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GUATEMALA

SUCCESS STORY

AFIM's Impact in Chajul

USAID supports the objectives of the AFIM in Chajul.



[Photo Credit]: Valentin Tavco PDGL USAID

USAID, through the PDGL program, assists municipalities such as Chajul in achieving the general objectives of the AFIM and in building the capacity of municipal administrations to improve the management of resources received from the central government and those generated locally, as well as to increase their capacity for transparent budget planning and financial management.

"The public reconciliation of accounts is our obligation to complete and a right that you all have to be informed of our resources. With this first reconciliation of our accounts, we hope to turn it into a regular practice, where we don't even need to call you to a meeting, but rather where you all tell us when you want to be informed," addressed the Municipal Mayor, Manuel Asicona Rivera to the participants in Chajul's seminar.

Since 2002, the National Government of Guatemala has implemented programs to increase transparency and fiscal responsibility at the municipal level. USAID, through the Decentralization and Local Governance Program (PDGL, acronym in Spanish), has been assisting municipalities to implement these programs. The PDGL has helped municipalities 1.) create and operate AFIMs (Units for Integrated Municipal Financial Administration, 2.) adequately use the equal opportunity purchasing system (Guatecompras), and 3.) provide timely reconciliation of expenses and revenues for municipal accounts.

Through the PDGL program, USAID has assisted the municipality of Chajul to assure that 100% of municipal procurement is achieved through the Guatecompras system. PDGL's technical staff has worked hand in hand with AFIM staff to ensure a timely, efficient and transparent reconciliation of accounts for all municipal funds.

In order to comply with Guatemalan law, the municipality of Chajul hosted its first ever public reconciliation of accounts. The Municipal Government of Chajul invited all of the local mayors, public officials and interested citizens to attend an all day seminar on July 25th to publicly reconcile the funds they have received from the municipality. PDGL, in conjunction with the municipal staff, has documented the process' results and will distribute them via a written magazine in Ixil.

This first annual reconciliation was attended by 75 people. PDGL made a presentation about "What is a reconciliation of accounts?" and explained the impact this has on achieving a transparent democracy. The Financial and Administrative Coordinator of the AFIM presented the municipal budget, explaining the municipal revenues, and municipal allocations from the central government. The Mayor of Chajul closed the seminar asking all citizens to actively participate in this process. "Many thanks to the PDGL for the support and tools they have given us in order to do this reconciliation of accounts and organize our finances" (Manuel Asicona Rivera, Municipal Mayor).