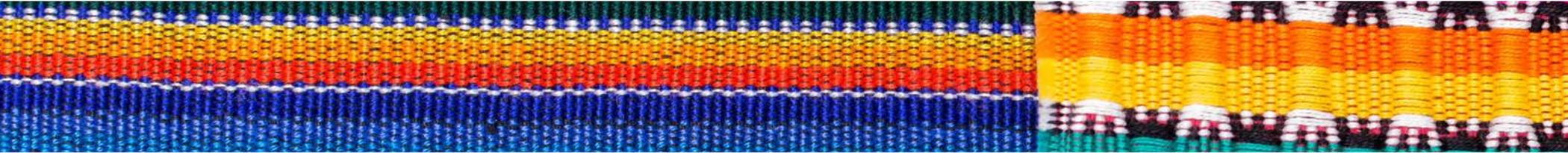




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# **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS, A PLAN FOR THE PRESENT TO BUILD THE FUTURE**



**COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT PLANS,  
A PLAN FOR THE PRESENT TO  
BUILD THE FUTURE**

February 2021



This publication is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of CRS and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADIPO	Association for the Comprehensive Development of the Western Highlands
AVANCSO	Association for the Advancement of Social Sciences in Guatemala
CEPAL	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
CLD	Communities Leading Development
COCODE	Community Development Council
COMUDE	Municipal Development Council
CONADUR	National Council for Urban and Rural Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DMP	Municipal Planning Directorate
CDP	Community Development Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEGEPLAN	Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## PRESENTATION: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

### A Message from the Catholic Relief Services Country Representative

The leadership and empowerment of the highland communities to build planning processes has proven the effectiveness of the community-based development model and has generated tools to bring the most pressing needs closer to public-private investment in development. Community leadership that directs and manages its own development creates the opportunity to share the vision of a promising future with leaders at the local, regional and national levels, while concretely charting a development path based on inclusiveness, social cohesion and dialogue among the communities' populations.

The process that USAID's Communities Leading Development (CLD) Project has carried out for the construction of the Community Development Plans has fostered the emblematic emergence of the voices of women, youth and people with disabilities. It is also a faithful reflection of one of the guiding principles of Catholic Relief Services -subsidiarity-, through which we trust in the capacity of communities to be protagonists and decision makers of their own development. With the presentation of these plans, the stage is set to use planning as a tool for investment in development. This process has been possible thanks to the trust and resources of the people of the United States of America, in line with USAID's 2020-2025 strategy in Guatemala, which prioritizes interaction with Indigenous Peoples.

The results of two hundred Community Development Plans (CDP), developed using a participatory methodology, are represented in synthesized form in this document, and are the outcome of the joint effort of the Community Development Councils (COCODE) with the active and inclusive participation of 27,652 people in 627 focus groups and 378 community assemblies. Catholic Relief Services is proud to act through this project as a catalyst in the process of generating community development plans, in consortium with its local partners Pastoral Social Caritas los Altos, Caritas San Marcos, and in previous years with Mercy Corps and ADIPO.

With our confidence in the voice of the communities participating in the CLD project, I reiterate the invitation to read the community development plans and to use them in consultation with the communities to make decisions that promote inclusive development and the construction of a country of opportunities for its population.

**John Briggs**



The work of the project, in coordination with local organizations and institutions, has resulted in the design, drafting, approval, and implementation of CDPs in 203 participating communities.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Guatemala continues to be a country with great inequalities. According to the 2020 Human Development Report, Guatemala placed 127th out of 170 countries in the Human Development Index ranking and 119th in the Gender Inequality Index. Inadequate social services and infrastructure, as well as limited economic and educational opportunities exacerbate and reinforce cycles of poverty and chronic malnutrition, particularly in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. This situation affects the majority of citizens, especially rural populations, indigenous peoples, women, and youth.

The “K’atun, Our Guatemala 2032” National Development Plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are a guide for planning and implementing actions to achieve changes in the context of poverty and inequality in the country. In this regard, it is at the community level where strategic planning for development takes on great relevance, since it is at this level that the needs and problems that afflict the population can be identified firsthand, thus allowing for interventions that are more effective.

Considering the above, the CLD Project makes its contribution in the Western Highlands of Guatemala with a five-year project (2016-2021), whose objective is to improve the quality of life of participants, including women, indigenous people, youth, and people with disabilities in more than 200 communities in 30 municipalities in the departments of Totonicapán, San Marcos, Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango and Quiché.

Specifically, the project seeks to empower citizens through participation in the development and implementation of the CDPs, as well as to ensure their sustainability through the involvement and resources of the private sector.

Catholic Relief Services has taken on the coordination of these efforts, which led to a consortium initially composed of Mercy Corps, NCBA CLUSA, Cáritas San Marcos, Cáritas Los Altos, and the Association for the Comprehensive Development of the Western Highland (ADIPO, for its acronym in Spanish), to implement the project.

The work of the project, in coordination with local organizations and institutions, has resulted in the design, drafting, approval and implementation of CDPs in 203 participating communities. The CDPs are expected to be priority instruments that will contribute to community development management over the next 10 years.

The project is supported financially by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with the objective of promoting the participation and inclusion of citizens in the development and implementation of CDPs, equally taking into account the needs and priorities of men and women.



Communities Leading Development operates on the firm belief that the impetus for community planning efforts should originate from the community itself, with the community integrated in the identification of solutions to development challenges.

## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF PLANNING IN GUATEMALA

### 2.1 National Planning

In 2002, the National Council for Urban and Rural Development (CONADUR, for its acronym in Spanish) was created to support the planning processes led by the Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming (SEGEPLAN, for its acronym in Spanish), which is the institution responsible for assisting and promoting national planning. CONADUR's objective is to organize and coordinate public administration through the formulation of development policies, articulated from the centralized level and from national, regional, departmental, municipal, and community councils. One of the main planning tools achieved by SEGEPLAN and CONADUR was the "K'atun, Our Guatemala 2032" National Development Plan, which sets a series of long-term goals and objectives for the next 20 years. K'atun consists of five priority areas: 1) Urban and rural Guatemala, 2) Well-being for the people, 3) Wealth for all, 4) Natural resources for today and for the future, and 5) The State as a guarantor of human rights and driver of development.

Following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the Guatemalan State in 2015, SEGEPLAN has led efforts to link the different goals, indicators and targets of the SDGs with national goals and priorities. These efforts have been reflected in the Strategy and the Report on the articulation of the SDG Agenda with the "K'atun, Our Guatemala 2032" National Development Plan. The importance of this linkage lies in the possibility of a more detailed monitoring of the SDGs achievement and the progress in the fulfillment of K'atun 2032.

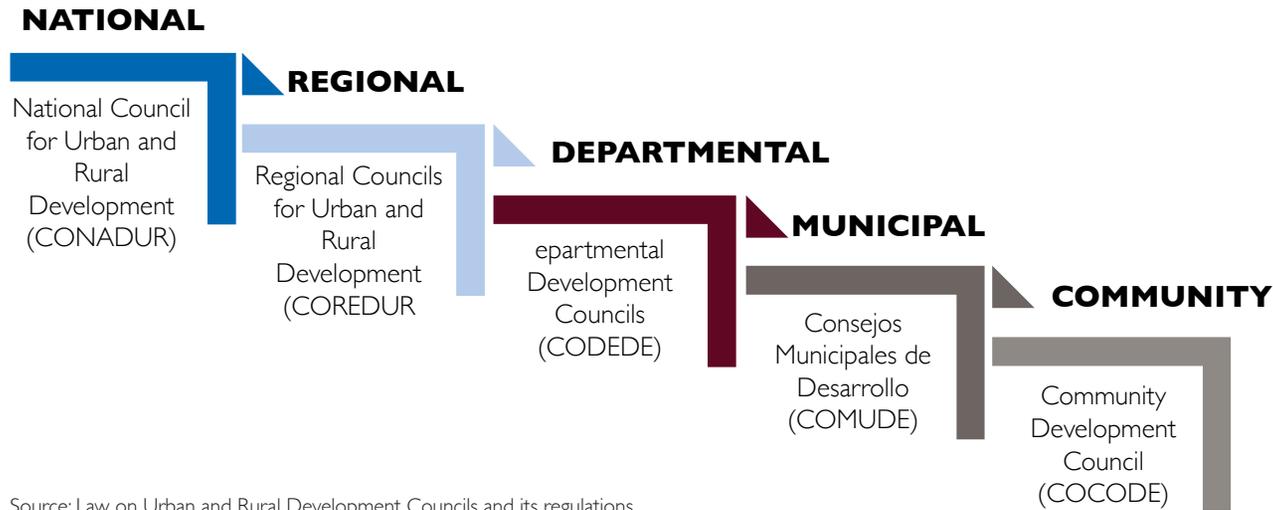
### 2.2 Departmental and Municipal Planning

Local planning relies on decentralization as a means to bring the capacity to define local policies closer to the people and their authorities, since they are ultimately the ones who have first-hand knowledge of their own needs. In Guatemala, there are at least three laws that seek to facilitate the pursuit of development to its own inhabitants and their authorities, all through local autonomy, citizen participation, and economic and administrative decentralization. These laws are:

**General Decentralization Law (Decree 14-2002):** Main objectives include the universalization of basic services, facilitating participation and social control in public management, strengthening the management capacity of local administrations, and reinforcing the identity of community, municipal, departmental, regional and national organizations.

**Law on Urban and Rural Development Councils (Decree 11-2002):** Seeks to promote economic and administrative decentralization through the proposed participation of people and different sectors under a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual approach. The system of Development Councils consists of different scales (see figure 1).

FIGURE I. DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL SYSTEM STRUCTURE



**Municipal Code (Decree 12-2002):** Objective is to develop the constitutional principles concerning the organization, government, administration, and operation of the municipalities. It highlights the autonomous nature of the municipalities in deciding on their territory, as well as formulating and executing different policies and plans for land use for the benefit of their inhabitants. Residents also have the right and obligation to participate voluntarily in the processes of formulation, planning, execution and evaluation of municipal public policies.

### 2.3 Local Planning

The Law on Urban and Rural Development Councils (Decree 11-2002) states that the mechanism for the participation of the population in local planning processes is through the Community Development Councils (COCODE), which consist of the following members:

- Community assembly, made up of members who reside in the community
- Coordination body, integrated according to its own principles, values, norms and procedures or, in a supplementary manner, according to existing municipal regulations

Among its functions, the COCODE:

- Promotes, facilitates and supports the organization and effective participation of the community and its institutions in the prioritization of needs, problems and their solutions, for the integral development of the community, and reports on the implementation of projects.
- Follows up on the execution of development policies, plans, programs and projects prioritized by the community and verifies their compliance.
- Ensures the proper use of technical, financial and other resources obtained on its own or assigned by the Municipal Corporation, upon recommendation of the Municipal Development Council, for the implementation of community development programs and projects.

The COCODEs are part of the COMUDEs and among the functions of the latter are: to ensure that the formulation of development policies, plans, programs and projects correspond to the needs, problems and solutions proposed by the COCODEs and to ensure that these are incorporated into the policies promoted by the municipalities.

## 2.4 CLD Project and Inclusive Community Planning

One of the aims of the CLD project has been to create conditions at the community level for an effective, albeit gradual, alignment

between the communities and the national planning system through their participation in the National System of Development Councils. The coordination that the CLD project seeks in this area is precisely a commitment to the activation of this bottom-up system. Together with the communities, CLD has been able to gain a sense of their management capacity to promote development through project planning and execution, including different types of stakeholders and institutions in this process.

In accordance with its historical perspective rooted in local context and sensitive to the participation of all social subjects, CLD has sought to ensure in its work with communities that it addresses the rights and needs of all populations, but especially those whose rights have been violated in the social and economic fabric of the community. This includes those who the social structure itself places at greater risk of exclusion (i.e., women, youth, people with disabilities, etc.). CLD has guided its work with these populations by the conviction that it is possible to overcome the situation of vulnerability, so that a community without vulnerable sectors is possible. In addition, it understands that in this field it is necessary to work both on the structural aspects that cause vulnerability and with the subjects themselves to promote their empowerment.



With the community diagnosis, the vision of what they wanted to achieve in the future, and the technical support of the project, the communities proceeded to elaborate and draft their CDPs.

## 3. METHODOLOGY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

### 3.1 Community Development Plans in the CLD Project

One CLD Project objective is to empower communities by enabling their participation in the development and implementation of CDPs. To achieve this aim, the project defined that participation in the identification and prioritization of community needs and assets, strengthening the capacity of the COCODE to lead the development of CDPs, and involving local groups to implement projects that respond to the CDPs were timely actions to achieve inclusive and relevant planning.

In 2017, the CLD Project laid the groundwork for community development planning, with the process of building CDPs. However, initial project efforts in the field revealed a reality that did not reflect the immediate possibilities considered in the original proposal. Field surveys conducted during the selection process of participating communities indicated a weak planning capacity at the local level, finding only 28 sectoral plans on topics such as health, disaster risk reduction, and food security, among others. The rotation within the COCODEs, as well as the lack of continuity with new members, made the need for a revitalized approach even more evident. Given the limited capacity at the local level, it was necessary to develop an integral methodological approach to community planning.

After conducting a comparative analysis of existing community development planning methodologies in the country, the project

determined that the most appropriate experience was the Community Life Plans developed by the Association for the Advancement of Social Sciences in Guatemala (AVANCSO, for its acronym in Spanish), which had experience implementing these life plans in 35 communities in the Western Highlands.

Based on the Community Life Plans, and with AVANCSO's support, CLD developed a methodology that was adapted to the needs of the project, and thus the Community Development Plans emerged, which focused on:

- Contributing to the strengthening of the set of conditions that promote quality of life in the community.
- Building an integral life project, based on: the community's own history and its dreams of constructing and forming its own political-organizational and community model.
- Collectively identifying alternatives for sustainable development.
- Being a strategy of struggle and resistance against the homogenization that threatens the material and cultural reproduction of the communities.
- Serving as a proposal for projection and action, embodying the dreams and goals of the community of building alternatives for a dignified life in the short, medium and long term.

## 3.2 Stages of the Community Development Plans

The preparation of the CDPs consisted of five stages, each with its own characteristics, methodologies and instruments:

- Geographic plan for community selection
- Community diagnosis (quantitative and qualitative)
- Collective construction of strategic actions
- Preparation of the Community Development Plan
- Approval of the Community Development Plan

### 3.2.1 Geographic Plan for Community Selection

During 2017, a methodological process was defined, aimed at reflection and discussion of the geographic area for the selection of intervention communities, based on the participation, feedback, and learning from the organizations that made up the project consortium.

This phase focused on carrying out geographic mapping to select the communities that would participate in the project's actions, with emphasis on identifying those communities where the actions would start in year 1. The original goal for that year was 120 communities; in practice, 123 communities were selected in this first project stage. Starting in project year 2, the other 80 communities were selected using the same method. For this purpose, several instruments and their corresponding forms were defined for data collection.

- Form 1 Record of the visit to the pre-selected communities;
- Form 2 Local diagnosis, community development plan;
- Form 3 Institutional survey that addresses conflictive situations

The information gathered at this stage allowed for the selection of the communities and was an input in the construction of the CDPs.

#### 3.2.1.1 Steps for the Geographical Plan

- a) **Step - 1: Identification of a set of criteria and pre-selection of communities.** Six categories were established for analysis: 1) need for development; 2) pre-existing cooperation work; 3) pre-existing public institutions; 4) community interest; 5) knowledge of potential; and 6) potential for collaboration with the private business sector. In addition, 23 variables were defined that could contribute to the identification of the communities with which the project would work (see Annex 1). After this exercise, the criteria were evaluated; rating the relative importance of each variable (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important) and the scores were calculated. Subsequently, each partner institution responsible for project execution proceeded to make a pre-selection of communities for each of the municipalities under its responsibility. The decision was made to choose a larger number of communities than those that were actually expected to make up the cluster, so that during the field validation stage, some could be eliminated and/or replaced by others in case the initial assessment did not coincide with what was found in the next step.
- b) **Step - 2: Observation visits, information gathering, individual and collective interviews in the communities.** Observation visits were made to 10 pre-selected communities in each municipality. The team completed a technical analysis for each community, considering the municipal, geographic, logistical, and security context of these communities, based on the criteria described in step 1. After the visits, the team carried out information processing and qualitative analysis of the fieldwork

results, as well as the analysis of secondary information, including plans and diagnoses, among others.

### 3.2.1.2 Community Selection

Once the first two steps of the geographic plan were completed, the participant communities were selected for the project as follows:

- Each technical team presented their proposals and supporting qualitative arguments for community selection for discussion.
- Documentation of qualitative arguments
- Adjustments made to proposal of communities
- Territorial analysis with invited specialists
- Final proposal of communities

### 3.2.1.3 Community Post-selection

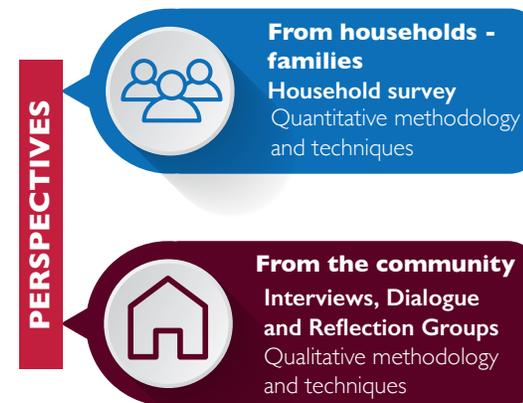
Once the communities were selected, the technical team completed a series of steps prior to starting work on the project:

- Sharing back information to selected and non-selected communities.
- A technical report with all the information was delivered to each community.
- Dialogue initiated with the community, local and municipal authorities, for acceptance of the project intervention.
- Presentation of the project to the community assembly
- Signing of letter of agreement with the communities, defining the scope of the partnership.

## 3.2.2 Community Diagnosis (Quantitative and Qualitative)

To obtain the diagnosis, two perspectives were considered: (1) households and families and (2) the community, through quantitative and qualitative methodologies and techniques.

**FIGURE 2. PERSPECTIVES USED FOR DIAGNOSIS**



Source: Communities Leading Development Project, CRS. Community Development Plan construction process (2018)

### 3.2.2.1 Household-family Perspective

The household survey was used for the community diagnosis. This technique made it possible to obtain more precise information from

the households. The survey allowed for the generalization of results to be able to share with the communities, with the objective of self-recognition and self-evaluation of the way of life, productive strategies, vulnerable sectors and governance. It should be noted that the survey was used because, at the time, there was no updated information of this type, since the most recent information was the Population Census conducted in 2002.

To achieve the aims of the diagnosis, a retrospective sample survey was conducted, which was applied once or at longer intervals as needed, to build a demographic, economic and social history of the communities that would be included in the CDPs.

This survey had the following characteristics:

- Partiality: only a sample of the population was taken.
- Eventuality: it was carried out on an eventual basis since it depended on the needs of the communities.
- Diversity of topics: due to the objective of the project, several topics were covered to generate broader information.
- Cost reduction: compared to a census, surveys reduce costs considerably.
- Optimization of time and human resources

The survey of “rights” was used for the diagnoses. The team utilized household surveys, as the questions are asked in the homes where the people who make up the households to be evaluated are located. This type of survey is obviously more structured because of the number of questions that can be asked, as opposed to a de facto survey, in which the number of questions and topics is limited.

The survey form for the household-based community assessment had 17 sections for better management of data collection:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Geographic location  | 8. Productive work of the household members |
| 2. Characteristics of the dwelling, the home and its services   | 9. Health of the household members          |
| 3. Energy sources for cooking                                   | 10. Training (non-formal education)         |
| 4. Household expenses   | 11. Returnees and deportees                 |
| 5. Receipt of aid and donations                                 | 12. Migration and remittances               |
| 6. Relationship between men and women                           | 13. Land use and tenure                     |
| 7. General information about the people living in the household | 14. Agricultural activity                   |
|   | 15. Livestock activity                      |
|   | 16. Tree cutting or reforestation           |
|   | 17. Loans received                          |

The benefit of the survey of “rights” was the variety of variables that could be collected to identify the community needs and opportunities. Although this approach resulted in a degree of complexity when analyzing the data, information on a range of issues was obtained in a comprehensive and thorough manner.

By conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the sample survey, it was possible to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the problems, opportunities and needs of the communities, since only a small sample of the population was used. When constructing the questionnaire, a larger number of questions were asked than what is typically found on a census ballot. In addition to demographic themes, the surveys included questions from other areas of interest to the communities.

### 3.2.2.2 Community Perspective

The purpose of the diagnostic process from the community's perspective was to understand the dynamics and reality of the community through the vision, perceptions, and conceptions of community members.

The community perspective and the household-family perspective complemented each other, making it possible to understand how the logic of the households and that of the community combined and interrelated to provide an integral vision of the community.

The community perspective facilitated a narrowing of the distance between community desires, more strategic horizons, and ways to organize that would make the desires viable.

While the view from the community was built based on qualitative methodologies and techniques, it is important to note the importance of creating spaces where both individual and collective subjectivities emerged. Thus, the criterion for the organization of the group discussions was the relationship between the subjects and the reflection topics.

The aim was then to facilitate a communication process in which the subjects could manifest, through their expressions and words, their intentions, their positions as subjects, how they felt and how they gave meaning in their daily life experience to the discussion topics.

Reconstructing the threads of history, from the stories, visions and perceptions of diverse subjects from the community, allowed the participants to recognize the social processes that the community has undergone in order to understand what it is and what it has been.

Knowing, being aware of, and reconstructing the origins of the community, the moments they identify as significant -what happened, how did it happen, who participated, what effects did it have on the

community? - allowed participants to understand the present and to propose a different horizon for the future.

For the diagnosis and CDPs, the process facilitated answers to the questions *Who are we?* and *How are we?*, complementing the view from the households. This combined information allowed the community to begin reflecting on the question: *Where are we going?* (the dream of what the community wants to be).

To carry out the process, the following criteria were also taken into account:

- **Temporality:** The time period was defined by taking into account milestones experienced by the community during its history, based on the knowledge of community members.
- **Composition of the groups:** The groups were made up of diverse social subjects from the community, up to a maximum of 16 people. A mapping of actors was used for their selection. The following were considered for their composition:
  - Gender equality -women and men- and age equity -elderly, adults, and youth.
  - Who made decisions and had power; who did not make decisions and who did not have power.
  - Who participated in the organizational forms of the community, and who did not.
  - As much as possible, participation of people with disabilities, migrants, and the LGBTI population.
- **Themes:** Three themes were prioritized for the historical reconstruction.
  - Organization and participation: forms of community organization over time, of population groups; who participated and who did not; who made decisions and who did not.

- Violence: tensions, conflicts, types of violence and towards whom they were directed.
- Development: what the community understood by development, and from that perspective what facts, actions, projects, dynamics, or programs have led to or hindered development.

The process to obtain the community diagnosis was divided into two parts, posed in the form of a question: *Who are we?* and *How are we?*

#### **Who are we? Our origin**

- When was the community founded? Who founded it?
- Why was it founded, what social dynamics led to its founding, what was the organization and participation like at that time, what is the state of development?

#### **How are we? How we see our community**

- Key moments in the history of the community
- Moments that generated significant changes
- Moments that improved and developed the community

Consideration was given to the fact that the reconstruction of the community's history is not only an account of facts or dates, that is, a linear history of events.

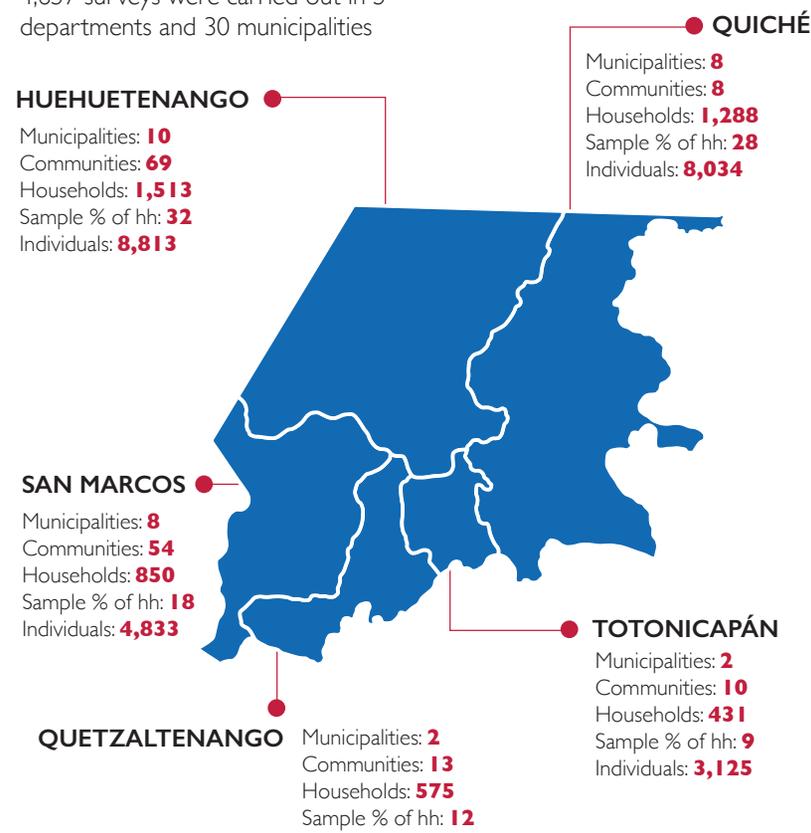
The information collected during the activities was related to the technique used and included:

- Memory
- Material created by the participants
- Recording of the reflection, as an aid for documentation
- Classification of the collected information by topic

The information collected and sorted was entered into an Excel table. This table was expanded if information was generated during the activity on other topics that were considered relevant.

### **FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE SURVEYS**

4,657 surveys were carried out in 5 departments and 30 municipalities



Source: Communities Leading Development Project, CRS.

### 3.2.3. Collective construction of strategic actions

Based on the results of the diagnosis, the project and the community jointly identified the main community problems in a “Knowledge Encounter”:

- Existing problems
- Consequences and effects
- Classification of problems
- Prioritization of problems

This identification made it possible to build the dream of the community (Vision):

- The community we dream of
- The story we want the next generations to tell
- Collective validation

The strategic moment aimed to answer a question:

#### ***Where are we going? or Where do we want to go?***

The idea was that by being aware of their history, their problems and their capacities, the community could realistically identify the ways they wanted to change or deepen the course of their own history. In other words, how they imagined or what vision they had of the future, and what needed to be done to take firm steps in that direction.

The collective definition and validation of the strategic actions, according to areas and problems, was of vital importance, since these are the strategies that the CLD Project would promote with the community and would be the basis of its community development action plan.

### 3.2.4. Drafting the Community Development Plan

This is the moment where, having received the community diagnosis, the vision of what they want to achieve in the future, and with technical support of the CLD project, the communities proceeded to elaborate and draft their CDP, taking into account the following inputs:

- General information, including the exact name of the community, sector, municipality, department and the duration of the development plan.
- Community information, location, boundaries, distances, number of inhabitants.
- Community diagnosis, which shed light on the situation facing the community and how the community has changed over time in terms of social issues; participation, organization and decision making; economy and environment.
- Community vision: the vision, dream or desire of how the community wanted to see itself within a period of time.
- Objectives: what the community wanted to achieve through the construction and implementation of the CDP over time.
- Development areas or issues: the issues to be considered for the development of a community, such as:
  - Economic development: how the community has satisfied its material needs, especially food, as well as production (agricultural, livestock, forestry, handicrafts and trade), income, activities according to its patrimony, among other information.
  - Social development: what has helped people to live better, such as housing, health, roads, public lighting, sewage, plazas and parks, among others?
  - Political development: organization, participation, local authorities, among others.

- Cultural development: identity as people, customs, traditions, traditional clothing, language, cultural richness and others.
- Environmental development: care of the environment, as well as the management and use of natural resources with a focus on community sustainability.
- Strategies and actions: what will we do and how will we do it?
- Who is responsible for executing the defined actions?
- Project planning: The proposals or solution alternatives through programs, projects or activities. This was classified in order of priority (short, medium and long term).
- Project execution schedule: The time expected for projects to be executed according to the established schedule.



- The benefits anticipated for the community, the welfare of people, women, men, youth, disabled people, returnees or the expected results of the project, in the short, medium and long term.

### 3.2.4.1 Community Development Plan Structure

The CDPs were structured to incorporate the information described above. The document had to be clearly written and its language had to be simple for easy access by the entire community. The basic structure included two chapters:

#### CHAPTER I: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY:

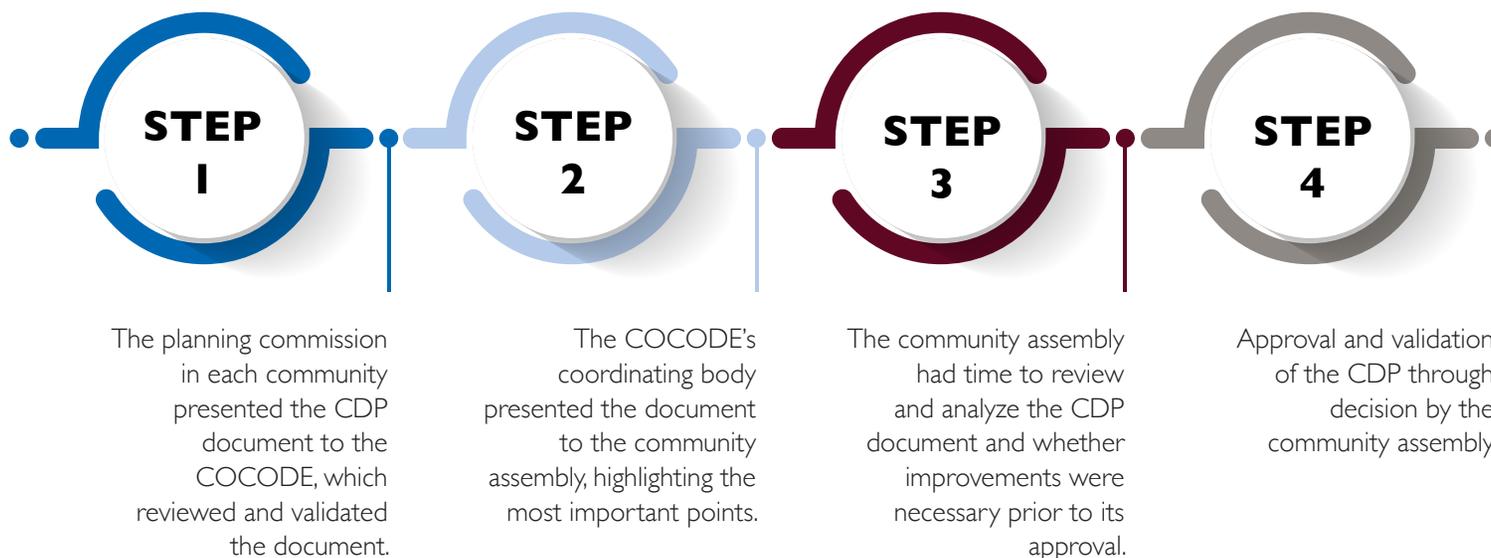
General information about the community, summary of the diagnosis, analysis of problems and needs, SWOT analysis, analysis of the main changes.

#### CHAPTER II. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH:

The vision of community development, summary of prioritized project proposals, description of prioritized proposals, portfolio of proposals.

### 3.2.5 Approval of the Community Development Plan

After it was drafted in each community, the CDP went into the approval phase. In this step, the Community Planning Commission, created to follow up on the CDP design process, was in charge of fulfilling a series of requirements for this purpose.

**FIGURE 4. STEPS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS.Tools and guidelines for planning the development of our community, with participation and inclusion (2019).

### **3.2.5.1 Handing Over the CDP to the Community**

Following the approval process, there was a process of accountability whereby the CDP was officially presented to the participating communities (in written and digital form). As part of activities held in each community, the plan was handed over and the community was informed of the main activities carried out by the project from the beginning through the completion of the CDPs.

In addition to being a process of accountability, it was also a learning process that allowed the application of a Community Perception Survey for the construction of CDPs.

Based on records and various means of verification, participation during the community planning process was documented in 203 communities.

**FIGURE 5. PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESSES**



The following were carried out:



Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records (2020)

### 3.2.5.2 Linkages and Management Based on CDPs

Two ways to link and manage the needs of the communities according to their CDPs with the municipality and other stakeholders were defined.

- **Sharing the CDP with the COMUDE:** the opportunity arose for the coordinating body, through its representatives (titular and alternate), to share the CDP so that all its members are aware of it. By sharing the CDP, it can be linked to the priorities of this coordinating body, facilitate the approval of project proposals by the COMUDE assembly for the benefit of the community itself, and be included in the annual municipal plan and therefore in the investment budget.
- **Inter-institutional management and alliances for CDP implementation:** consists in the identification of stakeholders who are responsible for implementing management and follow-up actions for the CDP in order to promote partnerships that contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of the planning cycle in the short, medium and long terms.

The COCODE coordinating body and its commissions will develop a community advocacy plan through the selection of development priorities in order to attract resources and support from other actors and sectors.

## 3.3 Strengthening Community Organization and Leadership

The CLD project has worked to empower people through their inclusive participation in community development processes, improving the quality of life through community development projects, and installing mechanisms that allow for the long-term sustainability of this support for community-led initiatives. The project's community empowerment approach has sought to support the self-determination of each community to achieve its shared vision for community development and to adopt a community-driven approach to partnerships and leveraging, ensuring a strong and sustainable bridge between communities and external stakeholders. In this regard, the project is a platform that works to catalyze investment in the Western

Highlands, in line with the collectively identified needs and priorities of the most marginalized communities.

The project has supported the identification, training and organization of community members, leaders and local groups that represent the needs and interests of the communities and lead the process of designing inclusive and collaborative community development.

CLD has worked with COCODEs and other community leaders to strengthen their skills in development planning, support the development of CDPs, and raise awareness of the importance of inclusive and participatory planning processes. In addition, CLD has worked with other key leadership bodies such as local water commissions and farmer groups to strengthen their technical and leadership skills to better support the implementation of development projects.

As a result of these efforts, the CLD Project has documented increased participation of women in community assemblies, training sessions and COCODEs and their sub-commissions. Women are also taking on key leadership positions. This allows community development to include women's perspectives and provides more opportunities for their professional development and leadership. In addition, although it remains a challenge, traditional community leaders are increasingly accepting women's leadership and the contribution they offer to community development efforts. The project also developed a leadership training manual for COCODEs to strengthen their project design and management skills. The training curriculum consisted of three modules, each with five sessions; the three modules are inclusive organization and participation, community development management and administrative procedures. The modules and sessions are designed so that COCODEs can select those that are most relevant and interesting to them.

As a result of this training, 1,600 COCODE members, youth, women, and community leaders were trained using the following handbooks:

- **Community Handbook - Our participation, inclusion and organization, the path to community development.** This document provides definitions, reference to laws that support participation and organization, how the community is organized, other forms of community organization, and responsibilities of citizens and authorities for community development. The handbook is intended to be used by the Coordinating Bodies of Community Development Councils (COCODEs), community authorities, community committees and commissions, community leaders, organized groups and potential local project implementers. This document is also complemented with an annex of tools and guides for community participation and organization.



- **Community Handbook - Planning the development of our community, with participation and inclusion.** This document, written in simple and illustrated language, explains the importance of developing a CDP in an inclusive and participatory manner. It also explains the step-by-step actions to be taken when preparing a CDP. The handbook is aimed at COCODE coordinating bodies, community authorities, facilitators, volunteers, municipalities and other institutions that support community planning in order to replicate the planning process. It is complemented by an annex of tools and guides for community planning and project implementation.





The CDP process led to the definition of more than 3,000 strategic actions in total, divided into 5 major areas.

## 4. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY PRIORITIES ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS BY SECTOR

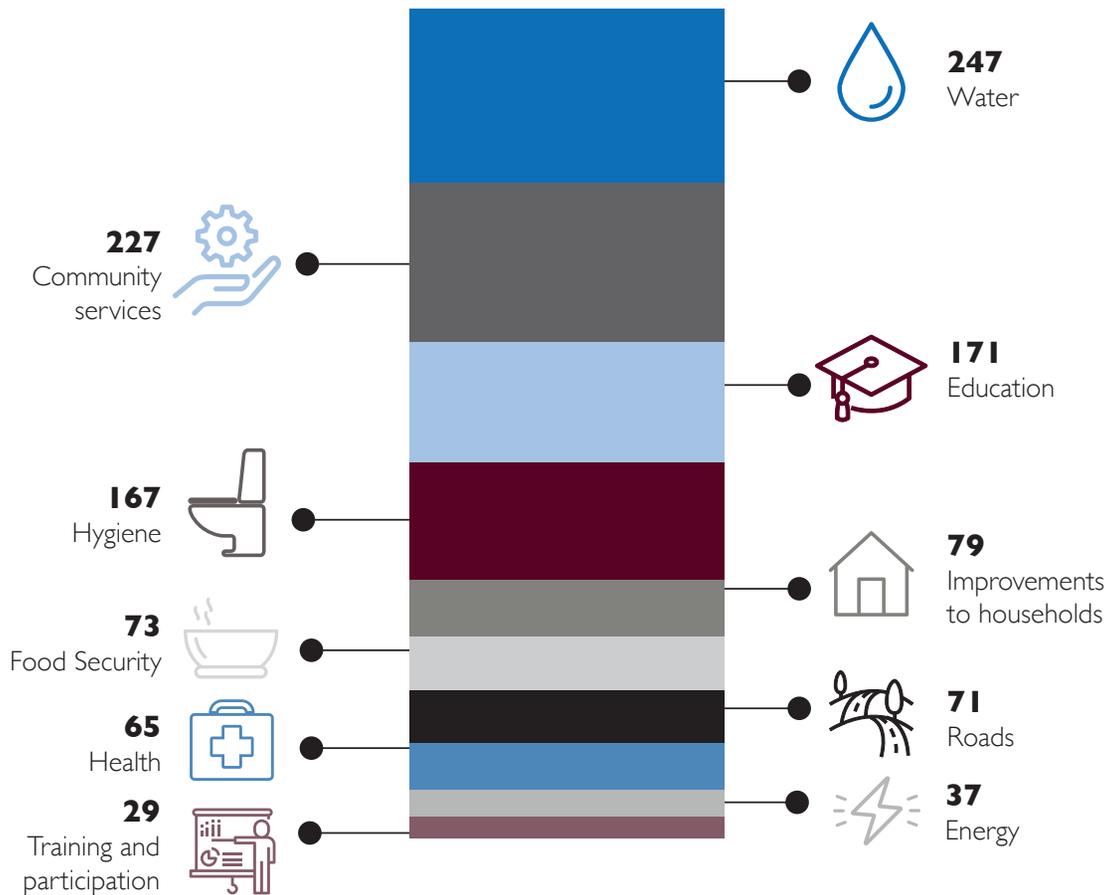
An integral part of the CDPs is the inclusion of prioritized project proposals to be developed in the short, medium and long term, according to the needs identified by the community. In total, more than 3,000 strategic actions, divided into 5 major areas, were identified. The following is a summary of each area.

### 4.1. CDP Results in the 203 Communities

#### 4.1.1 Quality of Life

In the area of quality of life, the five types of projects prioritized by the communities are water; community services, education, sanitation and housing improvement. This area highlights the importance of system management and implementation.

FIGURE 6. PRIORITIES – QUALITY OF LIFE

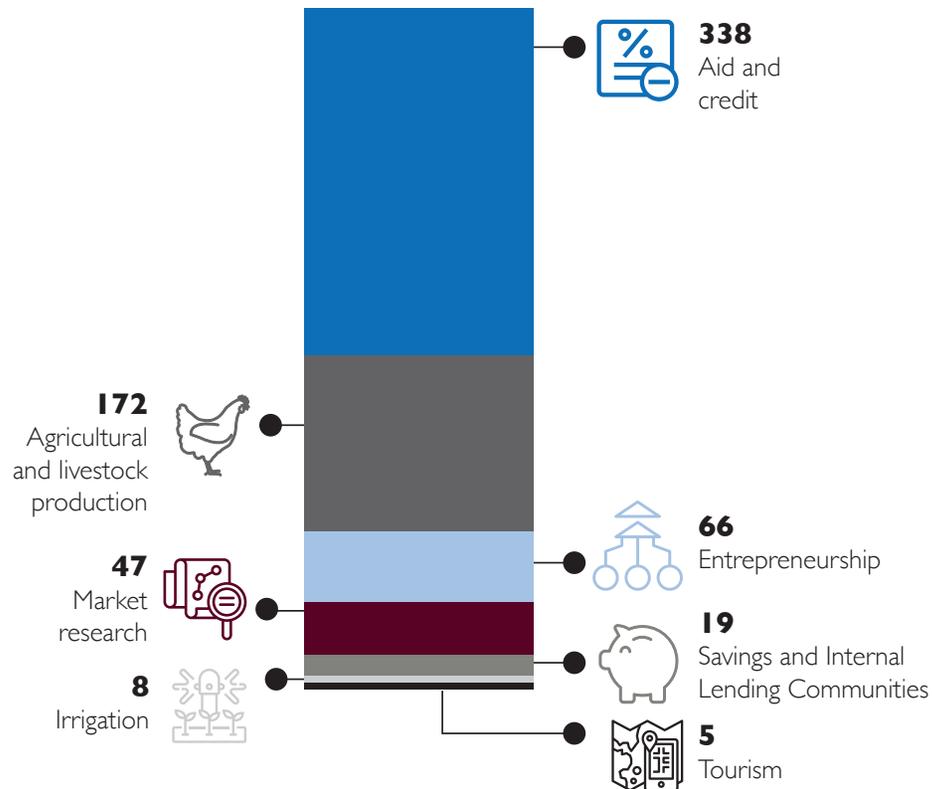


Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records (2020)

### 4.1.2 Economic Development

In terms of economic and productive development, the three types of projects that were prioritized are aid and credit, agricultural production, and entrepreneurship. Technical specialization as well as production are the most important themes in this section.

**FIGURE 7. PRIORITIES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records

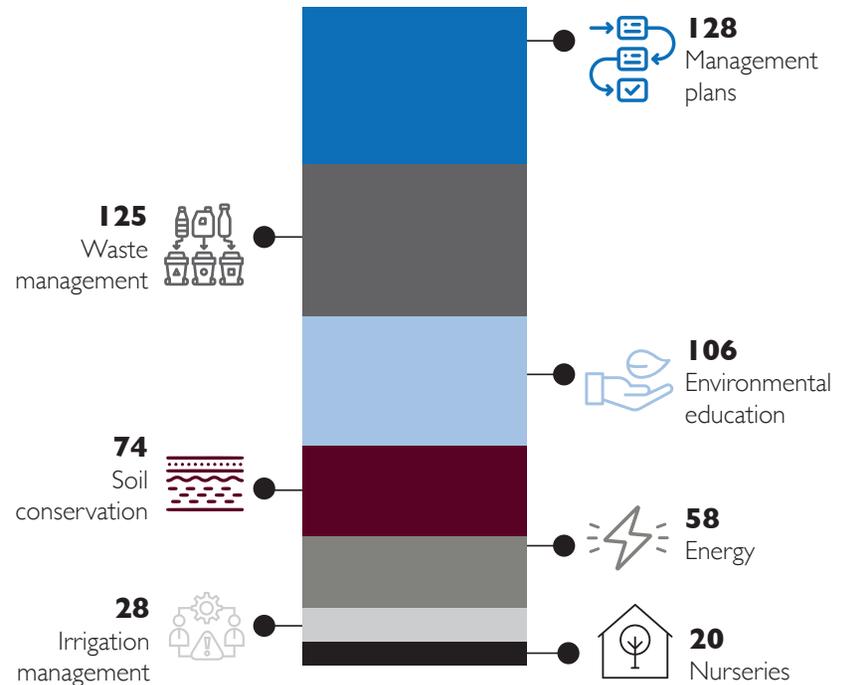




### 4.1.3 Natural Resources

Management plans, waste management and environmental education are the three types of projects prioritized in this area. The most important issues are the management of processes that allow for better care of the environment.

**FIGURE 8. PRIORITIES – NATURAL RESOURCES**

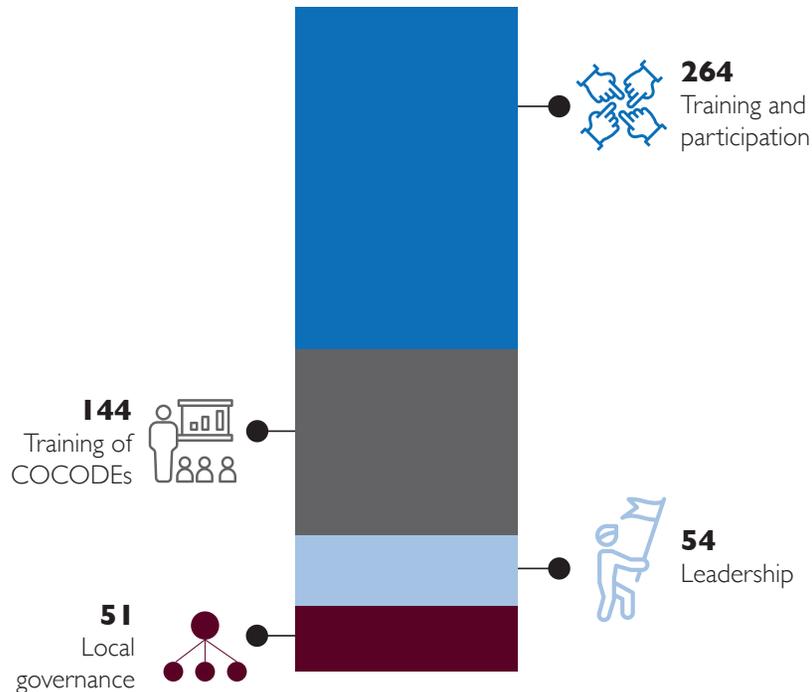


Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records

#### 4.1.4 Organization and Participation

Training and participation, COCODE training, and leadership are the most important types of projects in this area. Women's inclusion in the organization and participation was highlighted, as well as training.

**FIGURE 9. PRIORITIES – ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIPATION**

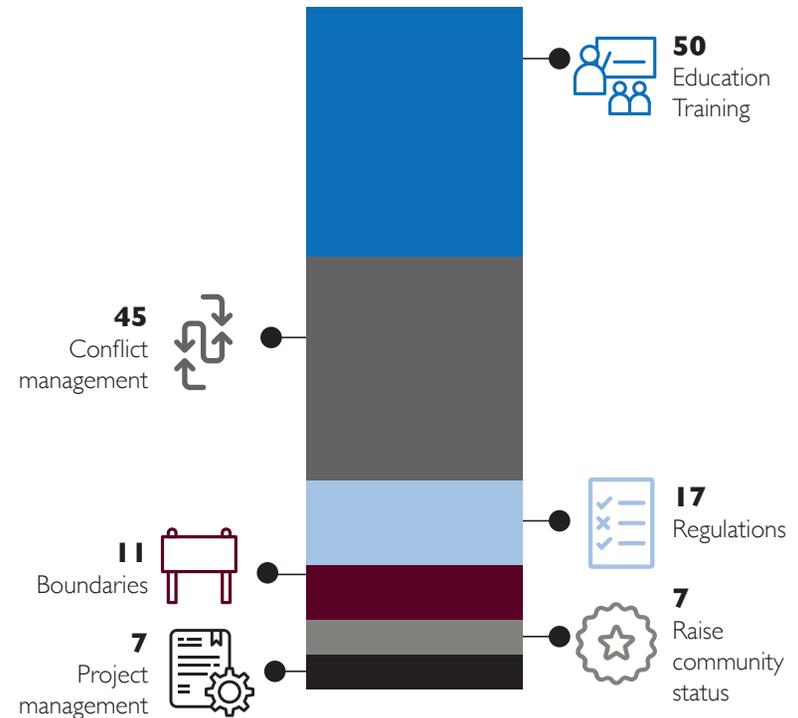


Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records

#### 4.1.5 Conflict Management

Education/training, conflict management and regulations are the three types of projects prioritized in this section. The most important theme is community and family.

**FIGURE 10. PRIORITIES – CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

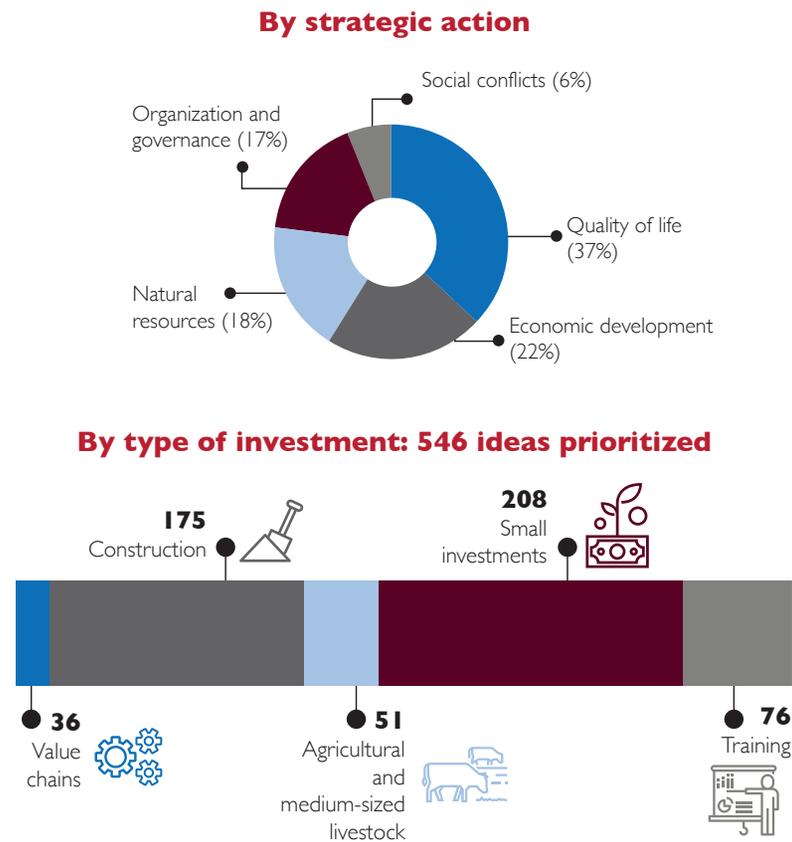


Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records

## 4.2 Initial Portfolio of Community Projects

Considering the strategic actions defined above, project ideas were prioritized, the majority of which fall under small investments and construction.

**FIGURE 11. PRIORITIZED IDEAS**



Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records

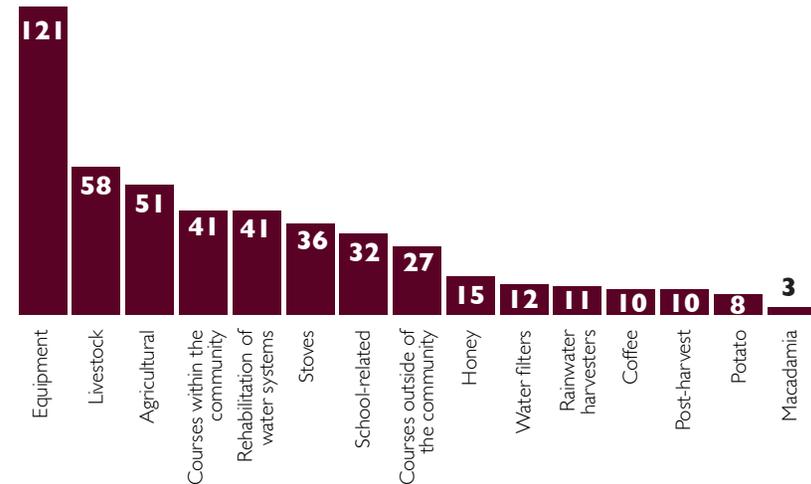
The priorities that originated from the CDPs went from being ideas to specific projects, following a technical process in consultation with the authorities for their implementation.

**FIGURE 12. PROJECT PROFILES GENERATED AS A RESULT OF COMMUNITY NEEDS**

### Project profiles by department

DEPARTMENT	COMMUNITY	INTER-DEPARTMENTAL	INTER-MUNICIPAL	REGIONAL	TOTAL
Totonicapán	37		2		39
San Marcos	105		1		106
Quiché	147		17		164
Quetzaltenango	40	7			47
Huehuetenango	123				123
				2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>481</b>

### Distribution by type



Source: Communities Leading Development Project. CRS. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Records



“There are those who believe that women have no voice or vote, but we have a voice, we just need courage to show it; women are strong, the limitation is only in our heads.” – Magdalena, CLD project participant and COCODE president

## 5. ILLUSTRATIVE CASES OF INVESTMENTS MANAGED ACCORDING TO CDP PRIORITIES

### 5.1 Women's Empowerment

Magdalena, who is 21 years old, lives in the community of El Naranjo, in the municipality of Tajumulco, San Marcos. In May 2019, the COCODE nominated her to run for President, and her community elected her. With this election, Magdalena took on the challenge of leading the coordinating body in the context of centuries-long marginalization of women in community decision-making.

The CLD Project works to sensitize the COCODE and the community in general about the importance of representative participation in the COCODE, including key decision-making positions. CLD's work had a positive effect in El Naranjo. The community opted for a more representative participation by electing Magdalena.

At the beginning of her tenure, the other COCODE members (mostly men) did not take Magdalena's opinions seriously. The accompaniment CLD provided to the COCODE in technical and administrative strengthening, as well as raising awareness of inclusive participation, helped Magdalena gain trust and respect from the COCODE. CLD's Community Institutional Strengthening component works with 203 COCODEs in five departments in the Western Highlands, through a training plan that includes three areas: strengthening community organizations, strengthening administrative capacities and project management.

Magdalena is one of 297 women currently participating in this training process who are members of COCODEs in their communities.

Magdalena has become stronger and has lost her fear of speaking out, and she has taken on a leadership role in the management of her community's welfare. *"There are people who believe that women have no voice or vote, but we have a voice, we just need courage to show it, women are strong, the limitation is only in our heads,"* said Magdalena.



There are many needs in El Naranjo: water, roads, a health center and a cemetery, to name a few. The COCODE led by Magdalena will be working to try to manage solutions to some of these needs. *"I dream of bringing improvements, I have a commitment to my community,"* Magdalena assured.

With good management, Magdalena has the opportunity and the challenge to open the doors for greater participation opportunities for youth and women in the COCODEs. *"There is the possibility that Magdalena will return to the COCODE because she has done a good job and maybe she will be elected to continue leading for another term,"* said Leonel Ixcoy, CLD's Institutional Strengthening Coordinator.



## 5.2 Water Management

Rural communities in the Western Highlands of Guatemala lack models for the management of community water. Without local organizations that envision more long-term strategies or planning, water resources become unsustainable.

In the community of El Potrerillo, in Chiantla, Huehuetenango, the CLD Project has strengthened community management through the implementation of the Community Water Office (OCA, for its acronym in Spanish). Raising awareness among community leaders and system users about the importance of the OCA for proper system management was fundamental to achieve its implementation.

The OCA currently provides a space where leaders and users can hold meetings, discuss improvements and provide information, make decisions about the management, maintenance and repair of the water system, and provide the infrastructure for users to pay fees, arrears and fines. The CLD Project has supported the OCA with capacity building and by equipping the office with computers and furniture.

“Now that we have finished building our pumped water system and it is in operation, a new need was generated, since to keep good control of water consumption we needed equipment and furniture to pass information. Thanks to the project that supported us with the tools, computer and office furniture, which made it necessary for us to build a safe space for the safekeeping of what they donated to us and with this, we now have an office. The office is a good model. It will allow us to collect the necessary dues and we in the Water Commission can have a comfortable space to meet. In addition, we designed it with a small window where we will collect user dues,” stated Bartolomé Ramírez, president of the COCODE and of the Water Commission, El Potrerillo

In 2018, the community identified the urgent need to improve their water systems in their PDC. The COCODE and the water commission, with support from the CLD Project, managed funds from the Municipality of Chiantla equivalent to \$33,000 to purchase construction materials and \$10,000 from the Social Development Fund (FODES). The community contributed \$39,600 in materials and labor to build the system. In addition, the CLD Project assisted with the feasibility study and environmental study during the planning of the project.

As a result, 204 families have access to better quality water in their homes, improving their quality of life.

“This project is important because most of the 204 families of El Potrerillo had to carry water from contaminated wells which, in addition to causing diarrhea, required significant physical effort from the children and women who were mainly responsible for this task,” said Ángel Quiroa, CLD Project Water and Sanitation technician.

Water as a human need requires good management to ensure its sustainability. Community water offices provide the opportunity for communities to operate and manage the vital liquid efficiently and thus maintain the service for many generations.

### 5.3 Economic Growth and Social Development

Three large buyers and exporters dominate the macadamia market in Guatemala; these companies control prices due to their monopoly on access to international buyers. Small-scale producers do not have access to this market, forcing them to sell from their plot to the local market, to intermediaries at lower prices. The inability to access international markets exacerbates inequality and reduces community productivity.

The CLD Project strives to empower companies to address their financial needs to improve their production and ultimately enable small producers to access more attractive and profitable markets. CLD connected Alianza S.A., a small farmer-led organic macadamia production company, to the San Isidro Investment Fund. This investment fund provided a loan of more than US\$155,000 to Alianza S.A. to invest in its processing capacity.



The loan will enable Alianza S.A. to build and equip a processing plant to dry and remove the nutshells and have the capacity to export macadamia kernel (shelled nuts) to international buyers.

*"The construction of a processing plant to extract kernel brings much joy to the entire community and shareholders because it represents development. The plant will bring employment for 40 members of the community. We have been dreaming about this for more than 20 years and now, thanks to the CLD Project, this dream will come true,"* said Javier Jiménez, Alianza S.A. General Director.

The export of macadamia kernels will increase the value captured by Alianza S.A. and enable it to incorporate 100 additional small farmers into its supply chain. The investment will position Alianza S.A. as the first small farmer-owned company in Central America with the capacity to export kernels to the international market. In addition, the investment will reduce transportation costs, reduce nut rejections, contribute to watershed and wildlife restoration, and stimulate employment and livelihoods in the area.

The CLD Project is committed to supporting companies like Alianza S.A. on their path to success and collective development. With this support, Alianza S.A. will directly export macadamia kernels without the intermediaries, accessing prices that are more competitive, creating new jobs and expanding to include more farmers. *"Behind the producers, there are families. We are going to have more jobs and less migration to the United States once we have our macadamia processing plant. The region will boom; our business and our community, too. We will have great economic growth and social development,"* said Jiménez.



The community-led nature of the development strategy empowers indigenous and local populations to identify community needs and assets, and define and prioritize the issues that most urgently affect the communities.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS, KEY LESSONS LEARNED, AND BEST PRACTICES

### 6.1 Conclusions

- There is an urgent need to implement community-driven development plans and projects that allow, as the CLD project has been able to achieve, the accompaniment and technical contribution for the construction and implementation of plans that encourage communities to shape their futures and determine their development priorities.
- Community-led development efforts offer implications for public policies for social development at the local and even national levels. Encouraging communities to define their development priorities should spark interest and, eventually, a greater stake in processes that affect the community but are defined beyond it.
- The community-led nature of the development strategy empowers indigenous and local populations to identify community needs and assets, define and prioritize the issues that affect the community most urgently, design community projects, plan implementation and leverage resources, and implement projects transparently and effectively.
- The CDP processes allow for the emergence of new leadership while opening up opportunities for the honing of their community development skills. These changes are visible in the increased participation of youth and women in formal leadership structures, such as the COCODEs, which expressed a new understanding of the importance of women's and youth perspectives in community development.
- Advancements in gender equality and the empowerment of indigenous and other vulnerable populations are made possible through inclusive, gender-sensitive programming and

methodologies that promote leadership skills and link women and youth with community development agencies.

- The inclusive construction of development plans allows communities to have a management instrument that traces the route towards their own development, in which the interests, desires, dreams and opportunities of the 203 communities of the Western Highlands of Guatemala are represented, and it invites other sectors to join in the effort, mainly the public and private sectors.

### 6.2 Key Lessons Learned

***To facilitate replication, the tools used to collect, analyze and report data at the community level should be adapted for use by community members:*** In an effort to collect comprehensive information from the communities, analyze the data efficiently, and report the information clearly, the CLD Project used a variety of tools. To collect community-level data, the team used tools for initial community diagnosis, community mapping, power mapping, household surveys, socioeconomic-historical matrices, and secondary data sources. To analyze and develop tables and graphs, the team used SPSS, Excel and mapping software. To develop and edit the CDPs, technical writers supported the team.

These tools and resources provided much support for the process; however, relying on their use is not sustainable or replicable over time. During community data collection, some of the field teams opted to use low-tech tools that relied more on visual cues. For example, instead of aerial photographs or matrix mapping, the communities of

Quiché and San Marcos developed a social map by drawing images of the community that were meaningful to them and mapping them together. This proved to be a more interesting exercise for the groups involved and further engaged them in the data review process for community development planning as peers. As part of the sustainability of the process of collecting, analyzing and using community-based and community-collected data, the CLD Project plans to simplify these tools so that they can be accessible and easily used by COCODEs and potentially replicated by other community leaders in the future without external technical support or resources beyond their reach.

***Younger and older generations are connected through mutual interest in history:*** One of the challenges CLD faced in encouraging COCODE and other community leaders to involve youth more in leadership positions is that they have little confidence that youth are interested in or capable of being leaders. Many youths express disinterest in community leadership positions. However, the CLD Project found that youth were interested in hearing about the origins of their community, the history of the people, and stories during the armed conflict. The older generations were pleased with the youths' interest in these topics, which strengthened their confidence in the youths' ability to lead the community, having a greater understanding of the community's history. As an added benefit, discussions about past violence and trauma experienced by the community provided an opportunity for healing and rebuilding social cohesion between generations.

***Simplifying and institutionalizing the process for developing CDPs:*** The absence of development plans in the participating communities provided an opportunity to promote inclusive participation in the identification and prioritization of community needs and assets.

The experience of guiding communities through a rigorous and comprehensive process allowed CLD to implement methodologies that stimulated community participation among traditional community authorities and newly emerging leaders of historically marginalized populations. Promising practices drawn from this experience include:

- Close coordination and transparent communication between CLD, COCODEs and other local leaders facilitated active participation;
- The use of methodological tools such as stakeholder mapping, social asset mapping and community sectorization helped community members to better visualize and understand community needs and assets and promoted the participation of vulnerable groups in the process;
- Ongoing validation by COCODE and other community leaders of key outcomes and outputs produced throughout the development process generated trust and ownership; and
- The presentation and collection of feedback in community assemblies allowed for the decentralization and appropriation of the development process with the community at large.

***Good community development planning and empowerment take time and effort:*** Despite the lengthy process and the great effort invested in community participation, planning and analysis, the value of this comprehensive community development process was evident. The participatory planning process has ensured broad community ownership and commitment to the priorities identified in the CDPs. By investing more time upfront in the planning process, critical leaders and partnerships within the communities were developed, so that the communities themselves are empowered to sustainably plan, identify and mobilize resources to finance their community development plans.

## 6.3 Promising Best Practices

**1. Municipal Support.** Inviting a member of the Municipal Planning Directorate (DMP, for its acronym in Spanish) to witness the process of prioritizing community needs was valuable and fundamental. In the municipalities where this DMP participation was achieved, their respective communities were able to more quickly link their needs to municipal financing opportunities through the CDP, as in the case of communities in the municipality of Cunén, Quiché.

**2. Validation of community diagnosis.** The inclusive planning methodology required validating the results of the community diagnosis, which allowed the authorities, leaders and representatives of other groups present in the community to understand the situation in their community as of 2018, its historical, economic and environmental dynamics, and at the same time correct or rectify qualitative and quantitative data and information. This important step allowed the planning process to represent existing groups in the community, as well as to enrich the definition of priorities from the community itself.

**3. Establishment of preconditions for the planning process.** Establishing basic preconditions to prepare for the construction of the CDPs provided the opportunity to recognize numerous needs. These included the need for the community and its authorities to plan and update their organizational capacity; the need to know the size of the population and how they were geographically located in the community; the need for training to closely accompany the construction of the plan; the need to assign an anchor location where they could meet and carry out focus groups, among others. These conditions also allowed for the construction of the CDP from its inception to its approval in the community assembly to take place in less than a year of continuous and tireless efforts by the authorities and community leaders.

**4. Personalized invitations for groups, vulnerable populations and individuals.** To ensure greater representation of the various vulnerable groups in the community, using and sending personalized invitations (with names and surnames) made it possible to achieve inclusive planning. This method ensured that the voices of young people, women, leaders, the disabled, and deportees were heard and taken into account both in the community's vision and mission and in the definition of priorities for the next 10 years.

**5. Community sketch.** As a tool used in the community diagnosis, the CLD project used the community and sector sketch to identify individual households or homes, the recognition of boundaries and main services physically existing in the community. This updated map of the community and its respective sectors based on households and population has facilitated the follow-up, tracking and monitoring of participants in the various initiatives and community projects that receive direct benefits from the CLD Project in its implementation stage.

**6. Accountability and socialization of the CDP in community meetings or assemblies.** As the last step of the CDP construction process, the CLD team gave an accounting of the entire process to the community through community meetings and assemblies. These activities were recorded in minutes, which documented the presentation of the CDPs to as many community members as possible. Given this community knowledge, when COCODE leadership changed (usually every one to two years), the new authorities were versed in the existence of the CDPs and could continue to use them for community development management.

**7. Presentation of CDPs to municipal authorities.** The presentation of the community priorities included in the CDPs by the COCODEs to the new municipal authorities opened a space for recognition of leadership and inclusion in the municipal investment plans.

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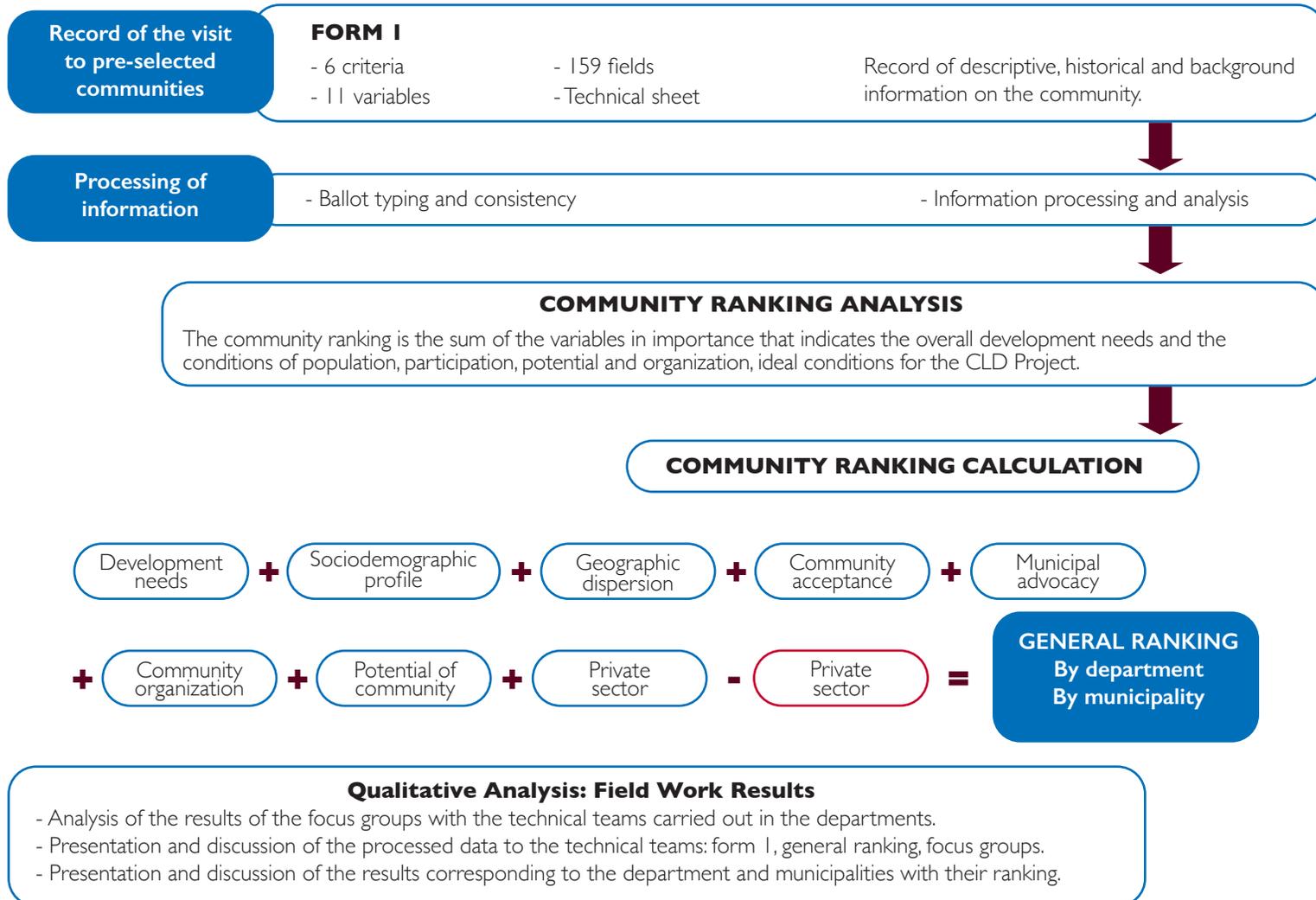
# ANNEXES

## Annex I - Identification of criteria and weighting for the selection of communities

Identification of criteria	Validation of criteria	Weighting of criteria	Preliminary identification
According to USAID & CLD team	Review and refinement of criteria and variables	Common scale defined by consensus	Based on criteria and prior knowledge
Criteria	Variable	Weighting average	Preliminary selection
1. Development need	a. Development needs according to population	5	Each partner in the field, through the project coordination for each department, proposes a preliminary list of communities, based on their experience and knowledge of the intervention area, taking into account the set of agreed-upon criteria.
	b. Communities that are sensitive and vulnerable to conflict	1.5	
	c. Socio-demographic profile of the population	3.75	
	d. Geographic dispersion with a view to forming a cluster of communities.	3.75	
2. Pre-existing cooperative work	a. Expand the work of the Western Highlands Integrated Program.	No valuation	
	b. Presence of investment from other cooperating agencies, experience with other agencies	3	
	c. Level of community acceptance considering external cooperation	5	
3. Pre-existing public institutions	a. Ability to influence and collaborate with the municipality and communities represented in COMUDE with prioritized projects.	4.5	
	b. SEGEPLAN municipal ranking	2.75	
	c. Community management for their own projects. Consider leading communities. Radius of action	No valuation	
4. Community interest	Existing community organization: groups, committees, cooperatives	3.25	
5. Knowledge of potential	Potential communities identified	4	
6. Potential for alliances with the private business sector	Evidence of prior interest in investing in the municipality	3.25	

Source: Communities Leading Development Project, CRS, Community Development Plan Construction Process (2017).

## Annex 2 - Process of observation visits to pre-selected communities



## Annex 3 – Community Development Plan Structure

Sections	Description
Cover page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project logos</li> <li>- Name: Community Development Plan</li> <li>- Name of the community, municipality, department</li> <li>- Name of the Project</li> <li>- Date</li> </ul>
Index	CDP contents
Presentation	A short explanation of why the CDP was prepared
<b>CHAPTER I CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY</b>	
General community information	Geographical description, boundaries, distances, and description of the population, number of inhabitants, women, men, young people, etc.
Summary of diagnosis	<p>A summary of the results of the diagnostic, including the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household perspective</li> <li>• Community perspective               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Historical scope                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who are we?</li> <li>- How are we?</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Economic scope</li> <li>o Environmental scope</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Problem and needs analysis	A description of the analysis and prioritization of the community's problems and needs.
SWOT Analysis	The result of the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the community
Analysis of major changes	The result of the analysis of the major changes that could occur in the world in the coming years.
<b>CHAPTER II APPROACH TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Community development vision	The community's dream for the future.
Summary of prioritized project proposals	The list of projects prioritized and agreed upon by the community.
Description of prioritized proposals	A description of the prioritized project proposals, as a small project profile, distributed in short, medium and long term.
Proposal bank	If there are project proposals that have not been prioritized, they may remain in a list that could be useful at some point in the future.
<b>ANNEXES</b>	
Copy of minutes	Minutes of approval of the initiation and approval of the plan formulation process (2 sets of minutes)
Summary of planning methodology	How the planning work was done in the community
Map or sketch of the community	The map or sketch used in the diagnosis
List of participants	Copy of the lists of people who participated in the meetings and workshops.
Photographs of the activities	Photos of the activities that were carried out to create the development plan.







To learn more about the Communities Leading Development project, visit the website: <https://projectcld.org/>

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