3. UNHCR programme and its context

a. Chronic underdevelopment and the context for reintegration in rural Guatemala

To understand the limitations faced by UNHCR in its assistance and reintegration activities in Guatemala, it is important to point out the generalised and historical problems that effect or limit development potential in the countryside. Certain national indicators of economic development, which might seem positive compared to other developing countries, are misleading in that they mask the great disparities between sectors of the population. The differences are especially noted by geographical region (highland and isolated jungle areas versus urban and/or coastal regions) and in terms of ethnicity (indigenous versus non-indigenous). The poorer and more isolated geographical regions coincide with the location of the majority indigenous population who in turn have the lowest indicators of access to education, health services and employment. The vast majority of returnees came from and arrived to these same under-served regions which are the same regions that suffered extreme violence, displacement, destruction and disruption of local economic and social patterns.

While the last 14 years of democratic rule and increased openings have prompted a gradual increase of institutional presence in the countryside, in general the government institutions are weak: extension workers are generally too few, underpaid and with virtually no resources with which to carry out their work. No comprehensive and long-term development strategy has ever been successively disseminated and decentralised in practice although each ensuing government has created short-term initiatives with mixed results. In recent years, the government has relied more on special *ad hoc* "social" funds to address, respectively, extremely impoverished areas, former conflict areas, indigenous communities and others. Some of these projects have benefited returnee communities and regions but due to their very nature --funding channels meant to bypass the characteristic bureaucracy associated with state ministries-- they have done nothing to resolve the underlying structural problems related to delivery of state services.

Given the apparent lack of restrictions about where returning refugees could settle (different agreements refer to complete freedom of movement and choice of settlement sites), it is surprising to some observers that some communities ended up on agricultural land with good potential and others in extremely remote areas with poor quality land. This is the result of two factors. Firstly, many refugees chose to return to their lands and/or areas of origin due to cultural and family ties despite the limitations that these areas represent. Repatriates thus repopulated northern Huehuetenango and northern Quiché (specifically the Ixcán region). Secondly, from 1993 until 1998, refugees in need of new lands were channelled by the primary

land purchase programme offered by the State to returnees to seek lands only in certain areas of the country and with certain price limitations (see below).
This led to the establishment of communities in regions that were new for most returnees and where lands were inexpensive precisely because of their isolation and/or limited potential for productivity (Petén and Alta Verapaz). With few exceptions, therefore, lands were not acquired in the more accessible and fertile pacific coast and piedmont regions until 1998-1999 when six more farms were purchased in this region. Some of these more recently established communities therefore have better long-term potential (if capital for productive activities is made available) but received less short-term assistance both by UNHCR and many other funding initiatives targeting returnees that had been disbanded by this late return date. Although all returnee locations vary in many ways that effect their development potential (length of time established, degree of external support, internal organisation, land quality, existing production, proximity to markets, access and infrastructure), the communities with the bleakest outlook are those that returned within the last two years (when support was winding down) and which were established on poor quality land and/or in isolated regions.

- Historical problems related to land and state-run land acquisition programmes for returnees

Guatemala is well known internationally for its extreme inequality of land distribution and the conflicts and problems that continue to result. As an agricultural country whose majority indigenous population continues to rely on land for daily survival, lack of land was one of the touchpoints for the 35-year armed conflict only recently concluded. The demand to obtain land was foremost for the refugees and remains the chief concern of the rural population in general. An innovative factor in the Guatemalan return programme was the fact that the Guatemalan government financed the purchase of agricultural land for returning refugees. Although the different land purchase programmes suffered from a variety of difficulties and resulted in an expensive (and therefore difficult to replicate) model, the potential problem of locating where large groups of refugees without land could settle was resolved by the possibility of these state-financed lands. As little state-owned land was available and the government was unwilling to expropriate land, the programmes bought private land at market prices for refugees. The following problems resulted:

- Land was purchased at high cost, often inflated by owners given the political (and international) pressure on the government generated by the refugees to acquire land quickly.
- The land purchase programme did not attract international funding since donors were reluctant to indirectly benefit wealthy landholders.
- Some refugees were able to negotiate expensive, more productive land and others settled for less costly (and therefore more isolated and less productive) land.
- The government had a financial incentive to direct refugees to less productive land and crowd more people together in order to better the investment per family ratio.
- For those communities that must pay back to the government the purchase price of the land, payment schedules are not realistic based on projected production. For those communities expected to create a community revolving loan fund instead of reimbursing the government, the government did not provide technical support or guidelines on how to make such a fund functional .
- Given the high investment made by the government on land purchase itself, the government has been unwilling to fund production-oriented credits or projects.
- There is a lack of administrative mechanisms on the part of governmental agencies to easily or automatically incorporate women as joint owners of lands purchased. The oversight on the part of the government continued even in the face of women's mobilisation to reclaim this right and in many cases was reflected in the government officials' inability to conceive of any other system than that of a typical family being represented by the male "head-of-family".
- About one fourth of the nearly 23,000 refugees arriving as part of collective returns returned to their own land and three fourths solicited new land under the purchase programmes (or received new lands in compensation for lands they could not recover). Together with some other families that benefited from the purchase of land for refugees,

the government estimates that some 5,000 families (most but not all returnees) were given land in this way. The average cost per family in these cases was approximately U.S. $ 6,000 although it ranged from US $ 1,000 per family to one extreme case where U.S. $ 20,000 per family was spent.

b. Repatriation assistance: beyond the basics

In comparison to some repatriation operations where the debate has revolved around cash grants or in-kind assistance, the Guatemalan returnees were given both. To the extent that funding was available, the varied nature of the assistance package proved important both as an incentive to return (especially for families repatriating outside of the collective return process) and for initial survival in the isolated return areas normally bereft of minimal access or short term prospects for significant food production.

Although meant to assist them in their disadvantaged state, the levels of assistance tended to set off the returnees from their non-repatriate neighbours and, in some cases, this caused resentment. In the first years of the (individual) repatriation operation, the repatriates were identified by the shiny roofs made of corrugated metal sheets. This, in some regions, reinforced the political scrutiny and distrust to which they were under as former refugees.

In general, neighbouring communities or families living within communities with repatriates/returnees were not given assistance packages because of the high cost involved and the rationale that these other families, although affected by the war and its aftermath, at least had minimal housing and ongoing agricultural production. Whereas the strategy of implementing Quick Impact Project (QIPs) in communities neighbouring returnees or on a regional level was supposed to ameliorate this negative effect, in practice the QIPs were sometimes too little, too late, or were abolished altogether due to funding problems

- Transport and reception

Transport modalities adopted in the return from Mexico depended on two factors: relative ease of access and the availability of routes to and from each location; and, in the case of the collective returns, political negotiations with the refugees. In most cases, all transport originating in Mexico was paid through UNHCR-Mexico regardless of how far within Guatemala the transport was needed.

For the some 20,000 repatriates who arrived in small family groups every two weeks between 1987 and June 1999 over the principal Mexico-Guatemala border (rarely more than 50 families at a time and normally between 10 and 30) logistics were a continual, if predictable, challenge The families were picked up in their different camps, sometimes in different Mexican states, and concentrated in a Mexican reception centre. After arriving in Guatemala, they generally spent two nights/three days in the main Guatemalan reception centre (in Huehuetenango) where they received food and other forms of in-kind assistance, assessment of their documentation needs and sometimes health check-ups. They were transported with their assistance items to their final destination or to where existing roads permitted. To transport goods onward to villages with no roads, CEAR would contract cargo animals or cash was provided to returnees to contract such services directly.

For collective return movements, arrangements for type of transport, route and overnight stops were developed on an ad hoc basis for each group (unless a previous group had had a similar departure point and destination). Given poor access in many cases, reconnaissance missions were carried out between the relevant parties and special "quadripartite" meetings (Mexican and Guatemalan authorities, UNHCR and refugees) made decisions for each group.

Some large returns were carried out using air transport from Mexico to a Guatemalan airstrip in the general vicinity of the return site when the number of refugees made this a more cost-effective option. Nevertheless, in some cases the most cost-efficient route was vetoed by organised refugee groups who had other criteria including the task of making the return process visible within Guatemala and economically beneficial to neighbouring communities. The most notorious case was the first organised and collective return in January 1993 in which 2,500 refugees undertook a two-week caravan of 850 kilometres to reach their settlement site including a stop in the capital city.

Where the destinations of collective return movements had no permanent road, UNHCR financed at least temporary access for the return itself (bridge repair, opening of roadways to at least make them accessible to tractors, etc.) while long-term solutions were under discussion

with the government. The high costs of some of these rehabilitation projects were consistently less than the projected cost of using animal transport.
Over time, more efforts were made in Mexico to limit refugee cargo although strict control was not always possible and the isolated nature of return sites meant that even rotted wood or warped roofing was given a high value by the refugees. The most effective scheme was limiting and eventually eliminating the transport of most animals brought into Guatemala by compensating refugees who left animals behind. Previously, UNHCR-Guatemala had financed veterinary services for animal transport and quarantine. The trade off, however, was the fact that work animals (and others used to supplement diet/income) were not readily available near most destination sites and the reintegration process suffered from the corresponding setback.

- Why was assistance so expensive in Guatemala?

High administrative costs in proportion to numbers of beneficiaries: From its inception, the Guatemalan programme and field office structure was conceived of in the context of the fragile security and human rights situation, especially in the remote return areas. A minimum of two international staff were placed in each office to carry out protection and monitoring functions as well as programme delivery. As described by UNHCR for the 1994 meeting of its Executive Committee (EXCOM): "...the extent of UNHCR presence should be assessed not only in relation to programme delivery, but also in terms of the support provided by UNHCR for promoting the creation of conditions that are conducive to repatriation and consolidate the durability of the solution."
The dispersion of returnees was great and there was deficient or no access whatsoever to many communities: Individual repatriate families and collective returns returned to over half of the country's 333 municipalities (covering virtually all of the 22 departments) arriving to hundreds of villages. A typical group of 30 families concentrated in a single repatriation movement might have a dozen different destinations, including several only accessible by several hours walk from the nearest, poor quality road.
The voluntary repatriation process was extremely drawn out; excluding most cost-effective measures: Some villages were literally repopulated over a ten-year period as families arrived by twos and threes. There was little possibility to speed up this pattern as communities let some families pioneer resettlement as a way of testing the waters, others waiting until they were sure that repatriation was a desirable and safe alternative to refuge.
Even for larger groups and collective returns, savings due to larger scale operations were offset by the limited supply of goods and services available locally: With larger groups heading to the same destination, local resources were often overwhelmed (buses and pickups for rent, mules for transport of goods) resulting in higher prices due to the need to import services from elsewhere or because of the sudden high demand versus small supply available. Mexican truck owners, for example, charged considerable amounts to traverse poor quality roads in Guatemala with refugee cargo but off-loading and finding regionally based Guatemalan transport was even more expensive.
In general, UNHCR had no control over the rhythm of returns based on land acquisition or land recovery: The host of factors delaying foreseen returns made the operation less efficient *per capita* (as costs were incurred with or without frequent repatriations) and seriously affected planning efforts as many destinations for collective and larger-scale groups were confirmed at the last minute when pressures for a rapid repatriation also drove up costs (implementing agencies working overtime or with extra staff).

- Cash grant and housing

The cash grant was administered at the rate of U.S. $ 50 for those over 14 years of age and U.S. $ 25 per younger child (always given in local currency). As of 1993, the total of the family cash grant was handed to each person in question except for that of the younger children whose money was handed over to the mother. Through this practice, UNHCR increasingly fomented the view that the money was for the use of the entire family and not just the male head of family. The formality under which each couple received the money (jointly signed receipts, for example, and ample explanation) was increased through the years and the net result was an understanding by the women that they had a say in the decision-making process regarding the use of these funds. Though UNHCR knew of cases where the money was used

for purchase of animals (for work, food or resale), small house-front stores, and housing improvement, no formal follow-up was done to determine how funds were being used and to what extent women and men were sharing equal responsibility for its use.
The evolution of housing assistance began with a family level package made up of roofing sheets, nails and a few construction tools that were distributed along with another cash grant (averaging around U.S. $ 100), ostensibly for the purchase of wood or other housing materials. When UNHCR made a concerted effort to give wood in-kind instead of a cash equivalent, either the shortage of local resources made in-kind donation too expensive or deforestation on a local level was fomented. As of 1997, modest additional funding was given to women heading households alone to contract help in housing construction.
Ultimately, no appropriate solution to the dilemma of how to best administer in-kind materials was found for families returning on an individual basis. But, as of 1997, funds earmarked for collective temporary shelters for the collective returns were reallocated to contract the construction of basic minimal houses (with wood posts and plastic walls) for each family anticipated in the collective settlement. This alternative was deemed the most humanitarian for all concerned since the family was spared the initial work of erecting a temporary house. The lack of privacy and crowded conditions in the collective shelters had been problematic, as was the fact that women routinely stayed behind during community meetings to watch over family goods.

- Agricultural aid

Given that the UNHCR returnee caseload was virtually all rural refugees returning to rural areas, agricultural assistance was deemed crucial. Tools, corn seed and fertiliser were given on a per-family basis. For many years, the same agriculture package was used regardless of destination and no specific orientation nor follow-up was given. As of 1996, agronomists were hired to a) vary the standard package for individual repatriate families according to the region, and b) work together with the collective groups to determine the combination of seeds, fertiliser and tools best suited to their specific return site. Women head of households without partners also had the option of helping design an alternative assistance package that often reflected the need to produce food closer to the home (fruit trees, vegetable seeds or chickens for egg production). Where a "family" was not made up of two or more people, only one third of the respective housing material and agricultural assistance package was given (except in the case of tools, which were provided in full) These single persons included mature, unmarried or widowed men, elderly men or women alone and living independently of extended family and, increasingly, young people establishing themselves independently at the moment of return (initially men only and later women as well). While the policy of giving only one third of the materials or supplies was not satisfactory for legitimate cases of mature persons living on their own, it was maintained in order to limit the possibility of abuse (wherein young people would split-up prematurely from their families in order to claim assistance). Ironically, UNHCR's determination to treat men and women equally sometimes further complicated the assistance scheme (for example, since a young couple could claim more assistance than a single man and a single women together, UNHCR-Mexico suspected that some young men would precipitate finding a partner --sometimes a girl of 14 or 15 years-- in order to claim family assistance).

- Food aid

Since 1987, the World Food Programme (WFP) contributed to the repatriation programme with food administered through the Guatemalan Government via prior arrangements with transport costs covered by UNHCR. For most of the programme, the food aid consisted of rations per person calculated for nine months equalling approximately 2,000 calories per day and made up of corn, beans, cooking oil, canned meat or fish and smaller amounts of sugar, salt and rice. Over the years, however, the components beyond the first three were decreased or cut from the programme. In many cases during the first year after returning, real food shortages were faced and many returnees suffered from a nutritionally deficient diet, although other programmes (chiefly those of NGOs) stepped in with food supplies The only food supplement directly purchased by UNHCR was lime (*cal*) used for softening cooking corn and the main source of calcium in the rural Guatemalan diet.

The terms of the food aid programme, conceived of before the possibility of the collective return process was foreseen, was better suited to the case of small groups of repatriates or individual families who arrived to their home communities. In this situation, the WFP rations were a complementary aspect of a more complete diet: destination villages had fruit, vegetable and poultry production established which permitted trade or purchase of these items at cost. Furthermore, family and community networks were usually available to help sustain return families until their first harvest. In the case of the collective returns to sites where often no production at all was underway and no established community existed, obtaining local produce entailed significant travel and/or ready cash and thus a varied diet was generally sacrificed.
In addition, for many years the programme suffered from the bureaucratic national system used to receive, store and transport food aid. Once the food aid was available to the Guatemalan agency (CEAR) responsible for transporting it to returnee sites, poor storage facilities and agency inefficiency compounded delays. Consequently, basic grains often arrived to returnee communities late and in questionable condition. UNHCR presence in the field was effective in identifying problems but corrective measures by WFP and CEAR were not always timely. In the case of particularly serious problems and/or when joint evaluations were carried out, WFP was more responsive but in general UNHCR was blamed for many problems it was not formally responsible for.

- Additional assistance for collective return groups

In addition to the collective shelters (or housing construction) described above, collective groups generally received other emergency assistance. This assistance was budgeted under the programme contemplating the return itself (logistics and assistance) and, in retrospect, was not always conceived as part of the continuum towards the "reintegration" activities and budget also managed by UNHCR. In general, this additional assistance may be characterised as. provision of access and temporary infrastructure, emergency health coverage and preventative health measures (such as latrines and waste disposal) and the provision of potable water. The counterparts were mostly national and international NGOs specialised in the respective task. In most cases, assistance was channelled through a signed agreement/contract that avoided complicated programme procedures (use of sub-agreement). Many of these emergency projects were initiated before each return took place but relied on an "advance brigade" of returnee families (or sometimes men only) to help make decisions and to provide paid labour.
In regard to water provision and health care in the emergency phase of the return operation, various NGOs shared their opinions in an evaluation workshop held in May 1999. These included the observation that in many cases, UNHCR was not prepared to give adequate follow-up to temporary projects nor were NGOs contracted or found to take on a permanent role. Therefore, the possibility of the temporary water system breaking down, for example, in a community with no available funds or technical support to fix it, was high and actually occurred in a few instances.
In the case of health support, there is general consensus that the Health Ministry remains extremely weak in rural areas and no short-term presence of an NGO working in emergency health care was sufficient to stimulate permanent coverage. Where a NGO programme already covered a geographical region with a long-term programme, and UNHCR provided funds for an initial involvement in a new returnee community, the programme was usually successful since the community was therein incorporated into an ongoing and regional programme with independent financing.
Despite the attention given to the topic of reproductive health for refugees in Mexico, little or no follow-up was given in Guatemala by any actor including UNHCR. At UNHCR's insistence, the health check-up routinely given to refugees prior to their return (of which the results were handed over to health authorities and/or the NGO giving follow-up in Guatemala) included information noting which women had IUDs for future monitoring.
Other comments in regard to the emergency phase of the collective settlements included the excessive costs due to the extreme isolation and poor access of many communities and the difficulty of incorporating returnee women participation into many aspects of emergency planning and programme implementation. In reference to the latter, it is possible that most NGOs were not properly aided in how to best foment the women's participation and may have made half-hearted attempts at best. In their eyes, the common practice of men carrying out technical and physical tasks overrode attempts to involve women, even at a decision-making

level. With extreme pressure on each NGO to keep to tight deadlines for each return movement, the quality of community participation was sacrificed in some, although by no means all, cases.

Lessons learned: assistance

General

- The relatively "generous" assistance package was important in creating incentives for return and a minimal basis for reinsertion.
- Efforts to make in-kind assistance a priority as opposed to cash, responded to information by women that the latter was more likely to benefit them and based on the reality that produced goods could not be purchased or were prohibitively priced in most rural points of destination.
- Nevertheless, not enough effort was made to give visible attention to neighbouring communities (for example, parallel programmes by other agencies to ensure minimal housing). Despite the fact that returnee flows attracted regional and generalised aid by area, the perception was often otherwise and this increased resentment against returnees.
- The investment of staff-time dedicated to assuring that women were present when assistance was given out and that men and women had understood that assistance was meant for joint administration, was important. Women felt validated by external and symbolic recognition of their role and presumably had more opportunity in which to influence the use of family resources.
- Additional assistance items that would have been useful and particularly related to women's domestic labour during initial installation include cooking pots and water containers.
- Decisions about family versus per capita assistance should take into account social structures to not artificially encourage "marriages" or the creation of new families in order to gain assistance.

Logistics

- The practice of substituting transport of animals for buy back schemes previous to return movements was a positive cost-saving measure. However, complementary measures to promote acquisition of animals upon return for the nutritional well-being of the families could have been emphasised through QIPs or institutional linkages.
- Other reimbursement schemes or incentives to cut down on cargo from refugee settlements to return communities would have been cost-effective given high transport costs.

Agricultural assistance

- The introduction of flexibility in the agricultural assistance and the active involvement of agronomists in advising and supporting initial agricultural activities were important improvements for the programme. More visibility was given to women's role in relation to agricultural and livestock activities
- The agricultural cycle and possible lack of storage facilities for seeds should also be considered.

Housing assistance

- Provisional houses per family, as opposed to collective shelters, plus minimal construction materials were a preferable option where feasible
- Drawbacks related to the materials provided (type of roofing that was unsuited to hot climates or wood that was scarce in some areas) were never resolved.

Food aid

- Changing the content of food assistance over the years and between deliveries was confusing for the beneficiary population. Cutbacks in the number of months of food aid

and the partial elimination of protein sources and other foods endangered returnees' nutritional status. Insufficient follow-up was given to quality of food and timeliness of delivery. UNHCR's inability to supplement or ensure additional foodstuffs contributed to decreasing nutrition for returnees in their first year after return.
- The possibility of selling WFP aid and purchasing certain staples from local markets was only initially explored. This could have been a possible, partial solution to exorbitant transport costs and food deterioration due to number of consecutive storage sites.

Emergency assistance in new settlement sites

- UNHCR probably could have saved time, effort and funds by better integrating certain emergency projects with the intermediate-term projects (QIPs) also financed by UNHCR.
- Implementing partners located for the implementation of emergency projects had less incentives/possibilities to follow-up on their own work with independent funding than was the case with organisations involved in development-type projects. Where UNHCR has little capability for follow-up, this problem should be anticipated
- Repatriate families arriving "individually" and not with collective returns received much less assistance and in most cases were not given any follow-up. In many cases their communities lacked the same basic services as the newly established collective return sites and the outlook for their reintegration was worse.

c. Reintegration activities

- Quick Impact Projects

The concept of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) grew out of the decision by UNHCR in Central America to assist returning refugees beyond the one-time assistance package (transport, food and housing construction aid) which was standard UNHCR practice in the 1980s. By definition, the QIPs were conceived of in a way that would avoid UNHCR involvement in lengthy and complex development processes while promoting rapid and effective responses to immediate needs. The application and selection of possible QIPs was to be based on a simple and reasonable set of guidelines founded upon the tenets of grassroots community development. The longer-term projects that were needed were to follow under the auspices of other more development-oriented agencies, both UN and others.
QIPs were established in order to provide immediate support towards basic needs on a community level so as to promote a sense of normality to recent returnees. UNHCR would invest relatively modest sums and procedures were streamlined. Community support (and preferably participation in planning) for the projects and in-kind contributions were essential and in most cases at least tacit support of the government was required.

- Choice of implementing partner and overall programme design

In the implementation of the QIP programme, the model of an "umbrella agency" was based on UNHCR's experience in Nicaragua. The precept of such an arrangement was that UNHCR's administrative practices were too cumbersome to merit a direct relationship with every entity that would carry out a project and that, furthermore, an agency specialising in project design and follow-up would help guarantee positive results. The Canadian development agency, CECI, was chosen given its presence in Guatemala at the time (one of only a handful of operative international NGOs) and the favourable attitude of most Guatemalan NGOs towards Canadian counterparts. In addition, the notion of using an agency specialised in development was seen as an appropriate way to ensure that reintegration projects were conceived of in a longer-term context.
The three overall objectives of the QIP programme were:

- to contribute to reintegration via the rehabilitation of social and economic networks and productive infrastructure;
- to facilitate reconciliation between returnee and neighbouring populations; and

- to promote conditions for further development initiatives in returnee areas

In regard to the gains made via the QIP programme towards reintegration and long-term development initiatives, the following observations as to successes of the QIPs are pertinent:

- The emphasis on the strengthening of community organisations within the QIP programme and the fomenting of their capability to lobby and have contact with a diverse range of institutions will serve the communities for establishing long-term and ongoing links.
- The creation of some region-wide networks for marketing and other purposes has long-term potential.
- Some of the productive projects undertaken have been fully appropriated by the communities and have the potential to remain sustainable in the long term.

Projects were either initiated after discussion between CECI staff and the community (often in a general community assembly and often with UNHCR presence) or brought to the attention of CECI by an NGO that had already reached an agreement with the community to propose a certain project. While CECI would take responsibility for all technical details including feasibility, mechanisms, design, budget etc., UNHCR would have final say on the political considerations of the project: such as if it would promote reconciliation or division and did it have priority over other projects or not.
A joint UNHCR-CECI committee in each UNHCR field office (where CECI promoters were posted) was the first level of project approval. Then CECI and UNHCR officials in Guatemala City would sign off and/or amend or exclude projects. Initially efforts were made for formal co-ordination through a standing committee involving UNDP and government counterparts but this did not prove effective in promoting joint or complementary efforts and the co-ordination was reduced to sharing copies of approved projects to at least avoid duplication of efforts.
In general UNHCR's close involvement with QIP implementation was beneficial given UNHCR's intimate knowledge of the returnee communities. Nevertheless, there were also disadvantages in UNHCR --in its role of funding agency-- having an on-the-ground and permanent presence where the implementing partner, CECI, was expected to carry out all the technical and operational aspects of the programme. In the first place, UNHCR intervention at the micro-level ultimately made CECI less accountable for some of the problems that arose. Also, while staff from both institutions generally tried to work together, there were often personal or work style differences that resulted in competition and occasionally conflicts at the field level.
It must also be said that, despite the development of two consecutive "strategic plans" in 1995 and 1996 involving the majority of UNHCR professional staff, these plans were never used consistently as blueprints to dictate UNHCR actions in reintegration activities or in any other area Although the effort of clarifying through a group process the goals and limitations of UNHCR intervention was helpful for those directly involved, the resulting document was never actively used either in orienting new staff nor in outreach to counterparts and other institutions.

- Production versus infrastructure

The relative emphasis given to production products versus infrastructure within the QIP budget was debated throughout the programme's existence. Two tendencies were clear. On the one hand, when the programme started, there was more need for basic infrastructure given a relative lack of parallel programmes. By the late 1990s, government programmes especially were significantly more involved in targeting return communities with road projects, schools and other basic infrastructure.
On the other hand, within each community's evolution there were different priorities at different times. Since all of the collective communities arriving to new land had virtually no infrastructure and any previous infrastructure in re-established communities had often been destroyed, these projects were given first priority by the communities, along with potable water projects. As the food and agricultural assistance wound down at the end of the first year and basic infrastructure was in place, the communities' priorities would rapidly shift to the kinds of projects that would generate food and/or income.
There is little question that the seeds of survival and reintegration are only possible with projects oriented towards production and income-generation and that they are needed often before