

**FINAL REPORT:  
2011 EXTERNAL  
EVALUATION OF THE PBI  
GUATEMALA PROJECT**

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<sup>1</sup> The case of El Quiché is specifically discussed in section 4.1.2.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This is the third external evaluation since the PBI-Guatemala Project was reopened in 2003.

The evaluation is a joint process of reflection on the overall progress of the project over the last three years (2008-2010). Its purpose is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the work, both at the internal as well as the external level, and the challenges for the future, and could provide input and serve as a guide for strategic planning from 2011 to 2014.

The results, conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation are intended to help strengthen the invaluable work carried out by PBI Guatemala.

We must acknowledge the openness, collaboration and transparency of all those who participated in this evaluation. Without their help this work would not have been possible.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of the evaluation is fully in line with its participatory nature.

There were two information gathering processes:

- Review, analysis and the systematic use of source documents. These were internal reports of all types, the internal publications of the project and those of other organizations and institutions related to the defense of human rights in Guatemala. This process was maintained throughout the evaluation process.
- The field work was carried out simultaneously with the documentary research. Part of it involved direct interviews in the field (Guatemala), and another made use of new information technologies such as Skype and e-mail.

Annex 7.1 specifies the number of persons from each group who were interviewed or who offered their analysis of the socio-political situation. These persons either work or have worked within the project (office personnel, committee members, consultants, team members) or people with whom the project has contact with in Guatemala in the course of its work (human rights defenders accompanied by PBI, expert analysts, foreign diplomats, members of international bodies, Guatemalan authorities, and members of other international NGOs).

There were two methods used for gathering information in the field: semi-structured group interviews, and semi-structured individual interviews. The individual interviews were conducted by three different means: via Skype, face-to-face, and via e-mail. All group interviews were conducted face to face.

In all, there were two meetings held for sociopolitical analysis, five group interviews and 26 individual interviews (four by Skype, seven via e-mail and 15 face to face). The total number of participants was 50: Six took part in the sociopolitical analysis and 44 in the interviews.

The content of the interviews (group and individual) differed according to the individuals or groups involved.

Once the field work was concluded, the information was analyzed and the final report drafted.

### **3. HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUATEMALA: CURRENT SITUATION**

This section lays out **some of the most important ideas resulting from the sociopolitical analysis** conducted in the aforementioned meetings and provides some general opinions about the current situation in Guatemala, where the project carries out its work.

A key issue in Guatemala that is creating a very complicated situation for its people and is a source of serious human rights violations is the **development of megaprojects** (large infrastructures, oil exploration and drilling, mining and hydroelectric projects, cement plants, etc.) Not surprisingly, the largest number of petitions for accompaniment received by PBI in recent years have been cases that fall under the category of “The Effects of Globalization on Human Rights.”

As these projects have developed, residents have become more informed about them, but they have fewer and fewer options to oppose them. Transnational companies are arriving in unexpected areas, people have nowhere to go, have no alternatives, and have no choice but to organize, resist and fight eviction. This activity is being met with repression both from the state and from private entities. People are being jailed, persecuted, threatened, murdered, etc.

Mining is the latest of the big businesses to capitalize on the natural resources of the region. The government continues to grant exploration and operation permits without informing or consulting the population. These projects continue to move forward and community resistance is mounting, which has created a situation of intense conflict and a resurgence of human rights violations against the population, particularly against those defending land, territory and natural resources.

In addition, several of those interviewed for this report agreed that there is **a crisis of organization and a severe fragmentation of the popular movement** in this regard. The communities are undergoing changes, and many local organizations have become intermediaries negotiating with the government.

Regarding **food security**, this is going to be a “**year of famine**,” as crops have been lost in some places so that people will have to buy corn at currently very high prices (up to 300 quetzals, or about USD38 per quintal). So-called mega-plantations and monoculture threaten food security and biodiversity. Historical knowledge of food production in the communities is being destroyed.

Moreover, these businesses have generated power struggles between different legal and illegal groups: drug traffickers, the government, companies, and plantation owners. They also create conflicts between communities, and the land problem grows worse. A strategy to divide communities continues, pressuring and coercing them to sell their lands, while community leaders and organizations are being bought out and/or co-opted.

Popular referendums have been held on these mega-business projects, but it is not enough to say no to them. The communities must have the capacity to develop. Otherwise, their poverty forces them to give up and surrender to one group or another.

In light of the conflicts cited above, the government has imposed so-called **states of exception** and **curfews**, automatically curtailing civil rights. And if the government does not act, then drug traffickers impose their own illegal but effective curfews (e.g. in Zacapa).

There is a **struggle for territory between the government, drug traffickers and business. Sometimes there is conflict, and sometimes there is negotiation** to the exclusion of

the communities most affected. There continues to be a direct conflict between the State and the people. **The land conflict goes unresolved.**

Another of the great concerns cited in the interviews is the **militarization** of the civilian population. There are reports that private businesses recruit young people in different areas, particularly in Nebaj and Cotzal (Department of El Quiché) with offers of money. There is significant trafficking of arms coming from the United States, following the same routes as drug and human trafficking. Paramilitary groups and militias have been organized. As one analyst put it: "The paramilitary monster produced by the war has given birth to its offspring in times of peace." Civilian patrols have been reorganized in Nebaj and are defending the commercial trucks coming in and out. These civilian units coordinate their patrols with the army (and are often hooded). There are also such patrols in San Juan Cotzal. **Organizations that arose during the war continue to operate in the Ixil region.**

Regarding the **fight against impunity**, the Bámaca case has been reopened, and other legal proceedings related to human rights violations committed during the civil war have been initiated or have progressed. These cases are seen as an opportunity to open cracks in the system of impunity enjoyed by criminal organizations operating during the war. This impunity continues to permeate the highest levels of state institutions and power. In this respect, the selection of Claudia Paz as attorney general is seen in a positive light. In part, this appointment was the result of an effort by many human rights defenders and by the International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG) to replace the previous attorney general, who had been accused of links to organized crime. The appointment of Claudia Paz has once again generated hope that the investigation of past crimes will move forward.

**Organized crime** has been **restructured** in recent years. It is no longer about clandestine, nor secret, nor parallel groups. The links between illegal non-state powers, legal private powers and state powers are increasingly more open and apparent to all. Clear alliances have also been created between the commercial, financial and agribusiness sector. A significant distinction was made between the nouveau riche, whose wealth comes primarily from drug trafficking and the old-money families of the oligarchy. The nouveau riche families have political ambitions and want to achieve them with their new-found wealth, sending their children to study abroad in good schools and colleges so that they can return home and enter politics. In fact, these families direct part of their money to so-called "development" projects.

Another important concern noted in the evaluation is the **increase of criminal cases brought against human rights defenders** as a new form of repression. Between 2004 and 2010, more than 600 cases against human rights defenders were documented. According to a report by UDEFEGUA, "Criminalization is a way to paralyze and weaken the social movement." By early 2010, before all of the cases were even documented, 592 criminal proceedings had already been initiated against human rights defenders since 2004. About 60% of those were dismissed or shelved.

Regarding the **evaluation of the outgoing government of Álvaro Colom**, all of the analysts we interviewed agreed that there were **many more failures than successes**. There was also agreement that **this election year is going to be very dangerous for human rights defenders** and underscored the importance of **PBI's presence in the country**.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

#### 4.1.1. Impact of the work and effectiveness of global accompaniment, the strategy of deterrence and related tools

There is a **general perception** among those who participated in this evaluation that the **human rights situation in Guatemala has significantly worsened** in recent years. They are in almost unanimous agreement that **PBI's presence is very necessary and fully justified**. Moreover, they generally feel that the situation will continue to deteriorate and that the election campaign will spark more human rights violations against human rights defenders. PBI's presence in Guatemala is therefore **considered indispensable**.

Various participants noted the difficulty of gauging the specific impact that PBI-Guatemala's work has had over these past three years, but all agreed that it was having a positive impact. The chart below reflects information taken from PBI's 2008, 2009 and 2010 annual reports regarding the level of work carried out by the project during those years:

	2008	2009	2010
Avg. no. of accompaniments	8-9	8-9	9-10
Total no. of accompaniments	18	17	15
Accompaniment petitions	13	24	30
Petitions accepted	3	4	3
Organizations and/or individuals accompanied	15	17	13
Contact with Guatemalan authorities	82	95	131
Contact with international authorities in Guatemala	26	24	56
Visits and meetings with Guatemalan organizations	85 meetings/visits to 58 organizations	141 meetings/visits with 60 organizations	76 meetings/visits with 49 organizations
Meetings with international bodies in Europe <sup>2</sup>	No info available	24	20
Information distributed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 MIPs<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• 12 monthly reports for Guatemalan authorities.</li> <li>• 2 bulletins</li> <li>• 1 Alert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 MIP</li> <li>• 12 monthly reports for Guatemalan authorities.</li> <li>• 3 bulletins</li> <li>• 1 Alert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 PIM</li> <li>• 12 monthly reports for Guatemalan authorities.</li> <li>• 3 bulletins</li> <li>• 3 Alerts</li> <li>• 1 special report<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> These figures only refer to meetings held with international multilateral institutions (UE, ONU). They do not include the number of meetings with foreign ministries in various PBI countries, or meetings with civil society organizations in Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Monthly Information Packet.

<sup>4</sup> "Guatemala's Indigenous Women in Resistance: On the Frontline of the Community's Struggle to Defend Mother Earth and her Natural Assets."

Another general perception is that the quality of **ADVOCACY/LOBBYING** work has increased both inside and outside of Guatemala. This work was **one of the areas that received the most favorable assessment from the overwhelming majority of the participants**. They had a **very positive view** of the advocacy work. The table above indicates the number of contacts maintained with authorities.<sup>5</sup>

Several people affirmed that PBI is recognized as a leading organization working in the defense of human rights. Both the project's European representative and the team in Guatemala are repeatedly consulted by different organizations, coalitions, international authorities and missions in Guatemala.

In Guatemala, the public relations work with international missions has markedly improved (embassies, the EU<sup>6</sup> delegation and the OHCHR<sup>7</sup>) and has resulted in good relations with the Filter Group, a distinct advantage for PBI, giving the organization an opportunity to talk about specific cases and put human rights defenders directly in contact with members of this group.<sup>8</sup>

It should also be noted that the project is contributing to the implementation of EU directives on the protection of human rights defenders. We were told in one interview that the Filter Group has formally consulted the PBI team with respect to local implementation of these directives. The project knows how these directives should be implemented and is applying this knowledge at all levels. Many of the international missions in Guatemala that we interviewed recognized PBI's efforts in this regard, stating that the organization knows these directives well and how to help implement them. Many of these missions acknowledged the obstacles that stand in the way of implementing these directives. They consider the Filter Group to be a very important initiative, but note that it has limits with respect to decision-making and implementation.

The international missions we interviewed underscored the influence and credibility that PBI enjoys. One representative of an international mission had this to say: "Without PBI it would be more difficult to initiate a dialogue with the international actors present in Guatemala. They have awakened an internal debate in the international community present in the country."

Several of those interviewed for the report say the fact that foreign diplomats have been attending court hearings in cases brought to their attention by PBI is testimony to the advocacy and lobbying work of the organization.

Despite the results obtained in this area, several participants agreed that advocacy work is going to become more complicated because there are many EU countries with substantial economic interests in Guatemala, interests that often collide head on with the human rights of the population and defenders of ESCR.<sup>9</sup> This is considered a threat to the advocacy work carried out by the project.

One weakness detected in this area of work is the limited capacity for advocacy that the project has in the United States. Despite numerous speaking tours and efforts from the project office (by a person providing support in the field, by the coordinator and by the European representative), the impact of advocacy work has been low. In any event, this must be put in perspective, since this task is not included in the job description of any of the office staff, and the person on the project committee specifically responsible for this left two years ago.

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<sup>5</sup> Inside and outside of Guatemala, with local and international authorities and institutions.

<sup>6</sup> European Union.

<sup>7</sup> Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

<sup>8</sup> There has already been a precedent-setting case in this regard.

<sup>9</sup> Economic, social and cultural rights.



Some of those interviewed said that lobbying of Guatemalan regional authorities has significantly improved. One person noted, however, that lobbying at the regional level could have negative effects at the national level, and that the priority should be national, regional, and then local.

There is a high opinion of the team with respect to advocacy work. One person accompanied by PBI recalled having doubts about the advocacy work at first but is now convinced of its effectiveness. This person said the impact of the advocacy work is more evident than that of the accompaniment. The team is convinced that global accompaniment is the key. This type of accompaniment has four essential elements: physical presence, advocacy/lobbying, information and observation.

One former accompaniment volunteer<sup>10</sup> said the need for physical accompaniment has been reduced because of the good results of the advocacy/lobbying work, which results in more space and autonomy for the human rights defenders. This is what others participating in the evaluation and members of the project committee call “symbolic accompaniment,” i.e. the physical accompaniment is never continuous and works “symbolically.” In the words of the former volunteer cited above: “Advocacy allows us to be present without being there physically.”

Advocacy/lobbying with international authorities, along with the dissemination of information, is also seen by many of the participants as essential and very effective in the aforementioned criminalization of human rights work that is causing so much concern. This type of advocacy is considered key to the deterrent effect in these cases, which are so complicated and are becoming more and more common.

Several of the participants noted that there is good communication and coordination between the team and committee in the area of advocacy work. Each rates the other’s work very favorably.

Some of the ex-volunteers say they believe that human rights defenders value the advocacy work the most among the four areas of global accompaniment. In this respect, they believe the project is moving toward this approach. They are not sure whether this is deliberate or is simply happening on its own.

Team members say it is difficult for PBI to know whether its work results in a reduction of threats, and therefore difficult to measure its specific impact. They say that only those who are accompanied by PBI can evaluate the effectiveness of accompaniment. They note that PBI often receives positive comments from those who receive accompaniment. The evaluator was able to confirm these very positive assessments when interviewing individuals and organizations accompanied by PBI. Some of the comments made with respect to advocacy/lobbying are paraphrased below:

- All of the individuals accompanied agree about the importance and effectiveness of PBI’s advocacy work. They generally praised the fact that this work makes their cases more visible and raises their profile. The speaking tours are considered very good opportunities to establish contacts and create alliances with human rights and other groups who can have an impact on improving the situation in Guatemala.
- They note that embassies and international bodies present in the country pay more attention to their cases as a result of this work.

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<sup>10</sup> All former volunteers who responded to the request to fill out a questionnaire for the evaluation were women.

- They understand the mechanism of global accompaniment very well, recognizing advocacy as one but not the only essential element.
- The lobbying of local authorities is also considered effective to some extent. In the words of one of the persons interviewed: “PBI’s presence has strengthened our position before local authorities. Now they treat us differently. They do not dare yell at us.”
- Another advantage noted with respect to this area is the fact that it facilitates a global vision for the persons accompanied, as it helps them to establish contact with other persons as the different movements connect and interact with one another, making the global problem of human rights in Guatemala evident
- “The advocacy work with the international community cannot be seen but can be felt. It is like an echo chamber for what is going on in Guatemala,” said another participant.

Regarding the question of **INFORMATION**, there are different perceptions between those inside the project (committee, office and team) and those outside of the project (those who are accompanied, Guatemalan authorities, the diplomatic corps, the EU, OHCHR and other national and international NGOs).

**Several persons on the committee, in the office and on the team agree that this area has been weakened, especially with respect to the publication of the project bulletin.** The number of bulletins has been reduced from four to three per year.<sup>11</sup> To compensate for the reduced number of bulletins, the number of pages was increased from 12 to 16 (although edition No. 21 still has 12 pages).<sup>12</sup> The production of the bulletins creates a lot of work for members of the team and can overwhelm them. According to one person participating in the evaluation, the team sees the bulletins simply as extra work. They don’t understand that the production of information has to be constant. When one bulletin is finished, work on the next one begins.

Although the publication of a monograph written between 2009 and 2010 is considered an achievement in the area of information, one committee member said that the time and effort required was excessive and much more than planned (especially in the case of the coordinator). This put an extra workload onto a position that is already overloaded (coordination).

One of the ex-volunteers interviewed for this report said one of the reasons this area is not working at 100% is because most of the responsibility falls to the subcommittee<sup>13</sup> assigned with this task instead of to the team as a whole as intended. One committee member said the entire team should be responsible for the bulletins, but the reality is that not all members are involved. The aforementioned ex-volunteer said that it is a struggle for the project to finish the bulletin and the MIPs on time and this creates stress and frustration.

In addition to those already mentioned, other factors in the debilitation of this area: broad flexibility in meeting the internal deadlines for publishing the bulletins and the MIP, which leads to delays and a backlog of work; change of layout editor for the bulletin during the period so that a

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<sup>11</sup> In 2008, only two editions were published due to the change of coordinator.

<sup>12</sup> The coordinator was consulted about this case and explained that this bulletin had only 12 pages due to a layout problem. One article was left out because including it would have meant going over 16 pages and exceeding the layout format.

<sup>13</sup> The Guatemala team has several subcommittees, each of which is responsible for different matters.

new person outside of PBI must be introduced and adapt to the job; shortage of personnel for a significant amount of work in all areas, leading to a lack of priorities for tasks related to regular publications.

Several of the people interviewed said the commitment and time necessary to complete the tasks for the publication of information is not there because of the workload faced by the team volunteers and the fact that the number of volunteers is most often less than 10 (the necessary and established minimum).

One of the achievements noted in this area is that the information is now distributed to local organizations, whereas before it was intended for dissemination abroad. This is considered helpful in strengthening the organization and constitutes a kind of “return delivery” and a way of sharing the information with the members of civil society with whom the organization has relations. However, others expressed doubts about the flexibility and speed of distributing the information inside of Guatemala, particularly to the communities and groups who are most directly affected by the conflict.

One of the participants believes that the quality standards of the publications have held up and said that **people have made various favorable comments** about them. These favorable comments were **confirmed and recorded by the evaluator** during various interviews with people outside of the project:

- Most of the people accompanied by PBI gave a favorable assessment of the project’s publications. They said that these publications disseminate information about the work of human rights defenders and cast light on human rights violations and the efforts of all groups struggling to improve the situation.
- Some of the accompanied human rights defenders praised the quality of the PBI-Guatemala special report “Guatemala’s Indigenous Women in Resistance: On the Frontline of the Community’s Struggle to Defend Mother Earth and her Natural Assets.”
- Some representatives of international bodies and the diplomatic corps said the information that PBI shares is very important to them: the Monthly Information Packet (MIP), the bulletins, advisory letters, alerts, special reports. They find it to be very valuable. They said the information is very useful to them and fulfills the purpose of bringing the cases of those they accompany to light. One of these individuals even considers PBI publications as one of its main sources of information.
- The representative of ACOGUATE considers PBI’s work in the dissemination of information to be very good.

Several of the persons interviewed agree that the **PHYSICAL PRESENCE has been reduced**. Interestingly, **some of these individuals see this as positive and others see it as negative**.

One of the participants noted that the project has distanced itself considerably from the concept referred to as “unarmed body guards.” In the words of this person: “Physical accompaniment has been reduced in a positive way, because the context has changed and PBI’s strategy has changed. Nowadays, a community can confront authorities without being massacred as was the case during the armed conflict. Physical accompaniment is a visible symbol of the interest of the international community. There is no continuous accompaniment. Deterrence works symbolically. And to ensure that this accompaniment is not vacuous, we give it substance with the advocacy work inside and outside of Guatemala. There is a lot of work, and physical presence is

limited.” Another participant referred to in the discussion of advocacy also said the advocacy work has reduced the need for physical accompaniment, with the result being more space and autonomy for human rights defenders.

Although this balance between physical presence and advocacy work is considered favorable, it is agreed that physical presence must not be neglected, particularly in rural areas. This means that the physical accompaniment and international observation work must not be given less importance or marginalized, and that the system of rotation must be regularly checked to ensure that a relationship of trust with the accompanied persons is established, maintained and further strengthened. It also means that first-hand knowledge of the local and regional reality and context in the country must continue to be expanded. The challenge for the project at this time is to ensure a maximum number of volunteers in the team to provide greater coverage of the global accompaniment work and an ideal balance in the system of rotation used by the team to plan its physical accompaniment and observation work.

Various human rights defenders have a relationship of great trust with PBI as an institution and with its personnel. They note the history of the project and what it has and continues to achieve in support of human rights in Guatemala, and the credibility it has earned for this work. In the words of one person interviewed for this report: “We trust anyone supported by PBI.”

Regarding how effective physical presence is when used, the majority of those accompanied have a favorable opinion.

The perception of representatives of international bodies and the diplomatic corps is that PBI is an organization in the field that has direct contact with the people.

Regarding the effectiveness of the **STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE AND RELATED TOOLS**, several of those interviewed agree that its effectiveness can be observed more clearly in more critical and urgent cases, such as that of Jorge López, director OASIS, or in the case of the arrest warrants issued against members of the Camotán Campesino Association. It is harder to see in the day-to-day work. Those interviewed were practically unanimous in that accompaniment in some way improves the situation of many of those accompanied. It does manage to provide certain protection to the people. PBI continues to receive many petitions for accompaniment because it provides a sense of security.

Many of the participants in the evaluation agree that deterrence works in the cases of criminalization and legal persecution. They also cited the case of Jorge López of OASIS. Advocacy work and lobbying of the diplomatic corps played a particularly important role in this case. It brought more attention to the case, with embassy representatives attending both the court hearings as well as press conferences. It is generally agreed that deterrence works in these kinds of cases, although it is necessary to refine the approach and this requires more work.

Several people said the hardest part in cases of criminalization and legal persecution is when one of the persons accompanied has committed an illegal act, however small and however justified this may be. This is considered very swampy terrain for PBI because the project could be blemished by the situation and become the object of smear campaigns, which could lead to criminal proceedings or even litigation. This risk was also cited by one of the persons accompanied.

When this occurs and this is a conflict between legality and legitimacy, the international community begins to distance itself from cases, even questioning, for example, whether DESC defenders are human rights defenders. This makes the advocacy work difficult, since international support is hard to obtain.

In this respect, the majority on the team say that it is not about whether deterrence is effective in cases in which there is a criminal proceeding or litigation, but whether it involves DESC defenders or not. The case of Jorge López of OASIS arises again, and the support he received from the international community as a human rights defender of sexual diversity. However, the case of DESC defenders is different, as the international community has a dual role, defending human rights on the one side, and defending foreign or transnational economic interests on the other, and these are often incompatible in specific cases. In these cases, the political will of international bodies in protecting human rights does not manifest itself in the same way, even if people subject to serious threats are involved.

Other factors identified by many of those interviewed as obstacles to deterrence include drug trafficking and the existence of other non-state actors and parallel powers. The fact that Guatemala is a “failed state” to a certain extent makes deterrence difficult. Nevertheless, the ties between state and non-state powers are frequently so visible as to make deterrence effective.

The team sees deterrence as a joint task with other international bodies such as the OHCHR, the EU delegation and the diplomatic corps, since the application of protection measures for human rights defenders depends to a large extent on the willingness of those bodies to act. In this respect, PBI frequently acts as a facilitator and a driver of visits by these institutions to the affected regions. In the case of Chiquimula, the team volunteers noted that the person accompanied said that the number of threats declined significantly after a visit by OHCHR officials.

The team volunteers are convinced that continuous and exhaustive analysis in each case is necessary for global accompaniment to work.

**The individuals accompanied by the team have a very favorable view of the deterrence effect.** They believe that the message to authorities is very clear that “defenders are not alone.” They are convinced that accompaniment reduces the attacks, threats and harassment. They generally feel more secure. Accompaniment is very important to them.

Within the project, the tools that PBI uses are generally thought to be flexible and adaptable to the situation and the changing dynamics of the country. These characteristics are assessed very favorably. One person pointed out that the tools are subject to continuous debates and reflection, and are reviewed every six months. The dynamics of PBI allow for the introduction of improvement measures at any time. It is an ongoing process. It is a “living” project.

The majority of those interviewed could not think of new tools that they would propose. What is clear is that such proposals have to be made from inside and not outside the country. They must be based on the needs of the human rights defenders.

The team unanimously agrees that the tools they use work. Those accompanied by the team say the same thing. For example, one of those interviewed had this to say: “The sight of the vest alone is a signal that the international community is watching, and the attitude of the authorities changes.”

#### **4.1.2. Impact of Accompaniment on the Social Process of the Defenders of Land, Territory and Natural Resources in El Quiché and Alta Verapaz**<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> After a map and a detailed analysis was drawn up for several regions in 2009, taking into account the processes for defending land, territory and natural resources, and those who collectively lead them, the project concluded that the El Quiché/Alta Verapaz region had elements that indicated an increase in obstacles keeping these processes from developing in the coming years. At the same time, there was growing mobilization and resistance in the popular movement in view of the abuses. Community referendums held in several towns in late 2009 and in 2010

One of the participants in the evaluation sees a qualitative leap in the quality of accompaniment in El Quiché. This is partly the result of the recommendations made in the last evaluation (2008), one of which was to increase accompaniment for the defense of human rights on the regional level (and based on the project's three areas of emphasis). Therefore, the project's presence has been extended in this direction. Moreover, local civil society groups made a joint request to several organizations, including some involved in accompaniment, which made the PBI project aware that other groups required international accompaniment, in this case communities and not just organizations. This situation poses a challenge to the project to create a new strategy: approaching the El Quiché region (and Alta Verapaz if possible) to facilitate access to accompaniment.

A presence in El Quiché has made it easier for the project to analyze the process of community referendums and the local situation. Among other positive aspects noted in this regard is the formation of relationships and mutual acquaintance. Another person who had a favorable opinion of the presence in El Quiché noted that establishing a secondary base there sends a message to both Guatemala authorities and foreign embassies, and makes international accompaniment available to members of civil society involved in the defense and promotion of human rights there.

Before continuing, it should be noted that this section only refers to El Quiché because this was the region to which the participants referred. A few individuals did refer to Alta Verapaz but only to say that there was no regular monthly presence there planned specifically to accompany the process of defending land, territory and natural resources.

**The “regional plan,” as many of the participants called this type of accompaniment, is an idea that is barely a year old. This may explain why participants have pointed out more of the difficulties than the achievements.**

Several people interviewed agreed that it is still too soon to evaluate this type of accompaniment and that more of a continuous presence is needed to assess it. These individuals say that more time should be spent there. Not enough time is being invested at the moment. The goal of maintaining a presence of 15-20 days a month is not being met, they say, and less time is spent there during most months.

Several participants said the fact that this type of accompaniment is new for the project is what makes it more difficult, especially for the team in the field. Moreover, some note that this is the initial phase in which trust must be earned in an area in which this is no easy task. The perception is that the process is more difficult and slower than initially expected. One person said this difficulty probably has to do with the nature of the processes being defended in this area: coordination processes in the defense of natural resources; follow-up on referendums, a proposal to create local councils. All of these processes are still taking shape and therefore the terrain is slippery.

Several people in the project office and on the committee acknowledged that this situation puts a drain on the team.

One former team member talked about how it felt to be in El Quiché without doing very much, while there was a significant amount of work to do in the capital and other areas. This

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are testimony to this (Cunén, Uspantán, Santa Cruz del Quiché in the department of El Quiché, and Lanquín in Alta Verapaz, held referendums on the extraction of natural resources and mega-projects. As this report is being written, referendums are being organized in Sacapulas in El Quiché, and San Cristóbal in Alta Verapaz)

person noted that developing a work plan in El Quiché has meant having fewer people to cover other work, and has even affected the teams ability to attend to other more urgent petitions, and believes that there is a contradiction in the project between theory and practice: In the East, and in San Juan Sacatepéquez, the project has managed to put this regional focus into practice, accompanying processes to defend land, territory and natural resources, but this has not yet occurred in El Quiché.

The majority of team volunteers say that the work has not had the expected results and the presence has been inadequate. The team, as well as the office and committee, feel that there is much more work to do in other regions, and going to El Quiché every month means fewer team members to cover other areas.

Many of the volunteers point out that there are different opinions about this type of accompaniment. The committee sees it from a long-term perspective and considers it very important, while the volunteers in the field see that it is not producing short-term results and therefore feel it is not really necessary or a priority. It involves a lot of work, which the team already has. They say that the current number of volunteers on the team makes it impossible to maintain a presence there 15-20 days a month.

However, some of the volunteers said that attention to emergency and urgent matters has led the team to lose sight of the importance of accompaniment in El Quiché. They say that without the preliminary work of establishing contacts, maintaining a presence and learning about the situation, nothing can be done. They note that it is proving to be difficult to establish relationships of trust with people in this region.

#### **4.1.3. Assessment of the Project's Response to the Needs of Human Rights Defenders and the Accompaniment Process**

There is a general sentiment among all those in the project who were interviewed that everyone is doing what they can despite limited resources and a situation as adverse as Guatemala. They note that sometimes they are short-handed because the team is small and overloaded with work. In this respect, there is a feeling that people cannot respond the way they want to, although one person pointed out that they will never be able to meet all needs, even with more personnel. Other people outside of the project share that sentiment. The reality and the problems of the country are so great that they stretch PBI-Guatemala's resources.

Another thing on which all those within the project agree is that there is only a response when those needs fall within the mandate. Sometimes needs arise that the project cannot cover, such as taking sides politically, sharing theoretical knowledge and providing advice. These requests cannot be met because they violate the principle of non-interference. It is difficult to say no in these cases, but they have no choice.

The volunteers believe that one of the keys to the work is in the way that those who are accompanied by PBI understand the mandate. They grow to understand it as the accompaniment continues, and explaining it is an ongoing task of the team. Frequently, the expectations of those who are accompanied are not met because the latter do not yet understand the mandate.

On the other hand, the team, the committee and the office agree that the greatest challenge is working with ESCR defenders in the communities. With the latter, the rules of the game are different, and there is a constant challenge in responding to their needs and not going outside of the mandate. It is easier to define the limits of accompaniment in the city than in the countryside. The needs of these individuals, groups and communities are the most difficult to meet, but the

project believes that it should continue to try. One limitation underscored in this regard is that the team often does not have direct access to the members of the communities who are the main focus of the accompaniment process, and instead are met by delegates or representatives of civil society organizations.

A member of the office staff noted that there is a continuous effort to review these needs and limits. On the whole, the project is paying close attention to variations in these needs and limits. A specific example of this are the questions posed to the accompanied individuals in this regard during the interview that is conducted during the regular evaluations of accompaniment petitions.

A few people indicated the importance of determining priorities and adjusting to the reality of the country, and they believe the project is doing just that. Since the project cannot meet all needs, the chosen strategies must be refined. This is done by means of focusing on distinct areas of emphasis.

The ideas, perceptions and sentiments expressed by the **individuals accompanied** regarding the accompaniment they receive are **generally very positive**.

**All individuals accompanied believe that accompaniment by PBI contributes significantly to a situation that allows them to continue working in defense of human rights in Guatemala.** The following are some of the statements made in this regard:

- “PBI’s work improves my situation as a human rights defender and improves my job performance.”
- “It reduces the tension that the harassment causes us and gives us more security to express ourselves, analyze situations and make decisions. It provides greater emotional psychological and organizational security.”
- “There is greater security at the organizational level, which gives people the courage to assert their rights. They feel the support.”
- “The volunteers also put their lives at risk. This is of inestimable value and makes you commit yourself even more to the work you do. It strengthens our commitment to human rights.”
- “It gives you confidence to continue the work we do. The family supports your work because they also feel supported. They don’t ask you to give it up. They don’t question you because they know there is an organization accompanying you.”
- “PBI’s presence substantially contributes to the performance of the work, especially when other international organizations do not have a presence in the region. We have to be grateful that they dare to accompany us. They are helping us a lot.”<sup>15</sup>
- “This work, which seems so modest at first glance, is fundamental so that human rights defenders have a little more freedom to do their job”.
- “PBI’s work helps improve the country.”

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<sup>15</sup> Referring to the eastern region of the country. The person interviewed is from the Chortí region in the Department of Chiquimula.



All of these comments clearly demonstrate that **the project is on the right track in fulfilling its mandate**: “Improve the human rights situation in Guatemala and contribute to the process of democratization with an international presence **to help keep a political space open for human rights defenders and civil society organizations who suffer repression due to their work.**”

In addition, accompaniment provides moral support, which is fundamental: “I felt like someone cared, supported me. I never felt alone at any time. If I had not been accompanied I would have been scared to death. They would have abducted or killed me. The accompaniment made the difference between my life and my death, my freedom and my captivity.” Accompaniment makes all of them feel safer, helps them survive, makes them feel less alone, more encouraged.

PBI’s policy of non-interference receives significant recognition: “PBI was very respectful of my strategy, placed itself at my disposal” – “The emotional relationship with the volunteers is very respectful, with no interference” – “We are the ones who decide and make proposals.” There are some, however, who would like to receive advice or opinions from the organization: “I would like PBI to share its views on the situation, to learn its perspective, but I know that it is restricted by its mandate.”

The participants have a very favorable view of the security workshops they have attended. In general, they find it to be very useful because they begin to pay attention to details they had not thought of before, such as how to answer calls, how to conduct themselves on the street, precautions to take when catching a bus, etc. They receive very practical advice that is easy to use. This helps them to be more wary in their daily activities. They also say it helps them to improve the use of tools for collecting information on security incidents, such as logging the threats received.

They also value the exchange of experiences that these workshops promote, and appreciate the chance to tell about theirs in an atmosphere of trust.

The human rights defenders have a favorable view of the volunteers accompanying them. Not one had a negative comment. Below are some of the comments from them in this regard:

- “The relationship is excellent, one of mutual respect and admiration.”
- “There is very good communication. In addition, they are also putting themselves at risk, and help us in bad times. They are noble and very special people. They adapt to the circumstances and the problems. There are anecdotes you never forget and memories of friends that are never erased.”
- “They are caring, simple, humble people who adapt to our conditions. The relationship is excellent. They are approachable, pleasant, friendly, with great willingness and interest, and a very positive attitude.”
- “They are very sympathetic and know how to put themselves in our shoes, feel the tension, the concern and the commitment just like we do. They are good listeners.”
- “The relationship is very respectful. They are very rational in their contacts with us. They know what to do and what not to do, how far to go. And they do this without losing their human side. Their ethical conduct is impeccable. You sense an appreciation for who you are and what you do.”

- “You feel very quickly that you can trust them. The fact that they are there without participating does not generate mistrust.”

Before concluding, it should be noted that the great majority of those receiving accompaniment believe that the number of volunteers for accompaniment should be increased.

#### **4.1.4. Validity of the Areas of Emphasis**

The team, committee and office agree that the lines between the land problem and other areas of emphasis has blurred. The project is not receiving any petitions that fit directly into that category. Petitions received from rural organizations or communities fall under the category of the negative effects of globalization. Even organizations that were previously accompanied due to land problems, or the issue of impunity, now fall under the effects of globalization.

The majority find it odd that no petitions have been received from unions, since it is a group that is hit very hard. Likewise, there are innumerable land conflicts in the country (about 5,000 in 2010) and yet no accompaniment petitions are received.

Someone raised the point that this decrease in petitions related to land and an increase in those related to globalization is attributable to the fact that lands have been invaded by the mega-projects, and this has become the number one concern.

Despite the above, the majority believe that the three areas of emphasis continue to be necessary, since they are very broad areas that cover all of the structural problems of the country. They are the most important areas in which the majority of political violence and the biggest conflicts occur. They concern deep-rooted problems and are therefore valid.

However, several current and former volunteers regret that there is no area of emphasis specifically concerning the rights of women, since Guatemala is a country where violence against women has reached alarming levels. A member of the project committee said there was a discussion about this at one time and the conclusion was that this issue is covered by all three areas of emphasis, and there should not be a focus on one specific aspect. However, the volunteers say the issue has been diluted within other areas.

**As with the 2008 evaluation, the choice of the three areas of emphasis continues to have support, but with certain adjustments that will be explained in the recommendations.**

#### **4.1.5. Main Risks for the Project and its Members**

The main risks noted are:

- Defamation and criminalization, aimed at organizations and their members.
- Attacks against volunteers. This risk is high during working hours, but perhaps higher during free time, since this is a time when volunteers are more relaxed and let their guard down. The possibility of these attacks is not necessarily linked to the work they carry out, but to the atmosphere of violence and insecurity throughout the country.
- Other types of physical risks for the volunteers: mudslides, traffic accidents, etc.
- The neighborhood in which the house/office is located.

- Financial sustainability: This concerns the substantial growth of the project in the midst of global crisis. One positive aspect in light of this problem is that some funding has been approved for a three-year period.
- Threats to the rule of law from the instability of state institutions and risk of a military takeover.
- Curfews and states of exception
- Non-state actors.
- Militarization
- Electoral campaigns.
- Strong transnational interests in exploiting the country's natural resources that hinder support from and weaken the political will of the international community to take on the issue of promoting ESCR rights and the criminalization of those defending them.
- Links between cooperation agencies and foreign investment.
- Risk of getting caught up in the routine and the bureaucracy as the reality constantly changes.
- The profile of the volunteers has changed so much so that today more of them come from the professionalized world of NGOs than from the human rights solidarity activism of the past. This is not to say that there is no solidarity in the new profile but there is a noticeable change in the motivation that sometimes affects the level of commitment under certain circumstances. In some cases, for example, volunteers take on a commitment but do not ultimately follow through on it as other opportunities arise. Sometimes the year with PBI is seen as just another work year, like a job.
- Excessive workload for everyone: team, committee, office.
- More accompaniment in the category of the effects of globalization, where the language is dominated by a certain "anti-foreigner" mentality. Being a foreigner in this situation can be risky. One person had this to say about this problem: "It can be risky if some team members put too much emphasis on the negative: We have no opinion, we cannot participate, we can't do this, we can't do that ... The language should be positive and emphasize what we can do and what we do, and the utility of international observation for the human rights defenders. This risk is greater when we are observing large events or accompanying large groups. We should always be accompanied ourselves during these types of activities by someone trusted by the project and the grassroots organization."

#### **4.1.6. Mainstreaming Gender and Diversity Perspectives**

In 2008, PBI-Guatemala began introducing its plan to mainstream gender and diversity issues. The objective of this plan was to "incorporate a perspective on gender and diversity into the work of the PBI project, internally as an organization in the first phase, then externally with respect to the field work and our relationships with local counterparts in a second phase."

The process is still in the first phase.

A document was published in May 2010 to follow-up on the implementation of this plan.<sup>16</sup> The **progress** made in this area can be seen both in this document as well as the project's annual reports:

- Incorporation as a comprehensive concept into the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan.
- Inclusion in the draft policy for the project's paid staff.
- Incorporation into the project's publications.
- Preparation, publication and distribution<sup>17</sup> of the special report titled "Guatemala's Indigenous Women in Resistance: On the Frontline of the Community's Struggle to Defend Mother Earth and her Natural Assets."
- Attempts to maintain a gender balance on the project team in Guatemala.
- Introduction of a system of grants for participation in the volunteer training and selection process.

The following are some of the **unattained results** in this area:

- The lessons learned from former volunteers have not been collected in order to convert them into recommendations that can be implemented.
- The concept is not specifically addressed in the training sessions for volunteers.
- There are no specific materials for training on gender and diversity.
- Only one specific article was published on the topic in 2010.
- A subcommittee on gender and diversity has not been created on the team.

Once the information in the reports has been reviewed, the opinions and perceptions of those interviewed will be examined.

One person who works in the project office believes that there has been a lot of progress in the internal work and that the project is ready to begin the second phase. One person said a meeting/workshop is being planned for 2011 with women human rights defenders so that they can express their needs. This workshop will establish guidelines for the project regarding how to proceed. Another person said the external phase poses a challenge and the project has to reflect on how this will work.

Someone else pointed out that some small efforts have been made externally but there is no strategy or direction.

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<sup>16</sup> Revised and updated every 6 months.

<sup>17</sup> There is no mention of the monograph's distribution in the annual project reports, the last one available being the half-year report of July 2010. Distribution began in August/September of that year and is still ongoing as some copies are still pending delivery.

Another person raised doubts about how far the project can go to counter the machismo in Guatemala without breaching its mandate of non-interference.

Many people on the committee and in the office are a little pessimistic about the prospects of implementing these concepts. Some think the process has stalled and say that it must still be internalized and everyone has to believe in it. It is seen as a slow and arduous process and there is a lack of specialized knowledge within the project to make progress.

Another concern is that there has been no time set aside so far to reflect on these concepts.

Meanwhile, some people working in the office and on the committee say that creating a gender and diversity subcommittee would make no sense without first completing the preliminary work to define the subcommittee's responsibilities. Without this preliminary work, the subcommittee would not have a specific task and would be destined to fail. Some present and former volunteers see it as an interesting initiative but one that requires a lot of reading and research for which the team has little time. Some also said that, while creating this subcommittee is important to get the concept off the ground, the system of subcommittees overall has to be reinforced first.

Several participants in the evaluation pointed out that volunteers leaving the team never answer the question about gender and diversity during their departing interview with the project.

One participant thinks that the mainstreaming of gender and diversity is being imposed, considers it unnecessary and believes there are no problems within the organization in this regard, pointing out that more than half of the project is made up of women. Along similar lines with some minor differences, another person believes there are too many other more urgent matters. This person believes that the idea has come up because it is fashionable, and is something that originated in the academic world and in cooperation agencies. This participant does believe it is an important issue that must be dealt with but is not such a problem as to make the creation of a specific subcommittee necessary.

Someone said there have been attempts to hold workshops for members of the team on gender issues but there was no interest. This person says it is difficult to motivate them if the idea does not come from them.

Regarding the training and selection process, the project acknowledges that the subject is not specifically discussed, although it is incorporated in a more general way.

Overall, the system of grants for potential volunteers is assessed favorably. The project believes that volunteers from different parts of the world enrich the team. The grants are intended to create diversity among future volunteers with regard to their country of origin, facilitating the participation of candidates from developing countries in the selection and training process. Despite these efforts, the volunteers in this case continue to come from the same countries (especially Argentina and Colombia) and this is attributed to the fact that there are PBI country groups or projects in those countries.

Several people said that the system of grants only takes into account the variation of countries of origin and not other factors such as social class and age.

Several people in the office and on the committee said that the project has never discriminated against anyone from a country due to bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining a visa. On the contrary, the project devotes all of its efforts and uses all of the tools available to it to facilitate the granting of visas. Occasional obstacles in the process do not stop the project from trying.

Regarding the management of the grant funds, several people think that a large portion is being wasted and urge the project to find a way to spend the money more efficiently.

It is important to note that the majority of present and past volunteers interviewed were not aware of the existence of the gender and diversity plan.

#### **4.1.7. Strategic Relations with other NGOs and/or Initiatives**

**The projects relationship with CIFCA is assessed very positively**, especially by those working in the office and on the committee who are most familiar with it, but also by some former volunteers. These volunteers say that participating in this coalition facilitates opportunities for advocacy work that the project does not have by itself. It is a source of very important additional knowledge and information. It is considered a very beneficial relationship.

Despite this positive assessment, one person noted that CIFCA has been significantly weakened by the withdrawal of several member organizations.

**The relationship with ACOGUATE<sup>18</sup> is also highly esteemed** in the eyes of all of the participants.

All of those interviewed from the committee and the office say there is good communication and the two organizations complement each other very well. It is a close relationship of respect and coordination. One of the committee members noted that meetings with ACOGUATE went really well and attributes this to the ongoing relationship in Guatemala.

A member of the committee expressed fears about the information shared with ACOGUATE. This member thinks great care should be taken in this regard.

One problem noted by both the committee/office and the team is that the good relationship between the two organizations depends in large part on the skills of the team members responsible at each moment for maintaining contact and coordinating with ACOGUATE.

All of the present and former volunteers consider this relationship to be valuable and useful, although some said that it was sometimes difficult to balance the need to share information with the commitment to maintain confidentiality over information received during accompaniment work.

The opinion of **ACOGUATE** in this regard is also favorable. The organization says that **coordination with PBI is excellent** and the evaluator was able to determine during the interview that PBI is meeting the two objectives of the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan in the annual reports: "To meet international accompaniment demands to the maximum extent possible, learning about and sharing useful tools for mutual support and enrichment."

The ACOGUATE coordinator says the coordination between the two organizations prevents overlap and facilitates an exchange of information to expand on knowledge about the regions in which accompaniment is taking place. The coordinator says that the two organizations have different ways of working and this leads to mutual enrichment and learning. The coordinator adds

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<sup>18</sup> The evaluator learned during the interview of the organization's coordinator that this organization is now called ACOGUATE and no longer CAIG.

that the two organizations together are able to fulfill the majority of requests, noting that it is also important to coordinate with SEDEM<sup>19</sup> and UDEFEGUA<sup>20</sup>.

The coordinator says that the two perspectives make joint socio-political analysis more meaningful.

The coordinator is very glad that the PBI has kept the same contact person, as this was a problem in the past. The communication with this person is very good, the coordinator said.

The coordinator has a very high opinion of PBI's work in general, and the Guatemala project's work in particular.

PBI is no longer involved with **FONGI**<sup>21</sup> because non-voting members acting as observers such as PBI and ACOGUATE have been excluded from the organization.

Although the evaluator heard critical opinions about the current operation of FONGI, both the participants from the project as well as other persons consulted consider the departure of PBI from FONGI to be a loss for both organizations.

The outside person consulted said the participation of PBI in FONGI was the most active along with ACOGUATE. The Human Rights Committee was strengthened by both these organizations. PBI participated systematically and brought a lot of experience. It brought freshness to the debate and another less "NGO-like" point of view. This person said FONGI has lost a leading and very important participant with the departure of PBI.

All of those participating agreed that the relationship with **SEDEM** is **excellent** and some see the consolidation of the relationship with this organization on matters of security (workshops and advice) as an achievement. One person noted that it is difficult for those that PBI accompanies to establish contact with SEDEM, and that they always do it through PBI. This person notes that almost no one directly requested participation in the regional workshops offered. However, several team volunteers noted that a positive relationship was being established between this organization and some of the organizations accompanied, which have requested workshops in their offices to attend to their specific needs.

One committee member said that **coordination with UDEFEGUA has been consolidated**. Along these lines, a former team member characterized the relationship with this organization as highly valuable, saying: "It is a strategic relationship that is very beneficial to us."

The majority of the team members noted the high quality of the workshop carried out jointly with ACOGUATE and UDEFEGUA on the issue of criminalization. They said there was a very good discussion, along with interesting proposals and questions.

The UDEFEGUA representative interviewed put it this way: "We have an excellent alliance with PBI and ACOGUATE. They maintain absolute confidentiality over the information that we share. We do not compete, we support one another and coordinate. In 2007, there was not such a close relationship. We had not reached this level of information sharing. We started doing that in 2008."

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<sup>19</sup> Security in Democracy.

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit in Guatemala.

<sup>21</sup> Forum of International NGOs.

## **4.2. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE PROJECT**

### **4.2.1. Function of the Office**

The majority of those interviewed have a **high opinion** of the **organizational changes to the office in these past years**. The following is a summary of some of the comments made in this regard:

- The project has grown in capacity, quality and efficiency.
- These changes have had a positive effect with very specific results and achievements in areas as important as advocacy and training.
- The positions created in Guatemala – field support and training supervisor – are assessed very positively by everyone. Great care is taken so that these are not perceived as coordination positions.

Since the arrival of the training supervisor, there have been many more applicants and participants in the training sessions, and the number of candidates selected for the team has increased overall and in each training session. On the other hand, it was noted that the increase in the number of candidates recruited has resulted to some extent in more candidates dropping out before they join the team. One possible reason cited for this is that the increase in the number of candidates has created a backlog so that some have a long wait before joining the team, and finally decide not to go.

The field support helps consolidate the team and saves the office a lot of administrative work that must be handled within the country.

The volunteers very much appreciate having these two persons in Guatemala. They find this to be a very good way to pass on the project's historical memory. The volunteers say that these two persons are always ready to help.

- The hiring of a European representative has consolidated the advocacy work.
- The hiring of a fundraiser has helped to take some of the heavy burden off of the project coordinator and provides greater access to funding.

Several participants in the evaluation agreed that the transition to a new coordinator in 2008 went very smoothly. The former and the new coordinator made the transition in an exemplary manner.

Some said it was a great achievement that the operation of the office has not been negatively affected by the fact that the majority of those working for the office live in different countries. They attribute this to the fact that all of the staff are very responsible and take their positions very seriously. This was also attributed to proper job descriptions.

**Present and former volunteers have a very favorable view of how the office is run and the competence of the staff.** They think that the staff works very hard and very well. They are always accessible, and act quickly and effectively. One person expressed admiration for the work they do. However, several persons said there is a lack of control over the work of the team.

Several of the people interviewed expressed concern about the heavy work load of the coordinator. They hope that the hiring of a fund raiser will ease this load.



One of the problems cited by the majority of the people working for the office is that a meeting with everyone from the project is never possible.

Another concern expressed by some people was the sustainability of the budget as the office grows.

#### **4.2.2. Function of the Committee**

There is a high level of respect between committee members and for the committee by the office and team. **The majority of those interviewed on the team and in the office say that the committee works hard and does a good job.**

The atmosphere within the project is friendly. There is a good personal and working environment. The majority of the project's members have known each other for many years. It is a lot of work but there has always been an environment of support and solidarity. Everyone on the committee believes they can handle a lot of work, with each taking on more than their share. Some remarked that reaching a consensus is no problem. The committee members share a vision, a great commitment and a lot of motivation and enthusiasm.

Several of those interviewed consider the committee to be a fundamental part of the project formed by people with a lot of knowledge about Guatemala and with a global vision that is absolutely necessary.

Someone else remarked that the committee is very effective and does a fantastic job of monitoring the situation in Guatemala without being there. Moreover, the committee is seen as very united and functional.

The Guatemala project committee is considered by several people to be the most active one in all of PBI.

The team considers it a very good idea to have a committee member working in Guatemala.

The committee is currently a bit weaker because of the departure of two of its members, but their replacements have just arrived and two more are expected to join in June, which is considered a positive step toward strengthening it. One person noted that the two departing members were not on the committee very long and wondered why. This person hopes the new members will stay longer. In any event, the participants acknowledge that a committee made up of volunteers works in waves, having some high and some low moments that depend on the number of members and the work that each can handle.

Several present and former members said they have the sensation that it is not possible to complete all of the required work and this makes them feel bad for not being able to do more. However, everyone else in the project has the opposite view, recognizing the efforts and the work accomplished by the committee.

One person regrets that it has never been possible to hold a meeting with 100% of the committee present.

As indicated at the beginning of this section, the team has a high opinion of the committee and the work it accomplishes. However, the evaluator heard opinions from several team volunteers

that the committee sometimes exercises too much control over the team, creating a gap in consensus when making decisions. For its part, the committee is very aware of its responsibilities regarding the supervision and support of the team in the different areas of work. It is aware of its duty to be on top of the work of the team and the project in general, and the legal responsibility it assumes as the project committee. These are all determining factors regarding the need to get involved in certain aspects of the team's work.

There is a great deal of respect for the experience and knowledge that the committee members have about Guatemala, but some team volunteers think this knowledge is "old" and a little out of date, which leads to different points of view between the committee and the team. These volunteers say that being in the country makes the difference. Things look different from the outside and this sometimes means that the committee has less of an understanding of the current situation.

Along the same lines, a former committee member who was also a team volunteer said it is true that someone on the team has a different view of things than someone on the committee. She said she had a simpler view of things as a team volunteer. For example, the greatest danger she perceived for herself was a possible bus accident. However, she said a committee member feels more responsibility, and senses the risks and dangers more, fearing for the safety and well-being of the volunteers, because it is the committee's responsibility to see that the project is functioning correctly.

Several present and former volunteers say that misunderstandings result when someone on the committee has never been part of the team, or has lived outside of Guatemala for many years. Another problem is when the committee and the office staff do not meet all the volunteers face to face.

The coordinating office notes that there is a balance on the project committee between people who have been on a PBI team (in Guatemala or elsewhere) and other who have not. The majority of the committee members see the volunteers in person every six months. Although the voluntary nature of the committee limits the possibility for all members to attend these meetings twice a year, many members do attend and the highest level of participation is sought. The committee also believes it is very important to meet the volunteers face to face.

The team feels that the committee was focusing on too many negative things with respect to the team for a period of time, although it acknowledges that many improvements were made during that period.

#### **4.2.3. Function of the Team**

The vast majority of people on the committee and in the office say that the team has its ups and downs, since volunteers are constantly coming and going, but in general it functions well. Everyone also agrees that **the current team is very good, with one person even calling it a "super team."** The team volunteers also feel that the team has its ups and downs, but they also acknowledge that they have been very lucky to have a situation with a lot of mutual support, both at the work as well as the personal level. In this respect, one of the volunteers expressed a high level of satisfaction with the functioning of the team, saying that it fulfills the horizontal principles to a large extent. Moreover, constant attention is paid to the needs of each person and there is a lot of balance, commitment and responsibility. The volunteers think they are doing a good job despite the work load and difficult circumstances.

A number of people interviewed on the team, in the office and on the committee agree that the team has a heavy workload. One former volunteer says that when there is a lot of work and not enough volunteers there is more friction and the volunteers can even become ill. Regarding the relationship between the workload and the number of volunteers on the team, someone from the office said it is difficult to maintain 10 volunteers on the team if 11 are not already scheduled to come and go in the annual plan, and there are always people who leave unexpectedly. The team also says that the home/office has limited space. This means that the limit of 10 people is only maintained during a few months a year. This significantly increases the workload for each person.

For some of the volunteers, the greatest challenge is cohabitation, and this puts an extra load on the team. Some people in the office and on the committee say that one of the most difficult things for the team is learning to share, which is very important during the year on a PBI team. They share a house, room, workspace, everything. Some people think this problem is related to generational changes and the continued trend toward individualism. During a year that consists of a lot of work and little personal space, some people adapt while others need their privacy and space.

Some say that the way the team functions and the quality of the work they do depends on the personalities that make it up. There are some people who make the team work better and others that make the job worse. More than one person on the committee and in the office said there are generally two or three people on each team who distinguish themselves in a positive way and have a more global outlook. Participants say this situation works and has to do with the fact that there is no on-site coordinator.

One person in the office said the team has acted on its own on several occasions without sufficient involvement of the committee.

A committee member and one of the former volunteers interviewed also said (as another person did earlier) that there should be a balance on the team between “activists” and more “professionalized” volunteers on the team.

Regarding the fact that all volunteers have to do a little of everything, one member of the team said it is also important for the skills of each person to be taken into account in carrying out the different tasks. Another volunteer said that would be fine as long as a lack of skills in one volunteer does not mean more work for the rest. This person insists that everyone has to do everything.

One former volunteer said there is (or was during her time on the team) a certain tendency to see the subcommittee work as unimportant. The result, she said, is that information is not systematically recorded so that there are no established strategies, and historical memory is lost. Whether or not the subcommittees function properly depends too much on the skills of the volunteers serving on them at the time because there are no established mechanisms to pass them on, or the process is simply very slow. Another volunteer said the lack of a system cited above is probably the reason that information is lost.

Regarding the close relationships the team has with the individuals it accompanies, one volunteer said it is a struggle to remain objective.

#### **4.2.4. The Horizontal Approach and Consensus**

**The majority of those working in the office and on the committee said the horizontal approach, or lack of a hierarchy, and consensus, are two essential PBI principles. They are**

the main pillars, the added-value of the organization, and without them it would not be the same. They are its strength.

**Some of the volunteers** say that these two principles are what they most like about PBI and one of the reasons they joined the organization. Like those working in the office and on the committee, **they consider them essential elements that characterize the project's work.** One volunteer is very convinced by this approach and said the volunteers serving on the team prove it can be done every day.

One person said the project values the volunteers very much, and they also respect and care for one another a lot. Everyone is important and contributes to decisions. This person thinks that the project values the volunteers more than anything else in PBI, noting that this was evident in the reorganization process in which PBI-Guatemala fought the hardest to defend these principles. One volunteer said the project has been very consistent in maintaining a horizontal approach.

Another participant said these principles are managed very well and are very internalized, and believes that this has to do with the convictions of the committee.

In reference to the internal workings of the team, some members say that everyone's opinion is considered, and the group backs the decisions that are made. Consensus means that each member assumes each decision as his or her own and works to fulfill them. **They consider it a good exercise for learning tolerance and respect for others. They believe that it is an enormous personal and professional learning experience.**

As with the team, the committee and the office are convinced that this approach is very productive and is an alternative to the status quo in which a hierarchy and competition rule. One person from the office said the principles are very enriching.

The committee and the office personnel say the process of consensus works very well, although they say it is more difficult for the committee than for the team, as members of the latter come and go, while the committee members remain and the debates are repeated.

From this part of the project, there is a lot of concern that the international organization would like to eliminate this approach. One person noted that the argument in favor of removing it is that the organization will run more efficiently. Some think that the way in which the international bodies attempted to impose this restructuring process on the rest of the organization was a little violent and the debate was not based on consensus or a horizontal approach. All members of the committee and several people from the office said that this process wore them down and exhausted them with little result.

Some people from the committee, the office and the team say that **something that generates misunderstanding and conflict is the issue of "authority earned by experience."** There are a number of people who have a certain authority within the project due to their extensive experience in the project and knowledge of Guatemala. It is precisely this experience that gives rise to this authority, which is not the same as authoritarianism. It is a different concept of authority and in line with a horizontal structure.

This concept is sometimes difficult to accept for volunteers who have been on a team a few months. One former volunteer says that there are a lot of doubts about this concept initially because the volunteers feel that the committee is making all the decisions. For this reason, some team members feel that the relationship between the team and the committee is not always horizontal. The committee gives the impression that it knows more and there is a discussion until

the team gives in. This is what these team members call “**consensus by attrition.**” Committee members point out that not everyone is the same, however, and some have come to use this type of approach more than others. One former volunteer pointed out that this is not exclusive to the committee and the team, it also happens within the team itself, where a lack of time and energy leads to the same situation, making consensus more of an illusion than a reality.

One team member said that reaching consensus requires a lot of work and is exhausting. This person noted, for example, that the weekly team meetings are way too long. By contrast, another team volunteer said that the team is very balanced, and consensus is not hard to reach.

A project committee member also made reference to what was earlier referred to as “consensus by attrition,” although this person is referring to pressure from others. One example cited is the aforementioned restructuring debate at the international level. This person may not agree with something that is approved but feels pressured by the rest of the group holding the debate.

One person working in the office said that the daily routine and convenience take precedent over true consensus, and that this is not good. This participant also said that there are certain things that are not questioned sufficiently because “it has always been that way.” Things that are not supposed to be questioned must indeed be questioned in order to make progress, according to this participant. Another participant from this area of the project agreed that consensus is often reached because of exhaustion and this leads to frustration.

Regarding the horizontal approach to decision-making, one team member said it is very hard to reach the point where you feel competent to do the work, because you have to know everything. One volunteer even wonders how far you can go without a little hierarchy. By contrast, another volunteer said the horizontal approach forces everyone to know and learn everything, and there are no specialists, which means that no one is indispensable. “The horizontal approach is the right one, but human relationships involve power relationships. The good thing about this approach is that the power is shared, between the committee and the team, as well as within the committee and within the team.”

The majority of the people interviewed in the project believe that **despite the problems involved in the horizontal structure and in reaching consensus, there are many benefits from these two approaches, and they are therefore very important and necessary.**

#### **4.2.5. Preserving the Project’s Historical Memory**

The project’s historical memory, which was discussed briefly earlier, is related to almost every aspect we have examined so far. There has even been one recommendation so far in this regard.

In any event, this topic is so important that it merits a more exhaustive analysis here.

There are various points of agreement between various people interviewed from the team, committee and office. Some of these concurring opinions are:

- **The committee has a fundamental role in passing on the project’s historical memory,** although the committee itself says it is inevitable that things will have to be repeated constantly, which is a bit tiring.

- **The committee member living in Guatemala**, who has been with PBI for many years, almost since the beginning, is considered **a very valuable asset to the project**.
- **A lot of systematically recorded information** is available to the team, **and whether it is used or not depends on the interest and commitment of each volunteer**.

The participants mentioned several means used to convey information. These include the training workbook, the week-long training session for volunteers, the two weeks of orientation in the field, the initial phase of accompaniment work (trial period of two months, the workshops given by the support person in the country, the project committee meetings, the weekly e-mail bulletin, the project operating manual (*libro mágico*), etc. Several members of the committee and office consider the *libro mágico* to be a useful tool and note that a lot of effort is put into keeping it up to date. However, another committee member suggested that this manual has become too big and might be too complex for people to take the time to read it. It is now considered a useful source to consult but it seems unrealistic to expect each volunteer to read the whole book at once.

Another way that historical memory is conveyed, according to various participants in the evaluation, is through former volunteers holding positions such as the training supervisor or the support person in Guatemala.

Some team members note that the more experienced team members are always ready to explain and pass on information to the “newer” ones even if there is a lot of work and they are tired.

Some on the committee and in the office say that the team does not always have time to explore the project’s historical information because of the pace of the work. Another participant said that historical memory is the first thing to be forgotten, even though it is covered in the training workbook and during the training week itself, because you are not exposed to it in practice and the tremendous workload does not leave time for it. This same person said attending the first project committee meeting helped a little in this regard. It is something that is acquired over the entire year on the team.

One team volunteer said the initial period of the project (1983-1999) is not as well documented as the second period (2003 to present), and that an effort should be made to rectify this. The digitalization of historical memory since 2003 has facilitated the process for recording and managing PBI documents, while the previous period was documented mostly on paper, which was filed away outside of Guatemala after the project was closed (at a university building in Canada).

Another participant believes that the problem is not just with the project itself, but with generational trends in which it is not the past but the present which is considered important. For the new generations, the present is everything, this participant said.

#### **4.2.6. Function of the Training Team**

Several participants stated that **the team functions much better now that a training supervisor has been hired**. As mentioned in section 4.2.1. (Function of the Office), there are many more qualified candidates for the project now.

One participant in the evaluation noted that many former volunteers have served on the training team so far, but another said that the majority of them do not stay very long. There is too much turnover on the team. To rectify this situation, the project is making a new effort to recruit former volunteers.

One participant noted that since leaving the project committee, the person who provided support in this area has been less involved in training. This person hopes that this situation will improve as the new members join the project committee.

Another person said there have been problems on occasion because of the unsystematic way in which the training team has worked. This person cited occasions on which a kind of “good faith consensus” was reached informally but not followed up.

#### **4.2.7. Mechanisms for Training, Care and Support of Volunteers**

**Regarding the mechanisms for the care and support of volunteers while they are on the team**, those interviewed on the committee, in the office and on the team are **unanimous that there is a lot of good care**. Volunteers even say that it is too much care, especially in comparison to the circumstances of Guatemalans. They say that the retreats and mini-retreats are very good, and they like the mental health meetings with a therapist a lot. One person thought the latter was a very good place to share things with teammates in a different environment.

Along these same lines, a former volunteer said that the **project has become the model** within PBI for supporting volunteers. This participant said that PBI-Guatemala **has been one of the most proactive projects in introducing this approach at the international level of PBI**.

Another former volunteer said there is high level of support for the team from the committee and the support person in Guatemala, both for work-related as well as personal and health matters. This person said a volunteer really feels the support of the organization. However, another volunteer complained that she did not receive sufficient support when she was ill, which was during the majority of her stay on the team.

Regarding the support that volunteers receive prior to arriving in Guatemala, one person said that this depends to a large extent on the PBI country group.<sup>22</sup> The largest country groups, such as those in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK, are better prepared to provide support than smaller ones. Another person interviewed said the training supervisor provides very valuable support with respect to information and the necessary paperwork visas and medical insurance, etc. One person noted that the PBI-UK country group provides good support for obtaining visas by preparing a letter of invitation.

**The majority of those interviewed agree that the support diminishes after a volunteer leaves the team.** This situation also depends on the size of the volunteer’s respective country group. The German CG does an excellent job, for example, said one volunteer. This same person said that the project attempts to keep former volunteers informed, and that the support that each volunteer receives after leaving the team depends on how strong their ties to the project and PBI continue to be.

One former volunteer said that when members leave the team, the break is very dramatic, and the follow-up call from PBI is only to seek support from the volunteer and not vice-versa. This person believes that the call and repatriation are good tools, but not enough. This person feels that support should be more long term to avoid such a dramatic break.

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<sup>22</sup>

Hereinafter also referred to as CG

One person said that the preparation of volunteers to join the team is very well developed, especially the training workbook for the candidates and the week-long training session. During their stay on the team, there is a continuous learning process and this participant thinks that the volunteers really value this. Team members also say that most of the workshops held during their year on the team area also very useful. They repeated that the most recent one, on the criminalization of human rights work, was very good. They also said that the training supervisor is very open to ideas from the volunteers.

#### **4.2.8. Satisfaction Level and Perceptions**

The **level of satisfaction** of the majority of those interviewed is **very high**.

All of those interviewed on the committee and in the office say they feel very fortunate to have the co-workers they have, and say the relationship is excellent.

Various volunteers say the experience on the team is very rewarding despite the fact that cohabitation is complicated and sometimes frustrating. Sharing with the team is a very valuable experience.

Some of the office personnel say they like their work a lot because it is very diverse and interesting. One person said the human relationships are a very rich experience.

Various people interviewed said that the work brings together a very broad group of people with many common interests, motivations, sentiments, values and ideas. One person said that no matter how different you may be from many of these people, you come to feel a close to them.

Those interviewed are generally convinced that PBI is doing good work that is very valuable, important and necessary for Guatemala. They believe it is very useful, because the people are asking for it. As one person put it: "It is not something the project wants, it is something the people want." Several volunteers said that the project is very respectful and not condescending with the Guatemalan people.

One team member sometimes wonders: "Are we accomplishing anything"? The more a team member gets to know the reality of Guatemala, said this volunteer, the more they realize how little they know, because of the complex nature of the situation. Another volunteer said, however, that the small things are what give the work meaning for a volunteer, such as when the persons being accompanied provide positive feedback.

One former volunteer sees the time on the team as a fundamental stage in the political, human and professional development of the individual.

Several people say that the environment of the project is one of transparency, tolerance, flexibility, seriousness and respect. This is an environment that is naturally conducive to constructive criticism and learning.

**Regarding the difficulties**, it is clear that they cause negative feelings such as frustration, anger, guilt and a sensation of not doing enough. **There is too much work to do**. This complaint is heard repeatedly, both from the committee and the office personnel. Someone noted that it is difficult to plan, schedule and meet deadlines, because there are always emergencies, something always happens. For example, one person in the project said she had always worked more hours than stipulated in her contract, but now her personal situation has changed and she cannot work



those extra hours, because she no longer has time. Now, she feels bad because she cannot do everything she is supposed to do

Along these same lines, one former volunteer says the problem of excessive workloads is a major one in the organization. This person says that PBI must seek a solution for this issue and the complaints which repeatedly arise. The organization should be realistic about what one human being can do and respect the need for free time. For the volunteers on the team, an excess workload is one of the things that causes a lot of stress and conflict.

One volunteer says that one thing that is very tiring is the lack of separation between the work and private life. Another volunteer agreed that the lack of time that volunteers have for themselves is stressful. They need time to think about what they are going to do when they leave, to keep in touch with their family and friends. One person said this is more tiring than the emotional drain from the injustices they see in Guatemala, and the workload.

One volunteer reported feeling very ill and this was very difficult.

Another indicated a desire to be more involved in rural areas, providing a physical presence in the communities.

#### **4.2.9. Sustainability of the Project**

The 2008 and 2009 executive budgets were reviewed. There was a deficit in 2009, which was covered by a reserve fund, according to an administrative employee. This reserve fund still exists because there was a budget surplus for several years.

This person says that the project continues to have strong funding because various donors have known the project for many years and trust it. Another strength is that **some donors have approved funding for three years**, something which the project has been seeking for a long time. **This reduces administrative steps and increases security.**

Another strength mentioned by several people is the **diversity of funding sources**, so that the project does not depend on just a few for financing.

One committee member said the future financial health of the project now depends on limiting the growth of the office, since it has reached its limit. What has to grow now is the committee and the team. It was also noted that one of the pillars of the fund-raising strategy for the following years will be private sources of financing.

Regarding the sustainability of human resources, it was noted that the majority of the project committee members have been with the project and are very involved in it, and this ensures the continuity of the work. Along these same lines, another person said the project **committee and the coordinator** are very good at their jobs and are the **cornerstones of the project, ensuring that it functions well and remains healthy.**

Moreover, it was noted that **a large number of former volunteers are involved in specific tasks and support the project.**

Regarding the volunteers, as noted earlier, **since the training supervisor was hired, there are many more people interested in joining the team.** However, one secondary effect of

this, as mentioned earlier, is that there are also more who do not follow through with their commitment.

Regarding **the difficulties in retaining personnel**, one mentioned earlier was **the excessive workload** of both the coordinator and the committee. Several people expressed concern in this regard. For example, the committee says more people are needed. The good news is that two new members just joined the committee and two more are expected to join in a few months.

One challenge already mentioned is the need to maintain a balance on the team between volunteers with prior experience in solidarity work and commitment to human rights and others who do not have such experience, but contribute to the team in other areas. In this respect, the project recognizes that the sustainability of the team depends on whether appropriate candidates are found.

Another **weakness** noted regarding the sustainability of human resources, is the **difficulty** over the years **maintaining a team of 10 volunteers**, primarily due to volunteers ultimately leaving the project.

### **4.3. EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE PROJECT WITHIN PBI'S GLOBAL STRUCTURE**

#### **4.3.1. With other Latin American Projects**

According to the annual reports and some of the interviewees, some joint initiatives have been carried out between the projects that are considered valuable exchanges.

Moreover, one person said there are not enough opportunities for the projects to discuss operational strategies and tools. There are occasional opportunities but there is no system. Another person noted that the reorganization of the PBI International Secretariat resulted in a plan to create an international committee for protection tools and strategies. This would provide opportunities each month for project coordinators and country group representatives to take advantage of. In addition, the reorganization may facilitate a better exchange of operational ideas between the projects. These exchanges would take place through the International Operations Council.

Another participant noted that in Guatemala there is little awareness of the ties with the other projects in Latin America. There has been some contact with Colombia due to visa issues, and the team there has been very helpful.

**In general, direct contact (team to team) is considered minimal, as it is the office and committee that maintain and follow up on regular contact with other PBI entities** (projects, country groups, committees, international work groups, the International Council).

One person said a direct exchange with other teams and projects would be interesting. Another volunteer says, however, that the reality in Guatemala would leave them little time to devote to other countries, and does not see this as viable unless it involves a regional meeting between Latin American projects to exchange experiences.

#### **4.3.2. With the Country Groups**

As mentioned earlier, there are broad differences between the sizes and strengths of the different country groups. The project maintains contacts with country groups in the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, France, Spain, the UK, the U.S., Canada, Australia, Argentina. Its strongest ties are with the PBI groups in Spain, the UK and Germany, probably because of their level of involvement. One participant said that this may also have a lot to do with the fact that there are members of the committee with strong ties to one of these groups.

One of the participants noted that the relationship with the country groups has improved considerably in recent years overall, and the hiring of a **European representative** has helped a lot in this regard, as **coordination between the project and the country groups has improved significantly**.

Regarding difficulties, there were essentially two: One is the aforementioned differences in capacity of the country groups. The other is the different relationships between the project and the country groups. Frequently, the country group requests information from the projects, which provide it, and the flow of information stops there. There is no return flow or feedback from the country groups to the projects. However, this also depends on the group. Not all of them work the same way in this regard. And despite this, an improvement in these relations was noted.

#### **4.3.3. With PBI International Bodies**

We already referred to the **repercussions** of the **debate about reorganization**, so it is not necessary to discuss it again.

The majority of those interviewed in the office and on the committee say they oppose the continued growth of the international organization, because it has already grown significantly in recent years without significant benefits or an easing the work of the project. Those interviewed believe that efforts should focus on strengthening the country groups.

Another suggestion was a debate and a review of how the international organization is funded.

One participant in the evaluation said the project is also concerned about maintaining a balance between the use of the two official languages of PBI, Spanish and English.

**The majority of the team volunteers** have no particular opinion about relations with the international organization. Although they do receive some information, their time is too limited to pay much attention. The majority **feel that the international organization is far removed from the work of the team in the field**.

Regarding the positive aspects, one person noted that **the coordination between the international organization and the project has improved**. Several people said that **PBI-Guatemala is very active at the international level**. One person pointed out that there have been more joint initiatives for advocacy work, and there have been more exchanges of information. This same person says that coordination of the Advocacy Working Group is going very well with very good results. What some say does not make sense is that the coordinator is based in London, when Brussels or Geneva would be much better due to the presence of international agencies in these two cities. It would even make more sense to be in Washington than London, although the ideal location would be Brussels or Geneva.

## **5. CONCLUSIONES**

- There has been a qualitative leap in the project's advocacy work. This is one of the most recognized areas of the project's work internally and externally. The advocacy work inside and outside of Guatemala is excellent.
- There are two assessments of the informational area: From within the project, the quality is considered to have diminished in this area and members say it is not being exploited as much as it should. Outside of the project, however, human rights defenders, authorities and other national and international NGOs have a more favorable opinion, deeming the information distributed by PBI-Guatemala in its publications and reports to be very valuable.

There has been a reduction in the number of annual bulletins published, but the number of pages in each one was increased in 2010 to compensate for this. Assessments of the quality of the bulletins and the special report are very favorable.

- The perception inside the project is that there is less accompaniment involving an actual physical presence. There are differing opinions here about this reduction, some positive some negative. What is clear is that the project is doing all it can with the number of volunteers it has and the amount of time available for each of the tasks involved in global accompaniment: physical presence, information, advocacy/lobbying and observation.
- Members of the project are convinced that deterrence works. This conviction is shared by the human rights defenders. Even in cases of criminalization/litigation, deterrence has been proven effective, although this area requires more work and an adjusted approach.

The participants give high marks to the tools used for the deterrence of human rights violations, underscoring their flexibility and adaptability to the frequently changing reality of Guatemala.

- The accompaniment of social processes in El Quiché for the defense of land, territory and natural resources is complicated and the impact and results expected in the initial stages (2010) were not achieved. There is not enough time devoted to building trust with the local population. However, there has been some progress in making contacts and learning about the local situation, which helps the team and the project to strengthen its capacity for international accompaniment and observation in that region. Moreover, the participants agree that the so-called "region plan" is helping to make international accompaniment accessible to more civil society activists in remote areas. The project needs to make decisions in this area and strengthen some aspects of the strategy.
- The project is responding to the needs of human rights defenders, within its mandate and within the limits of its financial and human resources. The greatest challenge is to respond to the needs of ESCR defenders.
- Human rights defenders accompanied by PBI have an extremely high opinion of the project. They understand the organization's mandate and are convinced that accompaniment is effective and permits them to carry out their work under more favorable conditions. They say this support is necessary, even indispensable, in the country's current situation.
- The participants in the evaluation continue to say that the project's choice of the three areas of emphasis (accompaniment categories) is the correct one, despite the fact that the lines have been blurred between the land problem and the effects of globalization on human rights. These three areas of emphasis cover the majority of problems in the country, the participants say.

Some feel that there should be a more specific emphasis on the defense of the rights of women and the situation of women human rights defenders. They say there should be a separate area of emphasis established for this, or it should be more comprehensively included in the other areas.

- Regarding the mainstreaming of a focus on gender and diversity, the first steps have been taken but there is still a lot to do. Most of the progress has been made in the area of publications: the use of non-sexist language, the publication and distribution of the special report and a specific article in the bulletin. Some progress has been made with respect to the grants for volunteers, but this mostly focuses on the country of origin of the candidates rather than gender. More work remains to be done with respect to the mainstreaming of gender and diversity.
- The participants say the relationships with CIFCA, ACOGUATE, SEDEM and UDEFEGUA are excellent, but say the project should reflect on the nature of the ties being established with the latter. The participants say that FONGI is weakening, but they still see PBI's departure from the coalition as a loss, and other alternatives for collaborating with international NGOs are being sought.
- The participants had a very favorable assessment of the changes to the office employment structure these past years, saying these changes improved the quality of the work. They say the office staff is doing a very good job, although there is concern about the excessive workload of the coordinator. There is hope that the recent hiring of a fund raiser will lighten this load.
- The participants also speak very positively about the work of the committee. They say it is a key component of the project. However, some participants feel that the committee exercises too much control and sometimes tries to pressure the team to make certain decisions.

The committee also has a heavy workload and has been overloaded lately with the departure of two members. Two new members recently joined the committee, and two more are expected to join in the next few months.

- In general, the participants in the evaluation expressed satisfaction with the way the team functions, although it is constantly changing as volunteers come and go and sometimes functions well and sometimes not so well. The participants were unanimous in declaring that the current team is working very well.

The greatest challenge with respect to the function of the team is the ability of the volunteers to live and work together, to spend a whole year and learn to share with people you just met.

Another challenge in this regard is in striking a balance on the team between members with professional experience as volunteers and socially committed activists with backgrounds in solidarity work.

- There is mutual respect and admiration between the committee, office and the team. Communication on the committee, in the office, and between the two is excellent. Communication within the team is also very good. However, communication by the team with the committee and the office, and vice-versa, is less optimal. In this case, distance does make a difference in communication. The written correspondence often leads to misunderstandings and the telephone is seen as a cold way to communicate.

The good thing is that the project committee meetings are seen as an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings between the team and the committee or the office. These meetings are used to find solutions to these problems.

- The participants generally believe that consensus and the horizontal approach are the essence of PBI. However, some problems with the way these principles are applied in practice were pointed out, and some participants noted that the situation is not always ideal. The project is consistent in applying these principles, and is responsible for ensuring that they are respected and maintained in good health, and the committee is absolutely committed to upholding them. They are what distinguishes the organization, and are its trademark.

The participants are unanimous in that consensus and the horizontal approach are excellent ways to promote tolerance and respect for others, and that the lessons learned at the personal and professional level are invaluable.

- Conveying historical memory is always a challenge for the project, as there is a constant flow of volunteers coming and going. There are plenty of tools for conveying this information but there are also shortcomings related to the excessive work level of the team. Its work leaves the team with little time to explore the history of the organization and the project. This is also related to the general tendency to diminish the importance of the past in relation to the present and the connections between the two.
- The team functions a lot better now that a training supervisor has been hired. The number of candidates for the team has increased. The results of adding this position have been very positive. However, the fact that several candidates do not follow through on their commitment to join the team, or to stay a full year, has made it difficult to maintain the desired number of volunteers on the team each month, as planned by the training team, and makes extra work for the team.
- Regarding the care and support of volunteers during their stay on the team, the project applies very well developed mechanisms. All of the participants in the evaluation, especially the volunteers themselves, speak very highly of these mechanisms. The greatest weakness cited with regard to the support provided for a volunteer after leaving the team is that this support depends on the strength of the particular country group, and there is a great disparity between country groups.
- Personal and professional satisfaction are very high overall. Most are convinced that the project's work is very effective and say it respects and is very useful for Guatemalan human rights defenders. One problem frequently cited is the excess workload throughout the project, which leads to bad feelings such as frustration and guilt for not doing everything necessary.
- Although there was a budget deficit in 2009, the financial sustainability of the project is not a matter of concern because some funding has now been granted for three years. Another strength is the diversity of funding sources for the project and the fact that these donors know PBI very well and trust the work it does. Nevertheless, the project has begun taking steps to cut back so that there will not be more budget deficits in the coming years. In addition, the hiring of a fundraiser to justify and obtain more financing also gives the project greater financial security and sustainability.
- Regarding the sustainability of the human resources, the majority of the committee members have been very committed to the project for many years, and many former volunteers continue to provide support for the project. The weaknesses cited in this area include the excessive

workload for the committee and the office and the risk of burnout, and the fact that the team is unable to sustain an average of 10 volunteers as planned.

- Regarding the relationships that the project has with other PBI bodies, the challenge is to increase opportunities for debate, communication and coordination between the projects, particular the Latin American projects. The disparity of the relationships with the different country groups is another challenge, and the debate about the reorganization of PBI on the international level took its toll on the committee and the coordination office. A positive aspect to highlight is the project's high level of participation at the international level of the organization.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

#### **6.1.1. Impact of the work and the effectiveness of global accompaniment, deterrence and associated tools**

##### **Advocacy/Lobbying:**

- ⇒ Continue lobbying Guatemalan authorities, reviewing and evaluating the meetings held to establish a balance between the national, regional and local level. Increase the number of meetings with both the foreign ministry, through which the project is able to remain in Guatemala, and the Interior Ministry. Establish contacts with ministries with whom the project has not had relations so far, and who might be able to provide support for PBI's work.
- ⇒ Develop strategies to improve international advocacy/lobbying aimed at raising awareness about the negative effects of mega-projects and transnational interests.
- ⇒ Develop strategies to boost advocacy work in the United States. The speaking tours organized by the support person in Guatemala would be a good place to start.
- ⇒ Increase advocacy work aimed at the UN to make it more systematic, making better use of international protection mechanisms: special procedures of the UN, special rapporteurs (freedom of expression, indigenous peoples, extrajudicial executions, etc.). The UNHCR representative interviewed expressed a willingness to collaborate with PBI in this regard to facilitate communication
- ⇒ Expand the range of countries with which advocacy work is done through their representatives in Guatemala. Establish relations with embassies in Latin America and elsewhere.
- ⇒ Continue with socio-political analysis and make contact with a broad range of actors with various points of view for a broader and more global vision of the situation at all times.
- ⇒ One of the Guatemalan authorities interviewed suggested that PBI meet with the following personas at the PDH:<sup>23</sup> Conrado Martínez (handles Inter-American Court of Human Rights issues), Rony Galeano (internal mechanisms); Edgar Ortiz (ESCR). The interviewee believes these people have a point of view that would be interesting for the project.

##### **Information:**

- ⇒ Develop strategies to improve this area: During the weeklong training of volunteers, reinforce the importance of continuously generating information and the involvement of the entire team in this; on the team, a minimum of 10 volunteers should continue to be a priority so that the production of information does not overwhelm it; continue improving the process for publishing the bulletin and adapting this process to the reality of the time available to produce it; have a project committee member work with the team's subcommittee on socio-political analysis for a more strategic alignment of the bulletin content.
- ⇒ Adjust the process for selecting bulletin topics to make them more of interest to the intended audience so that there is a two-way flow of information with the communities.

<sup>23</sup>

Human Rights Ombudsman's Office.



- ⇒ Improve the process for writing and editing special reports to limit the involvement of the project coordinator to a minimum.
- ⇒ Draw up the MIPs with more involvement of the accompanied persons, while respecting PBI's mandate, or create a space in which they have a voice.
- ⇒ Develop strategies for reaching a wider audience with the bulletin. One of these strategies could be to distribute it in electronic form, like the MIPs.
- ⇒ Find ways to better exploit the website. Articles that do not fit in the bulletin could be published here. Monitor the publications of the country groups to find interesting content that could be included on the website.
- ⇒ Review information that is treated as confidential to ensure that this is necessary and opportunities to use it are not being lost. Such information that is not truly confidential could be distributed and used to achieve the project's mandate and objectives. The persons accompanied by the team should be consulted in this process.

#### **Physical presence:**

- ⇒ Maintain a minimum of 10 volunteers on the team so that physical presence can be increased, especially outside of the city, and to facilitate the necessary presence in El Quiché (to accompany the processes for defending land, territory and natural resources and fulfill the work plan in this area).
- ⇒ During the training and selection process, reinforce the idea that the best way to gain the trust of the persons accompanied is to spend as much time with them as possible.
- ⇒ Continue working on the recovery of the project's historical memory and its transmission to the team of volunteers so they can put the work carried out by the project for nearly three decades in perspective and use it as a foundation for their own work.

#### **Strategy and tools for deterrence:**

- ⇒ Regarding criminalization/litigation:
  - ✓ Continue analyzing this topic in greater depth. Should the individuals accompanied by the team commit "minor infractions," highlight the disproportionate response by the state to the charges, while always stressing PBI's policy of non-interference.
  - ✓ The strategic analysis of this issue should include close coordination with other accompaniment organizations and with the individuals and communities involved. This should be a joint learning process with collective reflection on this topic, creating alliances with other national and international organizations.
  - ✓ There should be systematic evaluation of experiences to derive the lessons learned from them.
  - ✓ Resume the discussion about legality vs. legitimacy.
  - ✓ In contacts by the project with the individuals accompanied, encourage the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

- ⇒ Analyze the involvement of non-state actors, especially drug traffickers, and adjust the strategy of deterrence in these cases. A section with specific information should be included on this topic in the security manual.
- ⇒ Resume the discussion about wearing identifying vests during court hearings. One of the volunteers criticized the policy of not wearing them. This person said the vests give the volunteers greater visibility during accompaniment and, along with the letter delivered to the judge, it is a sign of support for the court officers so that they can perform their duties without being pressured or blackmailed. The vest is a symbol of the international community's support for human rights.
- ⇒ Conduct careful socio-political analysis at both the national and international level. Conduct these analyses jointly with other organizations, both national and international. Map the areas in which the different actors operate in the country.
- ⇒ Establish a system of sharing information with the persons accompanied about programs for human rights defenders in other countries. This should include information at the international level, such as EU directives.

#### **6.1.2. Impact of the Accompaniment of the Social Processes involved in the Defense of Land, Territory and Natural Resources in El Quiché and Alta Verapaz**

- ⇒ This refers only to El Quiché at the moment because there is still no significant presence in Alta Verapaz for this type of accompaniment.
- ⇒ Because this process is new, a new strategy is required. Innovation and a high level of creativity is necessary if this type of accompaniment is to be effective. Progress, as well as setbacks, in this area should be analyzed, as should the manner in which this work has been carried out so far.
- ⇒ Derive lessons learned from the work that is being carried out in the East.
- ⇒ In the early stage of building trust, attempt to keep the rotation of volunteers to a minimum. Is important at this stage to not to change personnel very often.
- ⇒ Take great care and be very demanding when verifying information about the individuals and communities being accompanied. Be careful about the manner in which this information is verified as well. An error in this regard during the stage of building trust could have a negative impact on the process.
- ⇒ Raise the awareness of future volunteers during their training about the importance of this type of accompaniment, explaining the differences with other types, and underscoring their strategic nature. The most serious conflicts, the locations of present and future accompaniment work, are in areas outside of the capital. Accompaniment in the capital, which raises the profile of the project nationally and internationally, is important, but do not necessarily involve the individuals and groups who are most affected.
- ⇒ Develop effective strategies to communicate with the communities to explain PBI's accompaniment work. Explain what can and cannot be done, the possibilities and limits, of the mandate.

⇒ Consider the possibility of increasing the size of the team to cover the region, and never let the number of volunteers fall below 10.

⇒ Pay special attention to the exchange of information with the communities. There has to be an equal exchange between the communities and the project. The communities provide local information and PBI should facilitate information to which the communities would not normally have access. This information could be provided in the bulletins and other project publications. Review the manner in which this information is being provided, which is different from the way it is provided in the city. The culture of the communities should be taken into account. Public assemblies and community meetings to which the project is invited should be used as opportunities for team members, and not representatives of the organizations or communities, to directly distribute this information to the group.

⇒ The solidarity with which PBI has historically carried out accompaniment work should be maintained, and the project's historical memory reinforced. The principle of non-interference is important but so is the principle of solidarity, and this principle should be upheld and kept at the center of the work.

### **6.1.3. Assessment of the Project's Response to the Needs of all Human Rights Defenders and Evaluation of the Accompaniment**

⇒ Re-examine the way in which shared spaces are facilitated, the way in which the sharing of experiences and information are analyzed for the different regions in which accompaniment is carried out.

⇒ Distribute information among the communities to supplement but not substitute the project's bulletins and publications, which are also essential.

⇒ Develop a strategy and seek advice on how best to establish direct contact in the communities without intermediaries.

### **6.1.4. Validity of the Areas of Emphasis**

⇒ Continue the three current areas of emphasis. If the area referring to the land problem is eliminated or combined with the globalization area, the focus on it will weaken further, labor rights may be neglected, and land conflicts hidden. Consider a way to resume contact with unions, to let them know that the project is still here. Union representatives could be invited to dinner at the team residence to discuss the current political situation.

⇒ Resume the discussion about the focus on women's rights, seriously evaluating the possibility of creating another area of emphasis in this regard. Creating this area could probably draw petitions from women's organizations. Keeping in mind that Guatemala has deep-rooted problems, if this problem is not addressed, the specific rights of women and their struggles will be lost in a broader context and permanently put off as less of a priority.

### **6.1.5. Main Risks for the Project and its Members<sup>24</sup>**

⇒ Always comply with security rules even during free time. Never let your guard down.

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<sup>24</sup> The majority of the recommendations for preventing risks were already listed above in this section."

- ⇒ Continue to search for a new house/office.
- ⇒ Continue working to create more opportunities to recruit volunteers. Always keep the diversity and balance of the team in mind and apply methods to correct imbalances.
- ⇒ Study and learn about the ties between cooperation agencies and foreign investments.

#### **6.1.6. Mainstreaming of a Gender and Diversity Perspective**

- ⇒ Maintain the distinction between the two concepts, as they are different issues. Two plans should be generated, since the challenges are different even though the two concepts are interrelated. The line between the two concepts, gender and diversity, should not be allowed to become blurred.
- ⇒ Disseminate the gender and diversity plans so that all personnel, whether volunteers or paid staff, are familiar with it. This plan should be continuously circulated so that all new people who enter the project are familiar with and have access to it.
- ⇒ Develop mechanisms for the continuous evaluation of the plan. Consider the possibility of having specialists conduct the evaluation of each of the two concepts. This evaluation should assess the impact of what has been accomplished so far and include recommendations regarding how and where the plan should be further implemented.
- ⇒ Facilitate opportunities for reflection and exchange of ideas and feelings about these concepts. Create opportunities within the project along these lines.
- ⇒ Provide for education about these issues for all paid and non-paid personnel.
- ⇒ Develop strategies for the committee and office to initiate the creation of gender and diversity subcommittees.
- ⇒ Develop a way to introduce specific information about these concepts during the training and selection process and create materials for the theoretical and practical training of volunteers. Examine the actual experiences that the project has had in the past, to systematically record them and pass them on to the training team to be used during the training of volunteers (role playing would be useful in this regard).
- ⇒ Keep these concepts in mind when petitions are being evaluated.
- ⇒ Seek ways to optimize the use of the budgeted grant funds.
- ⇒ Diversify the countries of origin for recruiting volunteers. Provide guidelines to country groups in this regard.
- ⇒ Work with PBI international bodies of PBI so that the organization's work becomes known in countries where there are currently no country groups. In this way, country groups can be set up and the countries of origin of volunteers can become more diversified.
- ⇒ Take these concepts into account when conducting socio-political analysis and invite persons who understand them and the discussion about them. One of the participants

interviewed in the evaluation suggested some names: Maya Alvarado (UNAMG<sup>25</sup>); Paula del Cid (La Cuerda) and Sandra Morán (Sector de Mujeres).

### **6.1.7. Strategic Relations with other NGOs and/or initiatives**

⇒ Good communication with **ACOGUATE** depends to a large extent on the person responsible for this on the appropriate subcommittee. Therefore, the work of this person should be documented so that it can be used by a substitute. This information should be shared with the entire team. Moreover, this work should be done by two people, since two opinions are better than one, and compare the information from both. In addition, this would ensure that there is never a vacuum. There would always be one person to train a new member of the subcommittee to assume this responsibility.

There should be as little rotation as possible for the contact persons working with ACOGUATE.

⇒ Develop various alternatives to establish relations with other international NGOs now that PBI has left **FONGI**. PBI should coordinate with international NGOs present in the areas where the project provides accompaniment when these organizations have similar or common interests. Some initiatives have already been introduced in the East and one (external) person interviewed for the evaluation said PBI would be invited to the next meeting.

Continue and expand on bilateral relations in this respect.

⇒ Take advantage of the relationship with **SEDEM** so that the latter can conduct workshops for the volunteers on a regular basis.

⇒ Coordination with **UDEFEGUA** is very effective but it would be good to discuss and reflect on this relationship and the need to diversify and verify the sources of information used by the latter.

## **6.2. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE PROJECT**

### **6.2.1. Functioning of the Office**

⇒ Find a solution to ease the workload of the coordinator. Take advantage of the hiring of a fund raiser to ease that load, and ensure that the coordinator does not assume new responsibilities in place of these that are taken over by this person. Try to establish working hours that do not exceed the hours established in the employment contract and adhere to them. This would be easier if the office were not located in the residence of the coordinator.

⇒ Study the possibility of organizing a meeting of office staff once or twice a year, or split the staff into two groups, one consisting of the administrative and finance employees, and the other of specialized staff.

### **6.2.2. Functioning of the Committee**

⇒ It has been suggested that the project seek an effective way to explain to volunteers the fundamental role that the committee plays in the project. The committee and the office are

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<sup>25</sup>

United Women of Guatemala.

permanent parts of the project, and much of the weight and responsibility of ensuring effectiveness and continuity of the project falls to them. Moreover, the committee has the legal responsibility, along with the International Council, for the implementation and sustainability of the project. This explanation should come not only from the committee and office themselves, but should also be shared in the training sessions and during orientation processes on the team.

⇒ Opportunities should be created for the committee to discuss more in-depth matters. One suggestion was to have the committee members spend some time together right after the semi-annual meeting.

⇒ Efforts should continue to find former volunteers with recent experience on the team so that they can serve on the committee. These former volunteers can be a big help in understanding the dynamics of the team and the work in Guatemala, and therefore improve communication by the office and the committee with the team.

### **6.2.3. Function of the Team**

⇒ Reflect on, discuss and reach consensus on a strategy to ensure that there are always at least 10 volunteers on the team in Guatemala.

⇒ During the training of volunteers, underscore the importance of “sharing” to prepare the volunteers to live and work together once they are on the team so that they understand that their personal space is limited during that year.

⇒ Continue assessing the criteria for selecting volunteers to the extent possible, taking into account the level of activism and commitment, as well as the professional experience, of the candidates.

⇒ Develop strategies to document and thus strengthen the work of the subcommittees without creating an extra or excessive workload.

### **6.2.4. Horizontal Decision-Making and Consensus**

⇒ Provide a better explanation during training of the concept of “authority gained by experience.” Convey a positive image of the committee-team relationship and support.

⇒ Continue working to strengthen the horizontal approach and consensus.

### **6.2.5. Conveying the Project’s Historical Memory.**<sup>26</sup>

⇒ Attempt to schedule time each week for volunteers to dig deeper into the project history and memory, both for planned activities during the week as well as for others for which it is necessary to prepare (reading bulletins, understanding the relationship with new geographical regions, security incidents, history of the human rights defenders, etc.).

⇒ Try to conduct regular analysis of this issue, including a review of the information to be collected, verified, etc.

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Some recommendations were already given previously in this report.

⇒ If a subcommittee on historical memory does not already exist, perhaps the idea should be considered. Another option would be to include this matter in another existing subcommittee.

#### **6.2.6. Function of the Training Team**<sup>27</sup>

⇒ The coordinator should participate in one of the two weeklong training and selection sessions each year. It would not be necessary for her to be there for the entire week, just a few days to get to know the candidates.

⇒ Continue to pay special attention during the training and selection period to the attitudes of the candidates and their personality traits to the extent possible, as these are decisive in their ability to live and work with others.

⇒ Develop a system for documenting the tasks of the training team: monthly or bimonthly calls to follow up on the respective tasks assumed by members, creation of a guide to recruit trainers for the team, creation of a log for recording decisions, etc.

⇒ Review the criteria for selecting volunteers, and work on improving them.

⇒ Reconsider holding the training exclusively in Great Britain. The participation of non-Europeans could be facilitated by holding it somewhere else.

#### **6.2.7. Training Mechanisms, Care and Support for Volunteers**

⇒ Initiate and insist within the project on a plan to strengthen the country groups so that there is uniform support for volunteers before and after their stay on the team.

⇒ Continue working and innovating to reinforce the link between former volunteers and the project and with PBI in general.

#### **6.2.8. Satisfaction Levels and Perceptions**

⇒ Consider the need to make adjustments so that paid staff and volunteers can complete their work within the prescribed time, and so that their work life can be reconciled with their personal and family needs. Develop mechanisms to counter the current environment in which unpaid overtime is the norm. Extra work can be done periodically but not as a rule, as this leads to a risk of burnout. This problem should be taken very seriously, and steps should be taken to prevent and treat problems of burnout.

⇒ Reiterate the project's important and sensible recommendation for volunteers to take vacations in three parts, once every three months.

#### **6.2.9. Sustainability of the Project**

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<sup>27</sup> Several recommendations for the training team appear in earlier sections of this report. For example, the second and third recommendation of section 6.2.3. "Functioning of the Team" and the fifth and sixth recommendation of section 6.1.6. "Mainstreaming of the Focus on Gender and Diversity."

- ⇒ Pay close attention to the existing deficit of 2009 and the probable one from 2010, and develop formulas for saving to avoid this situation in the future.
- ⇒ Consider developing a system for substituting volunteers who leave the team before their time is up.

### **6.3. RELATIONS WITH PBI INTERNATIONAL BODIES**

#### **6.3.1. With other Latin American Projects**

- ⇒ Develop a more systematic way of addressing common issues between the three projects: drug trafficking, criminalization of human rights work and defense of territory and natural resources.
- ⇒ Discuss in depth the reality in Latin America and the similar influence these problems have on the projects.

#### **6.3.2. With the Country Groups**

- ⇒ The project should initiate an effort and insist on the need for the international organization to help strengthen the country groups, as they are essential for the deterrence work, the recruitment of future volunteers, etc.
- ⇒ Develop strategies to encourage volunteers to get involved with their country group after returning home from the team.

#### **6.3.3. With PBI International Bodies**

- ⇒ Reflect on a way to avoid burnout in the continuing debate on international reorganization, and seek less exhausting ways to participate in the debate.



## **7. ANNEXES**

### **7.1. PARTICIPANTS**

– **2 Socio-Political Analysis:**

- ✓ One on human rights defenders and security in the electoral campaign. Three people from the following organizations participated in this meeting: UDEFEGUA, International Commission of Jurists, Comparative Studies Institute.
- ✓ Another on the social and community movements, social causes and the security situation in rural areas during the electoral campaign. Three people participated: one from CONGCOOP (Coalition of NGOs and Cooperatives) and two from Historical Memory.

– **Five semi-structured group interviews:**

- ✓ Three with defenders/accompanied individuals from:<sup>28</sup>
  - Group of six people: two from AMISMAXAJ (Santa María Xalapán Indigenous Women's Association), one person from the Cunén Communities Council, and three from Qamoló Kí Aj Sanjuaní (San Juan People Unite).
  - Group of two people from the Camotán Campesino Association.
  - Group of two from UVOG (Verapaz Union of Campesino Organizations).
- ✓ Two with team volunteers, six participating in one, and two in the other.<sup>29</sup>

– **26 semi-structured individual interviews:**

- ✓ 15 face to face:
  - Six with defenders/accompanied individuals: human rights lawyer, OASIS, UDEFEGUA, CONAVIGUA, CALDH and Chortí Nuevo Día Campesino Association.
  - Two international agencies: OHCHR and EU delegation in Guatemala.
  - Two with Guatemalan authorities: Human Rights Ombudsman and COPREDEH (Presidential Human Rights Commission).
  - Two international NGOs: ACOGUATE and a former member of FONGI.
  - A member of the project committee.
  - The person currently holding the team-support position in Guatemala.

<sup>28</sup> At first, the criteria that defined groups of human rights defenders to be interviewed was based on the area of emphasis under which the accompaniment petition fell, but ultimately it depended more on their availability. These three groups of defenders fall under the category of land and the effects of globalization.

<sup>29</sup> The intention was to conduct the interview with the whole team, but this proved impossible due to their workload, and it was done in two interviews.

- Training supervisor.
- ✓ Four via Skype:
  - One former member of the project committee.
  - One current member of the committee.
  - Two people from the office who are also members of the committee: the project coordinator and the European representative.
- ✓ Seven via e-mail:
  - The office administrator.
  - The project advisor.
  - Three former team volunteers.
  - Two embassies: The Netherlands and Canada.

## **7.2. REFERENCES**

### – **Internal documents:**

- ✓ Reference terms for the 2011 external evaluation.
- ✓ Project organizational chart.
- ✓ 2009-2011 Strategic Plan.
- ✓ 2008 external evaluation.
- ✓ 2008 Annual Report.
- ✓ 2009 Annual Report.
- ✓ 2010 semi-annual report.
- ✓ Recent “Alerts.”
- ✓ Policy for Providing Mental Health Support for PBI-Guatemala Project Volunteers.
- ✓ Policy for Minimum Standards of Support for Volunteers.
- ✓ Review of Fulfillment of the Gender and Diversity Plan. May 2010.
- ✓ Solicitudes 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

### – **Project Publications:**

- ✓ Bulletins: Nos. 15 to 21.
- ✓ Special Report “Guatemala’s Indigenous Women in Resistance: On the Frontline of the Community’s Struggle to Defend Mother Earth and her Natural Assets.”
- ✓ MIP: Nos. 52 to 87.

### – **Other publications:**

- ✓ UDEFEGUA reports published during the evaluation period.
- ✓ GAM reports published during the evaluation period.
- ✓ Reports published by international agencies during the evaluation period.
- ✓ ACOGUATE report “Indigenous Territories and Guatemalan Democracy Under Pressure.”
- ✓ Bulletin published by Resistencia de los Pueblo: *Tenemos palabras que compartir* December 2010; *No a la explotación de los recursos naturales a gran escala en el*

*municipio de Cunén,” June 2010; Esta tierra es nuestra: tierra y agua para los pueblos no para las empresas”, May 2010.*

- ✓ EU Directives on Human Rights Defenders.