



NAB'IL: Organized Maya and Mestizo Youth Contributing to the Construction of Inclusive Societies and Peaceful Coexistence in Huehuetenango.

January 2026



Duration:

Length:	40 months
Start Date:	December 2021
End Date:	April 2025

Budget:

TOTAL:	\$ 1.5 million
IOM	\$405,206.86
OHCHR	\$456,431.14
UNFPA	\$638,362.00

Implementing Agencies and Partners:

Implementing Agencies: UNFPA, OHCHR, IOM

National counterparts: Municipalities of Cuilco and San Pedro Necta (Huehuetenango), Municipal Youth Offices (OMJ); coordination with CONJUVE, SEGEPLAN and sector ministries (MINEDUC, MSPAS, MINTRAB, PDH and the Departmental Governor's Office)

CONTEXT

The PBF project NAB'IL responded to the structural exclusion of Maya and mestizo youth in remote rural communities in two municipalities (San Pedro Necta and Cuilco) the Department of Huehuetenango, a territory close to the Mexican border affected by high levels of poverty, territorial conflict, organized crime and human mobility. In this context, limited youth participation in local governance and weak institutional mechanisms to channel youth demands impact on social cohesion and tensions at the community level.

OBJECTIVES

To strengthen youth agency, inclusion and meaningful participation in community and municipal decision-making spaces for peace and development.

KEY IMPACT AND RESULTS

The PBF "Nab'il" project successfully piloted an innovative model which combined training for youth on leadership, human rights, conflict resolution and civic participation, psycho-social support, the production and dissemination of positive narratives on youth and peace, inter-generational and inter-cultural dialogue and volunteer networks, strengthening the agency and inclusion of over 250 local youth from 29 communities.

As a result, youth leaders have been formally recognized and integrated into four community councils and the municipal councils in both San Pedro Necta and Cuilco and are actively contributing to local peacebuilding and development issues. Seventy-three proposals based on youth priorities were developed and submitted to the Municipal Youth Offices, many of which were included in the 2025 Annual Operational Plans and Budgets in each municipality, on issues such as preventing sexual violence against girls and teenage pregnancies, access to decent work and more accessible healthcare especially mental health and sexual and reproductive health, and environmental awareness campaigns.

CATALYTIC EFFECTS

Catalytic financial effects The project leveraged \$51, 045.82 in additional financial resources from municipal budgets in both Cuilco and San Pedro Necta, for the implementation of youth-prioritized proposals in 2025. The initiatives were included in the Annual Operational Plans of both Municipalities and their respective Youth Offices. .

Beyond the amounts mobilized, these results reflect a meaningful shift in local public investment patterns, with youth proposals recognized as legitimate municipal policy priorities. Financing mechanisms were adapted to the political and institutional contexts of each municipality, including progressive and quarterly approval schemes, enabling implementation to advance while creating conditions for structured investment in youth priorities in the future.

Catalytic non-financial effects The PBF project NAB'IL generated a significant non-financial catalytic effect by positioning youth as legitimate peacebuilding actors and enabling sustained institutional change at both local and national levels.

The project influenced the update of the National Youth Policy and the adoption of the NAB'IL model by CONJUVE as a reference for scaling youth participation within the System of Development Councils (SISCODE). At the institutional level, it strengthened intersectoral coordination in strategic areas such as education, employment and mental health, while consolidating durable alliances among local governments, national institutions and youth networks.

The model also demonstrated a high potential for sustainability and replicability, evidenced by its spontaneous expansion to additional municipalities driven by youth themselves, confirming its capacity to generate structural transformations beyond the project lifecycle.

Voices from the Field

"Being trained and having the ability to convene others as Indigenous women encouraged me to organize more people and to engage in advocacy within our community." **Alejandra García, 23 years old, Cuilco.**

"The project enabled young people to overcome their fears, speak in public and actively participate in community and municipal life." **Municipal authority, Cuilco.**

"The project succeeded in organizing youth, who are now participating in decision-making processes, and it also strengthened the planning and management capacities of the Municipal Youth Offices." **Human Rights Ombudsperson (PDH), Guatemala.**