

Discussion

- A lessons learned process with government and NGOs re: peacebuilding efforts could be useful for the Peacebuilding Fund to consider for Guatemala and other countries. This could potentially be an extension of CPCC work and funding.
- Action Research Facility for civil society capacity-building which could include building the capacity of civil society to participate effectively in the Consultative Mechanisms and the capacity of people to interface with the legal system in rural areas. We could start with a pilot for a longer term initiative.
- Diplomatic pressure by the Canadian government around land and tax reform issues.
- Diplomatic and NGO support to the Truth Commission is needed. Several key moments coming up where Guatemalans will be giving testimonies of their experience (human rights abuses, massacres) during the conflict. The Historical Moments Project requires support to translate their documents into French. The Truth Commission reports will likely require this support also. How can we support key moments and people around the right to Truth? Very careful monitoring of UN bodies on the ground is needed.
- Indigenous customary law exchange to explore the interface between traditional legal systems and customary law in Guatemala; also, the relationship between indigenous justice systems in Canada and in Guatemala.
- Rural justice service centres. These should include a public education component for human rights and justice education. (program already under development by CIDA)
- Ensure education on the rule of law and civil society in the police training which Canada is currently providing.
- Promotion of models for citizen security, with community participation. Perhaps a civil society project on civil disarmament, accompaniment, and small arms.
- Support to alternative reconciliation processes such as compensation issues and gaps that the Truth Commission does not address at a civil society level.

Further Development of Key Initiatives

Long-Term:

- 1) **Action Research Facility:** The initiative would bring together the expertise of Guatemalan think-tanks with popular organizations, and Canadian expertise. This project would be very valuable given the current lack of capacity within Guatemalan civil society to participate actively in the peace process, as they are called on to develop and debate legal proposals. The project would allow groups to access funds for research needed on technical aspects and at the same time participate in consultative forums. It would allow civil society groups to reflect on what they are doing while doing it, thus improving their long-term capacity for meaningful engagement in the peace process. Other similar initiatives which may guide us in developing this project are: the South Africa IDRC project with University of Western Cape of an independent research facility, and the civil society foundation recently announced by Minister Axworthy. A strong gender perspective would be essential and special priority could be given to supporting the work of the Women's Forum. Supporting Guatemalans in addressing the discriminatory nature of both customary and regular law would be key.