

However, when able to going back to their communities or countries of origin, displaced populations might be faced with the fact they are returning to places that they no longer recognize as their own or to places where they might have to live along with those who forced them into fleeing, in the first place. This was the case of refugees returning to Argentina and Chile, but also to Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Displaced populations might be coming back to communities where they will have to live with people who never left and/or people who were brought and settled in by the very same persecutors and who took possession of their houses and properties. This was the case of Mayan descendent refugees in Guatemala where access to land plots play an important role as part of their Cosmo vision. In these complicated circumstances, how do you foster reconciliation efforts? What prevention and conflict resolution mechanisms are needed to ensure the sustainability and durability of any solution?

Maybe some lessons might be drawn from the experience of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico. During the 70's and 80's thousands of Guatemalan peasants and Mayan descendants were sent into exile in Mexico and other countries as part of a strategy to combat people perceived as being the social base of guerilla movements or because of living in areas considered as their strongholds. Many of those who flee did not have access to education and health posts in Guatemala, and did not even speak Spanish. In Mexico, over 20 years they started over a new life with access to basic facilities, they learned Spanish and participated in awareness raising activities regarding their human rights and duties, community empowerment and organization, women's rights, vocational training, and they also actively participated in water and sanitation projects and the training of education and health promoters. For many growing children and the newborns, Mexico became their homeland and only point of reference.

During their tenure in Mexico, Guatemalan refugees were able to highly contribute in the agricultural field and other income generation activities, mainly in the southern states of Chiapas, Campeche and Quintana Roo, which economies grew with the support of the "hombres de maiz" ("corn men", as Guatemalan Mayan-descendant populations identify themselves). However, the elderly and the grown ups always dreamt about going back to Guatemala and that possibility became a reality during the 90's before, during and after