

*file Guatemala*

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
RONALD REAGAN BUILDING, ROOM 5.8A
1300 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523-5900

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

DATE: September 29, 1999

TO: Melanne Verveer

FAX: 456-6244

SUBJECT:

FROM: Mark L. Schneider

OFFICE: AA/LAC

FAX: 202-216-3012

PHONE: 202-712-4800

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS COVER SHEET:

MESSAGE:

For your information.

To: <AAXA@barrb0041.usaid.gov>, <GEUP@barrb0041.usaid.gov>, <LACE@bar
<LASP@barrb0041.usaid.gov>, <LDHR@barrb0041.usaid.gov>, <MLC@bar
<POP@barrb0041.usaid.gov>
Cc:
Bcc:
From: Super-User <root@cableroom1.usaid.gov>
Subject: 99092446130|GUATEM 03545 |POLITICAL TRAINING WORKSHOP IN GUATE
Date: Friday, September 24, 1999 0:56:16 EDT
Attach:
Certify: N
Priority: Normal
Defer until:
Expires:
Forwarded by:

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 03545 240851Z
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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7452

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 003545

AIDAC

FOR: AA/LAC, MARK SCHNEIDER/CARL LEONARD/NORMA
PARKER; LAC/CEN, DBOYD; USIA FOR AR, E/P, S/PICW THERESA LOAR,
ARA/PPC, EVA WEIGOLD

E.O. 12958: N/A

SUBJECT: POLITICAL TRAINING WORKSHOP IN GUATEMALA.

1. SUMMARY: WITH SPECIAL FUNDING FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THE
US MISSION IN GUATEMALA CONDUCTED A POLITICAL TRAINING WORKSHOP
TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS.
OVER 70 WOMEN PARTICIPATED IN THIS SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP.

2. BACKGROUND: IN APRIL 1999, THE STATE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THE
AVAILABILITY OF LIMITED FUNDING IN ORDER TO HOLD FOLLOW UP
POLITICAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS IN THE REGION. PRIORITY WAS GIVEN
TO COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD BE ENGAGED IN AN ELECTORAL PROCESS THIS
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Success
to Melanne

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YEAR. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GUATEMALA VITAL VOICES DELEGATION, THE US MISSION PROPOSED GUATEMALA AS A SITE GIVEN THE TIMELINESS OF SUCH AN EVENT WITH NATIONAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 1999. BASED ON THE PROPOSAL, THE STATE DEPARTMENT CHOSE GUATEMALA AS ONE OF THE WORKSHOP SITES.

3. THE TWO-DAY POLITICAL TRAINING WORKSHOP WAS HELD ON AUGUST 19 AND 20. APPROXIMATELY 70 WOMEN, INCLUDING DELEGATES FROM NICARAGUA, EL SALVADOR, MEXICO AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ATTENDED. THE WORKSHOP WAS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES: (1) INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS; (2) GIVE CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS PRACTICAL TOOLS TO INFLUENCE THE CONTENT OF THE CANDIDATES PLATFORMS; (3) ASSIST CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS IN PROMOTING PUBLIC DEBATES AMONG CANDIDATES, WITH EMPHASIS ON ISSUES OF MOST IMPORTANCE TO WOMEN.

5. THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND BREAK OUT-GROUPS. THE TRAINERS HIRED WERE PROFESSIONALS WITH EXPERTISE IN THE AREAS SUCH AS GUATEMALAN LAW; CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION; SOCIAL COMMUNICATION; GENDER, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL ISSUES; ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY/GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS; USE OF MEDIA DURING ELECTIONS; ELECTORAL LAW/PROCESSES; AND ELECTORAL REFORM ISSUES. THE WORKSHOP TARGETED CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS THAT FOCUS ON WOMENS ISSUES, AND SPECIFICALLY WOMEN WITH EXPERIENCE IN GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION, POLITICS, THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT. ALL THIRTEEN ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED BY THE GUATEMALAN VITAL VOICES DELEGATION WERE ALSO PRESENT. GUATEMALAN PARTICIPANTS (60 IN TOTAL) RATED THE PANEL DISCUSSION SESSIONS WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES REPRESENTATIVES AS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OF THE WORKSHOP.

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6. DURING THE WORKSHOP SPECIFIC ACTION PLANS WERE DEVELOPED BY GUATEMALA CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO UTILIZE IN PROVIDING NEEDED FOLLOW-UP FOR THE 1999 ELECTIONS AND IN LONGER TERM EFFORTS. THE MISSION HOPES THAT IN THIS WAY THE LEGACY OF THE VITAL VOICES INITIATIVE WILL CONTINUE INTO THE FUTURE. SOME OF THE KEY ASPECTS OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION PLANS THAT WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY WOMENS ORGANIZATIONS ARE: (A) SUPPORT THE NOMINATION OF WOMEN AS GOVERNORS; (B) ADVOCATE FOR THE NAMING OF WOMEN TO KEY GOVERNMENT POSITIONS IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION; AND (C) PROMOTE THE FORMATION OF COALITIONS AMONG WOMENS ORGANIZATIONS.

7. USAID/GUATEMALA MISSION DIRECTOR OPENED THE EVENT AND THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRS, A.I. MADE THE CLOSING REMARKS. BOTH EXPRESSED THEIR INTEREST IN CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR THE VITAL VOICES DELEGATES IN THE PROCESS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE VITAL VOICES AGENDA IN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS WORKSHOP AND THE ACTION PLANS THAT WERE DEVELOPED, VITAL VOICES DELEGATES WILL ORGANIZE A FOLLOW-UP MEETING WITH SELECT PARTICIPANTS, TRAINERS AND MISSION PERSONNEL TO DEVELOP A LONGER TERM AGENDA.

8. COMMENT: THE WORKSHOP, AMONG OTHER THINGS, PROVIDED AN

OPPCRTUNITY FOR ACTION BY VITAL VOICES PARTICIPANTS. WE BELIEVE
THAT THE WORKSHOP WAS A SUCCESS, ALTHOUGH THE TRUE TEST WILL BE
IN WHAT PARTICIPANTS DO AFTERWARDS TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION.

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*file**Guatemala*

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

DATE: February 27, 1998

TO: Office of the First Lady — Ms. Melanne Verveer

FAX: 456-6244

SUBJECT:

FROM: Mark Schneider

OFFICE: AA/LAC

FAX: 202-216-3012

PHONE: 202-712- 4800

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS COVER SHEET:

MESSAGE:

Melanne,

I know it's not possible now, but just ~~some time~~—looks awfully good to me.

1

Potential Visit to Maya Biosphere Reserve, Peten

Summary: A day-long trip would provide a first-hand look at one of the most challenging yet successful efforts to promote conservation of forests and biodiversity in Latin America. The visit also offers a look at work to support a critical aspect of the peace accords: access to land. Depending on time and interest, the first lady could participate in ceremonies related to land titling and park infrastructure, and visit with school groups (environmental ed) and women participating in small business activities compatible with the Reserve.

Peten is Guatemala's largest department, one-third of the nation, site of one of Central America's largest undisturbed tropical forests, "the Maya Biosphere Reserve", and an area of intense violence during the internal conflict. Potential for conflict remains high due to extreme poverty, lack of infrastructure and services, and lack of civilian authority to apply law and order. USG programs are addressing these needs while at the same time conserving the Reserve's parks and biodiversity.

The Maya Biosphere Project: Since 1989, USAID has been assisting the Guatemalan government to establish a park service (CONAP) and national park system. The Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) was legally established in 1990 to conserve tropical forests, wetlands and hundreds of Mayan archeological sites in the northernmost 20% of Guatemala's national territory. The area was then, and continues to be, under extreme pressure due to many illicit activities and a rapidly advancing agricultural frontier. Under the Maya Biosphere Project, USAID supports the government and US based environmental organizations such as CARE, The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International. The Project has focused on park management, creation of economic incentives for more sustainable land uses, land titling, and devolution of forest management to local communities. This \$47 million (\$27m from USAID and the rest from GOG and NGOs) project also promotes improvements in the policy framework affecting the environment at the national level.

Proposed itinerary (7 am to 7 pm): Early am plane flight to Flores airport (1 hr); transfer to helicopter and flight for meeting with women entrepreneurs and community land titling ceremony; flight and visit to Tikal with GOG counterparts/officials; return to Guatemala or overnight in Tikal Park.

Possible Events Itinerary above, combines:

- a ceremony for beneficiaries receiving land titles. Recipients are predominantly indigenous Mayan and the project works with several women's groups in the area.

- a visit to San Andres Eco Escuela, a successful, worker-owned business where most partners are women. Representatives of other

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womens' groups developing more sustainable small enterprises would be present.

- The Tikal Park stop will provide an opportunity to visit one of the premier parks in Central America and to meet with NGOs and GOG officials.

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Potential Visit to the Ixcan

Summary: The proposed half day field visit highlights the historic end to Central America's series of long and bloody civil wars, including 35 years of conflict in Guatemala, and would allow the First Lady to witness and support the significant and effective USAID program to assist the Guatemalan Peace Process. A major element in the program is the work implemented in the Ixcan by the US-based Community Housing Foundation (CHF). The proposed site visit would present successful work with indigenous women entrepreneurs and would provide an opportunity to officially inaugurate a new Bailey bridge which will for the first time allow road transport for villages previously only accessible by river.

The Ixcan: The Ixcan is a remote and extremely poor area just south of the Mexican border populated primarily by indigenous Mayan indians. During the war, much of the population was either killed, fled across the Mexican border or escaped to other parts of Guatemala. With the signing of the Peace Accords, people are returning to the area where they are now learning new skills, and receiving technical assistance and credit to start their lives anew. The area is a major geographic focus for the USAID Mission's \$240 million commitment to support the Guatemalan Peace Process. The Peace Accords were signed in December of 1996. USAID is one of the first and major donors to commit funds and resources to bring about a lasting peace by addressing the inequalities and injustice behind the years of bloody conflict.

The Project: The CHF activity which began in early 1996, will increase both on and off-farm incomes through a combination of technical assistance, provision of credit, assistance in marketing and funding of local community infrastructure. The program works through and strengthens local assistance and credit organizations to reach an estimated 70,000 people by the year 2002. Children are involved through a program of environmental education. Conflict resolution is another key element in the CHF approach where small infrastructure projects have been used to bring people together and heal old wounds.

Woman Entrepreneurs: The program focuses on indigenous women, both through direct assistance to individual entrepreneurs and through developing and empowering local women's organizations. The trip proposes visits to a sampling of woman owned enterprises in the major town of Cantabal, including a store and community center.

The Bailey Bridge: The long promised Bailey bridge is scheduled to be completed in early April and would provide an historic and symbolic opportunity to inaugurate not only the bridge but the opening up of new opportunities for the people living in poverty in areas previously inaccessible by road. The building of the bridge has also come to symbolize successful conflict resolution as excombatants, returnees who fled to Mexico and those who stayed during the violence have all come together to build it.

Logistics: The trip would take roughly 6 hours and would include travel by helicopter from Guatemala City to Cantabal, the largest town in the Ixcan and the site of the women entrepreneurs and then on to the inauguration of the bridge.

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~~Handwritten signature~~

File
Guatemala

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FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

DATE: February 22, 1999

TO: Melanne Verveer

FAX: 456-6266.

SUBJECT:

FROM: Mark Schneider

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NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS COVER SHEET:

MESSAGE:

For your information.

Bcc:

Subject: GUATEMALA15-COX

Attachment: Headers.822

Date: 02/14/1999 5:55 PM

Profile: LGROSS / General / USAID Today

Feb 14 1999 17:46:50 - Source: NYWP - Clip 1 (limit 25, LOST 8)

[http://165.13.23.216/fpweb/fp.dll/\\$vnews/htm/x_dv.htm/_u/lgross/_id/576624721/_k/iWGKNbmKoIAh8r3W](http://165.13.23.216/fpweb/fp.dll/$vnews/htm/x_dv.htm/_u/lgross/_id/576624721/_k/iWGKNbmKoIAh8r3W)

GUATEMALA15-COX

Bringing Government 301 to life: Texas and Guatemalan students lead UT democracy project

By Angela Shah

c.1999 Cox News Service

AUSTIN, Texas - The bark from the family dog was a brief and useless signal.

As Magdalena, then 9, and her family slept in the cold night of early spring, a group of soldiers stormed her one-story white house in the rural Guatemalan farming town of Patzun. They bound and dragged off her father. Her mother screamed in protest. Young Magdalena watched, silent and stunned.

"The day they took my father away was April 9, 1985, in a leap year, when dawn comes more quickly," said Magdalena Jochula, now 23.

For almost four decades, generations of Guatemalans watched as friends and family members disappeared during an often brutal civil war. Many, like Jochula's father, were taken for suspected involvement in liberation theology, a Christian philosophy used to free people from economic, social or political injustice.

Most Guatemalans couldn't do anything to stop the military at the time. But some, like Jochula, are attempting to prevent it from happening again.

Guatemala's young adults are at the forefront of an effort to create a nation of their own, 175 years after Guatemala's independence from Spain.

Following guidelines in peace accords signed in 1996, about 80 students from the University of Texas and two Guatemalan universities are helping the Guatemalan Congress of Deputies decide which of the country's 12,000 laws to expunge, which to rewrite and how to rewrite them.

With a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, UT is directing the Texas and Guatemalan students in the Guatemalan Modernization Project. In addition to law making, they are setting up the sometimes mundane apparatus that keeps democratic governments functioning: budget boards, legislative research agencies and the staffs to operate them.

the student volunteers — most of whom are between 20 and 25 years old — are invaluable consultants.

“They are midwives in the birth of a nation,” said Reginald Todd, a UT staff member who heads the program's operations in Guatemala City.

Like other Central American countries, Guatemala fought a repressive Spain to set up a mostly repressive government of its own. Other than intermittent spurts when Guatemala had a democratic government, its history is ripe with episodes of peasant rebellion against government oppression. The power has always lied with urban elite, primarily the Spanish upper-class. This has fostered a deep mistrust of government for the majority of Guatemala's 10 million, largely indigenous residents.

Guatemala has been ruled by a legal system imposed by Spain, Todd said.

“The history of Guatemala is the history of top-down rule,” he added. So, the “country (is) governed more by tradition and custom than by formal law.”

Yet, the students believe they can help create a democratic system of government. Todd likens the modernization program to an incubator hatching different governmental bodies: a legislative technical assistance unit, budget analysis group, legislative committees and a “delegislative” group to eliminate conflicting or obsolete laws.

The students started creating a database last year of the thousands of laws passed in Guatemala since 1871. Getting the message out to Guatemalans, who speak more than 23 dialects, is difficult.

“All of us in the program are dreaming always that we can change our country,” said Ana Medina, a Guatemalan student who oversees the legislative research organization. “The laws are everything.”

Students such as Medina, 26, research requests by Guatemalan lawmakers that could lead to a bill being filed. Right now, they have completed 70 legislative studies on potential bills and have requests for 90 more. A third of those requests are aimed at banishing Guatemala's ghosts. But there also are questions of how to prosecute those guilty of torture, kidnapping or extra-legal killing. Others deal with more practical concerns.

“Many in the guerrilla movement moved to southern Mexico. Some married Mexican citizens, had children born in Mexico,” said Todd. “One of the questions is what is the citizenship of those people during those 36 years?”

Jochula and another team of students will meet with local public service agencies and international relief organizations to gather input. For example, Jochula is working on drafting adoption laws, which Guatemala doesn't have, and is talking with international and regional groups that can provide expertise on such laws in other Central American countries and around the world.

efforts is the eagerness of the Guatemalan government's support.

The legislative project also opens up an exchange program between the Guatemalan students and UT students studying law, public affairs and other subjects.

Sally Sykes, a UT law and public affairs student who worked with Jochula in Guatemala City last summer, said the students' idealism is the key for making the democracy work.

Lariviere agreed. "We've sent some pretty tough and I don't want to say jaded, let's say experienced faculty down there, and every single one of them comes back full of enthusiasm, and a glint in their eye they didn't have before," he said. "It's that idealism and that genuine belief that (the students) can do something consequential that's infectious."

Already, 20 of the 80 students have been hired as full-time staff in the Guatemalan Congress, Todd said. Another 10 have gone on to graduate school, and 10 other students are working for international organizations.

The legislative modernization program also gives Guatemalan students the chance to study at UT and work in government jobs in Austin. Medina has an internship in the Texas Senate office of engrossing and enrolling to learn the mechanics of how bills are processed and filed. The experience is also giving her the chance to practice English, she said.

Jochula, who will finish law school next year, wants to become a deputy in the one-house Guatemalan Congress. Self-effacing and self-confident, she says she wants to be her country's president.

Sykes said Jochula has inspired her.

"More than anything, I learned about the importance of strength of character and perseverance," Sykes said. "Magda has the most incredible attitude that I have ever encountered. She finds the positive in even the most tragic aspects of her life."

Story Filed By Cox Newspapers

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NYT-02-14-99 1752EST

*Guatemala
file human rights*

Sister Dianna Ortiz, OSU
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Washington, DC 20010
(202) 291-4371

February 2, 1999

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

Allow me to begin by expressing my heartfelt respect. I have watched from afar as you meet your responsibilities each day with both strength and dignity. Yet, I know the cost to you is great and that you live with a pain that others cannot know. The unscrupulous have turned so much of your life, as well as that of your family, into an open book. This injustice both saddens and outrages me. Mrs. Clinton, you and I may be very different, yet we have been linked by a common thread of injustice. That which we as Americans hold so dear, has been taken from us--the right to privacy. My heart goes out to you. I know what it is like to be the object of character assassination carried out under the guise of an "impartial investigation." I know what it is like to be powerless in trying to protect my constitutional right to privacy. I, too, know what it is like to be betrayed by government officials who lay claim to upholding the very values that our country was founded on.

What I do not know is why the fact that I was illegally detained, raped and tortured in Guatemala has resulted in my own government's continual attack upon me. My most recent "reward" for asking for what is my obvious right to know was an invasion of my privacy. A private choice I made as a result of the repeated rapes, one that was my business and no one else's, was used as a weapon to try to break me physically, mentally and spiritually. Mrs. Clinton, I share this with you, not for sympathy but with a sincere hope that you will know that you are not alone. Many of us walk with and beside you as you continue to weather the cruel storms of injustice.

Recently, I learned that you and the President will be traveling to Guatemala in early February. Please allow me to share a concern which is being expressed within the community of non-governmental organizations. Simply put, our own experience in the area leads us to suspect that the administration will be fed false or misleading information about the peace process and the human rights situation in Guatemala.

Mrs. Clinton, while I share this concern, I must also say that I am pleased and yes, envious, to know that you will be traveling to the country which, long ago, captured my heart. It is the place I consider my second home. I am sure that there will be many official responsibilities while you are there, but I do hope that you have the opportunity to see something of the richness of the REAL Guatemala. A visit to a Mayan village is where you will get a glimpse of this reality. It is in such a space that you would see and feel the hidden beauty of a cultured people, especially the children. To so much of the world, you are "The First Lady," but among the indigenous you would be treated as the complete human being that you are. This is what the children would find in you; this is what they would celebrate--that you are, in the most important of ways, one of them--someone created by their Mayan God.

Yet, in the midst of all this beauty, this gentleness and love, these same lovely children stand wounded by fear, violence, hunger, lynchings, kidnappings and the same unjust system which is protecting the killers of Monsenor Gerardi. I hope that while you are meeting with Guatemalan officials, you may raise questions about that investigation.

Some time ago, the Guatemalan government was provided with the names of present and former military who were most probably involved in his death. Instead of investigating these persons, the government has insisted that his death was non-political. First, the accused was a poor man who was so physically impaired that he was incapable of committing the crime. While he was still being detained, Father Orantes, who lived in the house with the bishop was accused of the murder, together with his infirmed and decrepit "attack dog," Baloo. Then, with Father Orantes still in jail, a gang was alleged to have killed Monsenor Gerardi. Most recently, there has been a return to the Church, as an official in the Archbishops Office is to be the "intellectual author" of the crime in a dispute over money. Finally, I should add, the government has studiously avoided investigating the claim by the best known death squad, Jaguar Justiciero, that it killed the bishop. It might be interesting to know what explanation would be offered to you.

Perhaps you might raise my own case, as well. While I did receive some government documents after our meeting in April, 1996, most were irrelevant, lacking new information, although they did make clear that a smear campaign against me had been initiated by Guatemalan and U.S. officials. Thus, I know something of my government's effort to destroy me with its lies. However, I still know nothing of my Guatemalan torturers or their American boss, Alejandro. If you do raise my case, I am aware that you may be told that I have not cooperated, that I may be hiding something, that everything I have said is a lie. Mrs. Clinton, from the moment I managed to flee my captors, I have spoken the truth, as I do today. The accusations against me are not true. Certainly, false accusations are not foreign to you either. I make this request of you not only in my own name but that of the Guatemalan people. Those of us who have suffered do have the right to know the truth.

As a small token of my esteem, I am sending you a copy of Ricardo Falla's, The Story of a Great Love, about the indigenous people of Guatemala. I am very fond of this work, as I hope my Foreword to it indicates. My very best wishes to you and the President on your trip.

I send you blessings of peace,

Sister Dianna Ortiz, OSU

Sister Dianna Ortiz, OSU