Technical Assistance to the Staff and Communities of USAID/Guatemala's Partners

A Two-Part Report on Gender Equity and Business Development in Atitlán

A project funded by the Office of Women in Development, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, U.S. Agency for International Development, under contract number FAO-0100-C-00-6005-00, with Development Alternatives, Inc.

June 2002

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A Women in Development Technical Assistance Project

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By

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Development Alternatives, Inc.

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PREFACE

Since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, Guatemala's transition to peace and sustainable development has offered the country an enormous opportunity to improve the marginalized position of women—particularly indigenous women—who have historically had limited access to education, health services, factors of production, and democratic institutions.

The agreement of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with the Government of Guatemala on protected areas for conservation of biodiversity calls for explicit strategies to include women. Under the same agreement, CONAP, the government agency for protected areas, is to separate "data by gender in reports and analyses whenever possible" and "to document to what extent women participate in, or are beneficiaries of, field activities and training."

The 2001 program document for the USAID/Guatemala Strategic Objective 5 (SO5), "Improved Natural Resources Management and Biodiversity Conservation," highlights the inclusion of gender and issues of concern to women and solicits technical assistance from WIDTECH, a USAID/EGAT/WID technical assistance project, to ensure the integration of gender in SO5.

The goal of USAID/Guatemala SO5 is to improve natural resource management and the conservation of biodiversity. A central strategy for achieving this goal is to work with communities living in and around protected areas and to promote the participation of civil society. The involvement of WIDTECH ensures the full integration of women in this strategy.

WIDTECH has worked with a Guatemala firm, Consultores Para El Desarrollo Rural Sostenible (CODERSA), to ensure the full integration of gender and issues of concern to women by focusing on the four areas of SO5:

- Economic activities;
- Sustainable use of natural resources;
- Policy, laws, and regulations analysis; and
- Strengthening of local nongovernmental organizations.

The result of this collaboration has been a series of publications that address the gender dimensions within each of these areas. This publication, one of the series, is presented as two reports, Report A and Report B. Report A addresses technical assistance to the staffs of USAID's strategic partners in Atitlán, Guatemala; Report B deals with technical assistance to civil society organizations in Atitlán. CODERSA consultants Timoteo López and Eugenia de Celada provided training to the staffs of nongovernmental organizations and to community leaders in three regions in Guatemala: Atitlán, Polochic/Motagua, and Petén. The two reports on the training in Atitlán have been translated into English. They serve as the main text for

this document. An appendix following the second report provides the two original Spanish Atitlán documents as well as two reports each for Polochic/Motagua and Petén.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We owe thanks to the rural men and women for giving us their time, for their devotion to the exchange of information, and for their frank discussion of the subject matter. We would also like to thank the professional, technical, and extension staff for their interest and commitment, as well as the coordinators and officers of the United States Agency for International Development's strategic partners for their understanding and support of the technical assistance activities.

Finally, we are particularly grateful to the team of consultants.

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REPORT A:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE STAFFS OF USAID'S STRATEGIC PARTNERS: GENDER EQUITY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN ATITLÁN PARKS

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1. INTRODUCTION

WIDTECH, a technical assistance project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Consultores Para El Desarrollo Rural Sostenible (CODERSA), a Guatemalan firm, have provided technical assistance to the USAID/Guatemala environmental program (Strategic Objective 5) on gender analysis and issues of concern to women. This report documents the assistance given to USAID strategic partners in Atitlán on the importance of the use of a participatory approach with a gender focus in conservation programs. CODERSA held a series of technical assistance workshops for USAID strategic partners in Atitlán (see the annexes to this report) with the goal of strengthening institutional capacity to use such an approach. The technical assistance was designed after extensive review of the strategic partners' current work plans.

The workshops, held between April and June 2002, were as follows:

- An initial technical assistance workshop for decision-makers and technical staff;
- A workshop on introducing a gender equity focus; and
- A second technical assistance workshop for decision-makers and technical staff.

The workshops included direct contact with community groups and interviews with agricultural producers (men and women) affiliated with the strategic partners. Findings from these interviews and discussions underscored the need for a deeper exploration of the obstacles and opportunities to incorporate a gender equity focus in existing programs. These interviews also highlighted the need for affirmative actions to promote the inclusion of both men and women from the communities in programs and projects.

The Atitlán region is inhabited by a population that has lived in the area since the 15th century. Consequently, Atitlán's social fabric and culture provide essential elements upon which to promote the value of conserving the region's protected areas and their natural resources. The existing capacity of USAID's strategic partners and their close ties with rural families and community groups can be used strategically to reinforce actions to conserve the flora and fauna of the region.

As a result of the workshops noted above, institutional actions to incorporate gender equity in the programs and projects supported by USAID's strategic partners will be undertaken with the goals of promoting the meaningful participation of both rural men and women in the management of protected areas, recognizing the cultural heritage of the region, and increasing household incomes.

In response to the interest demonstrated in gender by participants during the first technical assistance workshop, a second workshop was planned to introduce gender equity. This second session was aimed at personnel from public and private entities connected with the implementation of the USAID-funded Parks in Peril Program. The workshop was intended to foster a common understanding of gender equity that would contribute to the implementation of the strategic partners' work plans for 2002 without changing the overarching project goals and objectives, or the total level of institutional resources available.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE REGION OF ATITLÁN

Atitlán has been inhabited since the second half of the 15th century. The current population has been in residence for several hundred years and comprises several sociolinguistic groups, separated by language, social organization, and culture, and with manifestly different customs regarding the participation of men and women in the protection of biodiversity and the use of, access to, and control over natural resources.

During the 1970s, the population around Lake Atitlán received technical support from Guatemala's General Office of Agricultural Resources, General Office of Livestock Assistance, and National Forestry Institute in the areas of natural resource management and agricultural production. The same population also received support from the private sector through programs and projects (many with international financing) to work in the following areas:

1. Agricultural training and education (focusing on small producers and coffee harvesting);
2. Community projects providing training in soil conservation;
3. Community organization for work in tourism; and
4. Family-based projects focusing on animal husbandry (mainly poultry).

Technical assistance was channeled primarily to groups of men and male leaders of the rural community.

Within this geographical area, some forms of traditional organization demonstrate a strong concern for protecting the flora and fauna of the region. In many cases, women lead the charge for environmental protection. For example, in the case of San Marcos La Laguna, elderly women are prominent among the community members demanding that municipal authorities protect water sources.

The department of Sololá enjoys environmental and natural resource protection that has been institutionalized through the presence and work of the following entities:

- Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, or MARN);
- National Council of Protected Areas;
- National Forestry Institute;
- Departmental Development Council (includes environment and natural resources); and

- Departmental authorities (specific issues by third-party request).

In the municipality of Panajachel, in the department of Sololá, the following entities have been created that have developmental and environmental goals among their mandates:

- Authority for Sustainable Development of Lake Atitlán and its surrounding area; and
- The municipality (specific actions, especially in the urban area).

Finally, in the area of social development, several private-sector institutions are active in Sololá:

- University of the Valley of Guatemala (UVG);
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC);
- Vivamos Mejor (subcontracts with TNC); and
- Association for the Protection of Private Reserves.

Unfortunately, the departmental environmental strategy has been underutilized as a framework through which to promote and secure effective environmental management. This strategy has been largely abandoned as the result of discontinuities in projects and planning among the overlapping authorities and administrative jurisdictions. The formation of the Environmental Secretariat, which later became MARN, may have exacerbated these discontinuities. Currently, despite the lack of a viable departmental environmental strategy, steps are being taken to promote dynamic and committed interinstitutional coordination. Such coordination should foster an inclusive, collaborative, and participatory agenda to strengthen the environmental focus and revive concern for protected areas among the diverse institutions and community groups involved.

The institutional objectives of such coordination should focus on the promotion of participation and awareness-raising among community leaders and authorities in order to develop programs and projects that contribute to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources but that are also respectful of beliefs, traditions, and rites in Atitlán. Project and program objectives should be founded upon the belief that fostering community participation is fundamental for conservation and for the longer-term incorporation of community organizations into initiatives to protect natural resources.

3. First Technical Assistance Workshop (April 15–19)

3.1. Consultation during Field Visits (April 15–17)

The workshop began with field visits to sites in the Atitlán region that highlighted the following concerns and interests among community groups:

- **Many women express interest in engaging in productive activities.** There is limited knowledge about and technical understanding of the array of potential productive

activities that might be pursued in the region. This suggests that projects should begin from the ground up and engage in participatory planning with a clear understanding of the basic steps that any potential project should follow. This recommendation is particularly important because SO5[1] links business promotion with the sustainable use of timber and nontimber forest products.

- **Women are keen to acquire training.** Women, and particularly young women (20 to 30 years of age), demonstrate a desire to receive training in alternative production and productive activities. Unfortunately, many of these women are constrained by their reproductive activities and face substantial time burdens. Productive activities would need to be worked into their schedules in light of their reproductive roles and responsibilities. Women's engagement in productive activities is sanctioned by their husbands. Clearly, any economic activities that women can participate in that can generate income will be well received.

- **Men are concerned about raising family incomes.** Despite men's professed concern for raising family incomes, most men exhibit very traditional expectations about economic activities, holding on fiercely to traditional crops and cultivation practices. Efforts to diversify production will need to draw on participatory techniques to work collaboratively with men to change their expectations about the range of productive activities that may be open to them.

- **Men and women are particularly concerned about the education of their children.** Couples with children of school age are eager to take maximum advantage of any available educational services. Both men and women are keenly interested in the education of their boys and girls.

- **Men and women like the idea of working for their own benefit.** Men and women are keen to engage in productive activities but have a limited knowledge of potential opportunities to diversify production. They are concerned about the costs and benefits of shifting into new activities and the implications for time use, care provision, and family budgets.

- **The communities want to learn to manage their natural resources, particularly water resources.** The communities have not been trained in the sustainable management of natural resources, but they wish to take on this task. The region's current water scarcity has awakened their concern for and interest in behavioral modifications to minimize any harm from their use of water resources. Both men and women are conscious of the limitations they face managing natural resources and are aware that in learning to optimize their use of resources, they will improve their quality of life.

- **The communities place substantial weight in their local authorities and are concerned about coordinating community activities with these authorities.** The

[1] For a review of SO5, please refer to http://www.biofor.com/documents/Guatemala_Maya_Biosphere_BIOFOR_Report.pdf

intervention strategy, therefore, must have the support of local authorities. The goal of any coordinated environmental strategy must be to strengthen environmental institutions throughout Atitlán.

- **Diversifying production is critical, but the communities fear they may be unable to market their products.** The fishermen and vegetable growers interviewed recognize their limited ability to improve their well-being, citing their concerns about the lack of markets for their products. They do not want to sell their products to intermediaries, but historically have been unable to market their products without them. These producers see their continuing poverty as an impediment to diversifying production and as a limitation that reduces the likelihood of marketing goods locally.

The community leaders interviewed identified the following as key limitations impeding change:

- Low levels of education, particularly among women.
- Significant language barriers (communities were primarily Quíche-, Kaqchiquel-, and Tzutujil-speaking).
- Substantial time burdens among women fulfilling their reproductive roles.
- A lack of training in productive activities and business organization.
- Concerns that women lack the power to engage in productive activities and that men adhere to and maintain traditional gender roles.
- Women's organizations have a low profile in the community, particularly with respect to productive activities. Few initiatives have been undertaken to promote women's engagement in production.
- Inadequate roads and links to market, which limits the commercialization of production.

3.2. Working with Representatives and Institutional Decision-makers (April 18)

After they identified the primary obstacles to improving resource management, the group of decision-makers and technical staff visited was asked to identify particular obstacles to incorporating a gender equity focus in their activities:

- There are no public policies that support the participation and inclusion of women in decision-making.
- Women participate more dynamically and effectively in the household sphere than in community activities, where they are usually relegated to subordinate roles.

- Traditionally, biodiversity conservation projects have been designed without the participation of women either directly or indirectly.

- Projects aimed at improving production often do not work well. These projects are typically disconnected from the local reality and ignore gender roles and relations between men and women. Consequently, their probability of success is either small or nonexistent.

- The institutions that implement policies in the department of Sololá do not consider the importance of women's organizations or the ways in which women organize themselves in the community. Typically, these institutions consider only men's organizations, incorporating them as needed to fulfill program or project goals and objectives.

- Societal norms and the different forms of social organization do not sanction, or they have little tolerance for, women's engagement in productive activities.[2]

- Most institutions do not promote training for rural women.[3] Throughout the communities, women have been largely excluded from any training programs in small business and marketing. Women are limited by their lack of access to productive and financial resources and by their inability to speak Spanish (the majority of women speak Quíche, Kaqchiquel, or Tzutujil).

- Religious dictates may prevent women from engaging in productive or communal activities.

3.3. Working with Technical Staffs and Strategic Partners (April 19)

The following recommendations and observations emerged from consultation with the decision-makers and technical staffs working for USAID's strategic partners:

- The phrase "regional park" and the concept of "parks in peril" must be made meaningful to the intended beneficiaries and resource users by incorporating community beliefs and concepts of natural resource use and management. The definitions of use and access should not be imposed upon these communities by external mandate through legal institutions, but, rather, developed in concert with the users and beneficiaries, drawing on their cultural and historical relationship to the resource base.

  - The local communities have a clearly defined concept of the geographic boundary of their resources and the principles of protection and conservation that should be

[2] No information was volunteered regarding the type of work women might engage in, or whether they would be interested in working with timber or nontimber forest products. Even though information was not forthcoming, it would appear that the reference to women's engagement in productive activities referred to their work in crafts and small-scale livestock production and animal husbandry.

[3] This refers to training that enables women to engage in productive activities that yield financial benefits.

adhered to based on their vision of the world and the cosmos. These communities imbue their natural resources with spiritual and cardinal values. Therefore, in their efforts to protect the area, the relevant institutions and authorities charged with resource management should incorporate these community values and traditional relationships with natural resources.

- Connecting biodiversity management with the local culture and traditional forms of local resource use is essential if conservation programs are to evolve from parks "defined on paper" to parks acknowledged and managed by the communities that live within and around them.

  - The concept of a protected area among the communities of Lake Atitlán does not match that defined in the Parks in Peril Program. A community intervention strategy must be devised that acknowledges and values the participation of the community in biodiversity conservation and that draws on traditional precepts and beliefs about natural resource use. Institutions should embrace local beliefs in order to refine their projects.

- Local development projects should incorporate ecological and environmental objectives. For example, monitoring of ecological indicators could be carefully integrated into existing reforestation projects. Environmental concerns could be discussed in the dissemination of information about and training in the use of appropriate technology.

  - Existing community needs outstrip the capacity of the environmental institutions to respond to them. There is a need for interinstitutional coordination to foster other initiatives to improve living conditions and achieve more sustainable environmental outcomes.

- Efforts should be made to promote strategic alliances between community organizations. In many of these organizations, women participate actively and meaningfully in the decision-making process.

  - Projects should differentiate organizations that are formal, traditional, folkloric, and cultural. These types of organizations have very different criteria for the valuation and use of biodiversity and natural resources than do other groups. Promoting and expanding coordinated initiatives and building alliances between these groups may enhance the collective understanding of the different social and productive groups and the contexts in which they operate. As a result, this may also foster the greater inclusion and participation of women.

- Programs and projects should focus on community needs by addressing concerns about firewood production (promoting communally owned and managed buffer zones of fast-growing woody biomass for firewood) and stressing the need for greater conservation of water resources.

  - Projects should not be isolated and "one-time." Rather, they should evolve out of a process of long-term community planning, in order that they implement initiatives that promote participation and foster incremental behavioral and attitudinal changes among rural men and women.

- Public and private institutions must promote productive projects for women.

- Projects should focus on diversifying production based on the individual and collective knowledge and experience of women. For example, a focus on the production of artisan products and crafts and related marketing could prove particularly fruitful for increasing women's economic participation.

- Projects should promote the design of public policies for local development that include men and women as actors and beneficiaries, acknowledging the differences and inequalities between men and women and the complementary aspects of their roles and responsibilities.

  - The design of public policies should be included in the agenda for the Departmental Development Council, with the goal of promoting objective and up-to-date policies that harmonize with national initiatives to incorporate gender equity in legislation.

- Projects should recognize the difficulties imposed by conflict between existing institutional jurisdictions and mandates. The National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) is the government entity in charge of protected areas in Guatemala, but other institutions also wish to participate. Recognition of this dynamic is critical for project development.

  - Efforts should be made to support CONAP's institutional leaders, enabling them to bring together actors and promote interinstitutional cooperation in resource management in Atitlán. Such collaboration should include promoting the full participation of rural men and women.

3.4. Institutional Commitments (April 19)

The following institutional commitments emerged from the consultation with the decision-makers and technical staffs working for USAID's strategic partners:

- Projects should promote dialogue between men and women about productive activities that yield a direct economic benefit. "Proactive" discourse should be emphasized.

- Concerns about economic well-being have implications for applying the concept of gender equity. For this reason, strategies should be identified and adopted based on ensuring equality of opportunity for both men and women, in addition to achieving the overarching objective of identifying the most viable types of productive activities to adopt.

- Technical personnel should be trained in the use of tools that promote the incorporation of gender equity in their daily activities. This requires developing the concept of gender equity within each institution before reforming and modifying projects and programs.

- Any activities with communities should conform to schedules that are convenient for the community organizations.

- The institutions and technical staff should acknowledge the capabilities of, and value the local knowledge held by, community men and women.

- Projects and programs should be designed to provide opportunities for both men and women to contribute to and decide upon all activities implemented in their communities. Projects should be developed based on participatory diagnostic tools and findings that reflect the specific needs of men and women.

- Institutions should commit to including female technicians in activities with member organizations whenever the opportunity presents itself.

- Institutions should implement awareness-raising programs for community men and women that include topics focusing on the social construction of masculinity.

- Institutions should develop workshops and foster processes that nurture self-esteem for men and women.

- Institutions should engage in dialogue with pastors of the Evangelical Church, asking them to support the regional environmental strategy.

- Understanding and changing gender relations in the project context requires that personnel in both private and public institutions confront how gender relations affect and shape interactions in their workplaces.

- "Machismo" and its manifestations must be studied. Any attempt to ameliorate sexism should be tactical rather than confrontational, fostered through strategies to promote gender equity. Whenever possible, discussions of machismo based on sex characteristics should be avoided, because they often create confusion and make relations between men and women more difficult for technical staff.

- The Atitlán region encompasses a diversity of cultures, languages, and forms of social organization. Although these attributes may differ by community, technical staff should recognize that complementarities exist, as well, and can be used to promote gender equity throughout the region.

- An important opportunity for promoting gender equity is through marketing. Despite the substantial limitations that affect the commercialization and sale of products,[4] more and more men and women are interested in receiving training in production and marketing.

- Outstanding examples of experiences in other countries could prove useful in developing projects in Guatemala that simultaneously address income generation and natural resource conservation. Such examples should be drawn upon to promote community participation and elicit behavioral change.

4. WORKSHOP: "INTRODUCING A GENDER EQUITY FOCUS" (MAY 20)

During the consultations, the staffs of USAID's strategic partners offered several different interpretations of and ways to think about a gender equity focus. The divergence of opinions prompted the development of a short but substantive workshop to facilitate the understanding of gender relations and propose simple ways to adopt and implement a gender equity focus in the field.

The May 20 workshop was conducted to explore the underlying causes of the observed differences and prevailing inequalities between men and women. Before the workshop began, the female participants expressed substantial curiosity about the topic, in contrast to the men, who were largely reticent and demonstrated little or no interest in discussing the issue. It appears that among the majority of organizations represented at the workshop, male technical staff have had more opportunities than their female colleagues to participate in awareness-raising and training events. However, this generalization cannot necessarily be made about MARN's staff, as only men from the ministry participated in the workshop.

The workshop began with many jokes. Once the activities started, however, both men and women focused more intently on exploring the theme of gender differences by drawing on their daily experiences. Little by little, the participants' interest was stimulated by the topic and an inclusive dialogue began. The dialogue was transparent and focused on the exchange of experiences. This afforded a welcome opportunity to analyze the ways in which the relationships between men and women evolve through decision-making processes, the allocation of rights and responsibilities, and the distribution of benefits. The workshop also focused on gender differences in incentives to use and conserve natural resources.

The central theme of the workshop was understanding the rural community, the distinct groups it comprises, their forms of organization, and the characteristics that determine antagonistic relationships between and among the actors (both men and women), as well as the determinants of positive and negative leadership. Gender differences were explored in the structure of rural organizations and community participation in decision-making about the use of, access to, and control over natural resources.

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[4] Among these limitations are the lack of access to paved roads, poor communications, and inadequate transport and storage.

The skills of the technical personnel present, and their accumulated experience, were much appreciated and valued throughout the training. This made for a dynamic exchange about actions that reflect or embody gender inequalities and differences. The participants openly and objectively acknowledged the potential for men and women in rural communities to identify productive activities that combine income generation with community participation in the protection of natural resources.

The two initial workshops[5] underscored the breadth of experience the technical staffs had in working with communities, and their deep understanding of the socioeconomic context and institutional limitations that affect project implementation. The professional and technical staffs (both men and women) recognized the importance of incorporating a gender equity focus in their activities in order to refine the orientations of their institutions and better promote development activities that respond to the needs of rural men and women.

There was a general level of comfort with the discussion of gender equity and its relationship to the institutions' work and objectives and their mandate to work with rural communities. The technical staffs agreed that a fuller understanding of gender equity could improve the design of projects and programs to increase and diversify production and provide technical assistance to broaden and complement existing community development goals. The participants demonstrated a keen interest in applying a gender equity focus to business development projects in the areas where the strategic partners currently operate.

The workshop participants offered many positive comments and commitments to:

- Increase the participation of female professionals and technicians in order to facilitate the incorporation of gender equity among beneficiary organizations in the Parks in Peril Program.

- Promote training, awareness-raising, and an understanding of gender equity, in order to secure real changes in the promotion of rural enterprises. Merely increasing the number of women on each team is not sufficient; their participation must be active and meaningful.

- Study the materials distributed in the workshops and initiate practical applications in the field that set in motion a process of conceptual and practical reinforcement, using participatory methodologies, diagnostic processes, and planning exercises.

- Recognize that the theoretical component is often the easiest and simplest stage of integrating new ideas into existing programs and projects. To reinforce the theory, the organizations should implement field experiments with their community organizations to learn about relationships between men and women, particularly in productive activities.

- Identify business opportunities and promote the participation of men and women in planning, taking care to apply participatory methodologies and gender analyses throughout the design phase of a project.

[5] One with the staff of Vivamos Mejor in Panajachel and another with the staff of MARN in Sololá.

- Promote the incorporation of men and women in business activities and the potential production of goods or services, based on the recognition of gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities.

- Reduce or eliminate institutional, social, and economic obstacles, and take advantage of technical and business opportunities so that both men and women can participate in economic activities that support the goals and objectives of natural resource conservation.

5. SECOND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP (JUNE 10 –14)

5.1. Objectives

- Expand the expertise of technical, professional, and extension staff in member organizations, enabling them to implement participatory methodologies and foster the incorporation of a gender equity focus throughout their activities.

- Optimize the use of existing productive resources, recognizing the capabilities of rural men and women to produce goods and services that can improve their quality of life and simultaneously reduce pressures on the natural base.

5.2. Methodology

This phase of the technical assistance called for the design of a theoretical and practical approach to applying participatory methodologies to field consultations.

Technical assistance was offered in two phases:

1. Field Exercises

A team of consultants facilitated the field exercises with the staff of affiliate organizations. Three field days were organized in the following manner:

- Two days to visit and select focus-group participants from each community and prepare to conduct the focus-group activities.

- One day to implement the focus group.

2. Theoretical Exercises

- Two days providing an introduction to the use of participatory methods with a gender equity focus, including the analysis of data from the practical exercises and fieldwork results.

5.3. Participants

Despite the advance planning, few members of USAID's strategic partners were able to come to the meetings. Consequently, the team was forced to rely upon the director of Vivamos Mejor and the regional director of MARN to call for greater participation. As a result, two more individuals were recruited. Despite these additional participants, however, overall participation remained low. Initially, the authors had planned on 10 people attending the technical assistance workshops. In the end, only 6 attended from Vivamos Mejor, CONAP, and MARN (4 from field personnel and 2 administrative; see Annexes 1, 2, and 4).

5.4. Introduction to Participatory Methodologies with a Gender Focus

5.4.1. Theory Component

The participants were not familiar with the methodologies explored, either as participatory approaches for fieldwork assignments or as instruments for reflection and gender analysis. Consequently, the workshop began with a review of the basic concepts of participatory approaches and the tools for their implementation:

- Identifying the fundamental elements of participation;
- Highlighting the importance of a gender analysis;
- Ensuring that the diagnostic phase is complemented with participatory planning;
- Choosing the methodology and tools to stimulate the interest of the actors to be engaged;
- Understanding the accompaniment role of the staff with respect to the implementation of the participatory analysis; and
- Making sure that the diagnostic findings reflect the different community interest groups.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The technical staff expressed doubts about the usefulness of the PRA techniques. They raised concerns that although many previous diagnostics have been conducted, few have been truly participatory or inclusive. In the technical staff's estimation, such diagnostics have not generated any satisfactory results. For example:

- Several communities have had as many PRA exercises as there are organizations supporting local development;
- Many of these PRAs have not borne fruit, and the credibility of their techniques has been questioned;

- There is a general consensus that the goals of PRA techniques and their advantages for planning are not readily apparent;

- In many communities, people engage in the PRA with little understanding as to its purpose, and they often do so expecting some tangible benefit that is not realized; and

- As many methods are applied as there are distinct interests and objectives reflected in the diversity of programs and projects in the area.

The team shared with the workshop participants its knowledge of participatory rural appraisal with a gender focus, and facilitated a discussion about its importance and application. One of the conclusions offered by the workshop participants was that PRAs may be useful if the analysis is holistic and takes into consideration all levels of action: national, regional, departmental, municipal, and local.

Another concern raised by participants was the need to focus the PRA on productive activities. For example, they noted, the PRA should identify:

- Regional crafts and artisan products that may be produced;

- Marketing opportunities for regional crafts and artisan products;

- Opportunities for coffee production and demand for coffee;

- Potential for employment generation through different types of production;

- Local mechanisms for fighting poverty;

- The risks inherent in opportunities for small-scale production and the viability of such production over time;

- Organizational risks (posed by potential conflicts between beneficiaries and the existence of corruption); and

- The current context for coffee production and the influence of the international market.

5.4.2. Field Practice

The consultant team visited the communities of San Juan La Laguna and Paquip, Santa Clara La Laguna, to prepare the field exercises. The team found the following scenarios:

- **San Juan La Laguna.** After the goals of the fieldwork were explained, the personnel of the strategic partners decided to visit the Lema'h Women's Committee, a group of 13 weavers who use natural dyes for their yarns. The president of the executive board, Ms. Rosalinda Tay Mendoza, told us that their knowledge of natural dyes is of ancestral

origin, taught by their grandmothers to succeeding generations. Ms. Tay Mendoza explained that the organization evolved out of concerns to improve the weavers' productive capacity and increase the quality of the garments they produced. An environmental interest in replanting the ilama tree also spurred the group's development. The women extract the bark of the ilama tree to use as a dye. Their concern over reforestation demonstrates their general apprehension about the possible extinction and exhaustion of this valuable resource. Currently, the women are developing a nursery of ilama saplings for their reforestation activities. Ms. Tay Mendoza explained that they have received support from Fundación Solar to formalize their committee and obtain legal status, and that their plans for the future include building a museum, which would hold a permanent collection of costumes from Atitlán. The museum would also devote a space for selling the women's production. The Lema'h Women's Committee has a technical document available to submit to interested funders.

- **Paquip.** In Paquip, we contacted two members of the community housing committee and the secretary of the coffee commission. Both organizations maintain a relationship with Vivamos Mejor, receiving credits for housing and coffee processing. Two other committees also joined the meeting and showed interest in engaging in dialogue with Vivamos Mejor. The groups present at Paquip indicated that any subsequent meetings should be initiated through the mayor of Santa Clara La Laguna. In light of the general consensus on this point, we went to visit the mayor immediately. The mayor accepted the request to convene a meeting of community groups and sent a written invitation to various community organizations, inviting them to a meeting that would take place in the municipal offices on June 12 at 3 p.m.

5.4.3. Implementing Participatory Methodologies

Once the theoretical training was completed, the group went on to conduct a practical exercise in each of the sites selected. The entire team was able to visit the sites.

The practicum conducted with the women weavers used a tool called the "Twenty-four Hour Clock," which is designed to elicit information about time and task allocations in reproductive as well as productive activities. In addition to generating information about women's time and task allocations, the tool indicates potential opportunities for and obstacles inherent in incorporating women into productive activities.

The team identified the following opportunities and strengths:

- The acknowledged value of women's work and its importance in generating income for the family;
- Women's desire to produce high-quality garments;
- Women's valuation of their own work (self-esteem);

- The use of natural products to dye yarn;

- The leadership of the Lema'h Women's Committee, which is positive, open, and receptive to change; and

- The support of Fundación Solar, which has enabled the Lema'h Women's Committee to consolidate and formalize its group.

The following were identified as obstacles to improving the Lema'h Women's Committee's productive activities:

- No study exists of the market and potential demand;
- No technical or financial support exists for marketing the weavers' products; and
- The production arm of the organization is not run as a business.

The practicum with representatives of the Paquip committees employed a community mapping exercise that included a map of the past, present, and future. Unfortunately, no women participated in this exercise, largely because none was involved in the existing committees. The orientation of the analysis leaned toward natural resources: the impact they have withstood through time and the poor management to which they have been subjected. The need to seek alternatives for the future use and management of natural resources was made abundantly clear. The representative from CONAP present at the workshop demonstrated a keen interest in supporting initiatives that would respond to these concerns.

Once the importance of the participatory methodology and the development of appropriate diagnostic tools was recognized, the participants' understanding of PRA techniques expanded. The participants began to see that the PRA methodology is more than an instrument for diagnosis, that it can facilitate implementation of their projects.

Another important outcome from the workshop was the general recognition of the need for effective interinstitutional coordination. Such coordination should focus on reducing the gap between organizations' interests and communities' interests.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. Currently, none of the institutions that implements projects in the department of Sololá incorporates women's community organizations. Instead, these institutions focus exclusively on men's organizations. This is most likely a reflection of the goals and objectives of the programs and projects currently being implemented. By the same token, projects to diversify production have not worked well, and often bear no relationship to the needs of the local community or consider the relationships between men and women in the community. As a result, the probability of their success remains very low and few tangible benefits have been documented.

2. Initially, the participant organizations were not inclined to take advantage of the technical assistance offered. This attitude changed, however, as a result of the workshop activities and in response to the technical staff's concerns about strengthening their organizations' abilities to engage in participatory processes. The use of participatory techniques greatly opens up opportunities for the communities and organizations to identify and explore common objectives.

3. The organizations that make up the group of strategic partners in the Parks in Peril Program have not managed to engage in effective interinstitutional coordination, undertake joint efforts for natural resource conservation, or achieve tangible results in the communities in which they work. This lack of collaboration was evident in the absence of key professional and technical staff from the training session. No one from the Association for the Protection of Private Reserves (ARNP) or the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG), for example, attended.

4. As a result of the technical assistance provided, the professional and technical staffs were trained in the use and application of participatory methodologies, the incorporation of a gender equity focus, and methodologies to identify and encourage small-business initiatives in support of the Parks in Peril Program.

5. Because the Parks in Peril Program is in its initial phase of implementation, any technical assistance is timely that facilitates diagnostic activities and consultations with organizations of small producers, or that supports participatory planning exercises that incorporate gender equity objectives in the generation of rural employment. Such approaches and methodologies should, in turn, aid natural resource protection.

6. The staffs that participated in the technical assistance workshops and training can now identify the different roles and responsibilities of and unequal relations between rural men and women. The same staffs can engage in dialogue about socioeconomic conditions and their environmental implications as a means of identifying and reducing the inequalities that persist by ethnicity, gender, and culture.

7. The introduction to concepts of gender equity and participatory methodologies, and the experience generated through field exercises that foster dialogue between male and female producers, enabled the staffs of USAID's strategic partners to better understand socio-productive context and implement projects that can generate income and protect the natural resource base.

8. The technical assistance has galvanized a new commitment by the participating technical staffs to incorporate gender equity in their programs and projects (see Section 3.4, above).

Recommendations

1. Community processes, especially those that include men and women, are only possible to the extent that the organizations involved are prepared to commit to the communities and give them support. If the concern of the organizations is to avoid generating expectations on the part of the communities, it is best not to initiate any process of dialogue and community reflection, because the very invitation to participate creates expectations.

2. New activities will need consistent follow-up. This is especially important when considering that Vivamos Mejor has a work plan for 2003 that contains specific measures for reducing the existing gender equity gap.

3. The organizations will need to take advantage of all opportunities presented to emphasize the value of productive activities for rural men and women. The organizations will also need to commit to fostering dialogue within the communities about constraints that limit women's involvement in production and may exclude them from the benefits of business development and natural resource protection.

4. The organizations constituting the group of strategic partners in the Parks in Peril Program must strive to achieve effective interinstitutional coordination that focuses on maximizing community benefits. Thus far, their isolated efforts have borne only minimal results. Furthermore, the organizations themselves must take the initial steps toward greater participation and equity in order to achieve their stated goals and objectives and generate truly participatory projects that yield egalitarian results.

5. No institutional proposal can prosper if men and women are not included equally. Bearing in mind that consultations take time and resources, all parties must assume responsibility for engaging in these consultations and commit sufficient time and resources to them.

6. Program activities in the field should be undertaken with the appropriate technical assistance to master the use of participatory tools and planning and with the objective of facilitating the incorporation of men and women in various activities and productive processes.

7. Specialized technical assistance is required for marketing and commercialization. Such assistance should include a gender equity focus and promote training for rural men and women in business development and management. This also requires that organizations support local business initiatives providing training in management and the use of technical, financial, and administrative resources to increase production and capture greater market share.

8. Community needs far exceed the institutional capacity of existing environmental organizations. Therefore, active and committed interinstitutional coordination is required to link to other initiatives and activities that can improve community members' quality of life and well-being.

ANNEX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAM— WORKING WITH DECISION-MAKERS WORKSHOP, APRIL 18

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAM— WORKING WITH DECISION-MAKERS WORKSHOP, APRIL 18

Participants

1. John Beavers	TNC
2. Pablo Prado	TNC
3. Luis Villalobos	VM
4. Rolando de León	MARN
5. Lourdes Escobar	CONAP
6. Rachelle Jeanette	Cooperating, USA
7. Glenda Paiz	USAID
8. Timoteo Lopez	WIDTECH CODERSA

Program

08:30	Introduction to the workshop on gender equity	Luis Villalobos, Vivamos Mejor
8:40	Background, review of work plans, goals and objectives of the workshop	Timoteo López WIDTECH-CODERSA
9:00	Strategic partner comments, recommendations and proposals for the incorporation of gender equity, group activity (cards)	Representatives of member organizations (facilitated by Timoteo López)
10:00	Coffee	
10:30	Support elements for the implementation of the gender equity strategy.	Timoteo López WIDTECH-CODERSA
11:00	Affirmative actions for gender equity, on the basis of the plans for 2002, group activity (cards)	Participants
11:30	Report on findings from field visits	Timoteo López WIDTECH-CODERSA
13:00	Identification of measures to strengthen local businesses |(bearing in mind the social and technical division of labor in the communities). Timber and non timber production, services: ecotourism, etc.	Participants (facilitated by the consultant)

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAM—
WORKING WITH TECHNICAL STAFF WORKSHOP, APRIL 19

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAM— WORKING WITH TECHNICAL STAFF WORKSHOP, APRIL 19

Participants

1. Edgar Rolando de León. MARN (alternate delegate): coordination with government organizations, Municipalities and NGOs, responsibility for various environmental projects.
2. Julio David Mejía López. MARN consultant: environmental education, children, water pollution, solid waste, mitigation of illegal tree cutting, water source contamination.
3. Héctor Abel Sical Villatoro. VM. Chief of credit: analysis and lending. Support and orientation for investment and project implementation.
4. Fausto Pablo Saloj. CONAP. Resource warden: protection and management of timber and non timber resources.
5. Vicente Quisquinay Bocel. CONAP, Sololá. Resource warden: control of forest fires.
6. Paul De León R. CONAP, Sololá. Technician: wildlife management, protection of timber and non timber resources, flora and fauna conservation, environment.
7. Glenda de País. USAID. Project management: program on Natural Resources in Petén, Atitlán.
8. Rubén Enrique Somoza. CONAP. Resource warden: licenses for family consumption, environment and communities, firefighting.
9. Timoteo López. CODERSA. Consultant.

Program

08:00	List of participants	Timoteo López, consultant
08:30	Opening of the workshop	Luis Villalobos, Vivamos Mejor
09:00	Introductions	Participants
09:15	Expectation of the workshop (use of cards) institutional and personal	Participants and consultant
10:00	Coffee	
10:30	Collective review of the integration of gender equity in the work plans and affirmative actions defined (obstacles and opportunities, specific examples)	Participants
11:30	Presentation of results from field trip (observations about obstacles to equitable participation for decision making and access to activities and	Timoteo López, consultant

	benefits of the projects).	
13:00	Lunch	
14:30	Collective development of suggestions to improve the strategy for interventions and group work	Participants and consultant
15:30	Presentation of results by groups	Participants
16:30	Coffee, closing of the workshop	Participants and consultant

ANNEX 3

PROGRAM—GENDER EQUITY FOCUS WORKSHOP, MAY 20

PROGRAM—GENDER EQUITY FOCUS WORKSHOP, MAY 20

Goal:
To introduce the technical and administrative staff of USAID's strategic partners to the basic elements of gender inequality, and examine the cultural, social and economic determinants of gender inequality with a particular emphasis on rural societies.

Results:
An incipient but solid view of the dimensions of gender equity and inequity and an analysis of gender relations among the intended project beneficiaries.

Program:

20 May

8:00	Participant registration	Timoteo López, Consultant
8:30	Opening of the event	Pablo Prado and/or Luis Villalobos
8:45	The rural community and the gender focus	Timoteo López, Consultant
9:15	Questions and answers	Participants
9:30	Gender equity focus	Timoteo López, Consultant
10:30	Coffee	Participants
11:00	Participatory methodologies and gender equity	Timoteo López
11:45	Questions and answers	Participants
12:00	End of program	Pablo Prado

ANNEX 4

PARTICIPANTS—GENDER EQUITY FOCUS WORKSHOP, MAY 20

PARTICIPANTS—GENDER EQUITY FOCUS WORKSHOP, MAY 20

VIVAMOS MEJOR

1. Estuardo Girón S.	Field technician
2. Marvin Veles Palencia	Microenterprise accountant
3. Santos Rosalío Gómez	Credit manager
4. Francisco Matzar	Credit committee
5. Olga Oliveros	Executive secretary
6. Rufino Chavajay	Builder
7. Francisco Raxtún	Pilot
8. Rebeca Sánchez	Dept. Organization and Training
9. Raineiro Lec	Coordinator
10. Pedro Navichoc	Technician
11. Luis Villalobos	Chief of conservation
12. Marta Olivia Simón	Social worker
13. Juana Enilda Mendoza	Education
14. Julio Adolfo Barreno	Accounting assistant
15. Sara Victoria Quiñónez	Pharmaceutical assistant
16. Katy Werner	Peace Corps volunteer
17. Sindy Karina Toledo	Receptionist
18. Bryan Reyna	Building technician

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, SOLOLÁ

1. Fabián Us Alvarez	Promoter
2. Julio David Mejía López	promoter
3. Diego Culum Ujpan	MARN
4. Rigoberto Sac Ixmata	Promoter
5. David Bernabé Cululen	Technical promoter
6. Bairon Roberto Ralón Choc	Technician
7. Edgar Roberto Lec Alvarado	Promoter
8. Basilio Juracán Leja	Promoter
9. Antonio J. Xitamul	Promoter
10. Edgar Augustín Vázques Tuch	Promoter
11. Werner Tánchez	Delegate

ANNEX 5

SECOND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP, JUNE 10–14

SECOND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP, JUNE 10–14

Day 1

TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON IN CHARGE
8:00	Participant registration	
8:15	Opening	
8:30	Brainstorming and reflection on the rural community and the importance of civil society participation	Consultants
10:00	Coffee	Consultants
10:30	Introduction to PRD	
12:00	Group discussion and cumulative experience of participants	Participants
13:00	Lunch	
14:30	Video (discussion among participants)	Participants
15:30	Introduction to the use of tools	Consultants
16:30	Coffee	
17:00	Reading of teaching material	Participants
18:00	Organization of working groups for the next activity	Consultants/ Participants

Day 2

TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON IN CHARGE
7:00	Field outing (4 groups organized previous day)	
9.00	Beginning of the activity (always depending on time availability of men and women)	Facilitators[6]
18:00	Return of teams of facilitators	Participants

[6] Each team will have materials and equipment to facilitate field work

Day 3

TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON IN CHARGE
8:00	Comments on the field work and discussion of the role of the facilitator of the change process	Participants
9:00	The importance of identifying gender differences using participatory approaches. Setting priorities, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation.	Consultants
10:00	Coffee	
10:30	Continued: The importance of identifying gender differences using participatory approaches. Setting priorities, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation.	Consultants
11:30	Gender analysis and results of the PRA exercises.	Consultants
	12:30 Lunch	
14:00	Implementation of proposals by each strategic partner. Personal and institutional commitments.	Consultants
16:00	Closing of workshop and short evaluation.	Participants
16:30	Farewells	

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME	TITLE	POSITION	ORGANIZATION
Julio David Mejía	Environmental Tech.	Plan Natural Resources.	MARN Sololá
Paul De León	Agronomist	Technician	CONAP Sololá
Ismael Rodrigo Chávez	Agronomical Eng.	Advisor	CONAP Sololá
Francisco Matzar	Accounting tech/ Trainer	Technician	Vivamos Mejor
Mirella Rosales	Manager	Admin. Director	Vivamos Mejor
Héctor Abel Sical	Cooperatives	Credit awards	Coop. Utz Koslemal

LIST OF OBSERVERS

NAME	POSITION	ORGANIZATION
Pablo Prado	Technical assistant	TNC
Laura Hurtado	Chief social aspects	FIPA

ANNEX 6

PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL WITH A GENDER EQUITY FOCUS—MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL WITH A GENDER EQUITY FOCUS—MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

JUNE 2002

The consultants sent the work plan for the Second Technical Assistance ahead of time to the strategic partners of USAID's Environmental Program Parks in Peril, in the municipality of Sololá.

In principle, representatives of both the public and private sectors, and all potential participants in the workshop on participatory methodologies, had been invited to join the team of consultants (one male and one female) and travel to the project sites. The expectation was to jointly identify and select the organizations engaged in production and marketing for the participatory exercises.

Unfortunately, when the consultants arrived, neither the field sites nor the participants had been selected. Another member was added so that the team could function effectively. Because of this lack of preparation, we had to go ahead without knowing which site we would visit and without an invitation to the communities to participate. Furthermore, it was apparent that the professional and technical staff did not have a clear idea of the work to be undertaken or the reason why they were to participate.

Aspects of discussion during the first meeting with professionals and technicians:

The WIDTECH-CODERSA staff explained the content and order of the Technical Assistance workshop:

- Monday, June 10, selection and invitation of the first focus group;
- Tuesday, June 11, selection and invitation of the second focus group;
- Wednesday, June 12, theoretical work with workshop participants;
- Thursday, June 13, field experience (two groups), each one working with each of the groups selected on Monday and Tuesday, respectively; and
- Friday, June 14, theory and discussion of the field experience and closing of the event.

Monday, June 10

VISIT TO SAN JUAN LA LAGUNA

Group of women weavers who work with natural dyes:

One of the technicians gave information about the group, discussing production process and the different ways of using natural dyes to color the yarns which will later be turned into garments. Knowledge about the women weavers initially came from CONAP and through

personal contacts. On the basis of this information, the women's weaving group was selected for the first visit. Initial contact was established with the leader of the group, Mrs. Rosalina Tay Mendoza. She explained that the organization began in 2001, after the visit of the Mexican Mrs. Katja Winkler, from Fundación Solar. The group had been able to count on the support of this foundation. However, in order to receive support, the organization of craftswomen had to prepare, process and obtain approval of its bylaws.

The association comprises 13 women who have decided to work together and who have received legal and technical assistance from Fundación Solar:

1. Legal and organizational support
2. Technical assistance with use of natural dyes
3. Orientation and training to reforest with trees producing bark used for dyes
4. Collection and selection of seeds, reforestation initiatives

Mrs. Rosalina mentioned that there is another large group of craftswomen in the area, but that the difference is that they dye the yarn with chemical products. In her opinion, the quality of the products, and their price, must be different. She explained that their association uses:

- the bark of the *ilama* tree
- banana plants
- oak bark and others

She also explained that they had attempted to improve their marketing strategies, and they have even thought of opening a store front in Panajachel. They would also like to explore larger markets, such as fairs. One idea that has the support of Fundación Solar is to coordinate with Vivamos Mejor to develop an art museum which would have an exhibit of traditional costumes from the area of Lago de Atitlán.

The museum is being developed. The women's grip does not yet have funding Fundación Solar, but their proposal is being examined by the Foundation. Should financing be approved, the building would be on municipal land, paid for through a local tax. To date, these are proposals and nothing has been finalized.

Proponents of the project justify its focus on the basis of the need to bring tourists to the community. According to Mrs. Tay Mendoza, tourists stay nearby in San Pedro La Laguna. Her interest is to improve the economy of the area. Of note is that she is also adamant that as a woman she can, and should, contribute to the support of her children.

In the opinion of Rubén Somoza, Mrs. Tay Mendoza's husband, the main problem that they encounter in the community is the lack of economic opportunity. With the decline of coffee prices, families have been left in economic hardship and, according to his experience, the natural resource base will continue to deteriorate as long as there are no real alternatives for change. Mr. Somoza mentioned that he is a member of the municipal corporation and is

interested in supporting the work of the women, especially because he sees how seriously the group is working and in light of the interest from funding organizations.

The weaver groups demonstrated an interest in the use of PRA techniques and showed an interest in maximizing the potential opportunity afforded by our visit.

Tuesday, June 11

VISIT TO SANTA CLARA LA LAGUNA

Various committees of the community of Paquip

Initial contact was established through Arturo Ixcoy and Pedro De León Yac, president and vice president, respectively, of the community housing committee, who by coincidence were at the offices of Vivamos Mejor in Santa Clara La Laguna.

During the meeting other committees joined in. Among the other groups and individuals present was Pedro Alvarado, secretary of the local coffee committee, which maintains a relationship with Vivamos Mejor because of the coffee processing activities that Vivamos Mejor fosters. The representatives of Paquip mentioned that the community has several committees, among them committees that focus on:

1. Improvement
2. Housing
3. Drinking water
4. Education
5. Coffee production

The community participants showed great interest in initiating a dialogue with the other institutions present. These groups explained that many initiatives have been proposed in the community but the organizations have not taken the time to think about the community and its management of natural resources or the prevailing socioeconomic problems. They agreed to participate in a participatory exercise with a special emphasis on natural resources and the environment. They also mentioned that the meeting ought to be convened by the Mayor, in order to get as broad a response as possible. Consequently, we paid a visit to the Mayor, who showed a positive disposition and agreed to convene the PRA meeting.

REPORT B:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS: INCORPORATING GENDER EQUITY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRAMS IN ATITLÁN PARKS

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"I have been making crafts since 1985. The country's state of war and violence has hurt us [greatly]. People take advantage of each other. Politics do a lot of damage. I lost my husband but continue working. I want to learn about successful businesses. I want to bury the jealousy and hatred that exist among us Mayans, and I want to confront the problems of alcoholism and violence against women."

⌘⌘⌘⌘

"We women do not work on an equal footing with men. Many of us do not understand Spanish well. Our requests for financial assistance are made to institutions that have a lot of requirements, and, since we are illiterate and do not speak Spanish, we often cannot comply with those requirements. I want to learn more about business and the international market."

⌘⌘⌘⌘

"I came to the workshop to better understand and learn more about women's participation in business organizations. Women deliver and are very capable."

--Quotes from participants in the "Gender Equity and Business Development Workshop," held May 13–14, 2002, in Atitlán, Guatemala

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We owe thanks to the rural men and women for giving us their time, for their devotion to the exchange of information, and their frank discussion of the subject matter. We would also like to thank the professional, technical, and extension staff for their interest and commitment, as well as the coordinators and officers of USAID's strategic partners for their understanding and support of the technical assistance activities.

Finally, we are particularly grateful to the team of consultants.

REPORT B:
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS: INCORPORATING GENDER EQUITY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRAMS IN ATITLÁN PARKS

1. INTRODUCTION

WIDTECH, a technical assistance project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Consultores Para El Desarrollo Rural Sostenible (CODERSA), a Guatemalan firm, provide technical assistance to USAID's strategic partners in Guatemala in the environment sector (under USAID Strategic Objective 5, or SO5). This document is a report of a CODERSA consultancy whose objective was to facilitate the implementation of SO5 by identifying viable tools and strategies for incorporating gender equity in all activities to promote and diversify small-scale production. This production, for groups and individuals, is to be compatible with the protection of natural resources in those rural communities located near parks identified under the USAID-funded Parks in Peril Program.

SO5 fosters a genuine interest in developing and strengthening the skills of rural men and women so they can engage in productive activities. The approach is to use participatory methodologies to strengthen the organizational and business skills of small producers, enabling them to achieve tangible economic benefits. The long-term goal is to diversify production, conserve natural resources, and promote viable and sustainable businesses that can reduce poverty.

The technical assistance provided by WIDTECH/CODERSA targeted resources to the men and women of rural communities as a complement to the technical assistance received by the strategic partners' professional and technical staff in April and June 2002.[1]

Technical assistance was offered to men and women who are community leaders affiliated with civil society organizations that have ties to USAID's strategic partners. Three goals informed this consultancy: (1) to identify rural businesses with the potential to expand and increase their production of goods or delivery of services; (2) to respond to current and future market opportunities in the communities; and (3) to foster equal opportunities for men and women.

[1] For a summary of the technical assistance provided to the professional and technical staff of USAID's strategic partners, please refer to Report A of this publication, "Technical Assistance to the Staff of USAID's Strategic Partners: Gender Equity and Business Development in Atitlán Parks."

The majority of the grass-roots organizations invited to participate were formally established and legally registered. These groups included a small coffee-producers cooperative and a crafts cooperative operated and managed by women. Additionally, we invited several small producers and family businesses that were not formally incorporated—among these were several women's groups, community banks, clothing and textile producers, and other small, family-run businesses producing foods and various crafts, as well as small farmers who grow coffee, basic grains, and vegetables.

USAID's strategic partners have long-standing institutional and social ties in the area. Consequently, they were able to identify and invite male and female representatives and leaders of small producers and trade organizations. We visited many of the small producers at their workplaces to discuss the proposed activities and to invite them to participate in a technical assistance workshop.

After the preliminary visit and the conversations that took place May 10–12, 2002, individuals and representatives from organizations from several sites and communities were invited to participate in a training and orientation workshop on gender equity and business development, held May 13–14, 2002. The sites and communities chosen were representative of areas where Vivamos Mejor (a private-sector institution subcontracting to The Nature Conservancy), CONAP (the government agency on protected areas), MARN (the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources), and other institutions that jointly coordinate with The Nature Conservancy to implement the Parks in Peril Program in Atitlán are working.

The field visits enabled staff of the strategic partners' organizations to analyze the current and future basis for a range of productive activities, including vegetable growing, coffee and fruit growing, and, to a lesser extent, medicinal plant propagation, as well as activities such as the manufacture of traditional garments and various crafts and the provision of tourist services—including transportation and organized treks to various natural and ceremonial sites belonging to the Tzutujil, Kaqchiquel, and Quíche peoples, who represent three distinct sociolinguistic groups in the area.

2. Primary Objectives of the Technical Assistance

The primary objectives of the technical assistance were as follows:

- To promote the active participation of both men and women in the production of goods and services; and

- To reduce or eliminate institutional, social, and economic obstacles, and to take advantage of existing technical and business assistance opportunities, so that men and women may participate directly and equally in economic activities that also conserve natural resources.

To meet these objectives, the consultant team (with support from the strategic partners) organized a workshop for participating grass-roots organizations to discuss gender equity and business development. The specific objectives of the workshop were the following:

- To reduce obstacles to the equitable participation of men and women in economic activities and the protection of natural resources;
- To identify viable tools that will help increase women's participation in local decision-making; and
- To encourage men to be receptive to women's creativity and capacity as leaders, so that men may support the inclusion and participation of women.

3. METHODOLOGY

Preparatory Fieldwork—Three Days

Goals:

- To visit the individuals and organizations suggested by each of USAID's strategic partners;
- To coordinate the visits drawing on the resources of USAID's strategic partners;
- To arrange meetings with business organizations; and
- To identify and invite the participation of individuals and associations from rural areas with the potential to develop and expand their businesses.

Two-Day Workshop Attended by Male and Female Community Leaders

The men and women attending the workshop were invited to participate in a diagnostic exercise. The workshop focused on gender equity and business development within the context of the challenges of conservation in Atitlán parks. The workshop covered the following:

- Participants' expectations (explicitly differentiating between those of men and women);
- Getting to know each other and presentation of findings from the field visits to explore diversifying production and developing and expanding small businesses;
- Break-out sessions (small groups to discuss the topics listed below);
- Presentation of results by each group; and

- Conclusions drawn from the work emphasizing the findings relevant to men and women.

The following topics were discussed:

- Current organization of rural producers/business owners;
- Economic status of the family/community;
- Damage to natural resources;
- Specific environmental problems and challenges (water contamination and extraction of forest products);
- Role of local authorities in managing community resources; and
- Participation of other civil society organizations.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

4.1. Results of the Field Visit

The consultancy began with preparatory field visits to key communities and small businesses:

Business Women's Association (BWA) of Santa Catarina. This is an organization located in Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, consisting of 20 women, most of them married with children (with an average of six children each). The women are excited to work together to generate income that will help them support their families. Their current activities include making traditional garments and household items (tablecloths, napkins, placemats, and such) as well as home decorations.

BWA members have identified several other possibilities for income generation as well, including trout farming in a nearby well that has sufficient water for aquaculture (located on the boundary with the next village); bread-making (nine women can bake seven kinds of bread); running a coffee shop and a restaurant (taking advantage of the fact that there is a nearby road and that this is a transit area for tourists); and perhaps opening a crafts store to sell items made by the community to tourists and day-trippers.

BWA members have considered the potential markets for their crafts and products and recognize that they need to improve their craft designs and use raw materials of good quality to expand into and capture the tourist market. A local customer base has already been identified for bread production, as 567 families in the community are presently buying their bread from outside the community (in Totonicapán). Unfortunately, the BWA has been unable to undertake a market evaluation for the coffee shop and the restaurant, but the

members realize it is important to conduct a thorough investigation before embarking on any particular project.

One of the primary limitations that the BWA faces is financial. The association lacks working capital, although it is currently trying to obtain credit from funds available through the Social Investment Fund (FIS). Unfortunately, gaining access to and receiving these funds can take a long time. Consequently, BWA members do not think the FIS will be the best source of financing. They also believe that the amounts they may be able to access through this mechanism are likely to be insufficient for their needs.

In addition to their financial limitations, BWA members have received little support from their local authorities. Although the latter claim to be investing time and resources in Santa Catarina's infrastructure, they have not shown much interest in supporting production initiatives undertaken by community organizations. Moreover, the association members raised the concern that their local authority is not immediately transparent in its objectives and management of local resources.

Regarding the environment and the state of natural resources, the BWA women expressed concerns that the damage to the natural resource base has occurred over many years. They also highlighted their concern that no sign of political will exists on the part of the authorities to mitigate degradation or regulate resource use. The women identified two particular constraints that limit the effective management of natural resources in the community: the lack of clearly defined boundaries and the absence of clearly defined property rights to the land. Without either, social conflict arises and the conditions that foster illegal activity and the arbitrary and unregulated extraction of firewood, as well as the destruction of water sources and exploitation of highland fauna (primarily in Sololá and Totonicapán), remain unresolved.

Artisan Women in San Juan La Laguna. This group describes itself as a group of female workers that struggles to keep its position in the market of typical products from the Atitlán region. Some of the women have been in the group for several years and express their collective anxiety that their experiences in the marketplace have made them lose faith in their organization and interest in continuing to produce crafts. They identified concerns about corruption and mismanagement that has led to conflict and internal division.

Families in the community make a living by selling coffee through a local cooperative, Cooperativa la Voz que Clama en el Desierto, to an environmentally friendly market of "green" consumers in Europe. Although this product commands a higher price than conventional coffee, a precipitous drop in coffee prices has undermined profits. The women, however, are not involved in the coffee production, except for a few widows and divorcées who are members of the cooperative.

Women in the community are largely concentrated in crafts production. Lately, they have been making hammocks, which are sold in the United States. The problems the group encounters generally relate to product quality and the materials used to produce the hammocks, in combination with their lack of working capital.

The group members did not offer ideas on how to diversify their production. However, they expressed an interest in borrowing or generating sufficient capital to open a store in Panajachel, Chichicastenango, or La Antigua, Guatemala. This has not been possible to date, in large part because of the organization's general lack of funds and income. In light of the competition they face, the women are interested in acting as commercial intermediaries, purchasing items from small manufacturers in San Juan, accumulating quality products, and then supplying larger markets outside their municipality. For this reason, they are particularly keen to open a store. Most of the women in the group of weavers do not have working capital to expand their production or scale up, and they must contend with the problem of finding good-quality products. Not only is quality a problem, but the work is often not delivered on time. Although weavers and manufacturers may have good reasons for these delays, their excuses do not appease unhappy clients and buyers.

The income generated from the women weavers' production does not yield sufficient profit to invest in machinery, equipment, and raw materials. The mish, or yarn, that produces good-quality garments is very expensive, and the price paid for the finished product does not always permit the weavers to purchase higher-quality inputs.

Support from local authorities is limited to institutional backing. There is no possibility of obtaining economic and technical assistance from them. The municipality has been contacted by many civil society organizations. For instance, the local banco comunal (community bank) provides technical and administrative assistance to women working in the following areas:

- Poultry-meat production;
- Communal eating facilities; and
- Trade intermediaries (poultry and pork sales, for the most part).

Other organizations offer technical assistance as well and limited help in identifying markets for artisan products. Clearly some help is available, but it is not sufficient to satisfy the needs of the women weavers, nor have they been able to access it.

When asked about the environment, the women showed concern but were frustrated with the authorities that are charged with regulation and enforcement. Although the women are concerned about pollution in the lake, they also say that the municipal authority is unable to do anything to correct the situation. They are aware that waste is being thrown into the lake. Although the politicians include this issue in their campaigns, once they gain positions in the municipal government, they do little or nothing to improve the water supply and facilitate better water resource management in the municipality.

Among other concerns the women raised were access to firewood. For the most part, the rural population relies on firewood from high mountain areas, for their own consumption and for sale to generate income. The group of women weavers describes this as a complex situation that will be increasingly difficult to resolve unless the municipal authority assumes control over resource management.

Skilled-Labor Shortage

Marta runs a small business that supplies the store in her community's school. She averages Q200 in daily sales (Monday through Friday), with an estimated daily profit of 40 percent. She also makes huipiles, for which she hires three other women and endeavors to ensure product quality. Marta has been unable to expand her business because she lacks working capital and labor. One of her concerns is that few workers are available in the community who are skilled artisans. She would be willing to double her huipile production, which would entail creating three additional jobs, but she has not been able to find workers who can do the job.

Grupo De Mujeres Comerciantes De San Jose Chacaya. Lucia Vicente Ajcalon and Juana Vicente Tojin, representatives of this group of female small-shop owners, said that for some years now, they have been running a store that sells staple commodities where they also make and sell food (chuchitos and tamales) on Saturdays. The group has little experience with, and expressed little interest in, environmentally friendly production. One of the respondents said she was a widow and had no interest in natural resources or their preservation. The two women representatives drew extensively on their experience and said that as women who work for themselves, they face substantial time and resource constraints. Both women expressed interest in receiving financial assistance, in the form of donations from an international agency. The women emphasized that their time constraints are often overwhelming. They identified as a substantial limitation to expanding their businesses the fact that they have no help from relatives either in taking care of their small children or in managing their businesses.

A Promising Start

Eusebia lives in San José Chacaya and has been making and selling toasted corn tortillas for approximately five years. The quality of her product and her timely delivery have allowed Eusebia to increase her clientele, both in the departmental capital and in various villages near where she lives. Her present output is 2,000 units a week. Eusebia says that if she had the money to purchase equipment and create five new jobs, her production could increase to 20,000 units a week. Eusebia has invested in business promotion: she has business cards and a cellular phone. She believes strongly that it is imperative that indigenous peoples reject and challenge certain stereotypes and biases that limit their potential as businesspeople.

Eusebia wants to exchange experiences with and learn from other small-business owners to enable her to improve her production and expand her capacity. In identifying additional needs, she believes that her business requires better administrative controls and that she needs to be trained to improve her financial management skills. Technical assistance, in her view, would be critical to enabling her to increase production, create jobs in her community, increase sales, and raise profits.

Pequeños Productores De Café. In addition to the aforementioned groups, we contacted this group of small coffee producers, who are also members of a cooperative located in Paquip, Santa Clara La Laguna. We discussed the current situation and world market for coffee. Some members are better positioned than others to withstand recent market fluctuations. Those with sufficient resources who recognize that the international coffee market is cyclical expect prices to improve in coming years. Other small producers, who are confronting poverty as a result of the precipitous drop in coffee prices, are looking for technical assistance to diversify production and reduce their reliance on coffee. Some farmers have identified avocados as a product that offers promising markets. However, despite these possibilities, more complete technical and market evaluations that identify a range of different production opportunities and cost–revenue forecasts need to be done.

Several men also participated in the consultation, by invitation from Vivamos Mejor. All the male invitees participated actively in the consultation. Their statements, however, are particularly illustrative of the gender differences and inequalities in the production and marketing of agricultural goods. The men interviewed produce basic grains for home consumption and coffee for the local market. All the men present demonstrated considerable experience in and knowledge of traditional farming practices. It was also clear from their participation that the men make the majority of decisions about production and the women contribute their labor at various points in the production process on request. This underscores how agriculture remains a male domain where women are largely excluded from decision-making.

4.2. Results of the Workshop with Male and Female Leaders

4.2.1. Opening

Pablo Prado, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) representative in Guatemala, gave an overview of the project for the men and women participating in the workshop. In particular, he described how the Government of Guatemala had signed a cooperative agreement to work jointly with the U.S. government to protect natural resources. To enforce the commitments established in the agreement, USAID has disbursed funds to the TNC and CONAP to collaborate with the corresponding department-level office of MARN to direct the programs at the national level. Several other institutions, including Vivamos Mejor, Valle de Guatemala University, and the Peace Corps, act as strategic partners to implement programs and projects. The Atitlán Parks in Peril Program aims to collaborate with existing organizations to ensure the protection of natural resources and to facilitate and strengthen the public and private partnerships that will eventually assume management of the protected areas in coordination with the corresponding municipal authority.

4.2.2. Participant Expectations

The participants introduced themselves and gave the names of their organizations and the communities where they live. The participants then stated their expectations for the workshop. The expectations they shared demonstrated a significant level of interest, among local leaders of both sexes, in identifying and expanding productive opportunities and improving natural resource management. Among the expectations voiced were the following:

1. "The Mayan world vision respects the environment. I come to the workshop because I am interested in learning about and sharing techniques for the protection of the wild flora and fauna in my community."

2. "The way I received the invitation encouraged me to participate. I make traditional fabrics, and I am interested in learning about commercial management and business organization."

3. "In my capacity as vice chairman of the cooperative, I am interested in learning how to improve the market for coffee. I also want to learn about ways of integrating women into the organization. We have 45 partners, so with women, we could be 90. We men, however, need to understand how women can participate in the work."

4. "I have many years of experience and a lot of knowledge about making fabrics as well as hiring weavers, both men and women. I am here because I am interested in learning how to manage my resources. I must admit that I am also irritated about the corruption that destroys any kind of initiative in producer groups."

5. “I am very interested in the workshop because it addresses businesswomen, product quality, and new markets. We women do not have time for training; there is no one to help us care for our children. Our husbands work in the coffee industry and prices are low. How can we improve ourselves and strengthen women producer groups? How can we obtain technical assistance? We are interested in everything. I want to learn how to value my work and my contribution to the development of my family and my community.”

6. “I am interested in improving the quality of my weaving, and want my group to make a commitment to sell it for a good price.”

7. “We women do not work on an equal footing with men. Many of us do not understand Spanish well. Our requests for financial assistance are made to institutions that have a lot of requirements, and, since we are illiterate and do not speak Spanish, we often cannot comply with those requirements. I want to learn more about business and the international market.”

8. “I am part of a group of women artisans. I have come to the workshop to learn how to improve the quality of our products and to enter new markets. We are competent in what we do, and are willing to learn and improve what we do and protect our environment.”

9. “As president of a women’s organization, I am interested in learning more about business and the market. We are tired of lies and deceit. The mayor is very ‘political’ and [professes to] offer support. He was the one announcing that the community would have a garment assembly plant and avocado and crafts production. But he is not living up to [his promises]. We are not begging for charity. We only want the opportunity to have a better standard of living. By working in groups, we can improve ourselves. That is why I was chosen to participate in the workshop.”

10. “I have been selling fabrics in the region for 20 years, and I came to the workshop to learn how to obtain financing and find ways of entering the international market. I am interested in hiring people and creating jobs in my community.”

11. “In my community, we grow basic grains. We have good soils, and I want to learn to grow vegetables. But first, I want to organize—to bring women together. We also want to learn to reforest [our community] with ilama, cuje, and holm oak.”

12. “I have been making crafts since 1985. The country’s state of war and violence has hurt us [greatly]. People take advantage of each other. Politics do a lot of damage. I lost my husband but continue working. I want to learn about successful businesses. I want to bury the jealousy and hatred that exist among us Mayans, and I want to confront the problems of alcoholism and violence against women.”

13. "I am interested in getting credit and improving production and sales of typical products. I know much about those products and I serve four markets. What I want is to learn ways of giving women more time, so they can work, earn money, and improve their lives."

14. "As a children's educator, I want to learn about business and the protection of natural resources. I am especially interested in ways of working with people with few economic resources."

15. "I am very pleased to have been invited by Vivamos Mejor. I truly need to learn business administration, and how to obtain credit, to be able to grow my business. I am a woman of my word. I pay my debts and I know I must live up to my obligations, because it is in my own personal interest and affects my image and my children's future."

16. "I have already heard everything. I came to clear my mind."

17. "I am growing in my business, and this training is very useful to me. I thank Vivamos Mejor for this invitation."

18. "I took up weaving as a business at the suggestion of a Catholic priest … I came to the workshop to better understand and learn more about women's participation in business organizations. Women deliver and are very capable."

4.2.3. Results of the Working Groups

The participants, both men and women, shared information and observations about the obstacles, challenges, and opportunities they had identified as being critical for business development and growth:

Obstacles and Challenges

- Low levels of education among men and illiteracy among women;
- Poor leadership among and constant disagreements between producer groups;
- Little interest in business development, a lack of attendance, and member unreliability;
- Mistrust of, and inadequate coordination with, social development agencies;
- Addictions and social ailments: alcoholism, infidelity, and family disintegration;
- Censure (criticism, particularly of women);
- Concerns about the erosion of personal trust and values: irresponsible husbands and family desertion;
- Assistance from development groups using poorly qualified personnel;
- Limited ability to secure working capital;
- Limited access to qualified workers;
- Inadequate processing of raw material;

- A mistrust of leaders and lack of loyalty among groups;
- Economic, ethnic, and gender discrimination; and
- Politicking and cooptation that undermine producer organizations.

Opportunities

- Existence of development institutions and some credit facilities;
- Financing and technical assistance for crop production;
- Training opportunities for men and women to diversify/improve production;
- Training to produce quality products and access new markets;
- Possibility of using existing community fairs to buy and sell goods and produce;
- The Atitlán region offers particular advantages to access and develop tourist markets;
- Participation of men and women in education/literacy programs;
- Training and technical assistance programs to involve families in business activities;
- Marked seasonal demand for products that can be exploited;
- Freedom of association for men and women; and
- Promoting the creation of producer groups and associations and generating employment in rural areas.

Several recommendations were also advanced about how to expand local business potential:

Improving Rural Businesses

- Train men and women about how to obtain credit;
- Provide additional technical assistance and credit, specifically to obtain land for farming using modern methods and practices;
- Organize men and women to take advantage of existing opportunities;
- Channel resources to purchase equipment and build facilities;
- Provide technical assistance to small businesses to enable them to comply with all legal requirements, licenses, and business permits;
- Establish a common capital fund;
- Motivate people and train them to do a good job;
- Hire skilled labor to guarantee product quality;
- Study the market and be ready with new product designs;
- Legalize the community enterprise organization and its governing board;
- Knock on the doors of different agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and
- Develop systematic work plans and management plans.

4.2.4. Results of the Working Groups: Issues of Concern

The three working groups offered the following recommendations for sustainable business development in the community:

- **Current organization of rural producers and businessmen and -women.** The organizational abilities and business management skills of the groups are generally very weak. Local businesses do not have much information about market demand and fluctuations in demand for the products and services they produce. Some of the groups' representatives raised concerns about a lack of leadership, weak management, inefficiency, and a general lack of transparency in the community groups and among some of the local authorities. These concerns have in some cases generated widespread mistrust in the organizations and their leadership. The lack of transparency has also, on occasion, been associated with corruption.

- **Economic conditions of the family and the community.** In general, the economic conditions of individual businessmen and -women and their organizations reflect the lack of access to financial and technical resources. Most businesses have insufficient working capital and their production is concentrated in a few areas, largely traditional products and services. There is a marked dependency on commercial intermediaries at the local level. Poverty is widespread and there are limited opportunities for individual producers and producer groups to emerge. Although the workshop participants recognize the potential benefits from organizing as producers and seeking credit and financial capital, they maintain they lack business leadership and market knowledge.

- **Deterioration of natural resources.** Men and women in rural areas know that their natural resources are degraded, but they often have different priorities and concerns that exacerbate their dependence on the natural resource base or divert their attention away from strategies to reduce environmental degradation. Immediate concerns for food, housing, access to health care, and education dominate their lives. Where economic opportunities and alternatives are few, poor households depend disproportionately on natural resources to meet their subsistence needs.

- **Lack of environmental regulation and enforcement.** Many participants in the workshop, particularly the women, expressed concerns about environmental degradation. The participants also stressed that there is little community leadership or political will to enforce environmental regulations and mitigate degradation. What is most worrying is the local authorities' limited interest in establishing regulations and upholding ordinances to address the rapid degradation of the environment and the depletion of natural resources. Chief among the unprosecuted violations is the case of hotels and commercial establishments that use the lake for dumping wastewater and solid waste.

- **Participation of local authorities in managing community resources.** Despite the aforementioned indifference on the part of some local officials, other authorities have demonstrated the competence and willingness to manage community resources such as water resources and forests.

- **Participation of other civil society organizations.** The communities have had several experiences working with private agencies and NGOs to address a variety of needs: health, education, housing, and training in production and business activities. In general, the participants were positive about their engagement with these private agencies and

NGOs. They recognize, however, that these agencies cannot provide the level of assistance and range of services that are currently required by individual businesspeople and organizations in the communities.

4.2.5. Registering and Legalizing Businesses and Business Organizations

A simple description was given of the options available to small businesses and business associations for registering their businesses or organizations and complying with local regulations. It was apparent that there was little knowledge among participants of the various forms of ownership and association, or of the range of organizations that support development at the local level (see Annex 4).

4.2.6. Action Plan for the Short Term

- Both the male and female workshop participants are keen to learn about and incorporate gender equity in their activities and business plans.

- It is clear that conditions can be established in business organizations in Atitlán to create an environment of respect for and recognition of men's and women's rights and responsibilities. Using this concept as a platform, recommendations can be made for practical actions to satisfy the needs of both men and women seeking to develop and promote the growth of their small businesses.

- Rural communities have a pressing need to diversify production, raise household incomes, and incorporate social and economic goals in their community and business development plans. Gender equity may be introduced by emphasizing the value of women's work and their contributions to small businesses and by linking these contributions to a need for greater decision-making authority in the workplace.

- Concerns about management, product design, marketing, and sales will continue to be important as the businesses and business organizations grow. So too will concerns about gender equity, once the men and women assume responsibility for, and become involved in, the development of equal and participatory organizations that are committed to the protection of natural resources. We are just beginning, and now is a good time, to involve future generations in social processes that fully recognize the participation and work of both sexes in building a new society that values the individual and protects natural resources.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The field trips and the business consulting and orientation workshops demonstrated that rural communities in Atitlán have an unmet need to diversify production, expand their small businesses, and participate more actively in natural resource management. Participants of

both sexes contributed actively to the workshops, as individual businessmen and -women and as members of business groups and associations. The participatory methods were critical to eliciting information and observations about how to develop and promote the growth of sustainable and environmentally friendly businesses. The consultation required few resources but yielded rich information about how to tailor projects and programs to meet community needs.

The men and women participants highlighted the difficulties they face in obtaining institutional support for training, technical assistance, and financing for small businesses. Their difficulties result in part from language barriers that inhibit many individuals from seeking support, and from low levels of literacy and education. Significant obstacles remain for women that impede their full and active participation in small businesses and in the associations that represent these businesses. These obstacles often reflect social norms that limit women's mobility, association, and engagement in productive activities. Women participating in the workshops identified the following social norms and conditions as limiting their participation: the prevalence of domestic violence, a general denial of women's rights, the lack of attention to reproductive health-care needs, and the use of religious precepts and dictates to justify women's confinement to reproductive responsibilities and exclusion from productive activities. The women also identified economic barriers limiting their ability to engage in productive activities or develop their businesses; in particular, they cited the absence of resources for investment. Nevertheless, local initiatives exist that make training and institutional support available for diversifying and expanding production, creating rural jobs, and protecting natural resources.

Legal, financial, technical, administrative, and educational barriers notwithstanding, the lively participation of both men and women over the two days of the workshop gave rise to a series of recommendations for expanding and developing sustainable business initiatives. The challenges, however, remain great. In particular, it is important to emphasize that technical assistance and financial capital are essential ingredients for change if these businesses are to increase their potential and expand their market share.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The professional and technical staff of USAID's strategic partners should be trained to use participatory methods and have full knowledge of how to apply these tools to facilitate a deeper and more nuanced understanding of production and commerce in the communities where they work. Analysis should be undertaken with a gender perspective, to promote actions that engender equal opportunities for men and women in production and small business. Efforts should be made to implement projects that expand productive capacity, improve business organization, create jobs, and increase market share. Attempts also should be made to emphasize the importance of sustainable businesses that are compatible with the protection of natural resources in the communities.

Awareness must be increased about the importance of women's participation in community organizations, the value of their suggestions, and the contributions they make to decisions

that affect social and economic outcomes in their communities and organizations. Specifically, projects and programs should focus on providing training to both men and women to identify market demand and to diversify and expand production. The goal of these projects and programs should be to raise family incomes and improve the quality of life for all household members.

Professional and technical personnel working with USAID's strategic partners should promote the full and active participation of men and women in their projects and programs. They also should incorporate a full understanding of the time burdens and difficulties that women face in meeting productive and reproductive responsibilities and engaging in community activities. Understanding the conditions of poverty, scarcity, and financial limitations that individuals and communities experience should inform the design of programs and projects. Technical assistance should be timely and responsive and avoid paternalism. Additionally, professional and technical staff may need to be sensitive to local and domestic conflicts and violence that arise over a lack of access to resources or as a result of inequalities that are compounded and sanctioned by social norms.

The local authorities in Atitlán have traditionally exerted little influence over environmental concerns or the management of protected areas. Environmental organizations in the Atitlán region should attempt to draw these authorities into collaborative activities to strengthen local institutions and promote trust in the conservation activities local organizations undertake.

To date, no studies have been undertaken examining the full market potential for sustainably managed timber and nontimber products in Atitlán. There is every evidence, however, that production can be diversified and small businesses developed so that the twin goals of local development and improved environmental management can be achieved. The strategic partners should foster the development of small businesses, general tourism, environmental tourism, and transport in a way that is consistent with improved environmental management. The strategic partners should continue to coordinate with The Nature Conservancy–Vivamos Mejor program, promoting timely actions and supporting the work of community and business organizations that engage the full and equal participation of both men and women.

Male and female community leaders in Atitlán rarely attend meetings on environmental issues and the management of protected areas. This distances the leadership from the community groups themselves and engenders a general lack of trust in the leadership. Promoting the participation of all institutional and social actors is essential if NGOs are to facilitate greater recognition of the protected areas and their strategic importance to the local economy and the environment.

No public policies exist in Atitlán that promote the participation of men and women in decision-making for the management of protected areas and environmental protection. This should be remedied by drawing local authorities and local groups into dialogue and by emphasizing the importance of women's roles in ecosystem management.

ANNEX 1

ATITLÁN WORK PROGRAM—PARKS IN PERIL

ATITLÁN WORK PROGRAM—PARKS IN PERIL

WIDTECH –CODERSA, Civil Society Technical Assistance
Timoteo López, Consultant

MAY 20–24, 2002

FIELD VISITS (June 20–22, 2002)

The organizations or groups to be visited were identified by MARN, CONAP, TNC and VM in coordination with local organizations. The recommendations were to work with those organizations that demonstrate interest in the workshop.

WORKSHOP

TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON IN CHARGE
	MAY 23	
8:00	Participants registration	Timoteo López / Facilitator
8:30	Opening activities	Luis Villalobos, Lourdes Escobar and Pablo Prado
8:45	Goals, findings, and Workshop participants	The participants
9:00	Introduction of participants and expectations for the Workshop	Timoteo López, Facilitator
9:30	Background and findings of the first TA	The participants
10:00	Coffee break	Timoteo López, Facilitator
10:30	Rural businesses and gender equity	The participants
11:30	Questions and answers	The participants
11:45	Working groups (facilitator suggested)	The participants
13:00	Lunch	The participants
14:30	Group presentations	Timoteo López, Facilitator
15:30	Options for legalizing and registering businesses and business organizations	The participants
16:15	Coffee break	

16:30	Working groups (facilitator suggested)	Timoteo López, Facilitator
17:30	Presentation of findings and closing	The participants

	MAY 24	
08:30	Summary of the previous day	Timoteo López , Facilitator
9:00	Prepare an action plan, in the context of the 2002 POA, within existing resources and the time available, and with technical assistance from VM and the Strategic Partners' professional and technical staff.	The participants
10:00	Coffee break	
10:30	Plan preparation (continued...)	The participants
13:00	Lunch	
14:30	Presentation of findings (by business activity)	The participants
16:00	Coffee break	
16:30	Conclusions and recommendations	The participants
17:30	Closing	Luis Villalobos, Lourdes Escobar, Pablo Prado.

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Exequiel Ixcoy	Community Health Worker
Francisco Esteban Merlos	Community Health Facilitator
Vicente Hernández Vasquez	Traditional Fabrics Business Owner
Felix Edmundo	Vice President of the JD Coffee Cooperative
Teresa Hernández Cholotio	Works in traditional weaving
Dominga Pérez Hernández	Makes traditional fabrics
Francisca Hernández Yaquian	Makes traditional fabrics
Geydi Rosalia Och	Representative of the Sta. María Ixthm. Fabrics Cooperative
Ana García Och	Chairman of the Women's Association, in Ixtahuacán
Socorro Rosario Sicay Pérez	Chairman of a women's group
Marcela Hernández	Makes traditional fabrics
Bartola Cholotio Ramos	Sells typical products
Diego Xicol	Intercultural teacher
Eusebia Jeteya	Corn products
Cornelio Sologui	Community leader, Paquip

Vivamos Mejor participants:

Francisco Matzar	Credit Technician
Héctor Sicay	Cooperative promotion
Luis Villalobos	Partial coordinator of Parque en Peligro (endangered park)

Observers attending the workshop:

Liby Motta	USAID
Pablo Prado	TNC
Teresa Robles	FIPA IRG
22. Francois Herrera	FIPA IRG

ANNEX 3

THE VIVAMOS MEJOR EXPERIENCE

THE VIVAMOS MEJOR EXPERIENCE

Vivamos Mejor conducts three programs using a comprehensive approach to local development that is needs-based and needs-centered. Although these programs have no explicit gender focus, they do not exclude women. To date, the demand for the programs is primarily from men; it is estimated that 70% of the support provided is for men and 30% for women. Vivamos Mejor offers a range of services: housing credit (an estimated 7 to 9 thousand users); coffee production, processing and sales; and micro-business support.

Each program has specific criteria for identifying and expanding actual and potential market demand and share. The criteria for continued access to credit is successful repayment. Technical assistance is included in the micro-credit programs.

The experience shared by the Vivamos Mejor technical personnel underscored that when men and women organize jointly, the work is taken seriously. The women are generally responsible and reliable. Vivamos Mejor does not take any actions to ensure a gender-balanced membership, either at the committee level or within the groups of beneficiaries. However, in the program director's experience, if the committees were mixed, there would be fewer defaults and greater social benefits would be generated in a shorter period.

Another important observation by Vivamos Mejor staff focused on the micro-business program. The program's operating criteria ensure that it is sustainable. Credits range from 10 to 100,000 Quetzals with a repayment term of 3 years. Credit is disbursed (in order of importance) to the following sectors and activities:

1. Trade (restaurants, hardware stores, shops in general, etc.)
2. Services (transportation for goods and people, taxis, motor-boats)
3. Manufacture (local crafts)

Vivamos Mejor identified the following beneficiary characteristics that affect the choice of productive activity and their ability to grow their businesses. Beneficiaries have:

- An average of five children
- Are involved in agriculture and livestock production activities
- Are either Catholic or Protestant
- Alcohol abuse is not a significant constraint (for both men and women)
- Educational limitations that restrict their business potential
- Limited market experience
- Little ability to secure resources
- Some families are only interested in paternalistic programs

Vivamos Mejor has been providing support for small coffee producers organized in a cooperative. The cooperative has built a wet processing plant for coffee production with financial support from several institutions and is transitioning to produce organic coffee,

which could have great potential for capturing markets and creating jobs for both men and women. The Vivamos Mejor staff shared a number of observations about this program:

1. It provides an important example of a new model for small producers and offers an experience that can expose them to new forms of business organization, highlight the need to analyze and understand the conventional or traditional market and introduce them to the fair trade initiatives in the region.
2. Planning is done using a comprehensive approach. The cooperative will scale up and is likely to include dry processing for coffee production with the explicit goal of increasing profits8.
3. Women will be contracted in the harvesting phase because of the quality of their work.
4. The cooperative participates in the "peasant hands" consortium, which has joined the Fair Traded Coffee association. 9
5. Initially there were 160 partners or members of the cooperative, but now only 112 currently remain active.
6. In general, cooperatives have had little success as productive organizations in the region. Historically, there has been no participation by women.

Local experiences with cooperatives:

The following cooperatives have contributed to production endeavors in the region:

1. Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito R. L. UT´Z KASLEMAJ. This cooperative has a good reputation for taking its work seriously and being supportive and consistent in its relations with its members and service users.

2. Cooperativa La Unión Argueta (COLUA). This is a savings and credit cooperative, which does excellent work, has a good reputation, and is growing. It is well managed and responsive to its members.

3. Cooperativa de Café. This cooperative has only 112 members left. Based on past experiences, its future looks good, as long as the organization can count of the active participation and commitment of each member and also if it begins accepting new members, specifically women.

The successful cooperatives are those that have defined programs, objectives and goals, encourage their members to become involved, and strive to be transparent and fair. The technical assistance provided to small coffee producers is linked to the Fair Trade initiative and the organic certification process (implemented by MAYACERT). Criteria for the certification are closely tied to the conservation objectives for the Atitlán Region. The farming of coffee is included in this area's agricultural and forest systems, and receives

[8] Increasing profits will generate more jobs for men and particularly for women.
[9] The idea of the Fair Trade market is to provide support for small and medium producers, so they may access the market directly as much as possible (avoiding intermediaries).

institutional support from the following organizations: FEDEPMA, IJATZ, COTZIJ YA, VM.

Development support for local organizations:

1. Trade. Vivamos Mejor is expanding its support to include fair traded coffee. The criteria for fairly traded coffee do not exclude women's participation, but do not explicitly include gender equity either. Currently, producer organizations are dominated by men.
2. Ecological tourism services. Vivamos Mejor is assessing the potential for ecological tourism services and consulting with the communities.
3. Suggestions to improve women's business potential. Vivamos Mejor is contemplating expanding their service delivery to include training and technical assistance in production lines that interest women, or where women have shown to have some knowledge of the production process or sales.
4. Social organization in the Atitlán Region. The best known community organization is the local committee; and, in productive arena, the cooperative. There are also associations, which are mostly social in nature. Vivamos Mejor staff recognize that although women are not excluded from these organizations, the members of all organizations and associations are typically men.

ANNEX 4

TYPES OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

TYPES OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

Committees for local improvement: This type of community organization is well-known and is used for all types of infrastructure work in the community, as well as for basic services such as water, health, education, etc. This type of development organization is officially recognized by the local authority. However, once the work for which it was created is completed, the committee usually takes a passive role in community activities. This type of organization usually does not include women; if it does, women typically play a secondary role.

Community association: This type of rural organization is formed in response to the interests or needs expressed by a specific group of individuals. The association is established primarily for community development activities, charged with very specific tasks, such as promoting and producing medicinal plants, training health workers for rural services, training in productive activities, or conducting literacy programs in some cases. Women may take part in the management of the association. Although, traditionally it is men who assume management positions, and coordinate activities in collaboration with other private and public organizations.

Micro-business: This is a form of organization that is particularly well-known in rural areas. Despite the widespread acknowledgement, local producers (both men and women) often do not own and operate micro-businesses except in the more urban centers, where micro-businesses have greater opportunities to access technical and financial assistance.

The cooperative: This is the dominant form of organization for social as well as business purposes. However, in some cases, past experiences have engendered a mistrust of cooperatives, particularly where embezzlement and misuse of funds has been a problem.

Other types of business organizations, such as corporations, were not identified by the participants in the workshop. It is likely that this is because the participants avoid the expense of founding corporations, and the tax obligations associated with running them. In general, the men and women participants in the workshop expressed little understanding of tax issues and did not talk about them.

APPENDIX TO REPORTS A AND B: UNEDITED SPANISH REPORTS