

**ACTIVITY REPORT FOR
A NIWANO PEACE FOUNDATION
ACTIVITY GRANT**

code: 12 - A - 244

Name of the organization applying:

Human Rights Center Fray Bartolome de Las Casas, A. C.

Name of person to be contacted: Date of Birth: Nationality: Title: Sex: M F

Pablo Obando 23/06/1979 Mexican Funding M

Address of person to be contacted

Brasil No. 14 Barrio de Mexicanos, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.
Mail: pobando@frayba.org.mx

Phone: +(52) 967 678 73 95

Fax: +(52) 967 678 35 48

Title of project:

Capacity strengthening for the defense and promotion of human rights in Chiapas. Contribution of Civil Brigades of Observation in constructing Peace within the framework of unresolved armed internal conflict.

Amount of grant received:

JPY 400,000

Date: 26/12/13

Signature: 


Centro de Derechos Humanos
Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, A.C.

Civil society in Chiapas during the 1980s set forth a broad agenda of demands and social projects. The government response to these processes was torture, executions, incarcerations, evictions, and expulsions; in sum, the use of systematic repression as a mechanism for social control. It joins the diverse forms of discrimination, marginalization and historic subjugation groups of local power imposed upon the indigenous groups of Chiapas. The Human Rights Center Fray Bartolomé de las Casas A.C. (Frayba) is born of this context. It is a non-governmental organization founded in 1989 by ex-bishop Samuel Ruíz García (Niwano Peace Prize, 2002) in 1989. FrayBa was born under the care and orientation of the Catholic diocesan process for dignity, justice, and peace, albeit as a civil, autonomous and lay organization. FrayBa is an open space to receive and support every person that sees his or her rights violated without distinction of religious, ethnicity, gender, etc. Frayba works to defend and promote human rights in Chiapas.

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1. Purpose achieved:

Civil Brigades of Observation (BriCO), the main activity of this project, allowed: to conserve and promote the active presence and participation of national and international observers that contribute to the defense and exercise of the rights of indigenous groups and the promotion of peace in Chiapas against an internal armed conflict that has no end in sight. During the last year, with the Niwano Peace Foundation support, the BriCOs have been constituted by three fundamental tasks: accompanying the insertion of peace camps within communities, documenting general context, and forming national and international solidarity with vulnerable communities.

2. General outline of the project:

The project contributed to the Centers strategic goals: strengthening capacities to promote human rights, and peace building in Chiapas. Strengthening specially the work of promoting peace in the region through FrayBa's Civil Brigades of Observation (BRICOS). Within this project international human rights observers remained in vulnerable communities for at least 15 days.

The presence of BRICOS participants, through accompanying by non-intervention, and the documentation of the situation in each community allowed this Human Rights Center: 1. Immediate prevention of alleged or proven human rights violations that risk life or physical integrity or irreparably harm to individuals or groups; 2. Channeling, to the documentation area, of alleged human rights violations prioritized by the Center; 3. Systematization of all records and information collected from observers in a database that allows follow up and acquisition of important information pertaining to patterns of the human rights situation in communities.

Finally, we keep building international solidarity networks through the BRICOS participants activities in their own countries. This allows us the diffusion of the internal armed conflict that indigenous communities are still suffering in Chiapas.

3. Results:

During this project 327 persons participated in the BRICOS program. 193 women and 134 men, from 27 different countries (Germany, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Scotland, Spain, United States, France, Netherlands, England, Italy, Nicaragua, Mexico, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Swiss, Turkey, Uruguay, Finland, Greece, and Portugal) in eight different communities: Acteal, Cruzton, Huitepec, San Marcos Avilés, Puebla, Agua Clara, Bolom Ajaw, and 21 de abril.

Each of this camps contribute to maintain hope, while conserving self-dignity, and th attempt to reconstruct the social fabric of their communities. With respect to its own dynamic and conforming to the indigenous people's self-determination. In the short term, the BRICO project facilitate to:

- Inform and sensitize 327 observers on the human rights situation in Chiapas.
- Inform and sensitize on the importance of civic participation at the local and global level through the support of 30 solidarity collective groups in order to act as active and constructive agents of peace.

- Prevent or stop human rights violations in the communities where BRICO peace camps are installed.
- Document possible human rights violations in communities where peace camps exist.

The BRICOS activities took place in the next communities.

Acteal. Community in the Highlands of Chiapas, was founded by forced displaced persons during the 1990s. All of them belong to The Bees organization (Sociedad Civil Las Abejas). After the Supreme Court of Justice decided to liberate the para-militars implicated in the massacre of Acteal 1997 there is a fear growing in the surrounding communities that this persons – nowadays ex paramilitars - may act in revenge after their imprisonment. People in Acteal are actually suffering harassment by the government and strange persons that come to the community only to make photographs. There have been also gunshots during the last months in the nearby communities.

Cruztón. Community in the Highlands of Chiapas. The Mexican government gave mining concessions to international corporations in their territory. After recovering their lands in 2007 this tsotsil people community have suffered harassment and repression from the government. They have not obtained yet the legal documentation that recognizes the property of their lands. And because of that still suffering threats of dispossession.

Huitepec. Zapatista reserve in the Highlands of Chiapas, nearby San Cristobal de Las Casas City. Since the Zapatista Civil Society decided to established the reserve they are suffering threats of dispossession by the government.

San Marcos Avilés. Community in the North Zone of Chiapas. Part of this community belongs to the Zapatista movement. And because of that they are suffering harassment and threats by their neighbors who belong the political arty in the government, whom try to prevent their autonomy project.

Puebla. Community in the Highlands of Chiapas. As in Acteal, after the Supreme Court of Justice decided to liberate the para-militars implicated in the massacre of 1997 there was a fear growing in the surrounding communities that this persons – nowadays ex paramilitars - may act in revenge after their imprisonment. Eventually the paramilitars came back to their town. The violence grew and now there are almost 100 persons displaced living in Acteal. Just like in the lastly 90s. Unfortunately Puebla's camp was close since we were not able to guarantee the BRICOS participants security.

Agua Clara. Community located in the North Zone of Chiapas. The Mexican government is interested in the establishment of eco - tourism projects in this Tzeltal people lands. They are demanding the exercise of their right to consent as an indigenous community before the Mexican government establishes any development program in their territory.

Bolom Ajaw. Also located in the North Zone, they are living the same situation as in Agua Clara. The Mexican government is interested in the implementation of tourism projects due the beautiful waterfalls in their territory.

21 de abril. Located near the Lacandona rain forest. In the municipality of Altamirano. This community was founded by the Zapatista civil society at the end of the 90s. During the last months they have been suffering harassment and threats by members of the Nance community of dispossession. During the execution of this project there have been

Through FrayBa's BRICOS project we contribute:

- To strength the organizational processes of defense and the practice of Human Rights, through the rights of indigenous peoples and the right to justice, generating peace conditions.
- To increase the organizational capacity, analysis, and initiative of 8 communities in order to strengthen their social defense strategies and exercise their rights for a true democratic practice in Chiapas, Mexico.

FINANCIAL REPORT

CENTRO DE DERECHOS HUMANOS FRAY BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS, A.C.			
ESTADO DE INGRESOS Y EGRESOS			
FORTALECIMIENTO DE CAPACIDADES PARA LA DEFENSA Y PROMOCION DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS EN CHIAPAS.			
DEL 01 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2012 AL 01 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2013			
<u>Income</u>		SMX	exchange rate <u>12.910200</u> \$US
Aporte de The Niwano Peace Foundation		63,573	4,924
Ingresos totales		63,573	4,924
<u>Expenses</u>			
Personal	17,453		1,352
Travel	23,854		1,848
Machinery and equipment	2,766		214
Payments to outside sources	2,765		214
Conference materials	9,473		734
Transporting and communication charges	4,491		348
Supplies	2,793		216
Total expenses		63,594	4,926