



SPACES FOR COMMITMENT: USING KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE PUBLIC POLICY IN FAVOUR OF THE POOR

Case Study:

*External Assessment of the Government of Jalisco's Development
Programme of Community Centres by El Colegio de Jalisco*

Final report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study describes the institutional linkage between a government agency in a subnational sphere and a centre of research and local higher education. It is the case of the Secretariat of Human Development of the Government of Jalisco and El Colegio de Jalisco. The linkage arose when the latter assessed the Development Programme of Community Centres. It should be stressed that what is shown here is not simply the form in which the government programme was assessed. It is not a technical and professional assessment document but it tells a story of how the programme was formulated and implemented. This text highlights the institutional factors, both endogenous and exogenous, which surrounded the Programme, as well as the discourse and government practice on the basis of a detailed institutional and organisational explanation. The story told here is of a true experience, is based on a documentary and legal review to help understand the institutional development, and is also founded on a series of interviews with key actors.

Key words: community centres, linkage, endogenous and exogenous factors.

1. CONTEXT OF THE STATE OF JALISCO: REGIONAL IMBALANCE

As mentioned in other papers (Arias, 2008), the level of economic development of the state of Jalisco was one of the highest in Mexico: “in 1997, the state of Jalisco had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$22 billion dollars, which corresponded to 7% of national GDP. In 1999, it had a population of 6.4 million inhabitants and a GDP per capita of \$3548 dollars a year” (Ruíz, 2000, p. 5).

However, the development attained is not territorially homogeneous. Of the total number of municipal districts, “only four (Guadalajara, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá and Zapopan) are home to over 50% of the population and, consequently, the greatest economic and service activity offered by the state is located in these same municipal districts” (Arias, 2008, p. 19).

This strong concentration in the Guadalajara metropolitan area produced, on one hand, a need for services and growing social demands and, on the other, progressive deterioration and abandonment in other regions of the state (Arias, 2008, p. 20).

This has led to constant migration of the population from rural communities in the state to other areas, preferably the Guadalajara metropolitan district. As of 1995, the government diagnosis recognised that the number of inhabitants from rural communities barely reached one million: “spread over more than 8600 population centres, 6000 of which have fewer than 100 inhabitants. This dispersion prevents the demographic thresholds needed for an adequate provision of urban services” (Government of the State of Jalisco, 1995, p. 106).

In 2004, the rural areas showed practically no significant variations in their demographic situation. According to certain internal working documents of the State Government, to which the assessment team from El Colegio de Jalisco (El ColJal) had access, it can be claimed that “95% of the population in localities of high or very high marginalisation live in communities of fewer than 2500 inhabitants. In Jalisco, this sector of the population numbers around one million persons”.

By virtue of this situation, for the period 2001-2007, the Government of Jalisco posed the need to set “an agenda to overcome poverty in the state, differentiated by geographical areas and groups of persons, which will foster social participation and promote production projects in accordance with the socio-economic characteristics of each locality” (Government of the State of Jalisco, 2001, p. 84). The Development Programme of Community Centres was an important item on this agenda.

In this context, population dispersion in rural areas is a prime exogenous factor¹ to explain differentiated policy formulation on tackling poverty in the state of Jalisco, with a basic distinction between the rural and urban areas. In particular, to a large extent, this can be said to explain the emergence of the notion of community centres, according to the following comment by the former secretary for Human Development, Rafael Ríos Martínez:

¹ For this case study exogenous factors will be understood to be those that are external to the organisation and, as a consequence, beyond its reach.

“It was clear that work had to be done in two spheres, and two points were identified as critical: rural and urban poverty. Urban poverty had certain characteristics and a totally different situation, depending a great deal on the creation of formal employment, urban infrastructure, means of transport and other types of things in that regard. And rural poverty was often the result of the very isolation of the settlements: communities of up to fifty inhabitants, communities of less than ten dwellings which, thanks to their geographical location, made it very difficult for municipal services to reach them and allow them to live, so they had no medical attention, no education, no infrastructure... a series of deficiencies in the midst of their habitat.

“So it was a clear concern: what are we going to do with all those people? The first step was to make a series of proposals in order to attend to those needs regionally through an area of influence in the most important town in the target area. The second was to venture into those localities. What is curious about the matter is that its geographical or orographical conformation means that it has a great number of dwellings and inhabitants in totally inaccessible areas and ones that lack even the most basic services. The dispersion generated the idea of building community centres”.²

² Interview with Rafael Ríos Martínez, former secretary of Human Development of the State Government. Conducted by Roberto Arias de la Mora and Alberto Arellano Ríos on 11 October 2008. Zapopan, Jalisco.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANISATIONS

2.1. El Colegio de Jalisco

The ColJal is an academic institution which, since its foundation 26 years ago, has dedicated its efforts to carrying out higher level educational work, research and cultural diffusion. It was particularly active in improving understanding of the environment by studying the past and present of western Mexico.

Under such premises, through its Programme of Applied Studies in Local and Regional Government, El ColJal has been consolidating an educational project with the aim of contributing to the upgrading and training of professionals from a variety of disciplines in different subjects essential to ensure the good performance of the government and public administration.

As part of these efforts, it offers diploma courses that have already received almost a hundred pupils from different public areas. These programmes were driven by a specific objective: to make concrete improvements in the professional work of the students, quality in the functioning of the bodies in which they are active and the social impact of their activities.

These first experiences detected a need in Jalisco's academic sphere for a formal postgraduate programme that will allow professionals linked with public affairs to receive solid training, with better technical and analytical tools and with greater resources for the study, design, implementation and assessment of public policy.

So, since 2003, El ColJal has been offering a Masters Degree Programme in Public, Municipal and State Government and Administration, with the aim of promoting greater decentralisation in teaching and research in Mexico, by generating useful knowledge for regional and municipal development, to help strengthen a more balanced federal model.

Experience and institutional capacity have been enriched since November 2006 with the opening of the "Luis F. Aguilar Villanueva" Public Administration Department, which seeks to boost the linkage of the Masters Degree Programme in Public, Municipal and State Government and Administration, offering pupils and graduates a suitable space for academic reflection, plural debate and the dissemination of ideas on government, public administration and public policy.

It was precisely this capacity and institutional orientation that became the main endogenous factor³ in facilitating communication and the subsequent convergence of institutional interests crystallised in the assessment exercise that gave rise to the collaboration experience between El ColJal and the Secretariat of Human Development described in this case study.

³ For this case study endogenous factors will be understood to be those that are internal to the organisation and, as a consequence, are under its control.

2.2. The Secretariat of Human Development of the Government of the State of Jalisco

Unlike El ColJal, the Secretariat of Human Development (SDH) is a recently created government organisation. It was set up during the first years of the Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña government (2001-2007), and was motivated by a reflection made by the new authorities, which is an endogenous factor, on the institutional characteristics of the government framework in the state. The following comment by Rafael Ríos Martínez explains the emergence of the SDH:

“... (The idea was born from) observing that in the government sphere the support programmes designed to defeat poverty lacked an office of their own, a specific area for studying, controlling and operating programmes. Traditionally, this work had been done in the State Government firstly through the Secretariat of Rural Development, which operated this type of programmes exclusively in the rural environment. Subsequently, it was through the COPLADE [Planning Committee for State Development], which I always insisted was inappropriate because the COPLADE was a totally different planning body, which had different aims. The need had even been conceived for a body within State Government that could be held responsible. These were the motives behind the initiative to create the Secretariat, which is what was presented to Congress for the corresponding legal procedure⁴”.

From the point of view of the former secretary of Human Development, various exogenous factors allowed the initial proposal giving birth to the initiative to create the SDH to prosper. First of all, there was perceived inadequacy in a secretariat for social development in the federal sphere that had been operating diverse social programmes under a scheme which involved little effective participation by the states of the Republic.

Secondly, the pioneering experience of the state of Guanajuato served as inspiration and several ideas were taken to produce the initiative for Jalisco, from where the experience of decentralising social policy had begun to spread. This initiative would later become a wave affecting the other states of the Republic.

Thirdly, another motivation lies in the vision of human development being fostered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The presence of these exogenous factors could be corroborated during the interview with Alfonso Hernández Valdez, former advisor to the Secretariat of Human Development of the State Government, for whom ideological-partisan differentiation was another important exogenous factor in the creation of the SDH in Jalisco:

“When we began to think of creating the Secretariat, part of my work was to investigate in other states how the Secretariats entrusted with social policy in general were formed.

“So, there was a very clear distinction: there were secretariats of social development, analogous or very similar to the federal Secretariat of Social

⁴ Interview with Rafael Ríos Martínez.

Development (SEDESOL), in many states with a PRI government; and the new social development secretariats that had been appearing, as in Guanajuato, were called Secretariats of Human Development. Here there was a distinction, I'm not sure whether partisan, but certainly with a partisan origin, but there was also concern as it had a more integral axis in social policy. As I interviewed certain persons, they commented that the origin of social policy was imbued with assistentialism and programmes to fight poverty, which isn't a bad thing, but it was what these agencies focused on and, I think, there was a valid concern that it should be made a little more integral. That's to say, not just social assistance, not just fighting poverty but adopting new models for human development, which at that time were already well established, as proposed by the United Nations Development Programme.

I identify three components: a question of differentiation by party; a valid concern in terms of incorporating the most integral perspective influenced by the UN into social policy; and, in the case of PAN governments, the term human development seemed, in some way, to be more in keeping with their political programme. Perhaps this third element is related to the first, but that's the reason, I believe⁵.

In this context, a noteworthy aspect is the strategy adopted to promote the creation of the SDH, which was based fundamentally on close collaboration between the authorities and a group of consultants led by Alfonso Hernández Valdez. This factor inherent to the creation process was, to a large extent, decisive in assuring its materialisation in a relatively short nine-month period between March and November 2001. As Hernández Valdez said:

"In 2001, the then undersecretary of Social Participation, who belonged to the General Government Secretariat, now an under-secretariat, Rafael Ríos [Martínez], invited me to participate in a project to create a new secretariat, which would tentatively be called, and was indeed called, Secretariat of Human Development. The invitation was to create and design this new secretariat from the organisational, administrative and normative point of view. I began work in 2001⁶."

In fact, Decree N° 19,432 creating the SDH was published in the Official Gazette "El Estado de Jalisco" on 29 December 2001.

In accordance with this decree, various laws were modified for the purpose of creating the SDH. Among the reformed laws is the Organic Law of the Executive Branch of the State of Jalisco, whose article 41 established that "The Human Development Secretariat is the office responsible for planning, designing, coordinating and executing the integral development policies of persons and groups to which they belong." Among its attributions we can highlight the following:

⁵ Interview with Alfonso Hernández Valdez, former advisor to the Secretariat of Human Development of the State Government. Conducted by Roberto Arias de la Mora on 26 September 2008. Tlaquepaque, Jalisco.

⁶ Idem.

1. To coordinate, assess and help towards the design and execution of the social development programmes of the State Government together with the various agencies of the State Executive.
2. To execute and directly assess the corresponding social development programmes.
3. To coordinate and supervise the federal government's social programmes that are developed and applied in the State of Jalisco, in its sphere of competence, in accordance with agreements signed in that regard.
4. To coordinate and supervise the public assistance institutions, as well as to provide technical advice to those who request it;
5. To promote the professional provision of social assistance services, as well as to promote scientific and technological research to develop and improve the provision of assistance services;
6. To monitor the performance of the social assistance and public welfare institutions of the State Government, as well as the institutions of private welfare, coordinated by the Jalisco Institute of Social Assistance, and the System for the Integral Development of the Family, to ensure that they comply with the purposes for which they were created.
7. To promote the strengthening of the social administration through policies and programmes of citizen participation;
8. To drive and direct civil society so that it can participate in the drawing up, execution and assessment of social development policies.
9. To promote and carry out studies and research, as well as performing training activities on issues related to human development.
10. To promote and coordinate educational support actions for social integration and human development.
11. To promote and coordinate actions to train those receiving social assistance to work in the State, and
12. To manage and coordinate actions to promote access to decent housing.

In addition, the basic institutional characteristics –endogenous factor- of the new agency were structured, according to Adolfo Hernández Valdez, on:

“...Three pillars that are still valid. One pillar was to be, and was, the General Directorate of Social Development, another was to be the General

Directorate of Social Participation and, the third, the General Directorate of Social Policy.

“The idea was that Social Policy should set public development policy, or the agency entrusted with the work of planning, assessment, public policy proposal, and that the other two directorates should be a little more executive.

“The General Directorate of Social Development would operate the social development programmes in the State, while Social Participation would work with the citizens and communities.

“So, we constructed the Secretariat around these three directorates: a technical part, an operations part and a participatory part. I think it was a model which eventually proved its utility, its effectiveness. Although at first it was a Secretariat with very few resources, that was not one of its problems but one of the challenges at the outset. Gradually, the Secretariat managed to intervene with very specific programmes, in very specific places. We also worked on the decree setting it up, on the organogram, on establishing the functions of each of the posts, on the specific objectives of the Secretariat, and on programme design⁷”.

A relatively compact working team preferably made up of young professionals with solid academic formation was brought together, largely facilitated by continuity in the collaboration started by the first head of the agency with a group of consultants, was a decisive endogenous factor that boosted the scope of the first work done by the SDH.

“One of the great functions of this new Secretariat, at least as envisaged by the team, is that it should have the capacity to elaborate a true social policy. A public policy of social development that is not focused simply on continuing programmes from the time of the Federation, not because we didn’t need to continue them but because we had to think up new forms so that social development in the entity would be much more integral.

“So, as one of the functions of the new General Directorate of Social Policy, it occurred to us to start thinking of an integral social policy. Hence the concept of “Intégrate”, which was used to define public policy on integral social development, which incorporates several elements in keeping with the UN human development model: to encourage capacities of individuals, based on the assumption that the human being must be guaranteed freedom of choice, and a government that participates in the development of his capacities⁸”.

This vision was broadly shared by the first head of SDH, Rafael Ríos Martínez:

“It was essential to come down to the sphere of the person and not work in the abstract sphere of society. We had to come down and ensure the development of the individuals, and the group of individuals would develop the social sphere. What did we need to be able to combat poverty? First we needed to espouse the

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Idem.

idea that development of capacities was essential for persons to be in a position to manage to survive alone and to get ahead. So discussions began on a human development programme in the state. A programme inspired by the area of health, especially the health of pregnant women, of their unborn children, of nursing babies, and other questions such as vaccination and nutrition.

“So it was, and is, the individual from before birth: the nursing baby, its nutritional development and its educational development. Then came the education process and we linked it with the process of infrastructure, improvements in housing, roads, water, electricity and finally the possibility of production projects so that they could get ahead by themselves.”⁹

It is on the basis of this chronological vision of the human being that attempts were made to organise the various government programmes in health and education and in fostering the production infrastructure, rural development and economic activity in general.

This vision was broadly shared by the work team, particularly in the technical area, and in practice it meant the creation of a very flexible working environment open to the opinions of the public officials. This could be corroborated by the opinion of the former director of Research and Public Policy, for whom “Rafa was very open, very flexible, very willing to hear ideas.”¹⁰

The shared vision of objectives, together with a style of open inclusive management by the first head of the SDH, entailed two endogenous factors that boosted the scope of the first institutional tasks of the SDH.

In the particular case of the Programme of Community Centres the diagnostic component was reinforced by the convergence of another very specific exogenous factor: the demand for external assessment. According to Hernández Valdez, in charge of the assessment exercise of programme resources in its first year:

“I don’t remember whether it was with the operating rules of the Programme, but there were ‘state incentives’ [exogenous factor], and a demand that the projects proposed should have an assessment component. In the team we always thought that the assessment component was vitally important [endogenous factor]. Especially in a project like community centres, because in fact what it did was bring the “Integrate” strategy down to ground to apply it in localities of high and very high marginalisation, generally far from the main municipal centres¹¹”.

This circumstance became, as we shall now see, an important window of opportunity for productive collaboration between El ColJal and the SDH for several years.

⁹ Interview with Rafael Ríos Martínez.

¹⁰ Interview with Patricia Carrillo Collard. Former director of Research and Public Policies of the Secretariat of Human Development of the Government of the State. Conducted by Roberto Arias de la Mora and Alberto Arellano Ríos on 13 October 2008 in Guadalajara, Jalisco.

¹¹ Interview with Alfonso Hernández Valdez.

3. THE COLLABORATION EXPERIENCE

3.1. How the Secretariat began

At the beginning of 2004, and through the Directorate of Research and Public Policy, the SDH made contact with academics in the Programme of Applied Studies of El ColJal, in order to invite them to participate in the design and execution of the assessment of the Development Programme of Community Centres (PDNC).

At the outset, the SDH's interest in stimulating this type of approach with the ColJal seemed to be motivated by an exogenous factor of a legal and programmatic nature, according to Patricia Carrillo Collard, who explained that El ColJal was contracted because one of the requirements of SEDESOL programmes was that it receive external assessment¹².

In accordance with the PDNC framework and the 2003 operating rules of the Programme of State Incentives (PIE) of the SEDESOL, it was established that evaluation of the programme results had to be made "by an academic research institution or a specialised agency (...) with recognition and experience in the matter, based on the reference terms of the Programme" (Secretariat of Social Development, 2003, p. 25).

It should not be forgotten that, although it was a programme operated by the Government of Jalisco, the PDNC had received through the PIE budgetary resources from the Federation amounting to 19,649,217 pesos.¹³ The allocation of these resources was as a result of the choice between 14 proposals that were finalists in an open competition called by the SEDESOL under the modality of support for innovation (Secretariat of Social Development, 2003). This condition was a very important factor, according to the former planning director of the SDH, Sarah Obregón Davis.

"The main thing is that it was a project supported by the federal government. It was a project that had competed and been awarded in some way; so that was a very strong factor, making its enforcement valid, even within the Government¹⁴".

As a result of the first conversations between SDH officials and academics from El ColJal, on 23 April 2004 the interest of the education and research centre in conducting the assessment of the PDNC was formally ratified in the SEDESOL. The methodological criteria used in the academic expert's investigation had already been established by the SHD and previously communicated¹⁵.

¹² *Interview with Patricia Carrillo Collard.*

The recourse of the direct invitation to El ColJal, to which she refers, was possible by virtue of its being a non-profit-making institution dedicated to research and higher education.

¹³ *Equivalent to USD 1,786,292.50 at an exchange rate of 11 pesos to the dollar.*

¹⁴ *Interview with Sarah Obregón Davis, former planning director of the Secretariat of Human Development of the State Government. Conducted by Roberto Arias de la Mora in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, on 26 September 2008.*

¹⁵ *Communication addressed to the Secretariat of Social Development by the president of El ColJal, Dr. José María Muriá Rouret on 23 April 2004.*

The methodology comprised three stages: in the first the profile of each locality and the PNDC were assessed; in the second a description was made of the implementation process; and lastly, the impact was assessed. In each of the stages technical estimates of analysis or observation were made; the data collection instruments were designed or built; a results format was submitted; the sources of information were identified; and the minimum measuring indicators were built.

Chart N° 1: Methodological window on the work to assess the PDNC

	First stage: profile of localities and PDNC	Second stage: description of the implementation process	Third stage: impact assessment
Period for submitting results.	One month.	Three months.	Five months.
Assessment technique.	Process auditing.	Direct observation.	Survey of beneficiary population.
Data collection instruments.	Auditing script based on the general and specific guidelines of the Operating Rules of SEDESOL, in the description of the PDNC and other subscribed instruments.	Observation script based on the programming of works and actions, as well as on the physical and financial progress reports.	Written semi-structured questionnaire.
Format for presentation of results.	Schematic report of normative verification, both for PDNC processes in general, and for each work or action included in the auditing.	Statistical report tabulated and illustrated on progress in execution.	Written report tabulated and illustrated with responses of each reagent applied in the interview.
Sources of information.	Persons and instances involved in operating and executing the PDNC (SEDESOL Delegation, SDH, town councils).	Observation <i>in situ</i> and interviews with the beneficiary population (persons and households).	Representative sample of the beneficiary population from the works and actions of the PDNC in reach community.
Minimum indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verifying the integration and operation of instances (committees) stipulated in the Operating Rules and in the PDNC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerical and percentage progress in executing each work/ action programmed and selected for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and identification of the PDNC and of the works/actions that it includes in each community. Changes in the

	First stage: profile of localities and PDNC	Second stage: description of the implementation process	Third stage: impact assessment
	guidelines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence and contents of the general documentation and operating instruments (electoral registers) stipulated in the Operating Rules and the guidelines of the PDNC. • Existence and contents of the progress reports and control of works/actions. 	measuring.	quality of life of the informant and/or his family, stemming from works and actions of the project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation of informants in the different phases of the PDNC.

Source: Own data.

In accordance with these criteria, on 3 May 2004 the terms of the contract were formalised to allow the study and assessment of the PDNC of the SDH to be performed. The state government represented by the Administration Secretariat endorsed the contract with El ColJal, which stipulated that the phases established in the methodological window should be set in motion. From that moment on, El ColJal authorised two academics linked with the Programme of Applied Studies in Government and Public Municipal and State Administration as those responsible for the assessment¹⁶. The work of analysis provided for in the first stage of the assessment thus formally got underway.

The first stage consisted in identifying the profile of the localities where PDNC could be implemented. A total of 14 localities out of a total of 90 were considered.

The selection process for the places eligible to become community centres was made on the basis of a universe of 620 rural localities in 90 municipal districts in Jalisco. The communities had already been identified by two agencies of the Government of Jalisco: The Subcommittee of Development of Ethnic Peoples and Priority Regions (SUDERP) and the

¹⁶ In charge of the assessment was Min. Roberto Arias de la Mora, former assistant coordinator on the Masters Programme of Applied Studies in Government and Public Municipal and State Administration, and currently teacher and researcher at El Colegio de Jalisco and academic coordinator of the study programme.

To carry out the field work Javier Gutiérrez Rodríguez was hired. This consultant is a specialist in applied research for strategic projects and graduate from the Programme of Applied Studies in Government and Public Municipal and State Administration from El Colegio de Jalisco.

COPLADE. From that universe 90 localities of high and very high marginalisation were selected, one for each of the municipalities considered by the Government of Jalisco for attention.

On the other hand, the minimal technical criteria that were considered in selecting the 90 communities assisted by the PDNC, and that in turn became its universe of attention, were the following:

- a. *They should have high or very high degrees of marginalisation.* The starting point for the selection was to begin with the most relegated localities.
- b. *They should have a population of under 2500 inhabitants but, if possible, over 300.* This range reflected the consideration that “in order to feasibly qualify as a community centre, a minimum population base is required.”
- c. *It should be near a road that is passable year round.* This criterion was deemed fundamental since “the community centre must be of easy access for the neighbouring communities”.
- d. *In a radius of four kilometres of influence there should be the greatest number of marginalised localities possible.* The radius of influence was defined on the estimate that “four kilometres is a distance that can be travelled in under an hour and a half on foot, depending on the geographical conditions”.
- e. *If feasible, it should not be close to the main municipal centre, which was thought to have several of the factors considered essential to trigger micro-regional development.* Hence community centres outside the area of influence of the main municipal centre would be privileged.

However, in this first phase, the authorities insisted on restricting the verification only to the execution of works and actions funded with PIE resources, which implied limiting the assessment to only 10 of the 14 localities initially considered. Besides, the verification exercise in those communities did not contemplate works and actions wholly funded with additional resources of the Government of Jalisco. The reason given then to curb the scheduled academic labour was that they were works and actions funded exclusively with federal resources and that they were close to the deadline for sending the first progress reports on the external assessment to the SEDESOL.

These conditioning factors did not pass unnoticed for the El ColJal assessors: the prevailing spirit of reserve and caution among the personnel of the agency meant that no information was given on the Programme other than that funded with federal resources. In other words, the only incentive for the SDH to cooperate with the El ColJal assessment had seemed strictly exogenous at the outset.

The interest of the state agency focused on requesting further budgetary resources from the Federation for the following year. In particular, the SEDESOL had to authorise them, for which it was essential that the SDH report the results of the assessment made by El ColJal. In other words, if an external assessment was not done or the minimum requirements of rationality in its exercise were not complied with, the SEDESOL would deny further budgetary resources for 2005.

In short, and although exogenous, this type of incentive was sufficient for the officials involved in the Programme and El ColJal to collaborate jointly. It also contributed to correct certain constraints of a logistical nature in the assessment process¹⁷.

The results of this first stage were submitted at the end of May 2004. They included a brief description both of the PDNC and of the profile of the 10 localities subject to assessment (see **Chart 2**). Besides, assessments and progress reports were made on the works and actions carried out in the localities after making the visits and the field work.

Chart N° 2: Community centres considered in the first phase of the assessment

Community seat of the Community centre	Municipality to which it belongs
1. Nuevo Valle.	Atotonilco el Alto.
2. Santa Elena de la Cruz.	Ayotlán.
3. Juchitlán.	Cuquío.
4. Las Güeras.	Encarnation de Díaz.
5. La Troje.	Lagos de Moreno.
6. Guadalupe Victoria.	Ojuelos.
7. San Jacinto.	Poncitlán.
8. Juanacatlán.	Tapalpa.
9. La Milpilla.	Teocuitatlán de Corona.
10. Santa Elena.	Tolimán.

Source: Own data.

The results obtained were entered into the request for budgetary resources file and submitted to the SEDESOL in the first days of June. Perhaps because the request made by the SDH had already been approved, or perhaps because of the very nature of the assessment that focused on the implementation process, the fact is that during the second phase of the process the problems of access to information increased for the assessors, who met with certain resistance.

However, the most important aspect of this cooperation and institutional approach exercise was the innovative design of the PDNC. The programme had a clear intersectoral vision that was materialised in different “packages” of programmes and actions executed by diverse agencies and entities from both the state and federal sphere, and it involved around 39,300,000 pesos.

The words of the former director of Planning of the SDH, Sarah Obregón Davis should not be overlooked when she said that one of the objectives of the Programme was to concentrate the actions and the programmes of the different Government agencies of the State

¹⁷ Among other constraints, the lack of suitable vehicles to travel on the access roads to rural communities stands out.

of Jalisco and, even, of some programmes of the Federal government. Therefore, the selection of localities was the prime objective.

The agencies that participated in the programme were the Secretariat of Rural Development (SEDER), the Secretariat of Urban Development (SEDEUR), the Administrative Committee of the State Programme to Build Schools, decentralised public bodies of the health sector and decentralised public bodies of the State Commission of Water and Sanitation (see **Chart 3**).

Chart N°3: Agencies, budgetary resources and localities benefiting from the Programme of State Incentives (PIE)

Agency or collaborating entity	Date of signing the execution annex	Amounts from the PIE ¹⁸	%	Number of localities benefiting
1. Secretariat of Rural Development.	10 October 2003.	\$ 1,120,727	2.85	9
2. Secretariat of Urban Development.	10 October 2003.	\$ 5,934,735	15.1	10
3. Administrative Committee of the State Programme to Build Schools.	10 October 2003.	\$ 3,742,539	9.52	4
4. Decentralised Public Body Health Services Jalisco.	17 November 2003.	\$ 1,133,394	2.89	7
5. Decentralised Public Body State Commission of Water and Sanitation.	10 October 2003.	\$ 27,367,039	69.64	10
Total investment		\$ 39,298,434	100	

Although the organisational design was an element to highlight, it produced several challenges and certain reticence in the assessment team. There was bureaucratic obstinacy in the five agencies directly responsible for the executing the works just when it was hoped to assess the actions performed. To carry out the task of external assessment the provisions of

¹⁸ The total investment reflected here is the result of the sum of resources which, in equal proportions, the federal and state governments contributed for the operation of the Programme and which amounted to \$19,649,217. This figure emerges from communiqué D. S. 134.720. PDSH 0180/2003 sent to the head of the SDH by the Jalisco Delegation of Sedesol.

the annexes of execution signed by the SDH were followed to comply with the Coordination Agreement for the Implementation of the PIE¹⁹.

The bureaucratic practices of the five executive instances were varied: from full collaboration by officials of the decentralised public body of the State Commission of Water to resistance and lack of collaboration in submitting information from the SEDER.

Unlike the first phase of the assessment and despite the difficulties and resistance in obtaining information, in the second phase of description of the process of implementation of the programme the team of assessors managed to integrate a report that went beyond the limited vision to the detailed verification on the level of compliance with the rules of operation of the PIE. The report was submitted in July and incorporated a broader description of the environment in which the PDNC was implemented. It identified the formal and informal factors that facilitated or limited the setting in motion of the Programme.

Submission of the report was decisive, not only in easing the resistance shown so far, but in beginning to modify the perception of the SDH officials and achieve their greater willingness to participate. The supposed benefits of the assessment of the Programme provided, perhaps for the first time, a complete vision of the processes involved in the operation of the Programme under the responsibility of the SDH. The recommendations that emerged from the first report helped show the potential of this kind of exercise to improve the formulation and setting in motion of other social programmes.

The change of perception among the SDH officials was finally consolidated with the results obtained in the third and last stage: the impact assessment. This stage involved conducting a survey of the beneficiaries of the PDNC. To apply it, it was necessary for the assessment team to hire young university students, preferably students of Political and Government Studies of the University of Guadalajara with previous experience in conducting surveys. The students were trained and the survey applied. Finally, the results were submitted at the end of September, as established in the calendar stipulated in the contract.

3.2. Trust, a pillar of collaboration between agencies (2005)

Although the results of the external assessment of the PIE were submitted to the SEDESOL as per the agreed timetable, additional resources were not allocated for the continuation of the PDNC in 2005. The work and technical analysis were insufficient to continue or improve a programme which was apparently yielding good results.

The true factor that explains why a government programme is designed, implemented and continued, regardless of its technical viability, is of another kind. During a conversation between the assessment team and the head of the General Directorate of Social Policy of the SDH, Alberto Órnelas, it emerged that the reason why the initial mission of the PDNC had not been accomplished was political.

¹⁹ The agreement was signed by the Federal Executive, by means of the Sedesol, and the State Executive, with the attendance of the General Secretariat of Government (SGG), the Secretariat of Finance (SF), the SDH and the Coplade, on 8 October 2003. Its formalisation meant the PDNC could start.

According to the Órnelas, the SEDESOL formally argued that it had not authorised the budget extension for the programme in 2005 because it had decided to support other state initiatives which had been left without resources in 2004. However, another explanation blames the political situation: the decision not to authorise the extension of the budgetary support was apparently caused by the distancing between the federal and state governments at the surprising announcement by Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, the then energy secretary, of his candidacy for the Partido Acción Nacional to the Presidency of the Republic. Subsequently, Calderón Hinojosa became President of the Republic.

However, this version could not be corroborated at a later date²⁰ and, on the contrary, in the opinion of Rafael Ríos Martínez, the level of intergovernmental collaboration in matters of social policy did not change with this political episode.

What was public and visible was that the event had implications between the Government of Jalisco and the federal government, on one hand because the candidacy of Calderón Hinojosa did not enjoy the support of President Vicente Fox and, on the other, because it was the Governor of Jalisco, Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña, who made that candidacy public on 29 May 2004. As was to be expected, the event caused the resignation of the then Energy Secretary and a public rebuke to the Governor of the State of Jalisco²¹. This reflects the weight of political questions in the Mexican civil service.

Nevertheless, and despite the context, the SDH decided to continue collaborating with El ColJal during 2005. The aim was to study the socio-economic profile of the 31 localities that received support from the PDNC in 2004. On this occasion, the study focused on the actions of the PDNC that received funding through the State Social Investment Fund (FISE).

This second external assessment posed as a central objective to serve as a base from which to determine variations in the socio-economic conditions of the target localities, through successive programmed measurements for the future. With this perspective, the El ColJal assessment team presented a working strategy supported in the instruments, techniques and sources of information detailed in **Chart 4**.

Chart N° 4: Methodological window for the base survey 2005

Basic criteria	Assessment of the community and homes profile of the target localities
Period in which to submit results.	-One month as of the date of signing of the agreement.
Contents.	- Measurement of the socio-economic conditions of the 31 target localities. - Measurement of the perception of the inhabitants of the localities regarding their living conditions, on the basis of a

²⁰ An attempt was made to contact Alberto Órnelas, former director general of Social Policy of the SDH in order to interview him. However, it was not possible.

²¹ The Governor's reply to President Fox was: "Only the people from Jalisco can scold me."

	sample that included homes in 12 localities.
Assessment technique.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys of the inhabitants of the target localities. - In-depth interview with key agents. - Direct observation.
Data collection instruments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-structured written questionnaires. - Observation script. - In-depth interviews.
Format for presentation of results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptive document on the profile of the localities. - Written report tabulated and illustrated on the survey, with the responses to each reagent applied in the interviews.
Sources of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative sample of the beneficiary population. - Key informants. - Direct observation in communities.

Source: Own data.

The general objectives of the applied survey were two: first, to establish the basic features of the socio-economic profile of the 31 target localities; second, to identify the fundamental features of the socio-economic profile of its inhabitants, as well as their principal requirements, demands and expectations in the area of human development. Besides the quantitative results from the survey, the PDNC was subjected to an analysis exercise in light of the results and observations obtained from the survey, in which both the researchers responsible for the study and the personnel in charge of the field work participated.

As a result of this session of work the programme's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) were analysed. There follows a description of the main results of the exercise, organised according to the same structure as the study: the relevant community profile and the socio-economic profile of homes.

Relevant community profile

Strengths:

Public services.

- A reasonable coverage of electricity, public lighting, street paving and telephone services was observed in the communities.

Education services.

- [Basic education needs were relatively well covered.

Health services.

- The basic needs of the population in matters of health were practically covered by the public sector, either through auxiliaries, health centres or medical dispensaries. Mobile health brigades did not visit only five localities.

Government programmes

- In general terms, the perception in the localities regarding the presence of government programmes and supports was good. This is a strength that the PDNC shares, although in no locality was this programme identified as such. In this respect, the clarity with which

the interviewees recognised the agencies and government spheres that channelled support to their communities is worthy of note.

Opportunities:

General aspects of the locality

-The presence of municipal authorities in practically all the communities, through inframunicipal figures, such as the delegate or subdelegate, should be exploited to involve them even more in PDNC development.

Public services

-The data confirmed that in these communities water was mainly supplied by means of natural sources, both surface and underground. The presence of other non-natural means, such as an installed hydraulic network, pipes, pumping, pools or dams was not very significant. If the PDNC seeks to have significant impact in the dispersion patterns of the rural population, incentivating their concentration in these localities, strong investment in hydraulic infrastructure is a relevant variable that should be taken into account to encourage people to move to the locality with drinking water and mains drainage services. This observation seemed to be confirmed with the fact that one of the most pressing needs in the localities studied is precisely the lack of drainage.

Economy and employment

-Although production activities related to the primary sector (agriculture and stockbreeding), predominate, other economic activities not related to farming have begun to appear, such as construction. By making use of this opportunity, progress could be made in the PDNC objectives that seek to increase the population occupied in sectors other than the primary, with the consequent improvement in income.

Weaknesses:

Public services

-Although the electricity, public lighting, street paving and public or private telephone services appear to have the greatest coverage, it should be stressed that in some of these areas (roads, public lighting, and telephone booths, for instance), the principal needs for services or community equipment were identified. Only in the case of drainage is there a clear correlation between the strong deficit in the service and the needs for services and the most commonly mentioned community equipment.

Education services

-A recommendation was made to assess the information at locality level, together with the education authorities. For example, it seemed important to know why classes were given on only three or four days a week in some localities.

Health services

-In the communities basic health services are offered. There are other needs that are particularly sensitive to the population that are not being covered, like for example,

assistance in childbirth. These needs are satisfied in health installations located in neighbouring, and presumably larger, communities.

Government programmes

-It was necessary to emphasise the greater perceived presence of federal instances, followed by state agencies and, to a lesser extent, by town councils. This indicates that it had not been possible to involve the municipal authorities in the programmes, and the people perceive that absence by the municipal authorities. This was a weakness of the government programmes in general, and of the PDNC in particular, especially if it is recognised that decentralisation was one of the strategic objectives of the PDNC.

Threats:

Public services.

-A latent threat for the general purposes of the PDNC had to do with solid waste management, since a high percentage of localities burn the solid waste they generate. On the other hand, practically the same percentage of localities is served by the council refuse collection, although it would be interesting to know the quality of the service provided.

Economy and employment.

-The average daily wage in all the 31 localities was \$112.26, insufficient to cover the population's basic needs. The average cost of transporting to the community products such as school utensils, personal hygiene, beef and milk, among others, ranged from \$10 to \$106.

-Despite the significant weight of production activities linked to farming in the economy of the localities, it is surprising to see the strong trend to monoculture (maize and beans), as well as the lack of adequate production infrastructure.

Socio-economic profile of homes

Strengths:

System of family subsistence

-In 2004, the homes received different forms of support from the Government²² almost in the same proportion as their principal source of income (salaries, daily or weekly wages, etc.), with which they complemented their consumption needs.

Opportunities:

Origin and condition of the homes

-In contrast to what could be supposed, the data showed a strong attachment of persons to their place of birth. In most homes, the members claimed to have been born in Jalisco and

²² The references to the "government" must be read as generic. Whenever citizens were interviewed they were unable to distinguish and specify between government orders: federal, state or municipal.

expressed their intention to remain there for at least the next year. The PDNC had to make use of the intentions of the people to remain in their locality and strengthen them.

System of family subsistence

-In almost half the homes there was an incipient trend to complement the main family income with commercial activities of farming products and real estate (houses and land). The trend may be a window of opportunity that the PDNC should take into account at a potential strategy to boost the socio-economic development of the localities involved.

-If such a strategy is carried out, it is recommended to bear in mind the consumption needs of the localities, which seem to focus on products of primary need: food and drink, articles of personal hygiene, cleaning articles for the home, medicines, clothes, blankets and footwear, as well as school articles and other items.

Economic activities

-Agricultural activity is predominantly seasonal: few homes practice it throughout the whole year. The vast majority does so between one and ten months a year, thus putting them in a position to dedicate the rest of the time to other economic activity to complement the family income.

-Economic activities not related to farming showed a greater stability throughout the year. Those who work in small-scale trade and traditional employment maintained that occupation throughout the year. This observation reveals that alternative economic activities offer greater stability in family income as an advantage.

Weaknesses:

System of family subsistence

-In 2004, few homes received Government support to carry out economic activities to complement their income.

Threats:

Origin and condition of the homes.

-It is highly recommendable to enquire as to the reasons why almost half the persons did not respond to the questions on the permanent residence of the head of the family in the home and his/her spouse. According to the opinions given by those responsible for the survey, the possibility that they may not have responded to the question because they failed to understand it is minimal and, rather, the lack of response may reveal a definite pattern in the family relations prevailing in those localities.

Patrimony

-Although in the majority of homes it was claimed that the dwelling belonged to them, it was noteworthy that almost half said that the dwelling was not legally regulated, or they did not know if it was. Legal acknowledgement of possession of the dwelling is a necessary condition to guarantee the family patrimony. Therefore, if no specific action is considered in the question of regulation, any effort to support the socio-economic development of the family groups may be seriously limited in its scope.

-This observation seems to be confirmed with the prevailing form of land ownership: almost half those surveyed revealed some form of ownership different to private ownership (common, communal or public), or were unable to respond regarding ownership of the land on which their dwelling stands.

-Only a few homes have land suitable for agricultural activities. So the vast majority of members of the household engaged in agricultural work as day labourers either on rented or borrowed land, or on common land or communal property. The fact that the majority of heads of family in the homes consulted claimed as principal occupation day labourer or peasant confirms the above.

Economic activities

-In families a strong non-entrepreneurial economic culture was observed: the vast majority of its members engage in agricultural activities and the few that work in other activities did so as labourers or employees. Only in a few cases did they claim to engage in trade and almost the same proportion claimed to have some type of establishment (workshop, shop, pharmacy, taco store, etc.). This limiting factor suggests that training and education should play a fundamental role in the success of any strategy undertaken in support of the family economy.

This SWOT analysis reveals that government action is very limited in its capacity to effectively articulate social policy. This constraint is explained by the presence of certain tensions present in relations between town councils and state authorities.

In the particular case of the PDNC, it is clear that even as of its design –endogenous factor–, according to Obregón Davis spoke of the possibility of working interinstitutionally within the agencies of the State Government, with the agencies of the Federal government and with the town councils, certain exogenous factors appeared that complicated the spirit of intergovernmental coordination.

According to Alberto Esquer Gutiérrez, former director general of Social Policy of the Secretariat of Human Development of the State Government, the electoral situation –the presidential battle between Calderón, Madrazo and López Obrador– somewhat distorted the Programme, especially as regards the focus on the localities. Esquer Gutiérrez explained that the localities were chosen according to three criteria. On one hand, marginalisation was taken into account according to the figures of the National Population Council (CONAPO) and the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information (INEGI). Finally, the requests and needs presented by the municipal presidents were also considered²³.

In other words, the priorities for attention according to the institutional criteria of the PDNC did not necessarily correspond with the interests and priorities of the municipal authorities.

²³ Interview with Alberto Esquer Gutiérrez, former director general of Social Policy of the Secretariat of Human Development of the State Government. Conducted by Roberto Arias de la Mora on 3 November 2008, in Guadalajara, Jalisco.

This significantly reduced the potential scope of the actions foreseen by the PDNC. According to Esquer Gutiérrez, “it was a state programme in which the municipality did not contribute to certain actions; it only contributed labour provided by the beneficiaries themselves and, on certain occasions, the municipal presidents [participated] with transport of certain machinery, but most was provided by the Government of the State of Jalisco²⁴”.

3.3. 2006: change and continuity

Despite the interest shown by SDH officials to continue studying and assessing the socio-economic conditions of communities in Jalisco, changes occurred in the SDH at the end of 2005, motivated by the proximity of the elections scheduled for the end of July 2006.

It should be taken into account that the electoral process itself was a determining factor that had a strong impact on the results of the programme and affected the immediate reality of the localities concerned, according to the following statement by Alberto Esquer:

“(In view of the fact that) the electoral process brought complications because the ground is basically of cement, the water storage systems are tall earthenware jars, or cisterns and the question of food was solved with DIF supplies, school breakfasts, and health care and education, (we had to) reinforce the Programme with very specific, very accurate indicators from the INEGI and the CONAPO to focus on municipalities and the localities we were attending²⁵”.

This period was particularly difficult because the provision of resources interfered with the result of the Programme. To reduce the negative impact, a direct delivery was made from the Government of the state of Jalisco to the beneficiaries (avoiding doing it via the municipalities). Moreover, to determine the degree of marginalisation of the localities a joint survey was conducted with the Government of the State of Jalisco, the municipalities, the registers of beneficiaries and those with socio-economic studies. The invitation was open and publications were disseminated with the results observed as of the delivery of these resources and materials²⁶.

Once the elections were over, and contrary to expectations, the new PDNC officials re-established contact with El ColJal assessors. According to Alberto Esquer Gutiérrez, the fundamental motivation lay in the need to assess the impact of the Programme in the beneficiaries in the community centres. So, and given that the ColJal had already assessed the Programme twice, a third assessment was decided ²⁷.

After various conversations, a request was finally formalised to carry out a third study which, unlike that made in 2005, targeted the integration of a social evaluation component that would complement the PDNC’s execution report. The period of assessment included the years 2003 to 2006 and was integrated with a view to the process of submission-reception of the Government of Jalisco.

²⁴ Idem.

²⁵ Idem.

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ Idem.

In this context, the Coljal formally presented the terms of the assessment of social perception of the PDNC, as detailed in the following chart:

Chart N° 5: Methodological window of the assessment of the social perception of the PDNC.

Period for submitting results	Three months
Contents.	Measuring the changes perceived by the target population in their living conditions.
Assessment technique.	Survey of beneficiary population.
Data collection instruments.	Semi-structured written questionnaire.
Presentation format of results.	Written report tabulated and illustrated with the responses of each reactive applied in the interview.
Sources of information.	Representative population sample benefiting from the work and actions of the Programme in each community.

Source: Own data.

The general objectives of the assessment were defined jointly between the SDH personnel and the Coljal assessment team at a working meeting on 27 July. The objectives agreed were the following:

1. To analyse the perception on the economic and social situation of the interviewees.
2. To analyse whether the works or actions carried out in the locality affected the perception that the beneficiaries have of the Government in general.
3. To measure the level of knowledge and identification of the PDNC in the core localities.
4. To measure the impact of changes in the quality of life of the informants and/or their family, stemming directly or indirectly from the works and actions of the PDNC.
5. To estimate the level of active social participation of the informants in the PDNC, as well as their future willingness to participate in government programmes.

On the basis of these objectives, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed with open response scaled option from which information on the target population was gathered. Meanwhile, to select the sample the systematic method was used, with random stratified selection proportional to the number of inhabitants in each community and without weighting. For this, data was taken on the total number of inhabitants by core locality in the Census conducted by INEGI in 2000. On the basis of these criteria, the sample was made up of the following localities:

Municipality	Locality or centre	Total population of localities of influence	Population of the centre	Total population	Number of interviews
Jilotlán de los Dolores	El Rodeo	901	106	1007	10
San Julián	El Puerto de los Amoleros	1021	118	1139	10
Pihuamo	Colomos	483	243	726	10
San Miguel el Alto	La Angostura	894	173	1067	10
Zapotitlán de Vadillo	Teteapan	1434	222	1656	10
Autlán de Navarro	Agua Hedionda	217	228	445	10
Chiquilistlán	Agua Hedionda	901	264	1165	10
Huejuquilla El Alto	La Soledad	163	271	434	10
Chimaltitán	San Juan Los Potreros	560	300	860	10
Unión de Tula	La Taberna	232	136	368	10
Cihuatlán	Colonia Pinal Villa	211	207	418	10
Guachinango	Llano Grande	344	245	589	10
Juchitlán	Las Juntas	301	79	380	10
Etzatlán	Puerta de Pericos	103	164	267	10
Ayutla	El Zapotillo	785	186	971	10
Tamazula de Gordiano	El Taray	755	459	1214	26
Cuatitlán de García Barragán	Ayotitlán	3864	543	4407	27
Zapotiltc	Ferrería de Providencia	278	378	656	26
Sayula	El Reparó	338	350	688	26
Ayotlán	Santa Elena de la Cruz	227	722	949	35
Acatlán de Juárez	San José de los Pozos	57	794	851	34
Acatic	Tierras	858	1174	2032	29

Municipality	Locality or centre	Total population of localities of influence	Population of the centre	Total population	Number of interviews
	Coloradas				
Poncitlán	San Jacinto	261	1396	1657	18
Tapalpa	Juanacatlán	1076	2243	3319	29

Source: Own data.

With this composition and sample size, the estimated margin of error in the values of the variables was +/-5% globally, with a confidence level of 95%. This means that one out of every 20 pieces of data thrown up by the study could be outside the established margin of error. On the basis of this survey, various observations were made as to the economic and social situation of the communities. According to Esquer Gutiérrez, the ColJal assessment revealed that “Community Centres” was generating the expected impact in the localities in which it was applied²⁸.

Beyond the results of the survey, from the perspective of the then Director General of Social Policy, its results did have a significant impact in the perception of the state authorities, and very favourable practical consequences for the continuity of the Programme. According to Alberto Esquer, assessments are fundamental to know what happens in the programmes applied by the governments:

“One of the most difficult tasks of governments is to create transversal public policy between [the] federal, state and municipal governments; and between the agencies of the state Executive. The Governor requested specifically to see the results produced by the Programme. So, we couldn’t know the results if it wasn’t under assessment scheme. (...) I think that, even now, governments in Mexico, in general, and the Jalisco government, in particular, have very little culture in matters of assessment and, from my point of view, any programme that is not assessed can’t be improved. (...) The results of the assessment were vitally important for taking decisions on the budget, public policy decisions and decisions on distribution of resources as State Government”²⁹.

According to Esquer, the El ColJal assessment allowed them to discover that, although the impact was good, the number of localities reached by the Programme was relatively low and that there was still a long road to travel. So, the following year more resources were finally allocated to the Programme.

²⁸ Idem.

²⁹ Ibid.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE COLLABORATION EXPERIENCE

The previous section contained a description of the collaboration experience between the SDH, a government agency in the subnational sphere in Mexico, and El ColJal, a local institute dedicated to higher education and research. It focused on those factors that determined the conditions in which the applied research was incorporated into the process of formulating social policy in Jalisco and, specifically, during the assessment stage of a particular government programme that was designed to combat poverty in rural communities with very particular characteristics.

Nevertheless, with the aim of appraising the impact of the factors, both endogenous and exogenous, of each of the organisations involved in this case study it was deemed pertinent to make a brief recapitulation of these factors.

4.1. El Colegio de Jalisco

The institutional efforts deployed by El ColJal in support of the professionalisation of the public service in the state of Jalisco and its municipalities, opened an important window of opportunity to the gradual incorporation of professional and researchers oriented to applied studies in the sphere of government and municipal and state public administration.

Consolidated over recent years, this trend was the principal endogenous factor that fostered convergence of institutional interests between the ColJal and the SDH, reflected in the assessment exercise external to the Programme of Community Centres.

In this regard, an exogenous factor to El ColJal which was fundamental to begin the initial linkage with the SDH was the prevailing normative expressed by the Operating Rules of the PIE that establish as an essential requirement external assessment of the social programme that receive public financing through said federal programme. However, the impact of the results from the first external assessment conducted by ColJal academics should also be stressed, as an endogenous factor that was decisive in sustaining the link with the SDH, at least during the following two years.

4.2. The Secretariat of Human Development

Now, if SDH's initial interest to formally request ColJal's collaboration to assess the Programme of Community Centres was restricted to the exogenous factor related to the Operating Rules of the PIE, the case study also reveals a series of factors endogenous to the SDH that helped sustain collaboration with El ColJal for two years after the first assessment exercise.

Among these factors endogenous to the SDH, the following stand out:

First of all, it is worth stressing both the initial motivation and the strategy that it was decided to follow for the creation of the SDH at the outset, and the later formulation of the social policy named "Integrate", as two prime endogenous factors. The first emerged from the diagnosis made by the government actors in which the lack of a government agency specialised in attending population in conditions of poverty was identified. The second was made in the close collaboration that could be established between public officials and a group of consultants who were entrusted with the technical tasks that allowed both the

organisational design proposal of SDH and the formulation of social policy in Jalisco to be sustained.

Secondly, we found the institutional characteristics of the SDH and the later integration of a working team like other fundamental endogenous factors that contributed to give a clear orientation and solid support to the first institutional tasks undertaken by the SDH. The institutional characteristics, as stressed above, were structured on the basis of three areas with clearly defined functions: the area responsible for planning social policy, the area responsible for programming operations, and a third area designed to foster citizen participation and social linkage. As regards the working team, it lays particular emphasis on the fact that it was formed in the planning area, and was made up of a relatively compact group of young professionals with a solid professional profile, who also stood out for showing high motivation in taking on responsibilities and undertaking innovative actions.

Finally, it is necessary to stress the personal style of direction shown by SDH's first head, Rafael Ríos Martínez, as an endogenous factor that was strategic in ensuring that the institutional objectives were achieved. This factor is crucial in creating a work mystique oriented by a vision shared between the head of the agency and his work team.

Certain factors exogenous to the SDH that seem to have impacted significantly during the conformation stage of this government agency also deserve to be stressed. In this sphere, the context of population dispersion that prevails in the rural areas of Jalisco stands out, along with the previous experiences made by the Government of Jalisco to attend to the rural population in conditions of marginalisation, as two relevant exogenous factors that had significant impact and opened an important opportunity for the SDH's initiative of creation as a government agency coordinating government efforts in matters of social policy.

In addition, the experiences developed in other states of the Republic, particularly the state of Guanajuato, the ideas concerning human development being disseminated in the framework of the United Nations Development Programme and the party political differentiation finally made up a favourable situation for the creation of the SDH.

The case illustrates particularly, how the normative demand to carry out an external assessment of the Programme of Community Centres was joined by the positive impact of the first results of the external assessment in the perception of the SDH public officials. Both exogenous factors contributed significantly in the decision of the government agency to sustain an institutional link with the ColJal from which other relevant studies and assessments resulted to improve social policy in Jalisco.

It is also worth pointing out that the exogenous factors that favoured the development of successive assessments external to the Programme of Community Centres seem to have helped reduce the tensions that subsequently appeared between the town councils and the SDH itself, stemming from the operation of the Programme in the context of a difficult political situation marked by the electoral process.

Beyond the political-electoral situation, the results of the assessments contributed to reveal certain limiting conditions of the necessary linkage that had to be established between the town councils and the State Government to ensure the operation of the Programme of

Community Centres. Such constraints are an exogenous factor that the SDH had to overcome at the time in order to sustain the good progress of the Programme.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The case study on the external assessment experience of the Government of Jalisco's Development Programme of Community Centres made by El ColJal is very solid and direct evidence on how the use of research applied to public policy is a fundamental tool to facilitate and substantially improve the process of formulating public policy in the social sphere.

However, certain questions arose that bear witness to the fact that relations between academic research centres and government agencies in Latin America are mediated by networks and relations that are not necessarily supported by institutional mechanisms that encourage solid formal relations. When in truth the intention is that social policies should respond to minimal criteria of rationality, these networks of contacts between actors are relations of friendship or professional relations that go beyond the constraints arising out of the bureaucratisation of public administrations.

In this respect, the case is very rich and shows the multiple constraints and opportunities that usually arise in developing joint initiatives between research-oriented institutions and government agencies. The case particularly shows how the close link and collaboration sustained between authorities and policy analysts, beyond the nature described above, became the key factor for social policies to respond to minimal technical criteria that attenuate the strong political position they enjoy.

The linkage we have just described generally covers different stages of the public policy process. Although the social policy was designed in the subnational government agency, in this case the SDH, and also the Programme of Community Centres (implementation phase) took charge of ensuring its accomplishment, the impact monitoring and assessment phases were looked after by a research centre, in this case El ColJal.

Although the case could be presented as a successful experience of linkage between a government agency and a research centre, especially in the phase of professional and endogenous collaboration, it also revealed the main problems and constraints which Latin American public administrations generally face, notably:

- a) The great weight of party politics on the public policy formulation process.
- b) The link between a subnational agency and a research centre usually begins with external imperatives rather than endogenously.
- c) Government actors recognise in the discourse the importance, value and utility of external assessment, whose scope goes further than programming and operational questions and really helps measure social impact. Unfortunately the institutional mechanisms that force it on or encourage it are scarce.
- d) The above means that social policies and government programmes are unable to resist "changes of government". This is reflected in the fact that policies are not institutionalised and reinvented, their content does not change and the prior experience is not wasted, among many other problems.

Finally, the case presented offers different clues that help understand problems in Latin American public function. Particularly, it illustrates how in practice links with research

centres are established, operate and perform, especially in the subnational sphere, which differs substantially from the national sphere.

In this regard, the sociological reality shown in this case study offers multiple evidence on the conditions of institutional weakness that still persist in subnational spheres of government and which strongly limit the possibilities and potentialities that can be reached through a closer linkage between applied research and the public policy formulation process.

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7. PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY





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