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Advocacy for change:

Lessons from Guatemala,
Brazil, and USA



Chapter 2

SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE EXPERIENCE 'PREPARATION AND APPROVAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LAW' Guatemala (2003-2007)

by ActionAid Guatemala





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Abstract

This pack presents the results of the Systematization of Advocacy and Campaign Experience in ActionAid Americas (2007 – 2008) carried out by IASL and ActionAid Americas. The aim of the systematization project was to provide an opportunity for countries in the Americas to critically examine, together with other actors, their advocacy experiences. Through a methodology called systematization which has its origins in Latin America different actors involved in advocacy or campaigns critically recalled what the experience was about, analyzed the rationale for the choices made, how and why different factors intervened to shape or change the intervention over time, and what processes of change emerged from the experience.

Learning from our advocacy work and disseminating the various advocacy and campaign experiences that took place in the last two years in the work of ActionAid Americas were two of the central objectives of the Systematization of Advocacy and Campaign Experience in ActionAid Americas. Learning, as stated in the ActionAid Shared Learning: A Working Guide (2007), is a social process because it happens through relationships between people and the ongoing dialogues that they have with others. ActionAid Americas through its close interaction, discussion and exchange with partners, communities, poor and excluded people and other stakeholders in the work for rights has learned in various areas but particularly in a specific area, which is advocacy, as advocacy is core work in the region. The way we work with other actors through organised and coordinated actions for change in policy, public attitudes and socio-political practices has generated lessons and learning that need to be shared and disseminated.

The pack 'Advocacy for Change' includes a CD and two DVDs. The CD includes an introduction and three chapters. Rosario Leon provides an introduction to the systematization project and highlights some of the key moments of the experience. In Chapter 1 Esteban Tapella (Consultant on Systematization) presents the theoretical framework adopted for this systematization, the basic concepts and methodological considerations. Chapter 2 is about the experience of Advocacy on Comprehensive Youth Development Law in Guatemala, systematized by ActionAid Guatemala in coordination with the local partners SODEJU-FUNDAJU. This experience is also synthesized in a video in one of the DVDs of the pack. Chapter 3 includes the experience of work of ActionAid USA with a coalition of NGOs around the Farm Bill in the United States of America. Finally, the experience on the National Education Campaign, systematised by ActionAid Brazil in coordination with Ação Educativa, a local partner, is presented as a video in the other DVD of the pack.



Presentation

“Sistematizacion! What’s that?” This was my response, a few years back, on hearing this strange sounding term for a Latin American methodology for critical reflection and learning. At the time, we were finalising AAI’s approach to shared learning, and were identifying existing and new learning methods and processes we could implement to support our concept of learning.

ActionAid’s concept of learning is based on four core elements: learning is a social and collective process; learning should be focused on practice; learning involves questioning what we know and building new critical knowledge for change; and learning flourishes best in supportive learning environments.

Systematisation as a methodology has all these core elements. Translated into English, systematisation, which has its origins in Latin America in the 60s, loosely means ‘the act of organizing something according to a system or a rationale’.

Through systematisation practitioners and activists critically reflect on and make sense of an experience, turning the lessons we derive from that reflection into new knowledge, that is explicit, which can inform the new round of practice, and be communicated to others who may also benefit (Morgan, 2009). Importantly it is a new form of knowledge production that turns the traditional relationship between practice and theory on its head: instead of applying theory to practice, we build theoretical or conceptual understanding about an issue from the systematisation of experience or practice (Jara, 2006).

As IASL, we believe that systematisation is a powerful methodology that can support AAI and its allies critically reflect on our practice for change and construct new forms of knowing. This knowledge will assist us to deepen and transform our work, and support new ways of working and struggling towards a change in this world of ours.

Our Latino colleagues, and especially Rosario Leon (at the time the IASL Advisor for LAC), have in the past two years greatly supported AAI’s orientation to and uptake of the systematisation methodology. We now have a small collection of existing written materials in English; we have some core documents translated into English; we have trained over 35 colleagues in the Africa Region in the basics of systematisation; and we have a simple English guide to systematisation (available at the end of June 2009).

Most importantly, we have piloted the methodology through the systematisation of three advocacy and campaigns experiences in the LAC region, which are now presented here and which we hope you, the reader, will benefit from reading.

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Members of the Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala,
one of the driving actors of the experience.

Contents

Chapter 2	39
SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE EXPERIENCE ‘PREPARATION AND APPROVAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LAW’ Guatemala (2003-2007)	
1. Introduction	41
2. Aspects of context	42
3. Critical analysis of the endeavour	49
4. Conclusions and lessons learned	56
5. Recommendations	58
6. References	61



Chapter 2

SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE EXPERIENCE 'PREPARATION AND APPROVAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LAW' Guatemala (2003-2007)

by ActionAid Guatemala (1)

Summary

The process of lobbying and advocacy to have the Ley de Desarrollo Integral de La Juventud (comprehensive youth development law) drafted and approved is an experience without precedent in Guatemala, given that nearly always – and even more so in recent times – we young people are identified and associated with gangs more than with organisations that put forward proposals for policies and laws.

One of ActionAid's strategic goals is for "men and women citizens and social movement to struggle together for rights and for justice in national alliances and networks and with regional and world movements" (Plan Estratégico, ActionAid Guatemala 2006-2010, p. 10). That is why we have associated with and supported this endeavour which has produced movement, action, campaigns, local organisation and advocacy, because it is a repository of learning from practice, to be conveyed to within ActionAid and other organisations.

This chapter presents the main thinking as regards systematising this experience gained between 2003 and 2007. After first drawing in the context, the document reflects on how a significant group of stakeholders engaged in the process of advocacy and lobbying to achieve a law of the utmost importance to Guatemala.

The key driving actors in this process were Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala

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The chapter was translated into English by Peter Lenny

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During the systematization process representatives from different youth organisations took part in advocacy and in workshops to reflect on the experience, as follows: Abner Paredes (CALDH), Ana Luisa Borrayo (CALDH), Aura Cristina Rodríguez (ONEG), Calixto Morales (ONEG), Edson Rolando Flores (JOC), Erick Chox López (ADEJUCC), Luis Zapeta (OASIS), Magdalena Sarat (MOJOMAYAS), Ulises Pérez (JADESPA-ANJG), Luis Cruz (GESA), Carmen Mansilla (SODEJU-FUNDAJU), Marlon Francisco (Coaligay CJG) and Erick Asencio (ANJG-SODEJU).

(CJG), Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala (ANJG) and Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo de la Juventud (SODEJU/FUNDAJU).

The document concludes with the main lessons learned and offers conclusions and recommendations that are valid not only for those involved and young people in Guatemala, but for those with similar initiatives in other contexts.

Acronyms

CJG	<i>Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala</i> [youth coordination for Guatemala]
ANJG	<i>Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala</i> [Guatemalan national youth assembly]
SODEJU	<i>Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo de la Juventud</i> [civil society for youth development]
FUNDAJU	<i>Fundación para la Juventud</i> [foundation for youth]
INE	<i>Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas</i> [national statistics institute]
PMSPAS	<i>Programa Nacional del Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social</i> [national programme of the ministry of public health and social assistance]
TSE	<i>Tribunal Supremo Electoral</i> [electoral supreme court]
ACJ	<i>Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes</i> [young Christians' association]
MOJOMAYAS-CONAVIGUA	<i>Movimiento de Jóvenes Mayas</i> [movement of Mayan youth]
HIJOS	<i>Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio</i> [sons and daughters for identity and justice against forgetfulness and silence]
AEU	<i>Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios</i> [university student association]
MJPAZD	<i>Movimiento de Jóvenes por la Paz y la Democracia</i> [youth movement for peace and democracy]
CONAVIGUA	<i>Objetores de Conciencia de la Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala</i> [conscientious objectors of the national coordination of widows of Guatemala]
AEU “OLIVERIO CASTAÑEDA DE LEÓN”	<i>Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala</i> [Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala student association]
CJSC	<i>Coordinadora Juventud por el Servicio Cívico</i> [youth coordination for national civic service]
JOC	<i>Juventud Obrera Cristiana</i> [young Christian workers]
OASIS	<i>Organización de Apoyo a una Sexualidad Integral frente al SIDA</i> [integral sexuality and AIDS support organisation]
ONEG	<i>Organización Nacional de Estudiantes de Guatemala</i> [Guatemala national student organisation]
CONJUVE	<i>Consejo Nacional de la Juventud</i> [national youth council]
CNJ	<i>Consejo Nacional de la Juventud</i> [national youth council]
COPREDEH	<i>Comisión Presidencial de Derechos Humanos</i> [presidential commission on human rights]
Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud	comprehensive youth development law
Comisión del Menor y la Familia [del Congreso de la República]	[Congressional] committee on child and family affairs

1. INTRODUCTION

This publication contains the main conclusions drawn from the process of systematising the experience of political advocacy undertaken by a group of youth organisations headed by the *Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala* (CJG), the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala* (ANJG) and the *Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo de la Juventud* (SODEJU).

The work of advocacy, which was carried out by many different organised actors, was directed to securing approval of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud in Guatemala*. To that end, efforts were directed to bringing members of parliament, leaders of the various legislative groups and caucuses, and members of the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* [committee on juvenile and family affairs] to help the law pass. Advocacy activities targeted government authorities directly or indirectly connected with youth issues. Special emphasis was placed on securing commitments from the political parties in favour of the law.

This document describes an ongoing experience, not a process that has come to completion. Advocacy is not easy in Guatemala, particularly when it calls for laws assuring social and human rights. Despite four years' hard work, the final goal has not yet been reached. Nonetheless, all the young people involved in the process have taken important steps, particularly in terms of social alliance-building and organisation. Although the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* has yet to go through three compulsory readings in the full house of congress, it has attained the status of *Iniciativa de Ley* (measure), which – in the Guatemalan context – represents major progress.

Therefore, what became of particular interest in reporting systematically on this – certainly unprecedented – endeavour was the complex and rewarding process that led up to this situation. Accordingly, the coordination and alliance-building strategies that the various actors adopted in building, negotiating and reaching agreement on the law have been fully acknowledged, particularly in view of the Guatemalan social, institutional and political context. That is why it is important to reflect on the process and highlight the lessons learned, so that they can serve both those involved and other organisations with similar aspirations.

This document is organised into five sections. Following this introduction, Section 2 concentrates on aspects of the context in which the endeavour took place: it highlights the social and political situation in Guatemala and the key elements in the institutional and organisational background that gave rise to this initiative. Section 3 offers a critical analysis of the endeavour, introducing the main actors involved, describing the process that developed and how the endeavour progressed, and noting the main achievements and difficulties of the process. Section 4 sets out the main conclusions drawn and lessons learned during the process. By way of a corollary, Section 5 ends with a series of recommendations that hold both for the actors involved and others who may wish to embark on or replicate similar endeavours in other contexts in the future. Lastly, a brief documentary on the experience is annexed to this report.

The systematization process included participation by members of SODEJU-FUNDAJU, as well as representatives of several youth organisations, as mentioned in the course of the report. The other participants included two members of Guatemala's Congress who offered their opinions on the endeavour, together with the members of the systematization team who, in addition to taking on this task, played an active part in the endeavour itself. Without their committed participation, this thoughtful document would not have been possible. We thank them all!

To ActionAid, this systematization is of very significant value because it is a way of identifying, of seeing how we act jointly with the youth movement. Our action goes beyond financial cooperation. By fostering the emergence of discussion venues, exchanges within the process of political capacity-building for young people, and shared participatory planning and evaluation processes, our action favours empowerment for women and works to strengthen the social movement beyond the single concrete goal of getting the law approved.

It is hoped that the lessons learned from this experience not only feed back into and enrich the advocacy process now ongoing, but also favour and nurture organisational efforts both in Guatemala and around the world.

2. ASPECTS OF CONTEXT

In all experiences there are external elements or factors not completely controlled by the actors involved. Such factors, which can be termed aspects or elements of context, may limit scope for action or for the endeavour to develop, or they may serve to leverage opportunities. This section is intended to describe and analyse briefly the situation that gave the context for the endeavour to influence formulation and approval of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de La Juventud*, so as to situate it in terms of its determinants and to permit comparisons with other similar initiatives. The diagram in Section 2.3. shows the interrelations among the variables mentioned and the actors involved in the endeavour.

2.1. Demographic and socio-political information on youth

Guatemala is a multilingual, multiethnic, pluricultural country covering an area of 108,889 square kilometres and with a population of 12.7 million, of which 26.7% are young people between the ages of 15 and 29. Of these 3.5 million young people, 51% are women, 60% live in rural areas and 48% are indigenous (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística-INE*, 2006).

Young people make up 37.9% of the economically active population. Although young people are the most productive section of the population, 56% live below the poverty line (INE, 2006). The youth populations of 104 municipalities have little or no development opportunities, which are annulled by poverty levels ranging from 50% to 99% (SEGEPLAN, 2005). Education coverage for youth is extremely low: 19.1% at the *básico* (middle school) level, 14.6% at the *diversificado* (high school) level and 1.4% at the university level. These rates are lower in rural areas, particularly regarding access to education by women and indigenous people.



Constant processes of migration and displacement from the countryside to the towns have contributed to weakening the social fabric and cultural identity.

Other figures show that 35,000 adolescents and young people are members of youth gangs. According to official ministry of health (*Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social*, MSPAS) figures for the number of people living with HIV or AIDS, 32.4% are young people. Most murder victims are under 30 years old, as are most murderers. Road accidents kill more young people than any other population group. More than 15,000 adolescent and young women are sexually exploited.

According to SODEJU-FUNDAJU (2007), only 38% of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17 have participated in youth organisations, while the percentage is only slightly higher (43%) for the 18 to 30 age group. Meanwhile, 74% of young people from 18 to 30 years old have never joined a political party.

According to figures from the electoral court (*Tribunal Supremo Electoral*, TSE), at the 2003 elections, 19% of registered voters were young people from 18 to 25 years old, and 23% from 26 to 35 years old. However, only 32% of the former group and 36% of the latter actually voted, i.e. youth abstention was more than 60% in each age group. For the 2007 election process, youth registration rose to 38% of the electoral roll, but the trend as regards actual participation continued unchanged.

2.2. The national context and its influence on the endeavour

In Guatemala certain events have had important effects on youth participation. Some of them took place nearly a decade ago, but laid the foundations for present-day youth participation. It has to be remembered that, in Guatemala,

before the last peace accord was signed, participating to claim rights was considered subversive activity, and as such was condemned to persecution and political repression. Below we single out the key events or occurrences prioritised in analysing the undertaking.

• **Creation of a new institutionality reflected in the 1985 Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala (1985)**

The National Constituent Assembly (1984-1985) set out a new institutionality for the State, which included modifying certain political bodies and creating others. Changes were made to the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (electoral supreme court) and the *Registro de Ciudadanos* (registry of citizens), the *Ministerio Público* (public attorney's office) and the *Procuraduría General de la Nación* (attorney-general's office). It instituted the *Oficina del Procurador de los Derechos Humanos* (human rights attorney's office), *Corte de Constitucionalidad* (constitutional court), and *Consejos de Desarrollo* (development boards). These changes opened up democratic spaces and better opportunities for the exercise of social organisation and mobilisation.

• **The political negotiations that put an end to the domestic armed conflict (1987-1996)**

Following 36 years of domestic armed conflict, peace accords were signed which form the essential foundations for present-day political development in Guatemala. These negotiations facilitated opportunities for young people to organise and participate. The student, trade union, peasant, women's and indigenous movements – made up basically of young people, although not necessarily claiming specifically youth rights – played a relatively important role.

• **Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)**

The Guatemalan State ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 10 May, 1990, pledging to comply with the Rights of the Child laid down in the convention and to take the political and administrative measures necessary to honour that pledge. This made it possible to promote policies in favour of children and adolescents.

• **Approval of the *Ley de Consejos de Desarrollo* [development boards law] and the *Ley de Desarrollo Social* [social development law] - Reforms to the *Código Municipal* [municipal code] (2000-2004)**

These three laws approved during the government of Lic. Alfonso Portillo (2000-2004) were known popularly as the 'Development and Decentralisation Laws'. At present they are the most important tools for promoting citizens' participation in policy making and policy oversight at the municipal, regional and national levels.

• **Approval of the *Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia* [comprehensive child and adolescent protection law] (LEPINA) (2003)**

The *Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia* (LEPINA) was approved during the government of Lic. Alfonso Portillo, after a 12-year struggle. It provided for legislation in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The lessons learned in this lengthy process are being put to good use by the youth movement that is promoting the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral*.

• **Intention of the Legislature to pass a clearly punitive anti-Maras law (2004)**

In 2004 two Bills were put forward to address issues connected with youth gangs. Of the two, the one most likely to be approved was clearly punitive and moralistic. It did not propose prosecution for crimes committed by young people, but to punish membership of a gang as evidenced by dress, tattoos and conduct. Neither Bill included appropriate rehabilitation and care measures. Social pressures, especially from youth organisations, prevented these Bills from becoming law.

• **Public policies not implemented (2004-2005)**

While a number of policies on the subject were designed during the government of President Oscar Berger, they were never implemented for lack of budget funds and administrative mechanisms. These included (a) the comprehensive child and adolescent protection policy, (b) the national youth policy, (c) the human rights policy, (d) prevention of violence policy and (e) the peace culture policy.

• **General elections for President and Vice-president, Congress and Mayors (2003 and 2007)**

These were the most important electoral periods in the advocacy plans developed by youth organisations, especially as regards negotiations with presidential, vice-presidential and congressional candidates. At these points, youth leaders learned that in an electoral setting political actors do not gauge the scale of the commitments they make, but accept challenges that afterwards they are unable to meet.

• **Signing of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States (2004-2007)**

Immediately on taking power, the Oscar Berger government began negotiations with US government representatives to sign a trade agreement. The Guatemalan government offered no resistance to US demands and was not intimidated by public protests against the treaty. Some youth leaders claim that the agreement was signed in record time and surrendered the country to US economic purposes in disregard of the consequences for the people of Guatemala.

• **Extrajudicial executions and stigmatisation of youth during the government of President Oscar Berger (2004-2008)**

In line with a policy that was never declared or explicitly stated, the presidency of Oscar Berger persecuted youth delinquents, especially members of youth gangs, using mechanisms that included extrajudicial executions and stigmatisation. The authorities of the *Ministerio de Gobernación* [ministry of the interior] and the National Civic Police allied with organised crime and, in spite of media exposés and serious claims by the *Procurador de los Derechos Humanos* [human rights attorney] of the existence of undercover government groups devoted to social cleansing, the authorities took no cognizance of their participation in these criminal deeds.

2.3. Immediate background

This section relates to actions that youth organisations participated in relating to the advocacy process in favour of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*.

These actions, taken between 1999 and 2004, laid the political and organisational groundwork for pursuing the endeavour that is set out systematically in this report.

• **Formulation of youth demands and proposals to the State and society (1999)**

The main actors in this undertaking were the Fundación para la Juventud (FUNDAJU) and the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala* (ANJG), which take in approximately 65 organisations and 40 municipalities.

Taking advantage of the electoral situation in 1999, the ANJG held consultations with youth representatives from 40 municipalities on the demands and proposals they could submit to the State and society in Guatemala.

That process of consultation ended during the *I Congreso Nacional de la Juventud* [1st national youth congress] held in October 1999, with the consensual document '*Demandas y Propuestas de la Juventud ante el Estado y la Sociedad*'. Those demands were structured as follows:

- Social demands and proposals. These included demands on subjects such as education, health, nutrition, housing, the family, the media, street youth, violence and juvenile delinquency, child trafficking, child and youth prostitution, recreation, culture and sport.
- Economic demands and proposals. This aspect included topics such as child labour and exploitation, employment and labour conditions, production, relations with other countries and so on.
- Political demands and proposals. Here priority was given to demands on child and youth rights, civic and political participation, political system and parties, reform of the constitution and State, the army, juvenile courts, historical memory, indigenous youth, environment and ecological conditions.

These demands and proposals were formulated with the participation of 56 youth organisations from all over Guatemala and from different sectors. The demands and proposals were submitted to the political parties and their candidates on 20 October 1999, and served as the basis for discussion of the document '*Un Mundo Justo para la Niñez y Adolescencia*' [A world of justice for children and adolescents].

Once the demands and proposals had been formulated, the ANJG laid the foundations for the projects and actions to be carried out later, including political advocacy for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*.

• **Approval of the Ley del Servicio Cívico [national civic service law] (2003)**

The process leading up to approval of this law was important to the advocacy endeavour. The main actors in this process were the *Coordinadora Juventud por el Servicio Cívico* [youth coordination for civic service] comprising SODEJU-FUNDAJU, the ANJG, the *Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes* (ACJ) [young Christian association], the *Movimiento de Jóvenes Mayas* (MOJOMAYAS-CONAVIGUA) [young Maya movement], the grouping HIJOS (*Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio*) [sons and daughters for identity and against forgetfulness and silence], the *Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios* (AEU) [university student association] and the *Movimiento de Jóvenes por la Paz y la Democracia* (MJPZD) [youth movement for peace and democracy].

The *Ley del Servicio Cívico* offered an alternative to the compulsory military service and conscription that had existed in Guatemala until the '*Acuerdo de paz sobre el fortalecimiento del poder civil y función del ejército en una sociedad democrática*' [Peace accord on

strengthening the civil power and function of the army in a democratic society], signed on 19 September 1996. Immediately that accord was signed, the Guatemalan government and the national army pledged to eliminate conscription in general and recruitment of minors for military service. Prior to that law, peasant, indigenous and rural youth were at the mercy of conscription and risked being press-ganged into the army.

The *Jóvenes Objetores de Conciencia de la Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala* (CONAVIGUA) [conscientious objectors of the national coordination of widows of Guatemala] and the *Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios Oliverio Castañeda de León* (AEU) formulated a Bill to eliminate compulsory military service (*Ley de Servicio Cívico*, 1996-1997). After a series of negotiations with government representatives, the military and members of congress, the Bill was shelved.

In 2001 the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala* (ANJG) resumed efforts to secure passage of the *Ley del Servicio Cívico*. In a coalition with the *Movimiento de Jóvenes Mayas* (MOJOMAYAS), the *Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala* (CONAVIGUA) and SODEJU-FUNDAJU, they formed a national network for the purpose of redrafting the Bill and engaging in a process of political advocacy until congress approved the law. That network gave rise to the *Coordinadora Juventud por el Servicio Cívico* (CJSC) [youth coordination for civil service] made up of 10 second-level organisations with a variety of backgrounds, comprising Christians, indigenous groups, human rights activists, students, workers and so on.

Two years later these efforts bore fruit. The *Ley del Servicio Cívico* was approved by Guatemala's congress in July 2003, although it has not yet been implemented by governments.

As a result of this effort by the CJSC, the youth organisations decided to continue with their alliance-building and extend their proposals and demands on behalf of young people.

• **Preparation of the Agenda Nacional de la Juventud [national youth agenda]**

The main actors involved in drawing up this agenda were the *Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala*, comprising the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala* (ANJG), *Movimiento de Jóvenes por la Paz y la Democracia* (MJPZD), *Juventud Obrera Cristiana* (JOC), *Movimiento de Jóvenes Mayas* (MOJOMAYAS), *Organización de Apoyo a una Sexualidad Integral frente al SIDA* (OASIS); and *Organización Nacional de Estudiantes de Guatemala* (ONEG).

With the experience gained in the earlier processes, the youth organisations set themselves to formulate the youth policy proposals contained in the *Agenda Nacional de la Juventud* (2004-2012). Two basic components of this agenda are organised youth's vision for reform of the State and its public policy proposals.

Taking advantage of the electoral situation in 2003, the CJG planned to lobby political parties involved in the electoral contest and later the elected authorities, especially the Presidency (national president and ministers) and Congress.

Moreover, to achieve its aims, the CJG proposed the following route to gain approval of a youth policy in Guatemala:

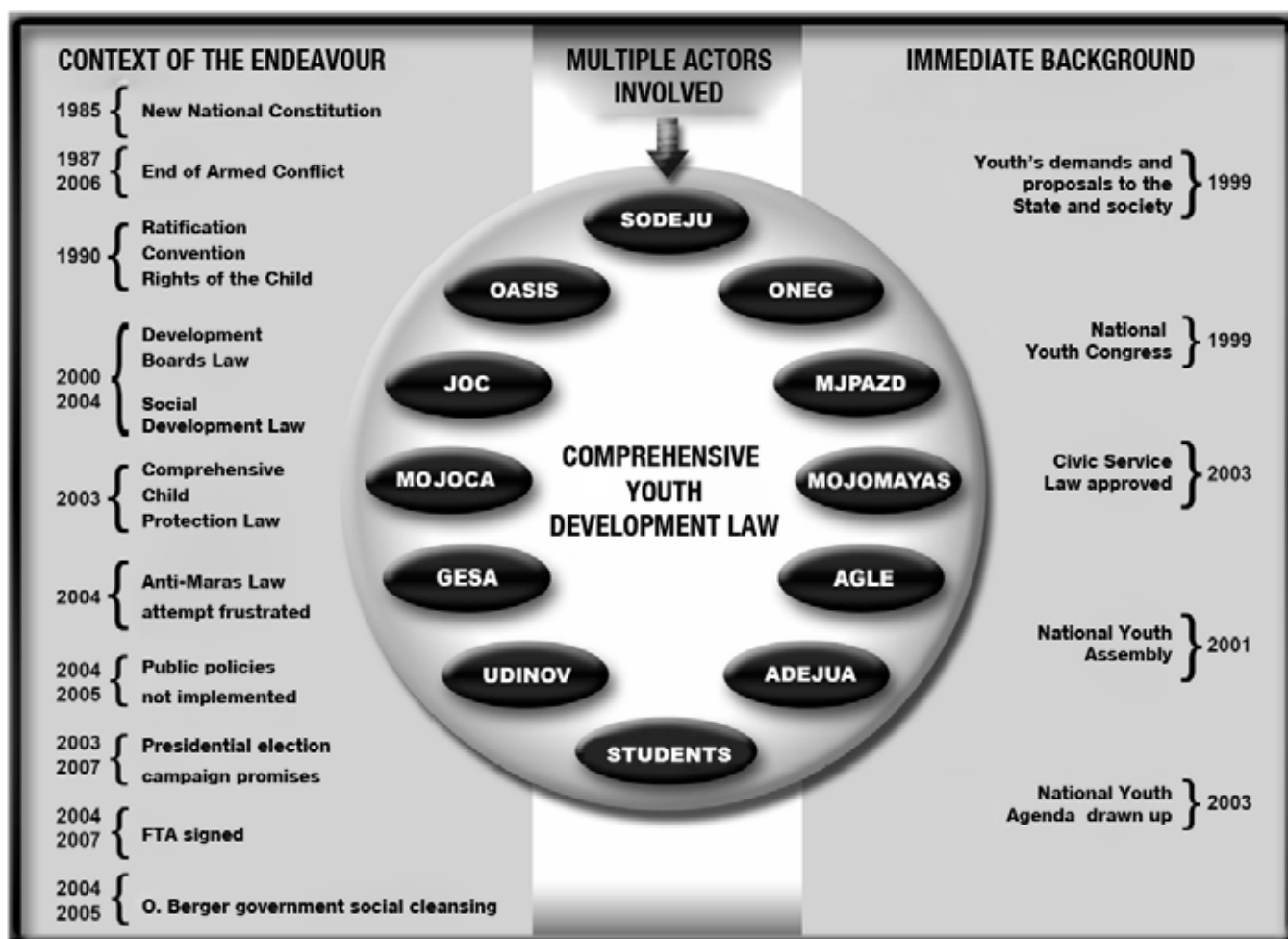
- To draft proposals for youth policies and programmes based on the documents produced since 1999, especially *'Demandas y propuestas de la juventud ante el Estado y la sociedad'*.

- To negotiate with and lobby political parties and their candidates with a view to securing commitments. The *Agenda Nacional de la Juventud* was circulated to political parties' youth secretariats and executive committees and was presented at the *Foro de Juventud de Partidos Políticos* [political party youth forum]. Only three presidential candidates and their youth secretariats signed a document of commitments.

-To lobby the elected government for approval of a youth policy. In June, they held a meeting with the *Consejo Nacional de la Juventud* (CONJUVE) (a state agency) during which the content of the *Agenda Nacional de Juventud* was improved and mechanisms proposed for implementing it. Several meetings were held with the Executive Secretary to the Presidency in order to start discussion of the national youth policy. The *Consejo Nacional de la Juventud* (CNJ) formed part of the inter-sector committee that drew up the 2005-2015 *Política Nacional de Juventud* [national youth policy]. The version approved by the Presidency (national president and ministers) in August 2005 contained 35% of what was proposed by the CJG Agenda, according to the report issued by the CJG itself.

The advocacy process that took place from 2003 to 2007 to press for drafting and legislative approval of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* represents an unprecedented experience in Guatemala. This figure below illustrates the context of the endeavour and the relevant immediate background. The significant group of actors involved in the process was headed by the *Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala* (CJG), the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala* (ANJG) and the *Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo de la Juventud* (SODEJU/FUNDAJU).

In line with its rights-based strategy, ActionAid Guatemala supported and associated with some activities of the youth organisation process at the local and national level, lobbying, advocacy and political capacity-building.



Multiple Actors of the Experience. Among distinct variables connected with the context and the immediate background, multiple social and institutional actors were involved in the experience.

3. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ENDEAVOUR

3.1. The main actors

Without a doubt, the political advocacy in favour of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* was a continuation from the processes described above. It is one step further, which built on previous gains by demands in favour of Guatemalan youth.

The political advocacy efforts rest on important organisational achievements, which have been encouraged and supported mainly by SODEJU-FUNDAJU and the CJG. In addition, this report considers the following organisations, working in coordination with the CJG, to have played a leading role in the organisational process:

- *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala (ANJG)*
- *Organización de estudiantes de Guatemala (ONEG)*
- *Movimiento de Jóvenes por la Paz y la Democracia (MJPZD)* of the Centro de Acción Legal de los Derechos Humanos (CALDH) [human rights legal action centre]
- *Movimiento de Jóvenes Mayas (MOJOMAYAS)*
- *Juventud Obrero Cristiana (JOC)*
- *Asociación Grupos Juveniles Luz y Esperanza (AGJLE)* [association of light and hope youth groups]
- *Programa Juvenil de UDINOV* [UDINOV youth programme]
- *Asociación Grupo Esfuerzo y Superación del Amparo (GESA)* [Amparo effort and growth group association]
- *Movimiento de Jóvenes de la Calle (MOJOCA)* [street youth movement]
- *Organización de Apoyo a una Sexualidad Integral Frente al SIDA (OASIS)*
- *Asociación para el Desarrollo Estudiantil Juanero (ADEJUA)* [Juanero student development association]

Another 34 youth organisations nationwide participated in the consultations on formulation and validation of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*. Both the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala (ANJG)* and the *Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala* are leading the new process of political advocacy in favour of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*. These two bodies are coordinators of other organisations and – together with SODEJU-FUNDAJU – have accumulated the experience necessary to continue the advocacy process that has been designed.

3.2. Characterisation of the endeavour

The advocacy process in favour of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* is a response to the difficult situation of young people in Guatemala and the urgent need to counter the problems that are preventing healthy youth development. There can be no doubt that Guatemalan youth is in urgent need of legal measures to (a) assure the means to social and political participation, (b) permit participation in generating proposals for solving young people's educational, vocational training and capacity-building, health and labour problems, (c) make it easier for them to

fulfil their responsibilities towards the family, community and the environment, and (d) secure their fundamental human rights.

The advocacy process in favour of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* is basically a political project in that it focuses on bodies of the State where decision-making and administrative power to approve and implement policies is centralised. The process is directed to securing the willingness among members of congress and people in government in general to take decision that benefit Guatemala's youth.

The process that gave rise to the law has entailed conducting activities of persuasion, organisation, negotiation, lobbying and mobilisation. Persuasion targeted various sectors of society: youth, women, adolescents, community leaders and government authorities. The organisational activities have been useful for ensuring stronger, more unified youth participation. Negotiations were held specifically with authorities and representatives of government bodies. The lobbying focussed on government and congressional authorities. The social mobilisation took the form of marches, demonstrations, forums, press conferences and meetings.

3.3. How the endeavour proceeded



• Preparation of the Bill (March 2004 - September 2004)

In the *Agenda Nacional* 2003-2012, the CJG agreed that the Bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* would include the following:

- The principles underlying the law;
- The specific rights of youth;
- The specific obligations of youth;
- The organisational structure to promote youth policies, which would include a *Secretaría de Desarrollo para la Juventud* [youth development secretariat] and a *Consejo Nacional de la Juventud* [national youth council]. Specific structures are necessary at the municipal level to promote local youth policies, programmes and projects;
- The functions of the organisational structure;
- The areas of intervention corresponding to the main problems facing youth; and
- The principles and commitments of the State in promoting youth participation and organisation (inclusion, pluri-culturality, gender equity and so on).

• Written consultation of youth organisations and civil society

Consultations were started using a questionnaire directed to youth grassroots and leaders in order to obtain input to formal preparation of the Bill, which would then be validated consensually with the youth organisations.

The questionnaire contained, among other things, questions on the nature and precise statement of the law, its object and objectives, the role of the State, the main rights and obligations, the definition and functions of the administrative structures, what should sustain the promotion of public policies, what mechanisms for youth participation and organisation should be set out in the Law and so on. Responses to this questionnaire were taken prior to the seminar called by the CJG and the ANJG to discuss the law.

• Survey and study of other Latin American youth laws

In parallel with the written consultation, the SODEJU-FUNDAJU team studied Costa Rica's *Ley de la Persona Joven* and Venezuela's *Ley Nacional de Juventud*. Both laws provide for policy bodies to be set up to ensure that youth legislation is applied in full and set out arrangements for youth participation and consultation.

Later, the team also studied the youth laws of the Dominican Republic and Spain. They took a special interest in studying Guatemala's *Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia* (LEPINA) and other Guatemalan laws. These readings permitted a comparative analysis that yielded valuable input to the discussion and formulation of the Bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*.

• Discussion of the Bill for the Ley de Juventud

Following all that is described above, on 29 and 30 June 2004, a seminar was held to discuss the youth law. Using a participatory methodology, fundamental aspects of the law, including its final title, were considered and approved. The youth leaders who participated there represented 25 organisations.

Among the issues discussed, the following stood out for their complexity: delimitation of the age range, the central youth policy promotion structure and the system of youth participation. After substantial discussions of these topics it was concluded that youth would be defined in legal terms as aged from 13 to 30 years (in line with the LEPINA and international standards including Central American laws and UNESCO criteria); that the central youth policy promotion structure (to replace the CONJUVE) would be the *Secretaría de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* [secretariat for comprehensive youth development], although the majority favoured a ministry of youth, which would not be politically feasible; and that the system for youth participation would be national forums, state forums and municipal forums, which would be connected to the *Sistema de Consejos de Desarrollo Urbano y Rural* [system of urban and rural development councils].

• **Technical drafting of the Bill for the Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud**

The Bill was drafted by a technical team responsible for its final structure and drafting, and was submitted as the '*Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*'. The Bill was validated and revised by the organisations of the CJG in September. The main features and chapters of the Bill produced in this way are shown in the diagram below. Lawyers and congressional advisers were consulted to ensure that the Bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* could be submitted to the chairman of the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia*.

Final outline form of the Bill.

Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud	
	Substantive Aspects
	Chapter I: General Provisions.
	Chapter II: Rights and Obligations of Youth.
	Section I: Main rights of youth.
	Section II: Duties and obligations of youth.
	Organisational Aspects
	Chapter III: Agencies for Integral Youth Development
	Section I: National System for Integral Youth Development.
	Section II: National Secretariat for Comprehensive Youth Development.
	Section III: National Youth Forum
	Section IV: State Youth Forums.
	Section V: Municipal Youth Forums
	Public Policies and Promotion of Youth Participation
	Chapter IV: Integral Youth Policies
	Chapter V: Youth Organisation and Participation
	Implementation of the Law
	Chapter VI: Temporary Provisions.

• **Submission of the Bill for acceptance as a Measure (October 2004-August 2005)**

Once the Bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* was complete, talks were held with the chairman of the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* – at the time Congressman Jorge Luis Ortega – for him to sponsor the Bill before the full House of Congress.

The Bill was presented to him on 19 October 2004 at an official meeting that also included jointly designing the strategy to have the Measure become law in 2005.

Presentations on the Bill were given to the President of Congress, the *Comisión Presidencial de Derechos Humanos* (COPREDEH) [presidential commission on human rights], the *Consejo Nacional de la Juventud* [national youth council], the *Foro Permanente de Partidos Políticos* [permanent political party forum], the *Red Interpartidaria de Jóvenes* [inter-party youth network], the *Secretarios de Juventud de los Partidos Políticos* [political parties' youth secretariats], the *Director del Programa de Valores Democráticos de la OEA* [director of the OAS program on education for democratic values and practices] and UNICEF's National Representative in Guatemala. This series of presentations generated expectations and certain conditions favourable to the Bill's being admitted to Congress as a Measure.

The CONJUVE expressed opposition to the Bill. It explained that it would submit a Bill of its own, which never happened. This is thus regarded as a diversion from the process initiated by the CJG.

During 2005 the CJG representatives and the SODEJU/FUNDAJU technical team continued with the work of advocacy Congress, firstly to make the Bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* known to the benches and members of congress; and secondly to manage to get the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* to submit the Bill formally as a Measure. In spite of the offers made by the chairman of this committee, action by parliamentary advisors who had been tasked with drafting the explanatory statement and technical revision of the Bill's content was rather ineffectual and progress was slow.

Lastly, on the basis of the initial draft explanatory statement prepared by the advisors to the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia*, the SODEJU/FUNDAJU technical team prepared the final Bill, which was expanded with data and qualitative information on the situation of Guatemalan youth, plus descriptions of each chapter and section. This explanatory statement was to accompany the Bill.

At the end of this stage, Congressman Jorge Luis Ortega presented the Bill to the full house of Congress on 1 August 2005. The full house mandated the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* to issue the relevant opinion in order for the Bill to move ahead in the legislative process.

• **Work for a favourable opinion on the Measure for the Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud (September 2005-November 2006)**

Finally, in November 2005, the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* discussed the Measure and proposed some changes. The mechanism for electing the *Secretario Nacional de Juventud* [national youth secretariat] was eliminated. It was proposed to modify the *Ley del Ejecutivo* [executive order] by introducing a new chapter creating the *Secretaría de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* [secretariat for comprehensive youth development] and setting out its overall functions; participation by representatives of the national, state and municipal youth forums on the development councils was also eliminated. Despite the serious discussions that led to the amendments mentioned above, the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* scheduled no further meetings and by the end of 2005 the committee chairman had not managed to have the opinion signed.

• **Efforts in 2006**

For 2006, in spite of the difficulties and obstacles, the *Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala* (CJG) [youth coordination for Guatemala] decided to proceed with the advocacy plan prepared in 2005, updating it with new ideas and with an information campaign. Briefly, the following action was taken:

- Coordination with the chairman of the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia del Congreso de la República* [congressional committee on juvenile and family affairs].
- A favourable opinion was obtained from the committee's advisors, and was later revised and improved by the SODEJU/FUNDAJU.
- The advocacy work continued, targeting members of congress and benches with representation on the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia*.
- In the context of celebrations of National and International Youth Day (12 August 2006), a number of activities were conducted to bring the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* to issue the favourable opinion.
- The '*Encuentro Nacional de Juventud*' [national youth congress] was held. At the main forum of the meeting, Congressman Ortega once again committed himself to obtaining the opinion in favour of the Measure.
- An information campaign entitled '*USB - Usted Sabe Bastante, recuerde cuando fue joven*' [You know a lot: remember when you were young].
- The *IV Festival Nacional de la Juventud* [4th national youth festival] voiced demands in favour of approval of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* (19 to 22 October 2006).
- Participation in the 20 October march, publicly demanding a favourable opinion and approval of the Measure for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*.

Clearly the CJG and other youth organisations took important action during 2006 to gain a favourable opinion on the Measure for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* from the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* and moreover for it to be approved by the full house of Congress. However, this was not achieved during this period. The main obstacles arose in the context of legislative politics and included senseless argumentation, unwarranted declarations from the CONJUVE and a lack of political will among the members of congress sitting on the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia*.

• The favourable opinion is obtained, but the Measure is not approved (January 2007 to November 2007)

Early in 2007 a new chairman, Congressman Rolando Morales, was appointed to the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia del Congreso de la República*. Advocacy efforts prioritised the new chairman and the committee members. Also work to persuade the members on the benches continued.

The CJG implemented its advocacy plan for 2007: taking advantage of the electoral situation it decided to re-introduce the issue of youth into that year's electoral process. In that framework, a call was issued for a National Pact and Municipal Pacts for Youth to be signed, including commitments from the political parties *Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza* (UNE) and *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG), and from more than 20 mayors-elect.

Working meetings were held with Congressman Rolando Morales, who expressed an interest in the issue of youth and a willingness to support the favourable opinion pending from the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia*, and gave assurances that the law would be approved by August 2007. It was not until 19 September, however, that 17 members of congress sitting on the committee finally signed the bill.

Perceiving the opportunity offered by the electoral situation and the favourable opinion on the Bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*, a series of meetings were held with various members of congress, some of them on the *Junta Directiva del Congreso* [board of congress] and including the President of Congress, in order to obtain approval

of the law in a short time. These members of congress offered to include the Measure on the legislative agenda. On 13 November 2007, the CJG and SODEJU-FUNDAJU made a final effort with the 2004-2008 legislature. On that occasion, a delegation was received by the President of Congress, who once again offered to have the Measure included in the last period of sessions. That promise was not kept either. The period of Congressional sessions ended and the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* was not approved.

• **Concrete opposition and the CJG response (December 2007 to August 2008)**

The new government and legislature that were elected took office on 14 January 2008. In the same process, a new member of congress – belonging to one of the most conservative parties whose line is to ‘criminalise’ youth – took office as chairman of the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia*.

The CJG met with caucus leaders and younger members of congress with a view to including the Bill, with the favourable opinion, on the legislative agenda. On 15 March 2008, the Bill entered the agenda, but on the initiative of one congressman (a former director of CONJUVE) the Bill was returned to the *Comisión del Menor y la Familia* on the argument that it was in breach of the constitution.

Congress set up an extraordinary committee on youth, whose chairman submitted a youth bill providing for a different structure and omitting the topics of sexual diversity and participation by youth organisations in the bodies to be instituted by the law. Those issues, the thinking now goes, are the – previously unstated, now explicit – obstacles to the process of approval of the law.

The CJG met with the CONJUVE and the youth committee’s president and it was possible to engage in a dialogue, which is reaching agreement on a Bill based on the proposal that was originally submitted by young people and on the proposal presented by the chairman.

3.4. Main difficulties in the process

A number of difficulties have arisen in the process of formulation and preparation of the Bill for the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*. This section singles out the most significant of them.

- During the written consultation and other forms of validation it was not possible to obtain the opinions of all the youth organisations that make up the ANJG and the CJG, nor those of other organisations consulted independently.

- Input from a good number of youth organisations was not used fully, because they were unaware of how a law is formulated.

- The CONJUVE took an opposite path in spite of the government’s having committed itself in this direction. The impression is that this blocked the process of formulation of the law in that they sponsored a parallel youth policy proposal.

- There was opposition from some sectors and international organisations because of the way the Bill was prepared. They regard it as practically a requirement that such proposals be prepared by international consultants. They called into question the content of the bill, failing to give due value to the input from grass-roots youth organisations.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Even though the law has not yet been definitively sanctioned, the organisational and alliance-building processes that this endeavour has generated are unprecedented in Guatemala. This final section presents the main conclusions and lessons learned from this valuable experience.

4.1. Relations and coordination

Coordination relations among the main actors have been horizontal, especially in decision-making. In this way consensus has been reached as regards what specific work is to be done and the advocacy process in general. This kind of coordination has made for closer ties of solidarity and has leveraged the actors' organisational and collective decision-making capabilities.

Coordination at the highest level has been conducted among the representatives of the three organisations that have led the advocacy process, viz.: the *Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala* (CJG), the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes* (ANJG) and the SODEJU-FUNDAJU. Acting jointly, these organisations have been able to facilitate the process and draw a wide-ranging response to calls for other activities.

In evaluative terms, the levels of coordination can be considered sufficiently effective, particularly because participation by all the youth organisations is nearly permanent and also because they participate actively in most activities demanded by the advocacy process in favour of the law. All the organisations have cooperated, some as channels for information and youth mobilisation and others cooperating by providing technical, logistic and economic support for both strategic actions and more occasional or localised activities.

In terms of public representation, the youth organisations' main leaders have taken a leading role in the media, at public events and at moments of negotiation, lobbying and calls to action. Culturally and politically, the youth organisations are highly representative of their various constituencies, which legitimates the advocacy process.

There is no doubt that the organized action of Guatemala's youth movement on specific areas of legislation and public policy-making reinforces civic participation.

4.2. Factors critical to participation

At certain points, not all the youth organisations have assumed and fulfilled occasional commitments. This was due mainly to work constraints in the respective organisations. Other organisations were unable to respond immediately to urgent demands. Appropriate communication, consultation and motivation mechanisms must therefore be set up in order for participation to be more timely.

Some youth organisations which disagreed with the relationship established with the then government in the context of the advocacy were not interested in playing an open, leading role. Accordingly, two of them (HIJOS and ACJ) decided to withdraw from the coordination.

In 2006 the process slowed, due to the CJG's relying on Congressman Jorge Luis Ortega. He promised he would obtain a favourable opinion in the short term; however, he failed to do so in the course of the year. According to information received, he negotiated with CONJUVE to delay the opinion in order to give the government and congress time to ratify the *Convención Iberoamericana de Derechos de los Jóvenes* [Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights].

It became clear that Congress acts in response to circumstances, particularly on political issues where it has an interest and not on social issues relating to the population's needs. There is a great deal of informality and irresponsibility in the work of members of congress. That being the case, mechanisms for advocacy and pressure have to be firm in order to gain their attention and manage to get them to support initiatives such as the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud*.

The issue of youth was not a priority for the 2004-2007 government. The authorities behaved demagogically and did not fulfil the commitments they had assumed towards the youth organisations that led the advocacy process.

4.3. Participation by indigenous peoples - Coordination and alliances

A number of indigenous peoples' youth organisations took part. The most representative of them was the *Movimiento de Jóvenes Mayas* of CONAVIGUA. They were present in all the processes and played an active role in all the advocacy activities.

Indigenous youth organisations formed part of the coordinating structure. They took the lead at several points in the process. They continue to play a leading role and form part of the national executive coordination of the *Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes de Guatemala* (ANJG).

4.4. Present state of participation

The *Coordinadora Juventud por Guatemala* continues to be the locus for encounters and joint action by its member civil society youth organisations. The advocacy strategies for the coming year and their agenda of work focus on securing approval of the *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* and fulfilment of the agreements signed by the new government.

Conditions for participation have improved in that a favourable opinion has been issued on the Law and the new government has signed a commitment undertaking to promote a whole youth agenda.

The youth organisations have agreed to continue with the endeavour. On the basis of redefining certain coordination mechanisms, the CJG is restructuring and there is more interest among the organisations in engaging in the steering bodies so as to expand the CJG and make it more of a force at the local level. One thing is abundantly clear: the work of advocacy should continue beyond the brief stagnation in 2007-2008.

The youth organisations have also gained strength and their social presence has improved on the basis that they are valid partners in dialogue for the youth sector they represent.

Organisationally some groups have managed to consolidate their internal processes, by drawing on the experiences of other organisations and getting support in occasional, localised actions and activities.

Funding for improving youth organisations' levels of organisation, participation, expression and mobilisation continues to be scarce. For that reason, it is indispensable that joint endeavours – as promoted by SODEJU-FUNDAJU – be made regardless of the funding that each one contributes.

4.5. Socio-political scope of the Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud

The *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* is an instrument for changing Guatemalan society. It is conducive to structural changes that favour youth development and eradicate the authoritarian, repressive view that is hegemonic in the Guatemalan State. The Law reaffirms and extends the rights of youth and at the same time sets out their obligations to society and the State.

In keeping with the peace accords, the Measure for the law establishes mechanisms for youth participation from the local to the national level, reaffirming the processes of decentralisation of the State. This contributes to creating and developing a participatory citizenship that will revolutionise and introduce changes from the community level to the national level.

On the other hand, the Measure for the law favours conditions in which Guatemalan society can accept that its youth is culturally and ethnically diverse: its youth is Maya, Garifuna, Mestiza and Xinca. The content of the law makes it explicit that youth cultural identities must be respected and must not be a basis for discrimination.

The law acknowledges openly that Guatemala's development rests on its youth. Youth is indispensable to consolidating real participatory democracy and to building an equitable, inclusive society.

The *Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud* is an instrument of social and environmental protection, but at the same time of co-responsibility. It promotes and develops mechanisms for youth participation as a function of their social co-responsibility by setting up proper channels for youth to present its proposals, demands and aspirations, which then become decisions of State. The law requires that the structures of State for youth be constituted by young citizens.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of engaging in this endeavour and the related reflective thinking, the various participants involved in the systematization process consider it important

to share the following recommendations with others who may decide to embark on similar endeavours, whether for reasons of political advocacy or social organisation.

- In order for processes of advocacy by youth to be conducted successfully one should seek constantly to expand participation by youth organisations and personalities and to build alliances in order to gain greater strength and grassroots support.
- At times, the lack of funding makes it difficult to engage youth organisations in advocacy, pressure and mobilisation, and it is therefore necessary to build alliances and seek greater support for the Measure for the Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud to be approved by the incoming members of congress.
- The work of advocacy requires organisation, training and capacity-building for an extensive team of young people, accompanied by technical staff, so that they are better equipped to pursue the advocacy activities and better prepared to deploy activities and strategies, without unnecessary improvisation, in response to the contingencies of the negotiating process. That team should be broadly representative of youth and comprise a diversity of youth organisations. That helps prevent centralising decision-making and concentrating activities in a small group of people.
- In order to promote the approval of a law in Congress, it is better – once the bill has been drafted – for it to be submitted as a ‘measure’ by a group of members of congress, and much better if they represent various different political parties. This prevents the legislative process from becoming individualised and stalling due to the political interests or personal problems of the individual ‘sponsor’, as happened with this endeavour. The bill submitted would have been more effective if it had been sponsored by members of congress of a specific party in which it had substantial support.
- In the process of drafting a bill, it is better to seek outside advice on preparing certain technical and legal aspects to meet legislative requirements, such as the statement of reasons and the legal opinions. For a variety of reasons, including inefficiency and/or negligence, the advisors to members of congress, caucuses and congressional committees are remiss in fulfilling these requirements in good time.
- Given that the political pace of Congress is extremely slow, advocacy plans should be structured to be executed in the medium term by carrying out a variety of lobbying and mobilisation activities periodically in order to keep demands current and bring pressure to bear to further the aims of the political effort to sway Congress. On the other hand, advocacy strategies always entail planning other options and alternative plans, which includes physical presence and organising emergency visits, with the idea of not allowing the political pressure to slack off.
- In order to be objective and realistic, one should not trust fully the offers ‘normally’ made by members of congress and other government authorities, because mostly they do not keep their promises. In that regard, various options should be available to enable the process to continue and to respond immediately to such situations.
- Communication, publicity and information strategies should be permanent in order to keep young people, social organisations and the general public informed and as a means of pressuring members of congress and other political agents towards approving the Measure for the Ley de Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud. That means maintaining close relations with reporters, journalists, editors and media owners. ■

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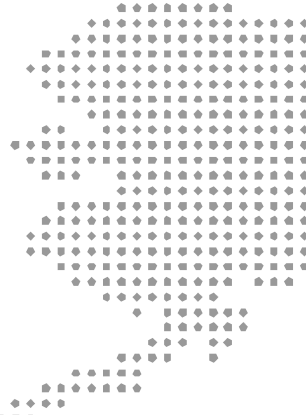
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