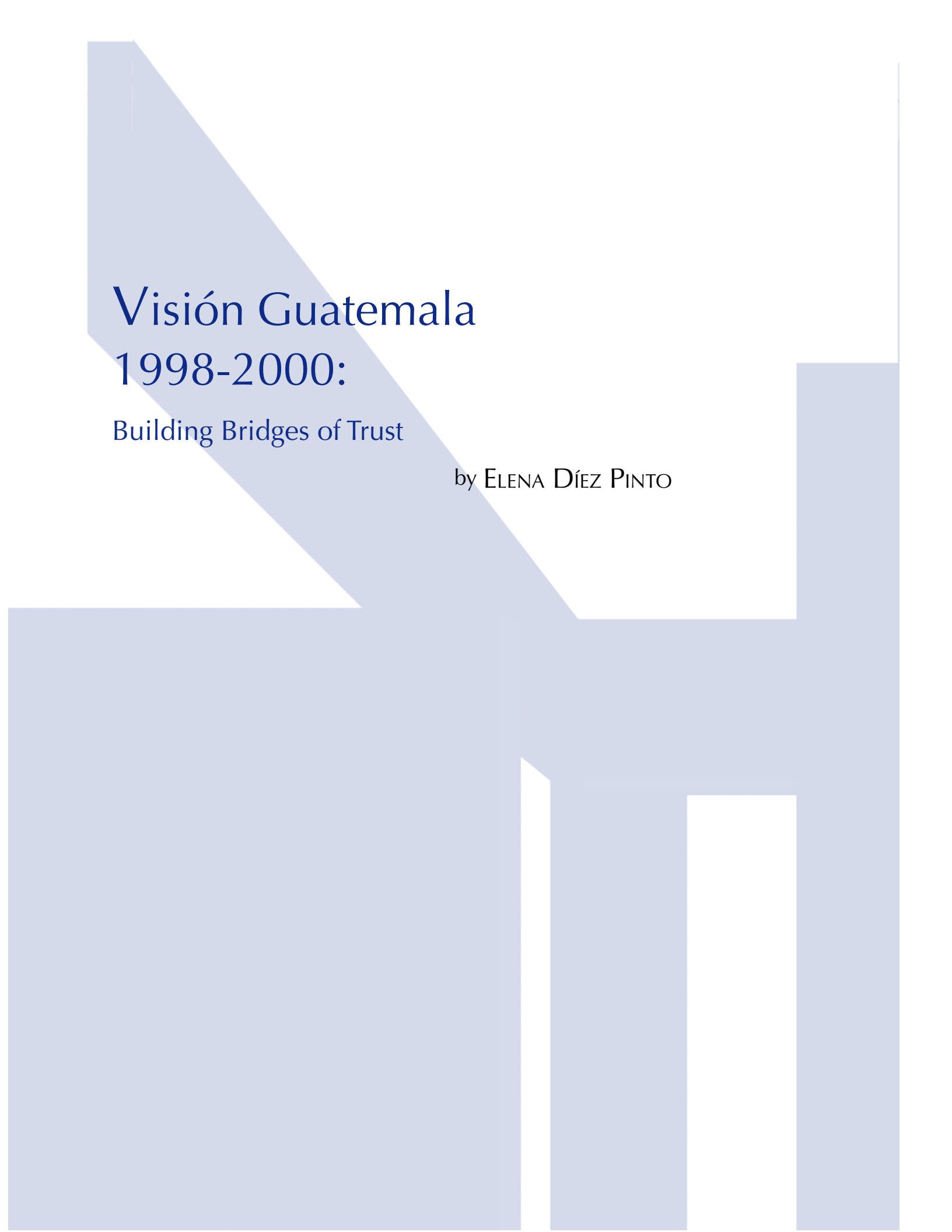




Visión Guatemala 1998-2000:

Building Bridges of Trust

by ELENA DíEZ PINTO

Introduction

*We did not put our ideas together. We put our purposes together.
And we agreed, then we decided*

POP WUJ
Q'iches' sacred book

... we have good news to tell you, goods news about something that has taken place in Guatemala, which has been conceived by Guatemalans and concerns us all, and all of us can feel part of a spirit generated through Visión Guatemala.

Gonzalo de Villa, promoter

The Visión Guatemala project came to life in November 1997. The Peace Accords between the Guatemalan Government and the URNG¹ had been signed less than a year before, at the end of the armed conflict lasting over three decades. Once the conflict was over, the Guatemalan society demanded the creation of spaces wherein to build trust, particularly among the political elites, in order to facilitate fulfillment of the Accords.

Several alternatives for the creation of a heterogeneous group were analyzed. Ricardo Stein, Secretario Técnico de la Paz (Technical Secretary for Peace) at the time, recounts how this process initiated:

We began to examine different prospects and one who was most helpful in terms of trying to point in the right direction at that moment was Richard Aitkenhead who had just finished a scenario building for the Canadian Agency for International Development. And he had been subject to at least several different techniques as to how this could be done. And so Richard Aitkenhead began to excite us as to the prospective of being able to put together a very heterogeneous group, to think of the country counting years down the line thinking of it as a twenty-twenty type of situation. It even matched in terms of a twenty-twenty vision, more or less. But the original idea was to have a look to the future and what were the things that could be done in order to be up there and to how will this mesh with the Peace Accords.

Director of the Soros
Foundation of Guatemala, member
of the constructors' group

¹ Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (National Revolutionary Unit of Guatemala), representing the union of the four rebel guerrilla groups: EGP (Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres), FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes), ORPA (Organización del Pueblo en Armas) and PGT (Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo).



The Secretary of SEGEPLAN,² former director of Asociación de Gerentes de Guatemala (Association of Guatemalan Managers)—AGG, participated in initial conversations, from the government's perspective. The design of the project begins, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is requested to prepare it.

Owing to the neutral role undertaken by the external cooperation, it was absolutely necessary to incorporate its assistance at that particular moment. Furthermore, promoting the project under the United Nations flag would grant it impartiality.

An institutional frame is initially created around the project. The private sector participates through Asociación de Gerentes de Guatemala,³ offering a somewhat balanced platform upon which to promote the project. The Guatemalan Government participates through the Peace Secretariat and SEGEPLAN; and UNDP is the sponsor. But it was obvious that, in order to successfully convene the various sectors of the society, a more extensive and representative group would have to be involved. Therefore, seven prominent persons, four men and three women, of the Guatemalan society are invited to integrate the promoting group. As a group, they enjoyed credibility, had great convening power and repre-

sented diverse ideological trends. This group is responsible for selecting and convening 39 influential leaders to represent the plurality of the country.

In addition to promoting trust among various political elites, Visión Guatemala intended to generate a long-term national agenda—to be shared by all sectors of the society—that would serve as a conducting thread, and support and be supported by the Peace Accords.

...we asked from the beginning, is this an effort running parallel to the peace process? Anything that we do here aims at strengthening the Peace Accords process. We are not building a forum parallel to the institutionalization of peace. In other words, instead of being a supportive commission, it aims at forming illuminated groups; that is the risk... Luckily, there was political will to avoid this. It is made possible by the peace process. The attitude assumed by the participants is that this effort be seen as one supportive of the peace process rather than a parallel collateral effort, as expressed at the end in the axis around which the scenarios and the vision are built. The peace accords are the axis and that, I

² Secretaría General de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia (Economic Planning General Secretariat).

³ The AGG is an association under the private sector.

think, is an extremely valuable element.

Former guerrilla activist

The Peace Accords also include a nation's agreement throughout the whole document. Therefore, we based our ideal scenario on the Peace Accords. We cannot visualize a Guatemalan nation that does not include the commitments derived from the peace negotiations and subsequent agreements. We believe this to be a basic take-off platform. Upon this platform we shall build, we shall continue to improve so that –if we are very ambitious– in 20 years time, I believe, we might be witnessing a different Guatemala.

Retired General

Visión Guatemala sought to strengthen the dialogue culture and the creation of consensus around concrete and conflicting issues in the country. And, finally, the project intended to influence the national programs of political parties in the forthcoming general elections at the end of 1999.

1 Visión Guatemala

1.1 Context and Conditions in the Country

The Peace Accords facilitated this meeting allowing, for

instance, for the participation of former guerrilla members, which would have been otherwise impossible. The prevailing atmosphere proclaimed the need to start building a different Guatemala departing from the Peace Accords.

Promoter

Furthermore, constitutional reforms were discussed in order to grant legal viability to the Peace Accords and a popular consultation was forthcoming for their approval. The Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico (Historical Elucidation Committee) was in charge of drafting a report recounting the pain and hardships experienced by several sectors of the population during the armed conflict.

At the same time, there was a feeling that polarization had resulted from meetings not yet held among the various sectors of the society rather than from the war itself.

Throughout the whole negotiation process and afterwards, in the first implementation phase, Peace Accords had created social and political conditions which promoted improved relationships among the sectors. However, this does not mean that all was harmonious among such diverse interests but that polarization, which characterized social struggles in previous years, was of a different dimension.

Politician

1.2 Timeline Table

Date	Event
Nov '97-Aug '98	Preparation phase: - Prepared a project document and budget - Selected methodology and facilitator - Presented methodology and facilitator to potential team members - Approached donors - Integrated promoting group - Identified and invited team members - first information meeting - held weekly core team meetings
Aug. '98	First team scenario workshop at Panajachel, Sololá 44 participants; held Friday noon through Sunday - brainstormed initial 44 stories - decided on topics to learn more about (recent history, multiculturalism and Mayan cosmovision and economic development) - video production crew attended
Aug-Sept '98	- Selected and engaged experts - Prepared summary of scenarios and transcriptions - Distributed various documents and papers to team members - held bi-monthly core team meetings - made further attempts to include politicians
Early Oct. '98	Second team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá - Brainstormed additional 30 scenarios, adding up to 74 scenarios - Learning journey to largest indigenous NGO (CDRO) - Presentations and discussions with experts - held Thursday noon through Sunday - video production crew attended
Oct-Nov '98	- Prepared summary of scenarios and transcriptions - held bi-monthly core team meetings - made further attempts to include politicians - Technical secretariat + ad-hoc group of team members agreed on 5 draft scenarios
Early Nov '98	Third team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá - Agreed on 3 draft scenarios and named scenarios - Discussed dissemination strategy - asked team members to suggest multipliers - video production crew attended
Nov '98-Apr '99	- Prepared and distributed transcriptions - refined 3 final scenarios - wrote draft technical document and story book - proposals for additional project financing/approached donors - produced short video for donors

	prepared guidelines for strategic thinking and reflection workshops prepared information and documentation for multipliers
Feb '99	First information meeting with multipliers First training workshop on use of guidelines for 60 multipliers
End of April '99	Fourth team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá test draft document and story book Discussed results of Historical Clarification Commission and Constitutional Reforms with invited experts, politicians Held Friday noon to Sunday
May '99	Printed 8,000 copies of technical document, 20,000 copies of story book Prepared and distributed transcriptions and national launch of VG Prepared press reports for major newspapers Mail out invitations to embassies, donors, political parties, business groups, universities, indigenous, human rights, business, the media and other key-decision making groups
Jun '99	National launch; attended 800 people Beginning of dissemination process
Jun -Dec '99	Started bi-monthly newsletter 30 presentations to key decision making groups, including the Presidency, the media, universities, business groups, political parties, Ngo, indigenous groups, etc. 5 reflection and strategic thinking workshops
End of Nov 99	Fifth team workshop in Antigua Guatemala joint meeting team members+multipliers Visión to create Grupo Vision Guatemala Redefined purpose and intention of the project Reviewed dissemination process and decided on next steps
Jan-Oct 2000	40 additional presentations to key decision making groups 20 additional reflection seminars with government officials, artists, indigenous groups, grassroots groups, university professors and students, communicators Sixth team workshop in Antigua Guatemala (May) Contributed to UNDP-Guatemala Human Development Report (The Inclusive Force of Development 2000) Trained 36 trainers of the Municipal Development Institute (INFOM) Trained 35 grassroots and community facilitators
Mid Oct 2000	25 reflection & strategic thinking workshops w/ municipal-level leaders prepared and tested guidelines for intersectoral dialogue workshops First intersectoral dialogue workshop the regional level in Panajachel, Sololá 40 leaders from Escuintla held Friday through Sunday defined key strategic areas for the development of Escuintla established individual commitments, and follow-up committee

1.3 Summary of the Scenarios

The scenario team developed three stories of how Guatemala might develop over the next 20 years:

The Illusion of the Moth

The moth's path is troubling: it flies alone towards whatever light it sees and as a result often gets burned. In this scenario, economic conditions do not improve and diversity and multiculturalism are not really taken to heart, so discrimination of all types persists. National reconciliation is shallow and polarization and social conflict continue. Certain sectors cry out for political messianism and authoritarianism. Labor instability and unemployment rise and international cooperation decays. The economy is characterized by short-termism and tax revenues are not sufficient to pay for social necessities. The national spirit is pessimistic, mediocrity prevails, the rule of law is absent, and impunity remains. The process is one of wearing down, with expectations unmet and solidarity eroded in the face of individual agendas. There is no vision.

The Zigzag of the Beetle

The back-and-forth flight of the Beetle is erratic and without any

sense of a north to which it is pointing. In this scenario, advances in political, economic and social life occur side-by-side with regressions. There is economic growth along with unequal participation in its benefits; multiculturalism along with exclusion and discrimination; and citizen participation along with apathy and lack of representativeness. Environmental degradation is accentuated. The state is incapable of achieving real fiscal reform. Reconciliation and dialogue coexist with deep wounds and fear.

The Flight of the Firefly

The light of each firefly radiates to others and this creates a larger unity; a group of fireflies breaks down the darkness. In this scenario, a will exists to recognize our history and to construct a model where tolerance and educational transformation create multiculturalism and eliminate discrimination. Holistic development is reflected in a nation with its own identity, and with pluralism and fairness, the rule of law and the genuine consensus. The democratic state grants equal opportunities to all. A fiscal pact reduces gaps between sectors. Citizen participation and productivity increase. Optimism spreads with the real reconciliation that accompanies sustained and fair economic growth.

2 Findings⁴

Visión Guatemala is, in a certain way, a parable of the best that could happen to this country.

Promoter

The findings below suggest that Visión Guatemala encouraged rich and intense personal learnings and reflections due to very specific factors, and that the project's influence may be observed in at least two levels: first on those who participated; and second on the country.

2.1 Factors enhancing group learning and reflection

At least six important elements enhanced in-depth learnings and reflections within the group:

2.1.1 Methodology

2.1.2 A group embodying the plurality of Guatemalan society

2.1.3 Informal dialogues

2.1.4 Discovering the power of collective creation

2.1.5 Conditions and location of the venue

2.1.6 Logistic support and technical conducting

2.1.1 Methodology

The methodology was not only innovative but also highly effective for group work and extremely valuable in encouraging mutual approach among group members:

I had never participated in a similar experience.... the mere fact of being requested to approach somebody whom I least knew in order to discuss issues at a personal level, directly, well..... that really led to mutual interchange of experiences and closeness in a very short span of time. The Vision Guatemala exercise was valuable in terms of proving that it is possible to establish lasting links of understanding and collaboration if the adequate methodology is applied.

Former Secretary of Peace

2.1.2 A group embodying the plurality of Guatemalan society

The promoting group selected 39 prominent leaders from various sectors of the society. This group included indigenous leaders as well

⁴ The findings described in the following pages are the result of 15 interviews to promoters and constructors of Visión Guatemala in August 2000, which were based on a research protocol. The questions led to reflection and brought forth observations and learning. Preliminary findings were presented to a larger group of Visión Guatemala, which included some of the people interviewed.

as leaders from non-governmental organizations and the human rights area; businessmen, government officials, journalists, retired generals, politicians, scholars and other national personalities. The group, although incomplete, is perceived in general as a large and representative sample of Guatemalan society.

Group members were chosen on the basis of their individual qualities and openness to a wide scope of perspectives. They participated on a personal level; in other words, they did not represent any specific sector and, therefore, felt free to participate openly without mandates.

Several participants expressed that the group lacked more leaders of leftist ideologies and social movements, more young people and more women. And many felt that more politicians should have participated.

of the human rights area, for instance, an area outside my daily occupations. And I also tried to understand the viewpoints of some of the human rights leaders, which differ from mine at a personal level; the death penalty issue, for instance. To discuss with someone who thinks that the death penalty should not exist left me wondering. I have not yet found a solution. I also had the opportunity to talk with a former minister of National Defense and with a guerrilla leader. Yes, on a personal level, the various conversations I held left a deep impact on my mind. As far as personal enrichment, I benefited more from these corridor dialogues.

Businessman

2.1.3 Informal dialogues

Informal dialogues encouraged personal approaches –which otherwise would not have taken place within the room– and fostered trust among the participants

Casual meetings greatly enriched me. personal conversations with some of the participants whom I could never have otherwise approached, the leaders. I looked for any opportunity at every moment to talk to the leaders of diverse visions;

2.1.4 Discovering the power of collective creation

Many participants were surprised to discover the group's capacity to create. It made no difference if it were dreams, utopias, rules of the game or scenarios:

I think that very few people have the privilege of collective dreaming. The power of collective dreaming is intoxicating. The fact that you can sit and begin to converge on a series of issues in which you are not just making it up but you are

actually trying to root it in reality. To be able to not only root it in reality but also to grasp it up with all of your strength so that you can in fact envision what you sense. Where people are actually making a contribution to the detail, to fleshing out the structure that has been agreed upon. That sensation is very powerful. It's powerful to the point of being contagious, to the point of saying that this has to be repeated.

Former Technical
Secretary of Peace

Establishing the rules of the game allowed for free, direct and courteous communication. It also encouraged a spirit of joint responsibility and commitment. The persons interviewed continuously referred to this collective construction:

In the first session, the project facilitator informed us that it was necessary to establish the rules of the game, a series of principles that would serve as the basis of our work and discussions. These rules helped us to keep our discussions on a low key, particularly when they involved massacres, indigenous discrimination, the effects of war on the civilian population, army participation in the war, etc. They also helped us to feel free to talk and to expect respect

and careful answers from those who listened.

Retired General

2.1.5 Conditions and location of the venue

Visión Guatemala created a positive spirit that fostered opening. The beautiful place selected for the venue also contributed to this spirit. For many participants, it felt as a “retreat” aimed at setting their minds to reflect about the reality of Guatemala and its possibilities as a nation:

A certain atmosphere must be generated in order for a good deal of energy to start adding or multiplying in a group of such diversity. I strongly believe that the proper atmosphere is important. I believe it is also important to take people away from their daily routines, to isolate them, to place them under different circumstances, far away..... I think this enabled us to investigate and also gave us a sense of purpose that could hardly be achieved in the city where we are constantly encircled by our personal worries. I also believe that the variations in the approach methodology were most useful. Finally, the location of the venue was simply beautiful.

Promoter, priest

2.1.6 Logistic Support And Technical Conducting

Logistic support and technical conducting were aspects that enhanced the development of Visión Guatemala in providing the necessary structure to make participants from such diverse groups feel comfortable.

2.2 Influence on participants

I came to the conclusion that guerrilla activists are somewhat right, that the private sector is somewhat right, and I stopped being suspicious of priests.

Journalist

I learned to listen. I learned to see and to discover the great richness inside others and inside myself.

Politician

The greatest richness that Visión Guatemala has produced is its influence on those who participated in the scenario building process.

2.2.1 Change of mental maps

I believe the greatest contribution of the project is that the country has now a group of persons who can, and have the capacity to, see things from a different perspective and, therefore, can help others do the same.

Government official

For many, their participation in Visión Guatemala was an unprecedented personal experience that left a deep imprint in their minds. It implied forsaking their prejudices, opening up to others' viewpoints, and learning to listen and to be tolerant.

When I finally decided to open my mind and forsake my prejudices, I learned from people whom I would have never approached. I learned from them as persons, at a personal level, but also about some aspects that represented their ideologies. It was extremely important..... someone recounted a massacre. Several businessmen spoke of their experiences with kidnapping. It is then that one begins to understand why these people became hardened and full of hate and resentment because these experiences are granted little or no value, depending on a person's position.

Promoter

2.2.2 Discovering the Human Dimensions

We are unaware of the great richness in others. We do not see it... there is a lot, quite a lot, to learn from people who, frankly speaking, one would never have considered as possible sources of learning.

Government officer

Group members learned to get acquainted with each other; they found converging points and felt empathy for others' realities:

The group gained the possibility of speaking frankly. Things could be said without upsetting the other party. I believe this helped to create a favorable atmosphere in which to express, if not the truth, certainly each person's truth. I do not know if an absolute truth was ever found. I do not believe it exists but we surely made great progress in trying to fit in another person's shoes. This, I believe, was finally achieved. In the end, and particularly after listening to one of the stories, I understood and felt in my heart all that had happened [in the country]. And there is a feeling that we must struggle to prevent this from happening again.

Politician

One anecdote reveals how much the group learned through the participation of three young men:

The first round in the first session was extremely negative because we were all looking back to the events of recent years, which had left a deep imprint on us. Thus, a first moment full of pessimism was generated. Suddenly, a young man stood up and questioned our pessimism in a very direct

manner. This moment marked the beginning of a very important change, and we continually referred to it afterwards. That a young man would suddenly call us old pessimists was a very important contribution.

Promoter, priest

2.2.3 Generation of Spaces for Multisectoral Meeting and Dialogue

I felt that interchange was very important, the fact that we could express our ideas and opinions. Contradictions certainly arose but we were able to settle them. I still do not share some ideas, but now we can talk.

Human rights activist

The possibility of creating a multisectoral space for dialogue is an innovation for Guatemalans. The war years seriously restricted approaches among sectors of a diverse nature, fostering a culture of confrontation. Therefore, one of the major contributions of Visión Guatemala to the society is the promotion of such a space.

All of us have something to learn from the dialogue, it is fundamental. However, it is also true that the struggle to establish a dialogue is really a struggle. It is not a given. In our history, is confrontation; we are suspicious of each other;

we turn away from each other, and we attack each other surreptitiously.

Promoter

The general consensus was that dialogue continues to be the best option in building a future.

I learned that dialogue is possible even between people of different ideologies; that it is possible to reach consensus, to have a common vision and that, in the end, even in the light of different ways of thinking, the objective that we all pursue is the same. In other words, the well-being of the community and the possibility of living in peace and prosperity. Therefore, the first thing was to demonstrate that dialogue is possible. A second element that was very useful to me was to discover different visions, different ways of learning about the reality of the country and drawing paths leading to the objective that each of us has chosen in seeking common well-being. On a personal level, it helped me get acquainted with many distinguished persons that I had not met before. I was very excited to participate.

Businessman

2.2.4 Establishment of Networks of Relationships and Trust Building

I would never have imagined seeing a former member of the army intelligence and a former member of the guerrilla intelligence together in a hotel bar.

Politician

A truly special atmosphere of trust was generated in the group throughout the duration of the scenario workshop.

By the end of the third seminar, there were not 40 people but 40 friends. I had the feeling that it was only a lot of friends getting together. And, when you are friends, you trust each other.

Scholar

Personal approaches, unthinkable in previous time, were taking place:

Sometimes during the workshops we were asked to walk in pairs after meals. On one occasion, I had the opportunity to pair up with a journalist who writes a column and is inclined to the right. When our walk came to an end, he said, "Look, I had never had contact with a guerrilla activist before." Today, we enjoy a nice relationship. Both of us write for "Siglo 21", and he has been very supportive in terms of my partici-

pation in the newspaper, although it is obvious that our ideas do not coincide. It was different with former Army members, Balconi and Bonilla, who had participated in the peace process and, therefore, a positive atmosphere was created. I observed many things and lived through many experiences. There is this person who is the director of a research center. She is like the tic-tac of the basically more powerful sectors. A fluid conversation with someone who represents this way of thinking, extremely neoliberal, was difficult to imagine. Yet, the conversations allowed for communication levels. I have invited this person to my courses in the university and have asked her to explore there. She has invited me to participate in her events and, naturally, we have our own points of view. The truth of the matter is that this would not have been possible before our *Visión Guatemala* experience.

Former guerrilla activist

An esprit de corps was generated despite the fact that the participants came from opposite sectors:

A positive learning was that, although we came from opposite sectors, it was possible to generate this esprit de corps. Aside from discrepancies that might

arise –because we never assumed that we would agree on everything– we respected all positions. But the creation of this physical spirit as a *Visión* group in charge of constructing scenarios was one of the greatest project achievements.

Human Rights activist

Contact has been kept among group members; occasions for getting together have been sought, and this is a positive sign. The dimension of relationships and trust achieved in the group are confirmed in the following set of statements:

I was happily surprised to see the photograph of a member of *Visión Guatemala* in the newspaper. The Rector of Universidad del Valle is seen walking on the street beside a former guerrilla activist, a former commander, on their way to the Congress to submit a fiscal agreement proposal. That was a former guerrilla member with the rector of a highly conservative university! I am sure this was, to a certain extent, a product of *Visión Guatemala*.

Journalist

The relationships which I established have allowed me, for instance, to knock the doors of many people from *Visión Guatemala* and to ask for their support on behalf of the campaign that we are launching in

Quetzaltenango [Campaña por la Tolerancia y Convivencia Pacífica]. For instance, I invited Otilia Lux de Coti, whom I know to be very busy person. I also invited Helen Mack and Dr. Gonzalo de Villa. They, as well as other people, have supported the campaign that we are implementing in Xela. Under different circumstances, if this atmosphere of trust had not been generated, I would not have dared ask them, knowing how full their agendas are. The atmosphere of confidence that was generated was very interesting. People opened their hearts. Personal histories were recounted. If empathy is not felt, people do not have the courage to tell their stories. At the personal level, I was very much impressed by two positions at a certain moment. In previous years, it would have been impossible to conceive an Army member and a former guerrilla activist telling their personal experiences. It was really interesting to hear General Balconi or Mauricio López Bonilla recounting war stories while aware of the presence of their former enemies.

Indigenous journalist

... the best thing is that the elite of the country can talk now. We can make a telephone call and we can talk to people

who were not accessible to us three or four years ago.

Scholar

2.2.5 Collective Learning about the Country's Reality

I think that Visión Guatemala removed our fears and vanished our ghosts. So, we said, "think of it as a phase in history that we were unable to overcome". Today is a different story, another phase of Guatemalan history. Today we understand that problems are not solved with bullets but with a "please sit down here and we will sit over there, and let us talk, let us find joint solutions".

Minister of Culture and Sports

To discover the dimension of Guatemalan reality was one of the most outstanding learnings for the members of Visión Guatemala. This was achieved, on one side, through the participation of experts who were invited to dictate on three themes that the group had selected. In the second workshop, the experts made presentations on economic development, multiculturalism and Mayan Cosmovision, and the recent history of Guatemala. These presentations generated intensive dialogue and revealed new aspects about the country.

The discussion around multiculturalism, for instance, revealed a reality that had remained hidden from many people. One of the businessmen referred to what he actually felt during this discussion in the following terms: “it seemed as though we were living in two different countries.”

Experts on multiculturalism were engaged in the second workshop. The group agreed that very little was known about indigenous reality. This is understandable. People would rather go to the United States or other countries in Europe than to the hinterland of Guatemala. Consequently, they knew these countries better than their own. The decision to bring aboard experts on these themes was most suitable. Quite a number of participants have mentioned that the participation of experts on indigenous issues was extremely valuable because it allowed them to further understand the reality of the country’. And, whether we like it or not, it is the reality of the majority of the population.

Indigenous journalist

The group displayed a genuine interest in multiculturalism and was able to assess the importance of multicultural cohabitation:

I believe that multicultural cohabitation is an important

issue in Guatemala. This has been fully understood by many persons. In my opinion, it was one of the themes that we were able to elaborate on: the possibility of multiculturalism. In other words, for each of us to live within our culture and have respect for all other cultures. It is a synergetic and most enriching process for the Guatemalan nation. In my opinion, this was one of the most outstanding issues.

Businessman

At the workshop, the faces of racism were exposed:

I remember that, in an effort to demonstrate that he was free from prejudice, one Businessman said, “I studied in Cobán; we always liked ‘inditas’ (pejorative for indigenous women). This was his way of showing that he was not a racist... Other women had to be convinced that racism was certainly an issue in Guatemala. They declared: “Guatemala is not racist” because they grew up in the capital city or in a financial atmosphere, and live there. However, the Visión Guatemala experience has taught them that racial discrimination is certainly practiced in Guatemala, although not openly or actively. It is a question of not having indigenous people present in their world or interacting with them.

Some members of indigenous communities have told us that poverty is more bearable than rejection. These persons from the banking or financial world, where money is the main interest, found it hard to understand that being poor was more acceptable than being rejected.

Scholar

Efforts to uncover the country's reality included a learning journey to the indigenous organization CDRO.⁵ Discovery of the indigenous world by some businessmen underscored this journey. It was also very important for the group to have appraised Guatemala's recent history, that part which is not found in official history books, and also to have learned about it:

When the history theme was proposed, the fact that we do not know our own history, that history has always been censured depending on the author, we said: we can bring in historians who represent various ways of thinking, and this was accepted. The fact that, for instance, Arturo Taracena, a strict historian with a high academic profile, could support the issue involving the grant of large estates and coffee plantations with proper documentation before important owners of coffee plantations... This oligarchy

learned—not learned but had to admit without defense— that they had become the owners of large extensions of land under a political process (through governmental concessions that gave them land for coffee). However, when a peasant requests a small plot of land from the government, these landowners are the first to oppose under the argument that this is not a government function. However, three generations ago, that very same function was the source of their present wellbeing. All statements were fully documented and explained by Arturo Taracena in a most academic manner. There were no insults. It was simply our history.

Scholar

The presentations sensitized the group on the importance of having a national economic program that would further the country's social development. On the other hand, the realities and multiple truths carried in the collective memory of Guatemalans were stripped down when members of this highly heterogeneous group decided to open up and share their intimate life stories:

There were former guerilla activists, former Army members who had actually fought; there were representative of

⁵ CDRO is the largest indigenous non governmental organization in the country with headquarters in the department of Totonicapán, in the western part of Guatemala.

human rights groups who had suffered on account of their direct relationship with human rights violations and terrible human rights violations. There were people like Helen Mack who had endured the death of her sister and her subsequent long struggle against impunity. In other words, there were people who had been deeply hurt, and this is another acknowledgment that we all made because they looked at the problem from their particular point of view, that it hurt because it had been directed against each one of them. And there were moments when all of us became conscious of the brutality. I cannot find the words to describe, from a human point of view, the tragic dimension of what the country had to undergo during the war years.

Politician

All interviewed persons made reference to the power of personal histories, particularly within the context of armed conflict.

There is something that I would like to underscore: I remember very well when people started talking about all the killings and genocide going on during war time. That was quite a strong moment in which group members became very conscious of what the war had meant for all Guatemalans,

directly or indirectly. It also brought to the surface our desire to establish a dialogue and to know what could be proposed or done. I still remember when Ronalth Ochaeta talked about an exhumation. I believe there were people in the room who had never heard about anything similar. May be only those of us who worked in the human rights area.

Human rights activist

The histories that told of community suffering by the repression moved many people, particularly the facilitator, who is an excellent facilitator. The magnitude of the tragedy has no comparison. Nevertheless, it is not the same to see it in black and white figures than to hear it recounted as an anecdote. That helped sensitize the participants.

Former guerrilla activist

Sharing these histories in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect allowed for the creation of group spirit.

I was very moved by the histories. The energy produced by their recounting and sharing elicited a reflection about the role each was playing from his/her particular position, naturally, without much hope of changing these attitudes. This is still painfully lacking. What

really changed was the issue of tolerance in addressing various issues. In my opinion, informal gatherings were very productive in terms of mutual approach. I am certain that group spirit was created. We certainly respect the position of others. There prevailed an attitude of respect, tolerance and desire for listening, and even for speaking and making proposals.

Human Rights activist

The openness, sincerity and honesty permeating these stories gave a human face to the Guatemalan tragedy, allowing the group to see and feel what others had experienced:

As to the history that he recounted, the one that caused such a great impact, a lot had to do with the fact that he witnessed an exhumation somewhere in Rabinal. It was a large field and he was suddenly called by the forensic anthropologists to see what they had found..... evidence of the skeleton of an unborn baby who had been buried, perhaps alive or still in its mother's womb, and the mother had been probably buried alive. That... that is the history. That is one history, and there must be a thousand like it. There are a thousand histories. All these deaths are contained in a document that has been prepared by the Historical Elucidating Committee, each

page.... Consequently, what happened in this country was brutal... 30 years... But we were aware of it! I was! I was a politician for a long time and this was one of the areas that I worked with. I was even threatened by military commissioners on account of my political work. We suffered, but as opponents, as enemies, always from our particular point of view. As far as I am concerned, the workshops helped me understand this in its true human dimension. A tremendous brutality! I was aware of it but had not experienced it. It is one thing to know about something and keep it as statistical data, and another to actually feel it..... And I think that all of us had to go through this process. May be not all of us because each has a particular way of thinking and feeling. But I am sure it happened to quite a few of those of us who were there. I think that, after understanding this, everyone is committed to prevent it from happening again. Anybody that was here has to be committed to prevent this from happening in the future.

Politician

When he finished recounting his experience, profound silence followed and the group bonded. It was an important moment that each of us remembers vividly.

In giving his testimony, he was sincere, calm and serene, without a trace of hate in his voice. This gave way to the moment of silence that, I would say, lasted at least one minute. It was horrible! Like a very moving experience for all... If you ask any of us, we would say that this moment was like a large communion. No one dared break the silence. The group included, let us say, an academic class, Businessmen or managers, who had always considered these issues to be exaggerations or to belong to the left side. Listening to a personal testimony really moved them.

Former Secretary of Peace

You become part of the silences. There's this mood that's created. The group is bonded by very many different things. Silence has an incredible capacity to bond. You simply remain silent and nobody has to say anything. We're there, all of us together. That's been a very intensive moment, a very dramatic moment.

Promoter

2.3 Influence in the Country

The influence of Vision Guatemala in the country is shown in at least three ways:

- Influence of group members on the organizations, sectors or groups from which they were drawn
- Generation of strategic thinking and conversation towards the future
- Image of a plural group which reinforces the conviction that dialog and search for consensus are possible in the country

When the promoters of Vision Guatemala assembled the constructing group, they looked for influential leaders of various organizations and spheres of society. These leaders have responsibility for running certain part of the country, either because they hold public office, direct human rights organizations, are journalists, are political figures or because they are directing important academic centers. The impact of Visión Guatemala on the country is reproduced from the influence these individuals exercise in the spheres in which they evolve.⁶

⁶ At present in the Vision Guatemala Group there are one female Minister and one Vice minister of Culture and Sports, the President of the Bank of Guatemala, the Guatemalan Ambassador before the U.N., the Guatemalan Ambassador before the O.A.S., two former presidential candidates, two university rectors and one vice rector, three female directors of the most important research centers, four directors of important human rights organizations and nine journalists and press reporters, among others. Other members of the group participating in unprecedented national initiatives, such as in the Fiscal Agreement Commission, the Governance Pact, the Accompanying Commission to the Peace Accords, and the Educational Reform, among others.

I believe that in the case of Visión Guatemala they have chosen social leaders who will certainly play important public roles. I think that the experience is not only personal, but also that in the measure in which personal attitudes change, the practice of any person, including public practice expresses the changes of attitudes that can take place. It is a fact that the role of individuals is not fundamental in these historical processes because there are other elements which accumulate forces but that does not mean that individuals do not play a role, which is sometimes underestimated. In this sense, I believe that experiences such as Visión Guatemala do contribute or have a bearing in an environment where it is more difficult to have a bearing. The decisions or attitudes taken as political realities are more objective.

Former guerrilla activist

This impact, of course, is frequently not direct and explicit and, furthermore, it depends on at least three situations. First, individual learnings effectively achieved by each of the participants; second, the degree to which these learnings are being conveyed to their respective sectors and organizations, and third, according to the office or position from which influence is exercised.

One of the first impacts of Visión Guatemala occurred in the process of the constitutional reforms and the popular consultation, as well as in the elections held in 1999:

...the specific issues that can be pinpointed to the project that began to appear in the political scenario that could be beneficial. One, that the candidate of the government party, the PAN at that moment, actually discovered that a multiethnic, multilingual group was doing the exercise. It became a concern of how to deal with that particular dimension of our reality. I think that they had not been as conscious as in that moment. I think that the political elite that were involved in the exercise became very much sensitized to the essential contribution that the constitutional reforms had to perform, and the Visión Guatemala group was committed to the contribution of reforms as a group, and it was something that grew out from the group. It was not something that the group was indoctrinated into. In fact, this group had been participating, I think very strongly.

Promoter

It could be argued that Visión Guatemala is having some bearing on university education as a result of the fact that a number of members of the group at present are parti-

cipating in directing the second largest university of the country.

....at present I have five members of Vision Guatemala on the Board of Directors of the University. We are trying to make this University a space where the spirit of Vision Guatemala is an innate spirit. I believe that this is something rich and which can transmit this spirit with great force as a University institution, even though it does not necessarily have to refer directly to the name Vision Guatemala. I believe that from the point of view of the students and professors themselves, a number of presentations have been made and believe that there has been an impact on the ordinary life in different spaces of the University.

Promoter, Rector
of Rafael Landívar University

Similarly, a human rights activist reveals how his experience has started to have a bearing on his organization:

For instance, on one occasion, Mr. X, an entrepreneur, sat at this table and we openly engaged in a heated discussion because he is a neoliberal and I had raised some points against neoliberalism. Sometime after this confrontation his brother was kidnapped and murdered, at which time I wrote an article

supporting all his accusations. Yesterday he came to pay me a visit, and we sat down to ponder on the things we do together to fight against the current impunity in the institutions, the violation of due process. And at this point one of us said: well, there are actually some points on which we actually converge.

Constructor

An government official tells how, from his point of view, the lessons he got from Vision Guatemala could be having a bearing on the country.

I don't know how much of what has been happening later (in the country) has to do with Vision Guatemala. I will mention one aspect in which I participated. It is the project regarding getting the process of the Fiscal Agreement for Guatemala going. If you look at the actors in the Preparatory Group for the Fiscal Agreement, in the Accompanying Commission of the Peace Accords and in the Commissions, which have been established subsequently, there are people who have been there (in Vision Guatemala). So I don't know how much of what each one of us experienced in the Vision Guatemala process has contributed to the little or lot we have advanced on this subject, which I believe is a lot... And one would have to

observe in other spheres its presence, like salt in the world, is not already impregnated in the way of being and behaving of some groups. But it is difficult to assess. Because in Vision Guatemala it is almost like the Apostles to whom Christ said: take up your cross and follow me. Yes, it is somewhat like that, the way I see it. There is not way of doing it in writing, or by radio or television. It is a process of inner reflection.

Government officer

(Visión Guatemala) infused and strengthened my way of being... I have new strengths. In the institution where I work (which is more or less a military hierarchy), you do what the President of the Bank says, of course provided it is within the framework of the law and standards....

Now I listen first, and listen well. As a result, when I make a decision, it is accepted without any major difficulty. But this new attitude not only works here; it works in Cabinet meetings, in meetings with different sectors: we must learn to listen. This is one thing on which I have probably improved a lot after the Vision Guatemala process, as sometimes one hears but does not listen, and probably one learns more by listening.

Government officer

One journalist was of the opinion that the influence of Vision Guatemala is indirect, but can be felt intuitively:

Visión Guatemala was a brainstorming job. If I were asked today what changes took place in my way of thinking, I would not be able to recall them. Actually, after I joined the way of thinking of the Visión Guatemala group, I buried my old mistaken ideas.

Journalist

In the spirit and with the participation of a number of members of Vision Guatemala, a new entity in the struggle against poverty in the country was created.

I recently began to lead the establishment of an Institute that will fight poverty. I invited some members I met at Vision and they all accepted quickly. We are 22 or 25 founding partners and I would say that 70% are members of Vision Guatemala.

Businessman

A politician said:

I feel very proud, satisfied and honored to be in the group. The meeting impressed me so much that a new political party around me will be called "Visión Guatemala Encounter 1998-

2000: *building bridges of trust*
“because, as far as I am concerned, that is what *Visión Guatemala* did.

Former presidential candidate

The generation of long term strategic thinking and conversation is another important contribution for a society, which often focuses on the situation. From the beginning, the members of the group appreciated the possibility of reflecting on the alternatives of the country’s future.

Visión Guatemala is thinking for the long term, drawing common lines of interest to the majority. In order to be successful, everyone must support a long-term project such as Vision Guatemala. Vision Guatemala has brought me to think for the long term, beyond that which I can see with my eyes. That starts from the family: What do I want for my children? I cannot think of working now to pay one month’s school for my children. I must work to pay for all their education, to help them be useful citizens. Taking this to the national level, it is a commitment for everyone, which begins with the individual commitment, that is, to participate.

Retired general

2.4 The force of the process

What was more valuable to you, the scenarios or the process of building them? In response to that question, all those interviewed agreed in pointing out that the greatest richness of the exercise was the process experienced to get to build the scenarios. For many participants, the process was everything.

In terms of paradigms, we are so focused on results that many times we miss the benefit of process and, in this case, process was everything. It was not the results. The stories that you end up telling is a neat way of packaging the process but it is the strategic vision that goes incorporated in that story what is really important, the sense of the power of collective dreaming with the capacity for you to actually listen to what somebody else is saying. I think that, once we are able to clarify that, what comes next follows by gravity.

Former Technical
Secretary of Peace

The scenarios stories acquire importance when sharing the experience, the learnings and reflections with those who did not participate in the process. That is to say,

the scenarios serve as means to bring the experience closer to the reality of each one but are not an end in themselves.

What place to assign to the construction of scenarios as such? It is good to construct scenarios but that is not necessarily the goal... No! That is not what is most important! I don't know if you are familiar with the anthropological tradition to which Malinowky refers as a system he discovered in some South Sea Islands, where he was stationed during the entire World War I. There he observed an extremely sophisticated mechanism of exchange—which exists apparently for no purpose—by which the people from some islands travel to others and make exchanges of shells and things like that. To us, from the point of view of economic logic, it has no sense at all to risk one's life in very long voyages to exchange seashells. But, in the end, it turns out that Malinowky discovers that the shells are the great pretext to do another whole bunch of things that are the ones that really matter. Then, I believe that the scenarios are the shells of Vision. They are the great pretext to do what we need to do.

Promoter, Rector of Rafael Landívar University

2.5 Limitations of Visión Guatemala

The main limitations stated by those interviewed were the following:

- The lack of sufficient and timely financial resources for implementing project activities.
- The participation of more women, more politicians, more young people, more leaders of the social movements and of the different expressions of the left was missing, as well as that of leaders from other regions of Guatemala.
- The intention and purposes were established by the promoters of the project and shared with the group at the beginning of the exercise. But participants' expectations with regard to these changed as the scenario construction process advanced. These new expectations were not addressed directly or made explicit within the group, giving rise to a certain degree of frustration among some of the participants as to the scope of the project.

2.6 Recommendations from Participants

Makeup of the promoting and constructing groups

- Making up a national promoting group which reflects the plurality

and diversity of society, enjoys credibility, assumes the commitment of leading the project, has convening powers, comes from different experiences and fields of work, different ideological positions and above all a feeling of commitment and love for their country.

- The constructing group must also reflect the diversity and plurality of society. Each member must be convened by the promoting group; participate personally and not as a representative of his/her sector, have a history of commitment to the country, a broad and open mentality, and time to devote to the exercise. In total it should be a group of not more than 45 persons. The participation of women and young leaders, who sooner or later will hold positions of leadership at national level is also important.
- In the measure in which the scenario exercises have the purpose of influencing decision making in the country, they should include politicians and other individuals (e.g. entrepreneurs, sectoral leaders) who are in capacity of bringing about changes.

ronment that will foster the exchange of opinions and limit adopting rigid positions.

Facilitation

- Look for an excellent facilitator or team of facilitators
- Insofar as possible, the facilitation should be in the local language

Hiring a technical secretary or management team

- This team should not necessarily be large, but should be dedicated full time, provide follow-up to the agreements and commitments, and keep up relations and communications within the group. The team is responsible for systematizing each workshop, supervise transcriptions of recorded material, and hire an editor and writer of scenario stories.
- In addition to a logistical management capability, the team must have good technical capability, mainly to prepare the synthesis of the workshops, prepare intermediate documents and lead the final preparation of the scenarios.

The most timely moment

Space the scenario construction exercise, insofar as possible, away from any electoral event. The scenario exercises require an envi-

Makeup of the board of directors

The board of directors among its functions could have: the definition, prioritization, review and monitoring of the strategy of the project and

support the search for and obtaining of financial resources for the project.

Definition of the next steps

- Before concluding the scenario building exercise it is necessary to define, with the consensus of the building group, a second phase to disseminate the results.
- After concluding the scenario building process, to establish an infrastructure for the review, assessment and continuous learning which promotes periodic meetings.

3 Learnings and Questions for the Future

3.1 A Need Felt by Society

Although inspired by the experiences of other countries, such as that of Mont Fleur in South Africa and Destino Colombia, financed by international cooperation and advised by a private company, which is also international, the Visión Guatemala project resulted from a demand felt in the country, as was at that time the need to generate spaces for dialogue and trust to shore up the

peace process. In addition, the project was created up, promoted, directed and built by Guatemalans.⁷

A second lesson is that there are at least three critical and extremely sensitive moments in the development of a scenario building exercise to which extreme attention must be paid: overcoming the initial mistrust which is awakened by an effort of this nature, to define and redefine throughout the process its intention or purpose and to reach a consensus on the dissemination of the results.

3.2 Overcoming the Initial Mistrust

At the beginning, the most common questions were: Where does this initiative come from? What are its real intentions? What and whose agenda is being promoted? Will I be manipulated if I participate? Will I compromise my sector? Is it a businessmen's project? A CIA project? A leftist project?

It must be personal, transparent, informative on the intentions, scope and those promoting the exercise. This initial approach could be strengthened with the testimony of participants from other countries who have experienced a similar exercise.

⁷ The international donors supporting the Vision Guatemala project are: The Soros Foundation of Guatemala, Cooperation of the Netherlands, UNDP, USAID. Local donors have been Fundación 2020 and the Managers' Association of Guatemala. Also, cooperation by World Bank and the Sugar Association of Guatemala (FUNDAZUCAR) is being initiated to carry out multisectoral dialogue workshops at regional level.

3.3 Clarifying the Intention of the Scenario Building Exercise

The promoters of Vision Guatemala from the beginning defined the intention or purpose of the scenario exercise and shared it with all the members of the building group. However, while some members of the group are of the opinion that Vision Guatemala fulfilled its purpose, there are others who stated the contrary:

When they talked to us it was to construct the vision, so I was looking forward to constructing a vision not scenarios. That is why I feel sad because I was looking for a more ambitious project.

Academician (female)

So that it was necessary for the group to approach its expectations and the real possibilities of a project of this nature realistically. Are we trying to generate a vision of the country? Are we trying to generate strategic thinking in society? Are we expecting to create spaces of trust and relationships? Do we want to influence the elite or all of the populations?

3.4 Dissemination of Results

The methodology used was powerful and clearly structured as regards scenario building. But it did not

contemplate, with the same rigor, how to disseminate the results.

4 Interpretative Conclusions

4.1 Influence on Participants

Visión Guatemala was a deeply human experience which each of the members of the group remembers vividly. In essence, it implied a change in their mental maps, which allowed them to do away with prejudices, open up to other ways of looking at things, and thinking and learning to listen to and tolerate each other. Many feel that the experience marked them irreversibly. Visión Guatemala also fostered that many discovered and appreciated the truths of others starting with what history includes, the collective memory and the experiences of the group. The days of learning and discussions about the history of the country and multiculturalism and the Maya Cosmovision stripped realities from a country which many did not know. Personal histories which some deposited with the group in an honest and calm manner brought about moments of true communion.

The workshops held created a meeting space for the leaders of very varied sectors to sit down to talk, to tighten the ties and to build trust. One year and a half after the scenario exercise ended, the group continues to meet and looking for ways to keep in contact.

4.2. Influence in the Country

The influence of Visión Guatemala on the country is not always explicit and direct. It is related to at least two conditions: First, to the changes in the mental maps experienced by this group of prominent national leaders, many of whom hold key positions in national events. Second, the degree to which each one of these is transferring his reflections and lessons to the sectors, organizations and work places, from where they can bring about a degree of bearing on the country.

The interviews revealed that Vision Guatemala is permeating Guatemalan society in very varied ways, through the individual contributions of the members of the group. A journalist says that he reflects the lessons in the media where he writes, a public official carries them to the meetings of the Government Cabinet; a politician has a bearing on a government program of his party in the 1999 elections; another one finds inspiration to name his new party; an academician and an entrepreneur incorporate them in to the Preparatory Commission for the Fiscal Agreement. Moreover, the participation of various members of the group in directing the second largest university of the country,

could have a bearing on higher education. The relationships and trust established on the basis of the scenario workshops were a fundamental ingredient for one of the members to start up a new institute to fight poverty, where 70% of the founders belong to Visión Guatemala.

The interviews also reveal some direct impacts of Visión Guatemala on the country. One of these is that Visión Guatemala is a tangible and visible example of the fact that various sectors can sit down and talk to each other with tolerance and respect, which confirms that it is worthwhile to invest efforts in the exercises of multisectoral dialogue. Another impact is that Visión Guatemala is generating reflection, strategic thought and public debate in regard to the possible, feasible or desirable alternatives in the future of the country, particularly through the dissemination activities which are under way.⁸

These findings suggest that the impact of Visión Guatemala is similar to what happens when you throw a stone into a lake. It falls and generates a series of ever broader circles until they expand to an area much greater than that of the small stone thrown. One is left with the sensation that the influence of the Visión Guatemala project has barely started

⁸ There are three dissemination activities under way: presentations to different groups of society, strategic reflection and thinking workshops, and multisectoral dialogue workshops. The core objective of these workshops is to generate dialogue and strategic thinking in society.

and that we still have to get to know the potential impacts it contains. Therefore, there is the hope that in coming years, many of the events of this nation will be enlightened by the powerful light of the fireflies.

5 Appendix

5.1 Methodology and Research

This paper was based on the findings of 15 tape-recorded interviews conducted in Guatemala 21-25 of August 2000, as well as a group dialogue conducted immediately after the interviews to validate and modify, if necessary, the preliminary findings.

5.2 Participants of the Visión Guatemala Project

Constructing Group

The following is a list of the members of the scenario constructing group and multipliers for Visión Guatemala. The list presented is in alphabetical order as per the first surname of each participant and includes a summary of their main biographic data on the basis of information given by them.

María del Carmen Aceña de Fuentes
Systems Engineer. Currently President of CIEN. She is most active in

the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial and the media. During the last few years has focused her experience on the fields of development, economic growth and reduction of poverty.

Richard Aitkenhead Castillo

Economist. Currently Executive President of IDC

Miguel Ángel Albizúres Pedroza

Journalist. Currently Coordinator of the Information Commission, FAM-DEGUA, also Coordinator of the Alliance Against Impunity. He is most active in the following sectors: human rights and trade unions. During the last few years has worked mostly for trade unions, human rights and journalism.

Virgilio Alvarado Ajanel

Degree in Social Work and studying for Masters in Anthropology and Ethnology. Currently Vice-Minister of Culture and Sports. Was Coordinator of the multiculturalism area of the UNDP Q'anil Project. He is most related to the following sectors: intellectual, indigenous NGOs of 2nd and 3rd grade on a regional and national level. Has focused during the last few years on endogenous development (CDRO), Mayan education (UNESCO) and has been member of the Parity Commission for Educational Reform (on behalf of the Government).

Clara Arenas Bianchi

Economist and Anthropologist. Currently Executive Director of AVANCSO. She is most active in the following sectors: popular, NGOs, religious and academic. During the last few years has focused on the areas of peasants, identity, State/society, research and coordination.

Julio Balconi Turcios

Retired general. Was Technical Advisor in the Faculty of Systems Engineering of the Francisco Marroquín University. Is most active in the academic/intellectual sector. During the last few years has focused on the educational area of armed institutions, collaborated in the attainment of peace as member of the Peace Commission of the Government of the Republic and in the modernization process of the Guatemalan Army.

Hugo Beteta Méndez-Ruiz

Administrative Vice-Rector of the Rafael Landívar University. Was President of Solar Foundation. Most associated with sectors of: NGOs and governmental. Lately has focused on areas of environment, energy and development.

Edgar Cabnal Santa Cruz

Social Worker. Currently Consultant for “Children bereft of Family relations due to armed conflict”. Was Executive Secretary of Special Commission for Incorporation. Most active in the following sectors: indigenous, political, popular, trade unions and

NGOs. During the last few years has focused on community development, uprooted populations and the peace process.

Eulalia Camposeco Cruz

Degree in Psychology. Former Director of newspaper El Regional in Quetzaltenango. Most active in the following sectors: the media, indigenous and academic/intellectual. Lately has focused on education, work with women, and journalism.

Héctor Centeno Bolaños

Civil Engineer. Currently Rector of the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. Most related to the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial and NGOs. Lately has focused on areas of teaching, entrepreneurial development, environmental sciences and natural resources.

Alvaro Colom Caballeros

Industrial Engineer. Currently President of MEGA Group, a consulting company. Was candidate to 1999 elections for Partido Alianza Nueva Nación. Most active in the following sectors: productive, indigenous and political. During the last few years has focused on areas of productive development, construction of peace and entrepreneurial development.

Luis Chocano Caballero

Insurance Broker. Life Executive Director of Tecniseguros. Was President of the Association of Managers of Guatemala. Lately has focused on private social security programs.

Elena Díez Pinto

Director of Visión Guatemala. Industrial engineer with graduate studies in regional and economic development planning. During the last few years has focused on design and evaluation of social policies and programs, relations government-civil society, and poverty alleviation and peace projects.

Jorge Escoto Marroquín

Economist. Former Undersecretary of the Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency (SEGEPLAN). Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, governmental, indigenous, political and NGOs. During the last few years has focused on social, economic and political areas..

Luis Figueroa Jurado

Journalist. Currently Vice-President of newspaper Siglo Veintiuno. Most related to sectors of: the Press, economic and academic. Lately has focused on journalism and economy.

Víctor Gálvez Borrel

Doctor in Sociology. Currently Director of FLACSO. Was Academic Coordinator of FLACSO. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, governmental, indigenous, NGOs, popular and trade unions. During the last few years has focused on teaching, research and counseling of international organizations.

Eduardo González Castillo

Entrepreneur. Currently Executive President of Bancafé and was Minister of Economy. Most active in the entrepreneurial sector. During the last few years has focused on the areas of finance, export of nontraditional products and the peace process.

Alfonso González Lacs

Economist. Currently Executive Vice-President of Grupo Pro. Was President of Association of Managers of Guatemala. Most related to sectors of: finance, stock market, managerial support and economic analysis. During the last few years has focused on areas of finance, economy and management.

Roberto Gutiérrez Martínez

Chemical Engineer. Degree in Business Administration and Anthropologist. General Manager of “Gutiérrez y Cia.,S.A.”. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial and indigenous. Lately had focused on areas of socioeconomic development, decentralization and local power, combating of poverty.

Juan León Alvarado

Urban Primary Education Teacher. Former presidential candidate in the 1999 elections. Former Legal Representative of Mayan Defense Counsel. Most active in the following sectors: Mayan, women, trade unions, CACIF (CC), State organisms, academic,

NGOs and religious. During the last few years has focused on areas of human rights, politics, indigenous rights and international law.

Raquel León Lux

Social Worker. Currently working for Social Investment Fund in El Quiché. Most active in the following sectors: local development committees, rural area communities and mayor's offices. During the last few years has focused on rural communities and community development committees.

Federico Licht Leibson

Entrepreneur and Telecommunications Engineer. Currently Director of Grupo AEROLUX. Was Director of Grupo telglob. Has been most active in the following sectors: religious, entrepreneurial and the media. During the last few years has focused on advising on sales of video equipment, audio equipment, air-conditioning and telephony.

Mauricio López Bonilla

Retired colonel. Political scientist, consultant/advisor, currently executive vice-president of Interimage Latinoamericana, S.A.. Works as consultant-advisor in corporative image and campaign design, is political analyst and opinion columnist. Currently columnist of newspaper Prensa Libre and was columnist of the magazine Crónica. Most active in the following sectors: private, human rights, political parties, academic, armed forces and the media.

During the last few years has focused on areas of negotiation of Human Rights themes in the U.N., lobbying and negotiation in the peace process, design of policies and institutional strategies in the Army.

José Angel López Camposeco

Degree in Political Sciences. Currently President of Banco de Desarrollo Rural. Was Vice-Minister of Livestock, Hydrobiological Resources and Food. Most active in following sectors: governmental, cooperative, coffee production, peasants, social, agricultural business, NGOs, indigenous and academic in area of his specialty.

Eugenia Mijangos Martínez

Lawyer and Notary Public. Currently Coordinator of Area of the Rights of Women of Centre for Human Rights Legal Action. Has been most active in the following sectors: human rights, academic, indigenous, religious, NGOs and the media. Lately has focused on areas of social development, gender/legal and human rights.

Ronalth Ochaeta Argueta

Lawyer and Notary Public. Former Executive Director of the Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric (ODHA). Currently the Guatemalan Ambassador to the OEA. Most active in the following sectors: religious, NGOs, academic/intellectual. During the last few years has focused on areas of defense and promotion of human rights, rescue of historical memory, reconstruction of social fabric.

Fabián Pira Arrivillaga

Certified Public Accountant, Auditor and Banker. Currently working in Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica (BCIE). Was President of Crédito Hipotecario Nacional and General Manager of the Banco de Guatemala. Most active in the following sectors: banking, computer science and economic. During the last few years has focused on banking, strategic planning consultant, financial consulting and computer science consulting.

Rigoberto Quemé Chay

Degree in Business Management, Master in Social Anthropology from the University of Paris and studying for Masters in Public Administration USAC-INAP. Currently Municipal Mayor of Quetzaltenango. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, governmental, entrepreneurial, indigenous, the media, political, popular, trade unions, NGOs and religious. During the last few years has focused on areas of development, anthropology and public administration.

Armando Quiacaín Cruz

Primary Education Teacher. Currently writer in the Bilingual General Management of the Ministry of Education. Was educational research assistant. Most active in following sectors: academic/intellectual and Mayan. During the last few years has focused on educational research, translation into Mayan languages,

Mayan literary production and assistance in national coordination instances.

Max Quirin Schoder

Entrepreneur. Currently General Manager of Ecoagro. Most active in entrepreneurial sector. During the last few years has focused on areas of agricultural exports, Presidency of Anacafé and the Monetary Board.

Luis Alberto Reyes Mayén

Business Administrator. Currently working in entrepreneurial, agricultural and commercial activities and is Executive Director of the consulting office GETSA, S.A.. Most active in the following sectors: entrepreneurial, expressions of civilian society in general, (NGOs, trade unions, cooperative organizations, etc.). Lately has focused on the labor relations area (especially in work training), small and medium businesses, dialogue and agreements.

Oscar Rivas Villanueva

Lawyer and Notary Public. Currently working in a professional office. Most active in academic and intellectual sector. Lately has been acquiring experience in professional legal offices, radio programs for citizens' guidance and student politics.

Mario Antonio Sandoval

Journalist. Currently Editorial Writer and Columnist in Prensa Libre. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, political, the me-

dia, popular, trade unions, NGOs and religious. Lately has been focusing on academic areas and journalism.

Pablo R. Schneider

Economist. Currently President of BCIE in Honduras. Works as a consultant. Most active in academic and intellectual areas. During the last few years has focused on areas of development and economic consulting.

Danilo Siekavizza Passarelli

Entrepreneur. Currently President of Hino de Guatemala. Most active in following sectors: entrepreneurial, government and academic (INCAE). Was President of the Association of Managers of Guatemala. During the last few years has focused on business management, competitiveness programs and medium and long-term vision (IBD seminars).

Lizardo López

Economist. Currently President of Banco de Guatemala. Was Executive secretary of ASIES and President of Banco Corporativo, S.A. Most active in the following sectors: politics, press, applied research and financial. During the last few years has focused on economic consulting, social communication (written press) and political leadership - public sector.

Ricardo Stein Heinemann

Mathematician and consultant. Currently Executive Director of Fundación Soros de Guatemala. Was Technical Secretary of the Secretariat of Peace (SEPAZ). Most active

in governmental and NGO sectors. During the last few years has focused on areas of Peace Accords, development projects, government-civil society relations and decentralization.

Lester Toledo Mena

Participated as a student of the Polytechnical School (military school). Most related to military sector.

Nery Villatorio Robledo

Historian and Journalist. Currently in charge of Department of Public Relations and Policies of the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation and is columnist of Siglo Veintiuno. Most active in the following sectors: academic, media and NGOs. Lately has been focusing on areas of social investigation, journalism and human rights.

Adrián Zapata

Lawyer and Notary Public. Currently regular member of the National Executive Committee and in charge of political training of the URNG Party. Was a member of the Secretariat of International Relations of the URNG. Most active in the popular sector. During the last few years has worked in training within the URNG and areas related to social movements.

Raquel Zelaya

Economist. Former Secretary of Peace. Currently works at ASIES. Most active in the research and political sectors.

Multipliers

Violeta Alfaro de Carpio

Political scientist. Currently independent Consultant. Most active in the following sectors: organizations of civil society promoting legal reforms in Urban and Rural Development Councils, specifically women. During the last few years has focused on gender and development, development councils and women's organizations.

Nelson Amaro Vitoria

Sociologist. Currently Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences of Universidad del Valle, also Director of Masters Course in Development. Most active in the university sector. During the last few years has focused on intellectual teaching (decentralization, local government, citizens participation, evaluation of social programs, social development).

Oscar Azmitia Barranco

Educator/religious. Currently General Director of Santiago Development Project. Most active in sectors of Agencies of Cooperation, Popular Movements, Civil Society Organizations and Mayan Movements. Lately has been focusing on the academic/religious, indigenous/popular areas.

José Leonel Cordón Anleu

Student and civil servant. Currently working in General Directorate of Labor in the Ministry of Labor and

Social Security. Most active in student groups of the Rafael Landívar University. During the last few years has focused on student support groups as social communicator, coproducer of the Radio Program "Derecho y Destino" (Right and Destiny), in Radio Asunción de María.

Alfredo de León Solano

Anthropologist. Currently working as social researcher in the rural area of AVANCSO. Most active in the following sectors: NGOs, peasants, political parties, Catholic Church. During the last few years has focused on studies on peasant groups, national identity and popular education.

Ruth del Valle Cobar

Political scientist. Currently working in Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric. Most active in the human rights sector. During the last few years has focused on social research, popular education, promotion and defense of human rights.

Adán Echevarría Guevara

Business Administrator. Currently Teaching Advisor of the Department of Planning and Educational Development of the faculty of Economic Sciences of USAC. Director of public sector training program. Is also Director of Human Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial, governmental, political and religious. Recently has been focusing on orga-

nizational development, university teaching and organization and methods.

Julia González de Villatoro

Anthropologist. Currently working as social researcher in socio-urban problems. Most active in the following sectors: urban popular sectors, persons displaced due to city violence. During the last few years has focused on socio-urban problems of city growth, persons displaced by violence, migration, urban sectors and popular religiousness, permanent discussion spaces with academics on urban problems.

Maritza Ochoa Rosas

Consultant in Human Resources. Currently working in MO Consultants on Human Resources. Most active in following sectors: financial, universities, companies in general. During the last few years has focused on areas of administration (Banco de Guatemala), university teaching (UFM) and organizational consulting (international institutions).

José Domingo Paredes Morales

Law student. Currently working in Turcios, García y Asociados. Formerly worked in Química Farmacéutica QUIFA. Most actively related to students and organizations of Antigua Guatemala. During the last few years had focused on student organizations, participation in different fora and co-producer of a radio

program for citizens guidance, currently writing articles in Diario “La Hora”.

Magdalena Quiacaín Cruz

Primary Education Teacher. Most active in Mayan sectors. During the last few years has been studying.

Pablo Eduardo Sáenz Ortiz

Degree in Business Administration. Currently working in the Guatemalan Chamber of Construction. Most active in construction, small and medium businesses, commerce. Recently has focused on training, entrepreneurial administration and human development.

José Eduardo Secaira Fajardo

Agonomist, conservationist. Currently working in “Conservation of Nature, the Mayan movement, and Spirituality: implications for Conservationists”. Most active in the following sectors: environmental, conservationist, indigenous and religious. Very interested in their interrelation. During the last few years has focused on conservation of biodiversity, NGOs for the environment, sustainable development, indigenous and religious areas.

Erwin Solórzano Urrutia

Architect. Currently is Coordinator of Planning Unit of the Faculty of Architecture. Most active in academic/intellectual sectors. Lately has been focusing on teaching.

Saqiiq' Felipe Tuy Navichoc

Researcher. Teacher. Currently working as researcher of oral literature. Most active in Mayan and non Mayan sectors. During the last few years has focused on social investigation, oral literature, training for groups of Mayan people, contents and educational reform.

Leticia Josefa Velásquez

Physician and Surgeon. Currently giving technical support to Mayan Defense Counsel for Organizational Development. Most active in the following sectors: development, health, women, ethnic, research and

systems systematization. During the last few years has focused on training leaders in subjects of health, monitoring and evaluation of development projects focused on gender, research and systematization of information proper to indigenous people.

Sheila Wilkins de Melendreras

Interpreter, Translator, Teacher. Most active in following sectors: human rights groups, popular groups, international donors, government, and army. During the last few years has focused on interpretation, translation and teaching.

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