

Women's Empowerment:

Strategic Impact Inquiry Research Summary

The Context: In 1996, following the Guatemala Peace Accords, the National Women's Forum was established across the nation's multiple ethnic groups – the first national women's organization in Guatemala – to hold the Accords' commitments to women accountable. While the Forum has not maintained its initial momentum and presence, it gave rise to a number of new initiatives for women across the country. Today, while poverty, illiteracy, poor health and conflict continue to affect communities, particularly in Huehuetenango where CARE works, civil society sustains its struggle to make demands on local government.

The Project: In 1999, CARE Guatemala, with CARE Austria and the Women's Forum in Huehuetenango, developed the **Strengthening the Development of Huehuetenango Women Project (FODEMH)** to enhance the sustainability of Women's Forum actions and develop the Forum as a platform for social change. After an initial phase of work around women's citizenship rights, a funding gap drove CARE and the Forum to seek new resources and link with an European Union (EU) tender that contained rights-awareness/literacy training.

The Women's Forum was forced to register a new NGO, ADIMH, to receive EU funding. ADIMH was created in 2002, and the leaders of this fledgling NGO were charged to:

- Strengthen ADIMH capacity through strategic partnerships, trainings for institutional capacity building and developing tools for organizational structure, operations and management;
- Integrate local, departmental and national institutions to influence public policy in favor of women;
- Promote literacy among women in Huehuetenango; and
- Provide training on self-esteem, conflict-resolution, women's rights/obligations, legal issues, empowerment and access to organizations, offering support in abuse.

The project ran until 2005 and covered 21 municipalities within the department of Huehuetenango.

CARE Guatemala's Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII):

CARE Guatemala undertook the SII in 2006 in a larger Latin America regional approach that sought to plant "empowerment questions" in planned and funded evaluations. Specifically, CARE Guatemala focused on the following areas:

- Project objectives, partners and ability to meet objectives;
- Project strategy for and impact in promoting women's empowerment; and
- Factors that supported or inhibited empowerment.

The Methods: In Guatemala, the SII worked from existing literature and staff perspectives, in collaboration with other participating Latin American country offices:

RESEARCH DESIGN

- **Researcher:** External evaluator
- **Workshop:** Participating countries in Latin America met together to discuss women's empowerment, plan and select evaluations to be reviewed for the SII

DATA COLLECTION

- **Document and Secondary Data Review:** Evaluation report and program documentation, terms of reference and monitoring reports
- **Interviews and Reflection:** project staff discussed project, women's empowerment, external factors and lessons learned

DATA ANALYSIS

- External evaluator analyzed findings and conclusions based on discussions and document review

GUATEMALA

The [Strategic Impact Inquiry](#) (SII) seeks to evaluate CARE's impact on women's empowerment. For CARE Guatemala's full SII report, please contact: pqlibrarian@care.org.

For more information, contact Rosario Garcia (marosgarci@hotmail.com), Alejandro Zepeda (raul.zepeda@ca.care.org) or Sofia Sprechman (sofia.sprechmann@lac-care.org).

Women's Empowerment:

Strategic Impact Inquiry Research Summary

Empowerment Related Indicators for FODEMH:

AGENCY

Skills in management, administration, strategic planning
Members can seek funding effectively
Decision-making, voice at local and departmental levels
Literacy, training
Awareness of rights/obligations
Skills in conflict resolution
Reporting of abuse
Women draft proposal to public entities to influence policy to favor women

RELATIONS

STRUCTURE

ADIMH services accountable and useful to beneficiaries
Women represented in pro-improvement and municipal development committees and department level development meetings
Access to training

Implications

CARE's obligation to form ADIMH as a funding regulation was accompanied by ongoing problems with ADIMH's leadership and management, hindering program impact

- CARE needed to develop capacities and skills of women on ADIMH's board of directors, enabling them to forge alliances with organizations to make progress in literacy.
- Over time, FODEMH's focus became detached from social movements and focused on organization formation, project implementation and job creation.

Rather than making programs to fit donor requirements, CARE must begin conceptualizing programs with communities to ensure program relevance and sustainability

- Include participants in project design and evaluation to ensure that it is institutionalized.
- Form proposals specific to the community, led by people who possess/develop the knowledge on local communities in order to support empowerment.
- Sufficient time must be allocated to analyze context/plan project before implementation.
- Discuss empowerment with communities from the outset. For FODEMH, the organization's interpretation of empowerment did not align with that of local women, hindering project progress and results.
- CARE must lobby administrative personnel regarding donor regulation and maintaining dialogue with donors to make them aware of difficulties that regulation poses in project implementation is critical in times of transition.
- Proposals should be flexible to adapt to the reality of women that they target in order to ensure participation and impact.

Engage staff and organization members in trainings to prepare them to manage projects effectively over the long term

- Institutional strengthening should cover the entire organizational structure to broaden trainings and improve performance across all roles of each member.
- Personnel did not have diversity in technical, political and interpersonal skills to deal with project requirements and activities over time.

Reflect on project learning and share knowledge to inform future work, leverage impact

- Initiatives like FODEMH and its results must be shared with everyone directly or indirectly involved in the project implementation process. This will provide options for the integration of program principles in other initiatives.
- Evaluate components of the project to identify strategic initiatives to emphasize.
- Overlap between project components strengthens shared vision and enables the project to link processes in order to leverage impact.

Impact on Empowerment

Agency	Structures	Rel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members able to manage and administer ADIMH autonomously • ADIMH municipal coordinator groups trained to bring women together at the municipal level and applied to the municipality for an office • Engage power-holders to advocate for action on women's issues • High literacy levels, exceeding goal • Participants trained in rights education, which led to awareness of rights, confidence, voice and mobility • Literacy materials designed to challenge gender bias. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADIMH provides training to four municipality groups and secured funding for trainings and advice for other municipalities • Working toward the establishment of ADIMH municipal groups recognized as the municipal office for women (though not yet realized) 	