters but we

found none. They seemed to be working in the fields or somewhere else at that time. It appeared as if we were out of luck this time.

On our way back to La Unión, Diego stopped the vehicle in a fairly unpopulated area. About the only thing there was a cornfield on the side of a steep hill. He told me that field belonged to one of the experienced community promoters in Oratorio. He wanted to check if Isidro was there. As soon as he said it, he went up the hill and started shouting Isidro's name. I wondered how anybody could plant and harvest corn on such a steep terrain.

Pretty soon his calls were answered. I saw a man coming down in a hurry. Isidro is a middle-aged farmer in very good physical condition. He was not exactly what I expected. Diego introduced us and explained the reason for my visit, and even though he was working and still sweating heavily, he was extremely friendly and eager to answer and ask questions. This is what we talked about:

MS: How many CAPS training courses have you attended?
I: Three: Human Relations (Laboratorio Vivencial), Project Planning and Management and Civics

MS: How do we know that community promotion work is successful?
I: There is more understanding...; there is more desire to work after attending a training course;... the promoter is able to motivate people;... the courses are a big part of the success in community promotion.

MS: What do you think of CAPS training courses and methodology?
I: Before I did not know how to develop myself and be someone... Through the courses I have learned to work with groups, to analyze needs... the courses have given

me self-confidence. I learned that my thinking must be focused in what I am doing... and that the application of what I learned is gradual...little by little one is improving... my own home... **The real thing is to work in the community.**

MS: What do you understand by community development?
I: It means a lot... It means to gather the people, have them talk to each other, **that is already development!...** The attainment of projects <u>is</u> development... To have a good harvest <u>is</u> development.. If this year we don't have to buy corn from somewhere else, that is already development.. To have a new cultural center <u>is</u> development.. To have a loan from CAPS is development... and even to remodel or improve our own house <u>is</u> development.. Underdevelopment is sad, ... there is nothing.

The interview with Isidro was interesting. I realized that the rural poor have their own concepts of what **development** means according to the reality in which they live. Promoters like Isidro also seem to have a good idea of how the training provided by CAPS changed them and influenced the community work that they do.

We came back to La Unión that afternoon. Diego told me that there was a meeting taking place in the main hall of a Catholic church community building. When we got there, Diego introduced me to several community promoters who are also *catequistas*[3]. I interviewed five promoters, three from the village of Campanario Progreso, one from the village of Capocalito, and one from the village of Tahuainy.

The next morning, August 12, 1989, we left early to get to a village called Capucal Chahuitán, La Unión, Zacapa. Getting there was an adventure in itself. I have never seen a road as muddy as this one. At some point, I had to get

out of the 4x4 vehicle and push it, while Diego was at the wheel, to get it out of a muddy hole. But we made it there anyway.

In Capucal I met Rodolfo, an experienced community promoter who has been collaborating with CAPS for five years. This is the essence of our conversation:

MS: What can you tell me about yourself?
R: I was born in this village, I am married, I have 11 children, I am a farmer and catechist...

MS: What are the characteristics of a community promoter?
R: Person who knows how to get along with his people..; understands the problems and needs...; motivates and organizes people; he is not paternalistic.

MS: How would you describe a successful community promotion project?
R: There is dialogue, there is understanding. Sometimes you have success and sometimes you don't; it depends on the planning.. and the economic resources...

MS: In general, how would you describe your community?
R: It is located approximately 11 km. from La Unión. There are about 200 people in the community... We produce coffee, corn, black beans, bananas, oranges. We are all catholic, only 3 evangelical...Resources: school, oratorio, road, potable water.

MS: How many CAPS training courses have you attended?
R: Two. One on social promotion for 15 days; the other on masonry for 20 days.

MS: What new things did you learn in CAPS courses?
R: I learned how to relate to other people, how to communicate.., how to do a needs assessment of the community and how to prioritize the needs.

MS: Do you think that CAPS's training of promoters is successful, and if so, how do we know that it is?
R: Yes. We notice it in the projects coordinated by CAPS. They give you orientation and support. The follow-up of the extensionist is a big support for the success of the projects.

MS: What would you recommend to improve the training of community promoters by CAPS?
R: That they give me the chance to go back to have a review or reinforcement of the same course.

This interview with the promoter Rofolfo concluded my round of visits to Zacapa, and the Eastern region of Guatemala. I was satisfied with the results because I had tackled one of the most difficult regions, but at the same time, I knew I needed to reflect on what had transcended in this region, in order to make the necessary adjustments in my research methods. I also hoped that people in other regions would be a little more candid.

Diego and I returned to La Unión after observing some of CAPS's technical upgrading projects in the production of coffee in the area. Several local farmers receive credit from CAPS for that purpose. I could see the difference in the quality of the new coffee trees: they were bigger, greener and had much more coffee fruit per tree than the ones that were not part of the project.

Back in La Unión, Diego suggested that I should return to Guatemala City that same day, because the next day the primary election of the Christian Democrat Party was going to take place at the national level. He told me that there were rumors that violence was possible in the town of La Unión. I did not want to wait and see if that threat was going to materialize, so I rode with Diego to the main highway going to Guatemala City and caught a bus.

Community Promoters of The Northern Region

Back in Guatemala City, I planed my next trip into the northern region. It is a distant region. Fortunately, Joaquín, the experienced extensionist in Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz has a telephone, so it was relatively easy to arrange my visit. We agreed that I would come to Cobán (the main city and capital of Alta Verapaz) on Wednesday, August 16, 1989.

On Wednesday, August 16, I went by bus to Cobán. The trip from takes about 4 hours. I arrived in Cobán, Alta Verapaz around noon. It is a beautiful small town 213 kilometers north of Guatemala City. It is famous for its constant mist and drizzle, popularly known as "chipi-chipi".

Another thing that you notice we you arrive in Cobán is that a lot of people speak both Kekchí and Spanish. Even those who not indigenous speak the Kekchí language. It is part of a strong heritage in this part of the country.

Joaquín was waiting for me in Cobán. We left that same afternoon for a distant village in the municipio of Panzós. I liked the idea of going to the villages as soon as possible.

We went south using the main paved highway, and then east, almost horizontally, towards the province of Izabal. For about half an hour the highway is in great shape, but after passing the town of Tactic you have to exit that

highway and enter a wide, unpaved and bumpy road going east towards the town of El Estor, Izabal.

That trip was a long and memorable one. The changes in climate were dramatic, from chilly to moderate to hot and humid. The views were beautiful because the road goes along the path of the great Polochic river. The enormous coffee plantations ("fincas") in the nearby mountains and hills are everywhere. We passed several important towns including Tamahú and Tucurú. I had no idea how far our destination was.

It took us about four hours to get to the village of La Tinta, Panzós. It was almost dusk when we got there. La Tinta is a relatively large village with about 8,000 inhabitants. It is very hot and humid there. About 95% of the people there are Kekchí Indians; they speak Kekchí as their primary language and a few Spanish as a second language.

We went directly to the offices of a local cooperative where we found several people working. Joaquín introduced me to them and explained what I was doing. He spoke in Kekchí to them, not in Spanish. They seemed to understand him very well. I realized that Joaquín was completely bilingual and that he was more comfortable talking to them in Kekchí. I felt a little bit out of place because of the language and cultural barrier. Their Spanish was limited

and my Kekchí was nonexistent. But we managed to communicate in Spanish or through the interpreter, Joaquín.

Here in the village of La Tinta I had a very interesting conversation and interview with Ernesto, a young, energetic and committed community promoter. Besides being a community promoter, he is also a bilingual education promoter and a catechist. My dialogue with him was very dynamic, intense, and long. We talked for at least two hours. These are some of the relevant notes that I took during this encounter:

MS: What are the primary conditions for the success of a community promotion program, and how do we know that it is successful?
E: Good planning, cooperation, evaluation of results and achievements..; we know that there is success when we see the change in personal attitudes, when the level of responsibility has increased..; seeing 'the fruits', evaluating...

MS: How do we know if CAPS training of community promoters is successful?
E: We know it when the promoters have put into practice what they have learned... There is a change in the way that communities work together... We notice success when the promoter himself changes his attitude from "you do it" to "we should do this", the promoter becomes more democratic...

MS: What would you recommend to improve CAPS training of community promoters?
E: It would be nice if the courses were bilingual, so that those who do not speak Spanish could participate..; participants should be required to only read and write in their own language (i.e. Kekchí); the courses should be regionalized; and seminars should be planned to take place in rural areas...

I was a little bit tired at this point but I made the effort to talk to one more of the promoters . His name is

Mariano, a Kekchí-speaking man with very limited Spanish.

Joaquín translated. This is the essence of what we talked:

MS: What can you tell me about yourself?
M: I was born in San Pedro Carchá but I have lived in this community since I was 4 years-old; I am 37 years old, married, with 6 children alive and 3 dead.. I am a member of the *Cooperativa de Consumo* (cooperative grocery store); I am in charge of the store... we sell groceries.., we have 90 members in our cooperative.

MS: What new things did you learn in the seminar and how much could you apply upon your return here?
M: It was a 'secret'. The first day ..we had to discover within ourselves how do we work in our communities...; It has not been applied yet. We are beginning to put it into practice... **we cannot feed a good thing to the hen, if the hen is not going to eat it.**

MS: How do we know if CAPS training courses for community promoters are successful?
M: I think it is a good course. It is helping a lot. It gave me a lot to do other things...; we met new people; we became very aware of our limitations. There is a lot of participation...

Usually, as part of the interview, I asked them at the end if they have any further questions or comments for me. In this village of La Tinta they certainly did. I realized that the needs and problems here are overwhelming. They both told me to use my "influence" to see if through me they could get needed resources.

Among the problems they have are: a health post that does not have medicines and does not provide treatment because there is no doctor or nurse, they do not have electricity, and only the center of town has tap water. The land problem is acute here. Most do not have land or just very small plots. There is plenty of land around but in the form of large private ranches (fincas) of hundreds, perhaps

thousands, of acres each. Most people of these communities work as "jornaleros" (wage laborers) in these large coffee plantations.

It was difficult for me to listen to their problems. Perhaps because I was coming from the U.S. they thought I had a lot of connections or access to money. It was painful for me to be there because I could see the needs right in front of my eyes. I was honest in expressing my limitations, being an outsider to the Guatemalan political and economic system. I also told them that just being aware of their problems was already a good thing because perhaps in the future I could be of help.

The next day, August 17, we got up early and got on the road around 7 a.m. We headed west and then south towards Baja Verapaz. On our way, we stopped at several villages where Joaquín coordinates or has coordinated community development projects.

At one promoter's home I could see what used to be part of a fish project: a large tank that still has a lot of fish. I also saw the small coffee plantation of this promoter. We also visited another cooperative, and then, the most impressive project of all: a solidly constructed suspended bridge over the Polochic river that extends for over two hundred meters, connecting two important villages.

After about two and a half hours, right before entering Tactic we turn south towards Salamá, Baja Verapaz. We

passed the city of Salamá and continued on to San Miguel Chicaj. After a while we arrived in the village of San Gabriel. We stopped at the cooperative store (that sells groceries, fertilizer, etc.), and stayed there.

At San Gabriel, Joaquín had scheduled a meeting with some key members of the cooperative to review their performance, the status of their loan with CAPS, and other items. I sat through a rather long meeting. When it was over I managed to talk to one of the promoters.

Federico was eager to talk to me. His Spanish is limited but adequate. The native language here is Rabinal Achí and the culture is Rabinal as well. Even though they live relatively close together, Joaquín cannot speak or understand Rabinal Achí and they don't understand Kekchí. So they communicate in Spanish with Joaquín. Some among them are trilingual: Rabinal, Kekchí and Spanish. These are the most relevant portions of our long conversation:

MS: How do we know if a program of community promotion has success?
F: The unity of the people..; the people have more interest in helping out; .. having resources, specially money..; the contribution of the people: labor, materials, etc.; have a good relation with other communities. We know that the cooperative is successful if there is an increase in sales; people from other villages come to buy here; there is a higher level of participation of people in meetings...

MS: What new things did you learn and how much could you apply upon your return here?
F: How to talk to people..; how to organize committees.., they gave us names of development organizations that could help us. What we attained was the health post

project: we worked with the people and built a health clinic. I motivated the people to do something...

MS: Do you think that CAPS training of community promoters is successful, and how do we know that it is?
F: Yes, there is success... because they give everybody a chance.., they 'conscientize' people; they talk to us with respect..., it is noticeable in the more effective way with which promoters work...

MS: What would you suggest to CAPS in terms of improving the training seminars?
F: Follow-up on the training courses received..; that they give me the chance to participate in more courses...

The following day, August 18, we went back to Cobán, and then straight to the village of Santo Tomás Purahub, not far from Cobán. I could not interview or talk to any of the promoters here because they do not speak Spanish at all, only Kekchí. In this community, CAPS is building a cultural center hall that is going to be used for religious services and for cultural activities. Joaquín had a meeting with one of the promoters on the progress of the construction. It was obviously going well.

It was the end of my field visits to Alta y Baja Verapaz. I visited 3 villages in this northern region and interviewed with 3 community promoters, but I actually saw more villages and talk informally to other promoters.

Community Promoters of the Central Plateau Region

I came back to Guatemala City on August 18, 1989. From this day on I knew that I was in more familiar terrain, namely the central and western highlands regions of

Guatemala. I decided to start in the central region and then move to the western highland provinces.

The provinces of Guatemala, Sacatepéquez and Chimaltenango comprised the central region. Chimaltenango is an important province that was served by CAPS in the sixties and seventies but not anymore due to the political violence that hit Chimaltenango hard in the late seventies and particularly the early eighties. Sacatepéquez is the province that CAPS serves now.

In Sacatepéquez I interviewed a total of nine community promoters and visited six villages. CAPS serves up to eighteen communities here, and that is why they have two extensionists in Sacatepéquez: Rolando and Enrique. What follows is an account of visits to villages and representative interviews with community promoters.

On August 22, I went to Sumpango, Sacatepéquez from Guatemala City. Sumpango is an indigenous (Cakchiquel) town that is only 40 minutes away from Guatemala City. There I met with Rolando, the CAPS extensionist, who took me on his motorcycle that same morning to the village of San José Yalú. After looking for a while, we found a group of men planting corn on a hill by the road. They turned out to be community promoters who are involved in CAPS projects.

Two of the peasants were willing to talk to me. First I talked to Carlos, a 24 year-old volunteer community promoter of CAPS for only two years. There was no

comfortable place to sit on that rugged terrain, but we managed to find a couple of large rocks. This is the relevant portion of what we talked about:

MS: What are the conditions for success of a community promotion program, and what indicates that it is successful?
C: The support of the community.., the community has to be organized..; dialogue with the members of the community.., much more participation of promoter, committees and community. The success happens when people feel happy because they can see the results: for instance, a much better and abundant harvest of corn or black beans...; or it can even be seen at the meetings, people participate much more and give their opinions..., **the more we work, the more success we have.**

MS: What new things did you learn and apply?
C: We learned about our own behavior.., the mistakes that we might be making. We learned how to organize a committee, what is the role of the committee and its members; we learned how to initiate a project. When I came back, I had meetings with my compañeros.. and I realized that I learned how to conduct meetings and how to work with others. I applied about 50% of what I learned.

MS: Do you think CAPS training of promoters is successful, and if so, what indicates that it is successful?
C: In my opinion, the course gives you success.., one learns how to implement projects and how to work in development. The training course changes you. The method has a lot to do with the success: participants and teachers form together a new idea.. The course is appropriate but one has to put it in practice in order to see results...

MS: How would you describe your community?
C: We have 670 inhabitants; we are at 5,500 feet above sea level; we are 8 km. away from the entrance to Sumpango. We produce corn, black beans, squash, and chinese pea and french string beans for export. We are 100% farmers. Here there is no migration to large fincas. There is enough land but it is getting scarce. We are 100% catholic and almost 100% indigenous.

After this interview with Carlos, I talked to Andrés, a 22 year-old farmer from this same village of San José Yalú.

He has been a community promoter collaborating with CAPS for only one year. His responses to my specific questions were very similar to those of Carlos, except that he participated in a Soil Conservation seminar in 1987 and one on Human Relations in 1988. In the first course he learned how to level soil and how to make a "Lorena" stove.

Andrés' recommendations to improve the training of promoters by CAPS were more specific. In his opinion, CAPS should "look for people who really have a commitment with their communities.., thus avoiding unnecessary expenditures by CAPS on training people who do not do anything when they come back. Economic incentives are necessary when people have to spend time in committees, visits, commissions... there are people who don't want to work in development projects because they are busy with their own subsistence work."

I realized after this day, that community promoters in Sacatepéquez, mostly of Cakchiquel descent, were much more open and also much more open-minded and critical in their thoughts. I did not know whether that openness and critical thinking was coming from their Cackchiquel culture, the closeness to the capital city or with the influence that the internal guerrilla war of the seventies and early eighties had upon them. I think it is a combination of all of the above factors. Because of this openness, the amount of

notes that I took during our conversations and interviews greatly increased.

On August 23, I returned to Sumpango. Rolando took me today to two more villages: Santa Marta and San Rafael. In Santa Marta I met Alberto, a promoter and also a pre-extensionist of CAPS. He has been participant in at least fifteen courses of CAPS. When I asked him about the methodology of the CAPS courses, Alberto said:

> It is pretty good.., the only thing is that they use only one method, the method is repetitious: 1) trainers present; 2) small group work; 3) group presentations; 4) whole group conclusions. This method is good for people who come for the first time, but for people who have come more than once it would be useful to change the teaching methodology...

I asked Alberto: Do you think the CAPS training of promoters is successful, and if so, what indicates such success? He responded:

> Yes, it has success. People are more dedicated to work [in development].., they improve themselves, they teach others with the example.. The success is based on the content because that is the essence to achieve something in someone.. The themes are of interest because they are useful to us.., one feels more motivated...

Alberto's recommendations to improve CAPS training of community promoters were very specific. He said that CAPS should a) give each participant at least 3 training opportunities in Guatemala city; b) they should be careful with the **selection** of participants; c) they should have more guest trainers in the courses, because the trainers are the same ones all the time; and d) change or vary the

methodology if the seminar is for experienced CAPS personnel.

In another village, San Rafael, I met a wonderful community promoter. Saúl is a young and energetic man with a lot of enthusiasm, hope, and experience. He is an important member of an agricultural cooperative in this village that sells vegetables to other towns and regions. I interviewed him in front of the building where they store, weigh and distribute their vegetable goods.

I talked for quite some time with Saúl. I learned that he did not know how to read and write until he was 15 years old and that the only course that he attended at CAPS in 1987 had an impact on him. As he put it: "I felt like they gave me a push forward..., when I came back I felt that I had more energy, more warmth. I liked the course a lot... one does not come only to receive but also to give ideas.."

To the question: Do you think that CAPS training of promoters is successful, and if so, what indicates such success?, he responded:

> Yes..., because one gets new ideas on how to work with people.. When we arrived we were sad and thoughtful. By the middle of the week there was already communication and confidence...At the end, we did not want to leave.. Upon return, one is confident... and thinks: **I am not afraid anymore.."**

Saúl's recommendations to improve CAPS training of promoters were: a) give more personal attention to participants (food, etc.); b) give training materials to participants (notebooks, pencils, etc.); c) organize and

implement training seminars in the communities; d) in general, the promoter needs some kind of economic incentive to produce more and be more effective.

I was impressed by the level of work and organization in San Rafael, a small village of only 672 people. They have 14 organized groups working in coordination. They all speak Cakchiquel and 75% speak Spanish very well. Perhaps the closeness to the capital of the country has had an influence in their ability or need to speak Spanish.

The following two days, August 25 and 26, I visited other villages of Sacatepéquez. This time I was with Enrique, the other extensionist in this province. It was interesting to go to the communities he works with because I found promoters here who had quite different perceptions of CAPS. I visited the villages of Rancho Alegre, El Rejón, and San Mateo Milpas Altas in the same area of Sumpango.

On the 25th, I interviewed with three young promoters, Salvador, Jesús and Moisés in the villages of El Rejón and Rancho Alegre. The three have experience in community development and have attended one to three courses in Guatemala City. The three thought that the training method was good but somehow "theoretical". Moisés would sum it up this way: "The CAPS course is good but it is mostly theoretical. CAPS would gain a lot more prestige if they would conduct the course in the rural communities.."

When asked what demonstrates the success of the training received from CAPS, Salvador responded: "It is demonstrated in my cooperative work.., now we work better than before, our group is different now. When we finished the course we felt that we had an exchange of ideas, everybody took something from the experience of each participant..". Moisés added: "The success is seen in what is put to practice of what is learned, for instance project planning;... also, now we are not deceived anymore... and we have the courage to express what we want."

When I asked these three promoters about their recommendations for improving CAPS's training of community promoters, I was surprised by the amount of suggestions and the emotion with which they were expressing them. I notice that there was agreement on one issue: CAPS training should come to the rural communities and not take place only in Guatemala City.

The three most important suggestions of these promoters were: "a) that CAPS trainers come to the countryside to give courses, so that the courses be more **practical**...and responsive to the needs of each community; b) CAPS should advise and help the cooperatives more. CAPS has helped us a lot, but now that we are a cooperative they have not taken us into account..; and c) CAPS trainers should talk less of religion and more of development: trainers speak too much of

religion during training.., they should separate religion from training..".

Some of the reasons for bringing the training to the communities are that the people of the community would get more animated and interested in participating in projects; the people of the community would better understand the work of the promoter; and the communication between CAPS and the communities would be a two-way process instead of one-way only.

I became aware during my two-day stay in these communities that one important factor affecting the relationship between CAPS and these communities is the fact that they owe large amounts of money to CAPS in the form of loans that are not being repaid on time because the cooperatives made bad business decisions and lost a lot of money. It is obviously a problem that I did not comprehend in all its historical complexity, but I could tell from the periphery that it is affecting the relationship and perhaps creating distance between CAPS and these communities in the province of Sacatepéquez.

The next day, August 26, I went with Enrique to the San Mateo village, another 100% agricultural community of 1400 inhabitants that is only 7 km. away from tourist-famous Antigua Guatemala city. I could sense more animosity towards CAPS here than anywhere else I went. There was a group of people waiting for us and eager to talk, but at the

same time very suspicious of what I was doing there.

Gustavo and Miguel, two of the promoters in the village, agreed to talk to me. They are both educated and bilingual (Cakchiquel/Spanish). They look and sound more "ladino" than indigenous, and are very articulate. Gustavo attended three CAPS courses, one in 1970 and two in 1987. Miguel attended only one in 1987. We talked for a long time about a range of issues and problems. The dialogue was dynamic but difficult to focus. These are the most relevant parts of our dialogue:

MS: What do you think of CAPS training and method?
G: I found that the first course on Social Promotion was more important than the other two.. perhaps because the first was for six weeks.., the other two were interesting too but they had a defect: the short period of time...; the other thing is that these courses have to have follow-on, otherwise you don't have depth on certain themes...
M: The methodology is different than the one used by other training institutions, CAPS is better.., but there is a problem, the expense, one cannot leave wife and children and come to Guatemala City all the time...

MS: What would you recommend to CAPS in order to improve the training of community promoters?
(both promoters agreed)
a) that trainers give out a written summary...with detailed conclusions; b) that they take into account the schooling level of participants...; c) that they give **follow-on** training every three months to the same participants who have attended certain courses..; d) that **women** participate in courses that are specific for women..; e) that the selection of participants should be done carefully and by the extensionist...

The agricultural cooperative in this community of San Mateo also has a serious problem with CAPS because of an unpaid loan. They made a bad business decision and lost thousands of dollars to a broker in the U.S. This problem

is putting a lot of pressure on the extensionist, Enrique, who is trying to figure out a way out of this financial mess for his communities.

This visit to San Mateo ended my round of visits, observations, and interviews in the Sacatepéquez area and the Central Plateau region. I remember thinking that the contrast between the regions was remarkable in many aspects. People are much more open, critical, and less innocent in the central (Sacatepéquez) region than in the eastern or northern regions. In addition, there is no doubt that the proximity of both Guatemala City and Antigua Guatemala has an impact not only on the Cackchiquel culture and language, but also on the economy of these central region communities.

Community Promoters of the Western Highlands Region

First of all, let me indicate that this western highland region is at least one fourth of the whole Guatemalan territory. It is composed of large provinces such as El Quiché, Huehuetenango, Quezaltenango, and San Marcos, and smaller ones likes Sololá, Totonicapán. It is this region that has made Guatemala a famous tourist attraction because of the concentration of indigenous peoples, cultures, languages and colorful crafts. I estimate that at least 65% of the indigenous population of Guatemala live in this region.

Several indigenous languages are spoken in this region, the main ones being the Quiché, Cakchiquel, Tzutujil, and

Uspanteca of the Quiché language group, and Mam, Aguacateca, Jacalteca, Kanjobal, Chuj and Ixil of the Mam language group. The dominant ones in the villages that I visited are Quiché, Cakchiquel and Mam. Spanish is also spoken as a second language in varying degrees.

I interviewed with 16 community promoters of CAPS in this region. I am going to present one or two representative interviews from each province, and then analyze and compare data collected from each province, give some interpretation and preliminary generalization to such data taking into account the powerful contextual and historical elements present in this region.

In tackling this region, I decided to go first with the province of Quiché, a province that has been hit hard during the recent years of insurgency and counterinsurgency violence in Guatemala. CAPS serves only the southern part of El Quiché, because the northern part is still considered a battle zone.

On Monday, August 28, I travel by bus to a crossroad outside Quezaltenango to meet Daniel, an experienced Quiché CAPS extensionist. He is bilingual, bicultural, and has a great sense of humor. When you talk to him you can definitely feel he proudly identifies with his own people, the Quiché. I was impressed with his level of commitment to bring development to various communities of the province of Quiché.

The region in which he works is still a politically sensitive area right now, and used to be one of the important battle zones in the seventies and early eighties. An important military post is very near the communities that he works with. I was apprehensive about going to visit these communities.

Daniel picked me up around 9:30 a.m. and immediately drove in the direction of one of the villages. The village is about an hour off the main highway. Very few cars enter it because you have to use an abandoned road to get there. It is not that far in distance but the drive is slow because of the bad condition of the road.

When we got there I realized that this was a community that is one hundred percent Quiché, culturally and linguistically. They spoke in Quiché all the time and not in Spanish. Daniel spoke to them and introduced me. He had to translate what I was saying. Here, in this community, I had one of the most special and emotional experiences of the entire field research.

I sat through a meeting that I could not understand because it was conducted in Quiché. They were discussing projects, problems, strategy. They seemed to be very involved in the discussion. Once in a while I got translation from Daniel. Somehow I started to feel that this community was at another level of organization and awareness in regard to development. The questions were not

innocent at all. They were critical, daring and intelligent. I never suspected that in such a small rural village they would have such a level of consciousness about the reality in which they live. But they certainly did.

I noticed that a very young man wearing a military hat was part of the audience. Nobody seem to care but I was suspicious of him. At some point during the meeting, he got up and left without saying a word. After his departure, the discussion turned even more open and daring. For a community that is being closely monitored by the military they were not afraid of speaking their mind.

After a while they turned their attention to me. They were curious about me and my thinking. They saw me as a sort of a trusting "guest speaker" that morning, so they asked me a barrage of questions of all kinds, including some that were politically compromising and at the same time very difficult for me to answer in a definite way. I cannot repeat the questions here, but suffice to say that I was taken by surprise. I was baffled and a little bit nervous. I think they enjoyed seeing me sweat trying to come up with a "good" response for each question. I had the strange sensation that I was being politically tested.

I was relieved when I got out of that classroom. We went to the humble home of one of the promoters. They offered me a modest lunch. In the middle of eating lunch, one of them confessed to me that they wanted to be nice to

me, and that was why, he told me "you did not have to cook your own lunch".

He explained, laughing, that they trusted me because I am a friend of Daniel. A lot of times, he said, they test outsiders by telling them that they have to cook for themselves. If they say "no", then they do not trust them; if they say "yes", they trust them to an extent. I thought it was a funny and strange way of testing people, but it was understandable given the circumstances in which they live.

In the early afternoon, I finally had the chance to talk to two of the promoters. They are Benancio and Sebastián. They are both young, married, with several children. I sensed that they were nervous about the information that they were giving out. At some point during the interview with them, they told me that some piece of information they had just given me was too compromising, so they basically asked me to destroy half a page of notes that I had taken. I did just that, with no regret because I did not want to endanger them or their families. I did not want to walk around with compromising written notes in my pocket, either.

This is only a small part of what we discuss with Benancio and Sebastián:

MS: What new things did you learn and how much have you been able to apply?
B: I learned how to implement a project, how to organize a group, .. and how to plan and implement a participatory research project.... I have applied a minimal part.

S: I learned that there is no person short or tall, that we are all the same.. we all have rights... It is important to relate to other people and communicate with them...I have applied about 10% because we have just begun to motivate people... and we had to look for a space to have our work sessions.

MS: Do you think that CAPS training of community promoters is successful, and how do we know that it is successful?

B: Yes, because through the course we realize that it is important to work in groups.., it guides us... Now we are not embarrassed to speak in public.., we do not do bad things, we correct ourselves.., we look for solutions to our own problems...

S: Yes, because there is achievement in our communities... The success is noticeable in the fact that fear has gone away, we are not afraid anymore..., one forgets the bad thoughts..., we speak and share with the committees so that together we can complete a project.

MS: What would you recommend to CAPS in order to improve the training of community promoters?

B: I recommend that trainers use simple words so that promoters understand well..and participate..; that they let me be a participant once again.

S: I recommend that the course be of one month, so that we learn something well..; that they train more community promoters...

After this unforgettable encounter I was tired and ready to go back. It was late in the afternoon but I could not leave unless Daniel was able to. He seemed to not be in a hurry. He had a meeting with one of the committees to discuss a project proposal. I could only understand the few Spanish words that they used in the Quiché language. I decided to visit the village store instead and talk to the attendant there. The store is not a private small business, it is a communal store. It is well stocked with groceries and other essential goods. It was a nice surprise to see this kind of store in a fairly isolated rural village.

When we left this village it was very dark already. This community does not have electricity, so it was an adventure to find our way to where the car was. Our return was scary because there is not a single light and, as I said, it is an abandoned road. There was no other car using that road at that time (about 9:00 pm). Daniel kept telling me stories about recent violence in this area. It felt like a long, long trip back to the main Inter-American Highway.

Ironically, there was a blackout on the highway's rest area too. I was certainly relieved to get on a bus that stopped there on its way to Quezaltenango from Guatemala City. I remember feeling a lot of admiration for Daniel for his conviction and for risking so much in doing this kind of work.

The next morning I returned with Daniel to the same area, except that this time we went north towards the capital of the province, Santa Cruz. We another village of where I had a direct encounter and conversation with members of the armed civil patrols. I met Santos, a community promoter who use to have an important local position in the civil patrols for many years. I interviewed him but I felt that he was holding back for some reason.

Instead of presenting some of Santos's thoughts, I will present the thoughts of a female promoter. I think it is important to hear the women's side of the story because so

far we have heard mostly from men. Her name is Elena, from the community of Chicuá Primero.

Chicuá Primero is a vibrant, one hundred percent Quiché community that has achieved a great level of organization and has accomplished a good number of community development projects. In fact, when I visited there on August 30, they were inaugurating a large and beautiful multiple-use hall. They had a colorful ceremony followed by a celebration that afternoon.

Elena is a very young promoter with only a year's experience as a volunteer in CAPS projects. Her native language is Quiché and she has good command of Spanish. I interviewed her in Guatemala City while she was attending a CAPS training seminar. Hers, was one of the first conversations that I tape-recorded. Here are some of her thoughts:

MS: How many CAPS courses have you attended and when?
E: This is my second time. Last year was the first time: a course on Preventive Health for one week in 1988, and now this one on Methodology to Work with Groups...

MS: How many women were participants in the two courses?
E: Six women in the first course of Preventive Health out 54 participants in total. In this course there are only 4 women out 34 participants...

MS: Why there is only a small number of women as participants in CAPS courses?
E: That is because people don't know yet.., they do not trust women, they say that women should not know what a man knows, they say that for a woman is not worth studying because it is not going to be useful to her.. they say it is only of value to men to study.., on the contrary, it is not valuable for women because they get married...and **that is not true!**.. they are still confused. Another thing is that maybe women want to

come to the courses, but what happens is that they don't get permission to come... their father or husband does not give them permission.

MS: What would you recommend to CAPS in order to improve its training of community promoters?

E: That they give us more opportunities to come to participate again..., to take back more knowledge, to get more training, and to continue forward with our community...

I was not surprised that it is here in the highlands where I would find some women working as volunteer community promoters. The highlands have been, historically, the vanguard of change in Guatemala, even though, as she expressed, there is still a long way to go in terms of equal opportunities for men and women.

The following week, from September 4 to September 9, I observed a CAPS seminar being conducted in Guatemala City for community leaders and promoters from many provinces of Guatemala. It was an already scheduled training course that coincidentally would give me the chance to observe the content and method of a one-week training seminar titled "Group Work Methodology". It was here, at the seminar, that I had a chance to talk to Elena and at least two or three other promoters.

The following week, I had made arrangements to meet on the 12th of September with Fernando, CAPS extensionist in Totonicapán. 'Toto', as it is popularly known, is a province of mostly indigenous people. Most inhabitants here are culturally and linguistically of Maya-Quiché descent.

I interviewed a total of 6 promoters and visited 4 villages in the province of Totonicapán. At this point in my field research, I was tape-recording all interviews because it was not a problem or culturally inappropriate here. I will select and present only three of the most representative interviews done in this province.

On the 12th of September, we visited the village of Chuanoj, Totonicapán. There, I sat through a short meeting of the "Ajnoj Pro-Integral Development Association". After the meeting I met with Evaristo, a young Quiché community promoter.

We conducted our interview outside, at the back of one the new houses built as a result of a successful community project. This is in essence what we discussed:

MS: What can you tell me about yourself?
Ev: I am married, two children... I belong to the 'Ajnoj' Association.. **'Ajnoj'** means **'that it has an idea, that it has ideas'**.

MS: What are the foundations for the success of a community development project?
Ev: See if the community accepts doing it.., see if the community has resources or possibilities or time to do it..; it has to be a well planned, easy to explain and valid project.. You also have to know how many people can contribute labor each day... It is better to see clearly and clarify: **if there is support, do it; if there is no support, leave it.**

MS: How do we know if there is success in a project?
Ev: When you achieve the goals of a project (like in our case we have completed 18 new houses).. people feel excited and have a desire to continue forward, to look for new projects. You can identify that kind of person: that person is not the same as before, that person feels happy...

MS: What would you recommend to CAPS in order to improve the training of community promoters?
Ev: I think that CAPS in terms of trainers are very qualified. I recommend that the training be conducted in a center closer to the people, so that those who want to attend are able to go, and at the same time have some leftover time to do other things.

One interesting note about the community of Chuanoj and many other communities in the highland region is that their economy does not depend only on producing and selling agricultural products. The highlands also have an important craft industry. They produce and sell all kinds of crafts: native weavings, clothing, rugs, bags, masks, hammocks, jewelry, leather products, wooden articles, etc. In fact, in some communities, the production of crafts for domestic or foreign consumption is more important than agriculture.

The same day, September 12, we went to the village of Paxtocá, Totonicapán. There I interviewed with Edmundo, an experienced promoter with more than 10 years of collaboration with CAPS. He is also an expert weaver and owns a family weaving business. This is only a small part of our tape-recorded conversation:

MS: What do you think of CAPS training method/courses?
Ed: In my opinion, the courses were good.., because now here in the community and with my own family we are feeling a tremendous effect..., my family is more developed now, the future is more bright.... Now I encourage young people to go to the courses: 'my friends, if there is a course: **go!**'

MS: How can CAPS improve its training of promoters?
Ed: Maybe only the strategies... maybe that **the communities ask for the courses that we want**... to collect ideas.., for instance, they go to see six communities, and if four of those ask for the same course, they win...

In Paxtocá, an agricultural and craft-making village, I also interviewed Guillermo, a community promoter with more than ten years of experience but who only attended one training course. His responses were very similar to those of Edmundo. He agreed that CAPS was successful in training promoters and he liked the "technique" used to accomplish that. He said that "what should be improved is to make the courses more constant and maybe repeat those that are already 'behind', so to speak, in order to maybe receive a retraining...or to invite again those who have participated in previous courses...I feel proud that I can do something..".

The following day, September 13, Fernando and I went to the northern part of the Totonicapán province. This area in the north is not densely populated and is considered a conflict zone. In the morning we stopped in Chuyaj, a village that is at least two hours north in the direction of Santa María Chiquimula.

In Chuyaj, we looked for Felipe. It took us a while to find his home. I was surprised to find a young man, maybe 20 years old, with the kind of commitment to rural community development as he did. We had an informal dialogue on issues of culture, language, and development. We did not talk much about his opinion of the training of promoters by CAPS. He seemed more interested in discussing issues of culture and ethnicity instead. He shared with me an

interesting essay that he wrote about the value of preserving the indigenous culture. Because of the value of this essay, I will present it in the chapter dealing with contextual influences in community promotion.

Early afternoon, September 13, we went even further to the village of Xesaná, Santa María Chiquimula. It is a very isolated village. I was surprised to see Vicente there, a promoter I had met in Massachusetts. He was one of forty Guatemalan participants in an out-of-country training program implemented by the Institute for Training and Development in 1986.

I had a dialogue with Vicente and his wife Berta, both leaders and promoters of this village of Xesaná. They told me that most of the approximately 700 inhabitants of Xesaná dedicate themselves to manufacturing western-style clothing that they sell to distributors in the south coast provinces of Suchitepéquez and Escuintla. The agricultural activities are very limited here because they have rugged and relatively eroded land. They have an ongoing reforestation project to try to correct the land erosion problem.

These two community promoters are very upbeat and funny. They both gave me valuable insights and opinions. But I will present Berta's story only, because the opportunities to present opinions of female community promoters have been scant. This is a portion of our conversation:

MS: What is your role in the community?
B: I am the coordinator of the Women's Group... we have twenty five women in the group.., we have a rabbit-raising project, one of vegetable gardens, and a group of weavers.. There are husbands who do not allow their wives to get out; they only allow them to go out to make the 'tamalitos', to cook the beans, but not to start a community group because is "wasted time"...

MS: Why is it that there were few women participants in those two CAPS training courses?
B: I imagine that women were not animated, confident..; there might be two reasons for the lack of women's participation: one, is that the husbands do not allow women to go.., and the other is that they have small children, so they cannot go even if they want to...; there were maybe four 'indígenas' from Totonicapán...

MS: What did you learn in the courses?
B: In the Pecuaria course: how to make a chicken house, how to prevent illnesses...; in the Health course I learned how to cure people who suffer snake bites or people who have been in accidents...

MS: What is the role of women in the community development process?
B: The role of the woman is that she has to develop herself.., and to feel in herself the needs that are felt by others..; if a woman values herself, she has to see and decide what is her role...

MS: What would you recommend to improve CAPS training of community promoters?
B: We would like to ask for follow-on training, so that two or three of us can go, because one alone cannot do it...

After our visit to Xesaná, we went back south to the so-called "Four Roads" crossing near San Cristobal, Totonicapán. That was the end of my visits to villages and promoters of the province of Totonicapán.

As a final note of my experience in Totonicapán, I have to add that Fernando is a very courageous and dedicated young Quiché man. I say this because I learned that in the mid eighties, the former CAPS extensionist for Totonicapán

was kidnapped and disappeared. He never reappeared and he is presumed dead. Neither the motive nor the identity of those who committed the crime is known. Fernando took his place well aware of the enormous risks involved in doing this work.

I returned to Quezaltenango the same September 13, late in the afternoon. The next morning, I tried to contact extensionist Ramón to make arrangements for my final visits to villages in the provinces of Quezaltenango and San Marcos.

On Monday, September 18, Ramón and I got together and drove north towards the town of Olintepeque, Quezaltenango. The road is in pretty bad shape because of the constant rains. You have to ascend for quite a while before reaching the village of La Cumbre, Olintepeque.

La Cumbre is a small indigenous town of Quiché descent. The climate is cold here because of the high altitude (over 8,000 feet above sea level). It is primarily an agricultural (corn, wheat, potatoes, lima beans, etc.) and textile town. Just by looking around and listening you realize that this town is almost 100% Maya-Quiché. the women wear colorful handmade dresses. The men usually do not wear native clothing. They prefer 'ladino' clothing, but culturally they still act like indigenous people. This town is relatively close to the City of Quezaltenango, and

perhaps that is why most of them speak Spanish fairly well, as a second language.

At La Cumbre, I had the chance to talk with Secundino, a bright and intelligent community promoter with many years of experience under his belt. He is an important member of the Agricultural Committee "Belejep Noj", that means "Nine Ideas". He has been a volunteer promoter for CAPS since 1980 and has attended ten courses.

This is part of our long tape-recorded conversation:

MS: What is your opinion of CAPS training?
S: The courses have helped me a lot. What helped me the most is to learn how to manage my money, how to work the land, how to raise animals... that is the way I did it.. and after a while I passed this experience onto other groups...

MS: How did you see the participation of women in CAPS training courses?
S: Very few women participants in the courses.. I sent my own wife to the courses.., then the community decided to send more women.. one has to give the example. Now there are many women participating...

MS: What would you recommend to improve CAPS training of community promoters?
S: To return to the old times. When we started the courses were of two weeks, Monday through Saturday. That gives you more work, because more is understood, more is grasped, and there is more time to explain. The courses of one week are too short, and it seems like the themes are not well developed.

After talking to Secundino, I had the chance to observe a "Grupo Femenino" (women's group) in action, working at their sewing machines, making embroidered garment pieces. There I had the chance to talk to a young woman promoter. Carmen is a 17-year-old Quiché woman whose Spanish is not as fluent as Secundino's. But she has a lot of energy and

enthusiasm. I feel it important to present the essence of this interview with Carmen rather than the one that I did with Cristobal, another male promoter. Leticia, the sewing instructor also participated in this dialogue once in a while.

I ask Carmen: **What is your opinion of the training courses and method of CAPS?** She responded: "It is good because they made us work in groups... I learned how to form a committee, how to lead a group, and how to use medicinal plants." I also asked her: **How do we notice the success of CAPS in training promoters?** Carmen responded: "It is already a change to just go there and get to know other people, to know what their projects are and let them know ours, and to exchange new ideas."

We came back to Quezaltenango, the same Sept. 18, late in the evening. I had one day to rest and reflect before my long trip to the now familiar villages of San Marcos.

On September 20, we left around 5:30 a.m. for San Marcos. In San Marcos we picked up a young 'pecuaria' advisor. The three of us went together all the way to the village of San Pablo. They immediately recognized us and were glad to see me again.

In this village I had a dialogue with several people including Esteban, one of the oldest community promoters I have found so far. Esteban has attended five CAPS courses starting in 1971. My dialogue with Esteban was very long

because he wanted to tell his whole life story. Although his story is fascinating, I will present only important and relevant portions of our conversation:

MS: What are the qualities of a community promoter?
E: In the first place, honesty; the respect towards others; pay close attention to everybody. Do not make false promises... Something very important are the example that you give...

MS: What do you think of the training courses and the methodology used?
E: They are all important..; the one on health was about preventing diseases and the use of medicinal herbs. I did not see any deficiency in the training staff... CAPS is different to any other kind of institution. Other training courses are just a matter of listening; at CAPS you are sharing experiences, ideas...you don't feel the time.

MS: How do we know or notice that CAPS's training is successful?
E: It is noticeable when among peers they talk about what it is being learned, and one says: "what a good course they gave us, this is going to help us a lot"; but if somebody is going to say: "ah, puchis, here there is nothing that interests me here, it is all garbage", then it is clear that is not useful...

MS: What recommendations would you make to improve CAPS's training courses for community promoters?
E: That the courses be in accordance with the needs that exist in the communities, and that the extensionist pay close attention to "the picture" that exists in the community, that's where you see the need...

At the same time that I was interviewing community promoters here and in San Pablo, the equally important task of conducting meetings and on-site training was also taking place. The livestock promoter was conducting a seminar on raising and taking care of livestock, particularly hogs. Meanwhile, Ramón went to the sister village of Tuismil to

start a training seminar on human relations and community organizing.

I was not just an spectator. I helped both extensionists with portions of the training seminars. It was exciting to do that kind of work in isolated rural villages. Ramón firmly believes in the benefits of doing follow-up and on-site training, and he is particularly good at it.

We stayed overnight in the village of San Pablo. It was a wonderful experience to stay there and to share everything with village people and the livestock promoter. The next day, September 21, was very rainy and cold. Ramón was stuck in Tuismil and was expecting me to come and help out. I knew that because he sent me a written message by foot messenger that said: "...here we have 35 people. We started at 2 p.m. When I finished in the afternoon, I tried to leave but the terrain is very slippery and neither the 4x4 gear nor the darkness helped, so I had to stay here. I will attempt to take the car out with the help of the 'señores'. If you could come..."

When I got to Tuismil, after walking a few kilometers in a muddy trail, I was quite wet, particularly my shoes. It was exciting to see a group of rural men, women and children listening intently and fully participating in Ramón's seminar.

Lidia is the president of the women's group in this community. She has never attended training courses of CAPS in Guatemala City. She was excited about having one in her own village. I asked her about the women's group projects. She told me: "What we are doing is the reforestation project, weaving, and cooking... We have also planted flowers and vegetables". On the training seminar taking place in her community, she said: "...I am amazed that in spite of the weather, people from far away are coming to give us something wonderful..., and we need it. I think the course is wonderful, it gives us encouragement..."

I asked Lidia to describe her community. She said:

> Tuismil is a place that likes to work in agriculture. We plant potatoes, wheat, corn and vegetables...; the main religion is the Catholic.. We have a school, a multiple-use hall...; almost all of us have our own piece of land, an average of 30 'cuerdas' each... All of Tacaná migrates during the coffee harvest season to the coffee plantations (fincas) in Tapachula, Mexico... Tuismil has one hundred and twenty families.. In September it rains a lot... right now it has been raining for eight straight days...

One important element that I notice in these two rural communities (San Pablo and Tuismil) is the fact that women here play an important role in all community projects. I asked Rodrigo, another experienced community promoter, why is it that in this area women are more involved in community development.

His response was: "... we did not want to leave women behind.., she too has rights, she is worth the same as a man. Before, .. 'a woman was not worth because she was a

woman'... they did not sign her up. Now my wife is participating...and she has a group in San Luis... and the first week of October she is going to Guatemala City to be in a CAPS course."

This progressive attitude of men is not rare in the Western Highlands. It is fairly common to find other male community promoters expressing the same view. I think that it has to do with the progressive nature of their own cultural heritage and with the influence that people like Ramón, working patiently for more than a decade, have had in the consciousness of villagers here. The training seminars taken in Guatemala City or in the villages have also contributed to shape and reaffirm that attitude.

Rodrigo's opinion on what indicates success in CAPS's training of promoters was: "It definitely has success in the communities..., you can see it in the work of the promoters, when Ramón comes we already have a proposal for him..., it is noticeable in the activity of the people."

Rodrigo's recommendations for improvement of CAPS's training courses were that ".. the extensionist, in agreement with community leaders, should select people who are enthusiastic and who collaborate for the courses, in that way time is not lost and CAPS does not waste resources like food, transportation money... The advantage of going to Guatemala City is that one shares with people of other communities..., and one learns..."

When we left San Pablo, late in the evening, I knew that I had completed my round of visits and interviews not only in San Marcos but in the whole country. This was almost the end of my field research. Our trip back was tortuous. It was raining so hard we could barely see the road. We got back very late to Quezaltenango. Fortunately, my last excursion into the rural areas ended up well.

My last task in this field research phase, was to observe and participate in another training course to be conducted in Guatemala City for CAPS staff (extensionists, trainers, pre-extensionists and experienced promoters) and for staff of "sister" non-governmental organizations. I observed this training course from September 25 to September 29, 1989. The course, on Popular Education, was given by an experienced trainer of CODE, a Canadian organization. Even a Mexican national, a woman representing the Heifer Project organization in Mexico, was present. It was during this one-week training seminar that I took advantage of having people together to interview some key members of CAPS's training, field and administrative staff.

Patterns of Promoters' Conceptions of Success in Training

Meeting and interviewing with CAPS volunteer community promoters in rural villages of Guatemala, and listening to and recording their conceptions of success about training and community promotion, was one of the most important aspects of the field research. The analysis of the

promoters' views and conceptions of success reveals that regional patterns exist in the way community promoters view and interpret success in training and community promotion.

In the eastern region of Guatemala, specifically in the provinces of Jutiapa and Zacapa, success in training is viewed by community promoters in ways such as the increase in personal development and self-confidence, improved skills relating to communication, the ability to assess and prioritize community needs, how to organize people and plan, manage and carry out a project at the community level.

In the northern region, Kekchí community promoters from the provinces of Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz expressed that success in training is notable when trainers treated them with respect and allowed for their full participation, when promoters are less authoritarian and more democratic, when promoters know how to organize people and committees, or put into practice what they learned in an effective way.

In the central plateau, specifically the province of Sacatepéquez, Cackchiquel community promoters view success in training when they learn and apply methods and techniques to organize people, conduct meetings and initiate and implement projects. The training is also successful when promoters are more dedicated to their work, have better communication patterns and self-confidence and better skills in project planning.

In the western highlands, the conceptions of success of indigenous and ladino community promoters varied. Promoters of this predominantly indigenous region thought that training is successful when they learn how to work in groups with more confidence, how to implement a project, and how to overcome personal fear when expressing themselves. Meeting people from other regions and communities at the training site in Guatemala City was seen as a success too. They felt that they learned and taught each other about their community promotion experiences.

In the Table 1, the promoters' conceptions of success in training are put into categories and checked against the four regions visited. It should be kept in mind that even though the same questions were asked, the open-ended nature of the questions resulted in a variety of responses from promoters. Therefore, even if one conception arose more frequently in one region than in another, it can be interpreted as the conception or view that was most immediate or important in their thoughts. Further interpretation is provided after the table.

Table 1
Community Promoters' Conceptions of Success in Training

Categories of Success	Regions of Guatemala			
	East	North	Central	West
Increased self-confidence	X		X	X
Improved communication skills	X		X	X
Ability to assess and prioritize group needs	X			
Ability to organize community members	X	X	X	X
High level of participation		X		
Practical application of new skills		X	X	
Increased dedication to community work			X	
Orientation towards consensual decisions		X		
Economic improvement	X			
Ability to implement community projects	X		X	X
Contact with people from other regions				X
Unity achieved in the community		X		
Economic success of community projects	X			
Heightened awareness of community needs				X

In Table 1, the conceptions of success in training of non-indigenous ladino community promoters of the Eastern region place an emphasis on personal success indicated by

the acquisition of new skills and individual and communal economic improvement. This emphasis on individual success can be interpreted as a reflection of the dominant ladino culture in the Eastern region which stresses individual success and private ownership of resources.

In the Kekchí Northern region, promoters' conceptions of success in training emphasize unity and organization, consensual decision-making, participation and application of new skills. The emphasis in their views on communal rather than individual success may be the result of 1) the struggle for cultural survival, and 2) the struggle to overcome the acute problem of landlessness. They know that to achieve a more just distribution of land in this region, they need to be united and organized.

In the Central Cackchiquel region, the emphasis is on the acquisition and application of new skills, such as project management and community organizing. The emphasis on personal skills may be the result of the need to better manage established agricultural cooperatives and other socio-economic projects in several communities of this region.

In the Western Highlands region, promoters' conceptions of success in training placed the emphasis not only on acquisition and application of new skills but also on increased awareness about community issues and needs. This is because community promoters and villagers of the Highland

region have a history of involvement in the popular and resistance movement, and therefore are much more aware of the larger structural issues and problems faced by their communities and the country.

Patterns of Conceptions of Success in Community Promotion

Promoters from the Eastern region (Zacapa and Jutiapa) expressed that success in community promotion takes place when the promoter knows how to lead his/her community, when they know how to solve problems, are enthusiastic and energetic, and when they apply new techniques to work with groups. Others expressed that success in community promotion happens when there is dialogue and people can express what they want. Also, successful community promotion creates more understanding, more desire to work; people are better organized and have confidence in a project because there is better planning and past mistakes are taken into account.

Success in community promotion in the Northern region (Las Verapaces) is viewed by community promoters in terms of an increase in the level of responsibility, change in personal attitudes, and in good planning, cooperation, evaluation, and in "seeing the fruits" of community projects. Success in community promotion is also conceived in this region as an increase in the unity of the people through higher participation in meetings and committees, having more resources (especially monetary), good sales for

the cooperative, and in establishing good relations with other communities.

In the Central Cackchiquel region, success in community promotion is conceived by community promoters in direct correlation to the success of their agricultural cooperatives. Organizing communities effectively and preserving the essence of the cultural and linguistic Cackchiquel heritage is also an important sign of success in community promotion here.

In the western highlands, success in community promotion is conceived by promoters as the achievement of the goals of a project and the subsequent sense of community confidence and desire to go forward. Success in community promotion also means to take into account the work of women promoters, and of women in general, in community projects. This is the region where the work of rural women is taken seriously and often on an equal basis. Successful community promotion is also viewed as a process that is culturally responsible, i.e. one that chooses projects that will contribute to the process of preservation and advancement of indigenous culture.

In Table 2, community promoters' conceptions of success in community promotion are organized into categories and indicators of success, and checked against the four regions visited.

Table 2
Promoters' Conceptions of Success in Community Promotion

Categories of Success	Regions of Guatemala			
	East	North	Central	West
Ability to organize community, groups	X		X	X
Positive changes in people's attitudes	X	X		X
Increased community participation	X	X		
Increased level of community organization		X		X
Preservation of native culture, lang.			X	X
Women's work is valued, encouraged				X
Village has more resources and funds		X		
Projects are better planned and managed	X	X		
Achieving goals of community projects	X	X		X
Co-ops are better managed, profitable		X	X	

The patterns in the promoters' conceptions of success in community promotion can be interpreted or explained in almost the same manner as their conceptions of success in training. Practically the same factors that create patterns in their views of success in training also affect the emphasis in their views of success in community promotion.

As it appears in Table 2, the fact that some categories of success are checked in one region and not in another, or

that one has more indicators or categories checked than another, should be interpreted only as the **emphasis** placed on indicators or categories of success that were more immediate in the promoters' minds as a result of already noted cultural, socio-economic, political and organizational factors that influence views of success in each region.

Patterns of Promoters' Conceptions of Success of CAPS

What follows is a region-by-region description and examination of findings in community promoters' conceptions of success as they relate to the performance of CAPS as a training and development organization in Guatemala. A summary of their recommendations for CAPS improvement of its training and development strategy is also provided.

In the Eastern region, all participants were in agreement that CAPS training seminars had success. They saw the positive impact received through the training more directly in themselves but also in their communities. In regard to the training methodology, they were impressed by the participatory nature of the method utilized and by the increase of self-confidence they felt after the courses.

As for recommendations to improve the training of community promoters, the eastern rural promoters recommended that CAPS trainers "come to see and share in our communities" and that training seminars be held in the rural communities too. Another point that was emphasized was the need for follow-on courses and more training opportunities.

In the Northern region (Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz), the few indigenous community promoters that I had the chance to interview agreed that CAPS training of promoters was successful and they thought the method used was either good or excellent. They liked a lot the participatory techniques used during the training process.

However, they pointed out in their recommendations that the courses could be "bilingual" and should be held in their own communities or in a regional center. Besides, they echoed the recommendation that they would like some kind of follow-on training and more opportunities for further training.

In the Central Region, represented by the province of Sacatepéquez, community promoters were much more open and vocal than in the Eastern or Northern regions. They seemed to not have any problem at all in expressing what they thought or felt.

In regard to the overall success of CAPS strategy to train community promoters, all but one thought that it was successful for a variety of reasons, in particular the support received over the years to establish agricultural cooperatives.

When it came to the methodology of training, some were positive and some were negative. On the positive side, they indicated that CAPS methodology is "better" than the one used by other institutions, and also that allowing

"participation" makes it great. On the negative side, they pointed out that the method is always the same, that it is repetitious, theoretical, and that the courses are "too short" now.

The recommendations of the Sacatepéquez' promoters were numerous. I will summarize them as follows: a) there was a consistent opinion that training of promoters should also take place in the rural communities; b) CAPS should pay careful attention to the selection of candidates going to training seminars in Guatemala; c) to help cooperatives more; d) that they give follow up training every three months; e) that promoters get some kind of economic incentive for their work; f) to have courses specific for women participants; and g) to vary training methodology, and talk less of religion during seminars.

The promoters in the Western Highlands region were unanimous in assessing that CAPS has great success in both the training and also in the community projects that they sponsor. CAPS has a lot of prestige and followers in this highland region.

In regard to the training method and the courses themselves, all participants thought they were good and important. The perspective of female promoters is heard and respected in this region.

Their recommendations for improvement of training are also varied. The more consistently voiced are: a) more

follow up training and more opportunities to come back to training seminars; b) courses should have more duration, not just one week; c) training should also take place in rural settings; d) pay more attention to selection of participants; e) training should be in accordance with the needs of the communities, communities should be allowed to ask what kind of training course they want; and f) trainers should use appropriate vocabulary during training sessions.

Analysis

My overall impression about the conceptions of success in training and community promotion of village-level promoters is that views and meaning of "success" are not the same everywhere in Guatemala. Indigenous promoters, usually part of the oppressed majority, view success more as a process of cultural and communal survival combined with material gain or economic improvement. Group rather than individual success in emphasized in indigenous communities. Mestizo or ladino promoters, particularly those from the Eastern region, view success not so much in communal terms but more as material and economic improvement for themselves and their families.

In regard to CAPS training and development strategy, my own overall assessment is that community promoters of all regions are right when they indicate that CAPS has had a high degree of success in training rural community promoters and in motivating them to be active in their communities.

The success stories are numerous both at the personal and community level.

But that high degree of success achieved by the CAPS training strategy among the "active" promoters, is somehow tempered by the fact that many other would-be community promoters trained by CAPS are inactive or passive.

Their recommendations to improve the training strategy of CAPS were also right on target, particularly in reference to the lack of consistency in follow-on training for active promoters at the village level, and the lack of a consistent criteria in the selection of candidates to be participants in training seminars in Guatemala City.

Another recommendation given by promoters that I find consistent with my own observations is that they would like to see the duration of the courses extended from one week to two or more weeks. I agree with many of them, based specifically on my participant observation of a one-week training seminar, that the shortness of the seminar does not allow for enough discussion of important topics or themes. Trainers are rushed to cover too much content in a short period of time. The result is a lack of depth in the discussion and analysis of themes. Or as promoters would put it, they do not have enough time to "grasp" what the important things are.

Finally, a lot of them mentioned that they would like to see training be conducted in the rural communities and

not only in Guatemala City. They have an important point there that should taken into account in modifications to the current training strategy. The reasons given by CAPS for not doing training at the village level, such as security for trainers and villagers, do not justify the lack of attention given to this important recommendation.

Endnotes

1. An extension worker (*extensionista*) of CAPS is somebody who has worked as such for many years and has accumulated a lot of experience. The pre-extension worker (*pre-extensionista*) is a person who may have experience as a community promoter but is rather new to extension education work. They call them that because the "pre-extensionista" is in being trained by the experienced extension worker of the area. In time, these pre-extension workers will replace those extension workers who retire.

2. During the presentation of translated portions of interviews, I will use the initials "MS" to symbolize the name of the researcher, and the first initial of the name of each community promoter interviewed or will be represented by an asterisk.

3. Catequistas are trained lay workers of the Catholic church.

CHAPTER VII

CONCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS IN TRAINING FOR RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE VIEWS OF TRAINERS AND FIELD EXTENSIONISTS

Introduction

When I first arrived in Guatemala I did not intend to include the views of CAPS field extension workers and trainers in this research. I wanted to go out to the distant rural villages and talk to the community promoters about their training experiences with CAPS and about their conceptions of success in training and community promotion. I thought that they would hold most of the answers to my research questions.

When I was actually with the rural community promoters and engaged them in conversations and dialogue about their experiences in training for rural community development with CAPS, I realized that their knowledge, information and conceptions about their own training with CAPS and other agencies is very clear and detailed. But when it comes to comment on CAPS strategy in training social promoters or about its overall rural community development strategy, their knowledge, perception, and analysis was limited to their own training experiences as participants or trainees in a limited number of CAPS training programs, and perhaps to the direct and frequent contact with the field extensionist working in their communities.

I realized also that community promoters know a lot about the influence that CAPS had in the development of their communities and their personal education and training. They know that CAPS supports them in different ways but they know little about the history, nature, goals, funding, training strategy, and administration of CAPS as an NGO committed to rural community development in Guatemala.

Early on I became interested in listening to the views of field extensionists and trainers because they were supplementing the picture that I was getting from the community promoters in the villages. They seemed to have views that integrated their experience coming from their frequent contact with villages and community promoters and also with administrators, trainers and fellow extensionists of CAPS. They were obviously more aware of the policies, plans, projects and strategies of CAPS and of the larger social, economic and political context in which these plans and projects had to be implemented.

Furthermore, getting to distant and sometimes very isolated villages takes a lot of time in Guatemala even if you are traveling by car. So, each time the extensionist and I departed for another village visit we usually had several hours to talk. I would use this time to get to know the extensionist and to ask questions informally about the history of his relationship with CAPS, his current work in the villages, problems, successes, etc. He would usually

ask me a lot of personal questions too. The information that came out of these informal dialogues was sometimes very valuable.

I had the same experience with the two trainers of CAPS. Every time I went to Guatemala City and visited their main site and offices, I would engage in very interesting conversations with one or both trainers. Their points of view and conceptions of success in training rural promoters had a lot to do with their role as trainers of community leader groups in Guatemala City, and less to do with their limited contact with the rural communities and promoters served by CAPS. I became interested in exploring their view as well.

Early on I decided that rather than, or in addition to, having these informal conversations with CAPS personnel without a guiding goal, I would make the effort to interview both trainers and a good number of field extensionists, with the goal of gathering their views on success and contextual influences in training promoters for rural community development in Guatemala. What follows is a summarized account of what happened during those more structured encounters between researcher and CAPS paid personnel.

Views of Trainers

When I arrived in Guatemala in July of 1989, CAPS had two full time trainers. I was able to interview both trainers in early September of 1989 at the training site

located within the campus of Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala City.

Rigoberto is the older and more experienced trainer. He has been with CAPS for nine years and has experienced the change in the organization's training strategy since 1978. This is his recollection of how the training courses were in 1978: "...CAPS would bring community leaders to Guatemala City and train them as social promoters. The course would last fifteen days divided in two phases: one phase was the 'Experiential Laboratory of Human Behavior' (*Laboratorio Vivencial de la Conducta Humana*) and the other was the academic portion in which aspects of the national reality, organizing and leadership were discussed. In the beginning, people were here for a whole month of training, and they were even provided with a three quetzales daily allowance because there was enough funding provided by USAID...".

What follows is an account of the most important sections of the interview with Rigoberto.

M.S.: **How did you understand CAPS rural community development strategy when you started and how do you understand it now?**

Rigo: At first,.. the focus was to create leaders, persons capable of working for the development of their communities..; the promoter was left alone to work hard with his people with minimal assistance from the extensionist. From 1981 on, it was thought that many communities already had plenty of community promoters and that it was important that these communities engage themselves in programs of community development. The conception of development adopted was that communities should look for integral development, that people should not only

develop themselves in a material sense but also in a spiritual sense..".

M.S. **How do you interpret the general current training strategy of CAPS?**

Rigo: It is assumed that each community has a program of development. Starting from that assumption, the people who are working in these development programs need training; thus, the extensionist and the community select the people who would come to CAPS to participate in training courses that are compatible with the needs detected in a generality of communities. The objectives are that people acquire more knowledge to be able to better face the problems that community development will present them when they are back in their communities; that people create a consciousness of **what they are**; that people wake up, **value themselves**, and start getting out of the cycle of dependency and paternalism.. We try to utilize a methodology that falls within the framework of teaching-learning, where all are teachers and pupils at the same time.

M.S. **What is and how do you describe the training method?**

Rigo: The method is participatory, dialogical, horizontal not vertical; we use group techniques, and we try to implement it within dialectical conceptions..; this methodology allows us to act according to the group's level of knowledge, and according to how one assess the training situation.

M.S. **What relevant changes have occurred in CAPS training methodology?**

Rigo: A problem that I noticed from the beginning was that all courses, whether a course on group dynamics or a course on community development, use the same themes; they would change the name but not the content. They used a conception of group dynamics that would make people stay within the framework of moralistic conceptions (e.g. the 'famous' **Human Relations** courses). These people would conceive groups outside the socio-political context, and as distinct groups without any relation or connection among them. We use group dynamics now not only for people to reflect but also to assume a more **critical attitude** towards the reality that surrounds them.

M.S. **What is the criteria or basis for the success of a training program for community promoters?**

Rigo: One of the basic criteria is to depart from the knowledge that one has about the reality that is being lived; another one would be to select the most

appropriate people for each given course; another one would be to select the appropriate content for a course.., for instance the title of this course is "Group Work Methods", but we are realizing that the group wants to discuss other themes, so we are trying to adapt to what they are asking for.

M.S. **What would show or indicate that a training program for rural promoters is successful?**

Rigo: It would be noticeable perhaps doing a study, an analysis of the organizational process of the communities; also the success would be shown in the attitude that they assume towards the national and communal reality.. I feel that evaluations are very difficult, we do evaluations in each "encuentro" but we do not place a lot of importance to them.. or we do not take them as the best way to know because people in Guatemala, specially people from rural areas, always tell you that everything was good.., people are very grateful..; that makes you lose objectivity in the evaluation process.., evaluation is difficult in this field.

M.S. **Do you think that CAPS is successful in training community promoters, and how do we know that it is?**

Rigo: This is a difficult question..There have been evaluations done by other institutions. The problem is that the evaluations done about CAPS have focused on the administrative/financial aspect. In that sense, it has been demonstrated that the funds managed by CAPS have been effectively channeled to people.

M.S. **What are the current problems of limitations that you have with regard to the training of promoters?**

Rigo: I have within myself a very hard contradiction: I conceive Popular Education within the framework of theory and practice.. but that should take place there, **in the field**.. I believe the reason for our existence here would be to reinforce what is happening there.. If over there authentic popular education is not happening, then it is very difficult to imagine that these courses would be "vitamins" or good injections to support the work that is being done there. We have other limitations with regard to teaching materials, resources, etc. We also need much better **planning** and **scheduling** in our general training program..

M.S. **Is the association of CAPS with Landívar University a limitation?**

Rigo: I think that more than a limiting factor it has been a kind of backing.., it aids because a program like this one, even if we assume that we are living under a democratic government, if this program, just as it functions right now, were part of the national San Carlos University it would have disappeared already, anyone of us would have disappeared as well!.. Fortunately, we are a semi-autonomous organization within the structure of Landívar University, and that situation more than limiting us, it helps us!...

M.S. **What do you think of the effectiveness of CAPS follow-on training?**

Rigo: We have to be sincere, here we talk about follow-on because at some moment we bring people who have been participants back to training courses, but to say that there is an actual planned follow-on program, no, **it does not exist...**

In early September 1989, I also interviewed Benjamín, the other young trainer at CAPS. He has been with this training and development organization since 1985, a total of four and a half years. Before joining CAPS, Benjamín had been working as a sanitation inspector for the Ministry of Health in Guatemala.

I met Benjamín ten years before (1979-1980) in Guatemala when I co-directed a private language school in the city of Quezaltenango. He became one of our best language instructors. It was a pleasant surprise to see him again, now a full time trainer at CAPS.

My conversation with Benjamín was very cordial. We knew each other pretty well and that facilitated the process of creating trust during the interview. These are the most important sections of such interview.

M.S. **How do you understand the current rural development strategy of CAPS?**

Ben: I think that in general we have a lot of experience. As in any group, we have diverse tendencies within us; I do not see coherence in the development strategies of CAPS, because somehow there is a conception of what we understand by community development.., but some of the fellow extensionists have a practice that deviates from what it is supposed to be the conception of community development; that is to say that they dedicate themselves to do basically just **projects** putting aside the education and organization aspects. Some of them conceive **education** as something isolated that only takes place here, in these courses, they do not conceive the courses as only reinforcement, a basic sharing of experiences... education should really happen there, in the field...

M.S. **What would show or indicate that a training program for promoters is successful?**

Ben: I think that is difficult to detect; that could only be detected by the people who have been working directly in the rural communities because is a qualitative aspect that is very difficult to assess, but I think that it could be noticed at least in qualitative changes such as changes in attitudes, level of knowledge that is reached, level of consciousness of people about their own reality..; but that can only be attained through a process of interaction and getting close to people.

M.S. **To what extent is CAPS training of community promoters successful?**

Ben: I think that in spite of many limitations success is achieved particularly in the long term. From my own point of view this success is not the kind of success that should be...

M.S. **How would you describe your training method?**

Ben: Since I arrived the method has been basically the same. Of course such method has improved through the years. It is participatory.., global.., it departs from the reality.., that is to say that we try to apply what an author defines as the '**dialectic method**' in popular education. I do not know if we really achieve that.

M.S. **What are the limitations that you have as trainer during the planning and implementation of training for community promoters?**

Ben: We always have the problem of people who are not well selected for the courses. Another limitation is that we **do not** have direct contact with the people who come to the courses, in other words, we are isolated from the work that people do in their communities.

M.S. **How would you describe the follow-on training process?**

Ben: It is assumed that it should happen this way: that it is the extensionist the one who should provide the follow-on to the training that people receive here... But I think in most cases the follow-on training does not happen, why not? because many conceive **education** as something that takes place only here, in the courses; therefore, they do not provide follow-on training in the field; apparently follow-on training means **another course** that people can take here...In this respect, with a few exceptions, I think we are in a rather difficult situation.

M.S. **What is the role of CAPS as an NGO within the context of rural and national development of Guatemala?**

Ben: I see it two-fold. On the one hand, the projects. With everything that it is done, with everything that it said, we are helping to maintain the system, even though some of us are not in agreement with that assertion. There is no clear conception in many of our colleagues about what **community development** **is** or what it **should be**; then, I believe that a lot of the time we fall into a "developmentist" tendency that is useful to maintain the system.. But, on the other hand, I also see a positive sign in the fact that, in one way or another, people keep acquiring, even without knowing it, an **organizing consciousness**, they keep acquiring levels of organization, they keep educating themselves...I would say that in general CAPS is a relatively small institution.. which within the national context may be doing **"developmentism"** (*desarrollismo*), but also helping people to acquire **consciousness**, helping people to develop themselves, to get out of conformist attitudes; .. I would say that in general that is where we are.

Views of Field Extensionists

My many trips into rural communities of different regions of Guatemala gave me a chance to talk to the each

field extensionist that was taking me to the villages. The anecdotes, experiences, and oral history became important sources for me to understand the context in which each CAPS extensionist was working and the methods he was using to carry out his work. It was also an opportunity for him to understand why I was doing this study, what I was trying to get out of it, and what were the potential benefits for them.

What follows is an account of my recollection of those informal conversations combined with more structured dialogues that I had with five of them. In presenting this data, I will follow the regional order in which I conducted the field research.

In the East, I spent time traveling with Víctor in Jutiapa. During our trips, he told me how socially and culturally different to the rest of the country the East is, and how politics, conservative tendencies in particular, had an enormous influence in the lives of people here.

From what I saw and experienced he is right. People here, in general, are more individualistic and suspicious of other people. Women and men wear western clothes. Men in particular often wear cowboy boots and western hats. It is also very common for men to visibly carry firearms and sheathed machetes. Their cultural heritage seems to come more from Spain and the Old West than from the indigenous peoples who were here before the Spanish conquest. In fact,

the indigenous influence, with a few isolated exceptions, is almost nonexistent. The vast majority of the population here is 'ladino' in clear contrast to the Western Highland region where most people are indigenous.

Víctor told me that he has been a community promoter since 1969 and a field extensionist for CAPS since 1978. This is what he had to say about CAPS training strategy: "The work is effective because you are constantly in the field supporting people. The selection of participants to training courses is carefully done. After their training, participants come back to their communities to transfer what they have learned. The objective of the training strategy is **education** through socio-economic projects. It is also part of the political strategy to avoid problems with the authorities. Coordination with other NGO's is also sought". I asked him about his description of the CAPS methodology to train promoters, and he responded: "It helps a person discover that he has as many abilities as any other..; in the same way that he has many things to learn, he also has many things to teach.., it is participatory".

I asked him several other questions before I got to important ones like: **how would you describe a successful training strategy of community promoters?** He responded: "Is one that is able to work in spite of the political obstacles. One that is able to survive the political pressures. One that has **no** involvement with any

governmental program. One that is a program of self-development and self-determination, a program that promotes income generation projects in the communities".

We kept talking about training promoters and about the role of promoters when they go back to their rural villages after participating in CAPS training programs. I asked him: **How do you describe a successful community promotion program?** He responded: "Successful community promotion is when the community has solved most of their needs; the community is self-sufficient; it has capable leaders; it keeps looking for solutions to the new problems that come up". I followed up with the question: **What are the most common obstacles to rural community promotion?** "The political problems; the idiosyncrasy of people, people are individualistic in the East, they are apathetic when it comes to being part of a group; there is a lack of resources: no land or arid land, no irrigation system, lack of sources of employment, and very little support from the central government or from foreign institutions".

In one of my final questions I tried to explore his general opinion on CAPS training and development strategy. I asked him: **How do <u>you</u> perceive the general training and rural development strategy of CAPS?** "It depends on whose eyes you see it with. Some people see it as a leftist program. The armed left think that this program is at the service of the right. The principles are social-

Christian.., it does not ally itself with one or the other. The program goes where the need is more pressing. Our motto is **'to choose from the poor, the poorest'.** When we help one small community to improve itself, this is seen positively by other communities; it helps people to change their thinking; it helps them realize that they have resources, that they can organize and build a network of organization and work".

I wondered how he felt about being part of this vision and about his own role in CAPS rural development and training strategy in Guatemala. I asked him: **How do you see yourself within this overall CAPS strategy of rural development?** He responded: "The extensionist is a person that collaborates in this development process according to his own human abilities. He has a clear awareness that we come to this world to contribute something for a better future".

When we ended this interview I was left with a feeling that Víctor, a 50 year-old father of five, still has a firm commitment to rural community development in spite of doing that kind of work for more than twenty years: since 1969 as a volunteer community promoter, and from 1978 on as a salaried field extensionist of CAPS. But I also got the feeling that he is getting physically and mentally exhausted by being in the front line of rural development work for so long.

The next field extensionist that I had the chance to talk to at length was Diego who is in charge of serving communities in the Zacapa province. I was in Zacapa the second week of August of 1989.

Diego started working with CAPS in 1981. At the time of the interview he had nine years of being a field extensionist. He attended training courses in 1980. In 1981 he had 3 communities under his responsibility. In 1989 he had 7 communities that he actively attended and some other peripheral ones in Gualán, Zacapa. He is one of the most active field extensionists of CAPS not only in his own area but also, at the national level, as coordinator and supervisor of his fellow field extensionists.

Among other things we talked about how CAPS has expanded its area of influence to about ninety two rural communities in eleven provinces. I was wondering what the criteria was to choose one community over another in the same province, or not to choose to work in a given province at all. I asked him: **What is CAPS criteria for selecting communities to be served?** Diego responded: "The first criterion is to do a socio-economic study of the potential community: status of land tenure, housing, economic situation, etc. The second criterion is to do a needs assessment of the community; the third, is to assess the level of organization within the community; the fourth, is how well the field extensionist might be accepted or get

along with the community; and the fifth, is prioritizing the felt needs of the community people. The **objective** is to implement a program of integral development with trained people who lead their communities to social and economic independence".

He told me that once these criteria are applied to several potential communities which might be asking to be included in CAPS area of influence, the executive council examines the results of these studies and decides whether or not they want to add more communities to its already extensive sphere of influence and if so, what communities are the best candidates. There are other considerations as well, such as **who** would be the field extensionist assisting this added community and **how many** communities does he already have under his responsibility. If he has too many already, then the pre-extensionist ends up guiding the "new" community. The state of "readiness" for development of the potential community is also carefully considered.

During our conversation, the general training and rural community development strategy of CAPS came into question, so I asked him: **What is your opinion of the general strategy of rural community development of CAPS?** He promptly responded: "The strategy has been one of the best things of the program. The proof is that it has survived. It does not have a political or religious end. It does not discriminate against anybody on the basis of religion or

politics. We do not go to the communities to impose programs of community development upon them nor to impose conditions on the help that we provide. The extensionist does not do everything for the people but rather orients them so that **they do their own things".**

I knew I could follow up this question with one more specific about training community promoters. I asked him: **What is your understanding of the training strategy and what is its role in the overall development strategy of CAPS?** Diego responded: "The objective of CAPS is not to create paternalism.., is to create critical consciousness of the problem and how to solve it. **The objective is that people learn by doing it.** The role of the training unit in the overall strategy is first, to send campesino people to training courses in Guatemala City; and second, these campesinos come back to their communities to work and to unite efforts.., thus creating work consciousness. The phases of the training program in general are: 1) peasants attend courses in Guatemala City; 2) a follow-on program is implemented by a field extensionist; and 3) the same trainees attend advanced training courses in Guatemala City".

We talked about the promoter as community leader and the characteristics of an effective promoter. This what Diego told me: "The promoters are not always the leaders of a community and vice versa. The community takes the leader

very much into account. The promoter is the adviser of the community, he is even a matchmaker! The community chooses a person as leader not because he has more money than they do. The age has nothing to do with the choosing of a leader. The promoter is a person who knows how to live with other people; he has consciousness of the poverty of others and is dedicated to them. He is a person who does not pay much attention to how much time he has invested. He has to have time for everybody. He has to do things without waiting for anything in exchange."

Diego told me about the many infrastructure, agriculture and economic projects that he is supervising, fourteen in total. Each community with a specific project is receiving credit from CAPS at a low annual interest rate without asking for collateral. The maximum amount that is loaned to a group or community is Q15,000 quetzales (= $3,000 at the current 1991 rate of exchange). How much money the community or group gets depends primarily on the actual needs of that community.

Diego was proud of telling me that all of the communities that he serves are on target in their loan repayment plan. Diego has a lot of pride in what he is doing and a lot of energy left to do more.

In the third week of August 1989, I was in Northern Guatemala, Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz to be exact. The field extensionist here is Joaquín. He attends communities

in both provinces. This region is very different to the Eastern one. The population is mixed, with a great percentage being indigenous peoples of Kekchí or Rabinal Achí descent. I traveled long distances with Joaquín because Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz are large provinces.

During this week I wanted to have the opportunity to get the perspective and knowledge of Joaquín on many issues. Towards the end of the week, we found the time to sit down and talk about his experience and views.

Joaquín, an experienced field extensionist working for CAPS since 1971, told me that he is a native of Alta Verapaz where he grew up bilingual (Kekchí/Spanish). He is now married with eight children. Between 1965 and 1968, he took his first courses in community development and on the cooperative movement. He said: "My family did not have economic resources. My mother had a store in the local market and worked hard to provide us with a living. I worked as a mechanic and, at the same time, I studied and was involved in the cooperative movement".

Joaquín told me that his first course in social promotion was taken in 1971 for twenty days. After the completion of this course, he was confirmed as a field extensionist of CAPS. I asked him: **In your view, what have been the phases of CAPS training and rural development strategy?** Joaquín responded: "The **first phase** has its origin in the real spirit of Kennedy's 'Alliance for

Progress' of the 1960s. Of all Guatemalans who had been trained at the University of Loyola in the U.S., only 1% came back with a positive attitude..; the first social promoters of CAPS gave a new interpretation to the Alliance for Progress program and to the help of USAID. USAID controlled CAPS in the beginning.

"The **second phase** starts in the early 1970's when CAPS ends its relationship with the U.S. Agency for International Development. CAPS was looking for its own identity. Several radio programs are aired such as 'La Voz del Promotor Social' through the Nuevo Mundo and Imperial radio stations. The objective of these radio programs was to orient people about community development, and to prepare radio announcers. There were radio programs in the Kekchí language broadcasted by Radio Imperial in San Pedro Carchá. In 1974-75 we had a lot of economic problems, we had to fight to subsist. There were many people who left or resigned from CAPS. We got help from World Neighbors (U.S.) and Miserior (a Catholic organization from West Germany) to do training and educational programs.

"The **third phase** starts with the great earthquake of 1976. We realized that community promoters could do a better job if they focus on specific projects. A reduction of the areas assisted was proposed in order to support specific projects, but the surge of political violence in 1977 made it very difficult to work at all. The first

extension auxiliaries were hired in 1977. The following year one of the former extension aides was killed. He was not working for CAPS at the time of his death. At the end of this phase, we looked for financial help internationally.

"The **fourth phase,** from 1979 to 1989, was a phase of subsistence and institutional survival. Because of the high level of political violence we were forced to work at a 'slow fire' pace. In spite of all the risks, we continued working: supporting infrastructure projects, updating and improving the training of promoters, and supporting the new socio-economic projects. Ironically, as a result of the political and social violence, there is a consolidation of the financial and material support from some international agencies. During this period these funding agencies changed their policies as well. Now, they are more careful in their selection and have a better control in terms of how their funds are being spent. CAPS is also more careful and selective in accepting help from international organizations...

"The **fifth phase**, from 1990 on, is a question mark. Certainly the goal is self-sufficiency and self-determination, but we do not know if that can be achieved. Also, it is difficult to predict what role the social and political conditions will play in this future phase".

Throughout my stay in Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz, Joaquín showed me some of the concrete examples of the

projects that he has guided and supervised: a long suspended bridge, a fish production project, coffee production technical improvement, several functioning cooperatives, a community hall, etc. He certainly thinks that he and CAPS have been successful in this region. I wouldn't disagree.

I could not help but notice that he is experiencing the same tiredness and lack of energy that I observed in Víctor. They both told me that they feel tired and physically sick sometimes. The work, they told me, is overwhelming and very dangerous sometimes. Understandably, two decades of constant work and commitment to the development of rural communities, under challenging political conditions, are taking a toll on them.

In the province of Sacatepéquez in the Central Plateau, Rolando was the field extensionist who accompanied me to the villages that he works with. Rolando is a married Cackchiquel man who is soft-spoken and intelligent. With only three and a half years of work for CAPS, he is rather new to the organization. He is young and energetic. He has attended more than thirty five training courses, six of them with CAPS.

Rolando told me that he works with seven communities, six from Sumpango, Sacatepéquez and one from El Tejar, Chimaltenango. He has ten projects under his responsibility: one of infrastructure, one of housing, two community stores, and six agricultural.

Since Rolando is relatively new to CAPS, I wanted to explore his views on success. I asked him: **What are the conditions or criteria for the success of community promotion and development?** Rolando answered: "that the project or activity be based on a felt need. Based on that need, you work with and organize people. The community committee is the crux of communication between the community and the authorities and institutions..; you have to be realistic in what you do; planning is very important to have success..".

We kept talking about CAPS training course and its methodology. He has had experience taking courses with several other training institutions in Guatemala. I was curious about his assessment of CAPS training methodology. CAPS training methodology, Rolando told me, "it is appropriate.., it makes participants express themselves and allows for sharing and learning of experiences. They used the same methodology in the six courses I took, the only thing that changed was the content".

I asked Rolando about his view on the **level of success** that CAPS has in training community promoters. Rolando responded: "Nowadays **yes**, it is successful. Before the objective was to 'form' social promoters. Now the courses are more varied and constitute a complement to the promoter's knowledge". I followed up with: **how does success in training promoters manifest itself at the**

community level? Rolando immediately responded: "When I arrived here, the groups of my communities were dispersed. Now they get together every week, and there is a rhythm of work as a result of the training they received".

Finally, I asked Rolando about **his interpretation of CAPS general strategy of rural development in Guatemala.** Rolando answered that "the strategy goes in accordance with the outlined general objectives. It is important that community leaders be appropriately trained so that one day CAPS may withdraw from the community, and the community continues all by itself".

When I finally made it to the Western Highlands I knew that I still had a long way to go because the highlands are a large region with several important provinces next to each other. In this region I traveled with three field extensionists: Daniel, Fernando, and Ramón. Although I had long conversations with all three, I wanted to talk to Ramón most of all because he is one of the "pillars" of CAPS.

I interviewed Ramón at his home. The interview was a long one, but I will limit this account to the most revealing portions of it.

I asked Ramón **how many years he has been working with CAPS.** "I am going to complete 22 years of continuous work", he responded. I followed up with: **practically you are one of the founders of CAPS?** "We could say that, because even though I was not part of the planning stages of CAPS, I have

become one of the pillars now.., my perseverance has been recognized even by the Universidad de San Carlos for staying with one institution for many years..".

I wanted to know his views about CAPS strategy. I asked him: **What is your view about the overall training and development strategy of CAPS?** Ramón: "When we started the courses they were six weeks long because the purpose was to give the promoters a 'package' of knowledge. But the promoters themselves kept making suggestions like 'we cannot absorb everything' and 'it is too long a time to be in the capital'.., so we listened and reduced the duration of courses to fifteen days only. From 1967 to 1980 we had a phase of 'formation' of promoters all over the country, with the support of several other NGOs. But the promoters were saying that when they came back to their communities they wanted to do something more concrete like infrastructure or economic projects, but usually they did not have access to credit or the support of governmental institutions.

"From 1981 on, we started working with what we call 'the selected communities', ...because the promoters were asking for our presence in the communities. That is when we started a program of development much more planned and focused in the communities...From 1981 on, CAPS has been working in the communities providing follow-on training to the promoters in rural regions, coupled with training courses of fifteen days or one week each in Guatemala City.

We were supporting now what we called 'basic structure' and 'socio-economic' projects".

I asked Ramón: **what criteria was used to select client rural communities?** "What we tried was to select communities that had the most limitations, or maybe communities not yet affected by any program of development. Another criterion was that the community be within range of the field extensionist's home base, thus increasing the possibilities of being helped..; I have about 8 communities that receive assistance through a process of development work..that has provided them with basic infrastructure, agricultural and livestock projects, health care..; we have stimulated in them the spirit of coordination with other institutions. I think we have achieved a lot, and the cornerstone of this achievement is that we have **respected the process of development that people themselves have created..**".

I asked Ramón about the **foundations of and criteria for success of a rural development project?** Ramón: "The foundation is that first you **listen** to people, in order to know their ideas, doubts, expectations, and also to help them increase their **sense of self-worth** and for them to see that they are capable of promoting their own development, with the support of institutions because they alone could not do it all. We have a **dialogue** with them and follow the criteria and guidelines that are put forth by them; in other words, we have a program that is not a program of

development that goes from the outside to the inside, but rather we have this main criterion: <u>to listen to people, so that development is generated from the inside to the outside</u>.., and that's what we have been doing so far..".

I followed up the question about criteria of success with this related one: **How do you know or how do you notice that a community project has success or failure?** Ramón: "You can see the success in the change of mental attitude that people have in their social relations and in the value that they assign to their group work; and in the fact that they have their own ideas or they know how to adapt new ideas that come to them..; you see failure most of all in the economic aspects of projects: a project promotes subsistence instead of production, a production project is not profitable, too much rain or little rain for agricultural projects, a cold spell.., sometimes these factors are beyond their control".

The **role of the field extensionist in the training of community promoters** is another issue that I wanted Ramón to address. He told me this about it: "I think that it goes according to the 'formación', work ethic, ideological, philosophical and religious principles of each extensionist. All of this converges to give a better service to the community..., but if one asks oneself: extension? ..at what point in the extension process am I? I may be stuck at a point where I am only 'extending' knowledge to people...

without knowing the results; or maybe I believe that my participation with people is for all to acquire consciousness of their own reality and for all to participate in the moments of life and irreversible development in our country.. But yes, the role of the extensionist is debatable: does he go to the communities to gain their sympathy and to just please the agency that employs him, or does he go because he truly wants to have consciousness of what in all truth needs to be done to develop people and communities?".

I finally asked Ramón: **What is the level of success of CAPS training and development strategy and how do we know that it has success?** Ramón responded: "CAPS has success because we departed, as I told you before, from the principle of respecting people's dignity; we firmly believe in their dignity and our own. We believe that it is possible that they change what they can change, improve what they can improve, and that <u>is</u> already **development**. We have learned to listen to them.., and we have learned to <u>value</u> what they have to tell us.., in other words, we have started, in almost all that we do, from the knowledge that they have... They have realized that our participation with them is not to impose something nor to devalue what they have".

I closed my conversation with Ramón with the general question: **How do you see the role of CAPS within the context of development at the national level?** Ramón: "Our fundamental role in the development of Guatemala is to keep struggling for education; an education for life, an education that allows Guatemalans to be more Guatemalan, to be more human, and to learn also because they have the right to know how to have and how to share but not to accumulate, and to learn how to have an integral development...".

My interview with Ramón was very insightful. I know that he is also feeling the pressure of time. His body does not want to continue with this kind of demanding work much longer. He is now in his mid fifties and suffering from two long-term illnesses. He told me that he did not know exactly when he will retire but that it is only a matter of time. In spite of this grim prospect, he has not lost his enthusiasm and faith in rural people at all. When he retires completely, he will be a great loss to CAPS.

Patterns of Trainers and Field Extensionists' Conceptions of Success

Patterns can also be found in the conceptions of CAPS trainers and field extension workers in regard to success in training community promoters. Trainers felt that success in training promoters may be indicated by the level of organizational process attained in the communities, the kind of attitudes and consciousness that they have about the

national and community's reality, and the level of knowledge that they have reached.

CAPS has been successful, the trainers said, in training thousands of community promoters for more than two decades, but their assessment is that problems still exist in the general conception of the training strategy and in the coordination and implementation of the follow-on training at the village level.

The field extensionists' conceptions of success in training community promoters varied. Some said that CAPS training strategy has been successful because of the fact that it has survived great political pressures and has no direct involvement with governmental programs. Success in training promoters is also noticed in the way promoters express themselves with confidence, and in the level of organization of groups at the community level.

Trainers very seldom have direct contact with the work of community promoters at the village level, whereas field extension workers deal with and assist community promoters in their villages on a daily basis.

Field extensionists are very familiar with community promotion work because they coordinate specific programs or projects with community promoters at the village level. Hence, their conceptions of success in community promotion are based primarily on this first-hand experience.

The views of field extension personnel on success in community promotion are that community promotion is successful when the community, through self-sufficiency and capable leaders, solves its own problems. Community promotion is successful also when specific projects are based on felt needs and organization. Planning is also important to have success. Success is also noticeable in the change of mental attitudes of people and in the value that they assign to group work.

Some of the foundations for success in community promotion, according to field extensionists, are to listen to and engage in dialogue with rural people and their leaders, so that programs of rural community development reflect their criteria for development and not that of the extensionist or community promoter. Programs at the village level have to be realistic and chosen by the villagers themselves. The incidence of contextual influences has to be taken into account as well.

The pattern in the views of field extensionists regarding success in training and community promotion was different from those of the trainers. Field extensionists, because of their direct work in rural communities, usually associate success in training with success in community promotion. Field extensionists see success more in terms of concrete accomplishments in educational, infrastructural, and socio-economic projects. Trainers see success in

training and community promotion mostly associated with the educational component of CAPS strategy, i.e. quality of planning and organization of a training program in Guatemala City, and level of effectiveness of the follow-on training at the village level. Trainers do not seem to give much importance to the achievement of specific socio-economic projects at the village level.

Table 3, shows the contrast in the views of trainers and extension workers about community promotion success.

Table 3
Success in Community Promotion: The Views of Trainers and Field Extension Workers

Categories and Indicators of Success	Trainers	Extension Workers
. Community solves own problems and finds solution to new ones		X
. Community has capable leaders		X
. Effectiveness of follow-on training at village level	X	
. Villagers practice critical thinking (consciousness raising)	X	X
. Community projects based on felt needs and appropriate planning		X
. Completion of beneficial community projects		X
. Efficient management and distribution of CAPS funds	X	
. Efficient management of project funds at the village level		X
. Respect for type of development that community desires		X

Table 3 shows a sharp contrast and differences in the conceptions of success in community promotion of trainers and field extensionists of CAPS. This contrast in emphasis graphically reveals one of the existing and troubling contradictions within CAPS as a training and rural development organization in Guatemala: the clear separation of work and lack of coordination and agreement between the members of the training and field extension departments.

Analysis

In this chapter, the views of two trainers and five field extensionists of CAPS are examined. What follows is an analysis of patterns and issues that have emerged from the examination of those views, and an interpretation of these patterns based on my observation of training courses, visits to rural villages, and interviews with CAPS personnel.

In general, the views of trainers and field extensionists alike, when compare to those of community promoters, have a deeper sense of history and continuity. Community promoters are close to their communities but are mostly detached from CAPS as an organization. Trainers and field extensionists, on the other hand, have a closer knowledge and experience about CAPS. Besides, some of these extensionists and trainers have been working for CAPS for a long period of time, and that gives them memory of many

things and events that most community promoters are not aware of.

One of the similar patterns in the views of trainers and field extensionists was that CAPS, as a non-governmental organization, went through two major historical phases: the first one, from 1967 to 1980, characterized by the "formation" and training of community leaders or social promoters as a primary goal; and the second one, from 1981 to present, characterized by the expansion of the training and rural development strategy, including the support of specific community projects, particularly socio-economic. The training of promoters continues in this second phase with an emphasis on skills and content that reinforce projects implemented in rural villages.

The views of success in training suggest a pattern of obvious disagreement between trainers and field extensionists. Both trainers seemed to suggest that the success of the CAPS training strategy is relative and difficult to assess. They both have the view that the process of education that they would like to see happening in the rural areas is not happening because, they said, some of the field extensionists do not understand the principles and methods of popular education. They specially indicated the alleged deficiencies in the follow-on training provided by field extensionists.

On the other hand, when I talked to the field extensionists, there was agreement among them about the effectiveness and success of CAPS in training community promoters and in supporting specific community projects. Their views about success in training and community promotion seemed to be based more on what they are actually doing in rural villages rather than their conceptions of community development or what takes place in training courses in Guatemala City.

One of the issues and contradictions that emerged from the views of success of trainers and extension workers in training and community promotion is the disassociation of the education and extension departments of CAPS. I discussed this issue with CAPS personnel in Guatemala before I left. My impression was that CAPS had to face this issue sooner or later.

My specific assessment is that there is a mutual misunderstanding between trainers and field extensionists when it comes to interpreting each other's role in the overall scheme of training and rural community development of CAPS. There is particular confusion and differences in interpretation on what the role of the field extensionist is in the follow-on training for community promoters.

The real cause of separation of work and misunderstanding between trainers and field extensionists might lie in the apparent **lack of consensus and definition**

on what the actual overall goals of CAPS are as a training and rural community development organization that is experiencing growth and change. Clarification of roles and patters of communication within a revised training strategy would enhance the coordination of work between trainers and field extension workers.

CHAPTER VIII

INFLUENCE OF PROGRAM AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON TRAINING AND COMMUNITY PROMOTION

The training of community promoters and their community promotion work is influenced by a number of program and contextual factors that are worth examining. Program factors, such as location of training, methodology, participant selection process and content of training, and powerful contextual factors, such as culture, language, ethnicity, gender, religion and politics influenced the views of success in training and community promotion of volunteer promoters and CAPS personnel.

During my field research in Guatemala, I had the opportunity to explore the views of village-level community promoters with respect to the degree of influence of the above factors on community promotion and their own training. I also explored the views of trainers and field extensionists of CAPS on the same subject.

What follows is an account of how community promoters and CAPS personnel perceive these issues. The program factors will be examined first, followed by an account of how selected contextual factors influence community promotion at the village level.

Influence of Program Factors on Training of Promoters

The training of social or community promoters is influenced by a number of factors, one of which is the very nature of the program or agency that is providing the training. There are also a number of added factors such as source of funding, choice of methodology, participant selection process, follow-on program and others, that contribute to the end results and possible success of the training program.

An important aspect of my research plan was to explore these contextual influences and factors through my observations and particularly through the interview process with community promoters, trainers, and field personnel of CAPS. The account that follows is a collection of the views of volunteer community promoters and of trainers and field extension personnel about how program factors influence the training of community promoters.

Views of Community Promoters

As evident in preceding chapters, this field research took me to four regions of Guatemala. In the Eastern province of Jutiapa I talked to several volunteer community promoters of CAPS. One of these community promoters was Horacio, a young man who lives in a village very close to the sea.

One of the questions that I asked Horacio was: **During the training, how did the trainers take into account**

participant differences and similarities in culture, language, ethnicity and gender? Horacio responded: "There are no differences with respect to treatment. Some people speak little Spanish, but the trainer is sensitive to that problem.., participants will help each other. There was no racial problem, the treatment is equal, there is no preference. Women are treated the same as men; they are given participation.., we all have the capacity to work".

In Zacapa, an eastern province north of Jutiapa, I interviewed several volunteer community promoters. One of them was **Cipriano**. When I asked him the same question, Cipriano responded: "They take everything into account. They give participation to everybody. The language was a bit of a problem. There were a lot of women. They participated during the course. Women can participate in everything". **Humberto**, yet another promoter, answer this way to the same question: "They did not have any preference. They accepted everybody equally. There were five women in our group, they participated a lot".

Daniel, Luis and Francisco were three other community promoters who offered their views on how trainers and the training program take into account differences in culture, language, gender, and ethnicity; and about the level of participation of women in the courses. Daniel told me: "They took everybody as equal. We understood each other very well. In our group there were seven women out of forty

five participants. Women were encouraged to participate; the theme of Women in Development was discussed". Luis commented: "Yes, they took those into account. Women received the same treatment as everybody else". Francisco added: "They treated us equally; there was a lot of sharing and friendliness, participation..".

In Alta and Baja Verapaz, two provinces of the northern region of Guatemala, I interviewed a coupled of indigenous community promoters. Ernesto and Mariano were two Kekchí promoters that agreed to talk to me in Alta Verapaz. I asked them how the CAPS program affected them, and how the trainers managed participant differences and similarities already mentioned.

Ernesto commented: "The course was taught in Spanish. For those who did not understand Spanish, a system was set up in which those who were bilingual or trilingual were in charge of the interpretation; the trainers allow time for the translation to take place, particularly when working in small groups. Because of this, there is some limitation in oral expression. Of all participants, about thirty five percent were women who were given the chance to participate and give their opinions. Women's opinions were respected".

Mariano had this to say: "There were people of different places in the course. We got along well with indigenous people of other places. In the first course that I attended there were only men; in the second, there were

twelve women out of sixty people. Women were encouraged to participate. The trainer told us men 'here you did not come to look for women, you did not come to look for your girlfriend'".

In another village in the province of Baja Verapaz, I talked to Federico, an indigenous volunteer community promoter of Rabinal Achí descent. Federico commented on the program factors and participant differences during training this way: "There was no difference between participants. They all got the same treatment from the program. The course was in Spanish. There were eight women out of thirty six participants. Women participated the same as men. Women's opinion was respected".

In the central region, specifically in the area of Sumpango, Sacatepéquez, I had the chance to get the views of several other volunteer community promoters on the same subject. Carlos, a young Cackchiquel promoter told me this about the ways in which the training program dealt with participant differences in culture, race, language, and gender: "During the break periods, we talked and asked each other what kind of work we are doing. The course was in Spanish. Some participants from Quiché who did not speak Spanish well were having trouble understanding the trainer; the other 'compañeros' from the same region would translate for them. There were only men in the two courses that I attended, women did not participate".

Moisés, another Cackchiquel community promoter from Sumpango commented: "..They treated us all the same. But there were problems of communication. We did not feel comfortable in the beginning.., we only communicated with people of our own region. As time passes one gets used to the situation, there is a change but not a one hundred percent change because there are still differences in language and customs between participants".

"In the first course I took, there were twenty four women out of eighty one participants; in the second one, there were four women out of thirty participants. Why so few women? women did not enjoy the same prestige as men; the language barrier is a big obstacle for indigenous women; the extensionist realizes that women are an important part of life..".

Another Cackchiquel community promoter in Sumpango that I talked to about this issue was Salvador. He told me that during the training course "the cultural differences between participants were not a problem. But the linguistic differences were an obstacle.., the course is given only in Spanish; participants are supposed to know how to speak, read and write Spanish.. There were only seven women out of thirty five participants".

I asked Salvador why did he think women participated in such small number in the course that he attended. Salvador responded: "If she is an older woman, she does not have

time because she has so many obligations at home. The illiteracy level is very high among women. They are afraid to leave home or else they lack self-confidence..; sometimes, we do not let our daughters or wives go to training courses. In this community almost one hundred percent of all people are illiterate".

Jesús, another Sumpango area community promoter, had this to say. He told me that as far as differences between people participating in the training program "that was not a problem.. There was no discrimination. The course was in Spanish; when somebody did not know enough Spanish, he would ask a 'compañero'. There were only four women out of forty people in the first course; and only four in the second out of 32 participants. These women had equal opportunity of expression and participation".

I asked Jesús his opinion on why so few women participate in the training courses. Jesús responded: "Women are afraid to attend the courses. The husbands do no let their wives go..; sometimes the task of raising children limits women. Those women who come to the courses are usually single young women".

In another village of Sacatepéquez very near the capital of Guatemala, I talked to two experienced community promoters who have attended at least four training courses of CAPS. Gustavo and Miguel had this to say about the training program and issues of race, culture, language and

gender: "They did not take into account linguistic difficulties. It is hard for some participants to understand Spanish, sometimes they can only emit their opinion in their own dialect" (Miguel). "Yes, they took into account the cultural differences.., that is why they would give written homework and literature..; if they did not understand something, at night they could consult with the training coordinator.., but that was in the first courses, now it has been quick and generalized.. (Gustavo)".

On women's participation in training courses, Gustavo says: "Yes, they have participated, but very few.., for instance in one course there were only three women out of thirty four participants, and in the other, five women out of forty seven participants. Why? Women almost never come in good numbers. Women do not have all the freedom to leave..". Miguel added: "In rural communities women have always been ignored and isolated...; the fundamental thing now is to begin right in the community. Women need motivation to work first within their own communities".

In the province of Quiché, Santos said that his experience in training with CAPS was good because "we got along well with everybody.., it was like one family. There was no discrimination during the sessions. Of forty eight people in the course only eight were women. These women participated a lot during the course because they knew about livestock..; women are afraid to come.., or perhaps there

isn't anybody to animate them. I feel sorry for women of 15 to 20 years of age who are not taking advantage of these opportunities".

Elena, an indigenous Quiché woman, was one of the few female community promoters that I had the chance to talk to during the duration of my research. In commenting about the role of culture, language, ethnicity and gender during the training program, Elena said: "..The Quiché culture helps us a lot; the language too because those of us who speak both Spanish and our own dialect.., here we listen and learn in Spanish, and then we go back and explain it in the Quiché language".

After learning that in the first CAPS training course attended by Elena there were only six women out of 54 participants, and that in the one that she was currently taking there were only four women out of thirty four participants, I eagerly asked Elena: **Why do you think there is a low representation of women in CAPS training courses?** Elena immediately responded: "That is because people still do not know.., they do not trust women, they say that a woman should not know what a man knows; they say that is not worth it for a woman to go to study because it is not going to be useful to her. Studying is only useful to men and not to women because they are going to get married... and **that is not true!** They are still confused..".

Guillermo, a community promoter from Totonicapán, told me that what he remembers of the training program at CAPS is that "they taught us to be people.., that we are all one person, and as the theme of the course would say: 'Let us create a man to our own image'..". When asked about the low representation of women in training courses, Guillermo said: "Maybe I would not be able to tell.., it depends on the organized groups; it depends also on how the community selects and sends its people to the training...".

In the province of Quezaltenango, I talked to Secundino, an experienced volunteer community promoter who is also a tailor. When asked about his experience in the course with regard to differences in language, culture, race, and gender Secundino commented: "Only one language was used, Spanish..; they told us that if there is a person in the group that does not understand Spanish, then we will be in charge of translating what is being discussed into his dialect.. In fact, there was a person from Panzós, Alta Verapaz who did not know a word of Spanish, but in spite of that he seems to be smarter than his compañeros because he went back to work well in his community...".

In San Marcos, in a remote village near the border with Mexico, I talked to Rodrigo about women's representation in CAPS training courses. Rodrigo told me "..there were almost no women.., there is a lack of guidance and motivation in the communities and a lack of personal interest on the part

of women..; as for our community there are several women who are going to courses next October, because they are interested..; several women from our community have gone already".

Views of Trainers and Field Extensionists

As of 1989, the reality was that community leaders who are selected for these short-term training programs come from diverse communities of Guatemala. Some of them only speak Spanish because they are from the East or the South Coast, and others speak both Spanish and an indigenous language or in some cases only speak their own indigenous language. In addition to language, selected participants to CAPS programs bring their own culture, ethnic and gender awareness, and their own prejudices and stereotypes about people from other regions of Guatemala.

The two trainers then, who only speak Spanish and who are ethnically ladinos, have the difficult and interesting task of bringing together Guatemalan community leaders who are not from the same ethnic, cultural and linguistic background. They even have strong political and ideological differences depending on where they come from in Guatemala.

I asked Benjamín, the youngest of both trainers, how does he deal with these issues in training community leaders to become volunteer promoters of rural development, and how does the program integrate these differences and turn them into a positive influence. Benjamín responded: "One way of

integrating this is through the first theme that we touch upon: Human Values. People recognize that in essence we are all equal.. My experience has been that in spite of the cultural differences there are no major barriers between the people who come here. They are mostly poor.., and one of things that I have learned here is that they are humble and do not put barriers to people of other cultures..; on the other hand, when we have participants who have a better or medium economic status, we have problems..".

I was very curious about the opinion of Benjamín on the possible causes of the low representation and participation of women in CAPS training courses. Benjamín: "I think it is a reflection of the dominant culture in our country, and it is also a reflection of the system in which we are. I think oppression takes place at all levels; we have an oppressive culture where women are not valued as people, and for that reason they are unappreciated even in their own communities..; men say that women are not capable or useful.., all of that is reflected in the culture. Perhaps we can say in simplistic terms that all of this is part of our 'machista' culture, but in general it is part of the oppressive system..".

Rigoberto, the oldest and more experienced of the two trainers, commented the following on how program factors influence participant training and how they deal with participant differences brought into the training room.

Rigoberto: ".. I think experience has given us certain knowledge about cultural differences that exist.., we carefully try to integrate these people. Now, I believe that the methodology and techniques themselves make people identify with each other, even if in the inside, because of the racist conceptions that are still held between the East and the West, it is not evident. But integration is achieved; the methodology makes people aware that poverty is not only a problem of the West but it is also a problem of the East.

"We have had problems with people, indigenous or ladinos, who have achieved a higher degree of knowledge or titles such as teachers, university graduates, etc. These people have given us a lot problems, sometimes they have even opted for withdrawing from the training for several reasons: one, is their view of the world, their class status; another is their total lack of interest in working to benefit the popular sectors.

"Sometimes we have had Kekchíes who do not speak Spanish, and we have had problems of that kind. We try ways to utilize a simple language, even though that is a difficult thing to do, because it is very rare to find an educator who can say the profound, the complex with simplicity.. We really try to speak a language for everybody".

On the issue of low representation of women in CAPS training courses, Rigoberto commented: ".. In our society women play a secondary role, one of being dominated; and this happens not only among indigenous people but also in all sectors of the Guatemalan society. However, there are sectors of society where things have changed, for instance in some urban sectors women go to the factory, and that sole fact of working and bringing money home changes their own mentality and gives them more power within their own homes..".

To complete this account, I will present the opinion of some of the field extensionists who accompanied me to rural villages in four different regions of Guatemala. All of them know first hand what it feels to be a participant taking a training course at CAPS, because all of them have taken formative courses at one time or another.

Víctor, the extensionist from Jutiapa, has this to say about the influence of program factors on training and participant differences: "Yes, they take into account the linguistic issue. Some of the training has happened in the native language, Kekchí for instance. There is no sexual discrimination against women. When dealing with the **cultural** aspect, it was difficult for the trainer to integrate the cultural differences. Some people are not satisfied with the way it is handled. In dealing with racial discrimination, the trainers are very alert to racial

tensions; in some cases, people have been asked to leave the course if they continue with racial stereotypes. There are changes in attitude as a result of the course".

Ramón, perhaps the most experienced field extensionist of CAPS working in the western highlands, had this to say about the influence of program factors in training rural promoters: "..CAPS has been a training organization that does not allow discrimination in its courses; on the contrary, it is a Center that exist for all Guatemalans without any distinction, and it is not a program dedicated to only one sector of society, but to whomever wants to find herself there, or for the one who wants to go to learn..."

"Those who go to the courses may be from the poorest peasant and urban worker to the affluent professional who wants to learn to communicate with people in order to serve them better.. We have been open to all type of suggestions and critique. We know that there are many people who are watching us constantly.., and we believe that we are doing our duty as Guatemalans..".

When asked to comment on women's low representation in training programs and in rural development efforts in general, Ramón commented: "What has happened is that because of the nature of the culture and because of patterns of life that still exist, women have been kept submissive in the rural areas, but we have seen in our experience that women can participate very well in activities of development

that are compatible with their abilities. We have seen an increase in women's participation .., but respecting of course the conceptions that parents and husbands have... who have been changing their way of thinking, seeing, and recognizing that women have the same dignity as persons, the same values, and that there is equality..".

In commenting about the role of culture in society and in women's lives, Ramón said: "The concept that we have of culture and the consciousness that we have about such culture, can help or hinder the development of peasant women as well as 'ladina' women".

Finally, Rubén, a field extensionist in Sololá, commented this about the role of program factors in the training of community promoters: "In the aspect of training, I believe that there is a limitation here at CAPS because none of the trainers can speak an indigenous language, and that is a limitation. Because of it, we are already thinking how to look for a trainer who can come to join the other two, somebody who is able to speak the most important indigenous languages like Quiché, Cackchiquel..".

I asked Rubén why there are women in the field extension personnel. Rubén responded: "..CAPS incorporated many women in the extension department, we even used to have female trainers, but the experience and most of all two determinant factors changed our minds: first of all, the civil status of a woman field extensionist. We had good

compañeras who after understanding how CAPS operates would get married and then limitations would appear: 'I cannot do this', 'my husband does not want me to do that'... This was a main factor.

"The second factor was, honestly, the socio-political situation of the country. We got very worried.., we would imagine that over there in one of the villages of Chichi at six p.m., a woman riding by herself in a Jeep in the middle of the violence.., and to be honest with you, we made the decision: No!..; because of that decision we have been the subject of criticism.., but the Council does not want to carry in its conscience the possible killing or rape of a woman extensionist. Honestly, more than anything else is fear!... Now CAPS from the beginning saw the need to have female personnel. We had Guatemalan and even foreign women working with us, but when the political situation went bad...well! But you can see that the current course coordinator is a woman, and if we had the possibility of incorporating more women, it would be ideal..".

Influence of Contextual Factors on Community Promotion: The Views of Community Promoters

One of the questions that really intrigued me was how contextual factors affect the work of the trained community promoter upon his return to his/her community with supposedly more knowledge, self-confidence and abilities.

Specifically, I wonder how his **community promotion** work would be affected not only by his new skills and knowledge but also by factors like culture, language, ethnicity, gender relationships, power relations, etc., that are already part of the life and structure of the rural community. I wanted to know if in the opinion of the community promoters these factors help or hinder the development process, and in what ways that influence takes place.

Horacio was the first community promoter in the province of Juatiapa to address my question. Horacio told me that in terms of factors affecting community promotion at the village level "**religion** can be a helping or negative factor; there is division between religions..; also people's **participation** is a problematic factor..".

In the province of Zacapa, promoter Humberto told me that "the preparation at CAPS was valuable. I realized that errors are made when working with groups..". As for the influence of contextual factors on his community promotion work Humberto said: "Men believe that they are powerful. Only men participate in development; we should give participation to women as well. Religion is a positive influence".

Rodolfo, another community promoter in La Unión, Zacapa, responded: "The culture helps because through it we can see the needs. We look for guidance, dialogue. Women

are important in society. There should be understanding between women and men". Daniel, a promoter from the same area added: "We could see the needs with more clarity after the course; I felt more oriented. The customs are the same but they are changing..".

Ernesto, a very sharp Kekchí community promoter in Alta Verapaz told me: "The 'etnia' or ethnicity here implies unity of work. Unity has always existed. But individualism also exists at times. The culture and language help in the development process. The concept of working together is natural. The Spanish conquest had an influence in the acquisition of the 'machista' concept and practice. In our Kekchí culture, discrimination by sex does not exist..".

In Baja Verapaz, a province with Rabinal heritage, I talked to Federico. This is what he commented: "Here the native language is Rabinal Achí. This village is 100% Rabinal Achí. The indigenous culture (Rabinal) helps in the development work. One main reason is that the community promoter speaks the native language and is from the community. Women almost exclusively speak the native language. Approximately 25 to 30% of people are bilingual in this village (Spanish/Rabinal). The rest speak a mix of both: 'Rabiñol'. Foreigners are well received here. In our culture men and women are the same.., the only thing is that men know how to read and write and women don't".

In Sumpango, Sacatepéquez, Carlos gave me his opinion about contextual influences in community promotion work: "Yes, people collaborate in development projects. Almost 100% of people in this village speak Cackchiquel. During meetings at the level of committee or community we use Cackchiquel. They can give better opinions in Cackchiquel than in Spanish..., the culture is changing a little. It is the grandfathers the ones who are practicing the old customs. The young ones have lost much of their culture. But the Cackchiquel language has <u>not</u> been lost among the young people. The school teachers are a positive influence too. For instance, the three teachers who work in this community speak Cackchiquel and Spanish. Thus, children learn to speak both languages".

In another community of Sumpango, Saúl gave me his own opinion on the subject of contextual factors in community promotion: "In the case of this community there is no problem because I speak both Cackchiquel and Spanish..; one has to adapt to the problems and beliefs of people. People mistrust when you say a lot and don't do much... You have to earn the trust of people through consciousness raising and backing your words with deeds. Women participate a little. We are raising the consciousness of men so that women have the opportunity to participate. Right now, 65% of women participate..; our Cooperative has contributed a lot in the motivation of women..".

Jesús, a Cackchiquel community promoter and member of a cooperative in Sumpango, had this to say about this question dealing with contextual factors: "The community is Cackchiquel: culturally, 100%; linguistically, 80%. The language is being lost because we do not have a bilingual teacher. The young boys and girls of 14 and 15 years of age understand the native language but cannot speak it well. Our meetings in the cooperative are held in Spanish. The Cackchiquel language does not have a major role in communication. To gather around in groups is part of our culture..; there are no racial differences, only in formal education".

Gustavo and Miguel, two formally educated community promoters who live in a village very near Guatemala City and Antigua Guatemala, told me this about their peculiar contextual influences: "..Eighty percent of the Cackchiquel culture has been lost. But the customs are still standing...(Gustavo)".

Miguel: "The old people do not speak Cackchiquel anymore. The customs of weddings, funerals, etc., have been kept alive strongly.. The language has been lost but not the customs. For instance, we have a horn to call the community: if it sounds three times, it means a meeting for the whole community; if it sound twice, it means a meeting for the community council; if it sounds once, it means a meeting for the mayor and his 'regidores'. The custom of

native dress has been lost in about sixty percent of the inhabitants..".

Alberto, a pre-extensionist and experienced community promoter in several villages of Sumpango and Pastores, had this opinion on the same subject: "In this village, one hundred percent of the people are Cackchiquel. Yes, the culture influences the process of development in a very positive way if one adapts to it. Culture facilitates working with groups. Women participate less, maybe only ten percent of them; this is due to the customary thinking that 'men are more than women'".

Santos, a Quiché community promoter in Chichicastenango, Quiché, said: "My community is one hundred percent Quiché. About eighty-five percent understand Spanish. The school teaches in Spanish. Our customs are being lost in this community. When there is a need, they understand a development project. Culture helps development. The two languages (Spanish and Quiché) also help..".

In Totonicapán, Evaristo, a young Quiché community promoter, offered this opinion about the influence of contextual factors in his community promotion work: "..Our language is the most important thing because it helps me in two ways: ..I can understand my own people who speak Quiché and I can also explain things in Spanish..; what about our culture? It is also important. We cannot loose our Mayan

culture, but unfortunately it is disappearing.., and that is why we are organizing people so that they understand what culture is all about, and that they learn how to honor and preserve it. Culture helps us in many ways (i.e. selling native fabric and crafts in the international market).., we do not really want to loose what is ours: simply **indigenous people..**".

Guillermo, a promoter in Totonicapán, had this opinion on contextual influences in community promotion: "..The truth is people here are quite 'civilized', that contributes to the quick advancement of any project..; when we call a meeting people come, they participate a lot. Young people are ashamed of speaking the native language, but most adults speak and preserve the language..; when there is meeting we talk more in our own dialect; young people have to talk in our Quiché language because there is no other choice..; we cannot repeat or translate for them in a foreign language when they are our own people..".

In a remote village in northern Totonicapán, I talked to Vicente and his wife Berta. They are both experienced community promoters. I asked Vicente what were his thoughts about the role of culture in community development. Vicente responded: "Practically, that is the most important point because if culture is not taken into account, then development is going to be broken through another culture..; what we need now is to support agents of development who are

based in their own culture... A practical example: some German community agents who came to talk about health and hygiene. They told us 'cleanliness is to have china dishes, a tablecloth..', that is what they perceived, but I believe that for us who belong to 'the culture', even if we eat in clay dishes, if the dishes are washed and the hands are clean, if what it is inside is delicious.., then it does not matter where we put the food, what matters is that it's clean.., and it does not matter if it is china or enamel dishes.. that's where the difference is. If they had only looked for people from the community to transmit the improvement message..".

In the area of Santa María Chiquimula, Totonicapán, I came across a very young community promoter, Felipe, who surprised me very much with his knowledge of and awareness about issues of culture, language and ethnicity. He was probably not older than 19 years of age in 1989. He told me that he had written an essay. I read his essay and I liked it a lot. I asked him to read it aloud while I recorded it.

I believe it is important to present Felipe's essay here because it is a genuine expression of the struggle that goes on in the highlands between destruction and preservation of culture, between the old and the new, between Maya-Quiché beliefs and non-indigenous influence. What follows is a translated version (from Spanish) of Felipe's essay.

Why Did God Create Man?

God created man in his own image so that he becomes owner of all the fish in the sea, of the birds in the sky, and of all those who live on Earth; that is why God commands us to look after our indigenous culture, because it is the wealth of the 'pueblos'; culture is the medium of communication with God, and that is why we should not lose our culture,..and from the culture of our ancestors, our grandmothers and grandfathers, their own communication with God.. Our own Maya-Quiché culture is the use of our native dress, the white pants, the white shirt, a red belt tied to the waist, and a black apron called 'Ix'.... They spoke in our own Maya-Quiché language, they were not ashamed because that was their culture..; they educated their children, and they all respected each other, like indigenous brothers and sisters they felt.. with their own 'palo de hormigo' marimbas, the 'tum' and the 'chirimía'.....

Now, why have we lost our Maya-Quiché culture? Now we do not like to wear our own dress, we are ashamed.., we have lost it!, these days we only like unisex blue jeans, a pair of cowboy boots....; we do not like to talk in our own Maya-Quiché language to our grandparents.., we do not like our name to be called in Quiché, in Spanish **yes**...; we like Rock music, 'Los Tigres del Norte', but not the marimba... We do not respect our ancestors, and that is why the Church commands us to value our culture, to value what is ours because we have lost it, we should discover why we have lost it.., **who** has made us lose our culture...?

In a village near the city of Quezaltenango, community promoter Cristobal had this to say about the influence of culture, language and other factors in community promotion: "The languages help, because those who do not speak Spanish give their opinion in the Quiché language and then we discuss it in Spanish. Culture has the same value".

In San Marcos, community promoter Esteban has this opinion about how to deal with culture, language, traditions and others: "One has to always give people the freedom to do what they think; one has to be social; one has to respect

some customs or improve them. One has to accept their ideas, the good ones, and tell them politely when some ideas are not so good..".

Views of Field Extensionists

When I traveled with field extensionists of CAPS, I had the chance to explore their opinions on the influence of contextual factors on the community promotion work of the social promoter or on their own field extension work. This is what some of them had to tell me.

Diego, in Zacapa, told me that "the language is a positive factor because everybody in the communities that he serves speaks the same language, Spanish. The traditions and customs are very similar: they observe the days of the Catholic saints. For instance there is a tradition called 'Los Siquines' in the month of November: a table is set up with fruits and water for the spirit of the dead to come to drink and eat; they make tamales, drinks like 'arroz en leche', etc. They pray, dance and drink for a whole day. In general, there are no ethnic differences here. But when it comes to gender, that has a lot of influence here. In the East of Guatemala there is a lot of 'machismo'. Men do not like that women organize themselves 'because when they go to meetings another man may wink at them'. Men are very jealous here."

Ramón, the field extensionist with whom I last traveled to rural villages, told me this about the same subject of

contextual influences and community promotion: "..What I am convinced of is that not to know the native language of a community can be a limitation; but if there is will to communicate, to share with people, then I believe that limitation becomes secondary. I have had the chance to work more with indigenous communities of the Mam, Quiché, and Cackchiquel areas, and the truth is that the friendship has gotten stronger and we have been able to communicate, even though in the beginning we didn't because of fear or shame...

"People have to communicate both in their dialect and also in Spanish, because we are not an island, we are part of a context and we have to communicate in order to look for what we are lacking. I have tried to discuss this with people and I have told them that they have a right to know and a right to communicate..; I tell them that they should value themselves, that it is good to know the two languages, and that they should not forget the cultural value that they possess.

"In Guatemala right now there is a cultural, folkloric, 'indigenista' movement that values only the native dress, the dialect, the dances, but not the people and their values. That movement instead of uniting the Guatemalan community it divides it, because they do things that are delicate. I have criticized many times the Catholic church

itself or the Evangelical church, when they say: 'let us do a meeting, a seminar for the Indians'.

"I believe that what we need to do is to have 'encuentros' or seminars about the peasant culture, not about the indigenous culture, because in the countryside live poor ladinos who are suffering the same situation as the indigenous people.. The Catholic church talks about the 'Pastoral Indígena'. I have criticized them for that because what that does is to mentally condition people, it opens more the psychological abyss.., and fosters even more the malaise that already exists."

Rubén, a field extensionist in Sololá, told me that in the beginning CAPS made the mistake of sending extensionists to areas unfamiliar to them. For instance he said: "Poor Ramón would go to the 'Oriente' and come back disillusioned and say 'I did not achieve anything'. CAPS learned from that experience a lot; now, ninety nine percent of all extensionists are from the area where they are working. They have been born in the same culture, speak the same language, so there is no shock.

"There are things that are structural though. For instance, in the aspect of women's participation, all of us have the same problem because it is rare that a 'chapín' peasant will let his woman go participate..; up until now we do not know how to deal with or how to work out this problem. But not all is negative; there are many

communities where we have dealt with this problem through the promotion of training focused on the formation of women's groups..; the man realizes that there is no problem and that women are also capable of doing things.."

Importance of Political and Religious Factors

While exploring and collecting information about how culture, language, ethnicity and gender influence the process of training community promoters and the community promotion work that they carry out in their rural villages, I started realizing from the beginning that at least two more powerful contextual factors needed to be considered: politics and religion.

As I described in another chapter, from my first few days in Guatemala, I realized how important and powerful the political factor is for nongovernmental organizations like CAPS which are committed to training and rural development. It is a factor that private NGO's have little control over, and more often than not imposes limitations on what they can do. In July 1989 an upheaval of political violence at the national level threatened the viability of my own research and the normal operation of CAPS.

As I proceed with the research, I realized when I was in the rural villages that politics are very much part of the life of the communities. Often, the field extensionist made me aware of special power relations present within the community; other times, it was the promoters themselves who

would talk about the subject with a lot of discretion and caution.

The political factor is very important in the east because many the people in positions of power are ideologically conservative. As I said before, there is a tradition of blind anti-communism and militarism in this region, so that makes the task of community promotion and field extension rather dangerous. Also, the Guatemalan Army appears to have a lot of control in rural communities of the East.

Both field extensionists and community promoters are aware of this and have learned to live with it. They need to make a lot of connections in the community. This helps them stay ahead of any potential problem with anybody.

People in the Eastern region are traditionally suspicious of any community meeting, organizing, or group work. Authorities suspect any activity until they are convinced that it is only a "community project" and not a political conspiracy. Consciousness raising about the reality of the poor is risky. Community promotion requires knowing how to effect social and economic change without jeopardizing lives.

Contrastingly, the mostly indigenous people of the Western Highlands are very progressive and want to effect change very rapidly and profoundly. The political factor is present too, because insurgency and counterinsurgency war

occurs here. Community promotion work is riskier here for community promoters and field extensionists.

In the Western Highlands, community promoters have to be careful in doing their work at the local level because they do not want to be accused by the authorities of implementing "subversive activities". They also have to know a lot of people in positions of power with whom they are not necessarily ideologically aligned.

Community promoters and extensionists in the Central and Northern regions have to deal with the same situation. The political factor is as powerful there as anywhere else. What changes is the nature of local power relations based on factors like land ownership, ethnic domination, distribution of wealth, political authority, etc.

Religion is also an important a factor. The moment you get to rural areas of Guatemala, you realize that there is a war of some kind going on between the Catholic church and the Christian Fundamentalist Evangelical churches.

"Evangelismo", as it is known in short in Guatemala, has been gaining ground in Guatemala, particularly since General Ríos Montt came to power in the coup of 1982. A born-again Christian himself, he encouraged the spread of Evangelism and allowed many conservative fundamentalist churches from the United States and other countries to establish branches in Guatemala. Today there are hundreds of national and international development organizations in

Guatemala, some of which have a hidden religious agenda. That agenda is usually to convert rural Catholics or atheists to a fundamentalist Evangelical religion.

This religious war for the hearts and minds of rural Guatemalan people between the Catholic church and Evangelical churches places CAPS in an awkward position. Even though CAPS is not an organization with a religious agenda, it is part of a private Catholic university, and some of its original ethical, philosophical and educational principles were based on social-Christian beliefs.

At the village level, that translates into a struggle to counterbalance the work of Evangelical promoters, not because they are not Catholic, but mainly because they bring with them an ideologically conservative outlook on the reality of the communities. I saw this struggle being played out more in the indigenous western highlands than in any other region of Guatemala.

Religion becomes a crucial factor when a community is divided by contradicting and opposing religions: one conservative, and the other mildly progressive. It is difficult for the extensionist and the community promoter to be effective in this situation.

The essence of how religion becomes an important influence in rural community development is that progressive organizations like CAPS and other allied NGO's want to promote social and economic change for the direct benefit of

poor communities in Guatemala. Fundamentalist development agencies, on the other hand, do not seem interested in promoting authentic social change. They are rather focused on converting others to their religion, maintaining the status quo, and neutralizing the Catholic church.

Patterns of Views on Contextual Influences in Training and Community Promotion

The training of community promoters by CAPS has been influenced by external and internal factors. The most important external influences on training have been the political violence and the cultural and ethnic diversity of Guatemala.

Political violence has been an important influence on training since the establishment of CAPS in 1967. Politics and political violence have influenced the content, the process, the location of the training programs, and the follow-on training process at the village level. In the seventies, CAPS was forced to cancel its training of community promoters at the local and regional level because the violence was widespread, endangering the lives of trainers and participants alike. In the early eighties, the political violence and armed conflict increased to great proportions, forcing CAPS to conduct its training programs in Guatemala City only.

Cultural and ethnic diversity is another important factor that influences the training strategy of CAPS. Since

most of the communities served by CAPS are located in the ethnically and culturally diverse central and highland regions, the participants in training programs normally reflect that diversity. This is a positive influence because people of different ethnic backgrounds get to know each others' culture, values, and experiences in a friendly environment.

The language diversity is usually a problem because core trainers do not speak any of the indigenous languages, and some participants do not speak Spanish. Fortunately, in most groups there are bilingual or trilingual participants who provide translation and facilitate communication between the two groups.

The pattern in all CAPS training programs for community promoters is that trainers try very hard to treat everybody equally and to respect the diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic background of participants. All participants, men and women, get the same amount of respect and chances to participate in discussions and group work. Women are usually underrepresented in training programs because, with the exception of some highland communities, the work of women is not yet fully appreciated at the village level in rural Guatemala.

Another important external influence on training has been the funding provided by international agencies. It usually came with strings attached that biased the training

process in different ways. This was a problem for CAPS for at least the first ten years of its operation. From 1981 on, CAPS has been able to accept funding that is free of any or most conditions.

Some of the important internal factors that have influenced the training of promoters are the evolving nature and goals of CAPS as a development organization, the changes in methodology and content of the courses, and the experience, skills, and beliefs of trainers. From 1981 to the present, one of the most crucial changes that influenced the training strategy was that CAPS changed its nature and goals from being just a training of social promoters institution with limited involvement at the village level, to a training and rural development organization directly involved in socio-economic and educational projects in rural communities.

The consequence of this change in CAPS nature upon the training strategy was that the training of promoters is now not only focused on the general theory of community development and/or popular education but also on providing specific skills that help the promoter to better coordinate educational or socio-economic projects at the village level.

One of the issues that was raised repeatedly by community promoters as an internal factor affecting training is the fact that trainers are ladinos who speak only Spanish and therefore conduct the training only in the Spanish

language. Many community promoters and extensionists singled out this issue of monolingual (Spanish only) and monocultural (ladino) trainers as one of the important constraints on the effectiveness of training courses, particularly when most participants come from indigenous rural communities and have a limited or no command of the Spanish language.

I noticed this problem during the training course that I observed in Guatemala. The indigenous trainees did not participate as much as the ladino promoters during open discussions probably because they felt uncomfortable with the Spanish language and the prevalent cultural environment. There are ways to bridge this problem (e.g. simultaneous interpretation), but the solution, one extensionist suggested, is to hire one or two additional trainers who are at least bilingual and bicultural.

Community promotion at the village level is also affected by a number of contextual influences like culture, language, gender, ethnicity, politics, economics, and religion. What follows is the pattern of influences that affect community promotion in different regions of Guatemala.

In the provinces of Jutiapa and Zacapa of the eastern region, language and ethnicity are not controversial or influential issues because the population in the rural villages of this region is highly ladino or of Spanish

descent. There are people here who look indigenous and may have indigenous blood, but they no longer speak an indigenous language and are not culturally indigenous.

In the eastern region, the issue of gender is a very important one. Women in this area are not allowed to participate in community development as much as men. Men dominate the decision-making process and are almost always in positions of power. The cultural pattern in the East can be described as conservative, male oriented and oppressive to women.

Two other important contextual influences affect community promotion to a high degree in the eastern region, namely politics and religion. Conservative political ideology is very influential and strongly supported in the eastern region. Right wing political parties have a lot of followers here. It was here where the right wing counterrevolution of 1954 was initiated.

Field extension workers and community promoters of the eastern provinces have to be very careful with what they do. They know that to be "effective" here, they have to work within the established mechanisms of social and political control (e.g., they have to be personally acquainted with those who are part of the powerful network of military commissioners). If they work outside these structures and/or challenge them, they put their lives in immediate danger. Politics in this eastern region is a very powerful

and restricting influence on the work and lives of community promoters and on rural community development.

In the East, religion is another important contextual influence on the success of community promotion. Because of the conservative nature of the eastern communities, several conservative evangelical churches have moved into rural communities to convert people to evangelism. The established and dominant Catholic church feels threatened by this evangelical movement and is fighting back to keep the hearts and minds of rural people.

The issue is that along with religion, evangelical churches, with some exceptions, also bring a conservative approach to rural community development. They de-emphasize the severity or even the existence of social and economic disparities, and persuade their followers not to question their reality but to accept it and conform to it. They emphasize individual self-help and achievement. The Catholic church used to have the same view, but since the seventies, they have recognized that poor peasants are victims of social and economic inequalities.

Community promoters in the East are aware of the influence of religion on people's consciousness. To be effective in any way, promoters know they have to adjust to that influence and even work with it.

In the provinces of Alta and Baja Verapaz in the northern region, culture, ethnicity, language, and

especially landlessness and politics are important influences on community promotion. There is a struggle here for cultural survival and for redistribution of land. Landlessness affects mainly indigenous kekchí and pocomchí peasants here who now have to work as seasonal wage laborers in the large coffee plantations of this region.

In the central region, the province of Sacatepéquez to be precise, culture, language, ethnicity, and economics are the most important contextual influences on community promotion. There is a struggle here for the preservation and survival of the Cackchiquel culture and language because the influence of nearby metropolitan Guatemala City can be felt very strongly. Economics is influential here because most peasants own plots of land and some of them have formed agricultural cooperatives in order to have access to credit, increase production and maximize their profits. Agricultural cooperatives sell vegetables to other regions of Guatemala, and they even export vegetables to other countries like El Salvador and the United States.

In the western highlands, politics, ethnicity, language, culture, women's participation, land distribution, and religion are important influences on community promotion. It is here where politics, manifested in the form of conflict and political violence, has a negative influence on community promotion. Ethnicity, culture and language are everyday influences here because the

concentration of ethnic groups is high in this region. The influence of religion is as much of a factor in the highlands as it is in the East. Gender is an issue and an influence here but in a more positive way: generally speaking, women's rights are more respected in the highland communities, and women's participation in rural community development is encouraged.

Because there are so many active contextual influences to deal with in the highland communities, the work of field extensionists and community promoters is very complex, dangerous, and extremely challenging. The level of people's consciousness about conflicting social, economic, and political interests is higher here than in any other region of Guatemala.

Table 4 is a graphic summary and contrast of how selected contextual influences affect community promotion at the village level according to the views of interviewed promoters and extension workers in four different regions of Guatemala.

Table 4
Contextual Influences on Community Promotion

Contextual Influences	Regions of Guatemala			
	Eastern	Northern	Central	Western
Politics/Violence	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX
Culture	X	XX	XXX	XXX
Language	0	XX	XX	XX
Ethnicity	0	XXX	XXX	XXX
Gender	XX	X	X	XXX
Religion	XXX	X	XX	XXX
Economics	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX

Code: 0 = not an important factor
X = important factor
XX = very important factor
XXX = extremely important factor

Table 4 visually shows that some contextual factors influencing community promotion are more important in some regions than in others. For instance, language and ethnicity are not important factors in the Eastern region because the same ethnic background, culture and language is shared by all here (Mestizo or ladino ethnic background and Spanish language).

In contrast, in the other three regions ethnicity and language are very or extremely important factors because 1) indigenous people in these regions feel that the preservation of indigenous cultures and languages should be an important goal of community promotion; and 2) community promoters in these regions have to be bicultural and

bilingual to be able to work with both indigenous and ladino people.

Across all regions, it is evident that politics and economics are either very or extremely influential factors on community promotion work. The local or regional social and economic power structure, usually unjust, becomes the ultimate negative barrier to successful community promotion. The community promoters either work within these powerful constraints or together with other villagers struggle to change them.

It is also clear from table 4 that religion is a very or extremely important influence on community promotion in the Eastern, Central and Western regions. In these three regions, Catholic and Evangelical non-governmental organizations are engaged in a struggle to control the community development agenda of rural villages. Evangelical development organizations usually bring a conservative development agenda that includes the conversion of villagers to an evangelical religion.

Analysis

This chapter examined program and contextual factors affecting training and community promotion. The views of community promoters, field extensionists and trainers were presented.

The views of indigenous promoters suggest that program factors, such as monolingual and monocultural ladino

trainers, the use of a non-indigenous language (Spanish) as the main medium of communication, the lack of training courses that are culturally sensitive and appropriate for each ethnic group or region, and the overemphasis on centralized training programs affect the quality and impact of training that they receive from CAPS. They often suggested that training at the village level and using trainers who are indigenous and bilingual would be more appropriate for them.

Another issue that emerged from the views of community promoters and extension workers is that women, especially indigenous, are largely excluded from the benefits of training. Cultural biases, prejudice, paternalistic attitudes in rural communities as well as a centralized system of training programs are the main reasons for this exclusion. Promoters suggested that village level or regional training programs would encourage women to participate in training and community development. It was also suggested that hiring an indigenous woman trainer would also encourage the process of women's participation and representation in the development process.

Patterns of contextual influences on community promotion suggest that the work of the community promoter is influenced by a variety of contextual factors, such as culture, language, ethnicity, gender, economics, politics and religion. The emphasis varies according to the region

where the community is located. Issues of culture, language and ethnicity appear to be very important in the mostly indigenous Western Highland, Central and Northern regions but not in the Eastern ladino region. Across all regions, politics, economics and religion are very influential factors on the success of community promotion.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Patterns of Conceptions of Success

The training of community promoters continues today to be an important component of governmental and non-governmental strategies of rural community development in Latin America. Since the early fifties, conceptions of success in training local leaders for rural community development have been expressed in the literature of community development primarily by theoreticians, practitioners, consultants, training experts and administrators of community development programs.

It is only through recent studies (Aulestia, 1990; Campos, 1990) that the voices of rural community promoters and leaders have been given some of the importance that they deserve in the theory and practice of rural development in Latin America. The acceptance and emergence of qualitative research and methods and the surfacing of new disciplines in social science, such as participatory research and participatory evaluation, have a lot to do with this new trend in social research. In the educational field the theory and principles of nonformal education and especially of popular education, have also influenced the trend toward understanding and constructing a body of knowledge in rural development theory based on the views of rural people.

The conceptions of success on training and community promotion of community promoters and trainers and field extensionists of CAPS were examined in detail in previous chapters. The conceptions of community promoters and other personnel of the role of contextual influences on the success of training and community promotion were also examined. In that examination of field data there was a clear emphasis on the views of the volunteer community promoters, mainly because their views are underrepresented in the literature of community development and development in general.

The conceptions of success of volunteer community promoters and those of CAPS salaried personnel did not always follow the same patterns. There were differences and similarities between the two groups when analyzing CAPS degree of success, criteria for success in training community promoters, and the role that contextual influences play in either supporting or constraining such success.

There were differences and similarities even among the views community promoters and field extensionists themselves. This is because community promoters and field extensionists were from four different regions of Guatemala, each with its own cultural, linguistic, social and economic characteristics. It is also due to differences in the level of experience attained by each promoter, extensionist, and trainer.

The patterns in the conceptions of success and contextual influences in training and community promotion of promoters, field extensionists and trainers of CAPS were examined, analyzed and interpreted in Chapters VI, VII and VIII. These findings of this study have important implications for a) the training and rural development strategy of CAPS, b) CAPS as a non-governmental organization in Guatemala, c) training rural community promoters in Guatemala; and d) training in rural community development. Also, based on results and implications of the study, recommendations for CAPS, practitioners, and researchers are also provided.

Assessment of CAPS Training and Development Strategy

Based on the conceptions and views of community promoters and that of trainers and field extensionists, and based on my own observations in the rural areas and at the training site in Guatemala city, I can assess that CAPS has had a lot of success in its training of community promoters strategy. The success of CAPS training strategy is indicated in different ways, such as the community promoter's higher level of self-confidence, skill and knowledge; the community's increased level of organization and social consciousness, and the improved level of participation of villagers in community-chosen educational, infrastructural, and socio-economic projects.

The success of CAPS training strategy since 1967 is based on respecting people's dignity, treating people equally regardless of their political beliefs, sex, ethnic origin and culture, and formal education level. It also departs from people's knowledge and needs and uses a participatory training methodology that is consistent with those principles. The principle of listening to the suggestions and demands of promoters and rural people has also contributed to this level of success.

But, according to the views of community promoters, trainers and field extensionists, CAPS training strategy has not always been successful. They pointed out that in the sixties and seventies, hundreds of trained community promoters came back to their communities but did not work as volunteers in programs of rural community development. A good number of these promoters trained by CAPS, perhaps due to a lack of incentives, were hired by other governmental and non-governmental organizations also engaged in rural community development.

Today, even though the great majority of active community promoters recognize the success of the training strategy of CAPS in one way or another, they also point out aspects of the current training strategy of CAPS that are not fully successful.

Among the aspects of CAPS training strategy that have problems or need improvement, community promoters chose the

following: the selection process of participants for training courses in Guatemala City; the lack of appropriate follow-on training at the community level; the short duration of courses (one week on the average) at the central site; the use of core trainers who do not speak a single indigenous language and who use Spanish as their only medium of oral and written communication; the problem of training courses taking place almost exclusively in the central site in Guatemala City and not in the villages; and the lack of consistent training opportunities and incentives for active community promoters.

The views of trainers on problems of the training strategy emphasized the following: the lack of appropriate follow-up training at the village level; the lack of coordination and cohesiveness between the training and field extension departments; and the lack of a clear and consistent overall conception of the training and rural development strategy of CAPS.

The field extensionists' views revealed these problems in the training strategy of CAPS: the selection process of participants to training courses needs to be improved; there is no unified interpretation about the role of the field extensionist in the follow-on training process, perhaps due to differences in experience, training and personal beliefs; and there is a lack of coordination and understanding between the training and field extension departments.

My assessment of CAPS, consistent with that of promoters and salaried personnel, is that along with its undeniable success, CAPS training strategy has the following problems: the selection process of candidates to training seminars is inadequate; training seminars are too short, have a lack of depth in content, and may have too many participants (35-40) per trainer; the follow-on training is not carried on properly by the field personnel; the training seminars are centralized; active community promoters do not receive training incentives to continue their voluntary community promotion work; and finally, there is misunderstanding, separation of work and, consequently, lack of coordination between the training and field extension departments.

In conclusion, and in spite of its successes, the training strategy of CAPS is suffering from a lack of consensus and definition at the level of the overall training and rural community development strategy. Redefining the nature, goals, and theoretical base of CAPS is one of the main challenges that lie ahead of this Guatemalan non-governmental organization.

Since 1981, CAPS has been changing from being a non-governmental organization that almost only trained social promoters in community development to an organization that is directly involved in the funding and technical assistance of social and economic projects at the village level. The

current changes within CAPS are influenced by internal and external factors.

Internally, CAPS has achieved a high level of administrative strength and financial stability. CAPS has also accumulated a lot of experience in training, field extension and community promotion work. CAPS has gradually expanded its coverage of communities, and will continue to do so, creating the need to hire new field personnel (pre-extensionists) who are already working in the newly selected communities.

Externally, some of the main factors influencing change within CAPS are: the challenge that the proliferation of NGOs working in rural areas of Guatemala is posing to CAPS; the growing influence of conservative religions and churches in rural development; and mild changes in the Guatemalan political scene (i.e. elected civilian governments) that may present somewhat different conditions and challenges than in the military era.

Implications for CAPS

The implications of this study for CAPS as a training and rural development NGO in Guatemala are three-fold: first, the conceptions of volunteer community promoters and those of employees have shown that CAPS has had long-term success in training local leaders and in supporting community promotion at the village level. The strength of its strategy has been the use of a participatory methodology

that is based on a belief in dialogue and in respecting people's dignity, knowledge and will.

Community promoters and salaried personnel also acknowledged the fact that, along with success, CAPS has had weaknesses both at the level of the training strategy and that of extension work, such as dependency on external funding, overemphasis on just training social promoters, weak support of extension work and community promotion, etc. The current weaknesses of the training strategy as seen by promoters and employees, such as inappropriate selection of participants, short duration of courses, centralized training of promoters, ineffective follow-on training, and the use of monolingual and monocultural trainers, constitute a challenge to the future of CAPS.

Secondly, the conceptions of both promoters and especially employees reveal that CAPS is in a period of change. They realized that CAPS is growing as a rural development NGO that has to deal with the new challenges brought in by growth. Likewise, they are aware that several veteran field extensionists, who have been with CAPS since 1967 may retire soon. The prospect of losing these valuable employees and finding worthy replacements will be one of the main challenges for the nineties.

Thirdly, the voices of promoters and paid personnel suggest that several contextual influences have affected CAPS performance through the years. Culture, language,

ethnicity, and gender have been powerful influences. Politics has been the most negative contextual influence in the history of CAPS. Political violence, as a manifestation of politics and other social contradictions at the structural level, has affected and diminished the potential overall impact and success of CAPS.

The findings of this study suggest that CAPS needs to reorganize and redefine itself as a training and rural development organization, and needs to update the nature and goals of its training strategy. It also needs to look for creative ways of dealing with contextual factors that have prevented ladino and indigenous women from being included as extension workers, trainers and community promoters of CAPS.

Implications for Training Community Promoters in Guatemala

One of the first implications of this study for the training of community promoters in Guatemala is on the issue of participation. Many development organizations take participation of local leaders for granted just because they offer them training and the possibility of bringing material resources into the promoters' communities. But the issue of participation in relation to success in training and rural community development is more complicated than that.

The findings of this study imply that the training of community promoters may be more successful when local people are convinced that their participation in their own learning and teaching is taken seriously. They appreciate a training

methodology that includes their own knowledge, conceptions and needs, and that respects their ethnic background, culture, values, and language.

A participatory training methodology that is rooted on the principles of adult and popular education, and one that encourages participation and dialogue and takes into account the participants' differences in culture, language, ethnicity and gender is more likely to be successful in Guatemala than one that is traditional, instructional and largely imposed.

Coerced or induced participation of local leaders in training and/or community promotion leads to failure in the long run. Authentic and voluntary participation is a difficult goal for an NGO to achieve in rural areas because it involves a long process of gaining mutual respect and trust. Once trust is achieved, authentic participation contributes to a community-chosen process of development.

Any training organization working in Guatemala or elsewhere in Latin America, should not underestimate the enormous influence that contextual factors have on the training of community promoters. In a country like Guatemala, culture, ethnicity, language, gender, politics and religion are important influences during a training seminar. Trainers have to take these issues and influences into account if they want to have success. Moreover, trainers should strive to develop a training process that is

not only technically participatory but also culturally participatory. Culturally participatory training means that trainers and participants should be of the same culture and speak the same language in order to truly communicate with each other.

Implications for Training in Rural Community Development

One of the most important implications that can be inferred from this study is that the training of human resources in the context of programs of rural community development is a political activity. Training, when applied to rural people, is a tool that can be used effectively to foster social change or to prevent it.

In a social context, training becomes political when a governmental or non-governmental organization uses it to transfer certain type of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to rural villagers. In this way, training becomes a means to an end. The end may be to help rural villagers in the process of their own development and liberation, or it may be to maintain and contribute to their mental and social and economic oppression and dependency.

If we assume that training of community promoters is political in nature because of its intentionality, then all training and development organizations working in rural areas of countries with social, economic and political disparities and contradictions, should ask themselves whether their training strategy and methodology is, directly

or indirectly, contributing to a process of change and liberation or to a process of enhanced oppression.

Recommendations for CAPS

Based on the analysis of data gathered in Guatemala from community promoters and CAPS personnel, these are some important recommendations suggested to CAPS for improvement of the training strategy. They are:

1. The aspect of planning and programming training courses should be carefully analyzed and discussed with all people involved, so that training responds better to the needs of promoters and communities.

2. CAPS should clarify and redefine its follow-on training and the role of the field extensionist in that process, in the context of a reassessment of the training strategy as a whole.

3. The process and criteria for selection of participants for training courses in Guatemala City should be analyzed and changed, so that those who attend specific training courses are the ones who would benefit the most.

4. Active community promoters should be given more than one or two training opportunities, as a way of updating their knowledge and skills, and as a form of personal incentive.

5. Training courses should also take place in rural communities. Training at the village level would be more culturally appropriate and more effective in responding to

local needs, and would also benefit people, such as women, who are normally prevented from attending these courses in Guatemala City. This should be done provided that the political environment of the community or region allows for this to happen and that it does not endanger the lives of trainers and villagers.

6. Procedures should be created to ensure that rural women, ladino or indigenous, are represented in more proportionate numbers in training programs. Training courses that address specific women's issues should be considered.

7. The length of a training course should vary according to the theme of the training. Promoters suggested that the average one-week length of current seminars was often restricting to the process of discussion and learning.

8. The number of participants in training courses should also be reconsidered. The current average of thirty to forty participants per trainer is rather high. It is recommended that twenty to twenty five participants be the maximum allowed in each course.

9. The core trainers should pay periodic visits to all or at least the majority of rural communities served by CAPS. The objective would be that through first-hand knowledge of the reality and needs of those communities, they would be better prepared to provide appropriate training and support to community promoters.

10. Ethnic and regional characteristics of participants should be considered when planning and implementing training courses in Guatemala City or in the villages, in order to make the training process not only technically participatory but also culturally participatory.

11. To strive for culturally participatory training, CAPS should hire two indigenous trainers who are bilingual and bicultural to facilitate training programs where the majority or all of the participants are indigenous. One of these two trainers should be an indigenous woman.

There are also some recommendations for improvement of CAPS as a training and rural community development organization. They are:

1. As an NGO in Guatemala, CAPS should carefully reassess its overall training and rural development strategy with the objective of preparing and adjusting it to face the challenges and dilemmas of the nineties and beyond. Special attention should be paid to reexamining the theoretical base of CAPS.

2. CAPS should continue to strive vigorously to reach the goal of financial self-sufficiency, through the efficient management of resources and the maintenance and improvement of the existing revolving loan program.

3. CAPS should improve the channels of communication between all three departments (administration, education, and field extension).

Recommendations for Practitioners

These are some recommendations for those who are or might be involved in training community promoters for rural development in Guatemala and elsewhere in Latin America, based on the case study of CAPS and on the views of interviewed community promoters.

1. Trainers and training organizations operating in Guatemala and similar countries, should always take into account the views, conceptions and suggestions of community promoters in designing and implementing training programs, to ensure that the training is successful and that it is responsive to actual participant and community needs.

The case study of CAPS shows that the views of success and suggestions of community promoters had an important influence in the evolution of its training and rural community development strategy. Through constant dialogue and respect for the community promoters' views, CAPS has been able to adapt and adjust its training strategy to new situations and challenges that have appeared in the last two and a half decades in the rural development context of Guatemala.

2. Training organizations and practitioners should always bear in mind that success in training community promoters at the classroom level does not always translate into the promoters' success in community promotion at the village level.

In other words, even if a training program has a good process of participant selection and needs assessment, and even if the implementation is successful, there is no guarantee that a trained community promoter would succeed alone in putting his/her new skills and knowledge to practice at the village level, unless promoters are genuinely supported by a consistent follow-on training and extension process at the village level.

3. Practitioners should always remember that training community promoters is <u>not</u> a neutral activity; that training is rather a political act.

The training of community promoters strategy, usually a component of small or large programs of rural community development, is directly influenced by the purpose, nature, theoretical base, and political orientation of the governmental or non-governmental organization that sponsors it. Training is a political tool that contributes to either support a process of empowerment and liberation or enhance a process of alienation and oppression of rural peasants.

4. Practitioners should make sure that their training methodology is consistent with the principles and goals of the training program in particular, and with the purpose, nature, and goals of the sponsoring training organization, in general. It is not unusual for trainers to talk about the importance of participation, dialogue, experiential and participant-centered learning in training rural leaders.

But when it comes to the training itself, often they use a training methodology that is top-down, teacher-centered, instructional and alienating. If that contradiction is not resolved, training programs become largely ineffective.

5. Practitioners involved in training community promoters in Guatemala and similar countries, should be aware of the great influence that contextual factors such as culture, language, ethnicity, gender, politics and religion, have upon the training process.

These issues should always be important considerations in the design and implementation of training programs for rural community promoters. Their inclusion in the training process enhances the chances for its success and enriches the level of discussion and mutual learning.

In Guatemala, politics and religion are two powerful contextual factors that are very influential on determining what kind and level of success training and community promotion can have at the village level. Due to their social and individual nature, these factors may either hinder or promote success in training community promoters.

Recommendations for Further Research

I hope that this study has sparked some interest for further research among people who are involved in training human resources for community development or in rural development in general. These are my recommendations for researchers on topics that would merit further study.

1. I would encourage further research on the conceptions and views of community promoters not only on success of training strategies, but also on other themes related to rural development in Latin America.

There is a need for continuing the process of validation and representation of the voices and knowledge of rural people in the literature of rural development in Latin America.

2. I gathered the conceptions of community promoters of one training NGO in Guatemala (CAPS). It would be interesting and valuable to see how different or similar the community promoters' conceptions of success would be when doing a comparative study of two or more training NGOs in Guatemala.

3. The number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Guatemala has increased dramatically in the last ten to fifteen years. There are more than seven hundred NGOs in Guatemala now, and the same trend of proliferation is being observed in other Latin American countries. Hence, a in-depth study on the role of NGOs in rural development in Guatemala and other countries, with emphasis on the causes of their proliferation and the implications of their direct involvement in rural development vis-a-vie the need for urgent change in the structural causes of rural poverty, would be welcome.

4. Contextual influences on training community promoters studied here (culture, language, ethnicity, gender, politics and religion) merit further research attention either within the context of the theory and practice of community development or any other strategy of rural development. The role of religion, for instance, in hindering or assisting rural community development should be explored in view of the recent wave of evangelism sweeping Latin America.

5. Exploring the principles, techniques, virtues and limitations of participatory training in the context of rural development in Guatemala, can also be a valuable study for those who are directly involved in training.

6. An ethnographic study on the history of community development in Guatemala in the last thirty years would be possible through interviews with field extension workers, trainers and community promoters of CAPS and other NGOs.

7. During the field research process I learned that doing research in rural areas of Guatemala is a very complex, difficult and sometimes risky activity. The presence of multiple cultures, languages and ethnic groups, and other factors, such as political struggle, enrich and limit the research process at the same time. I recommend that future researchers get fully acquainted with the complexity of the rural Guatemalan context, and the country as a whole, before doing field research there.

8. The risk of sudden political violence, as a consequence of social, economic or political conditions, is always present in Guatemala. Researchers should be aware that political violence and military control are powerful limiting factors in doing research at the village level. Flexibility with field research timeline is highly recommended.

9. Logistically, Guatemala is a difficult country. Many indigenous and ladino communities are found in isolated areas that are difficult to reach. Transportation to rural villages is usually a problem outside of the main roads. Telephones are mostly confined to urban centers. I recommend that researchers not familiar with Guatemala, come to visit the country first in order to design a field study that is feasible and realistic.

As a final conclusion, I would like to stress that learner-based conceptions of success are an important reference point for designing and implementing training and community development programs that strive to be participatory and responsive to regional and cultural differences. Moreover, my interviews with Guatemalan community promoters convinced me that they, as beneficiaries and coordinators of development programs, have a definite perspective of success that deserves recognition and inclusion in the discourse on training and community development in Latin America.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study used a critical review of the literature and a field case study of a training organization in Guatemala. This appendix will focus on the methodology utilized in the field phase of the study.

The Field Research Phase

The field research phase of this study was conducted in Guatemala in cooperation with the Training Center for Social Promoters (CAPS) of the Rafael Landívar University between July and October of 1989.

Data Collection Methods

In order to construct a case study of CAPS and to gather information on the conceptions of primarily community promoters, I chose to use a combination of three research methods: document analysis, observation, and interview.

In the case of document analysis, except for a booklet on CAPS published in 1976 and a few isolated sheets of information, I was not able to analyze internal documents of CAPS because they have a policy of not making those documents available to anybody. This is a direct consequence of the potential threat of misinterpretation of documents by political or governmental groups. Although the materialization of this threat was more likely to have taken place in the seventies and the early eighties, I understood their protective measures.

To compensate for the lack of access to CAPS documentation, I conducted in-depth interviews with the executive director of CAPS, veteran field extensionists and trainers. This alternative way of collecting information about CAPS turned out to be somehow better than looking at documents, since I was able to listen to and record the oral history of CAPS as described and analyzed by key personnel.

In regard to the observation method, I used it all the time taking notes of details, attitudes, contradictions, problems, etc. I used it especially during a one-week training program for rural community promoters that took place in Guatemala City. The theme of this training seminar was Group Work Methods. I also observed a training course for CAPS field and training personnel on popular education. I paid careful attention to the work of extensionists in the field and that of trainers in the classroom. Interpersonal relationships between CAPS personnel were also observed.

The interview method was the most valuable with community promoters. To interview community promoters in their villages, I used primarily an interview-guide format but in several occasions I combined it with and open-ended format to have a dialogue with them. I had some problems in the Eastern and Northern regions in terms of tape-recording the interviews because contextual factors (i.e., culture, politics) constrained the use of tape recorders. Field extensionists of the Eastern region had warned me that if I

tried to use a tape recorder during the interview process, the trust process would suffer and I would get little or no information.

On the other hand, community promoters of the Western Highlands region (mostly indigenous) were more trusting and open-minded. They had very little problem with my use of a tape recorder during the interviews. All of the interviews conducted in four provinces of the western region were tape-recorded.

Sampling Strategy

CAPS serves 92 rural communities in eleven provinces of Guatemala, half of the country's twenty two provinces. CAPS serves communities in at least four regions of Guatemala. I decided that in order to collect and contrast the views of community promoters with diverse backgrounds it was important to visit a number of communities in those four regions.

I realized upon arrival that CAPS does not serve an equal number of served communities in each province. This discrepancy is due to needs assessment, ability and experience of the field extensionist assigned to a province, concentration of population and to other circumstances, such as the political situation in an area.

The decision on how many provinces and how many communities I wanted to visit was not solely my own. I depended on the judgment and experience of CAPS personnel in

terms of estimating how much I could accomplish in three months. I had to negotiate with them the amount of collaboration that they would give me, and what they expected in return.

The way it really worked out was that instead of each of us working around the other, we accommodated each other and helped each other. They helped me logistically with the entry into communities, and I helped them in any way possible even during meetings, discussions, project evaluations, and as co-trainer during on-site short training seminars.

The joint decision was that they were willing to give me logistical support to get to communities starting in the eastern provinces, and then move to the northern, central, and western regions respectively. My goal, I told them, was to visit at least **two** communities in each of the nine provinces served by field extensionists willing to cooperate with me, and interview at least **one or two** community promoters in each rural community visited. In other words, the goal was to visit at least 18 rural communities and to interview a minimum of 18 community promoters or a maximum of 36.

In the end, I was able to go to the nine provinces that I expected to visit: Jutiapa and Zacapa (Eastern region); Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz (Northern region); Sacatepéquez (Central region); and Quiché, Totonicapán,

Quezaltenango, and San Marcos (Western region). Because of the tremendous logistical collaboration of the experienced field extensionists, I was able to surpass my goals in terms of communities visited and promoters interviewed. I visited a total of 26 rural communities and interviewed a total of 44 community promoters.

The 26 communities visited constitute 28% of the total of 92 communities served by CAPS. The 44 community promoters interviewed make up approximately 10% of the estimated total of community promoters who are actively working with CAPS.

Nobody knows what the exact number of active volunteer community promoters is, but one of the veteran extensionists told me that he estimated that in each community there is an average of 4-5 active promoters. If we assume that there are five active promoters in each community, that would give us a total of 460 active community promoters cooperating with CAPS. Forty four promoters are slightly less than 10% of the assumed 460 promoters.

The following tables clarify the breakdown of community promoters interviewed and communities visited by region and province. They also show the discrepancies in numbers from region to region and from province to province.

Table 5
Number of Promoters and Communities by Province

Provinces	Community Promoters	Communities Visited
1. Jutiapa	7	3
2. Zacapa	9	4
3. Alta Verapaz	2	2
4. Baja Verapaz	1	1
5. Sacatepéquez	9	6
6. Quiché	4	3
7. Totonicapán	6	4
8. Quezaltenango	3	1
9. San Marcos	3	2
Totals	44	26

Table 5 is a graphic summary of the number of community promoters interviewed and the number of rural communities visited in each of the nine provinces where the research was implemented.

Table 6
Number of Promoters and Communities by Region

Region	Community Promoters	Communities Visited
1. Eastern	16	7
2. Northern	3	3
3. Central	9	6
4. Western	16	10
Totals	44	26

Table 6 is a breakdown and summary of the number of community promoters interviewed and the number of rural communities visited in each region of Guatemala.

When looking at the above numbers, it is important to remember that the area of influence of CAPS is divided into "development nuclei" with their corresponding communities in each province. As it is evident in Appendix B, some provinces served by CAPS have more "nuclei" and communities than others, and that helps explain the discrepancies in the number of community promoters interviewed and communities visited in each region.

Other secondary factors that contributed to the discrepancies are the size of each province, the varying conditions of the roads, the distances from one village to another, and the amount of days that I spend in each province.

The actual data collection process is described and examined in chapters VI, VII and VIII.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher did a preliminary analysis in Guatemala of CAPS training strategy based on data collected from interviews with community promoters and with training and field personnel of CAPS, and from observation of a) training seminars in Guatemala City and a few in the villages, and b) community development projects in rural villages.

The result of this preliminary assessment of CAPS training strategy was a written report presented and discussed with CAPS personnel before my departure from Guatemala in early October, 1989. This preliminary report was part of the research agreement with CAPS described below.

Representative data of conceptions of success of community promoters and other CAPS personnel on training and community promotion is examined, analyzed, and interpreted in chapters V, VI, VII. Their views on the influence of contextual factors is examined and analyzed in chapter VIII.

Research Agreement with CAPS

My agreement with CAPS from the beginning was to do a field study that would be useful to all parties involved. My commitment was to provide them with preliminary feedback on their training strategy before my departure, and that I would write a formal report from the United States as well after I had thoroughly analyzed the data collected in Guatemala.

While still in Guatemala, I wrote a ten-page preliminary report that I had the chance to discuss with them. My second and final written report was sent to them in February of 1991.

APPENDIX B

MAP OF CAPS AREA OF OPERATION IN GUATEMALA

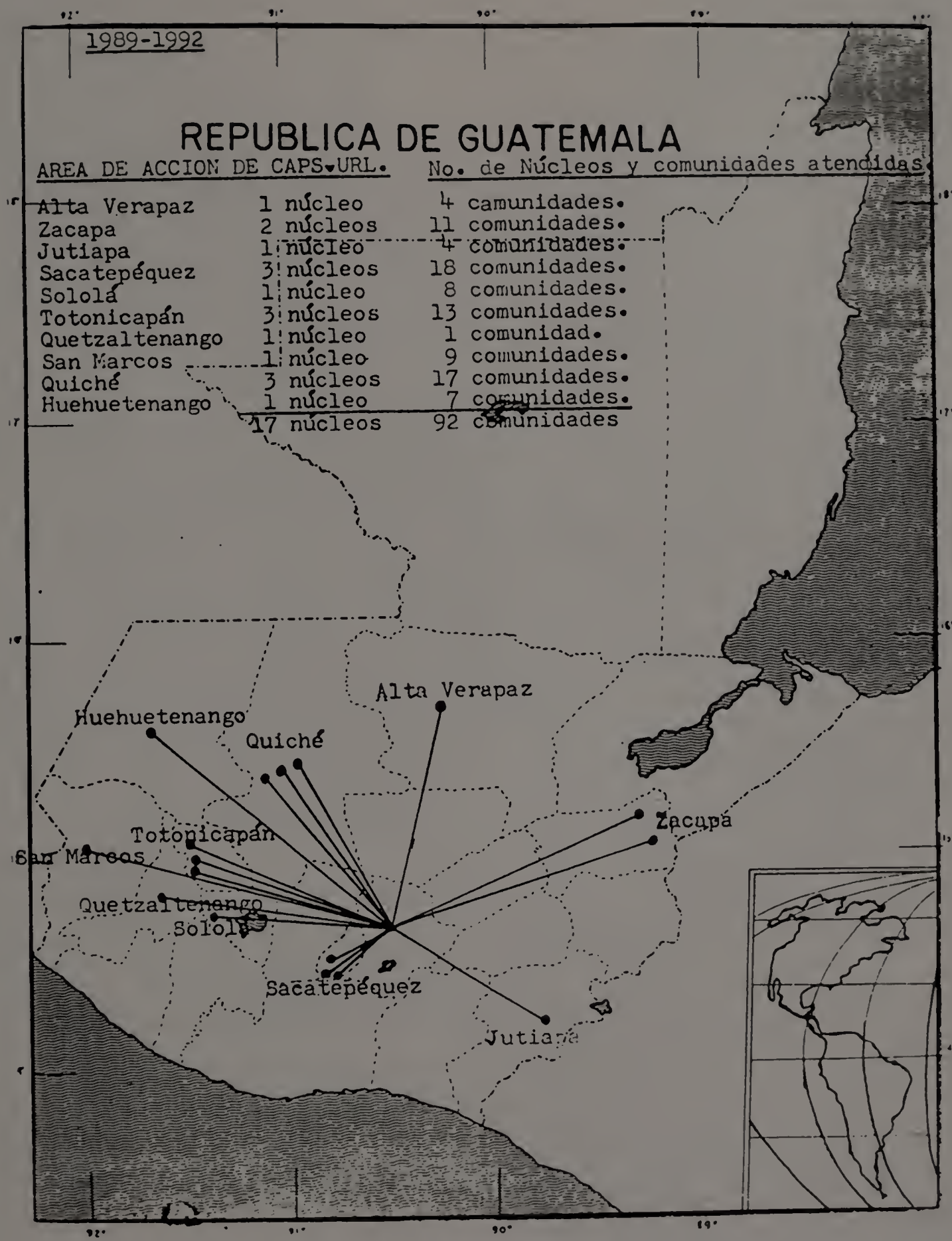

Figure 2 **CAPS Area of Operation: Number of Provinces, Development Nuclei and Communities Attended**

APPENDIX C

MAP OF GUATEMALA: REGIONS AND PROVINCES VISITED DURING FIELD RESEARCH

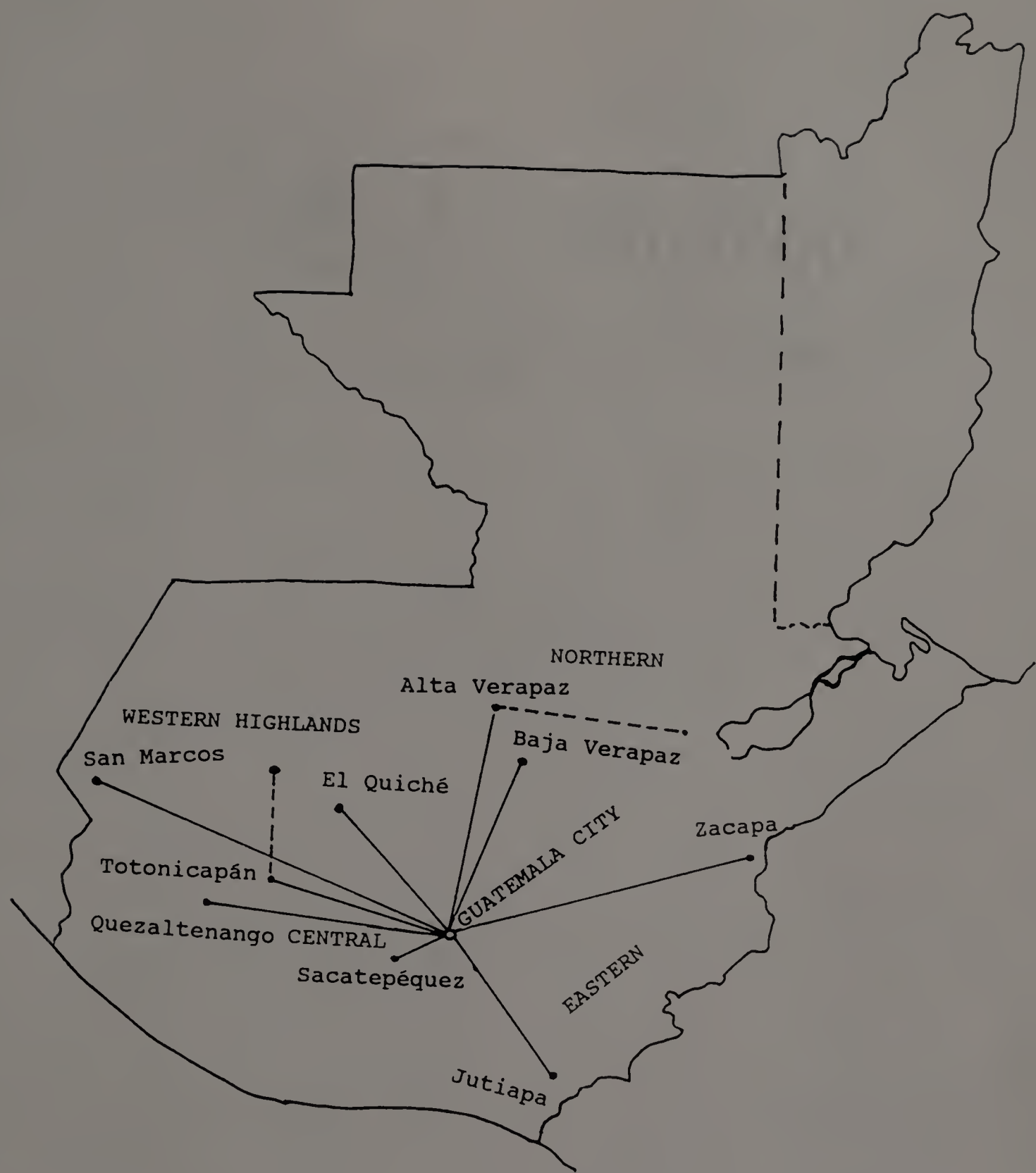

Figure 3 **Map of Guatemala: Regions and Provinces visited during Field Research**

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