



Contributions to Peace: Opportunities for Youth in Rural Areas of Guatemala.

January 2026



Duration:

Length:	27 months
Start Date:	March 2023
End Date:	June 2025

Budget:

TOTAL:	\$ 2 million
CONEXIÓN	\$2,000,000

Implementing Agencies and Partners:

Implementing Non-UN Organization:
CONEXIÓN

National counterparts:

Municipalities of Melchor de Mencos, Dolores, Poptún and San Luis; justice and environmental sector institutions; community and youth organizations

CONTEXT

The municipalities of northern Petén, located along the border with Belize, face complex dynamics of agrarian, social and environmental conflict, exacerbated by weak local mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as limited participation of youth and women in local governance spaces. In this context, the absence of clear institutional pathways to address conflict and prevailing distrust between communities and institutions pose significant risks to peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

OBJECTIVES

To strengthen peacebuilding at the local level by increasing the meaningful participation of youth and women in governance, reinforcing community and municipal mechanisms for the prevention and peaceful management of conflicts, and promoting a culture of peace grounded in dialogue, non-violence and inclusion.

KEY IMPACT AND RESULTS

The PBF Youth Promotion Initiative-funded project *Contributions to Peace* achieved greater youth participation in Municipal Development Councils (8 youth leaders formally accredited); strengthened multi-stakeholder mechanisms for dialogue and conflict resolution within the four municipalities and via the Inter-Sectorial Mechanism on Land and Environment (MITA) and established a community-based conflict monitoring network. The project also led to the 4 municipalities developing and adopting policies on youth and women, with associated budgets and operational plans, contributing to sustainability.

The innovative “Peace Hosts” itinerant training model was implemented, reaching 780 young people across the 4 municipalities to both build skills for gastronomical entrepreneurship and income generation and generate spaces to discuss non-violence, tolerance, dialogue and other skills necessary to build a culture of peace.

CATALYTIC EFFECTS

Financial catalytic effects The project generated significant financial catalytic effects by mobilizing local public resources for the implementation of municipal youth and women’s policies. In total, USD \$877,429.47 in non-PBF resources were leveraged and incorporated into municipal Annual Operational Plans and budgets, disaggregated as follows: Municipality of Melchor de Mencos: USD \$110,533.16; Municipality of Dolores: USD \$246,740.26. Municipality of Poptún: USD \$338,101.43 and Municipality of San Luis: USD \$182,054.62

These resources directly and indirectly benefit an estimated population of more than 207,000 people, strengthening the sustainability of interventions and demonstrating strong institutional ownership of the approaches promoted by the project.

Non-financial catalytic effects The project generated a significant non-financial catalytic effect by institutionalizing clear pathways and sustained mechanisms for addressing conflict at the community and municipal levels. Collectively, these changes contributed to transforming historically tense relationships between communities and institutions, fostering a logic of shared responsibility, dialogue and the construction of common objectives in environmentally and socially sensitive territories.

Voices from the Field

“Young women and men build peace through dialogue.” - Daysi Tiul Tec, young Maya Q’eqchi’ woman, Sabaneta community.

“We now understand that conflicts can be resolved through dialogue and respect. These trainings are helping us improve our services to the population.” - Municipal official, Municipality of Poptún.

“We are young peacebuilders, and through our voice we can participate in decision-making.” - Young community leader, Municipality of San Luis.