



# A Community Development Training and Cultural Exchange Center



**Mental Health Project:** The mental health project is directed toward children living in Jocotenango and Pastores, Sacatepéquez, to help them heal from the trauma of the Hurricane Stan disaster, and to develop coping mechanisms for future disasters in this earthquake and flood-prone territory. The project is currently being expanded to five new schools in the surrounding area.

**Potable Water Project:** Nahual volunteer engineers and architects worked with the village of San Lorenzo el Tejar in the city of Pastores, Sacatepéquez to create a new water source after the damage caused by Hurricane Stan. This relatively inexpensive, energy efficient hydraulic pump system has been such a success that other villages in Pastores have requested Nahual volunteers to assess the possibility of replicating the project in their pueblos.

## Media Center

The methods and results of demonstration projects must be communicated broadly. As Nahual gains resources, its goal is to produce films, use broadcast media, and design materials that effectively guide community members to replicate its projects. Already Nahual has produced a film about its water project in Pastores, Sacatepéquez, and the leaders of its Mental Health Committee have created a weekly, prime-time cable TV program on community mental health issues that has received high ratings for its professionalism.

## Cultural Program

*Celebrating indigenous culture in all of its complexity and exposing its rich customs to others promote understanding and bonding among all members of society in a positive and joyous way.*

## Projects

**Kite-Building Workshops:** Nahual conducts workshops for community members in advance of the Day of the Dead celebration on November 1 and 2, which in the indigenous town of Santiago, Sactepéquez, is the occasion for a unique kite-flying ritual.

**International Day of Indigenous Peoples:** Nahual created the first event celebrating International Day of Indigenous Peoples in Antigua, Guatemala in August 2006, and it is now an annual event.

**Cultural Celebration of the Anniversary of the Peace Accords:** In December 2006, Nahual organized a 10-year anniversary celebration in Antigua, Guatemala intended to make indelible and conspicuously public the support for the Peace Accords of 1996. It also is now an annual event.

**Antigua Guatemala Community Center:** Nahual's office serves as a multi-purpose community center, open daily to advise community members on the formation and operation of community development councils and their projects, and to host artistic and cultural community-building exchanges.

## How You Can Help

Asociación Nahual currently operates on individual donations and a volunteer workforce. Please give what you can to support this critical work to put Guatemalans on the path of controlling their own future. Donations may be made in person, or mailed to: Asociación Nahual, 2a Avenida Norte, 6B, Antigua Guatemala, Sacatepéquez Guatemala.

Visit [www.fundacion-nahual.org](http://www.fundacion-nahual.org) for more information.

*Asociacion Nahual-ONG, Reg. #5107070250*



**By and for the Indigenous and Campesino People of Guatemala**



*Asociación Nahual has worked in Guatemala since 2004, teaching residents about the principles of democratic governance and their rights under the 1996 Peace Accords, and training citizens in the Guatemalan community development council laws.*



Growing out of the Peace Accords ending 36 years of civil war, these laws were designed to drive community development from the grassroots. They present an unprecedented opportunity for communities to collectively determine their needs by planning infrastructure, health, safety, education, environmental and other projects, and to work with their municipalities to fund and audit their implementation.

But most of the people the laws were designed to empower, if even aware of them, do not know how to use them. A dearth of knowledge, coupled with a culture of authoritarianism and violence towards indigenous, campesino and other dispossessed people, hampers their use.

Because community councils are the essential building blocks for participatory democracy in post-war Guatemala, their flowering across the Guatemalan landscape is imperative for maintaining Guatemala's fragile peace.

This is the fundamental work of Asociación Nahual – to stimulate the formation of highly functioning community development councils. Nahual maintains a training/community center in Antigua, Sacatepéquez, to teach community members how to form community development councils and to use them effectively to drive community-determined projects. It presents its “live” training series, certified by IGER, the Guatemalan Institute of Radio Education, every week in Antigua, and elsewhere in Guatemala, during the year.

Nahual also provides advice and accompaniment to community members forming community development councils, and works with a variety of organizations and government institutions to communicate the importance of effective functioning of the community council system. And through its committees on a wide range of community development issues, Nahual stimulates, guides, and implements demon-

stration projects that provide hands-on illustrations of what people can do in their own villages with the planning, funding and auditing provisions of the community council development laws.

Asociación Nahual puts special emphasis on empowering the indigenous population of Guatemala, which suffered unthinkable devastation during the civil war, and which is desperate for the kind of training and guidance offered by Asociación Nahual. Nahual's goal is to insure that fully-functioning and highly effective community development councils exist in every village across Guatemala.

## Programs and Demonstration Projects

Nahual's training sessions and the work of its committees reflect the range of issues a community confronts in its quest for a better future. Experts on such topics as environment, health, women's issues, community safety, infrastructure, education, youth, and culture bring their expertise to Nahual's training and demonstration projects. Nahual projects, organized under three general program areas, reflect the energy and vision of its executive director and committee chairs, and are brought to life by a dedicated Guatemalan and international volunteer force.

### Education Program

*Through an emphasis on the history and lives of indigenous people, Nahual's education program seeks to be an impetus for social change.*

### Projects

**Teacher at Home:** Nahual partners with the Guatemalan Institute of Radio Education (IGER) to bring the Institute's Teacher-at-Home educational program to the department of Sacatepéquez. Teacher-at-Home

is a distance-learning project allowing people unable to attend traditional schools to study via the radio. Nahual awards scholarships to students unable to afford program fees. Its future plans include establishing an IGER center in each of the 16 municipalities of Sacatepéquez.

**After-school Project:** Nahual sponsors teachers in the villages of El Hato and San Lorenzo El Tejar to tutor students at the elementary level in an after-school program to increase successful learning and completion of examinations.

**Community Library Development Project:** This model community library project, which includes materials for opening and operating a library, is tailored to the linguistic and educational needs of both indigenous and non-indigenous people.

**English Language Training:** To enhance opportunities in economic development from international trade and tourism, Nahual is providing English language classes in three different communities in Sacatepéquez.

**Volunteers-in-Service:** Nahual exposes international and Guatemalan volunteers to the lives and struggles of Guatemala's dispossessed populations, shaping Guatemala's future leaders and emissaries for change in the developed world.

### Basic Needs Program

*While all change begins with education, it cannot begin in earnest if basic human needs are not met.*

### Projects

**Hurricane Stan Disaster Relief:** In October 2005, Hurricane Stan affected some 3 million people in Guatemala – roughly half the population. Nahual responded with clothing, medicine, and food for victims in the municipalities of Jocotenango and Pastores, some of the worst hit areas. In the months to follow, volunteers designed and constructed housing for families made homeless by the hurricane.