

# PEACE AMONG US

A POPULATION-BASED STUDY  
ABOUT RESILIENCE FOR PEACE  
IN GUATEMALA

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Peace Among Us  
A Population-based Study about  
Resilience for Peace in Guatemala

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# 1. ABOUT THE STUDY

## 1.1. Introduction

Twenty years after the signing of the peace accords between the State of Guatemala and the National Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala (URNG) in 1996, Guatemala remains confronted to poverty, exclusion, violence and other conflicts and social issues. These are both roots and consequences of social and political polarization, lack of confidence in and legitimacy of public institutions and political leadership, and weakening of the social fabric. After twenty years of peacebuilding efforts, the need remains to better understand, assess and ultimately leverage the positive assets and attributes of individuals, communities, and institutions in the country. This report contributes to this understanding of what makes Guatemalans able to anticipate risk, resolve conflicts collaboratively, and respond creatively to crisis – what we call *resilience for peace*.

This report presents the results of a survey about factors driving conflicts and resilience conducted in Guatemala between the months of September and October 2015. It is the quantitative component of a mixed method participatory action research designed to understand the complex linkages between resilience and peacebuilding in Guatemala. Combined with similar efforts in Liberia and Timor-Leste, the research contributes to the development of a framework to assess resilience in relation to conflict and peacebuilding.

The survey was designed to provide detailed information about existing and potential capacities for the nonviolent transformation and resolution of conflicts with a focus on key dimensions of fragility and resilience identified during the consultation phase and in the initial country note. Specifically, the survey sought to provide information relating to four dimensions of conflict where resilience applies, the

socio-environmental situation, violence and insecurity, the fragility of public institutions, and socio-economic fragility. The survey further explored factors of resilience identified through consultation, including key domains of social cohesion (belonging and inclusion; respect and trust, and civic and social participation), and legitimate politics and governance.

Structured interviews were conducted with a random sample of 3,712 adult residents in all 22 departments of Guatemala. The sample was designed to provide representative results for 8 custom regions of Guatemala. The custom regions were designed to group together departments with similar socio-economic characteristics based on consultation with the team in Guatemala. This was preferred over existing regional divisions that do not reflect dynamics relating to conflict and resilience.

## **1.2. Background**

The conflict in Guatemala has complex historical roots in agribusinesses and land ownership regulations. The armed struggle began as an uprising against economic and political marginalization imposed by wealthy landowner and successive conservative military regimes.<sup>1</sup> Various socialist rebel groups emerged and gained the support of the rural poor, including marginalized Mayan communities.

In an attempt to maintain control over the rural population, defeat rebellions, and eliminate the Mayans, the government rapidly engaged in campaigns of extra-judicial killing, forced disappearance, abduction, and torture that would last for 36 years.<sup>2</sup> By the early 1990s, however, popular and international pressure resulted in the most significant efforts at establishing peace, ultimately leading to the 1996 peace agreement. By then, the war had caused an estimated 200,000 deaths (particularly of indigenous Mayan populations from north and southwestern regions of the country),<sup>3</sup> 40,000 disappearances, the



displacement of over 1 million people, and major destruction of villages and infrastructures.<sup>4</sup>

The 1996 peace agreement, however, left a number of unresolved challenges and ineffective measures,<sup>5</sup> most notably around land and the exploitation of natural resources. Property rights such as illegal occupation or boundaries definition remain major challenges, especially in a context where, until recently, the land registry was neither legally binding nor precise in its description of land ownership.<sup>6</sup> As of 2000, 70% of the arable land belonged to only 3% of the Guatemalan population.<sup>7</sup>

For example, the Land Fund (Fondo de Tierras) and the Presidential Office for Legal Assistance and Resolution of Land Conflicts (Dependencia Presidencial de Asistencia Legal y Resolución de Conflictos sobre la Tierra) were meant to facilitate the purchase of land through credit schemes. Yet they were slow, inefficient and corrupt, lacking financial and institutional capacities in relation to the scale of the problem.<sup>8</sup> The government failed to improve equitable access to land and credit. Instead it created the opportunity for clandestine groups (hidden powers) and a complex repressive apparatus to emerge, fueled by bribery and kickbacks.<sup>9</sup>

Unresolved land issues and the lack of consultation on the construction of mega projects and hydroelectric dams undermined efforts at rebuilding trust in the state.<sup>10</sup> The legal system was slow, inefficient, overburdened and inaccessible and overall incapable of addressing agrarian disputes thoroughly and even-handedly.<sup>11</sup> More generally, the perception that concerns of the majority of the population continued to be overlooked in favor of the economic prerogatives of more wealthy and powerful individuals fueled a sense that the 1996 peace agreement resulted from international pressure rather than from within the government.<sup>12</sup>

In this context, violence and insecurity have continued in Guatemala, especially against women.<sup>13</sup> This violence is in part fueled by organized

criminal groups, especially those linked to drug smuggling and arms and people trafficking.<sup>14</sup> Other forms of structural violence in Guatemala are rooted in inequalities (wealth is the most unequal in the western hemisphere) and exploitative labor relations.

Institutional violence also persists and arguably spreads among individuals, in part because political violence was such an integral part of government functioning for decades.<sup>15</sup> Social reconstruction on the other hand, has been difficult, particularly in areas where those people who committed atrocities in their own communities and regions are still living alongside the victims.

Finally, justice and accountability remain an issue despite the work of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) which has uncovered numerous and significant corruption scandals.<sup>16</sup> One such scandal led to the resignation and arrest of then president Otto Pérez Molina. On September 3rd 2015, Molina was sent to jail, only hours after his resignation as President of Guatemala. His resignation was prompted by a multimillion-dollar customs fraud case, which had sparked months of national protests across Guatemala, and a formal investigation by Guatemala's Supreme Court.<sup>17</sup> The subsequent presidential elections were won by Jimmy Morales, a political figure best known for his past experience as a comedic actor, arguably sending a message of disgust to the country's political elite.<sup>18</sup>

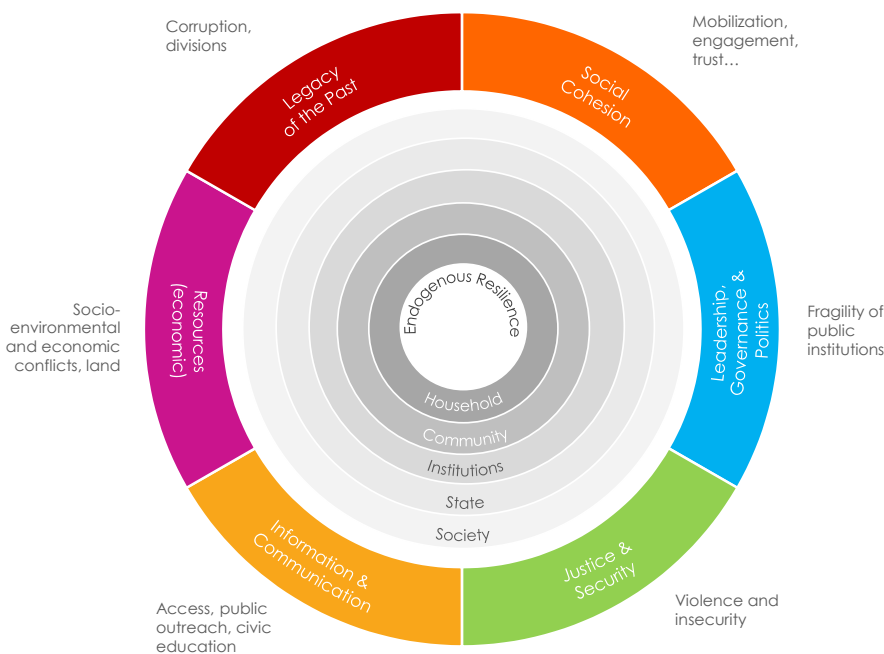
### **1.3. Framework for Analysis**

It is in this context of political corruption and transition that the research on resilience for peace was conducted. The specific manifestations of resilience and their relative importance is highly contextual. The process of defining specific measures and assessment objectives was informed by an in-depth nationwide consultation through focus groups and interviews and expert working groups. It resulted in examining particular manifestations of resilience for peace and in relation to four dimensions of conflict identified during consultations: (1) the socio-

environmental situation, (2) violence and insecurity, (3) the fragility of public institutions, and (4) socio-economic fragility.

Acknowledging the highly contextual nature of resilience for peace, it is possible to position and articulate the places, forms and manifestations of resilience within a framework developed by the authors in relation to six peace dimensions: (1) social cohesion, (2) leadership, good governance and inclusive politics, (3) access to resources and opportunities, (4) the legacies of past conflict, (5) societal information and communication networks, and (6) Justice and safety.

Figure 1: Analytical Framework



This report follows the logic of the framework proposed above, along the four conflict dimensions, and explores factors of resilience identified through consultation, including key domains of social cohesion

(belonging and inclusion; respect and trust, and civic and social participation), and legitimate politics and governance. These components are used to frame the survey data analysis.

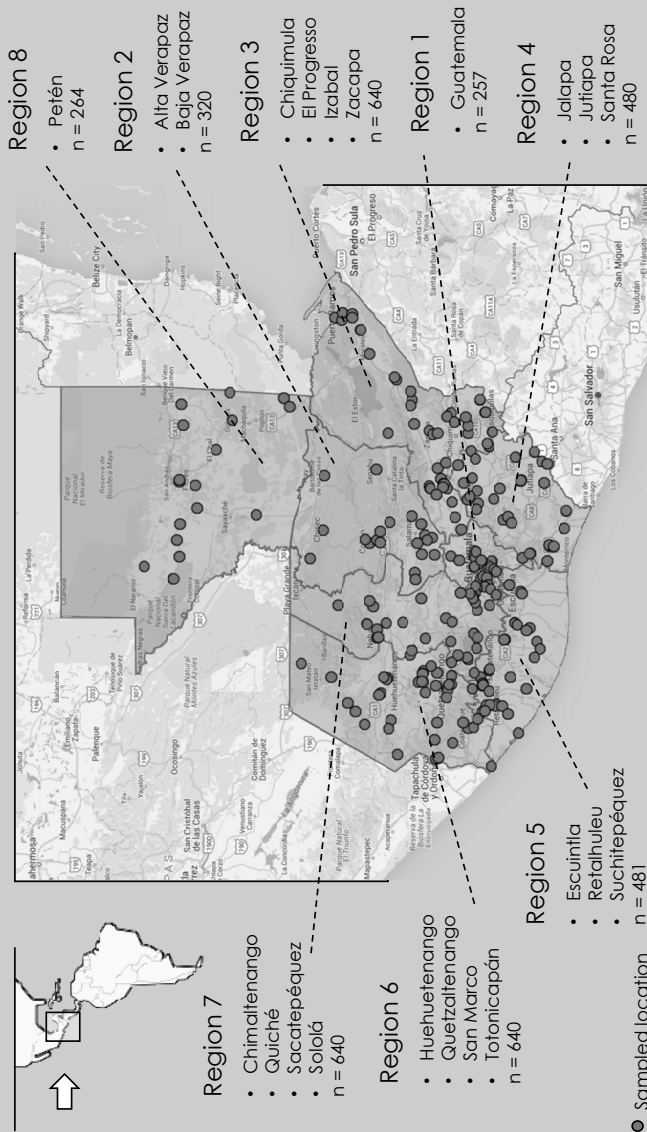
## **1.4. Methods**

### **1.4.1. Survey Design and Sampling**

The selection of respondents for the survey was based on a multi-stage random geographic cluster sampling of populated centers within all the departments of Guatemala. The 22 departments of Guatemala were grouped in 8 regions. In each department, a total of 10 populated places were randomly selected. For two departments, Guatemala and Petén, the number of populated places was increased to 16 because they were the only department in their respective region. The selection was made proportionately to the population size in each area using the best available estimates. In total, 232 populated places were selected. The interview teams aimed to conduct 16 interviews in each location, for a total target of 160 interviews per department (256 in Guatemala and Petén), or 3,712 total interviews nationwide. In the end, a total of 3,722 interviews were conducted.

After reaching the assigned locations, interviewers used a random geographic method to select a dwelling. Interviewers identified the center of the assigned location and randomly selected a direction. In that direction, interviewers selected every other dwelling. In each unit, interviewers randomly selected one adult in the household, (defined as a group of people normally sleeping under the same roof and eating together) to be interviewed from a list of eligible respondents. Three attempts were made to contact a household or individual before replacement. Due to the sensitivity of some questions, interviewers were assigned to the same-sex respondents. Thus male interviewers were assigned to male respondents, and female interviewers were assigned to female respondents.

Figure 2: Survey Regions and Sample Size



### 1.4.2. Survey Instrument

Interviews were conducted by trained interviewers using a standardized, structured questionnaire with open-ended questions. The questionnaire covered topics on demographics, priorities, access to and perception of services, governance, security, exposure to violence, social cohesion and resilience factors. The questionnaire took one to one and one-half hours to administer. The identification of indicators was guided by consultation with local experts and Interpeace key staff in Guatemala, as well as the project's leadership and steering committee. The research team developed the questionnaire and consent form in English. The final version was translated into Spanish. Expert review and team discussions were used to validate the translation.

Response options based on pilot interviews were provided to the interviewer for coding but never read to study participants, with the exception of questions employing a scaling format (e.g., the Likert scale). An open-ended field was always available for interviewers to record complete responses. These answers were coded for analysis.

Once complete, the questionnaire was programmed into Android Nexus 7 Tablets running KoBoToolbox, our custom data collection package. The use of the tablets allowed interviewers to enter the data directly as the interview was conducted. Built-in verification systems reduced the risk of skipping questions or entering erroneous values, resulting in data of high quality.

### 1.4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected between September 16th and October 8th 2015, by 13 teams comprised of 2 men and 2 women each. The teams were deployed across the country, following the research plan and random selection of 232 populated areas. The teams conducted

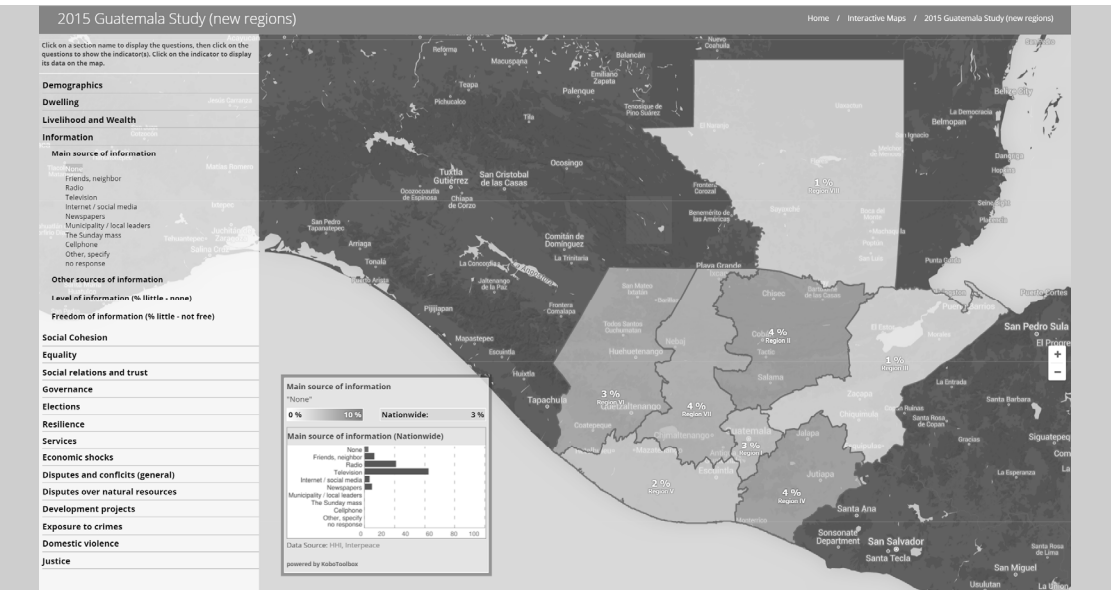
interviews under the guidance of one team leader in each team and two national field coordinators. The interviewers were selected and trained in close collaboration with Interpeace.

Prior to collecting data the interviewers participated in a weeklong training that covered interview techniques, the content of the questionnaire, the use of tablets to collect digital data, troubleshooting, and methods for solving technical problems. The training included multiple mock interviews and one pilot day in Guatemala City with randomly selected individuals at 13 populated areas within and around the city. A total of 56 interviewers were trained, from whom 52 were selected and deployed.

The research protocol required each team to collect data in one location per day. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, anonymously, and in confidential settings. When possible, data were synchronized with a central computer, enabling lead researchers to check data for completion, consistency, and outliers. The lead researchers and supervisors discussed any issues that arose with the team prior to the next data collection. Once the data collection was completed the database was imported into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 for data analysis. The results presented here are adjusted for the complex sample design and weighted to correct known disproportionate stratification of the sample and unequal probability of selection down to the household level.

After analysis, all of the results were imported online in an interactive map platform at [www.peacebuildingdata.org](http://www.peacebuildingdata.org) to enable users to browse detailed results at the regional level.

Figure 3: Interactive Map - [www.peacebuildingdata.org](http://www.peacebuildingdata.org)



The research was reviewed by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Partners Healthcare in Boston, Massachusetts and received an equivalent ministerial authorization in Guatemala. Permissions to operate were also obtained at the department level and from local authorities at survey sites. The interviewers obtained oral informed consent from each selected participant; neither monetary nor material incentives were offered for participation.

#### 1.4.4. Limitations

The present study was developed and implemented carefully to ensure that the results would accurately represent the views and opinions of the adult population residing in Guatemala during the period the data were collected in September and October 2015. As with any social science research, there are limitations.



Some selected individuals could not be interviewed for various reasons (e.g. refusal, absence). It is uncertain how responses from individuals who could not be interviewed would have differed from those of the sampled individuals, but the sampling approach was designed to reduce any potential for selection biases.

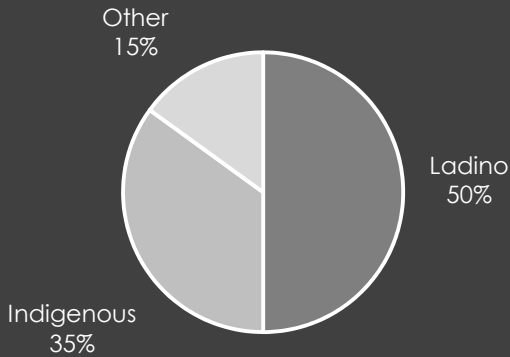
The study relies on self-reported and perception data. Responses may have been influenced by inaccurate recall of past events, misunderstanding of the questions or concepts, reactivity to the interviewer due to the sensitive nature of the questions, or intentional misreporting (e.g. for socially unacceptable answers.) Results also represent the adult population at the time of the survey - opinions may change over time. Specifically, the survey was conducted between the two rounds of the contested 2015 presidential elections – On-going election campaigns, political polling and mobilization may have affected the results. We minimized such risks by clearly explaining the scope of the study and through careful development of the questionnaire to make the questions sufficiently clear and to reduce potential bias.

## 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The sample was designed so that results are representative for each of the 8 regions comprising all 22 departments. The sample was selected regardless of any selection criteria with the exception that only adults aged 18 or older were to be interviewed and that same sex interviews were to be conducted. The sample was equally distributed between men (50%) and women (50%).

The resulting sample reflects the diverse ethnic composition of Guatemala. Overall, the sample comprises more than 12 ethnic groups, with Ladinos accounting for 50% of respondents, Indigenous groups for 35% (most frequently K'iche 13%, Q'eqchi 7%, and Kaqchikel 6%). Another 15% had another group of origin, most frequently self-described as mixed. The ethnic composition varies greatly by regions. Indigenous groups accounted for more than two-third of the population in region II (Chiquimula, El Progreso, Izabal, and Zacapa - 67%) and region VII (Chimaltenango, Quiché, Sacatepéquez, and Sololá - 76%). Spanish was the language spoken most frequently for a majority of respondents (74% of all respondents). About all non-indigenous respondents spoke most frequently Spanish. Among indigenous respondents, 29% described Spanish as the language they spoke most frequently.

*Figure 4: To what group of origin would you say you belong?*



Half the respondents (53%) were between the ages of 25 and 49 with 18% of respondents being young adults under the age of 25, and 9% over the age of 64. Most respondents described themselves as married or living with a partner (48%). Regarding education, 39% of respondents completed at least some secondary or high school education, 20% reported completing primary school, 24% reported some primary school and 17% reported completing no education. 84% reported being able to read and write. Education levels were similar across gender and wealth groups. However Indigenous respondents were twice more likely to have no education compared to Ladinos (25% v. 11%).

### 3. RESILIENCE TO WHAT?

This section presents data about four dimensions identified in the consultation phase of the project (focus groups and key informant interviews) as areas where resilience manifested itself in relation to particular conflicts or dimensions of conflict: socio-environmental disputes, violence and insecurity, the fragility of public institutions, and socio-economic fragility. These dimensions provide the frame of reference for understanding the nature, elements and manifestations of resilience in Guatemala. The information presented in this section provides context for the subsequent analysis of resilience factors and contributes to the understanding of the stakeholder's capacities for adaptation and for the nonviolent transformation and resolution of disputes.

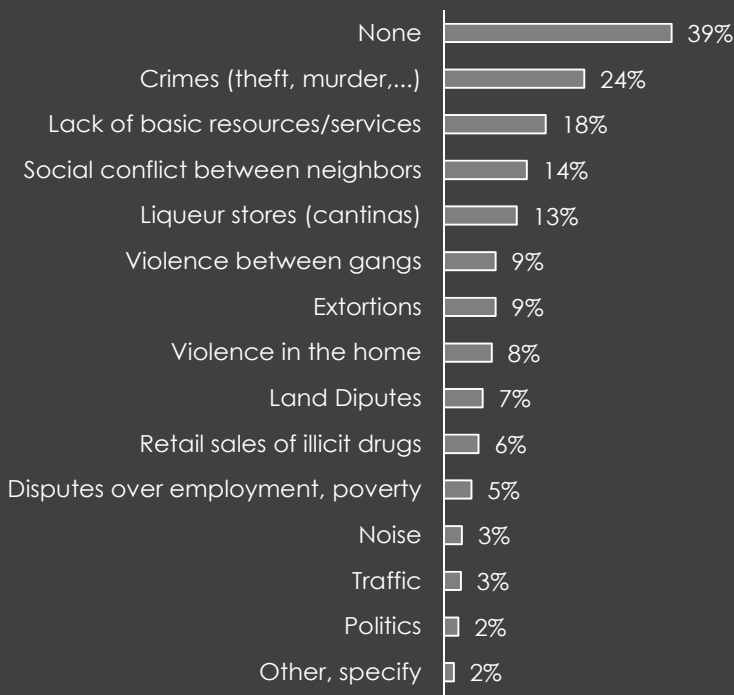
#### 3.1. Disputes

Disputes are a normal outcome of social interactions. They may however reflect deep-rooted divides and governance issues. In Guatemala, 39% of the respondents reported no experience of dispute or conflict in their communities. The most commonly reported disputes include criminal activity (24%) such as theft or murder, the lack of basic resources or services such as water, electricity, sanitation, and health (18%), social conflicts between neighbors (14%), and conflicts related to the sale of alcohol and accessibility of liquor stores (13%).

Extortions (9%), violence between gangs (9%), and violence in the home (8%) were reported among conflicts. Together, these responses point to the importance of violence and insecurity as a form of dispute, along with socio-economic fragility. Land disputes were mentioned by 7% of the respondents. More generally, conflicts and disputes resulting from the exploitation of, or damages to, natural resources were not

frequently mentioned despite being often identified in Guatemala as a prevalent and largely unresolved social issue [8, 9, 17]. About one in three respondents judged that various conflicts were somewhat to extremely likely to become violent, including conflicts over development decisions (37%), conflicts over natural resources (34%), conflict over agriculture (30%), and conflicts over jobs / the economy (28%).

Figure 5: Main disputes and conflicts existing in this community

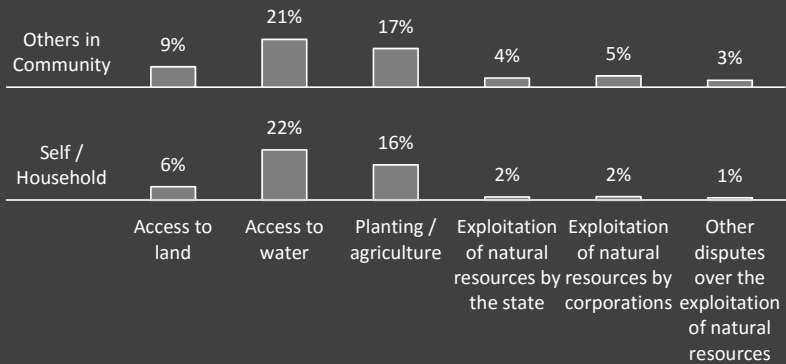


### 3.2. Socio-environmental Situation

A series of questions were asked to better assess the incidence of socio-environmental disputes and conflicts. The survey assessed the incidence of six common forms of disputes in the 12 months prior to the survey among the respondents, household, and community. The events considered included disputes over access to land, over access to water, over planting / agriculture, over the exploitation of natural resources by the state, over the exploitation of natural resources by corporations, or any other disputes over the exploitation of natural resources.

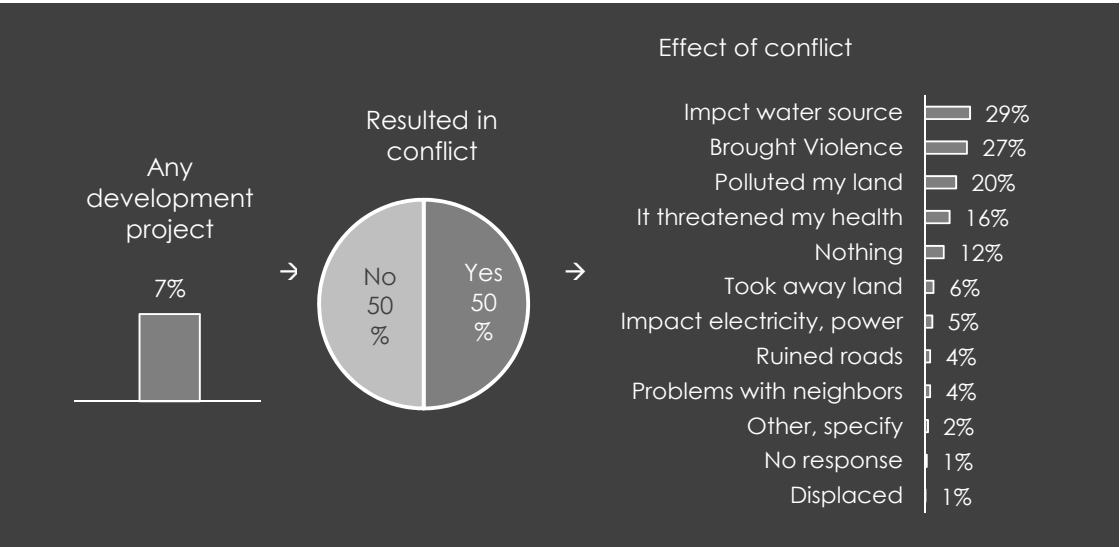
Overall, one in three respondent (34%) reported having experienced any of the disputes listed themselves or in their household, with the most common being disputes about access to water (22% of the respondents) and planting / agricultural issues (17%). Respondents indicated these two disputes as being most prevalent in the community in general, with disputes over access to water affecting others in the community in the year prior to the survey according to 21% of the respondents.

Figure 6: Self-reported incidence of conflicts over natural resources in the last 12 months



There is however evidence that such projects are becoming increasingly frequent, and constitute a major potential cause for violence: half the respondents exposed to such development projects noted that it resulted in some form of conflict: 29% indicated their water source had been harmed, 27% felt it brought violence, 20% reported their land had been polluted and 16% indicated that it had affected their health. Other effects included having their land taken away (6%), ruined roads (4%) and affecting their electricity source (6%). These results likely reflect the negative impact of electrification and large farm irrigation projects on water supply. Conflicts over development projects were also most frequently seen as somewhat to extremely likely to become violent (37% of the respondents).

Figure 7: Self-reported experience of conflict over development project in the last 10 years



When asked who helps addressing environmental conflicts, about half the respondents said nobody (46%) with some mentioning the Cocodes (23%) themselves (20%), and city / municipality authorities (18%). The departmental and national government were only mentioned by 3%

and 5% of the respondents, respectively. Similarly, about half the respondents indicated that nobody helps to resolve disputes related to development projects, while some (17%) felt the city or municipality government work to resolve these conflicts, 17% indicated that they themselves worked to resolve the conflicts, and only 8% felt the national government helped to resolve such disputes. These numbers contrast with the expectation that the government should be involved: 83% simultaneously felt it was ultimately the role of the state to resolve disputes linked to development problems. They also indicated that community consultations needed to be organized when beginning a development project (91%).

### **3.3. Violence and Insecurity**

Violence and insecurity are well-known chronic issues in Guatemala. The fact that respondents see crimes and violence as a leading form of dispute arguably reflects how much insecurity creates discontentment, divides communities, and undermines perception of state actors. The sense of security and incidence of various crimes were assessed through the survey.

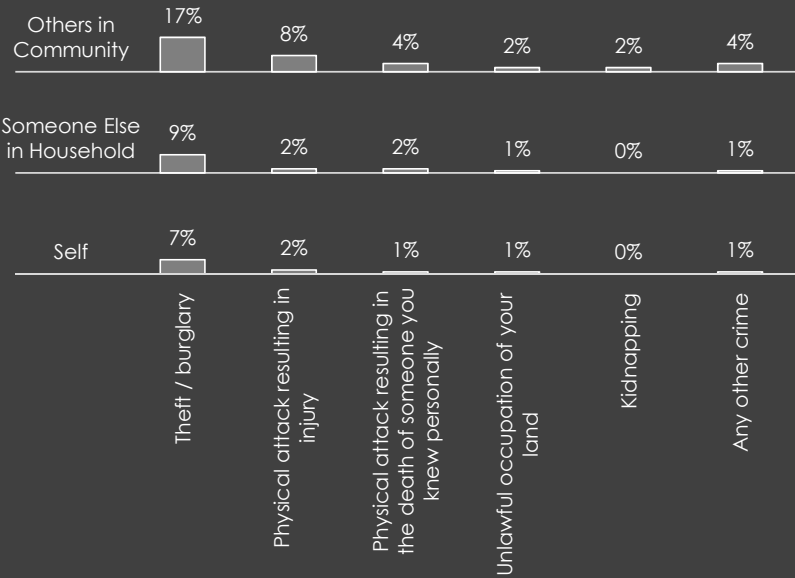
Overall, about half the respondents felt safe or very safe in their general activities, but just 38% reported feeling safe or very safe walking at night in their neighborhood / village. The leading causes of the sense of insecurity were identified as the constant repetition of crimes such as robberies, the lack of police and the existence of gangs. Only one in five respondent (20%) said there was no source of insecurity in their community.

When feeling insecure, a majority of the respondents said they would respond by staying home (56%), or not going out alone (25%). Some (17%) would communicate with neighbors, but few would call the police (8%). These results highlight the paralyzing effect of insecurity as respondents would respond by staying home. Looking at the incidence of specific forms of violence shows that theft is the most common crime



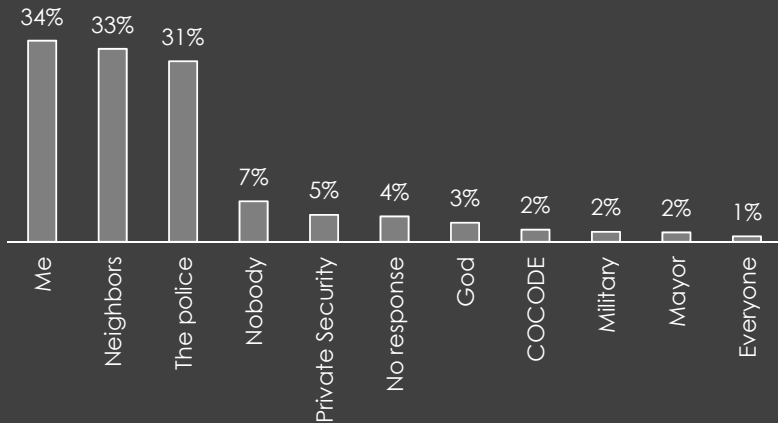
experienced directly by respondents (7%). Overall data on security tended to be worse in the regions at the border with Honduras and El Salvador, which are traditional corridor for trade and trafficking [31].

Figure 8: Self-reported incidence of selected crimes in the last 12 months



Respondents identified who, they think, ensures security in their village or neighborhood. Most respondents felt that they were in charge of their own security (34%), that neighbors organized in order to provide security (33%), or that the police ensured security (31%). Other actors included private security (5%), while 7% felt that nobody was in charge of providing security.

Figure 9: Who ensures security here?



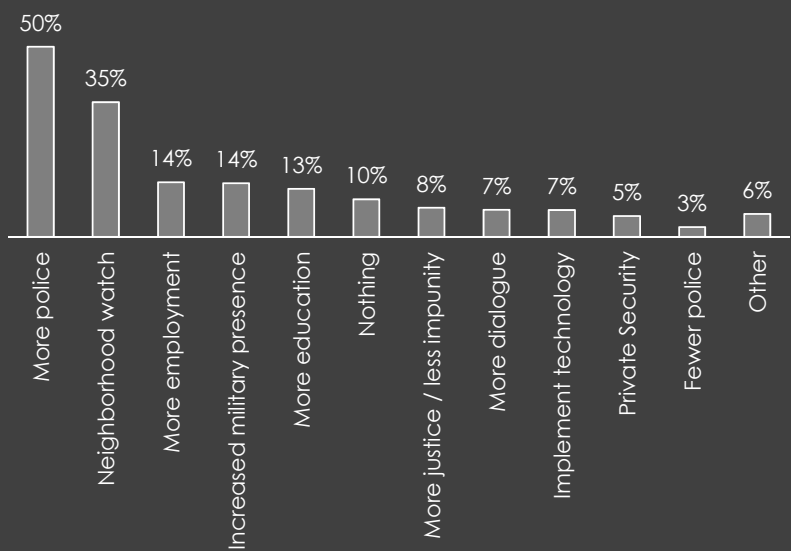
Respondents clearly contrasted security provision as it is experienced with what they believe it should be. Many (73%) felt that state actors do little to nothing to address crimes, 58% believe the judicial system itself does little to nothing to address crimes, and 55% believe the police does little to nothing to address crimes. Just 8% said they would call the police if they felt unsafe. However, a large majority believed it is the role of the institutions of the state to address crimes (85%).

Although 69% of respondents felt that the police did not ensure security in their communities – arguably its primary role and responsibility – and 55% percent felt the police did little to nothing to address criminal activity, the majority of respondents (50%) felt that more police presence would be the best way to improve security in their communities, highlighting the importance of this security actor. Other responses included neighborhood watch programs (35%), increased

military presence (14%), increased employment opportunities (14%), and increased justice and less impunity (8%).

While most respondents did not condone the use of violence, 29% felt it was acceptable for the community to use violence in response to criminal activity, about the same percentage felt that the police should be able to use violence (26%) for the same reason; 55% believed that the use of violence was never appropriate, 31% felt it appropriate when redressing a murder, 25% felt it acceptable in the cases of violence or rape, and 17% in the case of theft.

Figure 10: Proposed measures to improve security

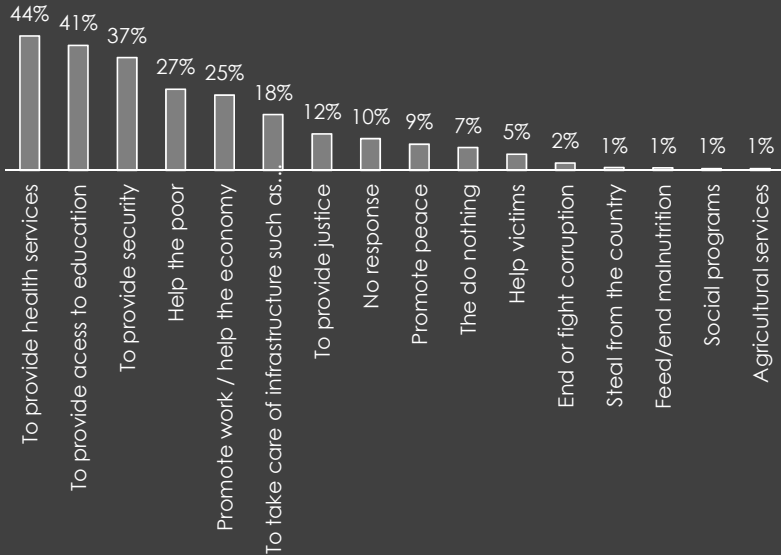


### **3.4. Fragility of Public Institutions, Legitimate Politics and Governance**

The fragility of public institutions reflects the capacity (technical, administrative, financial) of the state to carry out its mandate and respond to the needs and expectations of the population. One of the objectives of the survey was to better understand the perspectives of the population about the roles and capacities of the government and other public institutions in order to better understand the fragility of public institutions and how this may affect individual, community, institutional, and societal resilience. The information provides some understanding of and context to respondents' views on the roles of the state, trust, perceptions of corruption, socioeconomic opportunities, security, and freedom of information.

The survey asked respondents to identify what they thought the roles and services of the state should be. Health was the most frequently mentioned service among respondents (44%), followed by providing access to education (41%) and the provision of security (37%). Helping the poor (27% of respondents) and promoting work/improving the economy (25% of respondents) were also listed as main roles of the state. Data on socio-environmental conflicts and security also highlighted how much the population expects the government to be involved in resolving conflicts and ensuring protection.

Figure 11: Proposed measures to improve security



In contrast with their expectations, respondents ranked the performance of the government poorly on key aspects: 79% judge the performance of the government on increasing employment to be bad or very bad. Similarly a majority of respondents were negative about the government's performance on reducing poverty (76% bad – very bad), reducing crimes (75% bad – very bad) or resolving conflicts (72% bad – very bad). A majority of the population further believes that the government does nothing to improve life in their community. Survey results rather suggest that four out of five respondents believe that the government (80%), congress (85%), and other elected officials (83%) work little or very little in their interest.

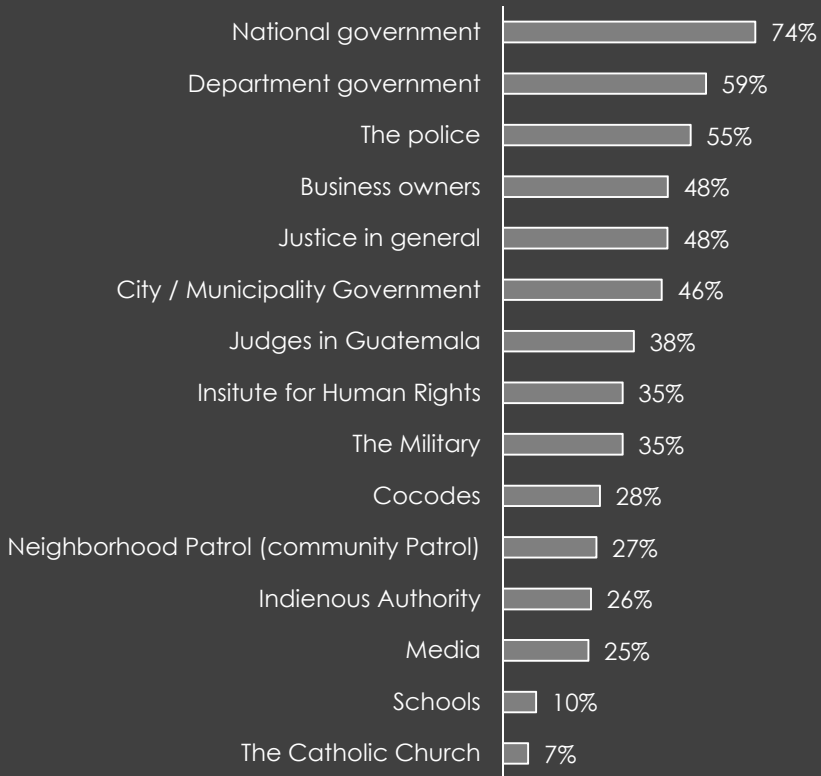
Figure 12: Perception of performance of the government (% bad)



Confirming the poor perception of the government performance, respondents listed themselves (42%), the municipality governments (37%) and community elected organizations (28%) when asked to list the actors involved in improving life in their communities and neighborhoods. Only 7% reported that the national government acted to improve lives in their communities.

This perception of poor performance of the state likely also undermines trust in government institutions: 74% of the respondents had little to no trust in the national government, 59% had little to no trust in the departmental government and 46% had little to no trust in local city or municipality governments. Furthermore, 55% of the sample reported little to no trust in the police. In contrast the level of distrust was lower toward civil society actors such as the media, schools, or the church.

Figure 13: Trust in selected actors (% little – no trust)



Arguably, confidence in the state is further undermined by a lack of contact and perception of corruption: 81% of respondents in the sample reported having had no contact with any authorities in the year prior to the survey; 13% of respondents indicated having contact with their mayor and 6% with local community authorities. With regards

to corruption, 90% of respondents felt that corruption is widespread in the government, but few find corruption acceptable under any circumstances – only 8% find it acceptable for officials to seek illegal payment (bribe) for services.

Despite the negative perception of state actors, 89% of respondents are registered to vote, 80% reported voting in the last national elections, and 81% planned to vote in the next election at the time of the interview (the second round of the 2015 presidential election). The main reason for not voting was not being registered, which in turn was primarily the result of not caring about politics (23%), losing documents (16%), or traveling and being prevented from registering (14%).

### **3.5. Socio-economic Fragility**

Respondents in the consultation process highlighted the challenges raised by poor access to services, unemployment, and the general economic conditions in Guatemala. Respondents were asked to rank their access to - and the quality of - a range of services. Only about half the respondents were positive about their access to education (59%), access to electricity (53%), and access to food (53%). Respondents were by far most negative about their access to jobs (6% good – very good).

Economic shocks - unexpected or unpredictable event that negatively affected the household economic status - were the most commonly reported problems: 89% of respondents indicated some form of economic shock in the last 12 months: 35% reported a loss of employment, 58% reported lowered income, 28% reported illness or death of a working person, 76% felt there had been a significant increase in price of products, 41% reported the loss of harvest. As far as the number of shocks experienced in the last 12 months, 31% reported having experienced four or more shocks, 24% reported experience of three shocks, 19% reported two shocks and 15% reported one shock.



Figure 14: Perception of services (% good – very good)



Figure 15: Self-reported incidence of economic shocks (last 12 months)



How people responded to these shocks varied. The majority (43%) spent less money on food, health and other essential items, 26% reported doing nothing, 12% sought additional work or another job, and 17% took out loans from family, friends, or neighbors. Less common responses were taking out loans from the bank (5%), selling goods at a market (7%), selling personal items (5%) or taking out loans from different private sources (2%).

When respondents were asked to list what they felt were the most effective means to improve employment and business opportunities in Guatemala, four pathways became evident. The majority of respondents (47%) felt it should be the government who generates sources of employment, 33% felt that more opportunities for employment would exist if private services were easier to access. Some

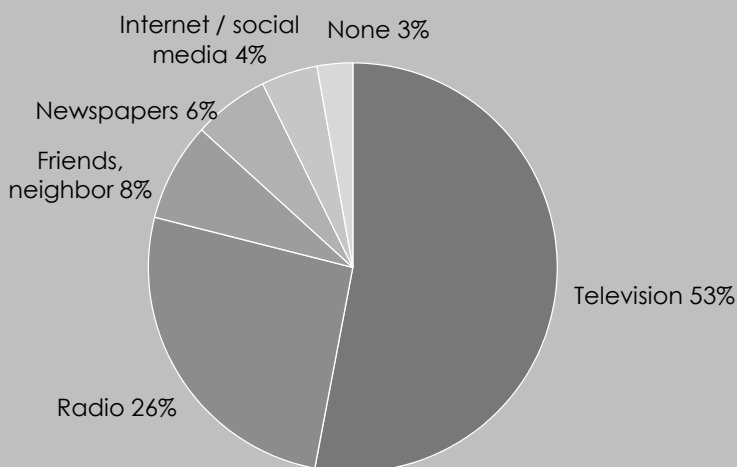
suggested that more opportunities for work would result from the creation of more municipality businesses (21%) and improved education (14%).

When asked directly who was involved in helping them through their economic downturns, most respondents reported turning to friends or family (84%). 8% reported turning to community leaders, 4% went to the church, and 4% indicated they turn to State appointed authorities. More generally, respondents tended to fend for themselves, when it came to solving economic problems, 67% reported they are principally in charge of addressing these issues, 20% reported that nobody is addressing economic problems, 5% indicated that the city or municipality government was in charge of addressing these issues and 4% indicated that the church was involved. The Mayoral offices and the state, however, were largely seen as normally responsible for improving employment and business opportunities.

## Box: Information

Access to information and channels of communication are critical in shaping views and opinions on issues of governance and conflicts. Channels and sources of communication and information flows are critical to resilience and contribute to forms of trust, social cohesion and social capital. Media are a primary means for outreach and public education, and media and informed citizens can hold public official accountable for their actions. For most respondents, Television is the main source of information (53%), followed by the radio (26%) and other media (21%). Not surprisingly, access to television is strongly related to wealth.

*Figure 16: Main source of information*



A measure of asset ownership showed that relying on television as the main source of information was most prevalent among the high level of asset ownership tertile, compare to those in the low level of asset ownership tertile (12%). Conversely individuals in the low level of asset ownership tertile were significantly more likely to rely on the radio and friends and family (43% and 19% respectively) compared to those in the high level of asset ownership tertile (12% and 2% respectively).

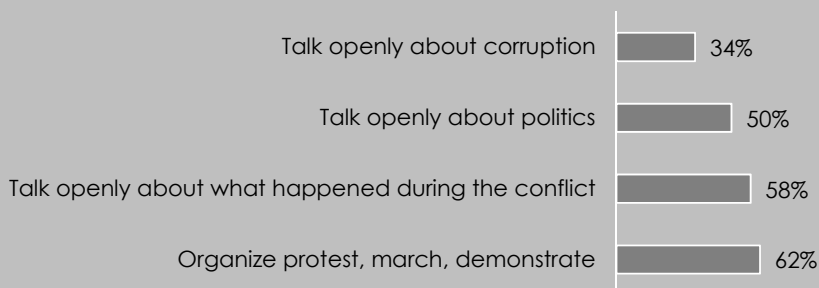
Despite the general accessibility of media, about half the respondents felt little or not all informed about national (52%) and local (51%) politics and about development projects related to the exploitation of natural resources that may affect them (52%). About one third of respondents felt little or not all informed about news in their department (40%), in their locality (32%), or nationally (30%).

*Figure 17: Self-reported level of information on selected topic  
(% little – not at all informed)*



Some topics appear to be sensitive for open discussion. Just about one third of respondents felt little or not at all able to talk about corruption without fear. However, the percentage of responders unable to talk openly and without fear about politics was higher (50%) and even more felt they could not talk about what happened during the war (58%). This was especially problematic in areas with experience of the war and on-going presence of police, military and former members of armed groups

*Figure 18: Self-reported level of freedom without fear  
(% little - not at all free)*

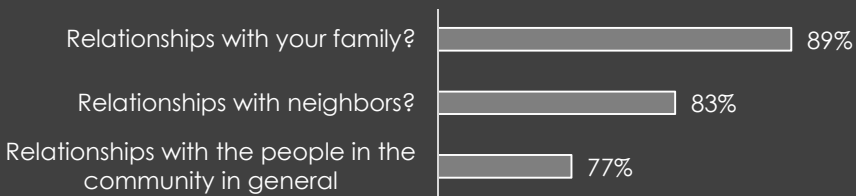


## 4. SOCIAL COHESION

### 4.1. Belonging, Inclusion, and Trust

Assessing levels of social cohesion is important when addressing resilience in relation to conflict and peacebuilding. A wide range of studies by the authors point to the importance of family and social support in building resilience, and community resilience in post-conflict societies.<sup>19</sup> This section examines key dimensions of social cohesion to provide a better understanding of the societal relationships which enable individuals and communities to anticipate, adapt, respond, transform and resolve potential conflicts – in other words, to be more resilient. First, respondents were asked to rank relationships, including relationships with their family (89% good to very good), with their neighbors (83% good to very good), and with the community in general (77% good to very good.)

*Figure 19: Perception of relationships (% good – very good)*



The positive perception of relations within and outside of the family may explain why a high percentage of respondents see the community as ready to organize itself and seek a solution to problems

with services (85%). Other data, however, suggest a more complex dynamic in social relations and support. A majority of respondents (72%) indicated that, in their communities and neighborhoods, people are ready to help each other, but 45% of respondents reported that people in their communities and neighborhoods did not trust each other. About half the respondents judge positively the ability of the people in their community to come together to resolve disputes over natural resources without violence (46%), and about the same percentage (50%) believe that people support each other if they lack income / food. Fewer felt that support is offered or available to them often / all the time.

Figure 20: Support frequency (% often – all the time)



The finding is consistent with other data suggesting that respondents see the community as a whole as having a very limited role in improving life in general, addressing economic problems and disputes over socio-environmental issues and development projects. Only in relation to security was the organization of neighbors seen to play a key role in improving security. Cocodes were also seen as one of the most legitimate actors contributing to improving life and resolving disputes. However, according to Guatemala scholars, they have limited power and resources.



When considering social distance with other socio-cultural groups, a majority of respondents (about 80% or more) indicated being comfortable living in the same community, going to the same market or church, working together, or sharing food. Respondents, however, were less comfortable with members of other socio-cultural groups for events outside of the public space, including inter-marriage and living in the same house. Nevertheless, few people reported problems and divisions over customs, traditions or religious beliefs: 78% said no such problems existed in their community, 14% mentioned issue over religious beliefs, and 8% mentioned ethnic groups not getting along.

Figure 21: Social distance (% comfortable with other socio-cultural group)



Together, these results suggest a social fabric in which co-existence is very much possible and where some level of support and coordination exist. But outside of household and private space, openness and depth of support appears to be more limited. The gap between support,

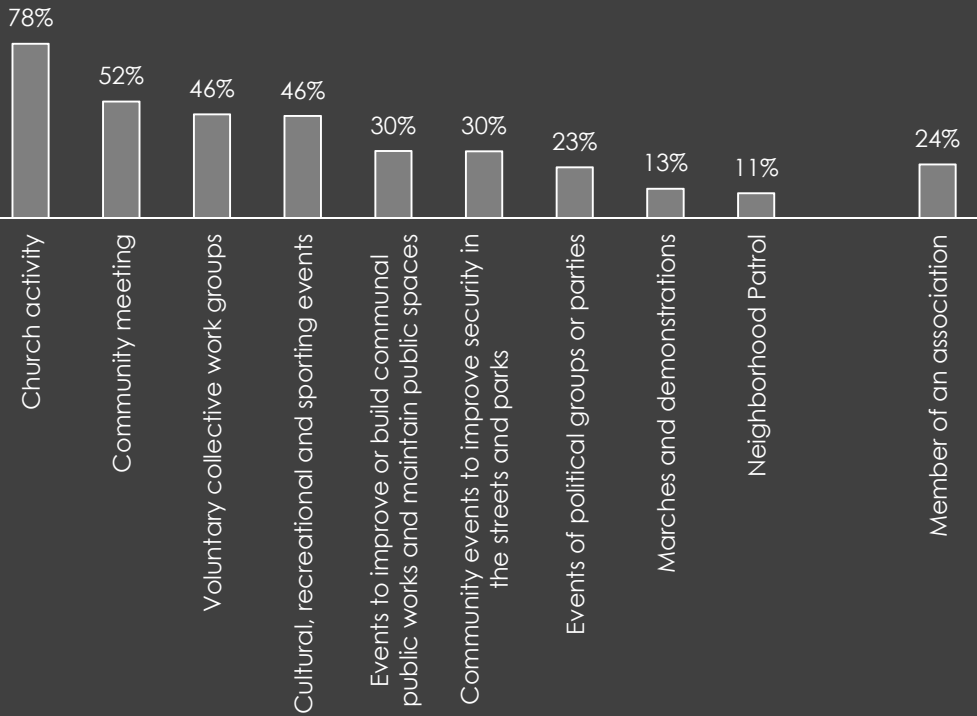
solidarity and social cohesion in the public sphere and in the more intimate sphere of respondents arguably implies a more limited notion of resilience lacking wider social cohesion that produces tangible sources of support or organization.

## **4.2. Civic and Social Participation**

The engagement of individuals in public events, groups and associations is an indicator of the existing social capital. According to the survey, 52% of respondents have participated in some form of community meeting in the year prior to the survey, 46% participated in voluntary collective projects and the same percentage participated in cultural and/or recreational events, nearly one third of respondents (30%) participated in community events to improve security in public spaces such as streets and parks, and 30% participated in events to improve or build public works and maintain public spaces.

Despite the high level of engagement in community events and activities, few respondents recognized formal membership in any organized associations – 76% were members of none, 13% were members of a religious group, and 4% were members of a Cocodes. Arguably, these results suggest a lack of formal institution that support and promote the creation and work of association. It also reflects some reluctance for anyone to be member of a group or association which they may be seen to represent or speak on behalf of.

Figure 22: Level of participation in selected public activities in the past year



## Box: Exclusion and Wealth

Guatemala has a history of unequal treatment of socio-cultural groups, with indigenous groups being formally recognized for having been historically discriminated against and excluded. The survey examined perception of exclusion and discrimination. While many respondents reported a sense of equality in terms of access to health services, education, justice, or public administrative services, 21% of respondents felt they had experienced some kind of unfair treatment, most often because of their social status (5%), work / occupation (3%), gender (2%), group of origin (2%), and religion (2%). Responses did not differ significantly by gender or group of origin and an examination of the survey results across key socio-demographic variable suggest that economic divides are the strongest and that poverty represents a significant trap and factor of exclusion.

Respondents were categorized in three socio-economic groups based on the ownership of selected non-productive assets: those with few assets (lowest tertile), those with average amount of assets (medium tertile) and those with the highest number of assets (highest tertile.). These asset wealth groups were significantly associated with a number of factors, with the lowest asset group being more likely than the wealthier group to:

- Be more negative about their economic future outlook
- Be overall less informed and more reliant on informal information sources
- Be less able to talk openly without fear on various topics or organize protests
- Be more negative about their access and quality of services
- More likely to be negatively affected by development projects

## 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESILIENCE

The survey findings outlined in this report yield complex insights into the various dimensions of conflictive situations and resilience in Guatemala. The findings suggest that the social fabric is somewhat limited to a state of co-existence. Collaboration and assistance exist, but it is limited outside of the private space. Relatedly, individuals participate in community activities, but this does not translate into meaningful engagement in the form of membership and involvement in civil society organizations and associations. Yet the meaningful engagement of civilians in public life is necessary considering the ineffectiveness of the state in meeting the demand and needs of its population.

The state was consistently described as lacking an effective role in addressing key needs demands, and expectations of the population on issues that the population largely defined as the duty of the state (e.g. justice, security, improving life...). This has implications for the type of resources and processes people may rely on to be more resilient in relation to conflict and peacebuilding. The dissonance between expectations and what is actually delivered, combined with perception of corruption, is undermining trust in the state and creating opportunities for rupture between the state and the population. The positive news is that the population continues to look up to state institutions to provide key services. For example, deploying more police was seen as a key measure to improve security. However, few thought they were currently fulfilling that protection role, leaving the citizens to fend for themselves, often paralyzed by insecurity. This in turn likely undermines the sense of community and solidarity.

To further examine resilience at the individual level, this survey included measures of individual capacities for resilience using two self-reported indicators of resiliency: a 10-item Resilience Scale (RS). Questions on

individual, psychological resilience included whether individuals feel able to adapt to change, can deal with whatever comes, can see the humorous side of things, are strengthened by coping with stress, tend to bounce back after illness or hardship, think they can achieve their goals, can focus under pressure, and are not discouraged by failure and other factors found to indicate resiliency. The scale was found to be associated with a number of variables, including:

- Gender
- Level of information and freedom to talk openly
- Social relationships
- Participation in community events and engagement in associations
- Level of assistance received and offered, and level of trust in the community
- Trust in the state
- Contact with authorities
- Sense of security

The fact that a fairly narrowly defined individual assessment of resilience based on mental health and individuals' self-reported capacity to overcome adversity is associated with such a wide range of community level factors explored in this survey validates the broad approach undertaken for this research, and highlights the complex relation between individual and community resilience, and wider institutional and societal resilience within the state. What this suggests is that resilience is interlinked with social cohesion and the effectiveness, legitimacy and good governance of the state.

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This report presents the results of a nationwide survey conducted in Guatemala in September - October 2015 among 3,712 randomly selected adults, as part of a mixed method research to develop a framework for assessing resilience for peace.

The survey was designed to provide detailed information about existing and potential capacities for resilience and the nonviolent transformation and resolution of conflicts with a focus on four dimensions of conflict and resilience: the socio-environmental situation, violence and insecurity, the fragility of public institutions, and socio-economic fragility.

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