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**EU-MEXICO'S COOPERATION IN EDUCATION PROJECTS FOR
INDIGENOUS CHILDREN**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, based on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography. The thesis as submitted is 16,630 words long, i.e. 72 manuscript pages.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Communitarian Organization
COPLAMAR	National Plan for Deprived Zones and Marginalized Groups
CRC	Children's Rights Convention
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
EC	European Commission
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUT	European Union Treaty
EZLN	National Liberation Zapatist Army
FpNM	Fondo para Niños de Mexico
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IEC	Ixtliyollotl Education Center
IBE	Indigenous Bicultural Education
IIU	Intercultural Indigenous University
LA	Latin America
LHDI	Lower Human Development Index
NGO	Non Governmental Association
NSA	Non State Actors
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARE	Program to Stop Educational Backwardness
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party

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INTRODUCTION

Mexico is a very unequal country; amongst its population there is the richest man on earth while 40% live in poverty or extreme poverty. Taking this into account I found the issue of education, human rights, and development of main importance to the further improvement of the situation of the vulnerable groups, especially the indigenous communities with big emphasis on the children.

The European Union (EU) stresses the importance of matching the social, democratic, and economic status of their partners, in this case Mexico, in order to have more equal, and therefore better, economic, social and political relations. This being the initial premise for establishing an agreement with non-member states, Mexico was found out to be a two-layer country. The first layer is a wealthy, educated elite with access to first-class education, services and opportunities, leading the industry, economy and political powers. The second layer is a very impoverished population with almost no access (or of very bad quality) to health, education or housing services, with very low wages and almost no opportunities to change their situation over time, most of this population belongs to the indigenous communities living in far out places all over the country. This second layer is the one that captured the attention of the EU's external aid action as a priority for these communities, especially the children.

The legal framework on which I base my research is the European Union-Mexico Cooperation Agreement and the Democratic Clause, using this as an international

cooperation tool for development and aid. The projects I will analyze fall under two categories, the first one is cooperation with the EU¹ (through the European Commission), and the other one is bilateral cooperation with a member state² (namely Germany). Using these two categories I will try to find strengths and weaknesses for the whole process of implementation, action and results with special focus on the evaluation process in order to come up with recommendations and conclusions.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that international cooperation on indigenous childrens' education between the EU and Mexico is a very important compliment to the domestic actions on the subject; however the lack of official assessment during and after the project implementation is a major impediment to evaluate the impact of this aid. Without assessment the EU-Mexico's action on indigenous education can't be measured and it remains as a resource allocation without a clear goal.

Now I will briefly present the outline of the work, the first chapter will consist of a detailed description of the Cooperation Agreement, contextualizing it with the EU-Mexico former relations and the troubles both countries encountered before signing it, especially the Democratic Clause which presented a big issue for the Mexican government. They thought it would compromise their sovereignty and lead the EU to impose some of it's own interest over the Mexico's; it was a very controversial clause that the government had to analyze over and over in order to preserve the state's interest over the EU's.

¹ Project with Centro Educativo Ixtliyollotl, Puebla for Human Rights education.

² Indigenous Intercultural University for Latin America.

The second chapter will go through Mexico's indigenous education status and the laws that improved the coverage, quality, and access to schooling. I will also present some national statistics comparing the non-indigenous with indigenous children's access to education, quality of public schools, and academic achievement such as: school attrition rate, under-age work, number of students, years of school attendance and some other differences in schools, the social context and social policies towards bilingualism. With this picture of the present situation and some theoretical background as framework it will be possible to better understand the importance of the subject and of the international cooperation with Mexico, in educational issues.

The third chapter will be about the EU's education guidelines for Mexico, explaining both projects, in which budgetary line they fall in, the funding process, and the actors involved: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Ministry of Education; and the way these projects work. All of this is in order to understand EU-Mexico's cooperation on indigenous childrens' education, how it is carried out, and the participation of different level actors. This will help to present a broader image of all of the involved parties; and to understand the way in which money is provided and directed according to priorities of subjects that comply with the interests of both parties.

The fourth chapter will deal with the assessment of the projects; this is a crucial point for evaluating the impact on the population, the spill-over effect and the accuracy of these very specific projects for the receiving communities. It is also important for further

project implementation in similar subjects and populations, in order to improve the outcomes, avoid the mistakes and learn more about the needs of these communities. For this chapter I will use the fieldwork I conducted in the community, with the adult and child beneficiaries of the project, also with the person responsible of programs in the main NGO (in Mexico City), and with some professors from different universities that work evaluating these kind of cooperation projects. It is based on a series of interviews, one to one questionnaires that I designed according to my knowledge of the projects and the research I did on the needs for education.

This part is mostly qualitative information as there is no quantitative information available, and there is no official assessment available from any of the involved parties, European Commission (EC), NGOs, Ministry of Education, any University, or research institute. Here I stress the importance and need for formal evaluation, and follow up from all the parties in order to assess the outcomes, for this to result in a constructive work on the flaws and better project implementation in the future.

For the last part of the fourth chapter I will develop proposals for assessing the projects, always taking into account the EU's main directives on these kinds of co operational projects, in order for the help to reach more people and be more effective taking into account the situation of the already finished projects. This will be an exercise of projection from the mistakes and achievements of the projects to the future ones and to improve the cooperation. I will emphasize the transparency laws that rule the EU and Mexican institutions; the accountability expected from local NGO's, EC, and all of the

benefiting people. The main aim of this work is to present the importance of empowering all of these communities and people, the spill-over effects, the positive externalities it brings into other communities and NGOs, and the follow-up needed. All of the latter, in order for the international cooperation between EU and Mexico to be better exploited and fruitful in future times.

Finally a series of conclusions will be part of the final chapter. The main finding is that there is no official qualitative or quantitative assessment from the EU, the EC, the NGO's or any of the actors involved. This is a very important asset that has to be constructed, and asked for in every cooperation project in order to learn from the mistakes and improve the quality of the EU-Mexico joint work. I will emphasize the need for assessment and creation of a publicly available database to make the most of the Agreement, the money, the people involved and the reputation of this kind of co operational project; and for them to be measurable and respectable.

This database should be available to all the interested people, institutions, and decision makers for consultation so that they can validate their projects, budget allocation and quantitative achievements. From this point of view, it is very important to have access to documents, papers, and statistics to prove that the money is being well used, according to the initial stipulations on the application forms, and properly allocated for the main purposes of the projects. It is not only about transparency and accountability but also about legitimizing the international cooperation and the work of all the Universities, NGO's and national institutions involved from both sides.

CHAPTER 1. EUROPEAN UNION- MEXICO COOPERATION AGREEMENT

1.1 Negotiations and signing of the Agreement.

The EU and Mexico have been in close interaction and cooperation since the 1960's, however they didn't have any formal treaty binding them. This changed in 1991 when they signed the Framework Agreement between Mexico and the European Economic Community (at that time) as part of the process of co operational policy renovation and development in Latin America.³ All framed in a project of deepening the political and economic interaction that the European block had with the rest of the world.

On the Mexican side this Agreement represented a unique opportunity for diversifying its economic and commercial affairs, as the major partner had always been the United States, and to balance the influence and weight of this dominant relation. President Carlos Salinas proposed this strategy during the opening of the Mexican economy to free trade policies and liberalization of the internal market.

The main difference of the Agreement proposed by the EU is that it was not only commercial but it included a Democratic Clause.⁴ This Clause presented a big issue for the Mexican Government, it was regarded as a unilateral EU imposition, and it was also

³ Sanahuja, J. A. (2000): "Trade, Politics, and Democratization: The 1997 Global Agreement between the European Union and Mexico" in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Special Issue: The European Union and Latin America: Changing Relations (Summer, 2000), pg. 38

⁴ In doing so the EU was seeking to improve its partner's domestic situation not only in economic terms but also politically and socially. In this way they were promoting a more equal kind of commercial relation with the third country.

hostile to the non-intervention policy guide of the foreign affairs inscribed in the Mexican Constitution.⁵ However, the greater attention expressed in an official way by the Presidents Salinas and Zedillo was to open Mexico's commercial interests to the emerging Central and Western European markets.⁶

In November 1993 the European Union Treaty (EUT) was signed. One of the objectives of this treaty, and also an element of the Common Security and Foreign Policy, is to develop and strengthen democracy, rule of law, respect of human rights, and fundamental rights within the communitarian policy.⁷ This new aspect represented the major interest of the EU in promoting all these values domestically and internationally and would be a guideline for the further economic relations the EU will promote with third countries such as Mexico.

However the political situation of the Balkans and Central Europe (war and fall of the iron curtain) demanded the EU's full attention, so for the further years they would not take much interest in other countries, especially Latin American ones. In this order of ideas, and with special emphasis for this work's interests, the EU continued in the line of promoting and preserving the fundamental rights as a leading community's directive. By 1999 with the Treaty of Amsterdam the EU included a new article in the EUT that reaffirms that all member states are based on the principles of democracy, freedom,

⁵ Escobedo Resano, M.E. (2008): "La Union Europea y las organizaciones no Gubernamentales en el apoyo a los derechos humanos. Estudio de caso: Centro Educativo Ixtliyollof, Puebla," Bachelor degree Thesis in International Relations, Mexico, ITAM, pg. 12

⁶ López Puga, M. (2001): "Evaluacion critica de las relaciones comerciales entre México y la Unión Europea," Bachelor degree Thesis in International Relations, Mexico, ITAM, pg. 32

⁷ "The EU's Human Rights & Democratization Policy" Available from web
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/ddh/eidhr_en.htm>

respect of human rights, and rule of law. Those member states that violate these principles will be sanctioned.⁸

Mexico was going through a similar introspectional process as in 1994 there was the economic crisis that led to a withdrawal of large amounts of foreign investment capital resulting in a major devaluation of the peso and an intense economic restructuring process. In the social and political spheres there were also problems, the National Liberation Zapatista Army (EZLN) erupted a protest in Chiapas, and the presidential candidate of PRI⁹ was assassinated. These events showed the world that the Mexican “democratic” state was not so stable and that the civil society was not finding legal ways to express their concerns.¹⁰

Despite all of the different issues each party was dealing with, the EU considered Mexico as a great consumer market and a mode to approach the other North American markets. By May 1995 the Solemn Conjunct Declaration was signed, establishing three pillars for a further agreement between Mexico and the EU: 1) High level political dialogue; 2) Framework for investment and trade of goods and services, including gradual and reciprocal liberalization according to the standards of the World Trade Organization; and 3) the need to intensify the economic cooperation.¹¹

⁸ “The EU’s Human Rights & Democratization Policy” available from web
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/ddh/eidhr_en.htm>

⁹ Institutional Revolutionary Party

¹⁰ Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p.14

¹¹ Sanahuja (2000), op. cit., p. 48

In 1995 the democratic clause represented a problem for Mexico, as it was regarded again as a tactic of European domination; this clause had to go along with an “application clause” that stipulates: in special urgent cases one of the signing partners can implement unilateral measures.¹²

On the European side, the concern about the Mexican political system, the continuous violation of human rights and the lack of accountability were the perfect proof for the European parliament’s argument in favor of the Democratic Clause. And it was that the free market was not accompanied by democratization of the state structure or by an equal distribution of wealth in Mexico, so in this particular case including the clause was mandatory and should be very carefully supervised. So by 1996, after a two-phase negotiation process, Mexico approved the inclusion of the democratic clause but the reciprocity of it had to be explicitly recognized and any type of unilateral supervision was rejected.¹³

In December 1997 three judicial documents were signed by the EU and Mexico, these would facilitate the accomplishment of the objectives of the Solemn Conjoint Declaration: 1) The Global Agreement or Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement; 2) The Interim Agreement on Trade and Related Issues; and 3) the Conjoint Declaration of Intellectual Property and Services or Final Act.¹⁴ The latter and the fact that a new government was democratically elected for Mexico City in 1997 from an opposition party gave some sense of confidence to the EU.

¹² Sanahuja (2000), op. cit., p. 50

¹³ Idem. p. 51

¹⁴ Idem. p. 51-52

Once the Agreement and the Clause came into use, Mexico became one of the three priority countries amongst Latin America (LA) within the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) for the 2002-2004 period.¹⁵ In 2008 the European Commission issued a new document entitled “A special place for children in EU external action” the main objective being to develop a long-term strategy in connection with the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Council in December 2007,¹⁶ but in chapter two I will analyze it in detail.

1.2. Mexican context of children’s rights at the time of signing the Agreement

The Mexican government has established, on a domestic level, a strategy of openness and cooperation with sustainable development and governance issues, the priorities are: 1) Economic growth and better income distribution; 2) Development of human capital with education and training systems; and 3) Reform of the judicial system and consolidation of the rule of law. The last point includes income distribution; access to services such as education and health; taking care of the environment, and promoting human rights. All

¹⁵ Roy, J. and Dominguez, R. (2007): “After Vienna: dimensions of the relationship between European Union and the Latin-America-Caribbean Region,” Jean Monnet Chair Editors, University of Miami and Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence, p. 28.

¹⁶ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions, “A Special Place for Children in EU External Action,” by Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 5.2.2008, p. 1.

this together makes the Agreement with the EU more relevant and helps the implementation of cooperation projects in areas such as human rights and education.¹⁷

The Mexican legal framework has emphasized the importance of the civil society in promoting and protecting human rights in general, stressing the rights of children, youth groups, and indigenous groups as key actors for planning public policies. For example, the different legal instruments implemented domestically, such as the ratification of the Children's Rights Convention (CRC) in 1989, the amendment of articles 4 and 18 in the Mexican Constitution (2005) where the inclusion of specific rights for child and youth took place and specially some dispositions from the CRC. Another innovation was the Law for Protecting the Rights of Children and Youth.¹⁸

Mexico has fostered the Human Rights culture hand to hand with the civil society with specific programs for indigenous children and youth such as the one in Ixtliyollotl, Puebla and Fondo para Niños de Mexico (FpNM), in cooperation with the EU. These kinds of projects show the importance and response given to the particular age and ethnic groups in topics such as education, diffusion and respect of their rights.

However there are still violations of their human rights and still a lot of educational gaps between the private and public schools, the joint work being done with help from the EU is very important and represents a window of opportunity. This work is not enough and is

¹⁷ Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p. 16

¹⁸ PhD. Gonzalez Dominguez, M. R. (2006): "Memorias del Seminario Internacional los Derechos Humanos de los Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes," Coordinator: Gutierrez Contreras, J.C., Cooperation Program on Human Rights, Mexico- European Commission SRE, p. 9

not fully evaluated, that is the point I would like to stress in order to improve and get the best from this international cooperation. The resources are available, and the NGOs keep on developing project proposals, but it is crucial to have evaluation processes to measure the impact of these programs.

1.3 Democratic Clause

The Democratic Clause still represents a controversial subject for the Mexican-EU relation, however it is important for this written work to state the following proposals as being relevant for the case studies that will be presented, and they are:

- Positive dimension of the Clause. Creating mechanisms for future implementation of proposals favoring human rights and education as stated in the first article of the Agreement. The named article says that the domestic and international spheres of the signing parties respect the democratic principles and the fundamental rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so this legal framework represents an essential element for the Agreement.¹⁹
- Mixed Consultant Committee. The organ that allows the participation of the European and Mexican civil society, as well as the legislative power to take action within the Political Dialogue part of the Agreement.²⁰
- Social Observatory. The mechanisms that provide follow-up and evaluation of the impacts of the Global Agreement in the following spheres: economic, human

¹⁹ Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p. 18

²⁰ Idem. p. 19

rights, and environmental issues with participation of the civil and social organizations.²¹

The EU wants to be seen as a “global player” attaining the image of “civilian power” that is why they place emphasis on civil society cooperation. However the question arises from many observers who suspect that European aid is simply instrumental to trade, investment promotion, and other interests. They question whether the EU’s strong position as a donor in Latin America, and especially Mexico for this work, means that the region is important to the EU.²²

²¹ Aguirre Reveles, R. and Pérez Rocha, M. (2007): “Siete años del Tratado Unión Europea-México (TLCUEM): Una alerta para el Sur Global,” in: <http://www.rmalc.org.mx/documentos/eumexicofta-s.pdf>, Editorial Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio, México, p. 21.

²² Freres, C. (2000): “The European Union as a Global “Civilian Power:” Development Cooperation in EU-Latin American Relations,” in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Special Issue: The European Union and Latin America: Changing Relations (Summer, 2000), University of Miami, p.1.

CHAPTER 2. MEXICO'S INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STATUS

2.1 Mexican Public Education: Differences for Indigenous Communities

In Mexico there are huge income inequalities that allow the best services to be available for those who can pay and the worst services for the most vulnerable groups. Among the vulnerable groups we can find the indigenous communities that live in remote rural places and have little or no access to health, education and housing facilities. This being the reality of indigenous groups, one of the major problems is the access to education in all senses, sometimes when the schools are available the professors are limited or there is no access to a library or any kind of pedagogic materials. There is also a gender bias, and the indigenous girls have even less opportunities to finish the mandatory schooling, either because they have to work or because they need to stay at home doing domestic tasks.

The main interest of this chapter is to present the situation of the indigenous children education, the mechanisms for resource allocation, the different types of schools, the bilingual education availability, and teachers qualification. All these characteristics will be analyzed in order to compare public (rural) indigenous education with the public non-indigenous schooling system of urban areas. I will go through public policy planning and implementation to have a better picture of the way things work for education and for resource distribution, the latter in order to acknowledge the importance of the European financial aid given to Mexico in this topic.

There are two realities in Mexico, the north is very developed and wealthy and the south has the biggest concentration of indigenous poor population. There is a correlation based on the access to educational resources of the students and their socioeconomic level, meaning that students that come from parents with higher occupational and educational levels have advantages on learning, comprehension, and application of knowledge over those with lower socioeconomic levels. There is also the difference between public schools from developed states and the ones from poor states. The first ones show better student performance in complex skills, knowledge, and mental processes, so in these particular issues the socioeconomic factors have more influence.²³

Even if the more vulnerable children finish primary school, they have no means²⁴ of competing for a good secondary or higher public education, and the same applies for the labor market competition in modern economic sectors. Also, in every level of the education scale there are many other expelling mechanisms that make it harder and harder to get to the further stage. Such expelling mechanisms are: 1) definitive desertion resulting from pressures to start working because of the economic needs of the family; 2) the school left-behind syndrome, which is the result of holding students in the same academic year due to bad performance and when this kids reach the legal working age they don't want to remain at school with younger peers.²⁵

²³ Muñoz Izquierdo, C., Villa Lever, L. and Marquez Jimenez A. (1997): "Calidad de la Educación: Políticas instrumentadas en diversos países para mejorarla," Universidad Iberoamericana Dirección de Estudios Educativo-Universitarios, México, p. 8.

²⁴ Means, as in development of intellectual complex skills that wealthy children acquired easily through all the school years.

²⁵ Muñoz Izquierdo (1997), op. cit., p. 8-9.

Other factors that influence school under-achievement are not only material poverty or belonging to indigenous groups, but also single-parent households, type of school²⁶ and geographical location. All of them are cumulative so if a student holds 4 or more of them, his or her deficiencies multiply by 10 and the final result is higher unemployment rates for this particular group.²⁷

On the side of the government's policy making and planning there are some problems that prevent the good quality of education and they are: 1) difficulties of the schooling systems to adapt to the various economic and cultural contexts; 2) lack of articulation between the different levels and institutions of the school systems; 3) deficient relations between the educative actors; 4) lack of equilibrium between administrative personnel and teachers and between spending for salaries and for buying scholar assets (materials); 5) centralization of the decision making processes and lack of evaluation.²⁸

So the needed changes should take place in two layers of the social strata, on the bureaucratic/institutional sphere and the household level. For the institutional level there is a debate over centralization or autonomy. As from previous Latin American experience, in order to have a successful decentralization process, there is a strong need of governmental presence to guide the allocation of resources, but also on the local level

²⁶ There are 3 kinds of primary schools in the rural areas: 1) General: one teacher per school year, with big demand and large number of students; 2) Indigenous: take into account the ethnic and cultural diversity so the teachers are required to be bilingual (Spanish and local indigenous language), and 3) Communitarian: it's a multi-grade school offered in remote communities where the number of children is reduced, instead of professional teachers they have young people (14-27 year olds) that attended training courses and finished at least high school.

²⁷ Muñoz Izquierdo (1997), op. cit., p. 11

²⁸ Idem. p. 31

independence is crucial for an effective application of the regional objectives and to customize the different schooling techniques.²⁹

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recommends four phases to implement public policies: a) define the agenda; b) policy formulation; c) implementation; and d) present and evaluate results.³⁰ All these principles apply to the Mexican case, as most of the time the government in turn, changes the objectives and policies according to a new innovative plan, so the lack of continuity is a major problem followed by lack of evaluation.

Some of the efficient public policies implemented in Mexico (from the 1960s to 1990s) and its effects will be described here to present a better picture of the situation. Since 1960, in order to satisfy the basic educational demand, a series of efforts were made and by 1982 almost every child was able to enroll on the first year of primary school. The number of rural schools that did not offer the complete 6 levels of primary school diminished during the same period of time, however the southern states remained with a lot of schools that didn't provide them all. The efficiency of primary school increased again for the wealthier states but not for the poorest ones, showing that the educational development was boosted by external factors and not by specially tailored policies. As for the federal budget destined to education, there was a constant increase in real terms from 1970 to 1982, and then with the debt crisis it decreased from 17.8% to 6.3% in 1988. But

²⁹ Muñoz Izquierdo (1997), *op. cit.*, p. 33

³⁰ *Idem.* p. 44

the number of students increased as a result of the change in the country's demography, and primary school was the one that suffered the biggest budget reduction.³¹

With president Carlos Salinas a new six-year (1988-1994) plan was proposed "Programa Nacional para la Modernización Educativa"³² with specific measures such as: 1) reorganize the school system; 2) reformulate contents and didactic materials; 3) professionalize the teaching career; and 4) equal distribution of schooling opportunities.³³ All of them in response to the needs resulting from the demographic changes and decentralization processes in order to empower the local governments and communities, with the main objective being to even the situation of the southern vulnerable states.

As for the existing inequalities amongst states and rural/urban schools, a series of special measures were implemented. The first measure was compensatory programs such as "Programa para Abatir el Rezago Educativo"³⁴ (PARE), it was established between 1993 and 1996 in Chiapas, Guerrero, Hidalgo and Oaxaca. PARE consisted on 7 components: a) didactic materials endowment given to teachers, students, and schools; b) school libraries endowment; c) construction of store rooms in order to have a better distribution of text books; d) teacher-training courses; e) building and improving schools; f) strengthening of supervision measures; and g) economic incentives for teachers.³⁵ However this particular measure was not successful and did not reflect any major improvement on children learning.

³¹ Muñoz Izquierdo (1997), op. cit., p. 85-86

³² National Program for Educative Modernization.

³³ Muñoz Izquierdo (1997), op. cit., p. 88

³⁴ Program to Stop Educational Backwardness.

³⁵ Muñoz Izquierdo (1997), op. cit., p. 94

The bottom line for this kind of compensatory measures and the needed components for them to be profitable is: to be implemented nationwide, with efficient administration, professional structure to guide it, giving decision power to local authorities (who know the exact needs of the students), and a proper and continuous communication channel within all levels of decision makers, with the inclusion of parents, and community leaders in the whole process.³⁶

2.2 Legal framework and adaptation of laws in Mexico

The legal framework is crucial for further development of public policies, for resource allocation and to protect the rights of the children, so I will analyze the Mexican context to connect it with the EU's directives and laws.

The change of legislation started in 1978 when the federal government created the Coordination of the National Plan for Deprived Zones and Marginalized Groups (COPLAMAR). Its objective was to increase productivity, to expand employment, and to distribute welfare services to Mexico's least developed regions. Nutrition, education, health campaigns, and food subsidization were central. By the 1980s and 1990s, COPLAMAR began to emphasize basic, compulsory schooling, President Miguel de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas set education as the highest priority of their administrations.³⁷

³⁶ Idem. p. 97

³⁷ Post, D. (2001): "Region, Poverty, Sibship, and Gender Inequality in Mexican Education: Will Targeted Welfare Policy Make a Difference for Girls?" in Gender and Society, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Jun, 2001), SAGE Publications, Inc., p. 470.

The creation of the General Department for Indigenous Education within the Ministry of Education in 1978 resulted in a series of changes focusing on bilingual education: improving the contents and methods for teaching indigenous language and Spanish; organization, development, and operation of programs; and decentralization of indigenous education.³⁸

However, the legal changes started in 1989 with the ratification of the Children's Rights Convention. With this new international treaty the national legislation had to fit the newly acquired responsibilities and demands. In the process of harmonization of the domestic law, the 4th article of the Constitution was amended in 2000 and from that change the Law for Protection of Children and Youth Rights was enacted.³⁹

In 1993 with the enact of the General Education Law, that states the need to direct special attention to the schools that receive the least favored students by giving them more and better resources (Article 33, fraction I).⁴⁰

In 1993 the 3rd article of the Constitution was amended, this article stipulates the universality of education and secularity of it. The amend consisted on expanding compulsory education to secondary school, before it was only until the 6th year of primary school, so it adds 3 more years of mandatory school. The right to basic education

³⁸ "Experiencias y Retos de la Educación Bilingüe en Zonas Indígenas," SEP, Mexico, D.F., 2003, p. 44

³⁹ In that way some directives from CRC were incorporated in the national legislation, and new tools for promoting children's rights were enabled.

⁴⁰ Muñoz Izquierdo (1997), op. cit., p. 89

is directed for children from 6 to 17 years old, however the legal age to start working is 15 years old.

So all these changes promoting mandatory, universal, secular education; recognizing children and youth's rights at the national and international levels that bind Mexico to the international community; and recognition of bilingual and bicultural needs for education all forged the path for the future cooperation with the EU and the projects about to be described in the further chapters.

2.3 Mexican education statistics

In this part I will go through basic statistics in order to present the most recent numbers and in that way be able to contextualize the needs of the indigenous children of the country. This will help to present the big picture of the requirements and take perspective on the reach of projects that the EU promotes and that serve as a big support for what it's being done at the domestic level.

In 2010 the Population Census took place, yield the following socio-demographic profile: there are 112, 336,538 million inhabitants, from which 6,695,228 millions (6%) speak an indigenous language. There are 1, 586,884 people that speak Nahuatl, the most spoken indigenous language in Mexico.⁴¹ There are 980,894 people that speak an indigenous

⁴¹ It is also the spoken language in the zone where the EU project took place in Puebla, and that will be analyzed in the future chapters.

language but don't speak Spanish. From the indigenous language speakers, 73.3% live in Lower Human Development Index (LHDI) municipalities.⁴²

As for education statistics the Census showed that 94.7% of the total population aged 6-14 years attend school, but 87.9% of the population goes to school in LHDI municipalities; 8.6 years is the average school attendance among the population group aged 15 years and more; 40.4% of the population between 15-24 years attends school. Illiteracy rate is 6.9% for the population aged 15 years and more. Most of the population that completed basic education works in the industrial, commercial and services sectors; then the sales sectors; then agricultural sector; and only 6.2% have higher-level work positions.⁴³

From a total of 33, 598,000 students of basic education level and taking into account that basic education consists of 3 levels: preschool, primary and secondary schools. The number of students for preschool is 4,634,000 students from which there are 383,000 attending indigenous schools, and 151,000 attending communitarian schools. For primary school there are 14,815,000 students from which 841,000 attend indigenous schools, and 109,000 attend communitarian schools. And for secondary school there are 6,153,000 students from which 1,255,000 attend Telesecundaria⁴⁴ and 19,000 attend communitarian schools.⁴⁵

⁴²<http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/Proyectos/ccpv/cpv2010/Principales2010.aspx>

⁴³ Idem.

⁴⁴ It's a form of school designed to receive the lessons via satellite, in that way the remote schools where there are no teachers available can follow the secondary education plan and as it is mostly for rural areas, many of the students belong to indigenous groups.

⁴⁵ "Panorama Educativo de México: Indicadores del Sistema Educativo Nacional," Edited by Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación, México, D.F., 2009, p.42.

As for the permanence in school, the school lags, and the advanced students here are some statistics. For preschool age 3-5 years: 13.6% of the total students are not attending school; .3% is lagged; 69.6% attend the year they should; and 16.6% are ahead their school year.⁴⁶ For primary school age 6-11 years: 2.8% is in serious lag; 11.5% is in slight lag; 78.8% attends the proper school year; and 11.9% are ahead their school year.⁴⁷ And for secondary school age 12-14 years: 4.3% are not attending school; 7.5% is in serious lag; 16.2 is in slight lag; 63.7% attends the proper school year; and 8.2% are ahead their school year.⁴⁸

As we can see the further the students go the more serious lag and the more they don't attend school, and this is mostly explained because of the need to stay at home and do household tasks or join the labor force, talking about less developed states and communities, mostly rural.

About child labor the statistics available for 2007, for children working from 20 hrs a week in household or external tasks are: 4% aged 6-11 years; 17% aged 12-14; and 43% aged 15-17 years. And only 48.1% of the children aged 6-17 years who worked 20 or more hours a week would assist school. The girls are mostly occupied with household tasks and the boys with external jobs.⁴⁹ So one of the main reasons for abandoning school

⁴⁶ Idem. p. 159

⁴⁷ Idem. p. 160

⁴⁸ Idem. p. 161

⁴⁹ "Panorama Educativo de México: Indicadores del Sistema Educativo Nacional," Edited by Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación, México, D.F., 2009, p.84-86

is the need to go perform some paid or unpaid work depending on sex, this is a major problem for the less developed rural communities.

The importance of the EU aid in Mexico is fundamental for this vulnerable groups, it works as a support mechanism to the public policies implemented by the federal government. As the European aid is only a complementary help, it is of major importance for it to be well focused and evaluated in order to know which kind of projects reach bigger number of children and how the neighbor municipalities can benefit from the spill over effects of them.

CHAPTER 3. EUROPEAN UNION'S EDUCATION POLICY TOWARDS MEXICO

3.1 Cooperation projects in Mexico: classification, funding and objectives

In this chapter I will analyze the EU's guidelines and directives towards Mexico in international cooperation and aid, specifically for indigenous children. The topics I will focus on are human rights and bilingual/bicultural education, as the two projects to be analyzed are concerned with these issues. But first a brief revision of the types of projects supported by the Cooperation Agreement will be made.

The EC through the EIDHR promotes targeted projects for Human Rights promotion. The Global Agreement memorandum stipulates a sum of 56.2 million euros for the 2000-2006 period for different general projects such as: consolidation of rule of law, judicial system reform, social development and reduction of inequalities.⁵⁰

But there are also 3 types of financial aid given by the EIDHR for projects supporting human rights promotion, democracy, and prevention of conflicts:⁵¹

- 1) Objective Projects: those that consider the participation of diverse actors such as international organizations, governmental organizations and national authorities, but also can be identified by specific objectives that cannot be achieved through

⁵⁰ Escobedo (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 20

⁵¹ Brochure: "Cooperación UE-México en derechos humanos" Delegation of the European Commission in Mexico.

- calls for proposals. For example there was a project with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs targeted to identify concrete actions and policies that incorporate international human rights' norms and standards in México.⁵²
- 2) Projects Identified by Calls for proposals: directed to NGOs and for the implementation the EC contributes with a minimum of 150,000 euros and maximum 1,500,000 euros. This is the case of the project to be analyzed in the next chapter: "Indigenous young people of Puebla working towards democratic and human rights culture," 150,000 was the subvention provided by the EC, it represents 63.33% of the total costs of the project.⁵³
 - 3) Micro-projects: those for which the EC earmarks a maximum of 100,000 euros. In 2003 the budget was 600,000 euros, and gave subventions for a maximum of 50,000 euros to Mexican NGOs. From July 2003 to January 2004 the EC launched two calls for proposals for the following topics: a) human rights promotion; and b) Fight against indigenous peoples' discrimination.⁵⁴

As for the latest Country Strategy Paper (CSP) designed for Mexico (2007-2013), the EU considers to be one of the 3 challenges the need to allocate resources for education, training, and technological development. It emphasizes the need for social cohesion; diminish poverty rates and social exclusion, as around 40% of the

⁵² Brochure: "Cooperación UE-México en derechos humanos," Delegation of the European Commission in Mexico.

⁵³ Grant Application Form for calls for proposals of the European initiative for democracy and human rights, Support to the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, Budget line 19 04 03, pg. 3.

⁵⁴ Brochure: "Cooperación UE-México en derechos humanos," Delegation of the European Commission in Mexico.

population lives below the poverty line despite of the high GINI Coefficient of the country (.458 in 2005).⁵⁵

The EU thinks that given Mexico's level of development and its membership to the OECD, it is not considered as a priority country for development cooperation by most international donors. Cooperation flows therefore are mostly in the form of loans from multilateral institutions or projects involving civil society to address poverty, such as those promoted by the EU. On the bilateral level, the main member state donors are Germany, Spain, and France, which is the case of the second analyzed project in this work.⁵⁶

This CSP stipulates that the possibility of concluding bilateral sectoral agreements in selected fields such as: Education and Culture, Environment, Science and Technology, and Fisheries is specifically mentioned in the Global Agreement.⁵⁷ This is the case of the Intercultural Indigenous University (IIU).

For cooperation through thematic lines in the fields of human rights, gender, environment among other topics, it should be carried out through NGOs.⁵⁸ And this applies for the study case of the human rights project in Puebla.

The CSP also stipulates that evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of bilateral cooperation projects is carried out in a regular basis. Specific problems

⁵⁵ "Country Strategy Paper 07-13 Mexico," DCI Committee January 2007, in http://eeas.europa.eu/mexico/csp/07_13_en.pdf, p. 9-10

⁵⁶ *Idem.* p. 12

⁵⁷ *Idem.* p. 13

⁵⁸ *Idem.* p. 14

encountered during the implementation of some bilateral projects, in particular where possible, national legislation should be harmonized in order to allow the application of EU rules and regulations to EU-financed projects, as is the case worldwide.⁵⁹ This is a very important point I would like to analyze in chapter 4 and according to my research there is few or no evaluation of the implemented projects available, either from the EC or from the NGO and it represents a major gap of this so far successful cooperation.

This paper also states that more flexible models will need to be developed for future bilateral cooperation projects. Cooperation carried out through thematic programs and other instruments has also delivered positive results. Particularly in the field of human rights, this kind of cooperation has been very successful in terms of impact and visibility and has helped in building valuable contacts with sections of the local civil society. The management of the remaining thematic programs and other instruments by the EC Delegation in Mexico opens up further opportunities in the field.⁶⁰

The activities developed in the context of present CSP will take into consideration the link between social participation of non-state actors (NSA) as well as the developed policies focused on cross-cutting priorities such as gender, environmental protection, good governance, rights of the child, indigenous people's rights and combating

⁵⁹“Country Strategy Paper 07-13 Mexico,” DCI Committee January 2007, in http://eeas.europa.eu/mexico/csp/07_13_en.pdf, pg. 15

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

HIV/AIDS.⁶¹ EC programs and actions directly operated with NSA in Mexico are coherent with the present strategy and considered a useful tool to complement bilateral action. Important projects have been developed in the field of human and indigenous peoples' rights, and NGO co-financing, and there's an increasing interest on the part of Mexican civil society to participate more actively in other EC lines covering sectors such as poverty diseases or gender.⁶²

As we can see from the latest CSP the guidelines continue to focus on the less favored people but with an emphasis on indigenous peoples' rights and gender inequalities, all of them very important fields to even in order to achieve a better development of the country as a whole. Which is the main objective of the Democratic Clause in the Global Agreement with Mexico, and a major guideline in any EU's trade agreement with third countries.

3.2 The EU as a civilian power: cooperation for development and indigenous peoples

The EU's attempts to strengthen ties with Latin America (LA) are based on existing historical and cultural links and on economic interests. The EU wants to be considered a global player, and it should have the international profile of a "civilian power" or a

⁶¹ "Country Strategy Paper 07-13 Mexico," DCI Committee January 2007, Available from web <http://eeas.europa.eu/mexico/csp/07_13_en.pdf> p.18

⁶² Idem. p. 19

“nonmilitary superpower” and share “world responsibilities”⁶³ that is why cooperation with LA is important to diversify its relations.

However, EU’s foreign aid is in crisis because public support is lagging and there is no convincing political *raison d’être* for development cooperation. Practically all the donor governments are under strong pressure to reduce public spending. Also LA would be excluded from aid if the criteria would say for lowest income per capita and human development indexes.⁶⁴ But as we have said before the region is one of many social and economic inequalities, and countries such as Mexico qualify for this specially tailored aid for some sectors of the population.

The relations between any Latin American country and the donors are still carried out mostly one to one. Each donor has its specific priorities, preferred area of concentration, and different ministerial partners; this makes it extremely difficult for any Latin American government to deal with all the EU donors together. The basis of European aid shifted from largely nongovernmental organizations and political foundations to government agencies and a more officially structured system. This is not to say that the NGOs and the foundations disappeared, but they took a back seat to the government agencies.⁶⁵

The EC co financed aid is large and represented more than one tenth of the Commission’s aid commitments to the region for the period 1992-1995. But a major

⁶³ Freres (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 63

⁶⁴ *Idem.* p. 65

⁶⁵ *Idem.* p. 77

and frustrating issue related to foreign aid, that exists to the present day, is that despite all the aggregate data available on flows and geographic and sectoral distribution, very little is known about the aid's impact. There is no shortage of project evaluations, but even considered together, they provide only a limited picture. Indeed, it is hard even to speak of "European aid" because of the considerable differences among the bilateral donors and between these and the Community's institutions.⁶⁶ I had to face this problem while doing the research and fieldwork for the project in Puebla, there is absolutely no official information available on the project either from the NGO or from the EC.

As for the specific cooperation for development and indigenous peoples' rights between EU and Mexico, it is a rather recent subject it started in 1997. First with the EU and member states recognizing the indigenous peoples' rights and implementing a comprehensive and including policy in may 1998. By November 1998 the EC issued a working paper to state the basis of a global EU policy to support indigenous peoples: recognizing the right to determine their own social, economic, and cultural development. In response to this, the EU would participate to eradicate this group's poverty conditions, to watch over their human rights, and vulnerability.⁶⁷

In June 2000 the EU prepared a "Progress Report of the Work with Indigenous Peoples" evaluating the achieved progress by integrating the indigenous topic in the regulations, directives, and brochures (judicial instrument), even though there is no

⁶⁶ Freres (2000), op. cit., p. 78

⁶⁷ Ramos Bustillos, M.R. (2004): "Cooperación al desarrollo y pueblos indígenas: El caso de la relación Unión Europea-México," Bachelor Degree Thesis in International Relations, ITAM, Mexico, p. 18.

specific brochure about indigenous peoples. From this work the main challenges to face were: to identify interest projects for indigenous peoples; develop indicators of project impact and control mechanisms; include consultation processes to the organizations in developing countries; facilitate the indigenous peoples participation throughout the project life cycle.⁶⁸

The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights was established in 1999 to promote democracy and human rights in third countries and it includes the indigenous peoples' rights as a thematic priority.⁶⁹ So the EU has come a long way and the changes and inclusion of the indigenous peoples' rights as a priority demonstrates a true interest to change their situation in other countries. However there is a long way to go for the real changes to take place and most of all the need for evaluation processes on this cooperation with third countries is of high importance, but I will talk about this in chapters 4 and 5.

3.3 Case Studies: Ixtliyollotl and Indigenous Intercultural University.

3.3.1 Ixtliyollotl: “Indigenous young people of Puebla working towards democratic and human rights culture”

I will briefly describe this co-operation project with Ixtliyollotl Education Center (IEC), it took place during a 3-year period (2006-2008). It consisted on a series of

⁶⁸ Ramos Bustillos (2004), op. cit., p. 20

⁶⁹ Idem. p. 38.

workshops with children and young people (under 18) to identify their needs and concerns regarding their human rights. Afterwards they attended a series of lectures to empower them to form committees for human right vigilance and violations reports. The final objective was to create local lobbying groups with family members, teachers and authorities in order to take all those demands to their local governments and promote legislative changes and punishment for those violators. A positive externality of this project was the spill over effect to other nearby communities, due to the family ties or social spread.

The IEC is a second floor NGO that depends on Fondo para Niños de México (national NGO) that belongs to Christian Children's Fund (international NGO). The main objectives of FpNM are to bring health, education and nutrition to indigenous children (0-18 year olds) living in extreme poverty. IEC is a communitarian organization that receives subsidies and monthly resources from small and grand donors, however it has independence to manage its resources, as it is the case of the co-operation project with EIDHR.⁷⁰

A part of the IEC's working lines is the promotion of human rights among children and women, so that they would pass the knowledge to older generations. The main objective is to break the poverty circles this kids live in by giving them the right tools, mostly via education.

⁷⁰ Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p. 30

The objectives of the project can be summarized as follows: 55 indigenous teenagers that belong to 13 communitarian organizations (representing Nahuatls, Popolocas and Totonacos ethnic groups of the state of Puebla) will be engaged in interethnic and intercultural projects to promote dialogue with local authorities, and organizations. This 55 young people will reach 1100 kids, 1100 other young people, and 1100 women from their communities, they will be able to diffuse the effects of the workshops in other social groups in order to improve their human rights situation.⁷¹

The project dynamic was to conduct 9 training meetings within 3 years, so it is 3 meetings per year: one during Easter holidays, other during summer holidays and the last one during Christmas holidays (one week each). During that week the teenagers live at IEC (because they come from remote communities and it is impossible for them to go home everyday), for 7 days they are able to socialize the experience, get some feedback from their peers, and foster the interethnic network. The process of participants selection was made through the Communitarian Organizations based on the kid's participation in the community and their school grades.⁷²

During the one-week training meetings the workshops and discussion panels allowed to identify the problems and needs of the children. The issues that took the attention of the kids were children's rights and gender equality. During every training meeting there were 4 trainers in charge of the lessons, monitoring the processes and evaluating the results. Once the kids identified the problems, they were presented with several

⁷¹ Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p. 32

⁷² Ibidem.

tools such as: dialogue skills; petition formulation; self-esteem classes; leadership and empowerment elements in order for them to compromise as change agents and to be able to face the local authorities and their families.⁷³

For each training meeting they prepared some problem trees,⁷⁴ written materials, triangular analysis, and commitments to take into action during the next three-month plan. They were visited by different personalities from NGOs, the state Human Rights Commission, the Youth Institute of Puebla, people from FpNM, even one person from the EC, and local government representatives. All these visitors talked about human rights, the legal instruments available to report any violation, and in general presented the big picture of the situation and the problems faced by their specific sphere of interest.⁷⁵

After the training meetings the children had to go back to their communities and share the knowledge with the local people. They were asked to contact 10 families, especially the more active or engaged to the communitarian life, to present the project and ask for their help in promoting it. This was the phase of human rights diffusion in the communities through a web page, posters, training other kids, and talking about their rights during local fairs or events. In that way they were able to get in contact with more people and map the human rights situation of the community.⁷⁶

⁷³ Escobedo (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 33

⁷⁴ Pedagogic tool similar to mind maps where the main problems are written down and the origins and solutions branched to them.

⁷⁵ Escobedo (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 33

⁷⁶ *Idem.* p. 34

This entire kid network was able to build up a support net within their community and all sorts of local leaders, public and private organizations and politicians. With this work they would be able to diffuse and be actively present in the local political agenda and the development plans that later will be implemented as public policies in defense of human rights, democracy, justice, social, cultural, economic, civic and human development of their people.⁷⁷

At the end the teenagers would be able to settle a human rights watch office with a computer and furniture, donated by the Communitarian Organizations (CO) and the EC. This space would be used as an observatory place to denounce or counsel any violations. They would also receive a diploma from the Universidad de las Americas de Puebla, recognizing their participation in the program. However, any of these two final things happened, even though they were stipulated in the initial plans and budget. I will go through this point with more detail in the next chapter.

3.3.2 Intercultural University: German bilateral assistance

As I mentioned before, there is also the possibility of bilateral cooperation between member states and third countries, I will present here the German case briefly as it takes place with many Latin American countries, including Mexico. This bilateral assistance would serve to place into perspective which of the EU's international

⁷⁷ Grant Application Form for calls for proposals of the European initiative for democracy and human rights, Support to the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, Budget line 19 04 03, pg. 2-3.

cooperation models work better, or reach more people. It is also about empowering indigenous peoples' rights, especially to bicultural and bilingual education.

This particular case has taken place over many years, and it's a completely different way of international cooperation than that of the Puebla project. It's a long-term agreement with deeper relations and not only focused on cash transfer, but it supports knowledge creation. The aim of this bilateral cooperation between European donor countries and receiving countries is creating new forms of multilateral collaboration in support of education, stressing the importance of indigenous peoples' human rights and poverty reduction.⁷⁸

The difference of this "donor logic" is that it aims to establish a new multilateral agenda, collaborate with governments and create new forms of engagement with civil society, for example, with the creation of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in 1992. The fund has a multilateral focus on the self development and recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, and that they need to reassess the contributions of indigenous languages and cultures to the diverse national identities of Latin American countries. The common goal of this technical support is a direct response to the two main overarching criticisms of education in LA, first that quality of schools for the poor is not improving, and second that educational equity is decreasing the region.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Cortina, R. (2010): "Empowering Indigenous Languages and Cultures: The Impact of German Bilateral Assistance in Latin America," in *European Education*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Fall 2010), M.E. Sharpe, p. 2.

⁷⁹ *Idem.* p. 3

The German cooperation with LA has taken place for 30 years; it manages and designs projects for other agencies and the EU. The primary focus in the past three decades has been on intercultural bilingual education, through components such as professional development for teachers, the development of new curricula, and the creation of innovative teaching and learning materials. The targeted countries are those with large indigenous populations such as Guatemala, Honduras, Peru and Bolivia.⁸⁰ Even though Mexico is not in the priority interest of this bilateral cooperation it has helped through the process with technical assistance and expertise knowledge and also the IIU has many campus all over the country.⁸¹

I will describe some of the programs briefly, the first one took place in Peru, the German agency was the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and the Peruvian one was the Ministry of Education. The name of the program was PROEDUCA and it ran from 2002 to 2007, the main goal was to provide basic education to rural communities with high rates of poverty, with majority of indigenous population. The main contribution of it was to provide intercultural bilingual education in the Andean region along with new graduate programs for young indigenous teachers, providing them with a new pedagogical model.⁸² The only problem is that after the program finished there is no reliable evaluation of the impact and academic achievements, however some of the successful curricular innovations have been implemented in other programs.

⁸⁰ Cortina (2010), op. cit., p. 4

⁸¹ During the conducted fieldwork for the Puebla project I asked some relating questions to this Intercultural Indigenous University, I would describe it in the next chapter.

⁸² Cortina (2010), op. cit., p. 6

The second program took place in Bolivia in 1996 within the public University of San Simon, better known as PROEIB Andes. The GTZ created two master's degrees for indigenous teachers and administrators: one was in teaching and learning for those in charge of training teachers for Indigenous Bicultural Education (IBE), and the other was in administration and public management. It lasted 12 years, until 2005 and they produced 74 books and doctoral thesis providing an important contribution to knowledge creation in the field. Even though the program ended the PROEIB foundation, a non-profit institution, continues carrying out the master's program and the regional activities aimed at the consolidation of intercultural bilingual education.⁸³ So the spill over effect was positive and the time line of teacher training was not interrupted

The third program is the Indigenous Intercultural University. It is a result of collaboration with Fondo Indígena⁸⁴ and the German cooperation. They started planning IIU in 2003 with a network of universities (all over Latin America) to launch graduate degrees on different subjects such as: indigenous law; intercultural bilingual education; human rights governance and international cooperation; and government and intercultural public policies. They provide scholarships to indigenous leaders and

⁸³ Cortina (2010), op. cit., p. 7-8

⁸⁴ A multilateral agency, its members are mostly LA countries and Spain, Portugal and Belgium. The role of the fund is to provide indigenous communities and local organizations with an international platform to participate directly in the economic, social, political, and cultural identity of the indigenous groups.

professionals; only 15% of non-indigenous people can participate. In this way they empower indigenous languages and cultures in LA.⁸⁵

The commitment of the German cooperation goes beyond the field of education. To coordinate its work with indigenous populations, in 2002 the GTZ established the Office for Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the goals of strengthening local indigenous organizations, helping them to establish regional cooperation, and providing direct funding to these efforts.⁸⁶

This other way of international cooperation is helping to develop the education system in Latin American countries with other perspectives. For example in Mexico, historically the state took most of the leadership in searching for options and opportunities for indigenous education, and in other cases, expansion and integration have been more the result of the engagement of the civil society.⁸⁷

The result of this bilateral cooperation is to empower indigenous people not only by educative means but with new tools for resource management, self esteem, but most important by educating local leaders that understand the needs of their communities and could design and apply better public policies. However, this bilateral cooperation faces the same problem as the EU-Mexico one: the lack of formal evaluation and follow up programs.

⁸⁵ Cortina (2010), op. cit., p. 9

⁸⁶ Idem. p. 10

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

CHAPTER 4. ASSESSMENT OF THE IXTLIYOLLOTL PROJECT

During the conducted research I found out there is no official or formal assessment available for this specific project. I contacted the EC Delegation in Mexico, FpNM, and the Communitarian Organizations involved, but none of them had any document that gathered any qualitative or quantitative information. So the data I will present here is the result of a series of interviews I conducted with different actors in two moments, the first one was during the 8th training meeting in August 2008 at IEC in Cholula, Puebla; and the second one at the General Communitarian Office of Cuetzalan, Puebla in December 2010. I designed the questionnaires based on the information I had from the NGO and the application form for the economic subvention presented to the EU.

The interviewed people were: the person in charge of program applications from FpNM, the director of the project in IEC, a few members of the Communitarian Organizations that were present through the project, and finally some of the benefited adolescents who took the whole course, some who only took it for a while and some that didn't take it (as a way of comparing the differences in their knowledge of human rights).

4.1 Fieldwork during the project application (august 2008)

Personal interviews with participant teenagers, it took place on Saturday August 2nd, 2008, IEC at San Andrés Cholula, Puebla:

-Lourdes Aldama Muñiz, she was 17 years old, belonged to the CO Okichpipil, A.C. from Ayotoxco Puebla, she was attending high school, and had been affiliated to FpNM since 2003. She expects to study Communitarian Development after she finishes school. Had been part of this project since the beginning and was invited by the coordinator of her CO through the community calls, her parents allowed her to participate as they saw her interest on the program. The issues that captured her interest from the project because of their importance and relevance to her community were: children's rights, violence against kids, gender equality, and education; she considered that democracy and electoral rights were not relevant for her community. The didactic material she used to work on the project's tasks was: Internet information or human rights brochures. The actions she took to spread the acquired knowledge were didactic games at the woman's rights fair; preparing posters for the CO; theatre plays for children's day; and through the programs at the CO with mothers and children with thematic campaigns. On the personal domain this project has encouraged her as she sees the interest and progress of the children, it also gains her the community's respect, and empowers her to be more self-assured. Her mother is the committee's president of the CO and two of her sisters' work as facilitators⁸⁸ for children aged 6-12 years. She talked about the positive people's reaction by supporting their actions, however she stressed the negative side with a cultural problem as the violation, and abuses continue to occur and the people involved don't want to talk about it, want to remain anonymous and don't want to be identified within their communities. The tasks she had to accomplish as a Human Rights promoter were to

⁸⁸ Facilitators are part of FpNM personnel; they implement the educational and entertainment programs with the affiliated children according to age groups.

determine how far the problem affects the children, to accuse any minor violations or at least inform it to the authorities if the affected ones are grown ups. On the children side, she noticed that once they know their rights they want to take advantage of them, for example, they argue that as playing is their right they should play all the time. With the teenagers she saw very good responses especially to reproductive rights.⁸⁹

-Mauro Seda Peralta, he was 17 years old, he belonged to the CO Paso del Jardín from Tuzamapan, and he attended high school, has been affiliated to FpNM since 2003, and plans to study Electronics. He suffered parental abuse his dad beat him. He had been part of the project since the beginning, was selected because of his outstanding participation at the CO and his good grades at school. The issue that catches his attention because of its importance and relevance is children's rights; he does not see democracy issues as a priority as each one can exercise them individually. The didactic material he uses to work with the children are: cardboards, analysis charts and trees, in order to prioritize on topics and to give lectures. He has imparted lessons, workshops, campaigns and working groups with children. He felt good with the project as he was doing a good action to his community and at the same time he was acquiring knowledge on the subject. His mom belonged to the CO Committee and so the whole family is involved in the projects. He observed a supportive and positive reaction from the people, whenever he found a negative reaction from the parents he stops working on that specific case. From his experience with teenagers he can say

⁸⁹ Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p. 40-41

they are very eager to learn their rights; on the negative side of being a young human rights promoter, some people don't take him seriously or don't believe in him.⁹⁰

Personal interview with the Coordinator of the training meetings: Luis Fernando Avila, it took place on Saturday August 2nd, 2008 at IEC, San Andres Cholula, Puebla:

The coordinator divided the teenagers achievements in four categories:

1. Personal: builds their self esteems, they get to learn skills and capabilities that allow them to outstand in many aspects of their life, they personalize the project, and through the exercises they become confident for public speaking, develop critical thinking and decision making processes.
2. Family entourage: they are able to rethink the family dynamics through the experienced events and apply the knowledge, the bright side of this is that they change the way their parents perceive them and the bad side is that the parents feel threatened when they find their level of empowerment.
3. Communitarian Organization: now has a network of young people that is constantly participating and supports other teenagers.
4. Community: the teenagers become leaders; have clear ideas on the communitarian development processes and the politics at a local level so they have bigger action margins.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p. 42

⁹¹ Idem. p. 43

As for the number of participants he said that at the beginning there were 55 teenagers, but after almost 3 years only 10 remain. However, new teenagers were included and now they are 65 beneficiaries and this allows increasing the diffusion of the project.

When asked about the required preparation for teaching the training sessions he pointed out that it was autodidactic and with certain support of teachers from the Universidad de las Americas de Puebla; for specific subjects such as human rights he approached the State's Commission for Human Rights and some specialized publications in the subject.

He pointed out that the last stage of the project will consist on the creation of a community committee with one kid, one teenager, one parent, one elderly people, and one teacher; the purpose of this committee is to be able to present a proposal to the municipal government and lobby in favor of it in order to satisfy the detected needs and improve the community's situation.⁹²

The last interview of this period was with the national coordinator from FpNM for the age group 12-16 years. She pointed out the importance of this project for the children and teenagers are their empowerment. Talking about human rights increases their self-esteem and development in order to identify the problems and manage solutions with the local authorities. All this taking into account that they all live in far out places and don't have access to information media or internet in their houses.⁹³

⁹² Escobedo (2008), op. cit., p. 43

⁹³ Idem. p. 44

4.2 Fieldwork two years after the conclusion of the project (December 2010)

I will first present the personal interviews with the CO personnel; they took place on December 7, 2010, in Cuetzalan, Puebla:

-Alma Delia Cabrera, she works for three COs: Ayotochtli A.C., Paso del Jardín, and Centro Infantil Cuahutlamin. She speaks 80% Nahuatl, she holds a bachelor degree in Rural Development with specialization on planning. Five children per CO took the human rights course; she didn't participated directly on the project. The benefits she observes in the children is that they are more self assured and have a better self-esteem. With the project she learned that with a good guide the children are capable of doing a lot of tasks and manage their own projects, they are very open to learning new things and to take that knowledge to action. As for the evaluation process, the IEC did conduct a small assessment with questions about the development of the project, however after an incident with IEC they were not able to read it or have a copy of it. About any teenager from her COs attending the IIU,⁹⁴ she said there was one girl from Ayotzinapan studying Sustainable Development, but she was unable to conclude the EU-IEC project. I asked her if she would like that a similar project would take place again within their COs and she said that it would be good, as the methodology was successful, however she thinks there's a lot to learn in that field and the need for good coordination and environment is essential. On the weak side of the project there were some bad experiences, especially in this age groups the need to reinforce the implementation of the project is mandatory as they are very impressionable. She

⁹⁴ There is a IIU campus at Huehuetla Puebla, very close to Cuetzalan.

pointed out the need of a follow up plan, and on the side of the CO to be able to demand the completion of the things the NGO and CE promised to give. To improve the course she thinks it will be useful to have more interest from all the actors and to take things seriously. Finally, the pedagogy used in the project was one of the best tools and the methodology is being used for other courses.

-Miguel Lemus Martinez, he works for Desarrollo Xaltipan, speaks Nahuatl. He finished primary school and then attended the non-schooling system to finish high school. From his CO only 3 teenagers finished the complete course. As for his participation he filled in the call, read the rules, gathered about 10-15 teenagers to attend the courses but eventually most of them dropped out. He thinks that the benefits of the project are that the teenagers formed their groups, trained people from their school and taught courses to their peers and families, there was one of them who worked with the communities until he left for College. He did not learn a lot from what the kids knew, as they would take the training sessions at Cholula and when they were back in the CO their work was independent, however he did revised the questionnaire about human rights and cultures they would present at the IEC. He was never asked for any kind of report from IEC; only the kids would do their homework. From his CO there are 3 kids studying Tourism at the IIU. He thinks this kind of projects are good, but there is always a gap from planning to implementing it, things changed and troubles came, for example, at first they would only cover the travel expenses of the kids but then IEC asked for them to pay \$26,000 pesos without telling them what the money was for, they didn't give them any receipt and this will go as an expense for

2010 budget. The problem will come when the tax audit happens and there is no concept for this amount of money, he doesn't trust now. To improve this kind of project he suggests better organization and written contracts in order to assure all the goals will be reached. The learned pedagogy is used for the diagnosis and planning of 2011's year program, the new thing is that the kid's opinion is taken into account through the problem trees, while before only the adults would say what they needed.

-Efrain works for the CO Paso del Jardin, he speaks Nahuatl and Totonaco. Holds a bachelor degree in Agronomy. 5 teenagers from each CO were sent to IEC, and each of them trained 15 children so the total of benefited children was 75. He didn't participate directly in the project but he enrolled in the introductory course, he saw the impact and benefits of it. As the person in charge of the region he requested the parental permissions, he met with them at Cuetzalan to explain the project. The teenagers would talk to the coordinator who will inform the manager or technical committee and from that they would prepare the monthly reports. It was a successful project that allowed the children have a better family life, to encourage them to keep on studying and to give them a different worldview. They built up their self-esteem, treasure their families and communities, but more important to know their rights and obligations. He learned that children are capable of doing a lot of tasks with the right drive, and they would do it better if you promise some sort of reward, on this special point he complains about the course diploma they never received, the furniture and the computer they were supposed to get for the human rights watch office and never arrived. The IEC was the one asking for activities and financial reports, but they would

never deliver any sort of evaluation paper. No kid from his CO attends the IIU. He would like it to be another project like this but with good methodology, evaluation, and information because that allows the whole CO to learn, value and know more. In his point of view the thing that he would do to improve the project would be to accomplish all the promises they made in the beginning. He was not familiar with the pedagogy of the course.

- Pedro Pizarro, he works for Cuautamazaco CO, speaks Nahuatl. He studied Technical Administrative Informatics. Four teenagers from his CO concluded the course, one didn't because of health reasons, and so in the end about 50-60 children were benefited from the course. He didn't participate in the project. The benefits he sees for his CO is that everyone got to know the rights and obligations of the children, the team work, be able to participate and express their opinion in the community. One of the best actions derived from the project was to plant trees, it was the children's idea, and they would also take care of the school garden, this kind of actions makes them be present and active in the community. He was not present during the training but he learned about the coordinated work to strengthen action, evaluate the viability and possibilities of participation and credibility of their actions. No written report or evaluation did the IEC asked him. No children from his OC have attended the IIU. He thinks it was a good project and is worth using the methodology. He thinks more compromise and be needed more responsibility would help improve the project. As for the methodologic instruments of the project they were used for planning and evaluating the 3-year programs for 2011-2013.

The following personal interviews are with the benefited teenagers; they took place in Cuetzalan, Puebla, on December 7th, 2010.

-Lourdes Aldama Muñiz, she was the girl I interviewed in 2008, so now she is 19 years old, she doesn't speak any indigenous language. She's attending the first year of Bachelor degree in College Teaching. She was enrolled on the project for the 3 years. The thing she found most useful was expression techniques, be self confident while interacting with other people, to work with people, to develop a research project, coordination of groups, and present activity reports to the communities where she worked. The right she identifies most with is self-respect, respect to others, and to different ethnic groups, even though the place she lives in isn't predominantly indigenous. At home her parents were open to the idea of her taking the course, she has always been different from her older brothers. Her mother supported her very much, though her dad suffers addiction problems so he is a bit absent from the family decision-making process. She is very interested in involving more people into these courses, for example her mother and cousins, one of them was very supportive and worked along with her and the children. She enjoyed very much the project, it open new opportunities to her, and she worked at the CO helping the facilitators for 2-3 year old children; she attended Queretaro's national meeting of FpNM, her task was to talk about human rights, health and work training. It was also useful to meet new people and other ways of work. She attended an international meeting in Honduras from December 2-7, 2008 as a speaker showing the national work on human rights, focusing on the IEC project; she received an award for the research work on human rights (carried out by

IEC). She told me that Mrs. Lorandi (director of IEC) has a paper with the statistics of the project but she wouldn't share it with FpNM or the COs. She spent one week in Honduras working on new goals, and looking at the work of other countries, for example in Bolivia there's a power struggle to acknowledge the indigenous peoples' rights. In Ecuador they carry out a more cultural, social, and sports program for the youth. She perceives that the adults tend to limit the youth action; they want to have control, and look at the problems only from their work desks. This meeting showed her different cultures and points of view, it also helped her to broaden the action spectrum carried out in other countries, she attended it on behalf of FpNM. She has had some classes on human rights in primary school, very little do they teach, so the project helped her a lot. About the vigilance committee on her community, she started it, talked to people, worked on study techniques with parents (all during the last year of the project), she was training more teenagers and children but in the end it didn't happen.

-Emilia Arroyo, she is 19 years old, belongs to Cuautamazaco CO, and speaks Nahuatl. She has been at Law school for one and a half years. She attended the course for 3 years. The course was very helpful for knowing her rights, apply and spread them with 10 active and constant children from 7 to 10 years old. The right to which she identifies the most is to take care of the environment; she organized some related actions to apply the knowledge. This action consisted on planting 100 trees, and the idea came from a workshop with the kids to evaluate their needs and goals. She comes from a very traditional family, she is the youngest of 3 siblings and the only woman, so she was not allowed to go out often, however she talked about her rights and obligations and it

helped her parents realized it was a good thing for her to attend the course. She used to be very shy and the course helped her be self-assured, her parents got involved in the project and they would bring food to the meetings and her dad helped plant the trees. Her older brothers live with their wives but their kids took the course. The thing she liked the most about the course was to meet other teenagers from different communities, she keeps in touch with them. Now she is a facilitator at he CO and she uses the methodology learned at the project with this kids. At school she didn't learn anything about human rights. In the end they could not organize the committee but they managed to spread the project in the community with the adults, at the health office and with the teachers. At first many people rejected the project but when they saw their involvement and the dynamics of it they started getting involved.

-Florencio Segura Guerra, he is 17 years old, belongs to Desarrollo Xaltipan CO, and speaks Nahuatl. He's at the last year of high school. He didn't attend the human rights course because he didn't know about it. He helps the OC teaching computer science, applied for knowledge, culture and communitarian uses, among the computer programs he knows there is draw, paint, and power point. The right to which he identifies the most is the right to education; nowadays there is more access to higher education and more scholarships available. His family knows about human rights, they have a difficult relation but it's good that they are aware of their rights; he has an older brother (19 years old) that didn't finish high school. He would like to study medicine, psychology, law or something that helps his community. At school he was thought human rights,

during primary school at Civic and Ethics classes, and then at the CO he had a course on human rights for kids from 6 to 12 years old.

-Juan Carlos Ramos Jimenez, he is 15 years old, belongs to Cuautamazaco CO, does not speak any indigenous language. He attends first year of high school. He enrolled in the project for one year only, the last one. The course helped him to be aware of the importance of human rights, of the violence in the families, the gender issues (machismo) in the communities and how all this limits the individual freedom. The right to which he relates the most is non-discrimination, because everywhere he goes there is some kind of discrimination practices and he does like that. He talked to his parents and they were supportive because they encourage knowledge. It was a bit hard to convince them, so Emilia came to talk to them. He would be interested on studying Law. He enjoyed the course, specially meeting other children and realizing that the problems in his community are common to other places. He keeps in touch with his friends from the course. He didn't know much about human rights from school, so the course was very helpful. He built up the committee with children from his CO, they still watch and if by some reason any right is violated they make posters and put them on the streets, some people do read them but others just don't care. Two cousins help him, one of them took the course and the other just joined them recently.

The last interview is with the coordinator from FpNM, and it took place in November 26th, 2010 at the National Office in Mexico City.

-Maria Elena Calvillo, program coordinator for the national office. At the beginning there were 55 teenagers but has no information on how many concluded the course. She has no information of qualitative data from the project either from IEC or FpNM. The EC didn't asked for any report to FpNM during the 3 years of the project. There was no spill over effect that would be able to reach other COs from different states, and almost no information about the project. IEC didn't share any of the information they gathered with the application of the project. She is not aware of any global evaluation of the project. About the two interviewed teenagers in 2008 she knows that Mauro got married and stopped being part of the CO, he probably didn't finished high school. There is no other co-financed project with the EU at the moment with any of the affiliated COs. As for Luis Fernando Avila the meeting coordinator from IEC, he left when the project ended and FpNM has no more information about him.

As we can see there is no official information or evaluation from the NGO or IEC, so these interviews represent the only source of information in order to evaluate the final results of the Human Rights Project. On the side of the EC I was no able to obtain any information either, they said, as it is a co-operation project with independent NGOs they do not have any inference in the final results.

4.3 Proposals for a better performance of the cooperation projects with the EU and Mexico

The presented cooperation projects carried out with the EU or with member states are very helpful to improve the education of indigenous children and teenagers, they serve as support for the national public policies and programs implemented by the Ministry of Education. However the lack of evaluation makes it really hard to calculate the impact on the communities and the learning processes of the beneficiaries. In this chapter I will present some proposals for better performance and accountability of the cooperation with the EU in order to better address the educational problems of indigenous communities.

The human capital theory suggests that schooling promotes economic and social development because it produces positive externalities, or “spill over” effects that benefit the community and the nation rather than only the individual student.⁹⁵ However these effects should be measurable in order to have quantitative and qualitative tools to support the implementation of policies or to promote international cooperation at different levels.

The promotion of children’s rights and response to children’s basic needs through the vehicle of the EU’s external actions is a primordial goal. The EU has developed a long-term strategy on the rights of children, including improved coordination, consultation

⁹⁵ Vavrus, F. (2003): “Desire and Decline: Schooling Amid Crisis in Tanzania,” Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York, p. 27

with stakeholders, more efficient mainstreaming of children's rights and the assessment of the impact on children of existing EU actions.⁹⁶ But taking the assessment into practice has proved to be a fail action on the Puebla project and on the bilateral cooperation with Germany from the side of the CE. There is no official assessment available from any of the mention projects, and when the NGO's or ministries carried out any evaluation works they would not share it with students or the academic community, as seen with the evaluation paper prepared by IEC in Puebla.

Here I will propose some possible ways to improve this situation in practical terms:

1. Create a consultant service at the European Commission Delegation in Mexico; the aim of this service would be to advice the Mexican associations that ask for EU's support or cooperation.⁹⁷ Sometimes the administrative tasks for applying to these resources get so complicated that many NGOs don't even know how to achieve them.
2. More involvement of the EC in Mexico, not only administrative track but full time advice when troubles appear with the cooperation projects.⁹⁸ Such as the ones faced by the CO with IEC at the end, the EC could have mediated on behalf of the children in order to obtain the furniture and the computer for the vigilance committees.

⁹⁶ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, " A Special Place for Children in EU External Action" Brussels, 5.2.2008, Commission of the European Communities, pg. 4.

⁹⁷ Ramos Bustillos (2004), op. cit., p. 49.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

3. A networking service provided by the EC to contact European NGOs with Mexican ones.⁹⁹ This would help foster a feedback process to improve the application of the projects and build up a knowledge database for further projects, it will also help avoid making the same mistakes.

4. Arrange a follow up team, autonomous or mixed from the Delegation of the EC in Mexico, not only for administrative tasks but specially prepared to deal with all sorts of problems derived from this cooperation.¹⁰⁰ Such as those faced by the COs at the end of the project, for example the final diploma of the course was never delivered to the participant teenagers and it was promised in the beginning. It was one of the main reasons why all the COs decided to participate and it would give the children curricular qualification for further studies or work.

So in general the money allocation processes are well covered, but the implementation and follow-up remains a main issue of this cooperation. Sometimes it seems as if the EU is just trying to compensate with money for some previous exploitation of the former colonies labeling it with cooperation aid, but with no deeper purpose or interests.

It shouldn't be like this as the EU remains being the biggest help donor worldwide, the help is reaching the targeted population and the effects as showed by the interviews with the teenagers are good and tangible. It's just a matter of implementing qualitative and

⁹⁹ Ramos Bustillos (2004), op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem.

quantitative methods of evaluation to have more information on this otherwise very useful projects and programs.

In order to deepen the cooperation is important to carry out this assessment mechanisms, to follow the transparency rules and to avoid the manipulative processes some NGOs execute over the indigenous peoples. It is a hard task but is necessary to build up credibility and promote a strong civil society culture in Mexico. This lack of consistency from what they promise to do to what they actually do has to be stopped and replaced for attainable goals. The money is there ready to be allocated in these projects so the planning process has to be coherent with implementation and goal achievement.

COUNCLUSION

This section is a summary of the research findings and a presentation of the concluding points. I would like to stress the importance of the indigenous education cooperation projects either on the EU level or bilateral level, they are very significant and help even out the situation of the indigenous peoples in Mexico. However the need for assessment is urgent in order to have quantitative indicators to demonstrate the real impact of the resource allocation and of the individual development of the children.

The situation of the more vulnerable groups in Mexico is not very promising but many actions have taken place over the years at the domestic and international level to change this and reverse the poverty circles they are immersed in. Education is a key tool for development and improving the living conditions of these groups, the cooperation with the EU brings out support mechanisms and complement what the children learn at school.

German cooperation not only helps the children but also promotes the formation of indigenous professionals in order to reverse the domination strategies of the Latin American states and empower the less favored groups. By having professional indigenous teachers that have all the knowledge of the needs of their communities they can promote a real change and the possibility of breaking the poverty lines they live in.

The spillover effects of such projects are of major importance for the remote communities, as shown in the interviews with the children from Puebla. It is very common that the families learn from their children and in the case of the human rights project the importance of oral communication takes a whole different level as they barely have access to internet or libraries. The formation of human rights watch committees represents a fresh and low cost idea, giving them the power to manage and lobby their interests and concerns about human rights with the local authorities, this may sound simple but is a major achievement for children that aren't used to be heard and who's rights have been violated in many cases.

For the NGOs it is important to promote the accountability process, the example of IEC shows how they not only didn't respect the budget assignation but also over spent it and then demanded more money from the CO. As IEC is a second floor NGO with the legal and administrative independence it implies, they would not share any of the information from the project. These practices have to end, and with a formal accountability process that is possible because if the NGOs have to present a final report on the administrative and goal attainments to the EU, the anomalies would be detected, corrected, and prevented in future projects.

There was one evaluation made by IEC, they wrote a paper with all the details of the project, the impact on the community and the outcome of the training process. The children were asked to conduct a series of questions to the members of their communities to evaluate the program, however the NGO would not share the

information with anyone, not even the EC. This is the kind of gap I am talking about when mentioning the need for public available evaluation, if the EC would explicitly demand for a final assessment there would be more transparency and accountability from all the involved actors.

For the EU, and the Delegation of the EC in Mexico, I tried to find out if there were any official assessment of this project and the response (via e-mail) was that I should ask the NGOs because they had no information about it. That is the problem of independence and freedom of action of the Mexican NGOs that was faced since the Democratic Clause was mentioned: the Mexican sovereign government would never allow any action that depletes the national sovereignty in the least amount, so it results in complete freedom and no accountability asked in this kind of cooperation projects.

In my opinion a little bit of accountability asked from the EC would help improve the reach and the implementation of this programs, it would not threaten the national sovereignty and would certainly prevent the abuse of power that many times takes place. Accountability will promote transparency and will help improve these projects and cooperation; maybe the best solution would be to create a special mixed office (with members of the EU and Mexican government) to evaluate these projects, in that way the Mexican sovereignty would not be at stake.

As for the children involved, these kinds of projects improve in many ways their academic, personal and social development. Based on the interviews the empowerment

of the girls helped them not only to finish high school, but encouraged them to study towards a Bachelor degree, to participate in national and international contests and more importantly to show their families they can pursue a different path than just getting married and having kids. On the boys side the project helped them to build up self-confidence and to become leaders in their communities. Of course not everything is perfect and for example one of the boys I interviewed in 2008 abandoned school and had a baby, even though he was very motivated by the human rights' project.

The general conclusion is that the cooperation derived from the Global Agreement on indigenous peoples education is good but lacks mechanisms of assessments. It faces some practical implementation problems that would be solved if the right information about the whole process would be available in order to learn from the mistakes and avoid repeating them. It will also help legitimize the whole cooperation mechanisms and actors involved; it would give more credibility and presence in the national and international community.

Mexico is not on the priority list of countries the EU helps but it has these vulnerable indigenous groups that represent one of the priorities in international European aid goals, so if this cooperation can be accurately measured it will be helpful for both parts. And it will be useful too, to take the best out of this aid, to better allocate the resources and to implement successful techniques in other similar projects.

ANNEX

Children's Questionnaire

1. Name
2. Age, Communitarian Organization (CO) to which you belong, indigenous language is your mother tongue, which one?
3. School grade
4. For how long did you take the course on Human Rights?
5. In your opinion, what was the most useful part of the course in your every-day life?
6. With which Human Right do you identify the most, and why?
7. At home, did you talk to your family about Human Rights? What was the reaction of your family when you told them you wanted to take the course and about Human Rights in general?
8. What do you want to study after finishing highschool?
9. Did you like and enjoy the Human Rights course? What was the part that you liked the most?
10. At school, do they teach you about human rights? Was the course useful for school matters?
11. Did you manage to establish a human rights vigilance committee in your community? Is it still watching out?

Communitarian Organization Personnel's Questionnaire

1. Name
2. Communitarian Organization (CO), do you speak any indigenous language? Which one?
3. Grade of studies, Do you have any children taking part in the course? How many?
4. How many children from your CO took the entire course?
5. Did you participate in the course? What was your role?
6. What are the benefits, in your point of view, that the course brought to your CO?
7. Did you learn something from what the children learned? What was it?
8. Did CEI ask you for any inform or report on the children that took the course?
9. Has any of the children from your CO enrolled in the Indigenous Intercultural University in Huehuetla?
10. Would you like to have another project or course like this?
11. In your opinion what would improve the course on Human Rights and with CEI?
12. Have you used the pedagogy learned from the course in some other courses at the Communitarian Center?

FpNM's Questionnaire

1. How many children concluded the course? At first they were 55
2. How many replacements took place during the course?
3. Is there any kind of systematization of the quantitative information of the course from CEI or FpNM? How is it?
4. Is there any form of accountability from CEI or FpNM to be presented to the EU? Can I get a copy of it?
5. Has there been any other course on human rights imparted to other CO based on the one given by CEI? In which states? How many children have benefited from that?
6. Was there any sort of evaluation for the kids, teachers and community members? Some quiz of the acquired knowledge? Can I get a copy of it?
7. Is there any final evaluation of the project? Can I get a copy?
8. About the 2 young students that I interviewed back in 2008, there are they now? Did they finish high school? Do they attend college or university?
9. Is there any other project financed by the EU in cooperation with CEI or FpNM? What is it about and where?
10. What is the present status of the vigilance committees established at the end of the project? Do they still work for the respect of human rights of the children and at the communities?
11. Has any affiliated child from FpNM attended the Indigenous Intercultural University? Where?
12. Do you at FpNM have any cooperation relations with the Indigenous Fund or with the scholarships given by the EU and some European countries such as Spain?
13. What happened with Luis Fernando Avila the coordinator of the course at CEI?

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