

Educational Reform in Guatemala: Lessons from Negotiations between Indigenous Civil Society and the State

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Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the negotiations which took place between representatives of civil society - both indigenous and non-indigenous - and delegates of the Ministry of Education in Guatemala to design and implement a comprehensive educational reform. This reform was stipulated in two of the Peace Accords signed between the Guatemalan government and the insurgent Unidad Nacional Revolucionaria Guatemalteca (URNG): the Accord on the Rights and Identity of Indigenous Peoples, signed in March 1995, and the Accord on Socio-Economic Issues and the Agrarian Question, signed in September 1996. Focusing on the question of ethnicity, an attempt is made to highlight the imbalances and struggles that occurred in two of the commissions created by the Accords: the Parity Commission for Educational Reform (COPARE) and the Consultative Commission for Educational Reform (CCRE).² These difficulties occurred despite the general principles accepted by the parties to the peace negotiations, which included the pacific resolution of differences, tolerance, solidarity and unity in diversity.

The educational reform itself is not analysed in detail here. Neither is it implied that the progress of both commissions for its implementation was not also marked by incidences of communication and coincidence. In COPARE for instance, differences did not always exist between indigenous and governmental delegates - in some issues the differences cut across both groups, with some indigenous and governmental delegates in favour and others opposed to a given proposal. The period examined here runs from 2 April 1997 to 14 January 2000, during which I was an indigenous civil society delegate to both the Parity Commission and the Consultative Commission for Educational Reform. After 14 January 2000 I continued to participate in the CCRE but as a governmental delegate from the Ministry of Education. The chapter is divided into three main sections: the first deals with limitations of the Peace Accords themselves (Section I), another with the negotiating process in COPARE (Section II), and the last with problems in the CCRE (Section III). The chapter concludes by drawing some lessons from these experiences.

Deficiencies of the Guatemalan educational sector and the response of the Peace Accords

Guatemala is a multi-ethnic developing country. Some 24 languages are spoken, but only one - Spanish - is officially recognised. Approximately 60 per cent of the population is indigenous, and approximately 80 per cent of the population lives in poverty or extreme poverty. A wide range of statistics indicates the severe deficiencies of Guatemalan education. A mere 1.8 per cent of the country's GDP is spent on education, only 80 per cent of the population has access to primary education, only 25 per cent to secondary education, and the illiteracy rate stands at between 30 and 40 per cent of the population. In 1999 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) underlined the fact that limited advances in primary and secondary education between 1994 and 1998 explained the low contribution of education to the country's Human Development Index (PNUD 1999: 17-19). Because of its multiplier effects, education was prioritised in the 1996 Peace Accords, which set out the case for a comprehensive educational reform.

However, despite various speeches, laws and pilot projects, the Ministry of Education's policy continues to be one of ethnic discrimination and assimilation of non-Spanish speaking communities. At the level of discourse, literature and legislation advances have been made towards the recognition of cultural pluralism. However, these have not yet filtered down to affect policy on the ground and have an impact in the classroom. Apart from a few exceptions, the exclusion of indigenous history and culture (languages, literature, art, and so on) continues to be the norm. Until the peace accords bilingual education - indigenous languages and Spanish - was treated as a marginal or exceptional phenomenon within the educational system. The General Directorate of Bilingual Education was created in 1983, first as a project, subsequently becoming a programme and latterly a general policy directive. However, this nominal increase in importance has not been accompanied by an increase in resources or coverage and in practice it continues to be a pilot project.

Government commitments to educational reform

One of the revolutionary features of the Peace Accords signed between 1994 and 1996 was that they sought to change neo-colonial policies towards ethnicity for positive recognition of multiculturalism within a framework of national unity and stability. The Accord on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples set out most clearly the government's obligations with respect to the character that the educational system should have in order to respect indigenous rights (chapter III, section G, number

2). Some of the specifications for recognition of multiculturalism within the educational system were:

- (a) That education be regionalised and decentralised, with the aim of adapting it to local needs and linguistic and cultural specificities.
- (b) That communities and families be given a decisive role in the definition of the curriculum and the school calendar, together with the ability to propose appointments and replacements of school teachers to ensure that they respond to the educational and cultural interests of the communities in question.
- (c) That the educational concepts of the Mayas and other indigenous peoples be integrated into the areas of philosophy, science, art and pedagogic techniques, history, languages, etc. as a central feature of a comprehensive educational reform.
- (d) Elements should be included within educational plans to strengthen national unity and the respect for cultural diversity.
- (e) Bilingual, intercultural education should be extended and promoted and the study and knowledge of indigenous languages valued at all levels. Educational experiments, such as Mayan schools, 3 should be taken into account and the National Programme for Bilingual Education consolidated in order to attend all indigenous people. Instruction in Mayan Languages and Culture should be given to the entire Guatemalan population.
- (f) Bilingual teachers and officials should be employed and trained in order to develop education within their communities and institutionalise mechanisms of consultation and participation in the educational process with representatives of indigenous communities and organisations. Indigenous peoples' access to formal and non-formal education should be facilitated by means of a system of grants and educational awards.

In addition, the Accord on Socio-Economic Issues contains a section referring to Education and Training, the emphasis of which is more on social factors than on ethnicity (chapter II, section A). It underlines the need for a coherent and dynamic state policy on education in order to achieve the following objectives:

- (g) To affirm and promote the moral and cultural values, concepts and practices which constitute the basis of a democratic arrangement respectful of the cultural diversity of Guatemala.
- (h) To avoid the persistence of poverty and social, ethnic, gender and geographical discrimination, in particular those resulting from the urban-rural divide.

Towards a comprehensive educational reform

The above-mentioned accords both specified that the implementation of these commitments should be carried out in a participatory manner through the Parity Commission and the Consultative Commission for Educational Reform (CCRE). They also specified that the reform should be comprehensive and not piecemeal reform or limited to changes to circumscribed areas, such as teaching methods, curricular adjustments, or changes in graduate teachers' profiles, as had occurred in the past. During the first period of democratic government (1985-90) the System for the Improvement of Human Resources and Curricular Adjustment (SIMAC) was created to develop changes in pedagogic methods and course content. This body continues to exist as an institution, but does not serve as a model for education in terms of study plans and teaching methods. In 1987 the application of the model it had developed was blocked by the teachers' unions, who alleged this was an imposition by technocrats and bureaucrats that would mean more work for teachers without any additional pay. As the government of the day refused to accede to their demands for salary increases, teachers reacted by rejecting the new model.

By contrast, the educational reform proposed in the Peace Accords is a *comprehensive* reform - in the Indigenous Rights Accord the government committed itself to an overhaul of the entire educational system (chapter III, section G, clause 2). The Parity and Consultative Commissions, charged with overseeing its implementation, have also understood their remit in these terms. COPARE identified 11 areas for transformation of the educational system, including pedagogic techniques, language, culture, policy, infrastructure, and training of human resources (PREAL-ASIES 1998: 61-81).

I: Limits of the Peace Accords

The indigenous and governmental representatives - the latter almost exclusively ladinos - who negotiated the application of the educational reform were not always clear quite what their task was because of the confusions, contradictions and idealism contained in the Peace Accords themselves.

The Peace Accords were negotiated between the government and the URNG in line with the 1985 Constitution of Guatemala and the country's international human rights commitments. A number of constitutional norms and principles relate to education. For instance, the constitution states that education is a basic human right, that minors have the right and the obligation to attend pre-primary, primary and elementary education within the limits set down by law, that state education is free, and that indigenous

groups have the right to their own educational activities, including the right to establish and maintain schools and to use and teach their own languages. Laws referring to education also specify that the educational system should be decentralised and regionalised, bilingual in predominantly indigenous areas of the country and equipped by trained professionals. The Peace Accords were also negotiated in such a way that they did not contradict each other. So when the Indigenous and Socio-Economic Accords refer to the participation of civil society - families, local communities, ethnic communities - this is in line with the terms set out in the Framework Accord on Democratisation and the Search for Peace via Political Means (the Querétaro Accord of January 1994). This stipulated that the democratisation of the country had to guarantee and promote the participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies at different administrative levels.

However, the need to ensure that the Peace Accords did not contradict the 1985 Constitution, international treaty obligations or each other meant that they could not go beyond whatever was set out in these instruments and agreements. This ultimately had a negative impact on indigenous people. Indigenous demands for greater autonomy for ethnic or linguistic communities were never considered in the peace negotiations, either because such autonomy arrangements were not included in the 1985 Constitution or because they were an unknown for the negotiators, and therefore perceived as difficult to control. Ultimately what was seen as an advantage from the point of view of coherence and constitutional probity was a disadvantage for the indigenous organisations, which found their demands blocked by such logic.

The two accords that set out the need for a comprehensive educational reform were those referring to Indigenous Rights and the Socio-Economic Issues. The first was signed in 1995 during the government of Ramiro de León Carpio (1993-95), a government that was seen by both liberals and conservatives as being favourable to indigenous demands. In section G, which refers to the educational reform, the Indigenous Rights Accord detailed the characteristics of the reform, the Mayan educational experiences which should be taken into account in its design and the means by which access to formal and non-formal education for indigenous people could be facilitated. The accord also specified the need to create a Parity Commission made up of representatives of indigenous organisations and government whose task it would be to elaborate the design of the educational reform.

The Socio-Economic Accord, on the other hand, was signed in 1996 during the first year of the government of Alvaro Arzú (1996-99), a government dominated by its conservative and neoliberal wing. In chapter II, which dealt with social development, the accord set out the function of

education and training, as well as the objectives of the educational reform. It also signalled government commitments in terms of the educational budget, curricular changes, coverage, vocational training, training to facilitate social participation, facilitating interaction between schools and communities and community participation, training of educational administrators, and providing financial support to disadvantaged students. The accord envisaged a multi-sectoral consultative commission linked to the Ministry of Education that would draw up and implement the reform.

However, the educational reform and the question of education were not only addressed in these two accords. An analysis carried out by PNUD in 1997 (PNUD, 1997) set out the different commitments acquired by the government with respect to education contained in other peace agreements. For example, the Accord on Constitutional Reform and Electoral Regulations (signed December 1996) states that in order to increase the level of electoral participation, the civic education of citizens should be increased, as well as their access to information (clause II). The Accord for the Resettlement of Populations Uprooted by the Armed Conflict (signed in June 1994) includes some five commitments relating to education. The Accord on Strengthening of Civil Power and the Role of the Army in a Democratic Society (signed September 1996) contains ten, and the agreement referring to the legalisation and incorporation of the URNG (concluded in December 1996) another ten. This multiplicity of government commitments and their dispersal across various accords has, at least in part, made their implementation and the monitoring of this process more difficult. Some commitments have been forgotten: for example, those referring to the mass media were not taken up by a specific commission, leaving the government a free hand in this area. The Arzú administration privatised the majority of radio channels, flying in the face of its commitment to open spaces in the mass media for indigenous peoples and their cultures. In the event, not even COPMAGUA, the body charged by indigenous organisations with overseeing the implementation of the Indigenous Rights Accord, intervened to protest.

The Peace Accords also contained contradictions, problems with decisionmaking bodies, and short-time frames to carry out long-term educational processes. The two commissions (Parity and Consultative) should have been set up to work together to advance the reform. However, in their respective mandates the role of 'elaborating the design of the educational reform' was duplicated, pointing to the failure to specify the tasks of each. In order to clarify their doubts each commission consulted the Accompaniment Commission - COPARE in mid-1997, the CCRE at the end of the same year - which was charged with clearing up such confusions and interpreting the content of the accords. This Commission determined that the Parity Commission should draw up the proposal for the educational

reform and that the Consultative Committee should oversee its implementation. The explanation for this repetition of functions was that the Arzú administration had feared an 'indigenisation' of the educational system because of the 'excessive' power granted to indigenous people - or to civil society - in the Parity Commission, which was to have equal representation of government and civil society representatives. It therefore took advantage of the Socio-Economic Accord to restrict the decision-making power of civil society and to leave the Consultative Committee with the possibility of 'correcting' any exaggerated indigenous gains made in COPARE.

Another problem which derived from the composition of COPARE and the particular nature of its remit -the implementation of the Indigenous Accord - were doubts concerning the extent of the educational reform to be designed. Some government and international officials were of the opinion that educational reform could not be proposed for the whole country, given that the civil society interlocutors on COPARE were indigenous. According to this view, only indigenous people could deal with indigenous issues, but they could not decide national policy. This doubt was also clarified with the Accompaniment Commission, which confirmed that the educational reform did indeed have national outreach. The explanation for this problem lay in discrimination and negative prejudices against indigenous people. Previously it was held that indigenous people could not even decide their own affairs. Now it is increasingly accepted that they can, but not that they can decide matters of national policy which affect the non-indigenous sector of the population.

Another set of problems referred to decision-making mechanisms. The Indigenous Accord stipulated that decisions of the Parity Commission had to be consensual, and the internal rules of that commission specified the same, stating that any decision had to be characterised by the 'absence of opposition'. However, decision-making by consensus has advantages and disadvantages - it facilitates full participation and allows for shared responsibilities, but it also requires much more time and progress is very difficult if any of the parties have fixed positions (OEA PROPAZ 1997). In practice, deadlocks had to be overcome by means of majority votes. At the same time, consensus was not always understood or implemented properly - in effect it meant whatever the governmental delegates conceded and what, in the light of this, it was possible to achieve. The CCRE also adopted consensus decision-making as its *modus operandi*, but it was and remains much more difficult to obtain this, given the greater number of people and institutions who have to arrive at a unitary position: 23 delegates from 17 institutions and organisations. For this reason it has also resorted to majority votes in order to overcome deadlocks or to make explicit the nature of the decision taken.

In terms of higher education, the Indigenous Accord envisaged the creation of a Maya University (chapter III, section G, clause 3). However, the Socio-Economic Accord repeated the stipulation of the 1985 Constitution that the 'management, organisation and development of state higher education is the exclusive remit of the University of San Carlos', thereby contradicting the Indigenous Accord, or at least obliging the Maya University to be a private institution. COPARE decided that the Maya University should be a public university, given that the almost universal poverty affecting indigenous people would not permit their access to a private institution. But as long as the University of San Carlos enjoys a monopoly as the only state university it will be difficult to create the Maya University.

Lastly, the question of the time frame for implementation of the accords also proved to be problematic. The Agreement on the Timetable for Implementation envisaged the implementation of the educational reform within four years (1996-2000) (URL 1997: 219-58). However, short-term educational reforms generally take some eight to ten years and long-term reforms some 15 to 20 years, although some analysts argue for permanent and ongoing educational reform. The timetable for the implementation of the educational reform has already been changed twice. The first revision was carried out by COPARE, the commission responsible for drafting the design of the educational reform, which timetabled a ten-year period (1998-2008), contained in the design of the reform itself. The CCRE made a second change, timetabling the reform for a 20-year period, which is in turn reflected in the Long-Term National Plan for Education 2000-20. These changes to the Timetable for Implementation led to criticism from verification agencies, such as MINUGUA, of the slow pace of implementation and eventually led to the readjustment of the time frame. These extensions have meant that indigenous people have to wait even longer for positive change.

II. Implementing the educational reform: the Parity Commission (COPARE), 1997-98

The Indigenous Accord included the requirement that a Parity Commission made up of representatives from indigenous organisations and the government be set up to elaborate the design of the educational reform (chapter III, section G, clauses 2 and 5). COPARE's objective was to negotiate the precise manner in which the commitments acquired on education could be translated into a concrete proposal. The Parity Commission considered two dimensions of the reform process, the technical and the political. The technical dimension referred to the content and pedagogic methods proposed in the design of the reform which were to

be drafted by experts in the field. The political dimension referred to the legitimacy of the proposals for society and for different sectors and organised groups. Other experiences in educational reform had confirmed that without the participation of civil society purely technical educational reforms tend to fail or have a limited impact. The decision-making process had to involve the direct or indirect participation of interested civil sectors, awareness of the needs, interests and proposals of those sectors, and the achievement of consensus and compromise. It was this political dimension that would ensure that civil society was informed about the educational reform and ultimately would approve and support it. In order for the educational reform to have a chance of success both aspects - the technical and the political - had to be carefully dealt with. However, it was not always easy to attend to both dimensions to the same degree.

COPARE was created on 2 April 1997. It included five delegates from indigenous organisations and five government delegates designated by the Ministry of Education. According to the timetable it was to finish its remit within nine months, by December 1997. In the event, the reform proposal was some seven months overdue and was finally completed in July 1998. The structure and format of the negotiations were as follows:

The Coordinator of Organisations of the Mayan People, COPMAGUA, and its specific body on education, the Permanent National Commission for Educational Reform (CNPRE), elected five indigenous representatives after agreeing on the number with the governmental Peace Secretariat, SEPAZ. These five, in turn, represented the different umbrella groups that made up COPMAGUA. COPMAGUA was the body charged with organising the elections of indigenous representatives and was composed of two 'culturalist' Mayan organisations (the Academy of Mayan Languages, ALMG, and the Coordinator of Mayan Organisations of Guatemala, COMG) and three 'popular' Mayan organisations (Tukum Uman, the Instance of Mayan Unity and Consensus (IUCM) and the Union of the Mayan People of Guatemala, UPMAG). The National Council for Mayan Education, CNEM, was not originally part of COPMAGUA but was included because it was explicitly cited in the Indigenous Accord. For the government, the Ministry of Education designated three representatives from the Ministry itself, a fourth person was delegated from the teachers' unions and a fifth place filled by an indigenous person who was not a member of the Ministry of Education. These two last-minute adoptions helped the Ministry of Education to appear less 'ladino-centric' and also gave some space to the teachers' organisations (generally teachers' unions are at loggerheads with the educational authorities and indigenous people are excluded from the government). The elected indigenous delegates had to respond to the organisations where they worked, the umbrella organisations they represented and COPMAGUA. The Ministry of

Education delegates had to respond essentially to the educational authorities, something that was quite difficult for the teachers' union representative. The government indigenous delegate, who was quite an independent figure, hardly ever stuck to the government position but rather adopted the role of conciliator between the two sides and, occasionally, leaned in favour of the indigenous organisation delegates.

The framework for the negotiations themselves was set out in the peace accords and international conventions such as ILO Convention 169, which had been ratified but not implemented. An attempt was made to hold the negotiations in a neutral space, such as a house rented for the purpose or a borrowed conference room. In general, the Parity Commission met twice a week for a whole morning or afternoon, sometimes this extended to whole days or various consecutive days if required. According to its internal regulations, COPARE did not have a director but rather a coordinator, a post which was alternated between the government and indigenous organisations' representatives. Because it was a parity commission, decision-making power was equally distributed between the two groups. The regulations also specified that decisions be reached by consensus. COPARE also created two internal parity organs: the Technical Secretariat and the 'Petit Comité', together with teams of consultants to research specific areas and problems.

COPARE had a mandatory relationship with the Peace Secretariat, SEPAZ, the governmental body charged with implementation of the peace accords, and with the Accompaniment Commission, principally in the event of problems arising. The UN Verification Mission, MINUGUA, was charged with checking that the educational reform was being complied with. National embassies in Guatemala monitored compliance with the Peace Accords to a limited extent. The relevant civic organisations participated principally in elaborating proposals for the reform, which were then presented to COPARE. Their role in verifying compliance with the educational reform was minimal, apart from those organisations which had a delegate on COPARE. The Civil Society Assembly (ASC), the body set up in 1994 to channel civil society groups' proposals to the negotiating table, played a minor role in monitoring the educational reform. During the period of COPARE'S existence opposition to the educational reform was voiced by conservative sectors and non-participating teachers' unions, but they did not pose a serious problem - their opposition was more due to the non-inclusion of their proposals or members.

Problema encountered in COPARE

Despite differences and competition between them, the indigenous organisations managed to elect their five delegates after a series of

meetings and assemblies: three 'cultural' delegates and two 'popular' delegates. Inevitably,

Indigenous delegates

Government delegates

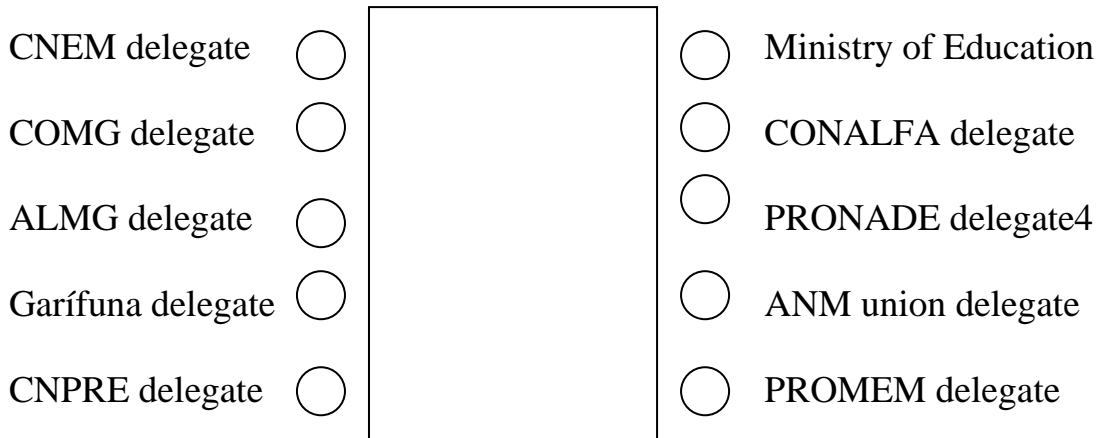


Figure 4.1 COPARE: civic and governmental representatives (see also Appendix 4.1)

however, some organisations felt marginalised or unrepresented in these elections. The five representatives chosen by the Ministry of Education, on the other hand, were not elected but appointed. As the government is predominantly ladino in ethnic terms, these were predominantly ladino. In order not to appear completely mono-ethnic, the government appointed one indigenous representative who helped the government side to appear somewhat more plural. However, the different means of selecting the delegates meant that the two sides took decisions at different speeds - the elected indigenous organisation delegates had to consult more extensively than the government representatives - and that each enjoyed different degrees of legitimacy

Delegating power and acting as a delegate for organisations and institutions is a learning process. The hegemonic sector of COPMAGUA's Permanent National Commission for Educational Reform (CNPRE) was made up of institutions directly or indirectly linked to the guerrilla organisations who were unaware or ill-informed about the procedures to be followed in the Parity Commission. This provoked a series of problems, above all at the outset of the negotiations, because the members of the CNPRE maintained that they had not delegated decision-making power. This practically invalidated the role of their delegates to the negotiating table and provoked the suspension of negotiations for a number of weeks. Ultimately the principles, norms and functions of the representatives in COPARE and the delegation of functions and faculties to those

representatives had to be established with the member organisations of the CNPRE with the presence of observers from the UN mission, MINUGUA and the Peace Secretariat, SEPAZ. After weeks of suspended talks, the CNPRE leaders were forced to recognise that their indigenous representatives did have decision-making powers, together with the government delegates.

The Indigenous Accord envisaged an equal number of representatives from the government and from indigenous organisations and the equal division of decision-making power between them. Nonetheless, the indigenous delegation was weakened by the lack of professional qualifications, contacts and resources, resulting in technical disadvantages. It also had little or no access to the data and information held in the Ministry of Education or logistical back-up. These technical disadvantages meant that some of their proposals and demands were rejected or defeated because of technicalities, restricted circulation of information and grandiloquent language. On the other hand, the governmental delegation had more leverage for a diverse series of reasons. The Garífuna delegate on the indigenous side was a teacher in a state primary school, and the authorisation to take time off work or be temporarily substituted depended on the Minister of Education or his subordinates. At the same time, the indigenous delegates who worked in NGOs or international organisations and who depended in some way or other on the Ministry of Education (for authorisation of projects, contracts as intermediary providers of educational services, and so on) could be subjected to indirect pressure. Similarly, the members of the Technical Secretariat, while obliged to act with neutrality, were open to pressure from the educational authorities, given the fact that sooner or later they would need to seek employment. Maintaining good relations with the educational authorities was therefore a kind of insurance for the future. The government was able to impose an almost military discipline amongst its negotiating team by threatening cautions or sackings, thus imposing a unitary fine among all the delegates (with the exception of the indigenous delegate on the governmental side who considered himself 'independent', and, to a lesser extent, the trade union delegate). However, nobody on the indigenous team had such coercive power and internal dissent was therefore more pronounced than among its governmental counterpart. These differences in leverage and abilities put the indigenous delegates at a disadvantage.

COPARE made a public call for civic sectors to present proposals for changes to the education system. This was carried out via radio announcements, paid advertisements in the newspapers and a poster campaign in Spanish and three indigenous languages. Participation was relatively high and some 30 proposals of differing quality were received.

Proposals were also received orally through a series of public meetings that achieved the involvement of significant sectors of Guatemalan society. The educational reform excited considerable interest and contributions were made in the form of forums, debates and various studies from the organised sectors of civil society, supported in part by the international community. Nonetheless, other members of civil society, above all teachers, perceived their participation as weak or non-existent. The enormous difficulties of communication throughout the country, limited access to the media, high levels of illiteracy, weak purchasing power, linguistic diversity and, above all, a political culture of systematic opposition to all public authorities meant it was difficult to ensure the consultation and participation of all groups and sectors. In addition, for most Guatemalans the Peace Accords were never as important as other issues, such as poverty or violent crime.

Problema related to the content of the negotiations

In negotiations over the content of the educational reform, key governmental representatives acted in such a way as to effectively renegotiate the criteria and parameters of the reform, or impose these as the limit for discussions. In contrast, as far as the indigenous delegates were concerned, the Peace Accords had already been negotiated and all that remained was to agree how to implement them. They also considered the accords as a starting point rather than an end-point for discussions. On some issues, such as indigenous educational autonomy, the government delegates did not cede at all or ceded even less than that stipulated by ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (which states that indigenous people have the right to direct their own educational institutions). However, despite these difficulties, on the whole the governmental delegation was open to accept indigenous proposals, above all when the leadership of the delegation was in the hands of the Vice-Minister of Education during the first half of 1997. This openness decreased when the minister took over towards the end of 1997 and during the first half of 1998. Nonetheless, despite differences, in general terms they always managed to achieve a 'consensus' that led to the elaboration of the design for the reform.

Both the governmental and indigenous delegates in COPARE adopted the categories and language of the Peace Accords which insisted that the country be characterised as 'multi-ethnic, pluri-cultural and multi-lingual'. The accords stated that four peoples made up the Guatemalan nation (ladino, Maya, Xinca and Garífuna), that each has different cultural expressions in the form of distinct ethnic and linguistic communities. However, the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism were 'guatemalanised'; that is they were contextualised according to where they

were to be applied, their meaning shifting according to the plans and fears of each side. For the indigenous delegates multiculturalism meant the possibility of obtaining positive recognition of their existence, strengthening their cultures, which had hitherto been discriminated by the state, and obtaining effective rights to equality and difference. Thus they adopted this doctrine as the appropriate formula to meet their cultural needs. In contrast, some ladino governmental delegates viewed multiculturalism as a strategy that would result in indigenous separatism, isolation and even 'ethnic cleansing' and for this reason they opposed it. Government delegates preferred instead the notion of 'interculturalism', effectively the maintenance of good relations between the different cultural groups present in Guatemala. Government delegates explicitly argued that interculturalism was the ideal mechanism to construct positive relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people in order to achieve mutual enrichment. Indigenous representatives rejected the idea of interculturalism not because they did not think it necessary, but rather because they perceived it as a state-imposed formula that was difficult to apply equitably among cultural communities which existed in highly unequal conditions. In addition, they found that ladino governmental representatives interpreted interculturalism in such a way as to permit the continued assimilation and control of indigenous people. Faced with these problems in obtaining a consensus, the negotiating parties decided to use both categories simultaneously and for this reason both concepts appear with equal weight in the proposal for the educational reform. The final solution was to define a sequence between the two: acknowledge and recognise one's own culture (multiculturalism), know and respect other cultures (interculturalism), accept and appreciate the differences between one's own and other cultures (multiculturalism and interculturalism).

For indigenous people the means to resolve their traditional subordination and marginalisation in the education system was to have an indigenous Vice-Minister of Education or their own Ministry, as experience had taught them that they would inevitably be marginalised in state institutions controlled by ladinos. In contrast, government representatives argued that indigenous education would not be resolved by the creation of parallel structures, but rather through one unitary system. Given that consensus decision-making was understood in practice as whatever the government ceded or conceded, indigenous delegates were forced to accept the idea of a single structure, but they introduced the idea of 'shared power', which was accepted by the government side. At the highest level of the Ministry of Education this was taken to mean the integration of Mayan authorities with ladino authorities so that it no longer appeared that the Ministry was controlled exclusively by ladinos or that indigenous people were excluded or only participated in a symbolic

manner. The idea of 'shared power' is one formula that facilitates unity with equality in multi-ethnic societies (Lijphart 1994:159-84).

Problems relating to the procedures adopted

The indigenous delegates faced enormous problems in terms of complying with their obligations. Meetings of COPARE usually took place twice a week for a whole morning or afternoon at a sitting. The indigenous delegates also met outside once a week to consult with their grass roots and report on advances. They also held additional regular weekly sessions to prepare their work and strategies for the coming meetings, and then they often had extraordinary or unscheduled meetings. Apart from very few exceptions, indigenous delegates were not relieved of their normal work duties in order to meet these obligations. The same was also true for the government delegates, for whom participation in COPARE was almost always an additional burden. Hardly anyone had enough time to analyse the topics to be discussed in any depth. Of all the delegates, only those who worked as teachers in state schools (one indigenous and one governmental representative) were excused from their regular work duties, but even then they were unable to contribute much in terms of global overviews or analysis of political processes. This problem of scheduling the meetings meant that the design for the educational reform eventually agreed was quite repetitive; indigenous representatives feared that their points had not been included and therefore fought to have their platforms included in each and every aspect of the proposal. This also made the entire process more drawn out than it should have been.

Those interested in changing the educational system were indigenous people, which implied that they would be proactive and draw up proposals for change. The government side only had to reject, accept or partially accept those proposals and did not see it as necessary to elaborate alternatives. This entailed a series of disadvantages for indigenous delegates, who were generally the least well equipped or qualified, above all in drafting technical proposals. At the same time it implied that they had the time and resources to carry out research and develop proposals, which was not the case.

Because of the mutual lack of confidence between government and indigenous delegates, and perhaps also to maintain the role of parity, COPARE decided that all the teams which supported or implemented the Commission's work, including the Technical Secretariat and the 'Petit Comité', should have equal representation from both sides. The research teams, which carried out 11 studies to support the design for the reform in the areas of language, culture, administration, teaching methods, legal situation, human resources and public policies, were also subject to the

parity rule. Yet the indigenous side faced continual problems in finding sufficient qualified indigenous personnel to work with non-indigenous individuals on these teams; they either lacked academic qualifications or professional experience.

Both sides delegated the task of drafting the final proposal to one of their members. However, because of lack of time, experience and political leverage before the Technical Secretariat, the contribution of the indigenous delegate was weak and the government delegate monopolised the task of drafting the final document, according to the decisions of COPARE. In spite of this, and above all because of lack of preparation on both sides, paragraphs and expressions were added between the first and second versions of the document which led to subsequent difficulties which also had to be worked out according to parity arrangements.

In general, negotiations between indigenous and government representatives were characterised by collective differences in the uses of language. For diverse reasons, some of them cultural, indigenous people tended to use language sparingly, while ladinos tended to speak at length. Linguistic competence and familiarity with technical terms was also a factor - Spanish was not the mother tongue of the majority of the indigenous delegates and for some it very much continued to be their second language. In addition, open displays of anger were rare among the indigenous delegates and only occurred in cases of serious divisions or conflicts. Discussions were hardly ever heated, as everyone was aware this could mean long-term divisions. However, angry exchanges were commonplace among the ladinos, even over minor points, and did not lead to long-term conflicts. For indigenous delegates, evidence of participation and agreement depended on the number of participants and the verbal intervention of each and every one. This sometimes worked against them as the different individual organisations they represented revealed differences that the governmental team used to their advantage. For different reasons, the ladinos were able to channel their participation through election of a group spokesperson. This meant the government side generally presented a strong, united front. These differences were most evident in the negotiations between COPMAGUA and SEPAZ.

The major cause of setbacks in the drafting of the proposal was the temporary suspension of negotiations between October and December 1997. Indigenous delegates broke off the talks arguing that they needed to consult with their grass roots, but in fact the real reason for the division was that the then minister was trying to reduce indigenous participation in the Consultative Commission on Educational Reform to three delegates out of 18. On 29 October 1997 President Arzú inaugurated the Consultative Commission in the National Palace, but the indigenous organisations registered their protest at the Commission's composition by not turning up

to take their seats. Negotiations recommenced on 18 December, following a series of agreements between the Ministry of Education, COPMAGUA, CNEM and SEPAZ, under the supervision of the Accompaniment Commission and MINUGUA. The Ministry finally accepted the participation of five supplementary indigenous delegates on the Consultative Commission, increasing their number to eight. The government was forced to accept indigenous demands because of its need to demonstrate results in the negotiating process. The final proposal for the educational reform and an explanation of its public and political implications was officially handed over to President Arzú and SEPAZ on 20 July 1998. SEPAZ passed the document to the Consultative Commission for implementation (although the Consultative Commission was officially created on 29 December 1997, it had been unable to begin its task until it received COPARES proposal).

III. Implementation of the educational reform: the Consultative Commission (CCRE), 1997-98

The Socio-Economic Accord envisaged the creation of a Consultative Commission linked to the Ministry of Education and made up of participants in the educational process, including representation from COPARE. Initially the CCRE was composed of 18 delegates from 17 institutions and organisations, but after the protest of the indigenous organisations it was extended to include 23 delegates of 17 institutions and organisations. The mandate of the Commission was and is to carry out the educational reform.

Civil society institutions and organisations elected and appointed delegates to the CCRE. Some of these bodies were part of groups, such as the universities which were linked in an Inter-University Forum. Others, such as the indigenous organisations (CNEM and CNPRE) set up coordinating bodies among themselves. The Ministry of Education appointed its delegates, who were generally heads of its internal departments. There was only one indigenous member amongst the Ministry's delegation, the director of the Department for Bilingual Education. The civil society delegates were a heterogeneous group and did not constitute a single bloc. However, events dictated that in some instances the civil society delegates clashed with the governmental delegates. As the delegation was comprised of institutions not individuals, there has been some turnover in the committee's membership. Every delegate has to answer to their own institution and use only COPARES proposal for the educational reform and the peace accords as their points of reference. If existing legislation had been used as a guide, it would have been impossible to implement significant sections of the reform.

Negotiations took place in the Ministry of Education and consisted of an assembly of the 23 delegates from 17 predominantly civic organisations concerned with education: universities, teachers' unions, indigenous organisations, private schools, and so on (see Appendix 4.3). The Minister of Education was responsible for coordinating the CCRE as he was ultimately responsible for implementing the reform. The Consultative Commission is effectively an adjunct or annex of the Ministry; therefore the minister has the final say. The Commission only has powers of assessment, accompaniment, advice and monitoring - it is not an executive organ nor can it take binding decisions on the implementation of the reform. Its decisions must be taken by consensus. The CCRE also has a number of internal bodies, including the Executive Council, Technical Secretariat, sub-commissions and work-groups, plus teams of research consultante. The Commission has a mandatory relationship with SEPAZ and, in the event of problems, must go to the Accompaniment Commission. MINUGUA continues its role in verifying the implementation of the reform. The embassies have been active in monitoring the implementation of the commitments acquired in the Peace Accords. A greater number of civil society organisations have issued statements on the implementation of the educational reform and have tried to lobby on this issue. Some opponents of the reform publicly voiced their opposition, such as some trade unions and teachers' leaders and non-participating private schools, but on the whole opposition has not increased.

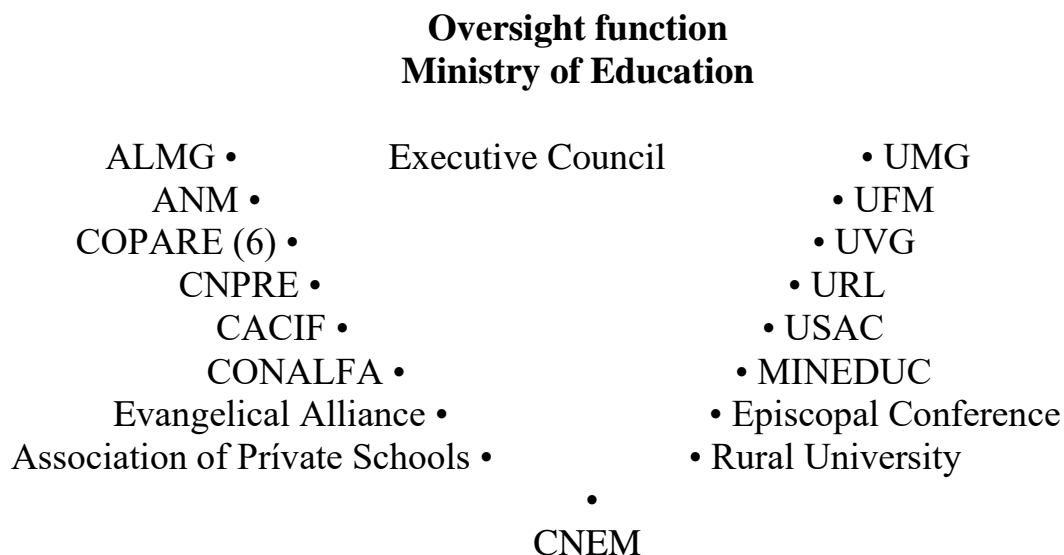


Figure 4.2 Civil and governmental forces represented in the CCRE (see Appendix 4.3)

Problems encountered in the CCRE

One of the aims of including such a range of institutions in the field of education was to ensure as great a participation as possible and to strengthen the Consultative Committee. In order to gain legitimacy, the educational reform needed to integrate as many sectors linked to education as it could, including those that could facilitate or block the reform. But this multisectoral approach presented a number of problems. The delegates came from different political trajectories and professional backgrounds and had distinct technical proficiencies and expectations, all of which made collective endeavour difficult. This was evident in the initial elaboration of work plans and the internal rules and regulations of the committee. For example, long discussions took place on whether or not all the representatives had to sign every record of a meeting. Nonetheless, the Consultative Commission is one of the first experiments in multi-sectoral collaboration for education in Guatemala.

Another problem for the CCRE was where to begin. The proposal for educational reform drafted by COPARE did not signal a clear starting point. There was no flow-chart to orient the work of implementation. After a few attempts, the CCRE finally approved a document at the end of 1998 that set out 15 priorities for the Consultative Commission during 1999 (see Appendix 4.2). These included: diffusion and validation of the proposal itself, revision of plans and programmes of the Ministry of Education, the formulation of a National Plan for Education (2000-08), the revision of the legal framework, curricular transformation, and the creation of the Mayan University. Some progress has been made on these different fronts, but coordination between them has been minimal.

After resolving the problem of duplication of functions between COPARE and the CCRE concerning who was to draw up the proposal for the educational reform, the major problem encountered has been the subordinate relationship of the Consultative Committee to government ministers. Until the end of 1997 the then Minister of Education limited the CCRE to assessment and advisory functions. She even expected the CCRE to approve government plans and procedures between 1997 and mid-1998. The CCRE complained that this was not its function and pressed for its right to decide the nature of the educational reform together with the Ministry. At times the Ministry accepted this, but sometimes it acted in such a way as to confirm the subordinate relationship of the CCRE set out in the Socio-Economic Accord. These frictions were at least partly due to lack of experience in managing such relations between government and civil society representatives on a theme of common interest.

Another problem faced by the CCRE was the dual agenda of the Ministry of Education. In one sense, the government had already drawn up

its plan and had established targets prior to the final signing of the peace accords on 29 December 1996. The CCRE followed the agenda of the accords and the government stuck to its own agenda. Another factor was the negative attitudes of members of the governing party towards indigenous people in general, and towards bilingual education in particular, which meant that they constantly blocked measures favourable to indigenous people through the Ministry of Education. The minister did little or nothing to try and reconcile both agendas or to subordinate the government agenda to that of the peace accords. The Ministry made the educational reform only one of its eight policy priorities, which meant that the reform received insufficient attention. Nonetheless, the government took advantage of the euphoria and optimism generated by the signing of the peace accords to negotiate large loans with the World Bank and the Inter-American Bank in order to support educational reform. This occasioned conflicts with the CCRE, whose members argued that these loans and the manner in which they were used evidenced the dual agenda of the Ministry. On numerous occasions the Minister of Education at the time made declarations to the press that the educational reform had begun, pointing to the sectoral reforms made under previous administrations and the activities carried out which related to the international loans. However, as far as the members of the CCRE were concerned, the reform had not begun. This dual agenda meant that members of the Consultative Committee felt manipulated and cheated, viewing their participation in the CCRE as a distraction which allowed the Ministry to do what it wanted when it wanted. This tension lessened towards mid-1999 when general elections were on the horizon and the Ministry became much more open to dialogue and criticism. Another problem encountered by the CCRE was its lack of understanding of the political rhythms that dictated the actions of the Executive. Governments were obliged to show results within their four-year term, therefore any suspension or hold-up in the implementation process had potentially dire consequences. In contrast the CCRE was not subject to similar pressures, leading to contradictions between its desire to have a decisive role in the educational reform and its inability to accompany the process at the same pace as the Ministry. This has proved to be a recurring problem.

The CCRE was made up of 17 institutions but included 23 delegates because certain institutions, such as COPARE and the indigenous organisations, had more than one representative. This is a large number of people and does not make for an easy or swift decision-making process. In addition, some institutions rotate their representatives and, in some cases, the level of absenteeism is quite high, making decision-making even slower and more laborious. Because of the time constraints of its members, the CCRE meets every 15 days. This is a long time gap between meetings in

terms of providing continuity in the discussions - what effectively happens is that immediate matters are discussed and this has little impact on what has already been discussed or what is yet to be addressed. Indigenous delegates constitute a majority in the CCRE. Although different tendencies exist among them they have managed to work together and ally themselves with non-indigenous popular sectors such as the teachers' unions or ex-members of the guerrillas within COPMAGUA. They have made their weight felt by changing and electing new members of the CCRE's Executive Council. As a result some ladino members of the Commission have complained of a built-in 'Mayan majority'. However, the numerical and political power of the Mayan delegates has been exercised with caution in order not to provoke the unification of the ladino delegates.

In general terms the role of the CCRE's members is more political than technical, although in practice it is difficult to separate these two aspects. Members of the CCRE were unequally prepared to exercise technical functions and make recommendations: few had any pedagogic training, some had formal educational training, others had non-formal educational backgrounds but no experience in teaching. The universities and the churches were perhaps the most qualified delegates to the CCRE. These differences in technical and academic qualifications were made worse by the fact that hardly any of the delegates were relieved of their regular work duties. The sub-commissions therefore produced results slowly and took a considerable time to respond to requests for information.

The Socio-Economic Accord was drafted with the intention of neutralising the possible effects of the Indigenous Accord on the educational system by means of reducing the power of civil society to affect the educational reform. This was achieved by making the Consultative Commission an adjunct to the Ministry of Education and by reducing the focus on ethnic discrimination by widening it to include social, gender and geographical discrimination. Social concerns thus weakened the emphasis on the ethnic question within the CCRE, where the indigenous question was not the central issue (it had not been the central issue either in COPARE, but at least in the Parity Commission the indigenous theme was permanently on the agenda). Attention was focused on the theme by the presence of indigenous delegates, by the need for non-indigenous delegates to accept a multicultural approach, and by the role of the indigenous question in COPARE's draft proposal. The ladino delegates did not champion their ethnic rights, but this relative lack of interest in the ethnic question meant that neither did they focus on the need for ladinos to modify their own beliefs and attitudes, such as their ethnic chauvinism and negation of their indigenous roots. On occasion Mayan delegates paid less attention to the specific demands of indigenous people in order to focus on general themes related to national education. While this disproves the

widespread prejudice that indigenous people can only deal with issues that directly affect them, it has also meant that the Indigenous Accord has not always been respected and many opportunities to advance their demands for culturally and linguistically appropriate education for indigenous peoples have been lost.

A number of changes envisaged by the peace accords were to be approved by Congress and endorsed by a popular referendum. For example, the referendum was to approve the recognition of indigenous customary law, of the nation as multi-ethnic, and the co-officialisation of indigenous languages. In the event, these reforms were not approved in the referendum held in May 1999. The reasons for this were diverse and included racism. Fortuitously, the educational reform was not subject to approval by Congress and public referendum and so was not affected by the fiasco of the rejection of the constitutional reforms. Nonetheless, various opponents of the educational reform, such as Some teachers' unions, used the rejection of the constitutional reforms to extend their campaign against the educational changes set out in the peace accords. The general elections at the end of 1999 also had a negative impact on public perceptions of the educational reform. Some opposition parties opposed it as the work of the governing party, the Partido de Avanzada Nacional (PAN). This politicisation of the educational reform was so acute that the Ministry of Education itself, with the backing of the Executive Council of the CCRE, decided to reduce public discussion of the reform while at the same time trying to safeguard the process. It was feared that opposition parties would not support the reform, so the CCRE redoubled its efforts to inform them of the composition of the Commission and the advances made. However, following the defeat of the constitutional reform, opponents of the educational reform gradually increased their profile. Some teachers' unions opposed the reform because it recognised the multicultural nature of the country, which they viewed as a step towards ethnic separatism. They also opposed recognition of the need for parents and civil society to have a greater say in the running of the education system. Some indigenous teachers also rejected the reform because of the 'effect of 500 years of colonialism', viewing the teaching of indigenous languages and cultures as a backward step. Conservative sectors also opposed the reform, arguing it was necessary to prioritise economic growth not education. They additionally alleged that existing laws, not the peace accords - which they maintained had been negotiated with 'criminals' (that is, the guerrillas) - should provide the country's legal framework. Lastly, they opposed multiculturalism and interculturalism on the grounds that they would lead to fragmentation and maintained that national unity would only be preserved by uniform policies. Happily, however, the majority of the private sector and a sizeable part of the 15 teachers' unions supported the

educational reform, even though they were not enamoured of all of its components or proposals.

Conclusions

The Peace Accords concluded in December 1996 were not perfect, precise or complete. They contained inherent contradictions, limitations, confusions and gaps that negatively affected the task of the negotiating parties responsible for their application. These internal limitations were due to the government and URNG's lack of expertise in the themes negotiated, or to deliberate omissions, authoritarianism, idealism or differences between the projections and plans of different governments involved in the negotiations. These contradictions and inconsistencies, together with the attempt to maintain coherence between the different accords, the 1985 Constitution and existing legislation, limited the development of the negotiations and the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. Fortunately the peace negotiators left possibilities open to reinterpret, correct and reschedule the commitments signed, via the mechanisms of the Special and Parity Commissions and the Accompaniment Commission.

Nearly all the problems analysed here negatively affected the negotiations of the Parity Commission, but they most negatively affected the indigenous delegation. Differences in leverage, technical and political inequalities, the unequal responsibilities for drawing up proposals for change and issues of language and different participatory styles all had an impact. The extension of parity to internal teams was perhaps intended to seek justice and equality of opportunity, but in the course of implementation the disadvantages of such arrangements became evident. Despite the institutional parity between the negotiating parties (numerical equality between indigenous and government teams) and the democratic mechanisms employed, the indigenous side was weak or at a disadvantage in nearly all areas.

Both sides suffered from the limited participation of civil society, despite all their efforts, and the fact that they were not relieved of their own work obligations in order to better serve in COPARE. Had they been full time they would have been able to finish the proposal for the reform in four or five months. However, the two teams did manage to reach a reasonably satisfactory 'consensus' which resulted in the completion of the proposal and the construction of good inter-ethnic relations.

With respect to the CCRE, the problems analysed make it clear that external circumstances and factors continue to limit the development of harmonious 'consultation' between the Ministry of Education and the Consultative Commission. This derives from problems that date from the start of the educational reform and frictions between the Ministry and the

Commission. The general elections of November 1998 and the defeat of the constitutional reform package also negatively affected the CCRE. However, the most detrimental impact has been on the indigenous representatives and indigenous interests in general.

Multiple lessons can be drawn from this experience. The Consultative Commission demonstrated its coherence and maturity, for example by insisting on its independence from the Ministry of Education, but also proved vulnerable to external events, such as the elections and the referendum. Similarly, it demonstrated its capacity to pursue implementation of educational reform, but was hampered by its slow pace of operation and the difficulties faced in achieving internal consensus. One thing that is clear is that the governmental or ministerial part has always been more powerful than the civil society delegates (indigenous or non-indigenous) in terms of its ability to determine directions and decisions. Civil society delegations have consistently proved to be weaker and less well prepared for negotiations. In general, the elaboration of the proposal and its implementation has not always been a consensual process, but rather has been marked by ongoing struggles. If the government had displayed more political will in complying with the peace accords then this would not have been necessary. For their part, indigenous people have been tenacious in pursuing their linguistic and cultural needs via the educational reform. The Secretariat for Peace, SEPAZ, has identified the indigenous organisations as one of the sectors most interested in ensuring compliance with the Peace Accords. However, their technical, logistical and political disadvantages, together with their focus on general, national themes, meant they lost opportunities to ensure that all their demands which were recognised in the Peace Accords were subsequently respected.

Notes

1. Guatemalan Vice-Minister of Education (1996-). The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the government of Guatemala or the Ministry of Education.
2. COPARE was established on 2 April 1997 and completed its remit on 20 July 1998; the CCRE was set up on 29 October 1997, became operational on 20 July 1998 and was still functioning as of August 2000.
3. 'Mayan schools' refers to non-state schools run either by indigenous communities themselves or by indigenous NGOs which seek to strengthen mechanisms for indigenous cultural self-determination. These schools, which have much more freedom to experiment than the Ministry of Education, have generated a number of culturally and linguistically sensitive pedagogic methods and course materials. In

effect, Mayan schools are innovative educational proposals advanced by indigenous civil society.

4. PRONADE stands for National Programme for Educational Self-Development (Programa Nacional de Autogestión Educativa). This highly decentralised programme consists of parents' committees which administer certain funds from the Ministry of Education in order to hire teachers, buy educational materials and carry out repairs to school buildings. It generally operates in inaccessible parts of the country where there are no ordinary schools.

Appendices

Appendix 4.1: COPARE delegates

Indigenous delegates

Demetrio Cojtí for the Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya (National Council for Mayan Education, CNEM).

Obdulio Son Chonay and subsequently Pedro Guoron for the Consejo de Organizaciones del Pueblo Maya (Council of Organisations of the Mayan People, COMG), a member of the Coordinadora de Organizaciones del Pueblo Maya (Coordinator of Organisations of the Mayan People, COPMAGUA).

Ruperto Montejo for the Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala (Academy of Mayan Languages of Guatemala, ALMG), also a member of COPMAGUA.

Domingo Sánchez, for the Comisión Nacional Permanente de Reforma Educativa (National Permanent Commission for Educational Reform, CNPRE), special organ of COPMAGUA which aims to monitor the Educational Reform.

Maura Luz Leiva, state school teacher and delegate of the Garífuna people, represented in the CNPRE.

Governmental delegates

María Eugenia Ramírez and later Roberto Moreno, delegates of the Minister of Education, Arabella Castro.

Eva Sazo de Méndez, Pedagogic Advisor to the PRONADE educational programme.

Floralma Meza Palma, Executive Secretary to the Comisión Nacional de Alfabetización (National Literacy Commission, CONALFA) and Director of the Peace Secretariat of the Ministry of Education.

Egil Ivan Galindo, trade union leader of the Asamblea Nacional Magisterial (National Teachers' Assembly, ANM).

Santos Virgilio Alvarado Ajanel, indigenous delegate invited by the Ministry of Education, National Coordinator of the Programa de

Movilización pro Educación Maya (Pro-Mayan Education Mobilisation Programme)

Appendix 4.2: CCRE's 15-point work plan

Diffusion and validation of the proposal for Educational Reform
Revision of the Ministry of Education's plans, programmes and projects
Formulation of the National Plan for Education, 2000-08
Revision of legislation
Design of a Strategy for Social Participation for the Reform
Strengthen the CCRE
Curricular changes
Mayan University
Promotion of educational research
Private schools
Development of Human Resources
Development of special educational needs programmes
Multicultural and intercultural education
Organisational structures

Appendix 4.3: Member organisations of the CCRE

Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala (Academy of Mayan Languages of Guatemala, ALMG).
Alianza Evangélica de Guatemala (Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala).
Asamblea Nacional Magisterial (National Teachers' Assembly, ANM).
Association of Private Schools.
Comisión Paritaria de Reforma Educativa (Parity Commission for Educational Reform, COPARE)
Comisión Nacional Permanente de Reforma Educativa (National Permanent Commission for Educational Reform, CNPRE) of COPMAGUA.
Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales y Financieras (Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Associations, CACIF).
Comisión Nacional de Alfabetización (National Literacy Commission, CONALFA).
Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala (Episcopal Conference of Guatemala).
Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya (National Council for Mayan Education, CNEM).
Ministry of Education (MINEDUC)
San Carlos University of Guatemala (USAC)
Rafael Landívar University (URL)
Del Valle University of Guatemala (UVG)

Francisco Marroquín University (UFM)
Mariano Gálvez University (UMG)
Rural University of Guatemala

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