The

UNDP Civic Scenario/Civic Dialogue Workshop

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Edited by
Bettye H. Pruitt
The Society for Organizational Learning
The UNDP workshop brought together 100 participants from 17 countries—people committed to social development and involved in a wide array of civic dialogue initiatives—to reflect on common issues and challenges and on the future direction of civic dialogue. In contrast to the established workshop format organized around formal presentations, this was both a conference about civic scenarios and other civic dialogue methods and a first-hand experience of the civic scenario process. The format challenged workshop participants to adapt to a more fluid, personalized, approach to collective thought and learning. Out of their efforts, however, came the first steps toward a broad methodological platform for civic dialogue work, as well as the foundation of a global community of people committed to this approach to social change and increasingly skilled in using it.

The motivating force behind this workshop was the excitement generated by three civic scenario processes, in South Africa in 1991-92 (Mont Fleur), in Colombia in 1997-98 (Destino Colombia), and in Guatemala, in 1998-2000 (Visión Guatemala). These three projects used the scenario planning methodology developed in the business world as a method for helping strategic thinkers make dramatic, creative shifts in perception. Collectively, they have suggested the potential of the civic scenario process to help societies create better futures in a number of ways: by promoting dialogue across boundaries; by bringing about shifts in perception and a reframing of issues through the scenario exercise; and by combining those two steps to build a shared vision compelling enough to unite and motivate people to act. The UNDP, a sponsor of Visión Guatemala, convened this workshop to provide a forum for sharing and reflecting on these experiences.

At the same time, it was an occasion to compare civic scenario work to other approaches and to provide some impetus toward launching new national or regional civic dialogue processes. Participants from Chile, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, and Bulgaria, as well as those from South Africa, Colombia, and Guatemala, brought experiences of recent or ongoing civic dialogue projects. Also represented were the War-Torn Societies Project, which has promoted dialogue in Mozambique, Eritrea, Somalia, and Guatemala, and the University of Peace, based in Costa Rica, which has also worked to promote dialogue and reconciliation, for example, in Colombia. All of these participants, along with representatives from Argentina, Bahamas, Ecuador, Guyana, India, and Pakistan, came with an interest in pursuing the use of civic dialogue to address a wide range of social issues—from poverty and inequality to the AIDS crisis; from fragile democratic institutions to armed conflict.

Perhaps the major learning to come out of the workshop was that there is an array of process options that are not competitive with one another but complementary. Indeed, one strong message from the workshop was that a single project or process cannot be expected to carry the whole weight of the changes that are needed. Some are stronger on deep analysis of complex problems, others are better designed for engaging the public at large; some are best suited to address macro issues, others to focus on micro. Civic dialogue initiatives need to employ the processes or process elements that will address the specific needs of the situation at hand, to make adjustments
when those needs change, and to have a long-term horizon, with the understanding that no one project can effect the large-scale changes contemplated. Plans coming out of the workshop for a Mont Fleur II, a Visión Guatemala II, and a strategy to promote new dialogue initiatives in Colombia gave concrete expression to this learning.

At the same time, the fact that all of these processes must deal with a common set of challenges, emerged as a central theme in the workshop discussions. In particular, there was the overarching question of how to ensure that a dialogue process will produce concrete results. This concern took various forms: how to connect with political actors; how to connect to the public at large; how to select a credibly representative group of participants; how to engage them fully as individuals in the dialogue process; how to ensure that they follow through on their commitments. And, underlying this issue was the deeper question of what is most important to communicate and share from the civic dialogue exercise – the product, or the process – or are both essential?

The significance of this workshop was in defining these critical questions and starting the process of working toward answers. At the conclusion of the meeting in Antigua, the UNDP committed to continuing its support of this work with a web site for sharing the materials produced, with a project to engage the community established in the workshop in continuing the methodological development of civic dialogue processes, and with support of a number of new civic dialogue projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. To follow the progress of this effort, the reader can visit www.undp.org/rblac/scenarios on the world wide web.

The workshop report captures much of the discussion at the meeting, including the statements and reflections of the participants in their own words. In addition, the full report document includes five supporting papers. Adam Kahane of Generon, a pioneer and leading practitioner of the civic scenario method, contributed “Civic Scenarios as a Tool for Making History.” This overview describes the evolution of the method from its first use in South Africa in the early 1990s, the results the method produces, and the steps of a civic scenario process. Kahane and others from Generon designed and facilitated the workshop in Antigua. A second paper, “Learning from Civic Scenario Projects: A Tool for Facilitating Social Change?” by Katrin Käufer of MIT’s Sloan School of Management, closely examines the three civic scenario projects discussed in the workshop – Mont Fleur, Destino Colombia, and Visión Guatemala. Käufer assesses the impact of the civic scenario work on the dialogue participants, on the broader circle of people with whom they engaged, and on the national societies at large. And she delves into the dynamics of the civic scenario process, evaluating the factors that contribute to individual and group change and to the emergence of commitment to pursue change on a larger scale.

The final three papers are learning histories of the Mont Fleur, Destino Colombia, and Visión Guatemala projects. A team including Katrin Käufer as research director and three learning history researchers and authors, Elena Diez Pinto, Glennifer Gillespie and Alfredo de León, prepared these case studies with the support of the UNDP, as preparatory materials for the workshop. Based on extensive interviewing, the histories tell the project stories largely in the participants’ own words. They help to place each project in its national context and provide concrete illustrations of many of the issues raised in the workshop.
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INTRODUCTION

This workshop brought together 100 participants from 17 countries—people committed to social development and involved in a wide array of civic dialogue initiatives—to reflect on common issues and challenges and on the future direction of civic dialogue. Sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and partially funded by The Rockefeller Foundation—and organized and facilitated by Generon—the workshop had an unusual dualistic character. It was at once a conference about civic scenarios and other civic dialogue methods and a first-hand experience of the civic scenario process. This represented a significant departure from the established workshop format organized around formal presentations; and it challenged workshop participants from many different countries, to adapt to a more fluid, personalized, approach to collective thought and learning. At times, the experience was uncomfortable, as civic dialogues often are. Yet the workshop also generated both energy and hope—through recognition of the power of civic dialogue, and through identification of a community of people committed to, and increasingly skilled in, using it.

With this workshop as a focal point, the UNDP has begun to build an infrastructure to support civic dialogue work and the continuing development of civic dialogue methodologies. In particular, it has created a web site where all of the workshop materials, including a list of participants are readily accessible:

www.undp.org/rblac/scenarios/documents

The UNDP also sponsored the preparation of three learning histories of civic scenario processes—Mont Fleur, Destino Colombia, and Visión Guatemala—as background material for the workshop. These histories are part of this workshop report, together with an analytical overview, “Learning from Civic Scenario Projects: A Tool for Facilitating Social Change?” prepared by Katrin Kaeufer, who led the learning history team of Elena Diez Pinto, Glennifer Gillespie and Alfredo de León. In addition this report includes an overview of the civic scenario method, “Civic Scenarios
as a Tool for Making History,” by Adam Kahane of Generon. All of this is available in electronic form on the UNDP web site, along with videos about the three projects.

The UNDP workshop was a starting point: it assembled many people, representing great breadth of experience, to discuss extremely complex issues, for just two and a half days. It began the process of synthesizing current understanding of effective practices, out of which might ultimately come what might be considered a “toolbox” for social change through dialogue. It identified numerous hurdles, the most significant being the challenge of translating the gains made through civic dialogue into concrete social and political changes.

Workshop participants raised many questions and answered some of them, but few if any definitively. As one participant stated, “the clearer I become about these processes, the more questions I have.” In that spirit, the structure of this report is defined by questions.

WHY HOLD A WORKSHOP ON CIVIC SCENARIO AND CIVIC DIALOGUE PROCESSES?

One stated objective of the UNDP was to examine past experience with civic dialogue processes. The motivating force behind this workshop was the excitement generated by three civic scenario processes, in South Africa in 1991-92, in Colombia in 1997-98, and in Guatemala, in 1998-2000. Mont Fleur, the South Africa project, represented a pioneering use of a scenario planning methodology developed in the business world as a method for helping strategic thinkers make dramatic, creative shifts in perception. In this project, a diverse group of individuals succeeded in overcoming the deep divisions and animosities developed under apartheid in the process of considering possible pathways toward a majority democratic government. The participants emerged with new friendships, new understanding of different perspectives, and a clear message about both dangers and opportunities in the transition from apartheid. The impact of this message, though informal, was broad, in part because of its timely emergence at a critical moment of national debate and openness to change. The most optimistic scenario, “Flight of the Flamingoes,” became a rallying point for people committed to making pluralistic government a reality in South Africa.

Mont Fleur participants at the workshop:

“I think the most important thing about the first night is, as individuals, we learned to forget our own importance and our own views. We forgot who we were and started to think about what the future should be or could be.”

“The stories [in the scenarios] had impact because of the people telling them.”
This South African experience inspired and guided the conveners of Destino Colombia. Given the condition of active warfare in Colombia they achieved remarkable success in including representatives of warring parties (paramilitary, guerilla, and retired military officers) along with members of diverse sectors of civil society in a civic scenario process. Like Mont Fleur, this project left individual participants profoundly changed by the experience of dialogue across deep-seated and bitter differences, and the scenarios that resulted conveyed a powerful message about the need to talk, listen, and work across boundaries. However, in the short-run Destino Colombia seemed to have only limited concrete impact on the country, particularly in the realm of public policy. Limited funds for dissemination, plus the danger and disruption of continuing warfare, limited the extent to which the scenarios could be shared with the country at large. Most important, in retrospect, the conveners felt they had gone too far in avoiding any connections to political parties or the government, which might be seen as tainting the process. This concern raised a question that became a major theme of the UNDP workshop: how can the conveners of civic dialogue processes connect the work to political institutions in a way that will produce positive outcomes?

Destino Colombia participants at the workshop:

“Pulling together the diverse participants, procedures, and concepts of Destino Colombia took one month. In South Africa, they had taken several years to do the same thing. . . . This made us see that the moment was ripe, that there was a will, even an anxiety in Colombian society to find other alternatives.”

“The most important aspect of Destino Colombia in our country has been that we were ideologically very different people, but we respected each other and we listened to each other – because, in reality, we had never listened to each other -- and we were able to reach consensus relative to the long-term future in our country.”

Visión Guatemala built on both the South African and Colombian experiences. The conveners brought government agencies into the planning process but also brought in the UNDP as an impartial, external party, to ensure the project would not be unduly influenced by any particular political agenda. Moreover, in constructing their scenarios, the Visión Guatemala participants specifically aimed to create one scenario that, like “Flight of the Flamingoes,” could become a compelling vision of the future, around which all sectors of Guatemalan society could unite. The civic scenario process began less than a year after the signing of Peace Accords between the Guatemalan government and the URNG, an alliance of four revolutionary guerilla groups. The most optimistic of the three scenarios it produced, “The Flight of the Firefly,” envisioned reconciliation after decades of violence and discrimination against the indigenous people of Guatemala and construction of a new, multicultural national identity within a framework of democracy and the rule of law. To promote this vision and the civic dialogue process, Visión Guatemala included by design an extensive dissemination phase that involved training “multipliers” to help share the story of the civic scenario process and facilitate dialogues at the regional and local level about the issues it raised.

Visión Guatemala participant at the workshop:

“This project permitted us to tie up some of the fundamental questions that had been [raised in the] peace process. It also permitted us to understand the signing of the accords, not just as a point of arrival, as it was in one way, but also as a jumping off place for constructing the future of the country.”
These experiences suggested the potential of the civic scenario process to help societies create better futures in a number of ways: by promoting dialogue across boundaries; by bringing about shifts in perception and a reframing of issues through the scenario exercise; and by combining those two steps to build a shared vision compelling enough to unite and motivate people to act. Yet a number of unanswered questions remained, as Adam Kahane, the facilitator for Mont Fleur, Destino Colombia, and Visión Guatemala and lead facilitator for the workshop, pointed out. “I am clear about the scenario technique itself, but I am less clear about how to connect that work to social and political change in countries,” said Kahane.

Another reason for the workshop was to connect civic scenario work to the broad stream of civic dialogue initiatives using other approaches, to help further the development of the civic scenario process and of civic dialogue processes in general. Chile, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, and Bulgaria were all represented at the workshop and all had such initiatives recent or ongoing. Also represented were the War-Torn Societies Project, which has promoted dialogue in Mozambique, Eritrea, Somalia, and Guatemala, and the University of Peace (UPEACE), based in Costa Rica, which has also worked to promote dialogue and reconciliation, for example, in Colombia. As Víctor Valle of UPEACE noted, “Dialogue initiatives are going on all over Latin America.”

The concept of the UNDP workshop thus emerged as an occasion to share the civic scenario stories and methodology with people engaged in the work of promoting civic dialogue. Equally, for the UNDP, it was an opportunity to establish a global network around civic dialogue and an occasion to support initiation of future dialogue processes. As Elena Martínez, Director of UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, noted in her welcoming remarks, these goals meshed with the strategic objectives of the UNDP to support the consolidation of democratic governments and to help position countries in Latin America and elsewhere respond effectively to the pressures of globalization. From this convergence of purposes came the three specific objectives of the workshop:

1. To share experiences and learnings from multi-stakeholder civic dialogue processes, including but not limited to civic scenario processes
2. From these experiences and learnings, to synthesize best practices for multi-stakeholder civic dialogue work
3. In this way, to help along new national or regional civic dialogue projects and create a learning and support network among leaders of these projects
WHAT IS THIS WORK ABOUT?

At the beginning of the first day, workshop participants formed country teams to discuss and share the most important challenges their nations face. Seventeen countries reported: Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador, Chile, Panama, Bahamas, Ecuador, Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia, South Africa, Bulgaria, India, Pakistan, Guyana, Colombia, Guatemala. Betty Alexander, the graphic recorder of the meeting, captured the content of what people said but also evoked through drawings many of the feelings expressed. Betty’s notes, below, captured the essence of the country presentations.

[INSERT THREE PAGES OF GRAPHIC RECORDINGS “CHALLENGES/RETOS” HERE]

While each national story was in many ways unique, the stories collectively conveyed an overwhelming sense of broadly shared social and political problems. Many of these are issues with dimensions that extend beyond national boundaries, such as stagnant economies, poverty and inequality getting worse with globalization, and the AIDS epidemic. Others are social ills that seem to be related to the breakdown of traditional society and social values: social and cultural fragmentation; weakened families; corruption; demoralization; and emigration of the educated class. In many countries, historic patterns of class and ethnic divisions and racial discrimination contribute to a lack of trust, an absence of shared vision, and uncertain national identity. Three countries, Colombia, India, and Pakistan, have ongoing armed conflict; others struggle with the legacy of authoritarian regimes, military rule, and violence, even genocide. Faced with democratic institutions undermined by corruption and political leaders not rising to the challenges these problems pose, many countries seemed to be threatened with widespread public disillusionment with democracy.

The common characteristic of these problems is that their solution requires engagement across the sectors and levels of society, because many people must change in order to break the deep-seated, complex patterns of behavior that sustain the current reality. A useful framework for thinking about the work involved in addressing such challenges is the problem typology introduced by workshop facilitator James Butcher. Type 1 problems are those in which both the cause and remedy are known. The solution is therefore straightforward, an expert can provide it. In the case of Type 2 problems, the problem is clear but the solution is less so – the stakeholders who own the problem need to participate in solving it. Finally, in Type 3 both the problem and the solution are unclear. Then, experts can play a supporting role, but the stakeholders must take the lead in defining and solving their own problem.

Many national issues have been addressed as if they were Type 1, when in fact they are Type 2 or 3. In those cases, what is really required is not expert advice but multi-stakeholder engagement. An underlying assumption in the workshop was that any solution must be grounded in dialogue across boundaries, in part to provide a viable alternative to authoritarianism and the solution of conflict through violence. In the

Workshop participants:

“One thing that is clearer to me today than before is that the application of civic scenarios, the methodology, involves a very high degree of personal involvement and commitment. That is, its impact has very little to do with what other people should do and everything to do with what I personally need to do differently in the future – which is a very uncomfortable thought.”

“Since I have little children, I would love to see in the educational system they belong to that they should learn from a very early age to come to agreements with this type of method.”

“Our problem is not so much dialogue but conflict. And when it’s a question of armed conflict, everybody goes to this dialogue armed with their own truth. As long as the dialogue is a theoretical exercise, nothing happens.”

“Unfortunately, we still haven't invented a sort of "pill" for transformation of the culture of the country which you could buy at the pharmacies. [This work] is very
words of workshop participant Rubén Zamora, “Participatory dialogue is the key to resolving problems. I always remember what I was told by the former Minister of Malaysia: ‘A bad policy with consensus is better than an imposed policy, always. Never forget this.’"

For some workshop participants the challenge is to initiate conversations among warring parties, simply to create the conditions in which social issues can be addressed. For others, it is to build on past or ongoing civic dialogue processes, expanding, refocusing, re-starting. In still other cases, the work is to provide tools for political parties and governments to develop effective policies, and the challenge is to move from dialogue to action. The task at hand for UNDP participants is to support those efforts: for the resident representatives individually, by providing technical, logistical, and financial support to new civic dialogue projects; and collectively, by supporting continued methodological discussion.
WHAT ARE THE PROCESS OPTIONS?

Above all, this workshop made it clear that there is great depth of experience with civic dialogue and a wide array of approaches. The workshop itself was just a first step toward creating the kind of solid “methodological platform” envisioned by the UNDP. Yet, some preliminary generalizations are possible.

Most important, the process options are not competitive with one another – they are complementary. One strong message from the workshop was that a single project or process cannot be expected to carry the whole weight of the changes that are needed. Some are stronger on deep analysis of complex problems, others are better designed for engaging the public at large; some are best suited to address macro issues, others to focus on micro. Civic dialogue initiatives need to employ the processes or process elements that will address the specific needs of the situation at hand, to make adjustments when those needs change.

At the same time, all of these processes must deal with a common set of challenges, which emerged repeatedly as central themes in the workshop discussions. In particular, there was the overarching question of how to ensure that a dialogue process will not just be a “feel-good” exercise for participants but will produce concrete results. This concern took various forms: how to connect with political actors; how to connect to the public at large; how to select a credibly representative group of participants; how to engage them fully as individuals in the dialogue process; how to ensure that they follow through on their commitments. And, underlying this issue was the deeper question of what is most important to communicate and share from the civic dialogue exercise – the product, or the process – or are both essential?

The variety of civic dialogue experiences represented in the workshop suggests there can be various answers to these questions, each appropriate to a specific context. As suggested by Alfredo de León, panel moderator of the first day’s discussion of different civic dialogue experiences, the method cannot provide a recipe for a successful dialogue process, it is merely a tool. Assembling a toolbox requires understanding past experiences with civic dialogue in context, so that the lessons they hold can be intelligently adapted and applied to new situations. The UNDP workshop made a start on this process.

The Civic Scenario Process

The workshop conveyed information about the civic scenario process in various ways: through the learning histories of the Mont Fleur, Destino Colombia, and Visión Guatemala projects; through the presence of participants from those three projects at the workshop, including on the first day of the meeting a panel presentation of their experiences and observations; and through a presentation on the method by Adam Kahane, the lead facilitator in those and other civic scenario projects. In addition, Kahane and a team from Generon designed and facilitated the workshop with the intention of providing direct experience of the civic scenario method. Reviewing the course of the meeting may thus capture some of the tools provided by this approach.
For example, the intellectual content of the meeting built gradually through layers of small group and large group conversation, in plenary sessions. At the beginning and end of the workshop, participants gathered in country groups, first to develop and present an overview of most pressing national issues, and then to create and share plans going forward. In between, small discussion groups self-selected around topics. In the first session, ten tables convened around individuals sharing their experiences with civic dialogue projects, each table producing three questions at the end of the discussion; then the facilitation team grouped the questions into “meta-questions” and new groups convened to discuss and respond to those. Finally, there was an “open space” session, in which some individuals posed issues or questions for discussion topics and others gathered around to join in those topics that interested them. After each session of small group work, the workshop reassembled as a whole to share reflections and learning. In a civic scenario process, these small group/large group discussions are focused on alternative stories of the future. The scenarios emerge progressively from several meetings held over a period of months, as the participants select and refine three or four of the most plausible and compelling ones.

The workshop also demonstrated some of the ways in which the civic scenario approach attempts to engage people on a personal, emotional level as well as an intellectual level. For example, one of the first collective tasks in a civic scenario project is to establish ground rules for discussion, which facilitate such engagement. For this workshop, Generon provided some typical ground rules: be present and punctual; listen both to what other people are saying and to your reaction to what’s being said; speak for yourself -- be concise and concrete; use “I” to convey what you’re thinking and feeling (a practice that can be difficult for people in some cultures). The discipline of check in and check out, which involves inviting individual thoughts and reactions at the beginning and end of each day, helped to solidify connections on a personal level as well as advance the discussion of substantive issues. The work of the graphic recorder created a record that both captured and reinforced the ideas and feelings shared that the group. A significant departure from the usual form of an methodological workshop, these dialogue techniques created some discomfort for participants but provided --- by design --- first-hand knowledge of civic scenario work.

On the first evening a session of one-to-one sharing of experiences with dialogue, then sharing of these experiences through storytelling in the plenary group, connected individuals on a personal level and helped to forge a group identity. As the learning histories indicate, some of the most powerful breakthroughs in civic scenario processes have come from such evening storytelling sessions. An extended lunch break on the second day provided space for lengthier one-to-one conversations. That evening, the storytelling resumed, as roughly one third of the workshop group attended an impromptu session in which Visión Guatemala participant and presidential candidate Alvaro Colom talked about Mayan beliefs and culture and told his personal story of being called to service as a Mayan priest. Betty Alexander’s graphic note on the first evening’s storytelling is below.

Elena Martínez:
“I like the civic scenario approach because it is not only intellectual but also emotional. People can express fears and frustrations, and this is important in countries with a legacy of armed conflict.”

Adam Kahane:
“I must say, in my experience as a facilitator, this first thing in the morning check-in is often the sweetest experience in the group. I find sometimes the main reason for having these workshops over more than one day is so that you have a chance to sleep on it. And sometimes the thing you wake up with in the morning is really interesting.”

[INSERT GRAPHIC RECORDING OF STORYTELLING SESSION HERE]
In the panel session, participants in the South African, Colombian, and Guatemalan civic scenario projects shared some of their experiences and reflections on this approach. Members of the Mont Fleur group, for example, reflected that there was a good deal of serendipity involved in the project conveners’ selection of participants, a number of whom went on to become very influential in Nelson Mandela’s government and as civic and business leaders in post-apartheid South Africa. They commented on the effectiveness of some of the civic scenario tools, such as a small-group exercise on the first evening, in which each group had to brainstorm ten stories of possible futures in South Africa. This forward-focused exercise helped them set aside the divisions they had brought into the sessions. One panelist noted the important role a neutral facilitator played in ensuring that participants could interact “on a level playing field, with equal participation and equal status.” Another noted they had tried and abandoned the idea of calling on academic researchers for input to the scenarios – in the end, it was the experience each participant brought to the table that was most valuable. The bird images they used to label their scenarios had power because they were “rooted in our idiom, in our culture, in our nature.” The messages the scenarios conveyed had legitimacy because of the diversity of the group that was the messenger.

When Mont Fleur convened, South Africa was in the grip of “an incurable cancer, and it looked as though there was no solution.” This group felt strongly that its work had made a positive contribution to the “political miracle” of South Africa’s successful transition away from that apparent impasse to pluralistic democracy. Yet, in retrospect, they also reflected that there had been some weaknesses in the process, for example, some important voices had not been at the table. (See the Mont Fleur learning history, below, for a fuller discussion of process issues.) Moreover, they had not anticipated problems that now loom large: the economic impact of overly conservative government policies; the problem of crime; and, in particular, the threat of AIDS. As the workshop progressed, there was serious consideration of undertaking Mont Fleur II.

The presentation of the Destino Colombia panelists spoke directly to some of the most problematic issues of context and connection to existing institutions. Confronting a situation of active warfare, to which the government was a party, the conveners of this civic scenario process took great pains to make it “antiseptic” in political terms. They included people who had influence in the government but did not directly represent it. And in the scenario process, they took care to avoid connection to any particular political agenda. The conveners also tried to avoid creating the perception that the dialogue group was meant to be a representative body, thinking this would only spark animosity, since it was not possible to have every sector of society represented. To do this, they chose participants who could “wear many hats,” so that every sector of Colombian society could see itself represented by someone in the group.

The outcome of this effort was mixed. On the one hand, the feeling in the meetings that the process did not require making a commitment beyond participating in three meetings was highly conducive to “free thought” and creativity. The scenarios that resulted could be seen, three years after their creation, to have “a very impressive validity.” Yet their impact was limited, both in the government and in civil society. Noted one panelist, “We still have to learn in this conflict-ridden society how we can benefit from this type of process and..."
In the portion of the panel devoted to Visión Guatemala, one participant and convener emphasized another set of selection criteria suitable to an environment of deep distrust and animosity: “We sat down to think about the invitation for the rest of the group [and] established a profile. The people who should be invited should [have] open minds [and] leadership charisma, especially influential leadership, representative leadership. And [we] searched for a group which was very pluralistic.”

Perhaps the greatest challenge in Guatemala was to find a way to overcome the legacy of racism and genocide against the indigenous majority. In the context of that terrible legacy, one panelist noted, it was clear “that the road to consensus is a long road, and probably it’s not necessarily consensus that we need. Perhaps transparency would be more desirable.” Another provocative question that arose in this panel was, in the context of globalization, what power does “dialogue, persuasion, and hope” have to make a difference in a small country such as Guatemala?” These thoughts echoed concerns expressed by others at the workshop about the danger that civic dialogue processes might raise false hopes about the possibility for change.

Finally, one panelist raised the important issue of how to share Visión Guatemala more broadly in the society – to make it more than just the “empathy and friendship” achieved by those who participated directly. The next step, and a frustrating one, he noted, was to promote not the vision, The Flight of the Firefly, but a process by which that vision will be implemented. “In the end, that is the challenge we have now: how to go from thought to action.” This was another concern widely shared in the workshop.

Other Civic Dialogue Processes

A thorough, systematic comparison of civic dialogue processes was beyond the scope of this workshop, though the workshop helped to identify the need for it. At the same time, the three-day program provided various formats for sharing the broad range of experience with dialogue methods and projects represented in the meeting. In the panel discussion of the first afternoon, Rubén Zamora from the War-Torn Societies Project, Raul Leis from the Panama consensus-building projects, Bambito, Coronado, and Panama 2020, and Víctor Valle from UPEACE all provided a brief overview of their work as well as commentary on the civic scenario presentations. On Day 2, small groups broke out to discuss an array of projects -- those three, the civic scenario processes, and others in Bulgaria, Paraguay, and Bolivia. Those discussions fed subsequent work on process issues. The following presentation aims only to initiate the work of comparison, drawing on statements made in plenary sessions and some interviews.

Víctor Valle: The University of Peace and the El Salvador Peace Process

Víctor Valle attended the workshop as a representative of UPEACE, affiliated with the UN and based in Costa Rica. However, in the panel discussion, he shared some of his experience in popular movements in El Salvador and as a founding member of the Salvadoran Conciliation for Peace Commission in the early 1990s. The Salvadoran factions met in Geneva in 1991 and agreed to develop political agreements based on three key elements: respect for human rights;
democratization of government and society; and reconciliation of “the Salvadoran family.” Valle pointed out that these discussions took place within the context of having created the Peace Commission, the purpose of which was to develop principles on which a new government could be created as well as methods for monitoring compliance to agreements. These were very concrete goals derived from the immediate experience of civil war. At the same time, Valle made clear that the dialogue among enemies engendered – and required – personal transformation, a central and explicit aspect of the civic scenario methodology.

These reflections framed Valle’s comments on the panel presentations. He noted with interest and “great admiration” the emphasis among Mont Fleur participants on the need to “renounce or give up the importance of self.” Said Valle, “This is the time when you are willing to have reciprocal concessions, when you are willing to listen to the other. When you are willing to deploy internal forces which, because of our human conditions, make it possible to move mountains.” He also picked up on the emphasis the Destino Colombia panelists placed on the value of open-ended dialogue, with no commitments up front. This was essential in the Salvadoran peace process, for example for representatives of the right to whom the very word “dialogue” was synonymous with treachery. Finally, Valle agreed with the conclusion from Visión Guatemala that “the road to consensus is a long one,” but that dialogue is possible when people are willing “to talk, meditate, consult oneself, and especially speak one’s thoughts.”

Valle described his current work as part of the dialogue initiatives “going on all over Latin America.” At UPEACE they have brought in 100 Colombians to talk about issues underlying the war. They use a less facilitative approach than the civic scenario method, simply putting people around tables to discuss five, very concrete questions. The participants talk and try to reach some agreement, and the sessions are captured by a university recorder. In another initiative, UPEACE has created “peace zones” on the borders between Ecuador and Peru.

Rubén Zamora: The War-Torn Societies Project

Rubén Zamora was also a leader of popular movements in El Salvador and a participant in the Geneva dialogues described by Valle. His role in the panel, however, was as the director of the War-Torn Societies Project WSP. WSP uses the methodology of Participatory Action Research, associated in particular with the Brazilian social scientist Paolo Freire and widely used in developing countries as a tool for social change. WSP represents a new use of the method, however, in that it focuses on the large-scale social issues underlying wars, whereas Freire and others have used it primarily in community settings to address localized issues. Still, the core elements of the method remain the same: the use of dialogue to address social problems; and the role social scientists play in “reconceptualizing” the issues that arise from the dialogue and raising them “to a higher level.”

Zamora described the steps involved in launching a WSP project. First, scope out conditions in the country for the possibility of dialogue among the parties and for obtaining a balance between both government and civil society in the process. Choose a local project director and subdirector with both the stature and the social science skills to carry out the process. For example, the project director of the WSP project in Guatemala was Edelberto Torres Rivas, a sociologist with an international reputation who had been living outside Guatemala for most of the war, so came in with an aura of impartiality. The director and subdirector then create a “country note.” This is a “diagnosis” of the causes of conflict, built up from both their social science skills and their personal insights. “[In Geneva] many of us who had been on one side of the war had the opportunity to sit around with our former adversaries, many of whom would probably have laughed to hear that we had been downed by bullets in El Salvador. But at that time we were able to deploy personal resources that had to do with courage and love and hope and [we were] able to accept ourselves as we were and able to discover that we had certain commonalities.”

On the question of elitism of the process: “Conflicts are sustained by elites—political, military, business. So, you need to start conflict management with the elites. Picking representative people to be involved in the dialogues is critical.”

Rubén Zamora:

“In societies like ours that have been characterized by authoritarian, vertical, non-participatory ways of making decisions and implementing decisions, which has led to a state of war, internal civil war, these sorts of exercises become even more necessary because they are not just an exercise, they are the bricks for building up a new political culture. [This work is based on the assumption that] participatory or dialogue consensus building are not natural things. They are something that has to be learned and developed as part of the civic culture of society.”

Toolbox notes:
through separate discussions with key institutions in the society, for example, political parties, NGOs, universities, unions, and women’s organizations. They identify both the problems and potential solutions, with the social scientists serving as facilitators. The country note in effect “extracts” consensus from these individual discussions and presents it as a starting point for the dialogue. If the institutions then agree to engage in the process, they send representatives to the dialogue.

Once the group is assembled, people participate as individuals, not as representatives of their institutions. The method does not emphasize personal change, but it occurs in the dialogue process. The group as a whole sets the agenda then splits up into sub-groups that focus on specific issues, conceived as “entry points” for dealing with national problems. A social scientist supports each group and is responsible for writing the group’s report. Zamora noted, “This is a discussion between actors and people who have scientific knowledge. Very difficult to attain.” The outputs of the groups are policy-oriented proposals, for example, a policy paper or a suggestion for legislation. The assumption is that these will be broadly acceptable to the society because of the way they have been developed.

WSP offers a method that involves the government and civil society together, but there are difficult issues to be resolved with this approach. Zamora suggested that the main problem is that a government minister in a dialogue process doesn’t like to be on equal terms with other organizations -- with the trade union, with the universities, with the political parties. So the method forces the government to be in a position that it doesn’t like and, as a result, its participation is sometimes quite limited. For example, it may only participate in general meetings. But it provides a sort of validation of the process whenever it does choose to participate. Notes Zamora, “These projects are profoundly political, but they cannot risk being partisan. How do you play nonpartisan politics? This is the science of participatory action research.”

**Raul Leis: The Panama Dialogue Processes**

Raul Leis, a sociologist, president of CEASPA (Centre for Studies and Social Action of Panama), and popular writer, described his experience with dialogue processes in Panama. In Panama, the Catholic Church proposed a national dialogue as part of an ethical accord among political parties in 1994. This followed a difficult period of transition to democracy after the ouster of Noriega and U.S. invasion in 1989.

The civic dialogue experience in Panama actually involved three successive projects. Bambito, in 1994, was the first. This was a learning experience, both for the organizers and for the UNDP, which provided technical, logistical, and financial support. Bambito was hampered by the impact of elections and by questions about whether it included the right participants – the conveners had invited the leaders of the various civic groups, rather than inviting the groups themselves decide who to send. Finally, Bambito was organized around a less-than-compelling topic, the general question of national development.

The second effort at civic dialogue focused instead on the subject of the canal – a topic of vital interest to all Panamanians. Coronado “2000 Panama Encounters” was a year-long process including four “encounters” with workshops in between. The conveners in this instance used a “reference group methodology” for selection – as in WSP, the groups were selected and invited to choose whom to send. Participants were widely representative: political parties, social organizations, professional associations, religious institutions, and cultural groups.

Like the civic scenario method, participatory action research, through the role of social scientists, has the capacity to take the analytical piece of the dialogue process to a higher level.
civil society, churches, indigenous people, journalists. The dialogue was facilitated by respected outsiders, for example, Dr. Belisario Betancur, ex-President of Colombia, not professional facilitators. The Coronado project resulted in two major decisions, regarding Panamanian sovereignty over the canal and what to do with territory that the U.S. was returning to Panama. Those decisions, made through the civic dialogue process, became policy when the legislative assembly approved two projects, effectively uniting the two parts of Panama that had been so badly divided for so many years.

The third project, National Vision 2020, built on the success at Coronado. This was a "civil society assembly" that undertook to develop a vision for where Panama could be in 20 years. This process led in the 1999 elections to the signing by politicians of five "pacts" with civil society: on decentralization, women, youth, the environment, and participatory government. The process conveners are now working on a "visionometer" to hold the government accountable for respecting the commitments made in these pacts. And they are in a new phase of the dialogue process, in which the municipalities are developing their own versions of Vision 2020.

Jorge Talavera: Civic Dialogue on a Mass Scale in Paraguay

The civic dialogue experience in Paraguay provides an example of a truly bottom-up process: in a country of five million people, it engaged nearly 70,000 participants and 2,000 facilitators. This project was conducted by the Paraguayan Episcopal Conference. Roughly 8,500 groups of eight people each, in 4-hour meetings, worked through pre-packaged materials, published in both Spanish and Guaraní, the indigenous language. Each individual used a list of 26 needs and 22 values to define both current reality and a vision of the future for their communities. There were separate materials designed specifically for groups of professionals, and others designed for groups of young people.

When all the results were compiled, the needs identified most often were health care and education; the values were honesty and faith in God. In a subsequent phase of the project, leaders at the district level – for example, public authorities and teachers – met to develop a common vision for the district. Then a provincial assembly pulled those local visions together into a vision for the province as a whole. For example, in one province, the vision is to be “a tourist district with handicrafts, nationally and internationally known for the quality, originality, and diversity of its products.”

The bishops and provincial governors have taken note of these visions. The step that remains is to bring the political and economic elite of Paraguay into the process. The Paraguayan contingent at the UNDP workshop came looking for methods to help them accomplish that.

Jorge Talavera:

“I am very much afraid that there is an over-eagerness to use scenario building for any type of problem-solving. If there is no crisis of the vision of the future, I do believe that we can make out of scenario building an overused exercise. Using this method indiscriminately is going to be slightly...”

Toolbox note:
The civic dialogue process in Panama has successfully linked to political elites, with some significant concrete results. To develop civic dialogue methods, it will be important to understand the steps and context that made this possible.

Ivan Krastev: A Scenario-building Exercise in Bulgaria

Ivan Krastev brought to the workshop his experience with a scenario-building exercise sponsored by the World Bank and UNDP and conducted by a think-tank, The Center for Liberal Strategies, of which he is Chairman of the Board and Program Director. In this exercise, political scientists, economists, and anthropologists addressed three key issues destabilizing Bulgaria: the crisis in the [the civic dialogue] to a follow-up step with more political bearing -- "political" not in the sense of political parties, but in the wider sense of the word. I think that in [the civic scenario] methodology, if there is not a very clearly defined strategy which actually goes beyond the communication strategy, then you run the risk of being very vague.”

Toolbox note:
The Paraguayan experience provides a model for “massification” of the vision-building exercise through the agency of the church. For change on a national scale, however, there is a need to combine this approach with one that can draw in elites.

Ivan Krastev:

“I am very much afraid that there is an over-eagerness to use scenario building for any type of problem-solving. If there is no crisis of the vision of the future, I do believe that we can make out of scenario building an overused exercise. Using this method indiscriminately is going to be slightly..."
Balkans; the collapse of the state of Albania; and the 1996-97 hyper-inflation crisis in Bulgaria. This is an example of using scenarios developed outside the political (or civil) sphere to influence policy makers. The project achieved some notable success: a scenario on the impact of refugees from Kosovo got the government thinking ahead on how to deal with it. Krastev suggested that, in situations where political institutions are functioning and elections are competitive, there is less need for civil society dialogues. He was a voice for separating scenario-building from dialogue, and he sounded a note of caution about the danger of undermining the scenario-building methodology by overuse.

Herbert Muller: National Dialogue processes in Bolivia

Herbert Muller, a consultant and a former Minister of Finance, former Minister Energy and Hydrocarbons, and former President of the Central Bank of Bolivia described three dialogue processes in which he was an active participant. The first process, called Dialogue for Democracy, in 1985, was a dialogue within and among political parties. It paved the way for the return of democracy. The second was National Dialogue I, an event convened when the current government took office in 1997. This process combined the political parties and civil society, represented corporately. It produced a national plan for development. In 2000, Bolivia launched a third process, National Dialogue II. It has engaged all 314 municipalities in the tasks of identifying priorities for the eradication of poverty, allocating resources derived from external debt forgiveness, and establishing social control mechanisms for the monitoring the utilization and impact of those resources.

Through these dialogue processes, Bolivia collectively agreed to implement democratic processes and a market economy model. It produced one of the more stable democracies in Latin America. And it continues to work collectively on the problem of alleviating poverty.

Clarisa Hardy: Dialogue in Chile

Workshop participant Clarisa Hardy is Executive Director of Fundación Chile 21, a policy think tank founded by Ricardo Lagos, now president of Chile. She described an ongoing dialogue process in which, for the first time in ten years of democratic government, human rights lawyers, the military, and the government are all sitting together and talking. Hardy suggested this will be an experience worth capturing, to add to the growing body of knowledge about civic dialogue.

Dialogue in Peru

Two big questions that arose in the workshop were how to involve political actors in civic dialogue processes, and what should be the role of the press. The Peruvian contingent brought those two issues together in its members. They included Luz Salgado, at the time First Vice President of the Congress of Peru and member of the official party, led by Alberto Fujimori; Jorge Del Castillo, Congressman and leader of the opposition party, APRA; Lourdes Flores Nano,
Former Congresswomen and conservative party candidate for the presidency in Peru’s April 2001 elections; Zenaida Solís, Director of the national radio network, CPN; and Juan Paredes, political analyst for El Comercio, the major national newspaper in Peru.

The backdrop for their attendance was the political crisis surrounding Fujimori’s government, which came to a head during the workshop. That crisis had provided the impetus for a dialogue process sponsored by the Organization for American States that aimed to create consensus around democratic reforms between the opposition party and representatives of civil society. But the participants reported that the dialogue group was struggling to establish its credibility as a representative body – a problem that spoke to the concerns of many workshop participants over how to pick the right people to sit at the dialogue table.

**Violeta Granera: Dialogue in Nicaragua**

Violeta Granera, Executive Director of FUNDEMOS, described her country as one “where we’ve always dialogued.” For example, Nicaragua has used dialogue projects for building missions and agendas in municipalities. Granera shared the story of one problematic project — a major civic dialogue initiative in 1997 that “wasn’t very inclusive” and was constrained by “a very short-term perspective.” This was a project coordinated by a civil society organization but overly controlled by the government. As a result, though it produced some significant commitments, the implementation of these commitments was lacking.

Currently, Nicaragua is developing a series of dialogues at the local and sectoral level that have the potential to form the basis for constructing “a real national dialogue” focused in particular on the pressing issue of poverty.

**WHAT ARE THE PROCESS ISSUES?**

Many process issues surfaced in informal discussions and check-in and check-out reflections. However, a formal consideration of process issues flowed from the sharing of participants’ varied process and project experiences – in the panel discussion on the first afternoon of the workshop, and in a small-group exercise the next morning. In that exercise, discussion tables convened around many of the individuals named in the section above, who volunteered to tell their stories. Each table produced a list of three questions emerging from its discussion of a particular case. Then the facilitation team grouped those questions into larger, “meta-questions,” and the workshop participants again self-organized in small discussion groups around those larger process issues. The groups presented their thoughts and conclusions in a plenary session at the end of the second day. The next morning, three of the Generon facilitators – Adam Kahane, Reoia Phelps, and James Butcher – briefly shared their own reflections on the process issues raised.

In short, the largest portion of the three-day workshop was devoted to an in-depth examination and multi-layered discussion of issues confronting people engaged in civic dialogue work. By design, this process provided a model of how scenarios emerge in a civic scenario process. But – potentially – it also modeled an approach to methodological development in this field, one that embodies the collaborative spirit of civic dialogue work and provides an alternative to the more traditional academic approach, which too often tends to be, in the language of the workshop, “a dialogue of the deaf.”

Toolbox note:
Building a useful toolbox will require better understanding of failures as well as successes in past civic dialogue efforts.

Some questions raised and not formally addressed during the workshop:

“How do you convene all sectors of society if you have a biased view of current reality?”

“Who represents whom?”

“One of the panel participants noted that ‘the project permitted us to go from polarization of white and black to the recognition of some of the possibilities of gray tones.’ How can you deal in gray tones without upsetting the value scales in a country?”

“How do you create empathy?”
workshop, “a dialogue of the deaf.”

The discussion of meta-questions in plenary session provided a forum for some lively debate. One of the major tensions in the group that surfaced in this discussion was around the connection between civic dialogue work and political institutions -- between participants actively engaged in political processes and others who felt the need for civil society to fill a vacuum of leadership created by ineffective politicians and political parties. Another debate centered on the role of the press. These and other issues were debated and not resolved. Indeed, the workshop gave a sense that they may never be resolved definitively — local contexts vary too much to allow that. In the end, as Adam Kahane suggested, “The questions are more important than the answers.”

At the same time, the group work on process issues generated a lot of simply practical information and insight on some of the challenges to be faced in civic dialogue undertakings. The richness of the discussion brought to light the depth of accumulated experience that there is to draw on in the field of civic dialogue. It also made clear, however, that the more the work has progressed, the more challenges it has encountered. The development of civic dialogue methods will continue to move forward by efforts such as this workshop to define collectively both the challenges in the work and the answers to those challenges.

“Can we implement a civic scenario process before getting to the point of war?”

“Is there a way to know if the scenario constructed is accurate? The right one?”

“How do power imbalances in the dialogue group affect the scenarios?”

“How can we prevent government from feeling displaced or minimized by the civic scenario process?”

“What role has historical analysis played in the scenario process?”
META-QUESTIONS

Altogether, the groups took up nine “meta-questions.” Six of these addressed practical process issues, collectively producing at least a preliminary version of a step-by-step manual for civic dialogue planners. The remaining three dealt with more theoretical, overarching issues ---harder to get a handle on, but also of pressing importance. The presentation that follows begins with the practical issues. They are presented as a guide, but with a caveat recognizing that each situation will be unique in key respects that must be taken into account. To quote one Visión Guatemala participant, who was asked what his advice would be to others wanting to undertake a civic scenario process: “Listen to all the experiences, listen with great attention, then forget everything you’ve heard.”

Who should be involved initially?

There are really three key groups that emerge sequentially in a civic dialogue process: the group of people who first get the idea of a dialogue process; then the conveners; and finally the participants. The convening group, will arise from dialogue among people who desire a better future. They should be people of credibility and prestige. They should be able to agree on what they want to do and have clear objectives in order to involve more people. The larger civic dialogue group should represent socially recognized groups and be leaders with credibility in their groups. But they must also be prepared to act as individuals: “They are not going to be spokespeople for others, but they will convey the expectations or the ideas of the sector to which they belong.” The small group that worked on this question also suggested a requirement for what it called “mystique:” total devotion to the work.

How do we start a project?

The team from Bahamas addressed this question, working with facilitator James Butcher. They outlined the steps listed below. Their presentation introduced a central theme in the process discussion --- the most important task the initiators and conveners of a civic dialogue process face is the definition of purpose.

1. Agree on desired outcomes.
2. Create a compelling case for change.
3. Select a process champion and a project coordinator.
4. Identify 4 to 6 trustees.
5. Involve experts in the project design, selection of methodologies.
6. Develop a project proposal and work plan, including budget
7. Use trustees to help sell the proposal to sponsors.
8. Identify internal and external stakeholders. This is a very difficult process in most cases, as there are usually many stakeholders and many needs to be met.
9. Design project.

How do we coordinate a project?

There is no recipe for this task, so the coordination team must have a clear sense of strategic priorities, and a clear sense of the whole, but also the capacity to allow the plan to change and adapt. Getting such a team in place is the first step. Funding is critical, but it follows establishing the structure. Because there

Note: the questions underlying this issue were: Who convenes the dialogue? How do you ensure representativeness without exclusivity? How do you give credibility to the process?

Adam’s comment: “It is important to include people who can effect change, people who can help us understand the issues, and people who, if excluded, would block the process.”

Workshop participant comment: “I think a fundamental aspect of starting this type of exercise is that it should result from a need which is felt by society. The UNDP, Generon, anybody can suggest and they can induce, to a certain point, what should happen and what could happen in an exercise of scenarios. But if there is no genuine need which is really felt by society, this is not going to take place.”
is always the problem of funding the successive phases of a project, however, the coordination team must have the management capability to handle the funding challenge throughout the life of the project.

The group working on this question put forward the following issues/steps for consideration:

1. Determine the scope of the project and its objectives: is it national, regional, sectoral? What is the time frame? The budget? The funding source?
2. Select an executive and create an executive group capable of all necessary functions: organization; coordination; logistics; communication; dissemination.
3. Create a monitoring group to assess the impact of the project.

How do we have effective group dialogue?

The discussion group offered the following points:

1. Have a neutral facilitator who does not take a position on the issues helps to ensure a neutral process and overcome initial distrust among the dialogue participants.
2. Agreed on ground rules for the dialogue.
3. Ensure that all stakeholders are represented and have equal weight.
4. Create a positive atmosphere: setting is important.
5. Keep the dialogue confidential until the participants agree to release the results. “People should not be rushing off to the press to give their own version of what happened.”
6. Have a shared goal for the dialogue and search for common ground.
7. If reaching a decision is imperative, agree in advance how to proceed in case of a deadlock, for example, by arbitration.

Point #5 sparked an extended conversation on the proper role of the press in civic dialogue processes out of which some clear points emerged:

- Premature or conflicting press accounts of the proceedings can be harmful to the process, create discomfort for participants, and make reaching consensus more difficult.
- But journalists have key roles to play, both as dialogue participants and as disseminators of the process and its results. In Panama 2020 and Vision Guatemala journalists played both roles and they adhered to agreements to withhold reports until the process was complete.

Adam Kahane, on his first experience facilitating civic dialogue: “When I first came to South Africa [for the Mont Fleur project], Howard Gabriels said to me, ‘Adam, when we first met you, we couldn’t believe how ignorant you were. We were sure that you were trying to manipulate us. But when we realized that you really didn’t know anything, we decided to trust you.’”

Workshop participants:

“‘There is nothing secret that one does on the scenario. You’re not negotiating, you’re not baking a secret cake. You’re baking a cake for your society.’

“I think what we should try to avoid giving general rules on the use of the media. The challenge in each case is to see what can be done and how far you can go.”

“I am a journalist, so I will start by saying that I thank you for thinking that journalists are part of civil society. We do not hinder dialogue, and we are part of the problem if we are not part of the solution.”

How do we enlarge the process?

To address this issue, Elena Diez Pinto and Manuel José Carvajal described their efforts to do this for Visión Guatemala and Destino Colombia, respectively. They described the enlargement processes in Guatemala and Colombia as being like the expanding circles created by throwing a stone into the water. They also noted that the approach to dissemination following the Mont Fleur project in South Africa seemed to emphasize sharing the content of the scenarios, as opposed to this model, focused more on sharing the process. They said that this affirmed for them that the major goal of the civic scenario process in Guatemala and Colombia had been to strengthen the “dialogue culture” in those countries.
These are the steps they outlined:

1. The participants made presentations to key groups—political parties, government officials, businesspeople, university groups, indigenous groups—300 presentations in Colombia, 100 in Guatemala.

2. Next came “reflection and strategic thinking workshops” with various organizations as well as at the municipal level for group discussion of the scenarios within sectors; 50 of these in Guatemala.

3. They developed a methodological guide to the civic scenario process to support another round of workshops so that leaders at the local level can replicate the process on their own, recognizing that the process is critical—people don’t just want to talk about scenarios that others have created; they want to create their own scenarios. Some of these workshops have taken place in Guatemala; the continuing war in Colombia has limited what can be done there.

4. In Guatemala, the original civic scenario group has continued to meet every 4-5 months, and this has kept them engaged in the process of dissemination and further discussion of key political issues facing the country. The group in Colombia did not have the funding to do this.

In the discussion of this issue, workshop participants suggested that there is an intrinsic weakness in the elitism of these processes: they are composed of elites, but the need arises in the first place because the elites are not doing what they should be doing for society. The experience is powerful for the elite group that participates, but it loses the force of emotion and meaning when it is packaged for presentation to the public. We should consider as an alternative the type of project of the Episcopal Conference in Paraguay, which began at the popular level.

The whole idea of sustainability is questionable, said one participant, because civil society has only a limited ability to influence government actions. In El Salvador, a year-and-a-half process in the Chapultepec, involving business, labor unions, and government, produced agreements. But eventually the enthusiasm in the process weakened as the business and labor union participants failed to see the actions from government that they expected.

A participant in Visión Guatemala suggested that both the process and the product of the civic scenario process can be shared broadly, but the sharing should be in a fluid way, inviting creative engagement. In Guatemala there has been an effort to train “multipliers,” who are essentially facilitators or people who understand the method and can take it out into the field and use it. They have gotten involved with the project in very different manners, and they have thought of many different ways of using the results and the methodology. Particularly in regard to content, sharing the work of Visión Guatemala “as is” has no particular value—this is not the only vision for the future.

Workshop participants:

“When the geniuses share the idea with others, they have the whole thing canned.”

“The hopes and expectations that the processes can create can result in greater frustration later on if we cannot find solutions to the fundamental problems that led to the confrontation.”

“I [like] the idea of seeing the scenarios as interactive, something that people can take in their hands and say ‘I don’t think that scenario would be exactly like that; I would imagine something different...’ And the other way around: ‘How would I act in that scenario? What would happen to me, my family, my sector?’ I think that’s powerful.”

Adam’s comment: “People really need to participate in co-creation of the vision to take it on. So ‘replicating’ rather than ‘enlarging’ the process may be a better way to think about it. And for participants, the thought might be about enacting the intention that emerged from the dialogue.”
How do we evaluate the impact of a project?

Two aspects of this work make evaluation difficult. First, a civic dialogue is not the kind of project that produces concrete, measurable outcomes. Second, the most concrete outcome, the scenarios, are national in scope. Even if the envisioned comes about, it would be impossible to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the scenario and the outcome. Nevertheless, we should at least try to define what success would look like during the design phase and attempt to assess its impact against the criteria established.

The group that worked on this question suggested the following:

1. At the outset, clearly establish objectives, define indicators of success, and prepare an assessment instrument. For example, if an indicator of success is to be that people’s perceptions change, we must take steps to establish what those perceptions were at the beginning.
2. Set the times to make an assessment and follow through.
3. Possible questions to ask in an assessment effort: to what extent has the vision that emerged from the process been enacted? To what extent has the scenario process influenced that? To what extent have participants in the process changed their perceptions and/or behavior?

Referencing complexity theory, James Butcher suggested the need to acknowledge and look for “ways of knowing,” aside from measurement. In addition, he said, “It is helpful to understand we may never know the cause and effect relationships in the outcomes.”

UNDP Participant: “In UNDP, we find it is useful to make the distinction between outputs (what we can control) and outcomes (what we can’t control).”

The three meta-questions that were broader in scope naturally produced fewer concrete conclusions and a great deal of discussion.

What is a typology of purposes/objectives?

This question arose primarily out of the group discussion about the civic dialogue experience in Bulgaria, in which a think tank developed scenarios on public policy issues to support decision making by the Bulgarian government. That discussion produced the question: “When is an expert-based approach to scenario building appropriate, and when is a civil-society approach appropriate?”

The key distinction underlying this question is between scenario building as a strategic planning tool and the scenario method as a multi-stakeholder dialogue process. Some of the South African participants drew this distinction in thinking about a possible Mont Fleur II: At the time of the original Mont Fleur, the early 1990s, civic dialogue was essential to bring a democratic government into being in South Africa. Now, however, there is an effectively functioning democracy, but there is an urgent need for creative solutions to pressing social problems, in particular the AIDS epidemic. Perhaps what is most important for Mont Fleur II, therefore, is to convene a group of experts to work together on solutions to this problem. With those considerations as background, the group working on this question offered the following typology:

1. Scenarios for strategic planning: used mainly by businesses; research is an important element; dialogue within the business organization supports it; both the process and the product (the scenarios) are important outputs
2. Scenarios for consensus building: the civic scenario method employed in Mont Fleur, Destino Colombia, and Visión Guatemala; dialogue is paramount, research supports it; the process is the significant output, the
product much less so, unless the purpose moves toward advocacy.

3. Scenarios for advocacy: used by the think tank in Bulgaria and some businesses in South Africa, to influence government policy; both dialogue and research are important; the product in this case is particularly important.

This discussion of this typology pointed out a problem significant in all civic dialogue processes, which aim to build consensus. But, to get consensus, they must often go to the lowest common denominator. “Consensus,” noted one participant, “is important in terms that you advance. But you advance very slowly.” A participant from the Mont Fleur group noted, “Amazingly, we were able to obtain consensus at Mont Fleur, despite the great diversity. But where we did, as in the Flamingoes Scenario, the platform of agreement was necessarily vague.”
What is the connection between civic dialogue and political institutions?

This was a question about there was no consensus in the workshop group. The small group that discussed it asserted that civic dialogue processes have arisen precisely because political institutions are weak and do not reflect or respond to social needs. Civic dialogue arose to fill the vacuum left by these weak institutions—especially political parties. Civic dialogue, the group suggested, must now serve as a catalyst for a process of strengthening them.

Another view was that people are making scapegoats of national governments and political parties, blaming them for ineffectiveness and continuing poverty when in fact they are constrained in what they can accomplish by a global economic system over which they have no control. In Latin America, said one participant, the immediate challenge is to strengthen political institutions, not create a parallel, separate track in civil society. There shouldn’t be two parallel scenarios or dialogues—one civic and one governmental—or societies will just repeat their past mistakes. If there is no encounter, at the same place, between social leaders and political leaders, we’ll have two separate worlds. Another participant suggested that people in civil society must simply accept the task of engaging with political parties, clean up the system, and get better leaders who may be better able to deal with the problems of globalization.

This discussion also brought a reference to the typology of purposes. “Once democratic parties have become institutionalized,” said one commentator, “how do you get them to use scenario planning to deal with the complex issues confronting them? Provide scenarios created by think tanks? Get government officials involved in scenario processes?”

How do we move from thought to action?

The group working on this issue described itself as “a big table of Latin Americans with the same ideology and spirit because we’re Latin Americans,” but with different national experiences. They said that the conclusions the group reached about this question, listed below, required some compromise.

1. There must be agreement that dialogue is necessary to solve the problems the country is facing.
2. The main actors—civil society, government, political parties—must make a serious initial commitment to comply with the outcome of the process.
3. The people at the dialogue table must be legitimate representatives of their sectors.
4. The dialogue methodology must lead to action by avoiding too broad a focus, developing a few key steps that may be actionable. Then, it may be possible to return for further dialogue on the next steps.
5. We must develop a mechanism by which civil society can hold the actors accountable to their commitment to comply with the dialogue outcomes and somehow penalize those who fail to do so.
6. The dialogue process must focus on both thought and action throughout, and the consensus produced must include both. This will require flexible positions and compromise, but “We understand that it is only thus that we can forge ahead.”

Workshop participants:

“How can we ask the people to believe in parties if one party after another cannot move forward their own governmental programs and the situations of marginalization and poverty are still the same?”

“What we have to understand is that although we might all be in agreement, none of us will solve anything unless we are in power. And the only way to power is our political parties.”

Adam’s comment: “The dilemma in this work is that one wants to be both disconnected from and connected to existing political institutions, as in the case of Destino Colombia, in which an “antisepctic” process was a strength on one level and a weakness on another. What you really want is a loose coupling between the informal scenario work and the formal political institutions.”

Discussion group presenter:

“Today, in Peru, there is a dialogue table convened by OAS. It has a certain problem--there is a question as to the representatives. Who does he/she represent? This is asked every day. So when this person says something, people say ‘He doesn’t represent anyone, so what importance does it have?’ There has to be authentic or genuine legitimacy of the participants at the dialogue table.”

Workshop participant: “Or, the dialogue group as a whole can have legitimacy, collectively.”
This presentation, too, surfaced some differing views. If one wants these civic dialogue processes to take place outside the legislature or the government, suggested one participant, then forcing compliance becomes problematic. Their influence must be more through persuasion. This can happen in two ways. The product of the dialogue can be convincing enough to change public perception of the issues. At the same time, the people who participate in the dialogue and who change as a result can go out and have an impact. These are ways of influencing the outcome through the process rather than through some form of control.

Reola Phelps shared her experience from the American Leadership Forum, in which results often came, not from specific action-oriented projects but over time from the network of relationships that formed among participants in the dialogue processes. She told the story of a community leader in Hartford, Connecticut, who was able to solve a crisis of affordable health insurance by calling a fellow ALF participant who was an insurance executive.

Adam Kahane:
“If you understand what’s going on and what you need to do, action will follow.”

Visión Guatemala participant at the workshop:
“The firefly image [in the scenarios] and the idea of weaving a multicultural entity in Guatemala helped me to focus on healing and reconciliation and made me feel more obliged to participate in the process.”

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

A formal, rigorous comparison of projects and methods may go a long way toward advancing the methodology of social change through civic dialogue. Yet it is unlikely to alter the basic fact, firmly established in this UNDP workshop, that there is no simple formula or “recipe” for a successful civic dialogue process. Though dialogue may be the only way to solve the problems societies face, solutions will not come through one method or one project alone. The greatest challenge, as several participants noted, is to institutionalize dialogue. This is as important in countries such as Panama and Bolivia, that have achieved significant cumulative results through successive dialogue processes, as it is in countries such as South Africa and Guatemala, where a Mont Fleur II and Visión Guatemala II are contemplated, and other countries, such as The Bahamas and the co-participants India and Pakistan, experimenting with a civic dialogue process for the first time.

To recognize this need is to pick up another key theme in the workshop discussions: the road to change will be a long one. The 2000 U.S. presidential election, with its lackluster campaign and indecisive result, formed a backdrop for the meeting and served to heighten the sense of how great the challenges of maintaining vital democratic institutions really are. While this sobering reality was much present in the meeting, it was balanced by palpable feelings of energy, commitment, and hope for the future. These are the kinds of positive feelings that people tend to bring away from experiences with genuine human connection through dialogue. They also seemed to represent a shared sense that -- the remaining questions notwithstanding -- the group had, collectively, both affirmed the power of civic dialogue to effect positive changes and pointed the way toward putting it to use.

The workshop began with presentations on the major challenges facing the countries represented -- the issues that participants hoped might be addressed through civic dialogue. The concluding exercise brought the discussion full circle with the development and presentation of country plans for civic dialogue projects. Consistent with suggestions made in the discussion of process issues, each country group framed its plans by answering three questions: What is our purpose? What is our definition of success? What are the next steps?
Two of the country plans proposed to broaden the scope of civic dialogue processes from national to international issues. The participants from India and Pakistan presented a joint plan they called the “Indus Valley Scenario.” Its goal is “to create a future of trust, harmony, and economic cooperation” for the people of this region – the disputed area between the two countries, where there has been warfare off and on for over 30 years. This team proposed to measure the levels of visa issuance between the two countries and the levels of joint cross-border business development to determine the success of their dialogue initiative. The workshop participants from Bolivia and Chile also presented a joint plan, in this case to create a development zone in a disputed area bordering Chile on the north, Peru on the south, and Bolivia on the west.

Some country teams could plan to build on existing dialogue initiatives, for example, in Ecuador, where it seemed possible to extend and build upon a process initiated by a citizens group and the nation’s largest newspaper. The Argentina group envisioned building on a dialogue process convened by the church to launch a broader dialogue involving all 17 provinces that had been consolidated to create the nation state in 1810. Their ultimate goal was to “re-found” Argentina through a collective act of the provinces, in the bicentennial year, 2010. In Panama, there was a solid foundation to build on, but also some new challenges – the pressing issue of extending the canal zone to be dealt with, and a “ politicization” of the environment that had not existed for earlier dialogue projects.

Chile has past experience with dialogue initiatives to build on and also a national commission charged with thinking about Chile’s future, focused on its bicentennial in 2010. The opportunity and need identified in the workshop was to introduce broader participation of Chilean society into these discussions. The Paraguayan team presented a plan to initiate a dialogue within the political elite, in order to build a sense of shared vision among the leaders of the country. This top-down approach would complement the bottom-up process already completed in Paraguay under the auspices of the church. For the team from Nicaragua, the challenge was slightly different: to overcome the negative impression left by a previous dialogue process that had been widely seen as unrepresentative.

Other country groups were starting largely from scratch. One of these, the group from Bahamas came up with the idea of preparing the ground for a civic scenario process by, essentially, fabricating a national conversation on social issues with video interviews broadcast on TV. The team envisioned that these “man-on-the-street” interviews of people from a broad cross-section of society could begin to awaken Bahamians to the need for a shared vision for the future and a common framework for addressing problems in the present.

All three country teams that brought experiences from civic scenario processes focused on moving on from those projects to start new initiatives. The team from South Africa committed itself to launching “Mont Fleur Mark II.” The team from Colombia expressed optimism that, for a variety of reasons, there exists a “window of opportunity” for dialogue processes to have an impact on the continuing war in their country. The team conceived its future work in terms of “giving the tool” of the civic scenario process to other groups, beginning with the political parties that had not been represented in Destino Colombia. It expressed the hope is that, as each group separately develops “a new way of looking at the future,” the way will be opened for the factions to come together to consider a common future without armed conflict. Following the workshop, some of the Destino Colombia participants even began thinking of a regional civic scenario process focused on the drug problem.

South Africa:
“In essence, there is still a crisis on South Africa. Perhaps we have achieved a political miracle, but much needs to be done in the social and economic sphere. Now we need a social and economic miracle!”

Colombia:
“We are convinced that if we give this tool to the actors in arms, to all of them, without exception --
Finally, the representatives from Visión Guatemala shared with the workshop that they had reached the conclusion that the time had come to draw that project to a close and start fresh with a new initiative. The closing process would include synthesizing and interpreting the learning gained from Visión Guatemala in light of the insights gained from sharing other experiences in the workshop. Then, they envisioned, a new project should build on the work of the last phase of Visión Guatemala, in which the scenarios and the dialogue process have been taken to the regional and municipal level. The goal of the new project would be, explicitly, to share the process and not the product of the civic scenario exercise - “to generate awareness and stimulate a culture of dialogue which is multi-sectoral, regional, municipal, and inclusive and binding in our society.”

The presentation of the country plans brought back into focus the magnitude, complexity, and deep-rootedness of the issues to be addressed. The goal of the team from Guyana, for example, was to break through entrenched racism to create the possibility of national unity. Several of the Latin American country teams spoke of the need to strengthen democratic institutions, particularly the judiciary, in order to continue evolving away from the violent military regimes and dictatorships of the past and to deal with corruption. Addressing the problem of persistent poverty was a theme in the background of all the presentations.

The country plans had a powerful cumulative impact. They showed that, even though there is no recipe to follow in a civic dialogue initiative, in each situation it is possible to move forward by defining a clear purpose at the outset, understanding that the sense of purpose may evolve over time. The exercise also reaffirmed that dialogue is central, no matter what the choice of specific method may be. Finally, the engagement of so many country groups in this endeavor generated a sense of hope, on one hand from a sense of commonality in the shared commitment to improving the human condition, and on the other from the rich diversity of national issues and solutions, which made it seem that no problem was beyond addressing.

In response to the powerful collective statement of commitment embodied in the country plans, Elena Martínez reaffirmed the intent of the UNDP to support civic dialogue initiatives and further methodological development in a variety of ways. She proposed collaboration with other institutions to create a “methodological reflections space,” to include future workshops and to be informed by additional learning histories of other civic dialogue processes. She also offered the UNDP website as a means to help keep the workshop community linked together, by collecting contact information, learning histories, and the meeting report.

Alvaro Colom – Mayan priest, engineer, peace negotiator, Guatemalan presidential candidate, and participant in Visión Guatemala – made the final statement of the workshop:

“Today at midday they asked me to look for something which was symbolic of the spirit of our meeting and the spirit of the Mayas. And I suggested they buy a little wrapping, a bag, like the Mayas give us when we become Mayan priests. In this bag, we keep all the quartz crystals we find, all the stones which generate energy. This bag also has wishes, dreams, and it inspires us. . . .

Guatemala:
“The first thing we should do is celebrate the success of Visión Guatemala. But also we think that a successful project has a beginning and an end as a project and that is necessary not to keep on wearing away a project which has been as successful as ours.”

Peru:
“We must launch in our country a new democratic government. And at that moment we will be able to tell you all ‘Welcome to a New Peru, without any corruption.’”

Paraguay:
“Paraguay has had 400 years of history with a lot of confrontation and it has been a ‘dialogue of the deaf’ where everybody tries to impose their will. They all speak, but nobody listens. And the secret of the dialogue isn’t in the person who speaks, but in he who listens. If not, the message of the dialogue doesn’t work.”

El Salvador:
“The peace accords provoked a political revolution, but the economic and social issues remain unresolved. . . . I hope it’s going to be done, and I hope we can prevent a new civil war.”
“We leave very happy and feeling strong. . . . And I hope that we’re going to be able to achieve continuing communication, even using electronic means, because today there are many, if not all of us who would not like to lose this human contact. We are dreamers, but we are not dreaming just to throw our dreams away. We want to keep them and let them evolve.”
Civic Scenarios as a Tool for Making History

By Adam Kahane, Generon Consulting

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

Introduction

Since the early 1990s, Generon Consulting has been developing the use of scenario thinking as a tool for effecting societal change. In a civic scenario project, a group of influential leaders, drawn from a broad range of sectors and organizations, works together to understand what is happening, might happen, and should happen in their city, region, or country. They then act in concert on that shared understanding and vision. This note summarizes Generon’s experience with this work to date, the process we have developed, and the kinds of results it has produced.

Experience to date

We first used scenarios as a tool for societal problem defining and problem solving when we led the South African “Mont Fleur” project in 1991. During the tumultuous transition away from apartheid, this project brought together 22 prominent people from across South African society, including community activists, conservative politicians, African National Congress officials, trade unionists, academics, establishment economists, and corporate executives. Their objective was to develop a set of alternative stories about South Africa’s future, in order to provoke debate and propel forward movement in the country.

The “Ostrich” scenario pointed out the risk and futility of the white government’s trying to prevent or avoid a negotiated settlement with the black majority. A second scenario, “Lame Duck,” envisioned a prolonged transition with a constitutionally weakened government. Because the government “purports to respond to all, but satisfies none,” investors hold back, and growth and development languish amidst a mood of long, slow uncertainty. This was an important scenario because, in 1991, the majority political parties were negotiating a coalition government. The Lame Duck scenario allowed people to see potential dangers in certain ways of organizing the coalition and how these could be mitigated.

Another scenario, “Icarus,” suggested that a black government could come to power on a wave of public support, embark on a huge, unsustainable public spending program, and consequently crash the economy. This was the first time that a team including prominent left-wing economists had discussed the possibility of a new government trying to do too much. Finally, the “Flight of the Flamingoes” scenario outlined the broad parameters of a positive and successful transition: everyone in the society rises slowly and steadily together. Overall this project contributed to the building of a common language for talking across groups about the opportunities and challenges facing the country, and hence about a way forward.

Since Mont Fleur, Generon has developed and extended this process in many settings. We have led major civic scenario projects in Canada, Colombia, the United States, and Guatemala, and smaller ones in Cyprus, Israel, Northern Ireland, and Japan. Other people have led similar projects in Indonesia, Kenya, India, Burundi, Sweden, and Finland, in many cases with explicit reference to Mont Fleur. Generon has also borrowed from Mont Fleur in consulting to numerous corporate, governmental, and non-governmental clients in North America, Europe and Southern Africa.

Our civic scenario work rests on two additional substantial bodies of theory and practice. The first is the well-developed application of scenarios to corporate strategizing that has grown out of the work of Royal Dutch/Shell’s famous global strategy group, which several Generon partners led in the early 1990s. The second is Generon’s own research on strategy processes and practices. Over the past few years, this has focused on studying the specific bases for entrepreneurial creativity—bringing forth new futures—in the new economy.

**Results of the process**

On the basis of these experiences, our conclusion is that civic scenario processes produce four types of results:

1. **Reframed mental models.**
   All of us operate from maps or models in our heads about how the world works. Sometimes these maps are accurate and helpful representations of reality, but they can also be woefully incomplete, inaccurate, and misleading. Scenario thinking helps us to improve the quality of our models by

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3 The Indonesia project is at <http://www.imd2010.org/> and the Kenyan one at <http://www.kenyascenarios.org/index.html>.


articulating them, sharing them with other people who have different perspectives and models, and together trying out new models in the process of developing alternative stories (scenarios) about how things have worked, do work, and might work in the future.

One of the major reframings at Mont Fleur involved the recognition that a successful shift away from apartheid would require navigating not only the political, military and constitutional transitions that were receiving most of the attention at the time, but also an economic one that was not. Furthermore, the obvious economic solution—quickly redistributing wealth from rich whites to poor blacks—could not work.

A significant reframing of Visión Guatemala was that understanding the country’s past, present and future required understanding the reality of the country’s indigenous majority, including of their distinct “cosmovision.” This enlarged perspective put the previously marginal issue of multi-culturalism into the center of the national strategy conversation. The Visión Guatemala scenarios showed that development of such shared understandings in the society at large is a prerequisite to Guatemalans being able to construct a better future together.

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**The Visión Guatemala Scenarios**

**The Illusion of the Moth.** The moth’s path is dangerous; it flies towards whatever light it sees and is therefore often dazzled and even burned. In this scenario, economic conditions do not improve and diversity and multiculturalism are not really taken to heart, so discrimination of all types persists. National reconciliation is shallow and polarization and social conflict continue. People cry out for political messianism and authoritarianism. Labor instability and unemployment rise and international cooperation decays. The economy is characterized by short-termism. Tax revenues are not sufficient to pay for social necessities. The national spirit is pessimistic, mediocrity prevails, the rule of law is absent, and the atrocities of the civil war era remain unacknowledged and unpunished. Overall the process is one of people being worn down, with expectations unmet and solidarity eroded in the face of selfish agendas.

**The Zigzag of the Beetle.** The back-and-forth flight of the beetle is erratic and directionless. In this scenario, advances in political, economic and social life occur side by side with regressions. There is economic growth along with unequal participation in its benefits; multiculturalism along with exclusion and discrimination; and citizen participation along with apathy and lack of representativeness. Environmental degradation increases. The state is incapable of achieving real fiscal reform. Reconciliation and dialogue coexist with deep woundedness and fear. Overall the pattern is one of mixed results and no clear progress.

**The Flight of the Firefly.** Each firefly illuminates its own way and also that of others; together a group of fireflies pushes back the darkness. In this scenario, Guatemalans recognize their history and construct a model where tolerance and educational transformation create multiculturalism and eliminate discrimination. Holistic development is reflected in a nation with its own identity, and with pluralism, fairness, the rule of law, and genuine consensus. A democratic state grants equal opportunities to all. A fiscal pact reduces gaps between sectors. Citizen participation and productivity increase. Optimism spreads with the real reconciliation that comes with sustained and fair economic growth.

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2. Shared commitment to change developed through dialogue.

No one person or institution alone can effect societal change. Yet, for collective action there must be some measure of shared perspective: a common mental model, a shared vision, a jointly-told story. Scenario processes that are organized as open and constructive conversations among stakeholders help build the mutual understanding, trust, and sense of community that make this possible.
In South Africa, the Mont Fleur process—together with countless other projects, workshops and meetings—built the foundation of relationships on which the “miraculous” 1994 shift to majority rule could be built.

In Visión Guatemala, the team members were able to see and listen to each other with empathy, and this opened the door to honest and open dialogue, including about areas of wrenching disagreement. Out of that dialogue emerged the shared moral values that inform the scenarios. The team has become an important symbol and model of cross-sector networking and collaboration in Guatemala.

3. Regenerated energy and optimism.
Achieving collective forward movement requires energy, which in turn requires hope.

In the fearful and confused South Africa of the early 1990s, the Mont Fleur team’s message that a positive *Flight of the Flamingoes* future was possible had a strong impact. One of the team members said, “We mapped out in very broad terms the outline of a successful outcome, which is now being filled in. We captured the way forward of those of us committed to finding a way forward”.

The Visión Guatemala team went further in explicitly developing a preferred scenario or vision in *Flight of the Fireflies*. They were conscious of constructing these stories as a tool not merely to study or anticipate the future, but to contribute to shaping the future, by engaging in dialogue with their fellow citizens.

4. Renewed action and momentum.
Ultimately change requires not only new thinking and relationships and energy but also the new action that these developments allow and catalyze.

Although the link between scenario processes and specific actions is difficult to establish, Mont Fleur probably contributed to the way in which some of the South African political parties approached the pivotal and ultimately successful constitutional negotiations; and it certainly contributed to the surprising shift in economic policy of the Victorious African National Congress. Even in 1999, eight years after the scenario project, one of the members of the Mont Fleur team, upon being appointed Governor of the South African Reserve Bank said, “We will not be an Icarus.”

Visión Guatemala has sparked ambitious and purposeful action, specifically in the promotion of dialogue processes to re-knit the country’s torn social fabric (see examples in the final section below).

**Overview of the civic scenario process**

In a civic scenario project, three groups of people work together and with others, in three phases, over two years or more, to envision the future and to shape it for the better. The three groups are:
1. A broadly credible Board of Trustees: 4-6 prominent persons who convene and lead the project and guarantee its integrity.

2. A broadly influential Scenario Roundtable. This is the core team. It is a diverse group of 20-30 civic leaders (including most of the Board members) who do the work of dialogue, scenario-building, and then acting on the shared understanding that results.

3. A small Professional Secretariat: a Project Coordinator, who works with a team of Process Consultants and Technical Specialists to support—the work of the Board and Roundtable.

The three phases are:

I. **Convening/Organizing.** The Board forms, usually at the invitation of one or two project instigators. The board then chooses the Roundtable, hires the Secretariat, articulates the project purpose, and raises funds. The result of Phase I is a planned and energized project.

II. **Uncovering/Constructing.** The Roundtable meets in three 3-day workshops. Team members work together and with outside resource persons to uncover current and emerging reality, construct useful scenarios of possible and desirable futures, uncover/discover their shared intention, and agree on the leverage points and a plan of action to enact this intention. In between these workshops, Roundtable members (individually and in sub-teams) engage with other civic
leaders and with resource persons to deepen and test their understanding of what is happening and what they must do. The result of Phase II is a published set of stories about how the future might and should unfold (several scenarios and a vision respectively), plus a plan, commitment, and momentum towards bringing this vision into reality.

III. *Enacting/Engaging*. The Scenario Roundtable implements the plan it has developed in Phase II. The purpose of this phase is not to disseminate or market the scenarios and vision as such, but to engage with other civic leaders in dialogue, moving to action. The Roundtable meets three more times to share successes and failures and to adjust its course of action on the basis of this learning. The Professional Secretariat continues to provide support. Phase III ends when the Roundtable concludes it has achieved the project’s purpose.

**Process Considerations**

Scenario projects—like the better futures they aim to bring forth—come to pass because a small group of passionate advocates dreams of them and works to bring their dream into reality. The process is an expanding circle of dialogue, trust, understanding and commitment, starting with the advocates, who assemble a Board of Trustees, who in turn invite the Scenario Roundtable, who in turn engage with each other and with the large system of which they are a microcosm and which they wish to influence.

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**Phase I: Convening/Organizing**

The first task is therefore to find the *Board of Trustees*. It will provide the initiative, credibility, independence and wisdom to launch and guide the project, and to invite others to participate. Board members must be seen to advocate the process rather than any particular outcome. In Visión Guatemala, for example, the trustees included six of the country’s most prominent citizens, including a Cabinet minister, a leading human rights activist, the rector of a Jesuit university, a prominent Mayan woman, the ambassador to the UN, and a top businessman. The Board in turn has four principal tasks.

It selects and invites members of the *Scenario Roundtable*. As a group, these people must have the influence and capacity to effect change, and must represent as broad as possible a range of relevant perspectives, with none dominating. They are invited to participate in their personal capacities, not as formal representatives of any organization or interest. The Roundtable team must be diverse enough (demographically, socially, politically, geographically, etc.) for most
stakeholders to be able to see their views reflected. For example, the Visión Guatemala Roundtable included academics, corporate leaders, community leaders, entrepreneurs, former guerillas, former military officers, government officials, human rights activists, indigenous people, journalists, national and local politicians, religious leaders, trade unionists, and young people. The participants should be respected thought leaders in their own communities, senior enough to be influential, but not so senior as to be unable to participate in such an informal exercise. Finally, an important criterion for selection is the capacity to be curious, reflective, and open minded.)

The Board hires the Professional Secretariat. The key person is the full time Project Coordinator, who will champion, organize, and manage the entire process. He or she must be zealous, competent and ethical. The coordinator hires and leads a technical support team, mostly part time or contract staff, including: process consultants, designers and facilitators (this is the role Generon plays); administrative and financial support personnel; people to document and communicate the work of the Roundtable, such as writers, filmmakers, webmasters, graphic recorders, learning historians; and other support personnel, such as workshop organizers, translators, transcribers. Visión Guatemala employed a Coordinator and two support staff full time for more than two years.

The Board must articulate a compelling project purpose. Initially, it must be able to answer the question, “Why should I support/participate in this project?” It is important to recognize, however, that the purpose, intention and orientation of the work will naturally evolve as the project unfolds.

Finally, it is up to the Board to raise the necessary funds and in-kind contributions. It needs to raise enough money to sustain the project through Phases I and II and to provide the core infrastructure for Phase III. The plan for Phase III will only begin to emerge during Phase II and therefore cannot be completely budgeted at the outset.

Phase II: Uncovering/Constructing

In this phase, the scenario team, convened as the Roundtable, does the core work of the project by developing a set of stories about what is happening and might happen (the scenarios) and what they want to happen (the vision). This work is challenging, because the stories must simultaneously be:

Relevant: illuminating current circumstances and concerns of team members and linking into current their mental models
Emergent: making the invisible visible by surfacing underlying assumptions and challenging current mental models
Plausible: fact-based and logical and contributing to systemic understanding
Clear: distinct, accessible, and memorable.

Phase II has four major milestones:

6 See Elena Diez Pinto et al., Los Escenarios del Futuro (Magnaterra Editores: Guatemala: Visión Guatemala, 1999).
Workshop 1
The team starts its work with people getting to know one another. It sketches preliminary versions of driving forces, scenarios, and visions. It also works on clarifying the project purpose and identifying subjects it needs to know more about in order to better understand what is happening and might happen.

Learning Journeys
One of the most important and difficult parts of this work is for participants to see what they have not been seeing. An excellent way to do this is to venture out of their familiar settings and circles to observe and interact with relevant and different realities. The team splits up into small groups, and each person goes on at least one Journey to Remarkable Persons, Organizations or Places. These are experiences that help team members see the world from new perspectives.

Workshop 2
The team comes back together for a second, intensive workshop, in which participants review and make sense of what they have learned. They may invite additional Remarkable Persons. At this workshop, they create the scenarios and vision.

Workshop 3
At the final workshop of Phase II, the team refines and agrees on the texts of the scenarios and vision, as well as on the lessons and conclusions arising from them. The team also makes a Phase III plan for broadening the work, enacting the vision, and contributing to changing society.

Phase III: Enacting/Engaging
In this phase the team uses its prior work together as a trigger and catalyst for contributing to enacting their vision for and with the larger society. The substance, process, and duration of Phase III must emerge from the discoveries and creations of Phase II and therefore cannot be specified in advance. In previous projects, however, Phase III has consisted of:

Working with print, television, radio and Internet media to disseminate the work.

Engaging around the scenarios and vision with other societal leaders from various sectors and various levels, both one-on-one and in different kinds of meetings and workshops. For example, the Visión Guatemala project trained 65 “multipliers” of the scenario process—leaders drawn from all sectors—and prepared multi-media presentation materials on the scenarios and scenario-building process. Within a year of the completion of Phase II, these resources made it possible to share the work with more than 3000 people, including key leaders in political parties, business, Mayan groups, cooperatives, universities, non-governmental organizations, the media, workers’ organizations, the military, and the church.

Connecting with other, more traditional political, negotiating, and problem solving activities. Visión Guatemala team members played an important role in their country’s 1999 national elections, as candidates, political platform drafters, and non-party public figures.

Promoting specific initiatives identified as critical for achieving the vision. For example, Visión Guatemala team members have worked for change in a variety of ways, including educational reforms in universities and in the public school system, and local development efforts in Quetzaltenango, the second largest city.
The ultimate objective of Phase III and of this work as a whole is to engage the whole society—
hearts, minds and bodies—in the process of creating a better future. Our experience so far is that the
civic scenario process helps this happen.
Learning from Civic Scenario Projects: A Tool for Facilitating Social Change?

Katrin Käufer
MIT Sloan School of Management
Society for Organizational Learning

Three civic scenario projects – Mont Fleur in South Africa (1991-92), Destino Colombia (1997-2000), and Visión Guatemala (1998-2000) – used scenario planning, a technique developed in the corporate world in the 1970s as a tool for strategic decision-making. This approach was used to design a workshop that aims at developing plausible scenarios in the civic arena, that is, scenarios that will help municipalities, regions, and even whole countries resolve conflicts and improve their futures. The conveners of these workshops and those who participated in them hope that sharing their experiences with a broader audience will contribute to strategic thinking and better futures for their countries.

This paper analyzes open-ended interviews that were conducted with participants in the three scenario projects and asks whether civic scenario projects are a tool for facilitating social change.¹ The interviews suggest that the civic scenario projects had an impact on three levels: on the individual participants, on the people the participants engaged with and the organizations they belonged to, and on concrete decisions and initiatives in the countries where they took place. Each scenario initiated a dialogue among diverse participants and established new patterns of relationship and thought. The task, the development of different plausible scenarios of the future, had a team-building effect and connected the participants with their aspirations, both individually and collectively. The process of scenario building provides a tool to move the participants through different stages of communication, to engage in dialogue and to move towards action. Additionally, the process allows the participants to reflect on their own intent.

The current civic scenario approach could probably be further developed by adding an implementation phase, in which change initiatives aimed at actualizing the desired scenario take place within a learning and support infrastructure that enables the implementation of decisions and possible actions resulting from the scenario work.
1 The Impact: First-, Second-, and Third-Order Influences

The scenario work had an impact on three levels: (1) on the participants, (2) on those with whom the participants engaged, and (3) later, on decisions and actions that affected the future of the country in which it took place (Gillespie, 2000).

1.1 First-order influence: on the participants

The primary impact of civic scenario work is on those who participated. The interviews with the participants revealed that people’s experiences had changed them personally. In particular, the work led to (1) a change of mental models, (2) the development of new skills and tools, (3) a new commitment to support positive change in the country, and (4) the establishment of new relationships and networks.

A number of participants felt that the personal change was the most important outcome of the work. Taking into consideration that a substantial number of the participants in all three cases later moved into influential positions in their countries, this level of impact is of special importance. For example in South Africa the present Minister of Finance, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, the Chairman of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the Managing Director of the Transnet, and two ANC members of the South African parliament, both of whom serve on important committees (finance and trade) all participated in the Mont Fleur civic scenario project. The convener and organizer of each scenario project had made an effort to invite participants whom they saw as future leaders. Said the organizer of Mont Fleur: “Between the two of us, we decided that we must get people who are potentially important for the future” (Gillespie, 2000.). In Guatemala, former participants in Visión Guatemala are currently occupying the following positions: Minister of Culture, Vice Minister of Culture, Minister of Agriculture, President of the Central Bank, Ambassador to the United Nations, and Ambassador to the Organization of American States.

Some participants emphasized that their participation in the scenario work was one of the most important events in their lives. They remembered exact dates and events associated with the scenario work – even in the case of South Africa where the interviews were conducted nine years
after the team completed their work. Said one of the participants in Destino Colombia, “I have not had anything more intense in my life” (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000).

1.1.1 Mental Models

The interviewees emphasized how the work on the scenarios changed their thinking and mental models and how they saw the world differently after participating in the workshops.

One factor the interviewees mentioned most often as a reason for their change in thinking was the dialogue they engaged in with participants from other sectors and groups. Seeing themselves through the eyes of someone else made them think differently about their own roles. That different perspective did not necessarily lead a participant to a change his or her political position but did make it easier to respect and understand other positions. According to one: “I learned that dialogue is possible even between people of different ideologies: that it is possible to reach consensus, to have a common vision and that, in the end, even in the light of different ways of thinking, the objective that we all pursue is the same” (Díez Pinto, 2000). Another said that “at a personal level, this was the most beautiful acquisition I have had, to understand and to discuss all subjects without having anyone get angry and without killing each other” (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000).

Learning journeys and the presentation by experts changed their perception of reality. “We do not know our own history, … history has always been censored, depending on the author…. The fact that, for instance, Arturo Taracena, a strict historian with a high academic profile, could support the issue involving the grant of large estates and coffee plantations with proper documentation … All statements were fully documented and explained…. There were no insults. It was simply our history” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

The work on the scenarios engaged participants in long-term thinking, what some described as a totally new perspective given that years of violence had allowed them to focus only on the next day or week: “As long as I can live till tomorrow, do not get shot on the street or arrested at a rally, or be jailed for my political activities, I will make the best of today and not think about tomorrow. Not plan for tomorrow. The scenario work taught me to see the bigger picture and to look further and wider” (Gillespie, 2000). “I believe that for me the influence of Visión Guatemala is precisely in thinking long term,…people must place themselves beyond what they can see, and that starts from the family, what do I want for my children today, what do I want for my children tomorrow” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

Participants said that the scenario work helped them develop hope and optimism. “Before Destino Colombia they were very pessimistic in regard to the country…. And Destino Colombia
has opened my eyes: it showed me that there was an interesting space there to be optimistic” (De León and Diez Pinto, 2000).

1.1.2 Changed Behavior

Participants also described becoming involved in new forms of behavior in their private as well as their professional environments: “I am involved in national problems in one way or another. I believe that my personal contribution has to do with at least one aspect, which is to be open to discussion with other sectors…. Yesterday, for example, X, who is an entrepreneur, was seated at this table…. He is neo-liberal and I raised points against neo-liberalism. When they had kidnapped his brother and had murdered him, I wrote an article supporting all his accusations and he came now and we sat down to discuss jointly what we could do to fight against the impunity which is occurring in the institutions” (Díez Pinto, 2000). Among the behavioral changes participants listed were an attempt to connect to people with different views and the use of dialogue, listening, and the scenario methodology in their private and professional lives.

1.1.3 Will and Commitment

“I had thought about going to work abroad, but then this event [the scenario project] occurred and I was more optimistic. I decided to bet on the country, stay here with my children and wife with the risk all of this implies” (De León and Diez Pinto, 2000). Interviewees such as the one quoted here described a change in will and commitment, and emphasized that after they had finished the civic scenario work they felt committed to preventing recurrences of unfortunate events that had happened in the past. Others described a new commitment in more general terms: “I believe that all of this begins with the individual commitment. I have to change, I have to change my way of acting to be an example in my home, in my family, and also, as a citizen I have to do the same, I have to change and have to participate” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

1.1.4 New Skills and Tools

Said the Minister of Finance in South Africa: “I can’t explain the shock I had when … X… called me and said: ‘you are going to co-ordinate economic policy.’… I think that by working in the way that we did [at Mont Fleur], it kind of broke through that fear: I say I could engage with the [economic] issues…. The strength of a process like this is that it actually sends forth people with skills” (Gillespie, 2000). Participants said that they learned dialogue and listening skills, how to apply the methodology of the scenario process, and new things about their own people and nation.

1.2 Second-order influence: Impact on those with whom the participants engaged
The second-order impact describes changes on those with whom the participants engaged. This influence is twofold: First, the participants took the tools and skills that they developed during their participation in the civic scenario projects back to the organizations that they represented as well as into their private environments. A substantial number of scenario participants moved later into influential positions. Second, through the dissemination process, the work of the civic scenario projects became common knowledge: “When we presented to the society at large, we did 70 presentations. We presented in three newspapers… but what has really worked is the small group, convincing people, not this mass dissemination” (Gillespie, 2000). In South Africa the scenarios became “household names” in the national debate. Additionally, the work itself set a positive example. According to one participant in Colombia, “The fact that Colombians of different origins, beliefs, and levels of education were capable of agreeing on the rules of the game and abiding by them had a profound impact on me” (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000).

The second-order influence can be summarized as follows:

- Participants who moved into influential positions carried the scenarios, the network, and the methodology with them.
- Public presentations (personal, video, newspaper) influenced the national debate.
- The project itself set an example that dialogue is possible across sectors.

### 1.3 Third-order influence: Social change

The third-order influence describes changes on a societal level resulting from the scenario work. This level of influence is the hardest to track because every change process is based on a wide set of influences, not only one.

#### 1.3.1 Common projects

Participation in the three scenario workshops led participants to initiate new projects afterwards. In Guatemala one participant initiated a project that aims at strengthening a culture of dialogue on the local level. She wrote a proposal and got funding to work with municipal and regional leaders. A group of diverse democratic groups in Guatemala became interested in working on another scenario project from their perspective and in using that tool to think about their future in Guatemala. In Colombia one participant established a foundation called “Ideas for Peace.” (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000)

#### 1.3.2 Influence on politics

There are indications that Mont Fleur had an impact on the economic policy of the ANC in South Africa. The Icarus Scenario developed at Mont Fleur, which dealt with the dangers of macroeconomic populism, has been internalized by government economic leaders and is still
referred to by them nine years after Mont Fleur. Presentations of the scenarios created an opportunity for ANC economic leaders to think through the logical conclusions of different courses of action. Most participants that were interviewed agreed that, although you could not directly link the direction ANC macroeconomic policy took to the work done at Mont Fleur, it was nevertheless an important contributing factor. Said one: “I would hypothesize that the big impact of Mont Fleur scenarios was not really on the constitutional transition or the political settlement or the end to the armed conflict, but specifically to the shape of the consensus about economic policy. I think one of the biggest surprises about the transition in South Africa has been how fiscally conservative the new government has been.” (Gillespie, 2000).

In Colombia interviewees could not identify an impact on any political decisions. But the Guatemalan interviews indicate that there the scenario work had an impact on constitutional reform as well as on university education: “I think that the political elite that were involved in the exercise became very much sensitized to the essential contribution that the constitutional reforms had to make, and the Visión Guatemala group was committed to making a contribution to those reforms as a group, and it was something that grew out of the group” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

1.3.4 Relationship/Network

The participants themselves created a network, a web of relationships among themselves, that continued after the process itself ended. According to one: “At present I have five members of Visión Guatemala on the Board of Directors of the University. We are trying to make this University a space where the spirit of Visión Guatemala is an innate spirit” (Díez Pinto, 2000). Another “recently began to lead the establishment of an Institute which will fight poverty. I invited some members I met at Visión and they all accepted quickly. We are 22 or 25 founding partners and I would say that 70 percent are members of Visión Guatemala” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

2 Creating Scenarios of the Future

According to one participant who was asked about the difference between the scenario work and other approaches, “Conferences try and sell ideas and do not really involve people. A scenario exercise is a way that you can get combined involvement from different groups” (Gillespie, 2000). Two characteristics of the scenario method stand out:

- People get engaged by working together on a common task that is clearly defined.
- The common task – developing plausible future scenarios for the country – connects the participants to the future of their society.

From team theory we know that a common purpose is one central feature that defines a team. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) define a team as “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” (Katzenbach/Smith: 112). The common task of creating the scenarios serves as the purpose for a diverse group of participants and is a first step towards creating a team.

This is relevant because the group membership, by design, represents different sectors and groups of a society, and the individual members – in many cases – do not usually work together or even talk to each other. The common task and common learning process support team-building among a group of people who are not “naturally” a team.

As one participant in Visión Guatemala said, “The power of collective dreaming is intoxicating. The fact that you can sit and begin to converge on a series of issues in which you are not making it up but you are actually trying to root it in reality. To be able to not only root it in reality but also to grasp it with all of your strength … that sensation is very powerful” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

The collective creation of scenarios about the future suggests two effects. First, it connects the participants to their own future and the future of their children, friends, and family, their organization or institution, and ultimately society. Even if the individuals are in total disagreement about the present and the past, and about what is right and wrong, they usually agree much more easily about what is desirable for the future. A group that thinks together about the future is very likely to reach a consensus: “Should people open old wounds, fight old battles, or jump to problem-solving, we seek to have them acknowledge each other’s reality and remind them that the task is finding common ground and future aspirations” (Weisbord, 1992: 6). Working on the future, according to Weisbord, helps people to overcome current battles and conflicts. The scenario technique is a way of working on the future. Second, the purpose of the work is to serve the country: “We are inclined to put labels on people, be it from the left or the right, army member or indigenous. But we never say, ‘we are Guatemalan!’ In my opinion, this was the most important change … and all of us feel Guatemalan now” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

One side effect is that people start to recognize the contributions of each other throughout the process. This is especially valuable in diverse groups like the scenario teams: “One begins to recognize, for example, who has a special mind for mathematics, … and we begin to divide our work like a team” (Díez Pinto, 2000).
Experiences with learning processes in organizations have shown that effective teamwork is furthered by the engagement of the team in three forms of interaction: practice, reflection, and intention (Scharmer, Versteegen, Kaeufer, 2001 forthcoming). A team that engages in only one of the three forms of interaction starts to develop all kinds of inefficiencies and pathologies. For example, a group that reflects but doesn’t act will have difficulty accomplishing anything. Scenario work allows the team to engage in common practice by conducting research, going on learning journeys, and developing scenarios.

3 What role does the diverse composition of the group play?

Diversity in a group’s composition was one main characteristic of the scenario projects in South Africa, Colombia, and Guatemala. Interviewees were astonished that they could communicate with people from completely different backgrounds. For example, one white Mont Fleur participant, said, “Tito Mboweni was the last sort of person I would have talked to a year before that – very articulate, very bright. We did not meet blacks like that normally. I do not know where they were all buried, but they were there” (Gillespie, 2000). A Guatemalan politician made a similar statement: “I would never have imagined seeing a former member of the army intelligence and a former member of the guerrilla intelligence together in a hotel bar” (Díez Pinto, 2000). “It came up that someone played the guitar,” said a retired army officer. “The Secretary General of the Communist party and I sang. We joked that it was the first time a general made a communist sing” (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000).

The ability to interact and enjoy each other’s company did not mean that the participants gave up their political views. However, the level of trust they developed and the experience of dialogue allowed them to communicate and work together across the differences. One Guatemalan participant noted, “I was happily surprised to see the photograph of a member of Visión Guatemala in the newspaper. The Rector of Universidades del Valle is seen walking on the street beside a former guerrilla activist, a former commander, on their way to the Congress to submit a fiscal agreement proposal. That was a former guerrilla member with the rector of a highly conservative university! I am sure this was, to a certain extent, a product of Visión Guatemala” (Díez Pinto, 2000). And a businessman in Guatemala said, “In my free time – very scarce – I try to speak with several persons whom I would never had the opportunity to approach. I tried to establish good communication with former guerrilla leaders. I made good friends” (Díez Pinto, 2000).
The diverse group composition allows for the experience of the other, and for prejudices, to become visible. One South African participant remembered: “I recall one day, after the session, walking with Tito Mboweni. I worked for the Chamber of Mines and he said that in 1975 or 1976 he went to the Chamber of Mines to apply for a job. But, can you imagine, when he [Tito] learned that I came from the Chamber of Mines he said: ‘Ah, you are lucky, you were white, and you got a job! I didn’t. Applied to the same place. Did they give you chair when you walked in?’ I said: ‘Yes!’ He said, ‘Well, they did not do that to me!’ … Look, I suppose that subconsciously we were all aware that what was being done to our brothers and sisters in this country was wrong. That people were not being treated with dignity but...somebody else was doing it. I was treating people with dignity. But I was not doing anything to get my brothers to treat their brothers with dignity. So it was like the Germans in the Second World War. They saw nothing. Heard nothing. Nothing. That was the Gestapo that was doing it, not me. You know” (Gillespie, 2000). These are powerful, change-promoting realizations that come directly from the experience of the group’s diversity.

4 Success Factors

The interviewees mentioned a number of factors that they considered critical for the success of the scenario method. The following list summarizes what the interviewees saw as important.

4.1 Project Management:

1 Project Organizer: The quality of the project depends on the relationship skills of the manager. It is important that the project manager be in close contact with all of the participants, especially in the preparation phase but also throughout the process. S/he should work full-time on the project and should be sensitive to the need of the participants.

2 Convener: The convener should be neutral, with limited power but with a rich and influential network, a typical network leader whose influence expands his/her formal authority. The convener’s credibility across sectors and political parties is important. Her/his own agenda should be transparent. Commitment and knowledge about the specific circumstances and issues in the country were mentioned as other important characteristics.

3 Promoter: The credibility of the promoter group is a critical success factor. Transparency and influence are also relevant.

4 Facilitation: The interviewees mentioned the importance of the quality of facilitation, and a number of participants mentioned the specific facilitator (in all three cases Adam Kahane) as an important success factor. It is not possible to conclude from the interviews what exactly
defines good facilitation. The interviewees mentioned experience, trust, neutrality, not interfering, enabling, and being foreign as important qualities of a facilitator.

5 Financing: The source of financing should be transparent and “neutral.”
6 Intent: There should be a crystal clear definition of the group’s intent.
7 Venue: Participants though that the scenario project should be held in a quiet, small, and remote location with natural light and beautiful surroundings where it was also possible to take a walk and recreate. No TV in rooms, good food, and a place to gather in the evenings were also mentioned as positive features.

4.2 Participants

The composition of the participant group is a key factor in the success of the scenario project. Participants should be potential future leaders, and they should be diverse representatives of society as a whole. Participants must have the time to commit to the projects and must be committed to the country’s development. Participants are free to attend in their own right without mandates, and to be non-dogmatic in the positions they take.

4.3 Method

The interviewees mentioned a number of factors that they considered critical for the success of the scenario method. The following list summarizes what they saw as important.

- An open brainstorming phase
- Good research between the workshops
- Clearly defined process rules
- Informal meetings during workshop breaks
- Good facilitation that enables and is not interfering but at the same times takes the lead and helps summarize the scenarios.
- The scenarios captured in powerful and memorable images that communicate well.

5 Can the Impact Be Systematically Reproduced?

In all three civic scenario projects most of the participants had learning experiences that changed their ways of thinking. Individual changes in thinking are essential because it is individuals who communicate the scenarios, who initiate follow-up projects, and who build networks that support
social change. Only when the scenario work engages the participants in a dialogue that allows them to access their deeper level of thinking and commitment does the scenario work have an impact.

Participants described their initial confusion about what to do and the purpose of their being together: “My initial impression when I got involved in the Mont Fleur scenario project [was that] it was sort of semi-confused [and] unclear whether we were making any sense. The shortcoming is that the process confused me in the initial stages” (Gillespie, 2000). The participants described how their thinking and involvement changed over time: “We are unaware of the great richness in others. We do not see it… there is a lot, quite a lot, to learn from people who, frankly speaking, one would never have considered a possible source of learning” (Diez Pinto, 2000).

In all three cases interviewees described the inner changes that the process brought about. Why do some processes change people’s thinking so thoroughly that their behavior changes and they become committed to acting differently? Research on change processes in groups distinguishes different phases of change. The classical model, developed by Kurt Lewin and Edgar Schein, emphasizes three phases: unfreezing, change, and refreezing (Schein, 1987). The most important phase is the unfreezing phase, which makes change possible. The art of facilitation is to design a process that includes spaces and time that support the unfreezing process. The final phase is the move into action. The actual change occurs in between, as described in Figure 1 below.
Figure 1. Different Levels and Phases of Change (Scharmer, 2001 forthcoming)

Level 0 is the well known. Problem s cause reaction. One group violates rules, the opposite group reacts. One act leads to another. As one civic scenario participated stated, “War produces something very complicated and it is the absence of tolerance, because war as such is a drastic solution for everything, it is the maximum solution so that when you break your word you have to take up arms, which makes it difficult to be tolerant of the ideas of others” (De León and Diez Pinto, 2000).

Action and reaction are determined by different underlying levels. One is the structure or the policies that are in place and influence individual action. But at another level, structure and policies are based on mental models of how people think. To use an example from outside the three civic scenario projects, in Singapore, the police changed their mission statement from “Being a police force for Singapore” to “Being a force for Singapore.” With the second statement the members of the police hoped to express that their mission was to help instead of to control. The framing of this new mission marked a breakthrough in their change process because it helped them to think differently about themselves and their purpose.

We know from personal experience how hard it is to sustain a change effort. In organizations and corporations most change efforts fail: according to studies by Arthur D. Little and by McKinsey & Co., two-thirds of Total Quality Management (TQM) programs “grind to a halt because of the failure to produce hoped-for results.” The same is true for reengineering, where the success rate falls between 20 and 50%. Change efforts that involve an larger entities, nations or
transnational units, are even more complex. Constituencies with contradictory goals, shadows from the past that reach out to the present, lack of a communication system, and many other factors make the large-scale change effort a problem of highest complexity. The complexity of these problems require a change process that accesses the deepest level of change – levels 3 and 4 in Figure 1.

The deepest level of change touches the will or intent of the participants and answers the question, “Where does our commitment come from?” The uncovering of will or intent is necessary to ensure that change is sustainable and that the purpose is being put into practice. Not every change process needs to involve all levels of change or access the deepest level, but a methodology that aims at social change has to walk the participants through the deeper levels where they become aware of their own thinking and reflect on it, and where they become able to access their intent and will and build commitment for social change.

6 Dialogue is the essential tool for change that allows access to the deeper level of behavior

Civic scenario participants recalled how the level of trust built up throughout the scenario work, how they learned to listen, and how their perspectives changed. According to one participant in the Guatemala project, “When I finally decided to open my mind and forsake my prejudices, I learned from people whom I would have never approached. I learned from them as persons, at a personal level, but also about some aspects that represented their ideologies. … Several businessmen spoke of their experiences with kidnapping. It is then that one begins to understand why these people became hardened and are full of hate and resentment because these experiences are granted little or no value, depending on a person’s position” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

Participants described the different levels of communication they observed and participated in throughout the process. What they described illustrates the different phases of communication captured in Figure 2, below.
1. Talking nice/Politeness

Interviewees described their interactions at the beginning of their common work as playing according to the existing rules: “In the first session, the project facilitator informed us that it was necessary to establish the rules of the game, a series of principles that would serve as a basis for our work and discussions. He said that we had to figure them out, so we came up with a list of eight rules; for instance, punctuality, seriousness, respect for the ideas of others, listening, etc. After all of us expressed our agreement with the rules, these were written on a board and kept before us all the time…. These rules helped us to keep our discussions on a low key…. They also helped us to feel free to talk and to expect respect” (Díez Pinto, 2000). Communicating according to rules implies that people don’t speak up when the conversation contradicts their own thinking.

2. Talking Tough

Interviewees described how the group moved from being nice and engaging on only a superficial level towards speaking up. “At the beginning it was a little hard, there is much mistrust in the first meetings. No one wants to talk, everyone limits him/herself and says the minimum of what he has to say, but little by little that environment starts breaking down and you are able to have all sorts of
things come out, and obviously they must be worked on” (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000). That process moves the group to a new level of communicating.

At one moment the mode of conversation was changed by one participant’s introduction of a different perspective: “The first round in the first session was extremely negative because we were all looking back to the events of recent years, which had left a deep imprint on us. Thus, a first moment full of pessimism was generated. Suddenly, a young man stood up and questioned our pessimism in a very direct manner. This moment marked the beginning of a very important change, and we continually referred to it afterwards” (Díez Pinto, 2000). When people speak their minds, conflicts show up. Interviewees described how their common work on the scenarios helped them to examine their disagreements and work together to resolve them. In this phase of communicating, listening means listening to different opinions.

3. Reflective Dialogue
In a next phase participants described a form of listening that is based on a mutual understanding: “We were capable of understanding each other, of talking to each other; we were capable of respecting each other, of doing this. This is something that I am certain has impressed many people in the country. And one of the conversations heard there was: Were the people of the guerrillas there? And if so, were they listening? Yes. This is something so simple, but I believe that what might be happening in the country may be influenced by one of these processes“ (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000).

In the phase of reflective dialogue, the participants individually and as a group develop an inner voice that helps them focus on what they are doing. They listen more carefully and moved away from a debate. A lot of interviewees described this new form of communication: “I think that the greatest impact was to discover to what degree you always engage in conversation without listening to what the other person says. And it is something that was so evident that one begins to put it in practice almost immediately. This is something…that I took with me” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

One interviewee described the exact difference between mode two, debate, and mode three, reflective dialogue: “So I try to make an effort not to answer but to actually listen, not to be thinking mentally of how am I going to respond but rather ‘what is this guy trying to tell me?’ To think beyond what this guy is trying to tell me, to go even deeper and say, ‘why is he saying it the way he is saying it?’… Just the exercise of saying ‘Is this what you are trying to say? Am I understanding it correctly?’… So this is something that was very powerful and something that is part of my baggage. I take it with me, I go with it, I exercise it, I engage it, and it is good” (Díez Pinto, 2000).
The difference between reflective dialogue and the debate mode of conversation is that the listener adopts the perspective of the person talking. He tries to understand the other person’s perspective. Participants described the bonding that evolved from the common effort to get to this level of understanding.

4. Generative Dialogue

Two interviewees described the next level of dialogue: “[One participant] witnessed an exhumation. It was a large field and he was suddenly called … to see what they had found … evidence of the skeleton of an unborn baby who had been buried, perhaps alive or still in its mother’s womb, and the mother had been probably buried alive. That is the history…. But we were aware of it. I was. I was a politician…. It is one thing to know about something and know it as statistical data, and another to actually feel it…. And I think that all of us had to go through this process…. I think that, after understanding this, everyone is committed to preventing it from happening again. In giving this testimony, he was sincere, calm and serene, without a trace of hate in his voice. This gave way to the moment of silence that, I would say, lasted at least one minute. It was horrible. … If you ask any of us, we would say that this moment was like a large communion. No one dared to break the silence” (Díez Pinto, 2000).

When communication reaches this point, the participants recognize their common ground. Their interactions can then take place at a level of connection that transcends individual interests. We call this level of communication “generative dialogue.” Generative dialogue allows the participants to experience the whole. Another example of generative dialogue is when a new idea comes up in a conversation and it is not possible to identify which participant had the idea because the idea emerged from the flow of the conversation. Musicians often describe a similar experience when they play together and start listening to the whole and no longer to their individual contributions.

Before reaching this level of dialogue it is important for the group to have moved through the other levels of communication: first the rules are established (talking nice), then people learn to speak their mind (talking tough), and then they listen to each other and develop an inner observer (reflective dialogue). Connected to that are different modes of listening. But these phases are not automatic. A lot of groups get stuck in Level 2, debate, and then regress to Level 1, talking nice. And, depending on the objective of the conversation, it may not be necessary to move into reflective or even generative dialogue.
But once the group has reached a generative dialogue it provides new opportunities, such as preventing a horrible event from happening again. This level of commitment is necessary for profound change to occur. Thus we see how dialogue is a tool for change that allows individuals and groups to move to yet a deeper level of behavior, where intent, will, and commitment are strong enough to make things happen.

7 What Is missing: A Plan for Moving into Action

The interviews with participants in civic scenario projects have shown that these projects can be a tool for initiating dialogue across differences and moving individuals and groups to a level of reflection that recognizes the need for sustainable change and transformation. The remaining question is whether this dialogue and agreement can lead to a resolution of the complex problems societies face.

Scenario work ends with the completion of the dialogue. The next step is completing the product or the agreed actions/decisions agreed collectively. The participants and organizers disseminate the resulting scenarios and discuss the importance of thinking strategically about possible and plausible futures. But the dissemination process is mentioned most often as one of the biggest limitations of the process, because the scenarios are a means, not an end in themselves, to promote and effect social change. The next challenge for the practitioners of the civic scenario method, therefore, is to design a dissemination process that reflects the method of the workshop: that is, to engage more people in open, multi-stakeholder dialogue and work on future scenarios for the society.

In connection with the impact of the scenario work, interviewees mentioned several concrete projects that participants had cooperated in establishing, such as an institute to fight poverty and a foundation for peace. Would it be possible to design an infrastructure that would systematically support such initiatives? The willingness of many participants in all three scenario workshops to be interviewed and reconnect with the other participants suggests that there is a high potential for further steps: “We bet on Destino Colombia, on everything seeking alternatives that are not military, for the solution of the conflict. The fact that we are up in arms and have a military structure does not contradict our objective of putting an end to the war. The objective of our war is to finish with war, but we are not saying how. Anything that may be an alternative to settle the conflict and to avoid bloodshed and losses of lives, and to avoid suffering, and to avoid
socioeconomic traumas, we will contribute to. I believe that the contribution we can make to this process [Destino Colombia] is to participate in it” (De León and Díez Pinto, 2000).

8 Challenges

All growth processes in nature are governed by the interaction of self-reinforcing (positive) and balancing (negative) feedback. Similarly, the growth of new practices involves self-reinforcing processes. But every growth process in nature is counterbalanced by “limiting” processes. Such limiting processes represent a system’s continual search for balance points – a human body’s homeostatic state, an ecosystem’s balance of predator and prey, or a company’s historic sense of identity and continuity. As Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana puts it, “all growth occurs while it is being inhibited.”

Initiating and leading change requires both identifying the forces of change and using them as a roadmap (Senge/Käufer, 1999). The strength of civic scenario work as a positive force for change in a society lies in its outlining of different possible futures and taking a longer perspective. Thus both forces, the reinforcing and the counterbalancing, can become visible. Scenario work has the potential to initiate dialogue among participants who are opponents, enemies, or individuals living in separate worlds. It allows participants to access deeper levels of knowing and experience and by doing so develop the intention and commitment to change. Scenario exercises also create or strengthen relationships, build trust between individuals, generate empathy, and enrich people’s thinking.

The learning histories of Mont Fleur, Destino Colombia, and Visión Guatemala reveal that scenario work can have a profound impact on the participants’ personal decisions, as well as an influence on decision-making processes in a country. The latter occurs when participants influence the national public debate or when participants initiate change in the institutions and organizations where they work. In that sense scenario exercises are a tool for facilitating social change.

The next challenge in civic scenario work seems to be how to ensure the move from reflection to action. This may involve the creation of a support and learning infrastructure to implement what the groups agree on collectively. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that the real power in the scenario method is in the transformative dialogue that is central to the process. In the end, it is the evolving new thinking and connections among diverse participants that will help society change in positive directions.
References and End Notes

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A research team consisting of four members prepared these learning histories: Elena Díez Pinto, Glennifer Gillespie and Alfredo de León conducted interviews in South Africa, Guatemala, and Colombia. Katrin Käufer supervised the research.
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Introduction and Focus

At the University of the Western Cape, Professor Pieter le Roux and his colleague, Professor Vincent Maphai, first thought about using a different approach to convene a group to think together about possible futures for the “new South Africa,” because they were weary of the kind of conferences that were all too familiar—conferences that le Roux referred to as “dialogues of the deaf.” At that time, around 1990, various European funding agencies were sponsoring such conferences, each attempting to promote its own formula for democracy, such as Social Democracy or Federalism. When one of them invited le Roux to organize a gathering, he was unenthusiastic. Those who believed in the approach the funders were promoting would come, he thought, and those who did not agree with it would not come, and so it would be a futile event. Instead, the two professors decided to try the scenario methodology, a respected tool for strategic thinking in the business arena but one that had not yet been tried in the civic realm. “Vincent and I just said that conferences try and sell ideas and do not really involve people,” said le Roux. “A scenario exercise is a way that you can get combined involvement from different groups.” This was the genesis of the Mont Fleur Scenario Project.

This paper argues that there were three important arenas in which the Mont Fleur project had an impact. First, it influenced the thinking of the individuals who were involved in the scenario work, some of whom went on to occupy powerful political and national positions as a result of South Africa’s first democratic elections, in 1994. Second, the scenarios created at Mont Fleur, informed public debate in the period of transition to democracy, as project participants presented them to the National Executive Committees of political parties, to the cabinet of the existing government, to business leaders, and to the general public. Finally, the Mont Fleur project had an impact on the thinking of the African National Congress (ANC) executive group, particularly around the development of its economic policy, which was influenced by scenario work that illuminated some of the dangers of a populist macroeconomic approach.

1 Mont Fleur

1.1 Context and Conditions in the Country

In February 1990, South African President F.W. de Klerk announced Nelson Mandela’s release from prison after 27 years. In the same announcement, he rescinded an order banning Mandela’s party, the ANC, and other political groups that had formed to fight apartheid—the Pan African Congress (PAC), and the South African Communist Party (SACP). With this move, everything in the country changed, and it was clear that institutionalized apartheid was dead.

At the time the Mont Fleur Project began, in September 1991, the country as a whole was changing gear, and there was uncertainty and confusion about how the transition from apartheid to democracy would take place. The violence that had characterized the previous decade continued. At the same time, there were talks going on everywhere about the future of the country—in the formal multi-party negotiating forum, the Congress for a Democratic South Africa; in policy meetings on a wide

1 All quotes in this paper are taken from interviews with 14 of the 22 participants in the Mont Fleur Project. The interviews were conducted in June and July 2000 in South Africa.

3 Inkatha is the major party of the Zulu people who number some 7 million people and are not ANC supporters.
array of topics; and in informal “bosberaads” (gatherings in remote retreat settings) that simply brought people together to get to know each other and talk about the issues together for the first time. The transition period between 1990 and 1994 presented an opportunity for people to get acquainted across racial barriers, and many individuals and groups took advantage of it.

Although a negotiated political settlement was not assured, the likelihood was that democratic elections would produce an ANC government, representing the black majority. In that case, most ANC supporters expected it to act quickly to address the plight of the poor, for example by providing housing for all. The business establishment had similar expectations. It feared that the ANC would nationalize major industries and implement other strategies for the rapid redistribution of wealth, further crippling an already stagnant economy.

1.2 Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. – Aug. 1991</td>
<td>Preparation phase:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First scenario team workshop held at Mont Fleur</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22 participants (see list of participants below)meet for 3 days, brainstorm 30 stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 1991</td>
<td>selected non-team members do supporting research, distribute research papers to team members, core team holds weekly meetings, finalizes 9 preliminary stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. – Nov. 1991</td>
<td>Second team workshop at Mont Fleur</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop team assesses stories, agrees on 4 draft scenarios and names them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 1991</td>
<td>Third team workshop at Mont Fleur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop team refines the 4 final scenarios, agrees on the name “Mont Fleur Scenarios”</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1992</td>
<td>The video producer creates a video</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The core team holds a workshop to test scenarios with invited leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1992</td>
<td>National launch of Mont Fleur scenarios</td>
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<td></td>
<td>This includes:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>reports in major newspapers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>publication of a Mont Fleur booklet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>presentations to general public</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mailings to embassies, trade unions, other groups to “market” presentations of the scenarios</td>
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<td></td>
<td>beginning of dissemination process</td>
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1.3 Summary of the Scenarios

Mont Fleur workshop participants analyzed the social, political, and economic issues confronting South Africa and compiled 30 stories about how events might unfold over the next decade. These included stories of revolution, right wing revolts, and democratic, free market utopias. The workshop team then carefully evaluated these potential scenarios against criteria such as plausibility and consistency, until nine stories survived. These ultimately became the following four possible futures for the country.

The Ostrich Scenario
The Ostrich depicts a government that does not want to face reality and hides its head in the sand at the first sign of danger. It is unable to fly. As a result of the initial steps taken by the de Klerk government, the international community becomes more tolerant towards white South Africa. Encouraged by this support the Nationalist government hardens its negotiation position, while at the same time, the liberation movement loses international support because it is too radical. The result is a standoff: negotiations break down, and the government decides to form a moderate alliance unacceptable to the black majority. The state represses by force the resistance that ensues. The business climate worsens and the economy remains stagnant. Social inequities remain unaddressed, and eventually the opposing parties are forced back to the negotiating table, but under worse social, political, and economic conditions than before.

The Lame Duck Scenario
The Lame Duck envisions a protracted transition period lasting for most of the decade. No matter how hard it tries, the nation cannot get off the ground. The Nationalist government and leaders of the liberation movement succeed in making a negotiated settlement, but it is a transitional arrangement, filled with “sunset clauses” containing minority vetoes, and various other checks and balances. These agreements, which respond to the wishes of all parties, but in fact satisfy none, are paralyzing to the government. The social and economic crisis remains inadequately addressed, with the government mired in a long and indecisive transition period. This situation discourages investors and creates more uncertainty about the future.

The Icarus Scenario
Icarus was the figure in Greek mythology who achieved flight on wings made of wax and feathers but, exhilarated by his new-found freedom and power, flew too close to the sun. The sun melted the wax, and Icarus fell to his death. In this scenario, the new democratically elected government tries to achieve too much too quickly, embarking on a massive spending spree to address the imbalances of the past. Initially, living standards increase and social conditions improve, but this is economically unsustainable and results in economic collapse. The very people the new government is attempting to serve end up worse off than before.

The Flamingo Scenario
This is the scenario of inclusive democracy and steady growth. Flamingoes take off slowly, rise together, and fly high. In order to achieve such a future for South Africa, the new government creates conditions in which economic growth is initially slow, but sustainable. It adopts sound social and economic policies and observes macroeconomic constraints. It makes well-targeted social investments, which give people confidence that their social needs will be met in the longer term. Business people become convinced that the government is trustworthy and that its policies will remain consistent, and therefore investment and employment grow. The essence of this
scenario is the notion of broad participation that allows for a sound balance between social reconstruction and sustained economic growth.

2 Findings

The findings described in the following pages are based primarily on interviews with Mont Fleur participants conducted in June 2000 in South Africa. These were open-ended, one-on-one interviews, focused on a set of questions designed to encourage reflection and surface observations and learning by the interviewees. The learning historians tested their initial findings with a sub-group of the interviewees, in a dialogue held at Mont Fleur, and modified them as a result of the group’s input.

2.1 Influence on Individuals

The Mont Fleur project was a multi-stakeholder dialogue process, like many of the national debates and discussions that were going on in the period of transition to democracy. Two major elements made it different, however. One was the use of the scenario methodology. The other was the fact that the participants—people from many different interest groups—attended as individuals in their own right, not as representatives of the parties or groups to which they belonged.

Of the 14 Mont Fleur participants interviewed, most had vivid recollections of their experience of thinking and working together during that time. For most, it was a very special experience, and they felt privileged to have engaged in it. One or two interviewees described it as the high point of their lives. Nine years later, some of them remembered exact dates and times of the shifts in their thinking, and they still felt the excitement of the process and the discovery of others they experienced. Although some of them had met before at one or another of the numerous conferences and meetings that were going on in the country, they had never had to grapple with thinking together in the way the scenario process required. They recalled being forced to challenge their ideas of what “other” South Africans were like, and they noted that simply engaging in conversation with those others was dramatically unusual:

*We had a very diverse team of whites, blacks, Asians, coloreds, rich, poor, community workers, trade unionists—a really interesting mix, and the fact that we could get together every now and then for three or four days at a time in a place like Mont Fleur—work together, play together, go for long walks after the sessions were over [was remarkable]. We would be walking for instance with a guy like Tito Mboweni [an ANC economist who later became Governor of the South African Reserve Bank]. Tito Mboweni was the last sort of person I would have talked to a year before that...very articulate, very bright. We did not meet blacks like that normally. I do not know where they were all buried, but they were there. ...new [for me] was how open-minded they themselves were. These were not people who simply said: ‘Look, this is how it is going to be when we take over one day.’ They were prepared to say: ‘Hey, how would it be? Let’s discuss it.’*

*Businessman*
It was not only the perceptions of each other that shifted during the Mont Fleur Project, but also people’s views about what the future might look like. One interviewee described gaining the capacity to think in terms of a longer-term future for herself and for South Africa.

You know, we came from a background of having lived in a country which was isolated from the rest of the world for more than twenty years. Because of the violence of the apartheid system, many of us, especially [those of us from] the oppressed group, tended to live only for tomorrow: ‘As long as I can live till tomorrow, do not get shot on the street or arrested at a rally, or be jailed for my political activities, I will make the best of today and not think about tomorrow. Not plan for tomorrow.’ The scenario work taught me to see the bigger picture and to look further and wider, [to look] on a personal level [at] my financial well-being, [at] my actions today which would help me fulfill my dreams for the future and for my children’s future.

Community Organization Leader and Women’s Leader

Participants in the Mont Fleur workshops indicated that the scenario project had a significant impact on their lives in a variety of ways. Many were deeply affected by the experience of working closely with people whose experience and thinking were very different from their own. Some noted they were surprised by, interested in, and ultimately influenced by the views of people whom they had not expected to respect. Interviewees tended to live said they had learned patience, or developed listening skills, or in other cases learned the value of open dialogue. The Mont Fleur experience changed many people’s thinking, in part because the scenario work made them take a longer-term perspective. The process was uncomfortable for many participants, especially at the beginning, but it created strong bonds among them.

2.2 Influence on Individuals who Later Occupied National Positions

A substantial number of Mont Fleur participants went on to occupy influential positions in South Africa. In 2000 these included the Minister of Finance, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, the Chairman of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the Managing Director of Transnet, a large transport company, and two influential ANC members of parliament. Others became advisors to government ministers, the leader of an educational institution serving 80,000 students, the Director of Education in one of the provinces, a leading participant in the Reconstruction and Development Project, and a member of the team that reformed the South African Post Office and privatized telephone services. How did the scenario work influence them? It appears that an important consequence of their participation in Mont Fleur was that they acquired skills personally and were educated about matters in which they were not previously conversant.

A big fear that most of us have about most things is what we don’t know....I thought my skills were largely organizational, and I think that by working in the way that we did [at Mont Fleur], it kind of broke through that fear. I saw I could engage with the [economic] issues. Certainly, at a personal level, it was an enormous fillip for my own confidence and for doing what I needed to do...The strength of a process like this is that it actually sends forth people with skill.

Minister of Finance
I learned an enormous amount because I have never been involved in economics, particularly. There was quite a heavy emphasis on the economic side—a lot of economists on the project—and quite a heavy emphasis on what was going to happen to the economy and how the country would progress. I was coming from the development side. [But] I became interested in [economics] and it has affected me because now I serve on the finance committee [in Parliament] and ...I often think about the Mont Fleur scenarios...I think we nailed the issues quite accurately, [though] it has been much more difficult to implement than any of us imagined.

ANC Member of Parliament

It is clear that the experience of Mont Fleur, both the rigorous process of scenario work and the content of the scenarios themselves, are still vividly carried by those participants who are now in leadership positions in South Africa. In a speech in 2000—eight years after the scenario project concluded—Tito Mboweni, Governor of the Reserve Bank, alluded to the Icarus scenario. “I can still visualize the way in which we took the discussion of macroeconomic policies,” another participant said. “I can replay that tape over and over in my head and I know I am not the only one who can.”

The conveners of Mont Fleur were able to attract future leaders into the civic scenario project because they were widely respected and not closely aligned with any political party. One of the limitations of the project, however, was that they were not able to draw people from two important sectors, the trade unions and the main party of the Zulu people, Inkatha.

2.3 Macro Economic Policy

It is not possible to establish a direct cause/effect relationship between the macroeconomic policy of the ANC, which emerged in the early 1990s, and the work that was done at Mont Fleur. Yet, one important factor, as indicated above, is that several Mont Fleur participants occupied influential national positions in South Africa after the elections. Others had a hand in research and policy-making during the period before the elections. However, as one participant put it: “You can see the footprints of Mont Fleur everywhere.”

According to one economist who attended,

...there were a lot of people there who had the idea that if we could just have a change of government and a change in the economic system, then Utopia would be there. There was that undercurrent.... that notion...At that stage in South Africa, there was this feeling that things were wrong. Now, some people would say that things were wrong because the politics were wrong. We just had to change the political system and everything would come right. Other people would say, well, you just have to change the economic system and everything will come right. And then there were those who said, well, you have to change the economic system and the political system and everything will come right. But what I tried to do in the whole process was to say: ‘Listen, irrespective of the economic system we have, irrespective of the political system we have, there are a number of basic realities about South African economic life which are going to determine what is going to happen in this country. Irrespective of our systems.’

Establishment economist
There were several participants who believed that their contribution to the Mont Fleur project was to play the role of naysayer to the ANC participants. The question of the ANC’s economic policy was very much the topic of the moment in the early 1990s, and clearly those who were working on the scenarios and who were also part of the work on policy development, had an ideal forum in which to explore ideas.

Prior to 1990, the ANC’s economic model, or at least the common view of what it would be, was focused more on macroeconomic populism, in particular, nationalization. At Mont Fleur, participants had the opportunity to think through the logical outcome of such a policy and to look at what had happened in other countries that had pursued this approach. Many of the ANC’s new leaders had been in exile in other countries, particularly in Africa, where they some of the problems of nationalization first hand. This made them more open to hearing the arguments advanced by advocates of a liberalized market economy.

In thinking about the impact of Mont Fleur on subsequent ANC economic policy, and the relationship between its influence on future leaders and new policy development, the following remarks are typical of the views of several interviewees:

*It is very difficult to say whether the chicken or the egg came first because at the time, Trevor Manual was head of the (ANC) Economics Desk and Tito Mboweni was, I think, number two on that desk. We did not even know that they were going to be ministers at the time. Then there was Saki Macozoma, who is head of Transnet...and we did not know what he was going to be either. But I cannot help but think of the way in which the philosophies of those three, in particular, have developed. That a lot of it had its roots in the discussions we had at Mont Fleur. I do not know what happened to them in their lives. I am sure that there were a lot of other influences, but the simplicity with which we came to these conclusions together—it was quite simple, in many ways—was also profound, I thought.*

*ANC Member of Parliament*

*In April 1994, the Government of National Unity came to power in South Africa, under Nelson Mandela. Trevor Manuel became Minister of Finance in 1996. A few months later, he introduced the GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) strategy—a conventional, conservative, supply side type of economic policy. It kept interest rates high, applied conservative fiscal policy with a low budget deficit, and liberalized exports. It was intended to promote growth and drive unemployment down. When I saw GEAR—and this was not even conceptualized at Mont Fleur, it was something that was decided by the new government and the appropriate structures—when I saw it, I could look at the relationship between what the policy said and where I thought it was going to take us, and those are the sort of footprints that Mont Fleur made.*

*Economist*

So, while an assessment of the extent to which Mont Fleur influenced economic policy is an indefinite matter at best, everyone who was interviewed agreed that the work done over the period of the scenario project gave them an opportunity to think through particular courses of action to
their logical conclusion. Economic policy was a central issue in the national debate in the early 1990s, and economists representing all sides of the debate were present at Mont Fleur, along with many future leaders of the ANC government. These facts strongly suggest a connection between the development of the Icarus scenario, which looked squarely at the dangers of macroeconomic populism and the unexpectedly conservative economic policies of the ANC after 1996, embodied in GEAR.

2.4 Informing the National Debate and the Transition to Democracy

Between 1990, when the liberation movements were legalized and Mandela was released from prison, and 1994, when the first democratic elections were held, a period of intense negotiations and preparation for change took place in South Africa. It was a time of transition to democracy, and everyone knew it. The Mont Fleur project played its part in informing public debate and assisting in the transition in a variety of ways—through its impact on the individuals who participated, as described above; and also through the communication about the scenarios and the project to people who did not participate directly. Following the completion and refinement of the scenarios, the core team and participants undertook a process of dissemination. They made presentations to many groups all over the country, including private sector companies, political parties, NGOs, trade unions, clubs, academic institutions, and embassies. Altogether, team members, along with others whom they trained, delivered around 70 presentations.

A number of these were especially important in informing the national debate and assisting in the transition process. For example, several of those interviewed indicated that the presentation made to the ANC’s National Executive Committee—which all the members, including Oliver Tambo, then president of the ANC, and Nelson Mandela, attended—was not an easy one. The critical factor was that people with credibility in the ANC were there to speak out for the dangers of the Icarus scenario, in particular, even though this was hard for some of the executive members to hear.

The team chose the presenters for this meeting carefully, so that the scenarios would have the greatest possible impact. This was always the case when the team was preparing to make a presentation: those who presented were chosen for their credibility and the impact they would have on their audience by virtue of who they were. For example, the presentation to the ANC Executive was made by Trevor Manual (then Head, ANC Economics desk), Pieter le Roux (a Mont Fleur convener), Tito Mboweni (ANC Economics Desk), and Koosum Kalyan (a private sector representative with credibility and standing among the left). When those individuals voiced the concerns about macroeconomic populism captured in the Icarus scenario, the ANC Executive group had to take them seriously. The video presentation of the Mont Fleur scenarios used the same approach—each scenario was presented by the person least likely, because of his political affiliations, to agree with the approach of that scenario.

The team also made presentations made to the PAC, a group to the left of the ANC. In the early 1990s was threatening to boycott elections and was known for its revolutionary slogan “One Settler, One Bullet.” Following a Mont Fleur presentation to its leadership, however, the PAC announced it would participate in the elections, and subsequently it launched a scenario project of its own.

If you look at the policies of the PAC prior to our policy conference in September 1993, there is no room...for changes. If you look at our policy after that, we had to revise the land policy: we
had to revise quite a number of things. They were directly or indirectly influenced by Mont Fleur.

PAC Member

The presentations of the Mont Fleur scenarios helped to stimulate critical thinking and reflection in both the ANC and PAC at a critical time. The presentations made to business were also critical. The corporate world was nervous about what the next government—generally expected to be an ANC government—would do, especially with regard to economic policy. The presentations helped to calm those fears, and they enabled the future ANC leaders who were the presenters to build relationships with the business establishment.

I remember when we did a presentation for a group of businesspeople in Johannesburg. There were 100 or 200 people there and it had an impact in the sense that people knew beforehand that these people presenting the scenarios were going to become important in the South African setup. So people outside the scenarios, on the establishment side as well, took it seriously. I think having been exposed to the scenarios by and large made them more positive about the future.

ANC Leader

Before the dissemination process began, the Mont Fleur team held a workshop to test the scenarios with a diverse group of prominent South Africans. Then, in mid-1992, an influential weekly newspaper that had credibility with the left published a booklet describing the scenarios and the Mont Fleur process. The team also created a video, which it sent to all public libraries in South Africa, as well as to every major university and, on request, to individuals and companies. The dissemination strategy also included a few large-group public presentations of the scenarios, as well as presentation in other newspapers. However, most interviewees agreed that the most effective way of communicating was through interaction with relatively small groups.

What has really worked is the small group, convincing people, not this mass [dissemination]. That is partly why we did not go for the wide publication, because it starts working when people ask questions and make contributions…the reason why we didn’t is that sometimes I changed things on the spot. Immediately, by having one little thing in the scenario presentation changed, that specific person [would] buy into it.

Mont Fleur convener

One important group, the Inkatha party, which had not participated in Mont Fleur, did not welcome a presentation of the scenarios. Yet, in general, by engaging people in carefully targeted small groups the Mont Fleur team was able to influence key players in South Africa at a time of national transition, at the same time exposing some of the future leaders of the country to constituencies they would otherwise not easily have been able to access. In addition to receiving local exposure, the Mont Fleur scenarios were presented in the U.S. to staff at the World Bank, where the exercise was very well received.

The response was: We are so proud of South Africa. You haven’t even had your democratic elections yet, but the future government is looking at the long-term picture.
2.5 Power of the Scenarios

All this publicity made Mont Fleur quite well known for a while:

What was nice is that it became a household name. You could talk about the Flight of the Flamingoes and everybody knew what it was. It was not as though you had to explain it to them...the nice thing was that nobody could tell us that the scenarios were wrong. They had such logic—it might not happen, but the fact is that it was a logical story...a very consistent story, very logical, very readable.  

...The imagery of the scenarios was captivating, the language simple, and the concepts explained in a comprehensible manner. ...de Klerk said quite a few times: ‘No, I am not a lame duck.’ Tito Mboweni recently said: ‘I won’t fly too close to the sun like Icarus’...the images of the scenarios, I think, were part of the power. We happened to get very good images.  

Mont Fleur convener

2.6 Recommendations from the Participants

Factors contributing to the success of Mont Fleur, and any successful civic scenario work, mentioned as important by most of those interviewed were:
- choosing a really good, unbiased facilitator
- selecting a representative, diverse group of people with the time to devote to such an exercise
- choosing a team consisting of intelligent visionaries committed to their country and willing to see the wider picture
- ensuring that the convening person or group has credibility with all the stakeholders
- having the right timing, in the sense that people have to be ready to talk to each other rather than fight
- paying attention to research and ensuring that it is focused enough to serve team members who are not specialized in the field under discussion; so that whatever is discussed is feasible, authentic and rooted in data
- drawing in those who were likely to be important players after the transition period
- keeping the scenarios simple and clear

2.7 Limitations of the Mont Fleur Work

In hindsight, there was very little about Mont Fleur that those participants who were interviewed would do differently if they had the opportunity. They agreed, though, that there were a few things they would change, and would recommend that others embarking on national scenario projects might bear in mind.
• They would have made a stronger effort to include Inkatha, which is the main political party of the Zulu people, and one of the major contributors to the violent conflict with the ANC in KwaZulu/Natal province during the transition process and thereafter.

• They would have made a more serious effort to engage the unions.

• They would have starting planning and thinking about the dissemination process earlier and done it more professionally—and made sure that they planned national TV coverage for the scenarios and had exposure in the most widely read newspapers instead of just among intellectual, progressive readers. Also, they would have embarked on a more aggressive marketing program to reach more people on the ground with the product.

• They would have included more women, more young people and more church groups on the team.

3 Learnings and Questions for the Future

3.1 Initial Confusion

One of the challenges many people alluded to was the confusion they faced at the beginning of the scenario process. A methodological question for future civic scenario projects is whether initial confusion is an inevitable part of the process and therefore unavoidable, or whether some improvement should be introduced to make the beginning easier for participants.

3.2 Dissemination of the Product

Another set of questions relates to the use and dissemination of the scenarios after they have been completed. To what extent is it possible to plan this process before the end of the work? And how is this best achieved? It is through “massification”—wide distribution to every community, every organization? Or is it through personal, in-depth presentation and discussion with smaller groups? Whom is one trying to reach and influence: the elite of each sector? the decision-makers of the future? the general population? To what must the answers to these questions emerge through the group during the process, and to what extent can they be decided ahead of time?

Perhaps a limitation of the current civic scenario methodology is that it does not include a guide or map of what to do when the scenarios have been completed, for example, what a concept or set of alternatives for action steps might constitute and the pros and cons of different dissemination strategies.

3.3 Intention of Scenario Work

The question of the intention of scenario work is also an important one. It is clear from the interviews that the intention of the Mont Fleur project was to influence future leaders—future ANC leaders in particular. This was a serious exercise undertaken specifically to make a contribution to the future of South Africa by influencing the elite. Their clarity of intention shaped the project that emerged and helped to make it successful. Their experience suggests that planners of future civic scenario projects must question themselves closely about their own intentions: who is it they are seeking to influence, and why? And what is their agenda?
4 Interpretive Conclusions

4.1 First, Second and Third Order Influence

The data provided by the interviews indicate that the primary impact of the Mont Fleur experience was on the people who participated. The second order of influence seems to have been on the people with whom the participants were involved, such as the political groups they were drawn from, and those to whom they made presentations and with whom they engaged in discussion. By this means, the national debate was influenced, which, at the time Mont Fleur was undertaken, was at the stage of needing to focus on future economic policy.

It was because of this, because of the future leadership positions assumed by several of the Mont Fleur participants, and because of the overlap with other exercises, research projects and studies being undertaken at the time, that the future macroeconomic policy of the country bears “the footprints of Mont Fleur.” This is the third order influence.

First order influence: **On the people who participated**
- Changed/temporarily suspended their personal mindsets
- Engaged them in a memorable historic exercise
- Allowed them to make a contribution to the emerging new South Africa

Second Order Influence: **On those with whom the participants engaged**
- Political and other groups they came from
- Groups to which they made presentations
- Influence on the national debate

Third order influence: **“Footprints” on later ANC fiscal policy**
- Future leaders in economic field internalized and applied scenarios
- Ran concurrently with and influenced other economic policy exercises
4.2 Prototypical South African Experience

It can be said that the Mont Fleur project was a spectacular success. But it can also be argued that this kind of exercise—dialogues, ‘bosberaads,’ and forums of all kinds—constitute a prototypical South African experience, and that it was no accident that South Africa was the country that first adapted scenario planning for a national agenda, and in effect gave this kind of process to the world.

4.3 The Politics of Civic Scenario Work

It can be argued that civic scenario work is entirely political in the sense that it seeks to influence those either already holding power or moving into positions of power, and thereby to influence the future of a nation. If its purpose is indeed to influence the dominant coalition, future leaders or the elite of different sectors (or to have these people influence and be influenced by each other), then there are a number of questions to consider, the answers to which can have important political implications for nations embarking on scenario work.

- Who convenes the scenario team, and what is their agenda?
- Who funds the project, and why are they funding it?
- Who is selected to participate, and why?
- In the dissemination phase, who does the presentations, to whom, and why?
- Who owns the scenario project?

5 Summary

The following table summarizes key features that characterized the Mont Fleur Project.

5.1 Preparation Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conveners</th>
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<tr>
<td>Network leaders whose influence was greater than their positional power and who were well connected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credible and respected across sectors and political parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well connected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transparent about own agenda and funding sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellently informed about current national situation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
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<td>Trusted</td>
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<td>“Neutral”</td>
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<td>Foreign</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential future leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverse group representative of the whole society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free to attend in their own right without mandates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good, non-dogmatic thinkers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had time to commit to project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed to country’s development</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Chosen on the basis of a specific field of expertise
• Credible in South African society

**Project Manager**
• Person of standing and credibility across the board
• Knowledgeable about issues in the country
• Committed full time to project
• Connected with people on a personal level and able to sustain relationships
• Good at follow-up
• Sensitive to needs of participants
• Included spouses where possible

**Venue**
• Quiet, small, remote conference center
• Natural light
• Beautiful, wild surroundings with walks and recreation
• No television in rooms
• Good food
• Place to gather in the evenings

**Timing**
• Banning orders lifted on political parties
• Mandela and others released from prison
• Negotiations in process
• General understanding that there was to be transition to democracy
• Violence ongoing

### 5.2 Workshops and Method

• Process adapted from corporate sector model
• Initial brainstorming of 30 stories which were refined down to four scenarios
• Three scenario team meetings of three days each were held
• Time from first to last meeting of scenario team was six months
• A lot of work was done between sessions e.g. by core team, researchers
• Facilitator respected and regarded as excellent by team—“non-interfering” and enabling
• Facilitator kept up to date by project manager on what was going on in the country between sessions

### 5.3 Impact and Dissemination

• Three levels of impact: on those involved, on the groups they were drawn from and presented to, and less directly on the fiscal policy of the ANC government
• Dissemination strategy had three prongs: teams presented to small groups, a video was made and widely distributed, and a pamphlet was published and distributed through a national newspaper as well as being sent out separately
• Presenters carefully chosen for their credibility and potential influence with the group they would be presenting to
5 Appendix

6.1 Participants in the Mont Fleur Scenario Project

Dorothy Boesak  
Project Manager

Rob Davies  
Research Professor & Co-director of the Center for Southern African Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)

Howard Gabriels  
Previous Trade Unionist with the National Union of Mineworkers; represented the office of the funder

Adam Kahane  
Facilitator and expert in scenario-based strategic planning at Shell International, London

Koosum Kalyan  
Manager of Social, Political, Communications and Media Department at Shell South Africa

Michiel le Roux  
Managing Director of Distillers Company

Pieter le Roux  
Professor in Development Studies and Director of the Institute for Social Development, UWC

Johann Liebenberg  
Senior General Manager: External Relations, Chamber of Mines

Saki Macozoma  
Member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC. Head of the Media Liaison United of the Department of Information and Publicity, ANC.

Tito Mboweni  
Economist in the Department of Economic Planning of the ANC

Gaby Magomola  
Chairman of the Inter-Africa Group

Mosebyane Malatsi  
PAC economist and senior policy analyst at The Development Bank of South Africa in The Center of Policy and Strategic Analysis

Thobeka Mangwana  
Teacher of Social Planning at the Institute for Social Development, UWC
Trevor Manual
Member of the National Committee ANC and of the National Working Committee. Head of the ANC’s Department of Economic Planning

Vincent Maphai
Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political Studies, UWC

Philip Mohr
Professor of Economics and Head of the Economics Department at the University of South Africa (UNISA)

Nicky Morgan
Associate Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, UWC

Patrick Ncube
Senior Research Fellow at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Research Consultant at UWC in economics

Gugile Nkwinti
Director the Eastern Cape Development and Funding Forum. Regional secretary of the ANC and member of the NEC of the ANC

Brian O’Connell
Director of the Peninsula Technikon School of Education

Mahlomola Skosana
First Assistant Secretary General of NACTU

Vivienne Taylor
Director of the Southern African Development Education Program (SADEP) at UWC

Sue van der Merwe
Member of the Black Sash National Executive Committee

Christo Wiese
Member of the Economic Advisory Council of the President, Executive Chairman of Pepkor

Winfried Veit
Director of the South African office of the Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung (FES) who funded the Mont Fleur Project
**DESTINO COLOMBIA 1997-2000:**
**A TREASURE TO BE REVEALED**

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Introduction

In 1997, Colombia became the first Latin American country to promote a civic scenario process. A promoting group, consisting of five people challenged the Colombian society to reflect and feel responsible for the country’s future. One of these promoters explained what motivated them to have faith in this project:

...in a society as fragmented as ours, an exercise such as this will allow a heterogeneous group of people not only to formulate a vision but also to come up with possible alternatives facing the country in order to stimulate discussion about them. And I think that there were two fundamental factors—one, the heterogeneous group and two, that more than being able to say this is the vision, the important thing is to generate a process of reflection on a series of alternatives so that people can decide which they want and which they don’t want.

The promoting group called a meeting of forty-three Colombian leaders, who were representative of the national heterogeneity, experienced and socially prestigious leaders, and who participated as individuals and not representing any particular sector, which gave them the freedom to express themselves and to construct. They were businesspeople, peasants, indigenous, union members, politicians, members of the church, academicians, young people, people from the communications sector, retired soldiers, the Self-Defense force (popularly known as the paramilitary group), and two guerrilla organizations: FARC and ELN,¹

The ability to bring together such a diverse group of people from society and from the conflict was surprising and promising:

The group that met was really very representative of the different aspects of the Colombian conflict. The quality of the people that were there, of all classes, was for me and for many, really surprising. And, above all, that the group could work together and make progress in such an important task.

Jesuit priest

Although it was unthinkable that representatives of the most varied tendencies of Colombian society could work together, in the midst of an ongoing war, they met at Quirama and held three workshops in fourteen days. During these workshops they imagined collectively what paths Colombia could take in the next sixteen years and what would be the consequences of playing out each of the four scenarios that they constructed.

This paper argues that, three years from its start Destino Colombia has made an impact in two ways. In the first place, it has influenced those who participated in constructing the scenarios and, secondly, it has influenced the country to the extent that participants have taken their reflections and learning to the sectors, organizations or groups from which they come from, and to other social groups to whom the Destino Colombia experience has been presented. But the outstanding feature of Destino Colombia is the potential it still has to contribute to the Colombian peace process.

¹FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (National Liberation Army).
1 Destino Colombia

1.1 Context and conditions in the country

*In Colombia democracy is fragmented; nobody delegates, nobody represents anybody.*

*ELN Guerilla*

At the time of the scenario exercise, the climate in Colombia was one of generalized social polarization, which was partly due to the political crisis caused by the government of Samper, who had been accused of using drug money to finance his campaign. At the same time, the economy was precarious, political upheaval was a daily occurrence, and corruption and violence prevailed.

Colombia lived then, as now, the consequences of a prolonged war, with the difference that now there is an open process of negotiation, as well as many efforts and proposals focused on contributing to the Colombian peace process. In this context, Destino Colombia is perceived as:

*...a great option and many of the people we work with consider it a great civic proposal that continues to exist because it supports the peace objectives. It has been a good support and, of course, we are not the only ones, there are other advocates betting on peace.*

*Non-governmental sector*

But the internal armed conflict continues to tear apart the fabric of Colombian society, striking blows at all sectors of society without exception, although in different proportion and on a different level. The country faces enormous challenges on an internal as well as an external level. In the international sphere, it is increasingly disputed, lagging behind in the Latin American economy as well as on a global level.

*In the opinion of the mayor of Bogotá, one of the greatest contributions of Destino Colombia was:*

*... to have given substance to the future.*

*And, in the opinion of a guerrilla from the ELN:*

*Destino Colombia is an experience that should happen to all of us. It allowed the participants to risk breaking down barriers, to explore the ideas of others. It forced them to think about the new, that was its worth. Destino Colombia is a leap towards risk taking.*
### 1.2 Timeline Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| March 1996      | • First presentation of South African Experience to heterogeneous group of Colombians.  
                  • Integrated first promoting group.                                |
| April - September 1996 | • Preliminary research among various sectors of society on suitability of a scenario workshop in the country |
| October 1996    | • Appointed Executive Director.                                        |
| November 1996   | • Visit to Boston to meet technical facilitator, understand methodology, and evaluate its pertinence with situation in Colombia  
                  • Integrated final promoting group.                                 |
| January-June 1997 | Summons  
                  • Summoned 43 Colombians from various sectors to integrate the Destino Colombia Scenario Team.  
                  • Estimated budget.  
                  • Disseminated initiative and engaged sponsors.                     |
| July 1997       | Workshop I  
                  • Defined workshop strategic agenda: gathered participants’ ideas on main national problems |
| August 1997     | Workshop II  
                  • Enhanced knowledge on Colombia and world context; prepared preliminary scenarios  
                  • Defined 4 draft scenarios.  
                  • Selected scenario writer.                                        |
| October 1997    | Workshop III  
                  • Agreed on and reviewed 4 final scenarios  
                  • Named scenarios tentatively.                                       |
| Nov. 1997 – April 1998 | • Developed many scenario versions and defined final stories by consensus.  
                  • Produced materials and video.  
                  • Defined launch date (July 22 1998); after presidential elections to prevent political tainting of process.  
                  • Prepared and drafted 6-page newspaper insert for simultaneous publishing in all national newspapers  
                  • National launch of Destino Colombia: published newspaper insert |
                  • Dissemination and national debate on 4 scenarios with various actors and groups of society  
                  • International dissemination of process.                           |
1.3 Summary of the Scenarios

From the collective reflection of the Destino Colombia group emerged four equally possible scenarios. Each of them describes a course, explores its consequences, and demonstrates that the future is the result of today’s actions and decisions, something that is constructed day by day. The conclusion of this scenario process is that Colombia has various means of overcoming the crisis, but that it may also continue its current state of disorder, and even plunge headlong into chaos.

When the sun rises we’ll see
The country collapsed into chaos. The lack of will to confront necessary changes had left us without the ability to act—because the worst thing people can do is nothing!

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
Following 10 years of bloodshed, and under continuing pressure from armed groups, the state and society decided that it was time to enter into a dialogue and come to serious agreements. Rather than losing it all, everybody gained something—because any settlement is better than continuing a bad lawsuit.

Forward march!
To rebuild a broken nation and mend the lacerations in the country’s social fabric before other attempts to achieve peace could be frustrated, people elected a government that proved strong enough to impose order and put an end to institutional chaos.

In unity lies strength
From the base of society up, the nation began an effort that led to vast transformation in our individual and collective mentality. It amounted to changing an old way of life, the source of many of our troubles: the inclination to work against each other. Instead, we discovered our true solution, one that could be achieved only through respect for differences and the strength of unity.
2 Findings

I think that having participated in Destino Colombia, having seen the group that met together, the quality of the discussions that were held, it’s as if one were faced with this dilemma: one sees the positive experience but at the same time one feels with a burning pain what is happening in the country, and asks how could one make this experience into something that would help the country to move along a different path

Promoter, businessman

The findings presented below are the result of thirteen interviews with members of the Destino Colombia group, between July 25 and August 1, 2000, in the city of Bogotá, two interviews with the guerrillas from the ELN who are political prisoners in the Itagui jail in Medellín, and one interview with the Self-defense members in San Roque.

At the conclusion of the interviews, the research team met with the group in order to share and give feedback on the preliminary findings. Their suggestions and recommendations were duly incorporated in the analysis.

The following findings suggest that there were factors that encouraged the richness and depth of the learning, reflections and analysis of the group, and that the impact of Destino Colombia can be observed on two levels: the influence it had on the people who participated in the scenario construction exercise and its influence on the country. These findings also reveal the power of the scenarios as tools for long-term thinking, the limitations of Destino Colombia, and the recommendations of those who were interviewed for countries that are thinking about trying similar exercises.

2.1 Factors that encouraged group learning and reflection

There are four aspects that synthesize the most relevant components that made possible group learning and reflection:

2.1.1 A group embodying the diversity of the Colombian society

Destino Colombia succeeded in bringing together diverse sectors of the society, including adversaries and enemies, in spite of the enormous limitations posed by the armed conflict. This encounter was so dramatic that the participants of the ELN participated by telephone from the Itagui jail in Medellín, and the FARC from Costa Rica:

In my opinion, never have such diverse people in Colombia done so much. In fact, it is very difficult to understand just how complicated it is to bring together in the same process the extremes that are tearing apart the country and who beforehand make clear that they won’t have any dealings with the other. For each of the extremes, the other does not exist or should cease to exist. We succeeded in this process of dialogue, of improving the way they treat one another, of respecting the rules of the game, of improving the quality of their long-term thinking and their manner of conversing.
The work of choosing was extremely significant of what Colombian society is. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of Destino Colombia was the opportunity to observe in the meetings how diverse we are and how different our interests are. We had the principal geographic regions of Colombia represented, as far as age I would have liked more young people and as far as gender I would possibly have wanted more female representation, as far as profession or involvement I think we had everything, from the guerrilla, the paramilitary, the military, the clergy, professionals, people from industry, to businesspeople. In short, I think it was very significant.

Businessman

2.1.2. The rules of the game

The internal rules agreed upon by the group made possible honest, tolerant, and respectful dialogue that, in turn, allowed the group to gain in confidence and to be open to new ideas and thoughts. For many, it was an outstanding experience:

The fact that Colombians of different origins, beliefs and levels of education were capable of agreeing on the rules of the game and abiding by them had a profound impact on me. For me, this was the most outstanding experience.

Businessman

2.1.3. The methodology and the facilitator

According to the majority of the participants, the scenario methodology was enlightening in that it led to reflections and learning about the country. In particular, it was considered to be a powerful tool for getting diverse players to sit down together to dialogue and think about Colombia in the future:

In my opinion, the value of Destino Colombia lies in the fact that it’s a method that produces results—the four scenarios that can be used symbolically as an example of how far one can take reflection about the totality of a country, among players from the most diverse places, in a society rife with conflict.

Jesuit priest

They also valued the ability of the facilitator, in particular when difficult situations arose:

...it was essential that the person in charge of facilitating the methodology be someone of great integrity and ability. There were moments when the discussion became heated and the facilitator was capable of calming things down. For example, once when the representative from the FARC said: “I can’t continue” and we came to an impasse, the facilitator was able to lead the discussion in a different direction with no negative repercussions.

Businessman

2 The rules agreed upon by the members of Destino Colombia were: To express differences, without irony. Not to stigmatize. Not to personalize. Sincerity. To assume good faith on the part of the others. Tolerance. Discipline. Punctuality. Respect for the person who has the floor. To be concrete and not to repeat ideas. A willingness to learn. Confidentiality and discretion in using the opinions of others. Willingness to “forget.” Disclosure of proposals based on agreements or reconciliation. To be willing to come to a consensus. To call things by name.
2.1.4. Rapprochement from informal encounters and dialogues

Many of those interviewed referred to the camaraderie and good humor that prevailed during the encounters in Quirama. These were essential factors in the building of bridges and confidence. The following anecdote from one of the members of the group confirms this:

> It came up that someone played the guitar. The secretary general of the Communist party and I sang. We joked that it was the first time a general made a communist sing.

Retired general

2.2 Influence on participants

> No one can take my travels from me, so they can’t take Quirama from me either.

Businessman

> I have not had anything more intense in my life.

Executive Director of Destino Colombia, Consultant

It is in the personal realm where Destino Colombia finds its most fertile handhold. Each one of the participants experienced an awakening towards his or her own realities, the truths of others and the possible visions of the country. Destino Colombia was a deeply human experience which marked everyone in more than one sense, generating learning, reflections and analyses in at least the following aspects:

2.2.1 Change in mental maps

Destino Colombia allowed the members of the group to change, in a good measure, their way of thinking and acting, as shown by the following testimonies:

> It is beginning to be possible for people to reflect on the fact that there are different alternatives to the same polarities. Basically it is a question of our visualizing schemes, which will allow us to put an end to polarity.

Government official

The participants were able to open their eyes towards options which are different from those they knew or which they could see up to that time:

> I think that the first thing that makes one open one’s eyes is that there are different alternatives. As with any other Colombian, something terrible happens to you, and that is that in the measure in which time passes your alternatives are also becoming limited. And you think definitely that there is nothing to do, that you must go to war. Then (Destino Colombia) forces you to having to rethink what your concept has been regarding a subject, open a panorama and think differently. I think this is very positive.
Government official

I believe that there we had an experience which was very rich and important, and it is good to remember that the group of us who were there, with extremely few exceptions, if any, were all persons willing to hear, to open up and to look for a common result.

Leader, indigenous sector

The experiences of the participants in Destino Colombia allowed them to reconsider some paradigms and acquire new capabilities and abilities. Among these, learning to listen.

On a personal level, it is of great impact to move in a different environment to the one you are used to, and that is one of the things which perhaps marks you in the exercise, to listen to different opinions and to see that if you want to reach a consensus or some agreement, you have to hear them and understand them.

Businessman

One of the aspects most appreciated by the group was to build trust in the midst of diversity.

To have built trust let us say among people who have some sort of leading role in national life, to be able to have a channel open between people who did not know each other there, to open up two-way communications, that was vital. To be able to express opinions, to discuss things knowing that the problem is that there are scenarios for some and scenarios for others.

Government official

The group also considered it valuable to have acquired tolerance:

War produces something very complicated and it is the absence of tolerance, because war as such is a drastic solution for everything, it is the maximum solution so that when you break your word you have to take up arms, which makes it difficult to be tolerant of the ideas of others. This exercise compels you to accept that the solution may be different from what you have thought, and suddenly you become critical of the devil’s advocate, of his solution, not yours, and that also obligates you to give a much more interesting proposal. I am convinced that tolerance is the way out for everything in life; it is accepting that there can be an opinion which is different from yours.

Government official

Other members of Destino Colombia were allowed to be optimists:

Before Destino Colombia they were very pessimistic in regard to the country and specifically vis-à-vis the settlement of the conflict in the country. And Destino Colombia opened my eyes; it showed me that there was an interesting space there to be optimistic. And I have kept my optimism, although to tell the truth, I think I need another injection of Destino Colombia because my optimism keeps getting worn down. But I continue to be optimistic, above all towards the persons with whom I surround myself and see that they are much more pessimistic regarding the future evolution of the country.

Coffee Businessman
And it returned their hope to them, leading some of them to make strategic decisions in their lives:

...I had thought about going to work abroad, but then this event occurred and I was more optimistic, I decided to bet on the country, stay here with my children and wife with the risk all of this implies.

Businessman

2.2.2 To bring together a diverse group and to be able to hold a dialogue

One of the most outstanding products of Destino Colombia was to have gathered together a diverse group and having shown the need society has to talk and create conditions to exchange ideas, thoughts and objectives. Something which struck the members of the group were the dialogues between leaders who were so varied and antagonistic:

I believe that we all remember with tremendous interest the dialogue between Felipe Torres from jail and the representatives of the paramilitary, Ivan Duque. It seems that each has his/her own truth.

Businessman

Multisectorial dialogue, which was unthinkable before, became a rich and novel human experience:

We were capable of understanding each other, of talking to each other; we were capable of respecting each other, of doing this. This is something that I am certain has impressed many people in the country. And one of the conversations heard there was: Were the people of the guerrillas there? And if so, were they listening? Yes, they were listening. This is something so simple, but I believe that what might be happening in the country may be influenced by one of these processes. People have seen that it is necessary to hold dialogues. I don’t see that as being too terrible.

Businessman

In the measure in which the group delved into and appreciated the dialogue with tolerance and respect, more than once it acted to protect the spaces it had built, and an example of this was when:

...one of the participants said: “I am one too many here, because all of those against whom I have fought are here: guerrillas, business people, the oligarchy” because of which he proposed to withdraw, and only the words of a peasant held him back and he stayed until the end, the peasant said: “we are here to learn and I am learning, I invite you to stay.”

In addition, the dialogues allowed the group to discover its collective intelligence. Despite this, reaching a dialogue required overcoming mistrust and putting the internal rules agreed upon by the group into practice.

At the beginning it was a little hard, there is much mistrust in the first meetings. No one wants to talk, everyone limits him/herself and says the minimum of what he has to say, but little by little that environment starts breaking down and you are able to have all sorts of things come out and obviously they must be worked... The topic, for example, when we reached one of the feasible scenarios in which the guerrillas were winning and got to the Plaza Bolivar. It was a scenario which cost me a lost of work and cost a great deal with the
paramilitary, because to force the exercise, I became very hard in the group I was in. In that group there were the paramilitary and it was heavy because those guys at a certain point jumped on me: What is this mess? Why are you accepting that the guerrillas are going to win this thing here? And indeed there was great resentment toward me by them, to the point of making me nervous about the subject, but it was an exercise that had to be done.

Government official

2.2.3 Discovering the human and true dimensions of the other person

The Quirama meeting fostered that members of the group learn from the worlds of others:

My clearest personal benefit was the opportunity to learn to see the world through the eyes of others, to be with very different individuals and see how they analyze the situation from their own assessment.

Academician

It also allowed them to discover their values and their lives, with which they influenced each other:

I was greatly influenced by a number of persons because of their vocation, because of what they are doing, because of the intensity with which they have lived their lives and by the weight their values have.

Industrial Businessman

2.2.4 Collective knowledge of the realities of the country

Destino Colombia offered the possibility of discovering the realities of the country and to sensitize the members of the group about the visions of others:

I attended Destino Colombia a lot because, being a businessman, the contact I had with social problems was very little. Perhaps the greatest teaching was to understand the very clear risk implied in remaining where we are and extrapolating information and analysis from the particular platform on which each one of us lives. At Destino Colombia we had the opportunity to try to understand the vision of all the other sectors that were represented there respectfully.

Businessman

Additionally, it contributed to having the participants understand the different worlds which coexist in the country:

It helped me to understand a little how we think. That we are a country, but in fact we are thousands of countries, thousands of worlds, that wherever you go, to any region of Colombia, we are different. I learned to understand how we Colombians are.

Advertising executive

It was equally revealing to get to know part of the process experienced by one of the actors in the war:
...we did not know what a war was, we thought it was killing guerrillas, combat face to face with the guerrilla forces, and thought that the causes of all ills in Colombia were the guerrillas. We did not know what a war was and did not know anything about the problems of Colombia and were unaware of and are still unaware of many realities. Then we got into this war and we had to start learning and slowly discovering many things and start to discover the social problems and the real causes of the conflict in Colombia and to start discovering corruption and how power is managed in Colombia. To start discovering that even though the guerrillas have the objective which is to take power, how the oligarchies in one way or another legitimize their discourse.

Military Chief, Self-defense groups

2.3 Influence on the country

... Colombians have been shown the product, the methodology and what we have achieved. And this has a demonstration effect; it generates an impact on the different sectors. And that generates change. To assess or try to get an approximation of the impact of Destino Colombia on what is happening today is so very difficult, but I am an optimist. I believe that much of what may be happening today can be the result of the Destino Colombia exercise.

Coffee Businessman

The scenarios and results of the process of Destino Colombia were disseminated by means of videotape and a TV program, which was shown on national television and the preparation of a magazine that was widely distributed. Also, more than 750,000 press inserts were printed and distributed. To date, more than 400 presentations and dissemination workshops have been held. By one estimate a minimum of 15 million Colombians in one way or another had contact with the words Destino Colombia, as a personal experience on all the TV chains that transmitted a special program simultaneously. But the influence of Destino Colombia in the country can also be appreciated on the basis of two situations:

- The influence that the members of the group exercise on the organizations, sectors or groups from which they come.

- The generation of strategic thought and conversation in society stemming from the presentations and workshops of the project before various sectors and in different regions of the country.

Most of the leaders convened by Destino Colombia have the responsibility of directing a certain part of the country. They hold public office, are politicians, are heading important companies, direct organizations of different kinds and are present in different regions of the country. This is why the bearing that Destino Colombia has on the country is related, on the one hand, to the level and degree in which these leaders have changed their mind-set and, on the other hand, according to the work they have developed in their respective sectors transferring their reflections and learning. This influence can be implicit or explicit, or, as one businessman stated:

I believe in the effects of Quirama, there are some that are visible and others that are invisible.
The interviews revealed that Destino Colombia is permeating society in very varied ways, mainly by means of the personal contributions of the members of the group. Thus, one of the participants stated how he used the results of the project in his academic activities:

*It gave me a very big tool for my academic and professional work. I used scenarios in my course at the University because I believe that scenarios are more than a planning technique; the scenario technique is a tool for thinking and that is what it is about, to teach the students to think, to show a little more serious analyses of what we are going through, which can turn into internal scenarios to consider variations and sub-variations of those scenarios. Also, of course, to educate the activities of groups.*

*Academician*

Another one expresses their use in journalism:

*Those of us who write do so today with theoretical and methodological instruments given to us by planning by scenarios.*

*Journalist*

In statements by two leaders from different sectors, Destino Colombia has contributed to the set of social, entrepreneurial and project sectors and the results are being applied in the country:

*It seems to me that in the set of social sectors, of entrepreneurial sectors, of popular projects we have made a good contribution. Furthermore, we continue to do so. For many people the methodology has been interesting. Barely a week ago they asked me for the materials to have a similar experience in Putumayo. That seems important to me. So I believe we are making a contribution; we cannot ask for the impossible; let us not become frustrated, because I believe that we have given what could be given, and I believe the experience is a positive one.*

*Leader, indigenous sector*

*The scenarios and the experience of Destino Colombia are being applied in the country. They are being applied in the educational and in the cooperative sectors; they are being applied through NGOs and have even been assumed by NGOs.*

*Woman from non-governmental sector*

It can still be early to measure precisely how far the impacts of the exercise and of the products of Destino Colombia have gone. Something positive, however, is that Destino Colombia has inspired new efforts for peace:

*... We set up a foundation that is called Ideas for Peace, in an invisible manner, and there goes the verbatim libretto of Quirama.*

*Businessman*

Another important contribution of Destino Colombia to the country was to offer the possibility of doing long-term thinking:

*People are very short-term oriented in the solutions they propose, they see a problem and then it is let a bomb go and kill these people here, and those that are here get out and that is the manner of getting out of the problem. This makes you have to measure in the longer*
term to where things are going. I believe that that is the most important thing. I can evaluate if I act in this manner this is what happens, and that compels you to think of a much longer term.

Government official

I am still after the possibility that we can sit down and write down what we want to be in the year 2025 or in 2030. This country has no idea how it will face globalization, computers, agriculture, tourism. This is not a question we ask ourselves every day.

Industrial Businessman

2.4 Power of the scenarios

Those interviewed agreed that scenarios are magnificent instruments for making people think. For many it has been surprising how skillful the construction of the scenarios was, since after almost three years they continue to be valid:

... it seems fabulous to me that results were obtained which are still useful and which we can continue to exploit. It seems to me that this should not be the only thing, that we can feel frustration because the government did not take it as its program, but that this is something that offers a methodology, offers a perspective, offers an element to try to find perspectives and prospects in the country.

Priest and academician

The scenarios have allowed us to think of the country from different points of view. They are not a prescription, but they do promote reflection and the search for integral alternatives:

There is something which is very interesting and that is that the country is not one, nor will what is going to happen be a single thing, they are different and I believe that there lies the great difficulty that exists in all these things that exist in the visions of the country which each human being has. For me the subject of education is important, it is what makes a society be able to progress and blindly limit all its social differences. That is my vision. But another type of vision says this cannot be settled if not by war, that we have to get into war, take up rifles, that that is the way to achieve equality. Another guy has another idea. Scenarios allow all of these visions of the country to start materializing on paper, by listening to the people. One thing that is very important and that is that it is not only how I am going to do it, but also what is going to be produced by what I am going to do, how will its real effect continue, what is going to happen to that scenario. This makes us understand that the way out for the country is not just one, but that there can be a number of them, but this must necessarily be demonstrated. A scenario can be something very positive at the beginning, but it can up different or something can give much pleasure to many people; but end up breaking up the country and not be achievable in the long term.

Ex Senator and at present a Government Official

2.5 Limitations of Destino Colombia

The main limitations expressed by interviewees relative to the Destino Colombia project were as follows:
• Conditions of insecurity and warfare in the country have limited possibilities for disseminating the results of Destino Colombia, for example, toward regions in conflict, which could get to know and benefit from the experience. These conditions also stopped group members from participating in the information efforts due to being in jail or in hiding in fear of their lives.

• The lack of financial resources has restricted the spreading of results. Financing of the first phases of the project mostly came from contributions from private entities, which could no longer keep on contributing due to the difficult economic situation of the country. Mobilization of resources from international donors was not pursued.3

• The group Destino Colombia did not keep on meeting once the scenarios had been constructed. As a result, in some cases the initial enthusiasm and cohesion of group members was reduced.

• It was necessary to have greater commitment from the group to disseminate but this task fell to too few people.

• Destino Colombia did not have a managerial team contracted fulltime for this project.

• Governments and politicians have not shown interest in knowing, assuming responsibility or accepting the results of Destino Colombia, therefore the incidence of the project on public decision-making has been very limited. In part, this lack of interest could obey the deliberate initial decision of the project leadership to stay off to one side in order to avoid “politicizing” the project, given the electoral context in which Destino Colombia developed and started its dissemination.4

• The leadership of the project was impeccable in technical terms but, according to various members, was too “antiseptic” and could have used a more political and strategic leadership so that the project could have articulated and contributed to the efforts of peace in the country and have had access to neurological circles of power, such as the groups-up-in-arms.

• There was a lack of better definition of the purpose or intention of Destino Colombia, provoking in some group members a series of unrealized expectations relative to the future and the real possibilities of a project of this nature. In particular, the expectation that the project would be more directly linked to political processes affecting the country.

• The group needed the participation of more young people and women, as well as influential leaders in public decision-making.

3 There was only small contributions from the Canadá and the World Bank for the dissemination phase.

4 In spite of this political decision, the Project invited five Senators of the Republic whose participation was outstanding.
2.6 Recommendations from the Participants

According to most interviewees, factors contributing to development of successful civic exercises are the following:

- Selection of an impartial facilitation team, technically capable and with excellent human qualities and capacity for political leadership.

- Contracting a managerial team dedicated fulltime to care for project necessities, support logistics of the workshops, give follow-up to agreements and maintain relations and communication among group members. This team must have excellent technical capacity for elaborating syntheses of workshops, preparing intermediate documents and conducting the final construction of scenarios. Moreover, it is the team that has to implement the dissemination activities agreed to develop.

- Finding an isolated venue appropriate for informal encounters and permanent communication.

- Making sure that promoters have credibility, representativeness and power of convoking for all groups of society, thus avoiding that some sector in particular hegemonizes the project.

- The constructing group must reflect diversity of society. Each member is selected as a person and not in representation of some sector. However, his or her leadership and representativeness must be guaranteed within his or her sector or level. Furthermore, they must be open-minded and have time enough to devote themselves to this exercise. The participation of women and young leaders is important, particularly those with potential to occupy national level leadership positions.

- The exercise for constructing scenarios must be kept separate from electoral events possibly taking place in the country. Electoral dynamics frequently give rise to greater confrontation between sectors and generate climates of greater coldness, impeding interchange of opinions and limiting consensus.

- Scenario exercises must not compete with other substantive political processes taking place in the country nor should be managed with separate agendas but rather should be articulated with the same. For example, to a process of national dialogue for peace and search for consensus in order to rethink the country on a long-term basis.

- Accessible and clear language should be used for naming scenario histories, looking for simple images, although with profound context, in order to make them comprehensible to society as a whole.

- Before concluding the scenario construction exercise, it is recommendable to agree on the purposes of the dissemination process, define a strategic plan to carry it out and have the financial and technical resources for its implementation.
3 Lessons and Questions for the Future

The experience of Destino Colombia suggests two fundamental challenges for those who are about to begin with a scenario building exercise: the definition of the intention of the exercise and the dissemination of the results.

3.1 Definition of the intention of the exercise

It is necessary from the beginning to approach clearly what the purpose of the exercise will be, to thus avoid frustrations due to unresolved expectations. It is common to find that the expectations of the group change as the qualities of the methodology get to be known. This is why it is essential that along the process of constructing scenarios the new purposes of the group be explained. The most frequent questions to be settled are: Are we trying to generate strategic conversation and thought? Or do we want to build a vision of the country? Do we expect to influence the elite or the whole population? Do we want to create spaces for dialogue and coming together? Are we trying to generate trust? For whom do we want to develop an exercise of this kind?

3.2 Dissemination of results

Another one of the challenges deals with the dissemination of the results of the exercise. An opinion shared by the members of Destino Colombia is that the methodology keeps a good structure throughout the scenario construction phase, but does not include clear guidelines on what to do once they are completed. The key questions which come up in regard to the dissemination are: What is being disseminated, the process or the scenarios? How can the process be replicated on a small scale? Whom are we trying to influence? What methods to use: presentations, workshops, publications? Should the dissemination be massive or should small groups be approached?

4 Interpretive Conclusions

4.1 Influence on the participants and on the country

*Destino Colombia was a deep human experience that had an impact on each one of its members. The meetings at Quirama permitted a heterogeneous group of Colombian society to open up to new ways of thinking and acting, and began a process of change of their mental maps and the perceptions they had of each other. The dialogues which developed brought about reflections which permitted reconsidering the paradigms and acquiring new capabilities and abilities. The members of the group who were interviewed agreed in pointing out that by means of their experience with Destino Colombia they learned to listen, to respect each other, to understand each other and to build. Quirama opened the door so they could look at each other on a “human to human” basis and to see the world “with the eyes of others.”*

*The participants considered it an outstanding fact that such a diverse group of Colombian society could be brought together in the context of the war being experienced in the country. They also*
appreciated having been able to hold a dialogue, to work jointly and to achieve progress on such a very important task as that of thinking of the alternatives for Colombia with a view to the future. The rules that the same group proposed for itself and the respect that prevailed for the same constituted the best manner of building trust and keeping the dialogues open, tolerant and flexible. For many, Destino Colombia gave them back optimism and hope for the future.

The impact of Destino Colombia has gone beyond the personal level and its traces can be observed in the country. On the one hand, the exercise of building Colombian scenarios has contributed to improve the quality of conversations and long-term strategic thought, which those interviewed appreciated because they considered that it is a fundamental aspect for their society where everyday contact with war and subsistence find their short term hold.

Additionally, Destino Colombia has permeated to the various sectors, groups and organizations of society to the extent to which the participants have transferred their learning. In this sense, Destino Colombia is perceived as a living tool, which generates processes of reflection and change.

The influence of Destino Colombia, however, has been partially restricted due to the fact that the conflict has limited the participation of individuals and sectors or the dissemination toward geographic areas where the war is taking place. In the sphere of public policy, Destino Colombia has not been able to have influence as a result of the lack of interest of the politicians and the government in assuming in a responsible manner the products that this effort offers the country.

On the other hand, the Destino Colombia group did not keep on meeting after the construction of the scenarios was completed, which reduced enthusiasm and has left the difficult task of dissemination to a few. Additionally, according to many of those interviewed, a more political management of the exercise was lacking which could have had some influence on the nerve centers of power, such as the groups in arms.

4.2 Destino Colombia toward the future

Most of those interviewed agreed in pointing out that Destino Colombia is a process that has not concluded. In this regard they stated that Destino Colombia is “hibernating” and is ”a treasure yet to be revealed.” In fact, these comments contain the hope of the group so that Destino Colombia in the near future could contribute to the complex peace process of Colombia. One of the members of the group stated:

*In the group the shared conviction also prevails that it is necessary to “re-launch” the project, guaranteeing greater representativeness and balance among the participating sectors, as well as in the socialization strategy and its management.*

The group also agreed that in Colombian society, torn apart by the internal armed conflict, it is necessary to continue to create spaces for collecting thought and reflection. In this sense, Destino Colombia could play the role of facilitator in society, capitalizing its strong points and experiences of dialogue and multisectorial meetings. The rebellious groups have stated their will to continue betting on Destino Colombia. An ELN guerrilla said: “we see Destino Colombia as an integral part of the peace process.” He also indicated that they would be willing to “start adapting the ideas of the scenarios inside the ELN.” Another member of the ELN, summarizing the achievements and future possibilities of Destino Colombia said:
“Destino Colombia required that we think towards something new, that was its quality. But we were left with the quality of the proposal. We did something very pretty, but we were left with the picture. We need for people go to the picture they drew.”

Finally, a Military Chief of the Self-defense Groups stated:

*We bet on Destino Colombia, on everything seeking alternatives that are not military for the solution of the conflict. The fact that we are up in arms and have a military structure does not contradict our objective of putting and end to the war. The objective of our war is to finish with war, but we are not saying how. Anything that may be an alternative to settle the conflict and to avoid bloodshed and losses of lives, and to avoid suffering, and avoid socioeconomic traumas, we will contribute to... I believe that the contribution we can make to this process (Destino Colombia) is to participate in it and to say things as I am saying them.*

These testimonies permit reaching the conclusion that Destino Colombia has a precious potential and many possibilities to contribute to political processes and to the construction of peace in the country. Destino Colombia has shown the country that very different people can achieve common objectives. The hope remains that Colombians turn their dreams into reality and discover their greatest resource: the result of respect for differences and the force of unity.
5 Appendix

5.1 Methodology and Research

This paper was based on the findings of 16 tape-recorded interviews conducted in Bogotá and Medellín from July 25-August 2 2000, as well as a group dialogue conducted immediately after the interviews to test and modify, if necessary, the preliminary findings.

5.2 Participants in the Destino Colombia Project

Moritz Akerman
Helped contact groups at war. He is Manager of Alef. Transportation, Ltd.

Eduardo Aldana
Academician and researcher. He is currently an advisor at the Ser Institute of Research of the University of the Andes.

J. Mario Aristizabal
Businessman, belonged to the Promoting Group. He was president of Proantioquia. He is currently president of Conconcreto.

Juan Sebastián Betancur
Businessman involved in activities that favor the peace process. He is currently vice president of South American institutional affairs.

Claudia Blum de Barberi
She was and is currently a senator in the Republic of Colombia.

Jaime Alberto Cabal
He is a labor leader associated with small and medium sized business. He was president of Acopi and Minister of Development. He is currently in private practice.

Francisco Caraballo
Guerrilla from the Popular Liberation Army (EPL).

Manuel José Carvajal
Instigator of Destino Colombia, pioneer of the scenario technique in Colombia. Member of the Promoting Group. He was director of the ICESI Research and Advisory Center. He is currently director of the Valle Planet Program of the Cali Chamber of Commerce.

Mario Carvajalino
Businessman. He is currently president of the board of directors and member of the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce.

Jaime Caycedo Turriago
Leftist politician. He is currently general secretary of the Communist Party.
María Emilia Correa
Active professional in environmental issues. She was executive director of the Colombian Business Advisory Board for Sustainable Development CECODES. She is currently president of Social and Environmental Responsibility of the Costa Rican New Group.

Gilberto Chinome Barrera
Leftist labor activist.

Cesar De Hart
Businessman. He is currently president of Fedepalma.

Inés de Mosquera
Executive director of Destino Colombia and active proponent of the project. Member of the Promoting Group. She is also an independent consultant.

Ivan Duque
Ideologist of Carlos Castaño’s self-defenses.

Hugo Estrada
Businessman and consultant. Active proponent of Destino Colombia. Member of the Promoting Group. He is currently a member consultant of Ramolina Estrada S.A.

Francisco Galán
Guerrilla from the National Liberation Army (ELN). Political prisoner at the jail of Itagui in Medellín.

Luis Eduardo Garzón
Leader of the political labor union movement. He is currently president of Central Union of Workers of Colombia, CUT.

Ana Mercedes Gómez
Journalist focusing on peace issues. She is currently director of the newspaper El Colombiano.

Hernando José Gómez
Economist. He was president of Camacol. He is currently a member of the World Business Organization OMC.

Lucía González Duque
Professional in the NGO sector. He was director of the Presencia Corporation (Colombo Suiza). He is currently in FOREC – the Reconstruction Fund of the Coffee Growers’ Group.

Camilo González Posso
Ex-member of the M-19, reintroduced guerrilla group. He is currently president of the Health and Development Corporation.

Paulo Laserna Philips
Media person. He was Vice President of Information of RCN Television. He is currently a journalist with Caracol.
Alejandro Martínez
Conservative union leader from the petroleum sector. He is currently executive president of the Colombian Petroleum Association.

Augusto Martínez Carreño
Businessman from the financial sector. Former president of the Santander Financial Corporation. Currently a private consultant.

Germán Medina Olarte
Publicity agent. He is currently a creative consultant for MPC Publicity.

Ursula Mena Lozano
Media person, active proponent of Destino Colombia. She was head of Information and Activities in the Ministry of Culture. She is currently Director of OBM.

Germán Montoya
Business leader. Member of the Promoting Group. He is currently president of Petrocolombia.

Eduardo Pizano
Conservative politician. He was president of Telecom. He is currently general secretary of the Presidency (executive branch) of the Republic.

Eduardo Pizarro
Political scientist and analyst, researcher. Member of the Promoting Group. He was director of the Institute of Political Studies. He is currently living outside the country due to threats on his life.

Jorge Ramírez Vallejo
Economist. Regional leader of the coffee growers sector. He is currently economic advisor to the top level management of the National Federation of Coffee Growers.

Javier Darío Restrepo
Renowned journalist know for his excellent track record and objectivity. He is on the staff of the newspaper El Colombiano.

Rodrigo Rivera Salazar
Liberal politician, regional leader. He is currently a senator in the Republic.

Juan Salcedo Lora
Retired general. Active proponent of Destino Colombia. He is currently advisor to the Insignia program.

Javier Sanín
Dean of the School of Political Science of the Javeriana University. Renowned political scientist. Priest.

Alejandro Sanz de Santamaría
Academic researcher. He is currently a professor and researcher at the University of the Andes in the School of Economics.
Manuel Antonio Serna Isaza
He was president of the Carare Farm Workers Association.

Roberto Steiner
Economist and researcher. He is currently an associate researcher with CEDE at the University of Los Andes.

Pablo Tattay
Leader from the indigenous sector. He is currently advisor to the Cauca Regional Indigneous Council.

Rodolfo Torrado Quintero
Retired general. He is currently director of the University Corporation Center.

Felipe Torres
Guerrilla from the National Liberation Army (ELN). Political prisioner at Itagui jail in Medellín.

Mario de J. Valderrama
Labor union leader. He is currently president of the C.G.T.D.

Rafael Vargas
Guerrilla from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).
VISION GUATEMALA 1998-2000:
BUILDING BRIDGES OF TRUST

We did not put our ideas together. We put our purposes together.  
And we agreed, then we decided

Popol Vuh 
Q’iches’ sacred book

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Introduction

... we have good news to tell you, good news about something that has taken place in Guatemala, which has been conceived by Guatemalans and concerns us all, and all of us can feel part of a spirit generated through Visión Guatemala.

Gonzalo de Villa, promoter

The Visión Guatemala project came to life in November 1997. The Peace Accords between the Guatemalan Government and the URNG1 had been signed less than a year before, at the end of the armed conflict lasting over three decades. Once the conflict was over, the Guatemalan society demanded the creation of spaces wherein to build trust, particularly among the political elites, in order to facilitate fulfillment of the Accords.

Several alternatives for the creation of a heterogeneous group were analyzed. Ricardo Stein, Secretario Técnico de la Paz (Technical Secretary for Peace) at the time, recounts how this process initiated:

We began to examine different prospects and one who was most helpful in the terms of trying to point in the right direction at that moment was Richard Aitkenhead who had just finished a scenario building for the Canadian Agency for International Development. And he had been subject to at least several different techniques as to how this could be done. And so Richard Aitkenhead began to excite us as to the prospective of being able to put together a very heterogeneous group, to think of the country counting years down the line thinking of it as a twenty-twenty type of situation. It even matched in terms of a twenty-twenty vision, more or less. But the original idea was to have a look to the future and what were the things that could be done in order to be up there and to how will this mesh with the Peace Accords.

Director of the Soros Foundation of Guatemala, member of the constructors’ group

The Secretary of SEGEPLAN2, former director of Asociación de Gerentes de Guatemala (Association of Guatemalan Managers) – AGG, participated in initial conversations, from the government’s perspective. The design of the project begins, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is requested to prepare it. Owing to the neutral role undertaken by the external cooperation, it was absolutely necessary to incorporate its assistance at that particular moment. Furthermore, promoting the project under the United Nations flag would grant it impartiality.

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1 Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatamelecto (National Revolutionary Unit of Guatemala), representing the union of the four rebel guerrilla groups: EGP (Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres), FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes), ORPA (Organización del Pueblo en Armas) and PGT (Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo).

2 Secretaria General de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia (Economic Planning General Secretariat).
An institutional frame is initially created around the project. The private sector participates through Asociación de Gerentes de Guatemala\(^3\), offering a somewhat balanced platform upon which to promote the project. The Guatemalan Government participates through the Peace Secretariat and SEGEPLAN; and UNDP is the sponsor. But it was obvious that, in order to successfully convene the various sectors of the society, a more extensive and representative group would have to be involved. Therefore, seven prominent persons, four men and three women, of the Guatemalan society are invited to integrate the promoting group. As a group, they enjoyed credibility, had great convening power and represented diverse ideological trends. This group is responsible for selecting and convening 39 influential leaders to represent the plurality of the country.

In addition to promoting trust among various political elites, Visión Guatemala intended to generate a long-term national agenda--to be shared by all sectors of the society-- that would serve as a conducting thread, and support and be supported by the Peace Accords.

...we asked from the beginning, is this an effort running parallel to the peace process? Anything that we do here aims at strengthening the Peace Accords process. We are not building a forum parallel to the institutionalization of peace. In other words, instead of being a supportive commission, it aims at forming illuminated groups; that is the risk... Luckily, there was political will to avoid this. It is made possible by the peace process. The attitude assumed by the participants is that this effort be seen as one supportive of the peace process rather than a parallel collateral effort, as expressed at the end in the axis around which the scenarios and the vision are built. The peace accords are the axis and that, I think, is an extremely valuable element.

Former guerrilla activist

The Peace Accords also include a nation’s agreement throughout the whole document. Therefore, we based our ideal scenario on the Peace Accords. We cannot visualize a Guatemalan nation that does not include the commitments derived from the peace negotiations and subsequent agreements. We believe this to be a basic take-off platform. Upon this platform we shall build, we shall continue to improve so that – if we are very ambitious - in 20 years time, I believe, we might be witnessing a different Guatemala.

Retired General

Visión Guatemala sought to strengthen the dialogue culture and the creation of consensus around concrete and conflicting issues in the country. And, finally, the project intended to influence the national programs of political parties in the forthcoming general elections at the end of 1999.

\(^3\) The AGG is an association under the private sector.
1 VISIÓN GUATEMALA

1.1 Context and Conditions in the Country

The Peace Accords facilitated this meeting allowing, for instance, for the participation of former guerrilla members, which would have been otherwise impossible. The prevailing atmosphere proclaimed the need to start building a different Guatemala departing from the Peace Accords.

Promoter

Furthermore, constitutional reforms were discussed in order to grant legal viability to the Peace Accords and a popular consultation was forthcoming for their approval. The Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico (Historical Elucidation Committee) was in charge of drafting a report recounting the pain and hardships experienced by several sectors of the population during the armed conflict.

At the same time, there was a feeling that polarization had resulted from meetings not yet held among the various sectors of the society rather than from the war itself.

Throughout the whole negotiation process and afterwards, in the first implementation phase, Peace Accords had created social and political conditions which promoted improved relationships among the sectors. However, this does not mean that all was harmonious among such diverse interests but that polarization, which characterized social struggles in previous years, was of a different dimension.

Politician
### 1.2 Timeline Table

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| Nov ’97-Aug’98 | **Preparation phase:**  
Prepared a project document and budget  
Selected methodology and facilitator  
Presented methodology and facilitator to potential team members  
Approached donors  
Integrated promoting group  
Identified and invited team members  
First information meeting  
Held weekly core team meetings  |
| Aug. ’98     | **First team scenario workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
44 participants; held Friday noon through Sunday  
Brainstormed initial 44 stories  
Decided on topics to learn more about (recent history, multiculturalism and Mayan cosmovision and economic development)  
Video production crew attended |
| Aug-Sept ’98 | **Second team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
Selected and engaged experts  
Prepared summary of scenarios and transcriptions  
Distributed various documents and papers to team members  
Held bi-monthly core team meetings  
Made further attempts to include politicians |
| Early Oct. ’98 | **Third team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
Brainstormed additional 30 scenarios, adding up to 74 scenarios  
Learning journey to largest indigenous NGO (CDRO)  
Presentations and discussions with experts  
Held Thursday noon through Sunday  
Video production crew attended |
| Oct-Nov ‘98  | **Third team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
Prepared summary of scenarios and transcriptions  
Held bi-monthly core team meetings  
Made further attempts to include politicians  
Technical secretariat + ad-hoc group of team members agreed on 5 draft scenarios |
| Early Nov ’98 | **Fourth team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
Agreed on 3 draft scenarios and named scenarios  
Discussed dissemination strategy  
Asked team members to suggest multipliers  
Video production crew attended |
| Nov ’98-Apr ‘99 | **Fourth team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
Prepared and distributed transcriptions  
Refined 3 final scenarios  
Wrote draft technical document and story book  
Proposed additional project financing/approached donors  
Produced short video for donors  
Prepared guidelines for strategic thinking and reflection workshops  
Prepared information and documentation for multipliers  |
| Feb ‘99      | **Fourth team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
First information meeting with multipliers  
First training workshop on use of guidelines for 60 multipliers  |
| End of April ‘99 | **Fourth team workshop at Panajachel, Sololá**  
Test draft document and story book |
Discussed results of Historic Clarification Commission and Constitutional Reforms with invited experts, politicians
Held Friday noon to Sunday

**May ’99**
- Printed 8,000 copies of technical document, 20,000 copies of story book
- Prepared and distributed transcriptions and national launch of VG
- Prepared press reports for major newspapers
- Mail out invitations to embassies, donors, political parties, business groups, universities, indigenous, human rights, business, the media and other key-decision making groups

**Jun ‘99**
- National launch; attended 800 people
- Beginning of dissemination process

**Jun –Dec ‘99**
- Started bi-monthly newsletter
- 30 presentations to key decision making groups, including the Presidency, the media, universities, business groups, political parties, Ngo, indigenous groups, etc.
- 5 reflection and strategic thinking workshops

**End of Nov 99**
- **Fifth team workshop in Antigua Guatemala**
  - joint meeting team members+multipliers Vision to create Grupo Vision Guatemala
  - Redefined purpose and intention of the project
  - Reviewed dissemination process and decided on next steps

**Jan-Oct 2000**
- 40 additional presentations to key decision making groups
- 20 additional reflection seminars with government officials, artists, indigenous groups, grassroots groups, university professors and students, communicators

**Sixth team workshop in Antigua Guatemala (May)**
- Trained 36 trainers of the Municipal Development Institute (INFOM)
- Trained 35 grassroots and community facilitators
- 25 reflection & strategic thinking workshops w/ municipal-level leaders prepared and tested guidelines for multisectorial dialogue workshops

**Mid Oct 2000**
- **First multisectorial dialogue workshop the regional level in Panajachel, Sololá**
  - 40 leaders from Escuintla
  - held Friday through Sunday
  - defined key strategic areas for the development of Escuintla
  - established individual commitments, and follow-up committee
1.3 Summary of the Scenarios

The scenario team developed three stories of how Guatemala might develop over the next 20 years:

**The Illusion of the Moth**
The moth’s path is troubling: it flies towards whatever light it sees and as a result often gets burned. In this scenario, economic conditions do not improve and diversity and multiculturalism are not really taken to heart, so discrimination of all types persists. National reconciliation is shallow and polarization and social conflict continue. Certain sectors cry out for political messianism and authoritarianism. Labor instability and unemployment rise and international cooperation decays. The economy is characterized by short-termism and tax revenues are not sufficient to pay for social necessities. The national spirit is pessimistic, mediocrity prevails, the rule of law is absent, and impunity remains. The process is one of wearing down, with expectations unmet and solidarity eroded in the face of individual agendas. There is no vision.

**The Zigzag of the Beetle**
The back-and-forth flight of the Beetle is erratic and without any sense of a north to which it is pointing. In this scenario, advances in political, economic and social life occur side-by-side with regressions. There is economic growth along with unequal participation in its benefits; multiculturalism along with exclusion and discrimination; and citizen participation along with apathy and lack of representativeness. Environmental degradation is accentuated. The state is incapable of achieving real fiscal reform. Reconciliation and dialogue coexist with deep woundedness and fear.

**The Flight of the Firefly**
The light of each firefly radiates to others and this creates a larger unity; a group of fireflies breaks down the darkness. In this scenario, a will exists to recognize our history and to construct a model where tolerance and educational transformation create multiculturalism and eliminate discrimination. Holistic development is reflected in a nation with its own identity, and with pluralism and fairness, the rule of law and the genuine consensus. The democratic state grants equal opportunities to all. A fiscal pact reduces gaps between sectors. Citizen participation and productivity increase. Optimism spreads with the real reconciliation that accompanies sustained and fair economic growth.
2 Findings

Vision Guatemala is, in a certain way, a parable of the best that could happen to this country.

Promoter

The findings below suggest that Visión Guatemala encouraged rich and intense personal learnings and reflections due to very specific factors, and that the project’s influence may be observed in at least two levels: first on those who participated; and second on the country.

2.1 Factors enhancing group learning and reflection

At least six important elements enhanced in-depth learnings and reflections within the group:

2.1.1 Methodology
2.1.2 A group embodying the plurality of Guatemalan society
2.1.3 Informal dialogues
2.1.4 Discovering the power of collective creation
2.1.5 Conditions and location of the venue
2.1.6 Logistic support and technical conducting

2.1.1 Methodology

The methodology was not only innovative but also highly effective for group work and extremely valuable in encouraging mutual approach among group members:

I had never participated in a similar experience.... the mere fact of being requested to approach somebody whom I least knew in order to discuss issues at a personal level, directly, well....... that really led to mutual interchange of experiences and closeness in a very short span of time. The Vision Guatemala exercise was valuable in terms of proving that it is possible to establish lasting links of understanding and collaboration if the adequate methodology is applied.

Former Secretary of Peace

2.1.2 A group embodying the plurality of Guatemalan society

The promoting group selected 39 prominent leaders from various sectors of the society. This group included indigenous leaders as well as leaders from non-governmental organizations and the human rights area; Businessmen, government officials, journalists, Retired Generals, politicians, scholars and other national personalities. The group, although incomplete, is perceived in general as a large and representative sample of Guatemalan society.

Group members were chosen on the basis of their individual qualities and openness to a wide scope of perspectives. They participated on a personal level; in other words, they did not represent any specific sector and, therefore, felt free to participate openly without mandates.
Several participants expressed that the group lacked more leaders of leftist ideologies and social movements, more young people and more women. And many felt that more politicians should have participated.

2.1.3 Informal dialogues

Informal dialogues encouraged personal approaches – which otherwise would not have taken place within the room - and fostered trust among the participants.

Casual meetings greatly enriched me. ….. personal conversations with some of the participants whom I could never have otherwise approached, the leaders. I looked for any opportunity at every moment to talk to the leaders of diverse visions; of the human rights area, for instance, an area outside my daily occupations. And I also tried to understand the viewpoints of some of the human rights leaders, which differ from mine at a personal level; the death penalty issue, for instance. To discuss with someone who thinks that the death penalty should not exist left me wondering. I have not yet found a solution. I also had the opportunity to talk with a former minister of National Defense and with a guerrilla leader. Yes, on a personal level, the various conversations I held left a deep impact on my mind. As far as personal enrichment, I benefited more from these corridor dialogues.

Businessman

2.1.4 Discovering the power of collective creation

Many participants were surprised to discover the group’s capacity to create. It made no difference if it were dreams, utopias, rules of the game or scenarios:

I think that very few people have the privilege of collective dreaming. The power of collective dreaming is intoxicating. The fact that you can sit and begin to converge on a series of issues in which you are not just making it up but you are actually trying to root it in reality. To be able to not only root it in reality but also to grasp it up with all of your strength so that you can in fact envision what you sense. Where people are actually making a contribution to the detail, to fleshing out the structure that has been agreed upon. That sensation is very powerful. It’s powerful to the point of being contagious, to the point of saying that this has to be repeated.

Former Technical Secretary of Peace

Establishing the rules of the game allowed for free, direct and courteous communication. It also encouraged a spirit of joint responsibility and commitment. The persons interviewed continuously referred to this collective construction:

In the first session, the project facilitator informed us that it was necessary to establish the rules of the game, a series of principles that would serve as the basis of our work and discussions. These rules helped us to keep our discussions on a low key, particularly when they involved massacres, indigenous discrimination, the effects of war on the civilian population, army participation in the war, etc. They also helped us to feel free to talk and to expect respect and careful answers from those who listened.

Retired General
2.1.5 Conditions and location of the venue

The beautiful place selected for the venue also contributed to this spirit. For many participants, it felt as a “retreat” aimed at setting their minds to reflect about the reality of Guatemala and its possibilities as a nation:

*A certain atmosphere must be generated in order for a good deal of energy to start adding or multiplying in a group of such diversity. I strongly believe that the proper atmosphere is important. I believe it is also important to take people away from their daily routines, to isolate them, to place them under different circumstances, far away……. I think this enabled us to investigate and also gave us a sense of purpose that could hardly be achieved in the city where we are constantly encircled by our personal worries. I also believe that the variations in the approach methodology were most useful. Finally, the location of the venue was simply beautiful.*

Promoter, priest

2.1.6 Logistic Support And Technical Conducting

Logistic support and technical conducting were aspects that enhanced the development of Visión Guatemala in providing the necessary structure to make participants from such diverse groups feel comfortable.

2.2 Influence on participants

*I came to the conclusion that guerrilla activists are somewhat right, that the private sector is somewhat right, and I stopped being suspicious of priests.*

Journalist

*I learned to listen. I learned to see and to discover the great richness inside others and inside myself.*

Politician

The greatest richness that Visión Guatemala has produced is its influence on those who participated in the scenario building process.

2.2.1 Change of mental maps

*I believe the greatest contribution of the project is that the country has now a group of persons who can, and have the capacity to, see things from a different perspective and, therefore, can help others do the same.*

Government official
For many, their participation in Vision Guatemala was an unprecedented personal experience that left a deep imprint in their minds. It implied forsaking their prejudices, opening up to others’ viewpoints, and learning to listen and to be tolerant.

When I finally decided to open my mind and forsake my prejudices, I learned from people whom I would have never approached. I learned from them as persons, at a personal level, but also about some aspects that represented their ideologies. It was extremely important........ someone recounted a massacre. Several Businessmen spoke of their experiences with kidnapping. It is then that one begins to understand why these people became hardened and are full of hate and resentment because these experiences are granted little or no value, depending on a person’s position.

Promoter

2.2.2 Discovering the Human Dimensions

We are unaware of the great richness in others. We do not see it... there is a lot, quite a lot, to learn from people who, frankly speaking, one would never have considered as possible sources of learning.

Government officer

Group members learned to get acquainted with each other; they found converging points and felt empathy for others’ realities:

The group gained the possibility of speaking frankly. Things could be said without upsetting the other party. I believe this helped to create a favorable atmosphere in which to express, if not the truth, certainly each person’s truth. I do not know if an absolute truth was ever found. I do not believe it exists but we surely made great progress in trying to fit in another person’s shoes. This, I believe, was finally achieved. In the end, and particularly after listening to one of the stories, I understood and felt in my heart all that had happened [in the country]. And there is a feeling that we must struggle to prevent this from happening again.

Politician

One anecdote reveals how much the group learned through the participation of three young men:

The first round in the first session was extremely negative because we were all looking back to the events of recent years, which had left a deep imprint on us. Thus, a first moment full of pessimism was generated. Suddenly, a young man stood up and questioned our pessimism in a very direct manner. This moment marked the beginning of a very important change, and we continually referred to it afterwards. That a young man would suddenly call us old pessimists was a very important contribution.

Promoter, priest
2.2.3 Generation of Spaces for Multisectorial Meeting and Dialogue

I felt that interchange was very important, the fact that we could express our ideas and opinions. Contradictions certainly arose but we were able to settle them. I still do not share some ideas, but now we can talk.

*Human rights activist*

The possibility of creating a multisectorial space for dialogue is an innovation for Guatemalans. The war years seriously restricted approaches among sectors of a diverse nature, fostering a culture of confrontation. Therefore, one of the major contributions of Visión Guatemala to the society is the promotion of such a space.

*All of us have something to learn from the dialogue, ..... it is fundamental. However, it is also true that the struggle to establish a dialogue is really a struggle. It is not a given [a priori]. A priori, In our history, is confrontation; we are suspicious of each other; we turn away from each other, and we attack each other surreptitiously.*

*Promoter*

The general consensus was that dialogue continues to be the best option in building a future.

*I learned that dialogue is possible even between people of different ideologies; that it is possible to reach consensus, to have a common vision and that, in the end, even in the light of different ways of thinking, the objective that we all pursue is the same. In other words, the well-being of the community and the possibility of living in peace and prosperity. Therefore, the first thing was to demonstrate that dialogue is possible. A second element that was very useful to me was to discover different visions, different ways of learning about the reality of the country and drawing paths leading to the objective that each of us has chosen in seeking common well-being. On a personal level, it helped me get acquainted with many distinguished persons that I had not met before. I was very excited to participate.*

*Businessman*

2.2.4 Establishment of Networks of Relationships and Trust Building

*I would never have imagined seeing a former member of the army intelligence and a former member of the guerrilla intelligence together in a hotel bar.*

*Politician*

A truly special atmosphere of trust was generated in the group throughout the duration of the scenario workshop.
By the end of the third seminar, there were not 40 people but 40 friends. I had the feeling that it was only a lot of friends getting together. And, when you are friends, you trust each other.

Scholar

Personal approaches, unthinkable in previous time, were taking place:

Sometimes during the workshops we were asked to walk in pairs after meals. On one occasion, I had the opportunity to pair up with a journalist who writes a column and is inclined to the right. When our walk came to an end, he said, “Look, I had never had contact with a guerrilla activist before.” Today, we enjoy a nice relationship. Both of us write for “Siglo 21”, and he has been very supportive in terms of my participation in the newspaper, although it is obvious that our ideas do not coincide. It was different with former Army members, Balconi and Bonilla, who had participated in the peace process and, therefore, a positive atmosphere was created. I observed many things and lived through many experiences. There is this person who is the director of a research center. She is like the tic-tac of the basically more powerful sectors. A fluid conversation with someone who represents this way of thinking, extremely neoliberal, was difficult to imagine. Yet, the conversations allowed for communication levels. I have invited this person to my courses in the university and have asked her to explore there. She has invited me to participate in her events and, naturally, we have our own points of view. The truth of the matter is that this would not have been possible before our Visión Guatemala experience.

Former guerrilla activist

An esprit de corps was generated despite the fact that the participants came from opposite sectors:

A positive learning was that, although we came from opposite sectors, it was possible to generate this esprit de corps. Aside from discrepancies that might arise - because we never assumed that we would agree on everything - we respected all positions. But the creation of this physical spirit as a Visión group in charge of constructing scenarios was one of the greatest project achievements.

Human Rights activist

Contact has been kept among group members; occasions for getting together have been sought, and this is a positive sign. The dimension of relationships and trust achieved in the group are confirmed in the following set of statements:

I was happily surprised to see the photograph of a member of Visión Guatemala in the newspaper. The Rector of Universidad del Valle is seen walking on the street beside a former guerrilla activist, a former commander, on their way to the Congress to submit a fiscal agreement proposal. That was a former guerrilla member with the rector of a highly conservative university! I am sure this was, to a certain extent, a product of Visión Guatemala.

Journalist

The relationships which I established have allowed me, for instance, to knock the doors of many people from Visión Guatemala and to ask for their support on behalf of the campaign that we are launching in Quetzaltenango [Campaña por la Tolerancia y Convivencia Pacífica]. For instance, I invited Otilia Lux de Coti, whom I know to be very busy person. I also invited Helen Mack and Dr. Gonzalo de Villa. They, as well as other people, have
supported the campaign that we are implementing in Xela. Under different circumstances, if this atmosphere of trust had not been generated, I would not have dared ask them, knowing how full their agendas are. The atmosphere of confidence that was generated was very interesting. People opened their hearts. Personal histories were recounted. If empathy is not felt, people do not have the courage to tell their stories. At the personal level, I was very much impressed by two positions at a certain moment. In previous years, it would have been impossible to conceive an Army member and a former guerrilla activist telling their personal experiences. It was really interesting to hear General Balconi or Mauricio López Bonilla recounting war stories while aware of the presence of their former enemies.

Indigenous journalist

... the best thing is that the elite of the country can talk now. We can make a telephone call and we can talk to people who were not accessible to us three or four years ago.

Scholar

2.2.5 Collective Learning about the Country’s Reality

I think that Visión Guatemala removed our fears and vanished our ghosts. So, we said, “think of it as a phase in history that we were unable to overcome”. Today is a different story, another phase of Guatemalan history. Today we understand that problems are not solved with bullets but with a “please sit down here and we will sit over there, and let us talk, let us find joint solutions”.

Minister of Culture and Sports

To discover the dimension of Guatemalan reality was one of the most outstanding learnings for the members of Visión Guatemala. This was achieved, on one side, through the participation of experts who were invited to dictate on three themes that the group had selected. In the second workshop, the experts made presentations on economic development, multiculturalism and Mayan Cosmovision, and the recent history of Guatemala. These presentations generated intensive dialogue and revealed new aspects about the country.

The discussion around multiculturalism, for instance, revealed a reality that had remained hidden from many people. One of the businessmen referred to what he actually felt during this discussion in the following terms: “it seemed as though we were living in two different countries.”

Experts on multiculturalism were engaged in the second workshop. The group agreed that very little was known about indigenous reality. This is understandable. People would rather go to the United States or other countries in Europe than to the hinterland of Guatemala. Consequently, they knew these countries better than their own. The decision to bring aboard experts on these themes was most suitable. Quite a number of participants have mentioned that the participation of experts on indigenous issues was extremely valuable because it allowed them to further understand the reality of the country’. And, whether we like it or not, it is the reality of the majority of the population.

Indigenous journalist

The group displayed a genuine interest in multiculturalism and was able to assess the importance of multicultural cohabitation:
I believe that multicultural cohabitation is an important issue in Guatemala. This has been fully understood by many persons. In my opinion, it was one of the themes that we were able to elaborate on: the possibility of multiculturalism. In other words, for each of us to live within our culture and have respect for all other cultures. It is a synergetic and most enriching process for the Guatemalan nation. In my opinion, this was one of the most outstanding issues.

Businessman

At the workshop, the faces of racism were exposed:

I remember that, in an effort to demonstrate that he was free from prejudice, one Businessman said, “I studied in Cobán; we always liked ‘inditas’ (pejorative for indigenous women). This was his way of showing that he was not a racist… Other women had to be convinced that racism was certainly an issue in Guatemala. They declared: “Guatemala is not racist” because they grew up in the capital city or in a financial atmosphere, and live there. However, the Visión Guatemala experience has taught them that racial discrimination is certainly practiced in Guatemala, although not openly or actively. It is a question of not having indigenous people present in their world or interacting with them. Some members of indigenous communities have told us that poverty is more bearable than rejection. These persons from the banking or financial world, where money is the main interest, found it hard to understand that being poor was more acceptable than being rejected.

Scholar

Efforts to uncover the country’s reality included a learning journey to the indigenous organization CDRO⁴. Discovery of the indigenous world by some businessmen underscored this journey. It was also very important for the group to have appraised Guatemala’s recent history, that part which is not found in official history books, and also to have learned about it:

When the history theme was proposed, the fact that we do not know our own history, that history has always been censured depending on the author, we said: we can bring in historians who represent various ways of thinking, and this was accepted. The fact that, for instance, Arturo Taracena, a strict historian with a high academic profile, could support the issue involving the grant of large estates and coffee plantations with proper documentation before important owners of coffee plantations…… This oligarchy learned – not learned but had to admit without defense - that they had become the owners of large extensions of land under a political process (through governmental concessions that gave them land for coffee). However, when a peasant requests a small plot of land from the government, these landowners are the first to oppose under the argument that this is not a government function. However, three generations ago, that very same function was the source of their present well-being. All statements were fully documented and explained by Arturo Taracena in a most academic manner. There were no insults. It was simply our history.

Scholar

The presentations sensitized the group on the importance of having a national economic program that would further the country’s social development. On the other hand, the realities and multiple

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⁴ CDRO is the largest indigenous non governmental organization in the country with headquarters in the department of Totonicapan, in the western part of Guatemala.
truths which are carried in the collective memory of Guatemalans were stripped down when members of this highly heterogeneous group decided to open up and share their intimate life stories:

There were former guerilla activists, former Army members who had actually fought; there were representative of human rights groups who had suffered on account of their direct relationship with human rights violations and terrible human rights violations. There were people like Helen Mach who had endured the death of her sister and her subsequent long struggle against impunity. In other words, there were people who had been deeply hurt, and this is another acknowledgement that we all made because they looked at the problem from their particular point of view, that it hurt because it had been directed against each one of them. And there were moments when all of us became conscious of the brutality. I cannot find the words to describe, from a human point of view, the tragic dimension of what the country had to undergo during the war years.

Politician

All interviewed persons made reference to the power of personal histories, particularly within the context of armed conflict.

There is something that I would like to underscore: I remember very well when people started talking about all the killings and genocide going on during war time. That was quite a strong moment in which group members became very conscious of what the war had meant for all Guatemalans, directly or indirectly. It also brought to the surface our desire to establish a dialogue and to know what could be proposed or done. I still remember when Ronalth Ochaeta talked about an exhumation. I believe there were people in the room who had never heard about anything similar. May be only those of us who worked in the human rights area.

Human rights activist

The histories that told of community suffering by the repression moved many people, particularly the facilitator, who is an excellent facilitator. The magnitude of the tragedy has no comparison. Nevertheless, it is not the same to see it in black and white figures than to hear it recounted as an anecdote. That helped sensitize the participants.

Former guerrilla activist

Sharing these histories in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect allowed for the creation of group spirit.

I was very moved by the histories. The energy produced by their recounting and sharing elicited a reflection about the role each was playing from his/her particular position, naturally, without much hope of changing these attitudes. This is still painfully lacking. What really changed was the issue of tolerance in addressing various issues. In my opinion, informal gatherings were very productive in terms of mutual approach. I am certain that group spirit was created. We certainly respect the position of others. There prevailed an attitude of respect, tolerance and desire for listening, and even for speaking and making proposals.

Human Rights activist
The openness, sincerity and honesty permeating these stories gave a human face to the Guatemalan tragedy, allowing the group to see and feel what others had experienced:

As to the history that he recounted, the one that caused such a great impact, a lot had to do with the fact that he witnessed an exhumation somewhere in Rabinal. It was a large field and he was suddenly called by the forensic anthropologists to see what they had found..... evidence of the skeleton of an unborn baby who had been buried, perhaps alive or still in its mother’s womb, and the mother had been probably buried alive. That… that is the history. That is one history, and there must be a thousand like it. There are a thousand histories. All these deaths are contained in a document that has been prepared by the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, each page…. Consequently, what happened in this country was brutal… 30 years… But we were aware of it! I was! I was a politician for a long time and this was one of the areas that I worked with. I was even threatened by military commissioners on account of my political work. We suffered, but as opponents, as enemies, always from our particular point of view. As far as I am concerned, the workshops helped me understand this in its true human dimension. A tremendous brutality! I was aware of it but had not experienced it. It is one thing to know about something and keep it as statistical data, and another to actually feel it……. And I think that all of us had to go through this process. May be not all of us because each has a particular way of thinking and feeling. But I am sure it happened to quite a few of those of us who were there. I think that, after understanding this, everyone is committed to prevent it from happening again. Anybody that was here has to be committed to prevent this from happening in the future.

Politician

When he finished recounting his experience, profound silence followed and the group bonded. It was an important moment that each of us remembers vividly.

In giving his testimony, he was sincere, calm and serene, without a trace of hate in his voice. This gave way to the moment of silence that, I would say, lasted at least one minute. It was horrible! Like a very moving experience for all… If you ask any of us, we would say that this moment was like a large communion. No one dared break the silence. The group included, let us say, an academic class, Businessmen or managers, who had always considered these issues to be exaggerations or to belong to the left side. Listening to a personal testimony really moved them.

Former Secretary of Peace

You become part of the silences. There’s this mood that’s created. The group is bonded by very many different things. Silence has an incredible capacity to bond. You simply remain silent and nobody has to say anything. We’re there, all of us together. That’s been a very intensive moment, a very dramatic moment.

Promoter

2.3 Influence in the Country

The influence of Vision Guatemala in the country is shown in at least three ways:

- Influence of group members on the organizations, sectors or groups to which they were drawn from
• Generation of strategic thinking and conversation towards the future
• Image of a plural group which reinforces the conviction that dialog and search for consensus are possible in the country

When the promoters of Vision Guatemala assembled the constructing group, they looked for influential leaders of various organizations and spheres of society. These leaders have responsibility for running certain part of the country, either because they hold public office, direct human rights organizations, are journalists, are political figures or because they are directing important academic centers. The impact of Visión Guatemala on the country is reproduced from the influence these individuals exercise in the spheres in which they evolve.5

I believe that in the case of Visión Guatemala they have chosen social leaders who will certainly play important public roles. I think that the experience is not only personal, but also that in the measure in which personal attitudes change, the practice of any person, including public practice expresses the changes of attitudes that can take place. It is a fact that the role of persons is not fundamental in these historical processes because there are other elements which accumulate forces, but that does not mean that individuals do not play a role, which is sometimes underestimated and in this sense, I believe that experiences such as Vision Guatemala do contribute or have a bearing in an environment where it is more difficult to have a bearing. The decisions or attitudes taken as political realities are more objective.

Former guerrilla activist

This impact, of course, is frequently not direct and explicit and, furthermore, it depends on at least three situations. First, individual learnings effectively achieved by each of the participants; second, the degree to which these learnings are being conveyed to their respective sectors and organizations, and third, according to the office or position from which influence is exercised.

One of the first impacts of Vision Guatemala occurred in the process of the constitutional reforms and the popular consultation, as well as in the elections held in 1999:

...the specific issues that can be pinpointed to the project that began to appear in the political scenario that could be beneficial. One, that the candidate of the government party, the PAN at that moment, actually discovered that a multiethnic, multilingual group was doing the exercise. It became a concern of how to deal with that particular dimension of our reality. I think that they had not been as conscious as in that moment. I think that the political elite that were involved in the exercise became very much sensitized to the essential contribution that the constitutional reforms had to perform, and the Visión Guatemala group was committed to the contribution of reforms as a group, and it was something that grew out from the group. It was not something that the group was indoctrinated into. In fact, this group had been participating, I think very strongly.

Promoter

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5 At present in the Vision Guatemala Group there are one female Minister and one Viceminister of Culture and Sports, the President of the Bank of Guatemala, the Guatemalan Ambassador before the U.N., the Guatemalan Ambassador before the O.A.S., two former presidential candidates, two university rectors and one vice rector, three female directors of the most important research centers, four directors of important human rights organizations, among others. Other members of the group participating in unprecedented national initiatives, such as in the Fiscal Agreement Commission and in the Governance Pact.
It could be argued that Vision Guatemala is having some bearing on university education as a result of the fact that a number of members of the group at present are participating in directing the second largest university of the country.

...at present I have five members of Vision Guatemala on the Board of Directors of the University. We are trying to make this University a space where the spirit of Vision Guatemala is an innate spirit. I believe that this is something rich and which can transmit this spirit with great force as a University institution, even though it does not necessarily have to refer directly to the name Vision Guatemala. I believe that from the point of view of the students and professors themselves, a number of presentations have been made and believe that there has been an impact on the ordinary life in different spaces of the University.

Promoter, Rector of Rafael Landívar University

Similarly, a human rights activist reveals how his experience has started to have a bearing on his organization:

Yesterday, for example, X, who is an entrepreneur was seated at this table and we had a strong discussion publicly. He is neoliberal and I raised points against neoliberalism. Later, after this confrontation, when they kidnapped his brother and murdered him, I wrote an article supporting all his accusations and he came now and we sat down to discuss jointly what we could do to fight against the impunity which is occurring in the institutions, the violation of due process. That is when we said, all right, there are points on which we can join up.

An official of this government tells how, from his point of view, the lessons he got from Vision Guatemala could be having a bearing on the country.

I don’t know how much of what has been happening later (in the country) has to do with Vision Guatemala. I will mention one aspect in which I participated. It is the project regarding getting the process of the Fiscal Agreement for Guatemala going. If you look at the actors in the Preparatory Group for the Fiscal Agreement, in the Accompanying Commission of the Peace Accords and in the Commissions which have been established subsequently, there are people who have been there (in Vision Guatemala). So I don’t know how much of what each one of us experienced in the Vision Guatemala process has contributed to the little or lot we have advanced on this subject, which I believe is a lot... And one would have to observe in other spheres its presence, like salt in the world, is not already impregnated in the way of being and behaving of some groups. But it is difficult to assess. Because in Vision Guatemala it is almost like the Apostles to whom Christ said: take up your cross and follow me. Yes, it is somewhat like that, the way I see it. There is not way of doing it in writing, or by radio or television. It is a process of inner reflection.

Government officer

(Visión Guatemala) infused and strengthened my way of being... I have new strengths. In this institution, which is an almost military hierarchy, here you do what the President of the Bank says, of course provided it is within the framework of the law and standards... now I first hear, and hear well, and what is produced is that when I make a decision it is accepted without any major difficulty. But this is not only good here. It is good in the Cabinet meetings, in the meetings with different sectors: to learn to listen. I think that this is one thing on which I have probably improved a lot after the Vision Guatemala process. Because sometimes you hear but do not listen. And probably one does learn more by not only hearing but by listening, by not only looking but by seeing. Probably. But it is difficult
One journalist was of the opinion that the influence of Vision Guatemala is indirect, but can be felt intuitively:

Look at my case, for example, you will have seen sometimes in the things I have to write that I get some ideas and you might think, “that sounds like something I said somewhere,” and I tell you that this is so, because Vision Guatemala went on an idea fishing job... Then (its influence) is indirect, because I wrote it taking it from Vision Guatemala. I do not say, I learned this in Vision Guatemala, but that I developed it and it is thus having an influence. If I were asked right now, what things or changes I had in my thoughts, I could not remember because they advanced so much that the things I did wrong I sort of erased, I buried them after getting into that manner of thinking of the group.

In the spirit and with the participation of a number of members of Vision Guatemala, a new entity in the struggle against poverty in the country was created.

I recently began to lead the establishment of an Institute which will fight poverty. I invited some members I met at Vision and they all accepted quickly. We are 22 or 25 founding partners and I would say that 70% are members of Vision Guatemala.

A politician said:

I feel very proud, satisfied and honored to be in the group. The meeting impressed me so much that a new political party around me will be called “Democratic Encounter” because for me, that is what Visión Guatemala did.

The generation of long term strategic thinking and conversation is another important contribution for a society which often focuses on the situation. From the beginning, the members of the group appreciated the possibility of reflecting on the alternatives of the country’s future.

What Visión Guatemala showed us was to think of the long term basically. Visión Guatemala is thinking in the long term, drawing common lines which are of interest to the majority. A long term project, such as Vision Guatemala, must be supported by everyone to be successful. I believe that for me the influence of Vision Guatemala is precisely in thinking of the long term, beyond that which I can see with my eyes, people must place themselves beyond what they can see, and that starts from the family, what do I want for my children today, what do I want for my children tomorrow and what do I want for my children later. I cannot think of working now to pay one month’s school for my children, I must work to pay for their school the year round, to pay for all their education, to help them be useful citizens. But for that I must visualize what I want for each one of them, what I want for my family, what I will do so that my family may have this, that is taking things to the family level, but taking them to the national level is a commitment for everyone, and I believe that all of this begins with the individual commitment. I have to change, I have to
change my way of acting to be an example in my home, in my family and also, as a citizen I have to do the same, I have to change and have to participate.  

Retired general

2.4 The force of the process

What was more valuable to you, the scenarios or the process of building them? In response to that question, all those interviewed agreed in pointing out that the greatest richness of the exercise was the process experienced to get to build the scenarios. For many participants, the process was everything.

In terms of paradigms, we are so focused on results that many times we miss the benefit of process and, in this case, process was everything. It was not the results. The stories that you end up telling is a neat way of packaging the process but it is the strategic vision that goes incorporated in that story what is really important, the sense of the power of collective dreaming with the capacity for you to actually listen to what somebody else is saying. I think that, once we are able to clarify that, what comes next follows by gravity.

Former Technical Secretary of Peace

The scenarios stories acquire importance when sharing the experience, the learnings and reflections with those who did not participate in the process. That is to say, the scenarios serve as means to bring the experience closer to the reality of each one, but they are not an end in themselves.

...what place to assign to the construction of scenarios as such? It is good that they be made, but that is not necessarily the goal... No, that is not what is most important. I believe that the history of the scenarios is, I don’t know if you are familiar with the anthropological tradition, but what Malinowky tells of a system he discovered in some South Sea islands, where he spent all of World War I. Then he found that a mechanism of exchange which is extremely sophisticated exists, and apparently without any purpose whatsoever, by which the people from some islands travel to others and make exchanges of shells, of conchs and things like that and that one, from the point of view of economic logic, finds no sense at all in: to risk their lives in very long voyages to exchange sea shells. But in the end it turns out that he discovers that the shells are the great pretext to do another whole bunch of things that are the ones that really matter. Then I believe that the scenarios are the shells of Vision. They are the great pretext to do what we need to do.

Promoter, Rector of Rafael Landívar University

2.5 Limitations of Visión Guatemala

The main limitations stated by those interviewed were the following:

- The lack of sufficient and timely financial resources for implementing project activities.
- The participation of more women, more politicians, more young people, more leaders of the social movements and of the different expressions of the left was missing, as well as that of leaders from other regions of Guatemala.
- The intention and purposes were established by the promoters of the project and shared with the group at the beginning of the exercise. But participants’ expectations in regard to these changed as the scenario construction process advanced. These new expectations were not addressed directly or made explicit within the group, giving rise to a certain degree of frustration among some of the participants as to the scope of the project.
2.6 Recommendations from Participants

Makeup of the promoting and constructing groups

- Making up a national promoting group which reflects the plurality and diversity of society, enjoys credibility, assumes the commitment of leading the project, has convening powers, comes from different experiences and fields of work, different ideological positions and above all a feeling of commitment and love for their country.
- The constructing group must also reflect the diversity and plurality of society. Each member must be convened by the promoting group; participate personally and not as a representative of his/her sector, have a history of commitment to the country, a broad and open mentality, and time to devote to the exercise. In total it should be a group of not more than 45 persons. The participation of women and young leaders, who sooner or later will hold positions of leadership at national level is also important.
- In the measure in which the scenario exercises have the purpose of influencing decision making in the country, they should include politicians and other individuals (e.g. entrepreneurs, sectoral leaders) who are in capacity of bringing about changes.

The most timely moment

Space the scenario construction exercise, insofar as possible, away from any electoral event. The scenario exercises require an environment which will foster the exchange of opinions and limit acquiring rigid positions.

Facilitation

- Look for an excellent facilitator or team of facilitators
- Insofar as possible, the facilitation should be in the local language

Hiring a technical secretary or management team

- This team should not necessarily be large, but should be dedicated full time, provide follow-up to the agreements and commitments, and keep up relations and communications within the group. The team is responsible for systematizing each workshop, supervise transcriptions of recorded material, and hire an editor and writer of scenario stories.
- In addition to a logistical management capability, the team must have good technical capability, mainly to prepare the synthesis of the workshops, prepare intermediate documents and lead the final preparation of the scenarios.

Makeup of the board of directors

The board of directors among its functions could have: the definition, prioritization, review and monitoring of the strategy of the project and support the search for and obtaining of financial resources for the project.
Definition of the next steps

- Before concluding the scenario building exercise it is necessary to define, with the consensus of the building group, a second phase to disseminate the results.
- After concluding the scenario building process, to establish an infrastructure for the review, assessment and continuous learning which promotes periodic meetings.

3 Learnings and Questions for the Future

3.1 A Need Felt by Society

Although inspired by the experiences of other countries, such as that of Mont Fleur in South Africa, and Destino Colombia, financed by international cooperation and advised by a private company, which is also international, the Visión Guatemala project resulted from a demand felt in the country, as was at that time the need to generate spaces for dialogue and trust to shore up the peace process. In addition, the project was created up, promoted, directed and built by Guatemalans.⁶

A second lesson is that there are at least three critical and extremely sensitive moments in the development of a scenario building exercise to which extreme attention must be paid: overcoming the initial mistrust which is awakened by an effort of this nature, to define and redefine throughout the process its intention or purpose and to reach a consensus the dissemination of the results.

3.2 Overcoming the Initial Mistrust

At the beginning, the most common questions were: Where does this initiative come from? What are its real intentions? What and whose agenda is being promoted? Will I be manipulated if I participate? Will I compromise my sector? Is it a businessmen’s project? A CIA project? A leftist project?

It must be personal, transparent, informative on the intentions, scope and those promoting the exercise. This initial approach could be strengthened with the testimony of participants from other countries who have experienced a similar exercise.

3.3 Clarifying the Intention of the Scenario Building Exercise

The promoters of Vision Guatemala from the beginning defined the intention or purpose of the scenario exercise and shared it with all the members of the building group. However, while some members of the group are of the opinion that Vision Guatemala fulfilled its purpose, there are others who stated the contrary:

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⁶ The international donors which have supported the Vision Guatemala project are: The Soros Foundation of Guatemala, Cooperation of the Netherlands, UNDP, USAID. Local donors have been Fundación 2020 and the Managers’ Association of Guatemala. Also, cooperation by World Bank and the Sugar Association of Guatemala (FUNDAZUCAR) is being initiated to carry out multisectorial dialogue workshops at regional level.
When they talked to us it was to construct the vision, so I was looking forward to constructing a vision not scenarios. That is why I feel sad because I was looking for a more ambitious project.

Academician (female)

So that it was necessary for the group to approach its expectations and the real possibilities of a project of this nature realistically. Are we trying to generate a vision of the country? Are we trying to generate strategic thinking in society? Are we expecting to create spaces of trust and relationships? Do we want to influence the elite or all of the populations?

3.4 Dissemination of Results

The methodology used was powerful and clearly structured as regards scenario building. But it did not contemplate, with the same rigor, how to disseminate the results.

4 Interpretative Conclusions

4.1. Influence on Participants

Visión Guatemala was a deeply human experience which each of the members of the group remembers vividly. In essence, it implied a change in their mental maps, which allowed them to do away with prejudices, open up to other ways of looking at things, and thinking and learning to listen to and tolerate each other. Many feel that the experience marked them irreversibly. Visión Guatemala also fostered that many discovered and appreciated the truths of others starring with what history includes, the collective memory and the experiences of the group. The days of learning and discussions about the history of the country and multiculturalism and the Maya cosmovision stripped realities from a country which many did not know. Personal histories which some deposited with the group in an honest and calm manner brought about moments of true communion.

The workshops which were held created a meeting space for the leaders of very varied sectors to sit down to talk, to tighten the ties and to build trust. One year and a half after the scenario exercise ended, the group continues to meet and looking for ways to keep in contact.

4.2. Influence in the Country

The influence of Visión Guatemala on the country is not always explicit and direct. It is related to at least two conditions: First, to the changes in the mental maps experienced by this group of prominent national leaders, many of whom hold key positions in national events. Second, the degree to which each one of these is transferring his reflections and lessons to the sectors, organizations and work places, from where they can bring about a degree of bearing on the country.

The interviews revealed that Vision Guatemala is permeating Guatemalan society in very varied ways, through the individual contributions of the members of the group. A journalist says that he reflects the lessons in the media where he writes, a public official carries them to the meetings of the Government Cabinet; a politician has a bearing on a government program of his party in the
1999 elections; another one finds inspiration to name his new party; an academician and an entrepreneur incorporate them in to the Preparatory Commission for the Fiscal Agreement. Moreover, the participation of various members of the group in directing the second largest university of the country, could have a bearing on higher education. The relationships and trust established on the basis of the scenario workshops were a fundamental ingredient for one of the members to start up a new institute to fight poverty, where 70% of the founders belong to Visión Guatemala.

The interviews also reveal some direct impacts of Visión Guatemala on the country. One of these is that Visión Guatemala is a tangible and visible example of the fact that various sectors can sit down and talk to each other with tolerance and respect, which confirms that it is worthwhile to invest efforts in the exercises of multisectorial dialogue. Another impact is that Visión Guatemala is generating reflection, strategic thought and public debate in regard to the possible, feasible or desirable alternatives in the future of the country, particularly through the dissemination activities which are under way.7

These findings suggest that the impact of Visión Guatemala is similar to what happens when you throw a stone into a lake. It falls and generates a series of ever broader circles until they expand to an area much greater than that of the small stone thrown. One is left with the sensation that the influence of the Visión Guatemala project has barely started and that we still have to get to know the potential impacts it contains. Therefore, there is the hope that in coming years, many of the events of this nation will be enlightened by the powerful light of the fireflies.

5 Appendix

5.1 Methodology and Research

This paper was based on the findings of 15 tape-recorded interviews conducted in Guatemala 21-25 of August 2000, as well as a group dialogue conducted immediately after the interviews to test and modify, if necessary, the preliminary findings.

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7 There are three dissemination activities under way: presentations to different groups of society, strategic reflection and thinking workshops, and multisectorial dialogue workshops. The core objective of these workshops is to generate strategic thinking in society.
5.2 Participants of the Visión Guatemala Project

Constructing Group

The following is a list of the members of the scenario constructing group and multipliers for Visión Guatemala. The list presented is in alphabetical order as per the first surname of each participant and includes a summary of their main biographic data on the basis of information given by them.

**María del Carmen Aceña de Fuentes**
Systems Engineer. Currently President of CIEN. She is most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial and the media. During the last few years has focused her experience on the fields of development, economic growth and reduction of poverty.

**Richard Aitkenhead Castillo**
Economist. Currently Executive President of IDC

**Miguel Ángel Albizúres Pedroza**
Journalist. Currently Coordinator of the Information Commission, FAMDEGUA, also Coordinator of the Alliance Against Impunity. He is most active in the following sectors: human rights and trade unions. During the last few years has worked mostly for trade unions, human rights and journalism.

**Virgilio Alvarado Ajanel**
Degree in Social Work and studying for Masters in Anthropology and Ethnology. Currently Vice-Minister of Culture and Sports. Was Coordinator of the multiculturalism area of the UNDP Q’anil Project. He is most related to the following sectors: intellectual, indigenous NGOs of 2nd and 3rd grade on a regional and national level. Has focused during the last few years on endogenous development (CDRO), Mayan education (UNESCO) and has been member of the Parity Commission for Educational Reform (on behalf of the Government).

**Clara Arenas Bianchi**
Economist and Anthropologist. Currently Executive Director of AVANCSO. She is most active in the following sectors: popular, NGOs, religious and academic. During the last few years has focused on the areas of peasants, identity, State/society, research and coordination.

**Julio Balconi Turcios**
Retired general. Was Technical Advisor in the Faculty of Systems Engineering of the Francisco Marroquín University. Is most active in the academic/intellectual sector. During the last few years has focused on the educational area of armed institutions, collaborated in the attainment of peace as member of the Peace Commission of the Government of the Republic and in the modernization process of the Guatemalan Army.

**Hugo Beteta Méndez-Ruiz**
Administrative Vice-Rector of the Rafael Landivar University. Was President of Solar Foundation. Most associated with sectors of: NGOs and governmental. Lately has focused on areas of environment, energy and development.

**Edgar Cabnal Santa Cruz**
Social Worker. Currently Consultant for “Children bereft of Family relations due to armed conflict”. Was Executive Secretary of Special Commission for Incorporation. Most active in the following sectors: indigenous, political,
popular, trade unions and NGOs. During the last few years has focused on community development, uprooted populations and the peace process.

Héctor Centeno Bolaños
Civil Engineer. Currently Rector of the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. Most related to the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial and NGOs. Lately has focused on areas of teaching, entrepreneurial development, environmental sciences and natural resources.

Alvaro Colom Caballeros
Industrial Engineer. Currently President of MEGA Group, a consulting company. Was candidate to 1999 elections for Partido Alianza Nueva Nación. Most active in the following sectors: productive, indigenous and political. During the last few years has focused on areas of political development, construction of peace and entrepreneurial development.

Luis Chocano Caballero
Insurance Broker. Life Executive Director of Tecniseguros. Was President of the Association of Managers of Guatemala. Lately has focused on private social security programs.

Elena Díez Pinto
Director of Visión Guatemala. Industrial engineer with graduate studies in regional and economic development planning. During the last few years has focused on design and evaluation of social policies and programs, relations government-civil-society, and poverty alleviation and peace projects.

Jorge Escoto Marroquín
Economist. Currently Undersecretary of the Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency (SEGEPLAN). Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, governmental, indigenous, political and NGOs. During the last few years has focused on social, economic and political areas.

Luis Figueroa Jurado
Journalist. Currently Vice-President of Siglo Veintiuno. Most related to sectors of: the Press, economic and academic. Lately has focused on journalism and economy.

Víctor Gálvez Borrel
Doctor in Sociology. Currently Director of FLACSO. Was Academic Coordinator of FLACSO. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, governmental, indigenous, NGOs, popular and trade unions. During the last few years has focused on teaching, research and counseling of international organisms.

Eduardo González Castillo
Entrepreneur. Currently Executive President of Bancafé and was Minister of Economy. Most active in the entrepreneurial sector. During the last few years has focused on the areas of finance, export of nontraditional products and the peace process.

Alfonso González Lacs
Economist. Currently Executive Vice-President of Grupo Pro. Was President of Association of Managers of Guatemala. Most related to sectors of: finance, stock market, managerial support and economic analysis. During the last few years has focused on areas of finance, economy and management.

Roberto Gutiérrez Martínez
Chemical Engineer. Degree in Business Administration and Anthropologist. General Manager of “Gutierrez y Cia.,S.A.”. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial and indigenous. Lately had focused on areas of socioeconomic development, decentralization and local power, combating of poverty.
Juan León Alvarado
Urban Primary Education Teacher. Currently Legal Representative of Mayan Defense Counsel. Most active in the following sectors: Mayan, women, trade unions, CACIF (CC), State Organisms, academic, NGOs and religious. During the last few years has focused on areas of human rights, politics, indigenous rights and international law.

Raquel León Lux
Social Worker. Currently working for Social Investment Fund in El Quiché. Most active in the following sectors: local development committees, rural area communities and mayor’s offices. During the last few years has focused on rural communities and community development committees.

Federico Licht Leibson
Entrepreneur and Telecommunications Engineer. Currently Director of grupo AEROLUX. Was Director of Grupo TELGLOB. Has been most active in the following sectors: religious, entrepreneurial and the media. During the last few years has focused on advising on sales of video equipment, audio equipment, air-conditioning and telephony.

Mauricio López Bonilla
Retired colonel. Political scientist, consultant/advisor, currently executive vice-president of Interimage Latinoamericana, S.A.. Works as consultant-advisor in corporate image and campaign design, is political analyst and opinion columnist. Currently columnist of Prensa Libre and was columnist of Revista Crónica. Most active in the following sectors: private, human rights, political parties, academic, armed forces and the media. During the last few years has focused on areas of negotiation of Human Rights themes in the U.N., lobbying and negotiation in the peace process, design of policies and institutional strategies in the Army.

José Angel López Camposeco
Degree in Political Sciences. Currently President of Banco de Desarrollo Rural. Was Vice-Minister of Livestock, Hydrobiological Resources and Food. Most active in following sectors: governmental, cooperative, coffee production, peasants, social, agricultural business, NGOs, indigenous and academic in area of his specialty.

Eugenio Mijangos Martínez
Lawyer and Notary Public. Currently Coordinator of Area of the Rights of Women of Centro for Human Rights Legal Action. Has been most active in the following sectors: human rights, academic, indigenous, religious, NGOs and the media. Lately has focused on areas of social development, gender/legal and human rights.

Ronalth Ochaeta Argueta
Lawyer and Notary Public. Currently Executive Director of the Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric (ODHA). Most active in the following sectors: religious, NGOs, academic/intellectual. During the last few years has focused on areas of defense and promotion of human rights, rescue of historical memory, reconstruction of social fabric.

Fabián Pira Arrivillaga
Certified Public Accountant, Auditor and Banker. Currently President of Crédito Hipotecario Nacional. Most active in the following sectors: banking, computer science and economic. During the last few years has focused on banking, strategic planning consultant, financial consulting and computer science consulting.
Rigoberto Quemé Chay
Degree in Business Management, Master in Social Anthropology from the University of Paris, Studying for Masters in Public Administration USAC-INAP. Currently Municipal Mayor of Quetzaltenango. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, governmental, entrepreneurial, indigenous, the media, political, popular, trade unions, NGOs and religious. During the last few years has focused on areas of development, anthropology and public administration.

Armando Quiacaín Cruz
Primary Education Teacher. Currently writer in the Bilingual General Management of the Ministry of Education. Was educational research assistant. Most active in following sectors: academic/intellectual and Mayan. During the last few years has focused on educational research, translation into Mayan languages, Mayan literary production and assistance in national coordination instances.

Max Quirín Schoder
Entrepreneur. Currently General Manager of Ecoagro. Most active in entrepreneurial sector. During the last few years has focused on areas of agricultural exports, Presidency of Anacafé and the Monetary Board.

Luis Alberto Reyes Martín
Business Administrator. Currently working in entrepreneurial, agricultural and commercial activities and is Executive Director of the consulting office GETSA, S.A.. Most active in the following sectors: entrepreneurial, expressions of civilian society in general, (NGOs, trade unions, cooperative organizations, etc.). Lately has focused on labor relations areas (especially in work training), small and medium businesses, dialogue and agreements.

Oscar Rivas Villanueva
Student. Currently working in a professional office. Most active in academic and intellectual sector. Lately has been acquiring experience in professional legal offices, radio programs for citizens guidance and student politics.

Mario Antonio Sandoval
Journalist. Currently Editorial Writer and Columnist in Presna Libre. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, political, popular, trade unions, NGOS and religious. Lately has been focusing on academic areas and journalism.

Pablo R. Schneider
Economist. Currently President of BCIE in Honduras. Works as a consultant. Most active in academic and intellectual areas. During the last few years has focused on areas of development and economic consulting.

Danilo Siekavizza Passarelli
Entrepreneur. Currently President of Hino de Guatemala. Most active in following sectors: entrepreneurial, government and academic (INCAE). Was President of the Association of Managers of Guatemala. During the last few years has focused on business management, competitiveness programs and medium and long-term vision (IBD seminars).

Lizardo López
Economist. Currently President of Banco de Guatemala. Was Executive secretary of ASIES and President of Banco Corporativo, S.A.. Most active in the following sectors: politics, press, applied research and financial. During the last few years has focused on economic consulting, social communication (written press) and political leadership – public sector.
Ricardo Stein Heinemann
Mathematician and consultant. Currently Executive Director of Fundación Soros de Guatemala. Was Technical Secretary of the Secretariat of Peace (SEPÁZ). Most active in governmental and NGO sectors. During the last few years has focused on areas of Peace Accords, development projects, government-civil society relations and decentralization.

Lester Toledo Mena
Participated as a student of the Politechnical School (military school). Most related to military sector.

Nery Villatorio Robledo
Historian and Journalist. Currently in charge of Department of Public Relations and Policies of the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation and is columnist of Siglo Veintimuyo. Most active in the following sectors: academic, media and NGOs. Lately has been focusing on areas of social investigation, journalism and human rights.

Adrián Zapata
Lawyer and Notary Public. Currently regular member of the National Executive Committee and in charge of political training of the URNG Party. Most active in the popular sector. During the last few years has worked in training within the URNG and areas related to social movements.

Raquel Zelaya
Economist. Former Secretary of Peace. Currently works at ASIES. Most active in the research and political sectors.

Multipliers

Violeta Alfaro de Carpio
Political scientist. Currently independent Consultant. Most active in the following sectors: organizations of civil society promoting legal reforms in Urban and Rural Development Councils, specifically women. During the last few years has focused and gender and development, development councils and women’s organizations.

Nelson Amaro Victoria
Sociologist. Currently Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences of Universidad del Valle, also Director of Masters Course in Development. Most active in the university sector. During the last few years has focused on intellectual teaching (decentralization, local government, citizens participation, evaluation of social programs, social development).

Oscar Azmitia Barranco
Educator/religious. Currently General Director of Santiago Development Project. Most active in sectors of Agencies of Cooperation, Popular Movements, Civil Society Organizations and Mayan Movements. Lately has been focusing on the academic/religious, indigenous/popular areas.

José Leonel Cordón Anleu
Student and civil servant. Currently working in General Directorate of Work in the Ministry of Work and Social Security. Most active in student groups of the Rafael Landívar University. During the last few years has
focused on student support groups as social communicator, co-producer of the Radio Program “Derecho y Destino” (Right and Destiny), in Radio Asunción de María.

Alfredo de León Solano
Anthropologist. Currently working as social researcher in the rural area of AVANCSO. Most active in the following sectors: NGOs, peasants, political parties, Catholic Church. During the last few years has focused on studies on peasant groups, national identity and popular education.

Ruth del Valle Cóbar
Political scientist. Currently working in Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric. Most active in the human rights sector. During the last few years has focused on social research, popular education, promotion and defense of human rights.

Adán Echevarría Guevara
Business Administrator. Currently Teaching Advisor of the Department of Planning and Educational Development of the faculty of Economic Sciences of USAC. Director of public sector training program. Is also Director of Human Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture. Most active in the following sectors: academic/intellectual, entrepreneurial, governmental, political and religious. Recently has been focusing on organizational development, university teaching and organization and methods.

Julia González de Villatoro
Anthropologist. Currently working as social researcher in socio-urban problems. Most active in the following sectors: urban popular sectors, persons displaced due to city violence. During the last few years has focused on socio-urban problems of city growth, persons displaced by violence, migration, urban sectors and popular religiousness, permanent discussion spaces with academics on urban problems.

Maritza Ochoa Rosas
Consultant in Human Resources. Currently working in MO Consultants on Human Resources. Most active in following sectors: financial, universities, companies in general. During the last few years has focused on areas of administration (Banco de Guatemala), university teaching (UFM) and organizational consulting (international institutions).

José Domingo Paredes Morales
Law student. Currently working in Turcios, García y Asociados. Formerly worked in Química Farmaceútica QUIFA. Most actively related to students and organizations of Antigua Guatemala. During the last few years had focused on student organizations, participation in different fora and co-producer of a radio program for citizens guidance, currently writing articles in Diario “La Hora”.

Magdalena Quiacáin Cruz
Primary Education Teacher. Most active in Mayan sectors. During the last few years has been studying.

Pablo Eduardo Sáenz Ortiz
Degree in Business Administration. Currently working in the Guatemalan Chamber of Construction. Most active in construction, small and medium businesses, commerce. Recently has focused on training, entrepreneurial administration and human development.
José Eduardo Secaira Fajardo
Agonomist, conservationist. Currently working in “Conservation of Nature, the Mayan movement, and Spirituality: implications for Conservationists”. Most active in the following sectors: environmental, conservationist, indigenous and religious. Very interested in their interrelation. During the last few years has focused on conservation of biodiversity, NGOs for the environment, sustainable development, indigenous and religious areas.

Erwin Solórzano Urrutia
Architect. Currently is Coordinator of Planning Unit of the Faculty of Architecture. Most active in academic/intellectual sectors. Lately has been focusing on teaching.

Saqíq’ Felipe Tuy Navichoc
Researcher. Teacher. Currently working as researcher of oral literature. Most active in Mayan and non Mayan sectors. During the last few years has focused on social investigation, oral literature, training for groups of Mayan people, contents and educational reform.

Leticia Josefa Velásquez
Doctor and Surgeon. Currently giving technical support to Mayan Defense Counsel for Organizational Development. Most active in the following sectors: development, health, women, ethnic, research and systems systematization. During the last few years has focused on training leaders in subjects of health, monitoring and evaluation of development projects focused on gender, research and systematization of information proper to indigenous people.

Sheila Wilkins de Melendreras
Interpreter, Translator, Teacher. Most active in following sectors: human rights groups, popular groups, international donors, government, army. During the last few years has focused on interpretation, translation and teaching.

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1 Between June and August 2000, 15 of the 25 participants in the South African Civic Scenario Project, 16 of the 43 participants from the Colombian, and 15 of the 39 participants from the Guatemalan civic scenario projects were interviewed. At least two researchers conducted the interviews, which were tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews were based on a common research protocol and were conducted as open-ended interviews. In each of the cases the interviewers invited the interviewee to a group dialogue where they presented and discussed their preliminary findings. The findings are summarized in three learning histories: De León and Diez Pinto (2000), Diez Pinto (2000), and Gillespie, G. (2000).

2 See The Economist, April 18, 1992.