



**Perspectives Sûres Suisse**

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Geneva, January 2015

## Dear Friends and Supporters,



We have just stepped into a new year and we would like to take this season as an opportunity to thank you for all your support and trust in us. For 10 years now (2004-2014), SP has been passionate to strengthen civil society and its leaders as well as community development, especially in Guatemala's indigenous Mayan communities as well as teach children in Europe about our work, on child rights, peace education and international socio-economic and cultural issues. Without your contribution to the cause we would not have been able to turn our mission into action.

In this letter, we would like you to join us in exploring what SP achieved with your help in the last year. 2014 was full of productive changes for Secure Perspectives International. Those changes have given our organization a great perspective for its future work and strengthened the relationship with our Mayan rural community Belejù in the Quiché region in Guatemala.

After having worked 4 years with our Mayan partner community in Belejù we are following a new community model. From now on one of the community leaders that worked with us since the beginning of our collaboration with the community will officially take over the management post. As one of our SP staff now, he will manage our projects in the community as Community Coordinator. That's Eduardo Cal Jom. He was selected by the community itself as the community leader to manage and lead all projects between the community and SP. We thank former SP Guatemala Country Director Fernando Hurtado for his 10 year commitment and dedication, who decided to step down from his post and focus on other commitments. We wish him all the best for his future endeavors.



Along with welcoming Eduardo to our team, we have built on our participatory rural approach working on the strengthening of civil society, its leaders as well as community development. It is part of our mission to encourage self-initiative within society and stimulate responsible action. In October 2014, Fiamma, SP International's president, worked for 10 days with the members of the community association and the future women's association to evaluate the work done up-to-date in the community, to prepare a situation analysis and to define the next steps forward. Community projects were re-prioritized and a roadmap for their implementation established. Such a participatory approach is critical for us as we are dedicated to foster mutual collaboration with our partners in order to find locally relevant solutions for the improvement of their living conditions. An indispensable requisite is the active participation of our project partners.

During Fiamma's work in the community, she conducted workshops for the existing and the future community association on planning, organization and implementation, and budgeting of projects, and on community strengthening. She trained our new staff member Eduardo in finance, bookkeeping and project management and in important SP processes to be able to take up the role as Community Coordinator.



SP is extremely happy that further, together with the community association and the future women's association, the first room in the newly restored community center was inaugurated: the library. The library was cleaned, painted, a mural was designed by the community, the library was equipped with furniture, bookshelves and books, ranging from children's books to books on teaching methodologies and pedagogy.

In Geneva, our dedicated team has continued to organize a couple of our *Sunday Brunch* - and

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**CookAid**-events. They are meant on the one hand to raise awareness about the situation our rural community finds itself in, with 75% of its inhabitants living in extreme poverty (a total of over 5000 inhabitants and of those about 2700 children, many of whom have less than 2.5 dollars per day for a family with 5 or more children) as well as on the other hand to bringing people from different cultures together to share their life and work experience.

Unfortunately, Guatemala has been struck by several natural disasters. Prolonged drought impacted food security. According to OCHA, about 75% of maize and bean crops were lost in Guatemala in 2014. Data from governments and assessments carried out by humanitarian actors indicate that about 1.5 million people in Guatemala are at risk of food insecurity.



In August 2014, the government of Guatemala declared a State of Public Calamity in Quiché – where our community is situated – and in 15 other departments. The very serious humanitarian situation has been prolonged up to the end of last year and is still ongoing. An evaluation managed by the World Food Programme revealed that at least 10% of the surveyed households are consuming water from unsafe springs and streams. The most vulnerable groups include female heads of household, children under age five and pregnant women.

30,000 families finished their food stocks in October and are implementing survival strategies. Negative coping measures include reducing portion sizes or variety of food, selling of belongings, reducing health and education costs or abandoning grain production and/or livestock farm animals or farm supplies. The members of our community in Guatemala in November told us many stories that especially families that were already vulnerable, like elderly people and women headed households, living with 2.5 Euros per day, if they manage to sell anything at all, were especially suffering.

This serious situation of our rural community underlines the urgent need to step up efforts to create positive change, raise awareness and mobilize as many supporters as possible. PS Suisse will dedicatedly continue focusing its efforts on advocacy and awareness-raising as well as supporting SP International's work on peace education, capacity building, and community-partnerships with rural indigenous communities.

We wish you all a wonderful year 2015! Thank you so much for all your support and trust in our work throughout the last year! It truly made a huge difference! The whole team of SP and the children and their families in Belejú thank you from the bottom of their hearts!

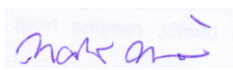


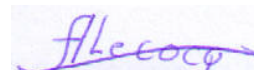
**Sincerely,**

Yours Perspectives Sûres Suisse, Geneva office

  
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