

HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT:
A LOOK AT OWNERSHIP, SUSTAINABILITY, CORRESPONDENCE, AND
REPLICABILITY

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Hometown associations (HTAs), organizations of immigrants who raise funds for the betterment of their places of origin, are growing in importance for communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. HTAs illustrate the evolving relationship between development and migration. One key aspect of this relationship is the impact on equity, an important component of development philosophy. These migrant associations seek to promote social change, particularly for the benefit of vulnerable populations, such as children and the elderly. They do this by financially supporting critical sectors, such as health and education, in their communities of origin. In this way, the migrant members of HTAs strengthen their relationship to the development of their country of origin.

In considering the relationship between HTA donations and development, it is important to keep four premises in mind. First, these financial flows are significant in volume and have broad economic effects. Second, although remittances to families and donations to communities are channeled primarily to the poor, these resources alone do not constitute a solution to the structural constraints of poverty, and they often fail to create financial security for households or sustainable development in a community.

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Third, to strengthen the ways in which remittances and community donations can promote sustainable development, concrete donor policies and assessments are needed. Fourth, any approach to this issue demands a transnational perspective because this is precisely the context in which HTAs operate.

In Mexico, hometown associations are playing an increasingly important role in transnational development. Yet, their influence is limited. To exert a greater positive effect, HTAs must achieve improved contact with community stakeholders in order to learn about development priorities.

Certain aspects of this relationship between migrants and their hometowns are particularly relevant for development, as they make it possible to assess the opportunities and challenges for HTA activity in regard to improving the quality of life in those communities. We developed four criteria—*ownership*, *correspondence*, *sustainability*, and *replicability*—which we applied during field research on Mexican HTA projects operating in rural communities within the municipality of Jerez, Zacatecas. We focused on Zacatecas because it is the Mexican state exhibiting the highest levels of migration and hometown association activity. The formation in the United States of several umbrella federations representing Zacatecan HTAs has facilitated a strong collaboration with the Mexican government through matching-grant programs to improve hometowns. Although each region of Mexico is marked by distinct migratory patterns, specific economic problems, and different levels of HTA activity, Zacatecas, and in particular the four communities described here, are indicative of what the future may hold for other regions with newer patterns of migration and more recently formed HTAs.

The criteria of *ownership, correspondence, sustainability, and replicability* are measures of the extent to which a project actually enhances community development. Based on those criteria, we analyzed four matching-grant projects undertaken in these rural communities in Jerez. Recognizing the need for tools that HTA leaders and community residents might use to evaluate projects in terms of their development potential, we created a scorecard that ranks the projects on each criterion.

Before turning to the analysis of HTA activity in Jerez, we need to set the context for understanding the relationship between development and migration as it pertains to the work of HTAs, the literature on diasporas and transnationalism, and the experience of HTA activism in Mexico. A key aspect of this evolving relationship has been the *Iniciativa Ciudadana*, also known as the *Programa Tres por Uno* (Three-for-One Program), Mexico's government matching-grant program to partner with HTAs.

<H1>SETTING THE CONTEXT: DEVELOPMENT, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY

Economic development is a complex process that involves a range of actors and institutions working together to implement sound, long-term strategies. The development of those strategies may require integrating new actors and accommodation to the changing needs of the target society. The complexities of development, the ability to adapt policies according to variations over time, and the need to focus on country-specific realities are critical issues in the field of social change and within the current context of a globalized world.

This complex reality takes on critical importance in Mexico, where the shifting dynamic of migration affects the nation's regional economies. Mexican migration is largely a consequence of development failures, but it also results from globalization

(Orozco 2002). The prevailing trend of inequity—a pervasive historical reality—has provoked large emigrations. However, the economic activities that migrants promote in their home communities reposition them to take more prominent roles, while simultaneously helping keep local economies afloat. Currently, the Mexican government, international financial organizations, and international donors have shifted the development approach away from one that focuses on basic needs to one that focuses on social inclusion. This new approach requires a more profound understanding of the role of migrants, especially active migrant groups, such as HTAs, in promoting growth in their home countries.

The “development doctrine” has evolved over the past five decades, based on the assessment of development objectives, theories, and available data (Thorbecke 2000). Under the assumption that economic growth and modernization alone would eliminate inequity, foreign aid focused on capital-resource transfer as a way to increase savings rates and propel the countries into self-sustained growth (Thorbecke 2000, 23). Donors later revisited this approach, emphasizing it in the agricultural sector. By the 1970s, however, it was widely agreed that financial investment and economic growth were only part of the development equation. A “basic-needs” approach, one which focused on the poor, then emerged. This approach addressed land reform, public investment, food, shelter, and other basic infrastructure needs. During the 1980s, partly as a result of major financial crises, the basic-needs approach was replaced with a focus on structural adjustment and a valuation of the effects of human capital on development (Thorbecke 2000, 37). In the 1990s, donor organizations and governments reinforced this by strengthening institutions while reforming the state and conditioning assistance to

performance (Hjertholm and White 2000). Meanwhile, except for studies on the impact of rural-to-urban migration, little academic research focused on the relationship between migration and development.

In the past five years, international financial institutions and the broader donor community have approached development based on an alternative model of social inclusion. The World Bank's strategy, building primarily on the work of Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* (1999) and Nicholas H. Stern's *A Strategy for Development* (2002), has two pillars: (1) building a climate for investment and growth and (2) empowering poor people to participate in that growth. Within this strategy, donor institutions could position members of a diaspora as agents of development as well as objects of the strategy. Development would be aided by incorporating diaspora investment into local communities, enhancing the voices of members of diasporas and their relatives remaining in the home country, and enabling financial infrastructures and environments. These efforts would also broaden the approach, which has traditionally neglected migrants in the development equation.

Taking diasporas into account when designing a development strategy is justified not only by the presence of millions of immigrants who are regularly connected to their homelands but also by the impact those connections have on local economies and communities. Diasporas have been defined as a "sociopolitical formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as being of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homeland and with individuals and groups of the same

background residing in other host countries” (Sheffer 2003, 10-11; see also Chaliand and Rageau 1996; Laguerre 1996; King 1997; Safran 1991; Cohen 1996). Diasporas define themselves through relationships with the homeland, international entities, and host-country governments and societies, thereby influencing various dynamics, including development. One key premise of the relationship between diasporas, migration, and development is that diasporas form as a response to development or underdevelopment but also in response to changes in the composition of the international system (whether the global economy or the international political landscape). People leave their countries because of development conditions there, yet they continue to engage with their homelands at various levels. Such engagement stretches the idea of development beyond territorial boundaries.

Thus, the interplay between micro and macro dynamics across borders, with diasporas as economic agents, has specific effects on economies. Jenny Robinson (2002) speaks of the relationship between diasporas and development as being three-pronged: (1) development in the diaspora, (2) development through the diaspora, and (3) development by the diaspora. The first refers to the use of networks in the host country, which includes the formation of ethnic businesses, cultural ties, and social mobilization. Development *through* the diaspora refers instead to “how diasporic [sic] communities utilize their diffuse global connections beyond the locality to facilitate economic and social well being” (Robinson 2002, 113). The third applies to the ramifications of “the flows of ideas, money, and political support to the migrant’s home country” (123).

Each of these three dynamics has crosscutting implications along various facets of the social reality that exists between the diaspora and its homeland communities

(Kearney 1986). Ideas related to income improvement, business development, gender relations, class structure, and ideological positions intersect when diasporas and their home countries engage. One result has been the formation of transnational relations and networks, which, in turn, have contributed significantly to the integration of countries into the global economy. These connections include immigrant-based donations, small and large investments, trade, tourism, and unilateral transfers—what can be termed the 5Ts: transfer of family remittances, tourism, transportation, telecommunication, and nostalgic trade (Orozco 2003a). The practice by migrants of sending donations to their home communities has significant potential implications for development.

The emergence of immigrant-based organizations working on projects for the betterment of their hometowns raises a question about their ability to function as effective agents of development. The research that we conducted in Jerez, Zacatecas, focuses on the experience of Mexican HTAs, and it revealed that for a development project to be successful, it should meet four criteria: local ownership, correspondence to community needs, sustainability over time, and replicability in other contexts (table X.1).

Table X.1. Definition of four criteria for evaluating development potential

Ownership	Correspondence	Sustainability	Replicability
Community members participate in decision making; community members participate in implementation; and community members have control of project after completion.	Project meets basic needs; needs met are a development priority; and implementation occurs in association or coordination with other institutions.	Project enables development goals; does not constitute a burden or entail added costs; and has a long life cycle.	Resources for the project are easily available in other communities; and institutional environment facilitating implementation is available in other communities.

Ownership: The ability to provide people with a sense of control of their personal and social lives is central to the idea of inclusion. When considering the HTA contribution to development, local ownership of projects is key and providing tools for that ownership is essential. Projects must encompass not only a collective good, benefiting all members, but also a means to transmit ownership or control of the projects to the members, to legitimate them as their own. Ownership of a project can occur through participation in the decision-making and implementation process or by directly transferring the property to the community.

Correspondence: Another issue central to development is the degree to which a project's goal corresponds with the community's true needs. The more a project reflects basic community needs, the greater its contribution to development. To assess correspondence in HTA projects, we considered three indicators: a project must (1) respond to the broad social needs of a community; (2) be based on a clear understanding or diagnosis of the status of health-care delivery, education, public and financial infrastructure, and the economic base of the community; and (3) allocate its resources to those areas defined as being of highest priority for the community.

Sustainability: Another important factor enabling a project's contribution to local development is its sustainability. A project is sustainable when it delivers the means to enable people to improve their quality of life and material circumstances. Sustainability also requires that the investment yield a long-lasting impact that does not burden the community or its future generations.

Replicability: Finally, a project makes a successful contribution to development when its attributes and functions may be replicated with ease and do not depend on the

local or unique circumstances of a community nor on a unique situation for the institutional donor. The replicability of a project allows for the establishment of regional strategies focusing on achieving a development goal beyond the effects on a single community.

<H1>UNDERSTANDING HTAS

Vis-à-vis their natal communities, hometown associations fulfill several functions, ranging from social exchange and political influence to the pursuit of small-scale development goals. Migrants living in the United States who come from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, and the Dominican Republic, to name just a few countries, have increasingly been organizing, in part in order to improve their hometowns. Although few studies were conducted on HTAs before 2000 (Alarcón 2000; Andrade-Eekhoff 1997; Orozco 2000; Mahler 2000; Zabin and Escala-Rabadán 1998), there is now a growing body of HTA literature. It attempts to build a theoretical framework related to transnationalism and diasporas. It is also introducing new conceptual understandings of migration trends by providing a description of the attributes of HTAs. This literature provides case studies that may constitute building blocks from which to generalize. Finally, it attempts to look at the relationship between HTA activity and partnerships with the home country's government.

The academic discussion of HTAs has focused on them as a source of social capital and as a feature of transnational relations. Transnationalism refers to the dynamics of migrant cross-border engagements, encompassing a range of activities, including but not limited to the sending of remittances, the building of social networks and economic

relationships, and the fostering of cultural practices and political participation.² Katharine Andrade-Eekhoff and Claudia Marina Silva-Avalos claims that the origin and the depth of the transnational ties that migrants maintain with both the sending and receiving communities help determine the creation and success of an HTA (2003, 3, 4, 17). Trends in migratory patterns, such as the increase of women migrants and the reunification of families as permitted under U.S. law, affect transnational relationships and, thus, they also affect the HTAs (Moctezuma 2004, 86-91). Gaspar Rivera-Salgado (1999) views HTAs and other migrant organizations throughout history as being attempts at “economic empowerment and social incorporation.” Similarly, Xóchitl Bada (2004, 190-1) believes that HTAs establish an alternative hierarchy that offers the members an ability to achieve social and economic success that would otherwise be unattainable in either the United States or the hometowns abroad.

Regarding the transnational nature of HTAs, Luin Goldring draws an important distinction between “migrant-led transnationalism” and “state-led transnationalism” (2002, 56-57). Transmigrant organizations, in the form of HTAs, preceded the Mexican government’s efforts to reach out to its diaspora. The subsequent efforts of the Mexican government, embodied in the various matching- grant schemes and the overt promotion of HTAs and their incorporation into federations, was a response by the state to migrant-led transnationalism.

2. For more on the evolution of a conceptual framework for transnationalism, see Guarnizo (2003, 3-6).

Some scholars have also sought to provide a conceptual definition of HTAs that not only theorizes them in a broader context but also describes what they do. Rafael Alarcón (2000, 3), for example, defines an HTA as an organization formed by migrants from the same locality with the purpose of transferring money and resources to their community of origin. Most scholars also agree that members come primarily from rural backgrounds, and the leaders are generally male, first-generation migrants (Escalera-Rabadán 2004). Generally, HTAs are non-sectarian, voluntary organizations that depend entirely on donations (Leiken 2000, 16).

Scholars have also address the characteristics of HTAs. Four features stand out: activities, structure, decision making, and endowment (Orozco 2000). First, the activities performed range from charitable aid to the building of recreational or religious facilities (such as arenas for rodeos or shrines to a saint) all the way to projects that address basic or public infrastructure (including building and maintaining schools, waterworks, and electricity or telecommunications networks), and any other area of community urbanization (Goldring 2003, 13). Although these activities may not constitute productive economic projects, they nevertheless help strengthen the local productive base of the community (Moctezuma 2003).

The second characteristic relates to organizational structure. In her analysis of Salvadoran HTAs, Andrade-Eekhoff identified three types of organizational structures in Los Angeles: hierarchic, modified hierarchy, and mutual collaboration (Andrade-Eekhoff 1997). The majority of the organizations are hierarchical, meaning they work with a contact person in the hometown but dictate major decisions from Los Angeles; others work with counterpart organizations in the hometown, such as committees or

representatives of the Catholic Church. Other classifications of HTA organizational structures include informal migrant social networks, formal HTAs with boards of directors, federations of HTAs, and HTA confederations (Escala-Rabadán 2004, 426).³

The third characteristic deals with decision making. Specifically, the associations' decisions defining agendas or activities depend on an array of factors, such as availability of resources, relationship with the hometown, preferences of their members, and organizational structure.

A fourth characteristic deals with the size of their resource endowments. Like many other Latino nonprofit groups, HTAs have a small economic base and are generally able to raise less than US\$20,000 per year (Orozco 2000; see Burgess in this volume). Both HTA events in the United States and project implementation in the hometown rely on volunteers, allowing HTAs to avoid intermediate costs.

When analyzing the economic impact of HTA activity on hometown communities, few scholars have conducted a systematic analysis. However, some argue that HTAs promote development as long as they are designed to generate wealth through investments. They also stress that whether HTAs can be considered an actor in the

3. A federation is an umbrella organization of HTAs representing members from the same home state who now reside in the same region of the host country. A confederation is the umbrella organization for a set of federations representing the same state but operating in different states or regions of the host country. Only one Mexican confederation has existed, the Confederation of Zacatecan Clubs (1997-1999) (Escala-Rabadán 2004, 430).

economic development of their home countries depends on the nature of their projects as well as the partnerships they establish. More recently, scholars and policy practitioners have stressed the importance of evaluating HTA performance in development. Specifically, they have considered if training would be useful to identify better the basic needs of hometowns, improve relations with between HTA counterparts and local governments in the home country, or increase the extent and effectiveness of HTA collaborations with government and development agencies.

Alarcón (2000, 23) argues that sustainable development rarely results from HTA projects, except when infrastructure projects, such as street paving, improve economies by facilitating economic transactions. Infrastructure projects, however, generally do not create permanent jobs. Raúl Delgado Wise and Hector Rodríguez Ramírez (2001, 760-61) believe that investment by migrants holds the greatest potential for promoting productive investment and encouraging local and regional development. However, he notes that these types of projects are still relatively new, and it is too early to say if they are an effective agent of economic development. Most authors would agree that HTAs have made considerable advances in improving the quality of life of the hometowns. Although improved quality of life and development go hand in hand, M. Basilia Valenzuela (2004, 472) stresses that HTAs, in general, have not been able to articulate a coherent development strategy.

<H1>THE MEXICAN HTA EXPERIENCE

Hometown associations established by Mexican migrants are among the more widely studied forms of HTA organization. There are some 600 Mexican HTAs, based in over 30 U.S. cities, representing communities from various Mexican states, and most of

these associations have been in existence for at least 11 years (Orozco 2003b, 6). Their organizational nature is relatively cohesive, with a close-knit membership that follows basic rules of group discussion and decision making. These associations adapt to changing circumstances by either joining other groups, such as federations, or electing new authorities. Mexican HTAs identify community needs and projects in several ways: through liaisons in the hometown, based on the preferences of HTA leaders and members; in response to natural disasters in the hometown; and in partnerships with other institutions. Usually an HTA member visits the community, returns with a list of identified needs, and proposes that the association work on three or four activities while concentrating efforts on one large project. On average, the amount Mexican HTAs raise for a project is less than US\$10,000 (Orozco 2003b, 12). Immigrants directly donate their resources to a project and avoid intermediation costs by having a counterpart in the hometown, usually a relative or other community member, volunteer to oversee the project.

Most HTAs have contacted and collaborated with other institutions. Nearly 80% have approached municipal leaders to discuss their projects, coordinate efforts, and distribute resources (Orozco 2003b, 14). The federal government has inserted itself in the partnerships through a range of formal and informal relationships that culminated with the Three-for-One Program. Half of all Mexican HTAs have participated in the program (Orozco 2003b, 16), which matches donations the clubs make to community development projects in their hometowns with funds from the three levels of the Mexican government (federal, state, and municipal). The government officially implemented this program on a national level in 2002, after hometown associations demanded partnerships in projects

that benefit their communities of origin.⁴ In 2003, the projects connected with the Three-for-One Program totaled US\$36 million, one-quarter of which came from the contributions of Mexican HTAs. Nearly two-thirds of the national total allotment for the program was apportioned to four states: Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán, the source of more than 30% of Mexican migration to the United States (Orozco 2003b, 26).

HTAs are having a direct effect on communities by providing goods and services that benefit collective needs in health, education, and economic infrastructure. The aggregate volume of annual HTA donations to Mexico reached US\$30 million in 2003 (Orozco 2003b, 19-20). Funds are channeled primarily to localities with basic development problems, which are also the places that have high emigration rates precisely because they have historically lacked employment opportunities as well as basic health, education, and housing. In many communities, the donations represent as much as the amount the municipality allocates for public works in a given community. Mexican HTAs donate to localities with populations as small as one thousand people—representing a US\$7 donation per inhabitant. Three-for-One Program contributions average US\$23,000 and on average represent over 20% of the municipal budget allocated for public works (Orozco 2003b, 18).

4. When the program was created on a national level in 2002, it allowed any group of Mexican citizens to apply for government matching funds. The rules of operation changed in 2004 to require that all applications demonstrate having the support of a registered Mexican HTA (see www.sedesol.gob.mx).

<H1> HTAS AT WORK IN ZACATECAS

The previous sections provide an illustration of both the dynamics of HTAs and their relationship to development. This relationship is organic by virtue of the HTAs' focus on key issues that affect social transformation and equity, such as health, education, and public infrastructure. In the analysis of the research on social and economic infrastructure projects funded by the Three-for-One Program in four communities in the municipality of Jerez, Zacatecas (table X.2), we relate macro socioeconomic conditions to individual project dynamics, using the measures we developed: ownership, sustainability, correspondence, and replicability.

Table X.2. Three-for-One Program projects and communities in Jerez, Zacatecas

Type of project	Specific activity	Community	Three-for-One contribution (US\$ as of 2003)	Population
Educational infrastructure	School renovation	San Juan del Centro	68,000	419
Microenterprise	Sewing workshop	Jomulquillo	7,224	305
Public infrastructure	Potable water	Sauz de los Garcia	175,263	138
Business investment	Lamb raising project	El Briseño	19,200	91

Source: SNIM n.d.; SEPLADER 2004.

Jerez is a municipality of 55,000 people, 56 kilometers west of the city of Zacatecas, the state capital (SNIM n.d.). Jerez is representative of areas with high emigration that also have a history of receiving large flows of remittances. The town of Jerez, the municipal seat, is the center for more than 100 communities, ranging in population from fewer than 50 inhabitants (communities that account for nearly one-third of the municipality's population) to more than 2,000 inhabitants. Since 1950, Jerez's population growth rate has steadily slowed, dropping from 2.1 to -0.06% in 2000. Of the

total population, only 36% is economically active, most of the men (82%) (INEGI 2002).

The municipality's major economic activities are agriculture and animal husbandry. More than one-third of the employed population receives a monthly income between one and two minimum salaries (based on a daily minimum wage of 38.30 Mexican pesos, or about US\$3.50) (INEGI 2002). According to the 2000 General Census of Population and Housing, overall annual per capita GDP is equivalent to US\$3,521 (SNIM n.d.). The municipal government calculates that remittances make up 37% of total per capita income (Padilla 2004).

At least 10 HTAs, most of which are associated with the FCZSC, are extremely active in Jerez and its communities (Jiménez interview). Between 1999 and 2003, US\$3.65 million in donations was invested for the implementation of 109 Three-for-One Program projects. Most of these involved public infrastructure, such as street and highway paving (Rodríguez Arroyo, España interviews).

<H2> San Juan del Centro: School Rehabilitation Project

San Juan del Centro is a community of 419 residents, 7 kilometers northwest of the town of Jerez (SNIM n.d.). An important Three-for-One Program project completed there was the rehabilitation of the adjoining primary and secondary schools. This renovation included installing windows, potable water, and bathrooms; extending electricity; replacing the roof; building a basketball court; and creating a computer classroom with 14 computers (Cabrera Torres interview). The school had been in need of repairs for more than a decade, yet the funds to undertake the project became possible only under the Three-for-One Program scheme (Sanchez Murillo interview). It required

an investment of US\$68,000, with 25% being donated by the HTA. The total cost was three times the municipal funds spent on public works for education in 2001 (INEGI 2002).

As occurs with most Three-for-One Program projects, the community of San Juan del Centro elected a project committee, formed by students' parents, who oversaw and coordinated project implementation and completion. Community involvement, and hence, community members' sense of "ownership," continues today through the local school board, which makes decisions about curriculum and the use of school funds. The school's continuing dependence on regular HTA donations tempers the sense of ownership resulting from this Three-for-One Program project (Rodriguez Arroyo, Cabrera Torres interviews).

This project is a good example of correspondence with a community's development needs. The school was in need of serious repairs and important improvements, and once the facility's renovations were completed, it offered adult education and computer-literacy classes.

In terms of sustainability, San Juan del Centro's local government body, which oversees public education and pays teacher salaries, maintains the renovated school. The government welfare program, Oportunidades, also provides aid to families to meet education costs, including school uniforms and supplies. Community members also help to sustain the project by paying a small enrollment fee for the computer classes to offset maintenance costs. Additionally, the HTA regularly donates funds for equipment and repairs. These donations, however, are completely voluntary, and there is no guarantee of their quantity or frequency (Fernández interview).

This project demonstrates sound replicability. HTA donations channeled to educational needs are a common practice. Similar school renovation projects can be replicated as part of an approach to regional development. Importantly, the project's implementation was enabled by institutional support, from existing government programs and institutions, such as the welfare program "Oportunidades" and the federal entity that supports education, the Secretaria de Educación y Cultura. Thus, the project could potentially be replicated as part of regional or national development strategies.

<H2> Jomulquillo: Microenterprise Project

Jomulquillo is a community of 305 residents, 8 kilometers from Jerez (SNIM n.d.). Like many other rural communities in Mexico, in Jomulquillo, employment opportunities are a major need. Fertile agricultural land is in short supply, and so the residents often turn to temporary agricultural work in fields owned by neighboring communities (Ibarra Muñoz interview). In 2001, seven women organized themselves into a sewing cooperative after taking sewing classes offered through a Zacatecas state government organization, the Brigada de Educación Rural (Rural Education Brigade, BER), dedicated to educating members of rural communities in self-employment strategies.

During a visit to the hometown, the community's HTA president proposed a Three-for-One Program project to build a workspace for the microenterprise. The seven women formed the project committee to oversee the construction. An investment of US\$7,224, with 25% contributed by the HTA, enabled these women to build that space. Once the space was built, the BER, in addition to having provided training for the women, also donated industrial sewing machines. To help cover start-up costs, the

women also obtained a loan from another state-level government program designed to support women in rural areas. Today, these seven women make collective decisions about using revenue, paying off the loan, and developing business strategies (Ibarra Muñoz interview).

This sewing microenterprise illustrates an HTA project channeling community donations to a wealth- and employment-generating endeavor, by providing the means for basic economic independence for women partners. Their participation in the decision making and management of this small enterprise enhanced their sense of being valued within the community. In 2003, 3% of all Three-for-One Program projects implemented in Zacatecas involved income-generating projects. Managers of federal and state matching-grant programs asserted that they hoped in 2004 to target 30% of program funds toward such income-generating projects (Quesada Hernández, Briceño de la Mora interviews). However, because of the small scale of Jomulquillo's sewing cooperative, both earnings and market potential remain modest. Consequently, the project's actual benefits can be considered more social than economic.

There is a significant correspondence between the community's employment needs and the project. The limited possibilities for productive investment in Jomulquillo demand (or require) creative employment-generating strategies, especially due to low market prices for local crops (beans and corn), small agricultural output, and the lack of land ownership. Although the women earn only 1.2 times the wage for an average workday in agriculture (Ibarra Muñoz interview), this is significant because employment opportunities are particularly scarce for women. On average, in the Jerez municipality,

only 11.6% of women are economically active (INEGI 2002; SNIM n.d.). This project has given these seven women the opportunity to enter the local economy.

In terms of sustainability, the difficulty in increasing the cooperative's revenue is the main obstacle to ensuring a long lifespan for this microenterprise. Because the project is still in its beginning stages, as long as there is an adequate margin of profit to provide input and labor, the sewing workshop will stay in business. Under these conditions, the business represents no added cost for the community: it would become self-sustainable. At present, government support aids in project survival.

Rural areas throughout Mexico have limitations for employment and wealth generation that are similar to those found in Jomulquillo. The replicability of the Jomulquillo project responds to a regional development need. The project's essential inputs are relatively simple: an organized group of individuals with sewing skills, and access to capital to implement the project physically. Institutional support providing resources and opportunities can be found in many rural Mexican communities. The HTA and the Three-for-One Program partnership, the government loan, the BER's equipment donation and the technical support, all of which made this project possible, have similar counterparts in other communities and states. Importantly, although these resources are available elsewhere, the members of communities may not be aware of them. Considerable initiative and organization are necessary on the part of residents who seek to create similar projects. Additionally, lack of access to or awareness of public and private financing is a common obstacle to business development in the region (see Bouquet in this volume).

<H2> Sauz de los García: Potable-Water Project

Sauz de los García is a community of 138 residents, 37 kilometers from Jerez (SNIM n.d.). The building of its basic infrastructure occurred only recently, and none of its main roads is paved. A major Three-for-One Program project was implemented there in 2001 to construct a potable-water system serving the entire community, at an investment cost of US\$175,263, with 25% donated by the HTA.

The potable-water project was the community's and the HTA's first Three-for-One project. One community leader commented that at its onset, local participation was slim, but over time, the project galvanized broad participation and even enthusiasm for future Three-for-One projects (Berumen interview). The project also enhanced the community's control over its own well-being. For 25 years, there had been persistent efforts to bring potable water into the community. Its water sources were wells dug near the river, and they were susceptible to contamination from agricultural run-off and waste. All previous attempts had failed to locate a viable water source. Only when sufficient funds became available through the community's organization and the contributions of the HTA were the necessary equipment, infrastructure, and geologic testing possible.

This project allocated its resources to a high-priority development area, enabling the community to work toward additional development goals in the future. For example, now that a potable-water system is in place, the community hopes to install a water-irrigation system to improve local agricultural production (Saldivar interview).

Another successful attribute of this project is its level of sustainability. By design, potable-water projects are relatively sustainable because of simple maintenance procedures and the long lifespan of the equipment. The water utility company conducts monthly cleaning and water-quality treatment and testing. As a subsidized service,

domestic water use is affordable. Thus, once a potable-water project is completed, it does not represent an added burden to the community it benefits. The lifespan of a particular project depends on the population size it serves and the quantity of water available, but in the case of Sauz de los García, the project's lifespan is expected to be between 50 and 300 years (Hernández, Sotelo Montelongo interviews).

This potable-water project demonstrates that obstacles to fulfilling basic needs are surmountable. In similar cases where environmental factors impede the realization of a project, access to financial resources is key. The contribution of the HTA, matched with government funds under the Three-for-One Program, was the prime enabling factor in Sauz de los García. Some comparable matching programs exist in other parts of Latin America (Orozco 2003a, 2004a, 2004b).

<H2>El Briseño: Lamb-Producing Project

El Briseño is a community of 91 residents, 22 kilometers from Jerez (SNIM n.d.). In 2002, nine residents of El Briseño and other nearby communities organized themselves into a cooperative to raise lambs for the market. They received assistance from Raíces Zacatecanas, a California based HTA to participate under the Three-for-One program. They acquired 200 sheep with an investment of \$4,800 from the HTA and each of the three levels of government, for a total of US\$19,200. Implementation involved additional financial support from the federal government program, the Secretaría de Agricultura, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca, y Alimentación (Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries, and Alimentation Secretariat, SAGARPA), which aids agricultural development under the Alianza para el Campo program. This support helped to purchase corrals and feed under a 50/50 cost-sharing scheme. To increase the herd, each of the business partners also took

out a loan for US\$3,200 from a state government program. A community leader who lives in Jerez and works for the BER was instrumental in connecting the community to the government through the office's resources. Under his direction, the BER trained the business partners in sheep breeding and lamb production and guided them through the legal aspects of applying for the loans for the project (Agire, Escamilla interviews).

Like the sewing cooperative in Jomulquillo, El Briseño's lamb-production project is an example of an employment- and income-generating strategy that enhances a sense of community ownership. This project has the added feature of yielding a greater profit margin. In broader development terms, its success can highlight viable future opportunities for channeling migrant remittances and HTA-state partnerships to other wealth-generating projects.

In terms of sustainability, the lamb-production project does not depend on the Three-for-One Program for survival. In this way, the business partners have greater control. They meet regularly to discuss business strategies and to solve problems. Business revenue is used at their collective discretion. One key factor affecting ownership is the business partnership with the BER government worker. In some ways, the group is dependent on this individual's leadership and government connections.

This project demonstrates recognition of community needs and market realities. The low profitability of conventional agricultural goods creates incentives to experiment with alternative production schemes. In contrast to the high price volatility of many agricultural products, the domestic market price for lamb in Mexico has been stable for the last 20 years. The project also takes advantage of existing economic infrastructure, namely by using an efficient sprinkler technology obtained by the community in 2000

under a cost-sharing plan with a Zacatecas state government agricultural development program. This irrigation system tolerates heavy use that is necessary to produce sufficient feed for the lambs without being incredibly costly (Agire, Escamilla interviews). Other indicators of correspondence include the collaboration of various actors, signifying relevance in terms of shared development goals.

Revenues from the enterprise have thus far proven sufficient to sustain the project. They cover transportation costs, loan payments, and feed costs. The accumulating profits provide capital for expansion, which the business has already experienced. During its first year, the original 200 head of livestock grew to 1,000. The business partners calculate that 250 lambs per partner, or a total of 2,000 lambs, is a sustainable population, a level they aim to reach within two years (Agire, Escamilla interviews).

The project is highly replicable because, with the proper care, lambs can be raised in a variety of environments. Additionally, although the inability to attract private and public investment continues to be a recurring problem for the region, government agencies promoting agricultural development, training, and loans are available to communities throughout Mexico. An overall lack of mechanized infrastructure for agricultural production, however, is a potential obstacle in implementing comparable projects elsewhere.

<H1> COMPARING DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS ACROSS HTA PROJECTS

Based on the four criteria of ownership, correspondence, sustainability, and replicability, these projects are relative success stories. However, each has distinctive

strengths and weaknesses. Here we compare the projects together, quantifying their development effects according to each criterion.

<H2>Ownership

The Three-for-One Program in Zacatecas facilitates community participation. During community assemblies, residents vote on priorities and elect committees to oversee each project. Individual project dynamics, however, affect the degree of participation. For example, because of the technical aspects of the potable-water project, residents contributed little to project planning. A project that involves self-organization, on the other hand, such as a microenterprise or business partnership, calls for more engagement by individuals, thereby contributing to a sense of ownership that is more robust.

Community involvement also varies. Some projects encourage ongoing participation, as was the case with the school renovation, which led to regular meetings of the school board, and also with the lamb producers, who meet regularly. The potable-water project, however, requires little ongoing community involvement. Community members' involvement in implementing and maintaining projects also establishes continuity. Over time, project committee members frequently work on several projects. An HTA will often appoint a local representative in the hometown as a permanent liaison, who communicates needs and reports on the progress to HTA members in the United States.

Thus, the control of the end products of these four projects has been transferred to the corresponding communities to differing degrees. For example, the women partners in the sewing cooperative have the ultimate responsibility for the success of their

microenterprise. In contrast, San Juan del Centro's school remains somewhat dependent on the donations and preferences of the HTA. The potable-water project's community relies on the water utility for project maintenance. The continual participation of the BER in the lamb-production project also slightly reduces community participation in decision making as well as in the control of the end product.

<H2>Correspondence

These projects demonstrate a high degree of correspondence to local needs, as the communities prioritize them. However, the development targets of the four do not represent needs that are of equal priority. The potable-water project fulfills a fundamental human necessity, and it represents infrastructure that must be in place before it is feasible to pursue additional development goals. By addressing deficiencies in the existing infrastructure, the rehabilitation of the school also tackled a basic development need for the community. Regarding access to jobs, the sewing cooperative serves women, a population that statistically, and traditionally, has had few opportunities for economic inclusion. In contrast to the types of projects that were traditionally popular with HTAs, such as those aimed at town beautification or the building of leisure facilities, the four projects described here generate income, create opportunities for education, or build useful infrastructure, even though the number of direct beneficiaries was, in some cases, few.

All four of the projects benefited from the support of government agencies working in local development. This effort ensured a better correspondence to local needs. To a more extensive degree, the sewing workshop and lamb-production projects received significant support in both training and capital from outside institutions, exceeding the

financial contributions delivered from Three-for-One Program donations. This is illustrative of current efforts to establish wealth-generating projects on the part of Mexican institutions.

<H2>Sustainability

These projects have been implemented only recently, since 2002, and, therefore, they cannot be evaluated in terms of their performance over time. However, certain characteristics are indicative of their level of sustainability. The potable-water project and the renovation of the school are two examples of projects that could enable the attainment of development goals in the future. For example, the school project maximizes the development benefits by offering adult education and computer-literacy classes in the improved facility.

The potable-water project exhibits the highest degree of sustainability, as mechanisms for maintenance are in place and are relatively simple. In the wealth-generating projects, the need to provide ongoing inputs to keep the project viable (in the case of the sewing cooperative, materials and electricity, and in the case of lamb project, feed and transportation) implies added cost for a community. Its ability to meet these costs rests partly on profitability and market conditions. In this sense, the lamb-production project presents less of a burden to the community than the sewing workshop, which has a lower profit margin.

Some of the projects benefit by having long life cycles. For example, both the potable-water and lamb-production projects have long-term viability. In the case of the first, the well will operate for generations and, in the latter case, the sheep herd could reach a size that would make it self-sustaining. The school receives regular support from

the HTA, which will extend the facility's lifespan, but these donations are not formally guaranteed and do not target long-range development goals. The sewing project is a microenterprise activity that has yet to become financially self-sustaining; therefore, it faces greater challenges to survive over time.

<H2>Replicability

The project with the most replicable components is the sewing cooperative, given the microenterprise's low start-up cost and simple inputs. Because it utilized existing infrastructure, most aspects of the school rehabilitation project are also replicable in other communities with existing schools. Additionally, the sheep-raising initiative (or a similar livestock-raising project) would also have replicable components. However, access to capital, business training, and productive infrastructure, such as irrigation systems, would be needed to duplicate the project. Additionally, the institutional environments that make these projects possible exist widely and provide both services and programs aimed at supporting potable-water systems, developing the educational infrastructure, and aiding agriculture and small businesses.

Although these four projects are successful overall, they differ in their performance vis-à-vis the four component indicators. We assessed this variation using a scorecard that we have designed to make the strengths and weaknesses of each project easily visible. The scorecard ranks projects based on a scale of 1 to 5 across each of the criteria, with 5 indicating the highest ranking within a criterion (table X.3).

Table X.3. Scorecard for evaluating a project's potential for enhancing equity

Criteria	School	Micro-enterprise	Potable water	Lamb raising
Ownership				
Participation in decision making;	4	4	3	3
Participation in implementation;	5	5	3	4
Control of project	3	5	4	4
Correspondence				
Project meets basic needs;	4	4	5	3
Needs met are a development priority;	3	3	5	3
Implementation in association or coordination with other institutions	4	5	3	5
Sustainability				
Enables development goals;	4	4	5	4
Does not constitute burden or entail added costs;	4	3	5	4
Long life cycle	3	2	5	4
Replicability				
Resources are easily available in other communities;	4	4	4	3
Institutional environment is available in other communities	4	4	4	4
Total	42	43	46	41

Source: Scorecard developed by the authors.

The scorecard is an example of the type of tool that HTA leaders could use in selecting projects to support. The scorecard's four criteria attempt to convey the critical components that must be present if a project is going to improve the standard of living in these Mexican communities. The project-selection process and ongoing evaluation are critical steps to achieving that end.

<H1>CONCLUSION

Hometown associations formed by Mexican migrants living in the United States are increasingly contributing to development in Mexico. The impact of that development will depend on the extent to which HTAs and local communities share a commitment to invest in high-quality projects. We believe it is important to provide decision-making

tools, such as the scorecard described here, that can help the leadership of HTAs and the residents of communities in Mexico to evaluate the relative development potential of possible projects. Tools to increase the capacity to assess projects based on their development impact may take many forms, but they must include knowledge about the basic needs of the recipient community. Donors are positioned to help develop the tools for strengthening the organizational capacity of HTAs, including the ability to assess and maximize projects in terms of development impacts. Donors must also work to ensure that such tools are made available to HTA leaders and to residents in the communities. Sharing projects among the HTAs, the government, and, especially, the local community promotes inclusion and participation of members of the Mexican diaspora in the pressing development needs of their hometowns.

Although it is important that governments and foundations continue to engage with HTAs, they must maintain realistic expectations about the potential influence of hometown associations. Fewer than 5% of Mexican immigrants who actively send remittances to relatives in their hometowns are HTA members (Orozco 2004a). Yet, hidden within that statistic, there is a bright spot—the possibility for HTA expansion within the rapidly growing Mexican migrant population in the United States. With the proper policies and incentives, the talents and efforts of a wider Mexican community may be brought to bear in strengthening civic activity and development in Mexico. We can anticipate that not only will the membership of HTAs continue to rise, but the number of HTAs working on development projects will also increase. Moreover, with the proper tools, the capacity for HTAs to make effective investments will spread. These higher

quality investments will produce more lasting development opportunities for Mexican hometowns.

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