



Cambridge, MA
Lexington, MA
Hadley, MA
Bethesda, MD
Washington, DC
Chicago, IL
Cairo, Egypt
Johannesburg, South Africa

Abt Associates Inc.
Suite 600
4800 Montgomery Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814-5341

Market Town Strategy for Nebaj and the Greater Ixil Region

Guatemala-CAP Income Generation Activities Project (AGIL)

August 2000

**Contract #
520-C-00-00-00035-00**

Prepared for
United States Agency for
International Development/
Guatemala
1A Calle 7-66
Zona 9
Guatemala 010009

Prepared by
Mike Richards

Market Town Strategy for Nebaj and the Greater Ixil Region



Market Town Strategy for Nebaj and the Greater Ixil Region

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ixil region historically has been isolated from the main economic and political spheres of Guatemala. In the pre-Hispanic era, the Ixil resisted incorporation by the politically stronger K'iche'. Throughout the Colonial Period, and even into the Republican Period, Ixil people successfully managed to resist intrusion or control from state authority. As recent as the 1970s and 1980s, the Ixil also resisted being controlled by guerrilla insurgents and State authority; regrettably, this resistance cost many their lives and disrupted Ixil society for almost two decades. Today, the Ixil are recovering from a prolonged period of conflict, and the scars of war are still present.

With regard to endowment of natural resources, the Karst geological formation throughout most of the area conditions low productivity in agriculture. The Ixil region is climactically diverse, with high mountain ranges that experience periodic frost to tropical lowland regions. What is common to all these ecosystems, however, is a great deal of precipitation and high humidity, and these factors are not propitious for producing high value export crops that brought about economic booms in other highland regions. The lack of a good road to the rest of the nation is an additional factor that has inhibited economic growth.

Nebaj and the Ixil region in general exhibit the characteristics of being an incomplete market system in that there lacks a fluid dynamic of goods and services exchange that normally occurs in interlocking central place market systems. Following market classification schemes advanced by scholars, the region at present can be classified as a combination of a 'bounded, hierarchical network system' and a 'dendritic solar central place system.' A true self-sustaining market system with potential for significant growth must eventually become an 'interlocking central place system.' This optimal type of market is one in which a wide variety of goods and services are exchanged in a rather symmetrical pattern over space where a multitude of communities are tied to a central place of exchange.

Some of the highest illiteracy rates in the country and the worst indicators of health and well-being are found in the Ixil region. The area is characterized as one of extreme poverty by the Guatemalan Government's system of economic classification. The principal 'product' the Ixil region exports is labor, in the form of seasonal migratory wage labor to coffee and sugar cane plantations on the South Coast. During the harvest periods of these crops, thousands of Ixil attempt to supplement their meager incomes. The health risks, the family disruptions, and the risk of being robbed or cheated on labor contracts, oftentimes nets only marginal returns on this income generating source.

In spite of some adverse features, the Ixil region holds potential for generating local income and improving the lives of its inhabitants. Prior to the relatively recent period

of conflict, the area was described as being in better economic standing than it is at present. Notwithstanding the generally poor soils of the region, there are small river valleys interlacing the region where the soil and water conditions are suitable for horticultural activities and animal husbandry. At one point in time, dairy production was a viable activity for many families, and holds a potential for revitalization in the future. Certain fruit trees, such as apples, are known to thrive in the cooler parts of the region; citrus in the lowlands is said to be of good quality, and there are possibilities to reclaim abandoned coffee groves to produce organic coffee beans. There exists potential to capture a specialized tourist niche market, and the textile handicrafts are of superb quality.

The population of the Ixil region is eminently indigenous (90 percent), and many inhabitants, especially women, are monolingual speakers of the Ixil language only. The Ixil people of the three *municipios* of Nebaj, Chajul, and Cotzal represent a relatively homogenous society with many shared features of culture and language. It is important to recognize, nevertheless, that where development cooperation efforts are concerned there exists strong regional, municipal-based identity systems. The people of Chajul and Cotzal point out with a measure of resentment that Nebaj receives the lion's share of assistance programs.

The AGIL team looks to Nebaj and the larger Ixil region as a challenge that requires a "quicksilver" approach, if the metaphor permits. There are many different indigenous activities in the region that can be strengthened by supplying technical assistance and by broadening channels of rural finance, and there exists great potential in linking these activities around a coordinated effort of a market and informational hub. Under USAID-AGEXPRONT-AGIL arrangement, a local affiliate of the Guatemalan Chamber of Commerce was recently inaugurated, and in December 2000 it is expected that the Internet signal will be connected in Nebaj as part of this same initiative. Already, USAID's LearnLink Project is training youth in computer usage and is awaiting the arrival of the broad band receiver internet hookup in December. The AGIL strategy will not concentrate exclusively on the little activities, or for that matter, work solely to strengthen the market and informational hub. What AGIL will do is to work in coordination with USAID and the other SO4 partners in simultaneously bolstering the little activities, while at the same time working to strengthen a core activity that will help unify efforts.

The quicksilver analogy is thus: create the conditions for a viable market and informational hub, and work on small activities that eventually will coalesce around the core, but not coerce those activities into prematurely binding themselves to a market structure and informational activities—that process will occur naturally and in a sustainable fashion. The manner in which Ixil society historically has existed bears out the fact that centripetal and centrifugal tendencies have been in operation continually, and these characterize the nature of Ixil society to this day. Ixil people come together for certain activities, yet find it necessary to disperse for others. The promotion of income generation activities in the region similarly must account for these innate patterns of coalescence and splintering, which are the quicksilver nature of Ixil society.

The lack of good access to the area has been a major inhibitor of agricultural development. Improvement of the primary access road will eventually occur. AGIL, as a partner in the larger SO4 of Income Generation and Food Security for Rural

Households, places firm stake in enhancing marketing and communication channels as the hub from which many productive activities can radiate. The Ixil people should be equipped with the know-how of the new informational age, including the use of the Internet. This will prepare them for the arrival of the improved road and all that a road portends, and will assist them in opening up new markets and opportunities. Strategic alliances with other organizations, along with other USAID Strategic Objectives, will further the potential direct and spin-off effects of technology efforts currently underway in the region. What the Ixil possess most in terms of capital is they themselves as people, a people endowed with a sense of survivorship, resiliency, and an ability to adapt.

Expanding channels of rural finance is, of course, a critical component of the AGIL strategy. Through supporting the development of viable intermediation systems, increased credit will be made available to small and micro businesses in rural and urban areas of the Ixil region. BANRURAL is the driving financial engine in the region, and the mechanism of the USAID financed trust fund permits speedy access by small organizations, once, of course, they are brought to level of efficient capacity through technical assistance inputs and expansion of strategic alliances.

The rural finance strategy of AGIL is a twofold one: first, improve the financial and administrative controls of selected organizations in Nebaj and the larger Ixil region to elevate management efficiency, and second, assist small organizations to access BANRURAL Trust Funds. Additionally, AGIL will reinforce the institutional strengthening of small organizations in the Ixil region through the promotion of strategic alliances with organizations elsewhere. These alliances will facilitate the adoption of a standardized Charter of Accounts and the creation of a regional credit bureau.

Through a partnership alliance that AGIL is strengthening with the Ministry of Agriculture and other USAID programs, and through cooperation with other NGOs, it is expected that a critical mass of production-based activity will move Nebaj in the direction of becoming a true central place market within a larger regional interlocking system. Once the production of agricultural goods gets to the point of generating significant income in the region, the movement of secondary goods and the offer of, and demand for services will help position the Ixil population and region into the configuration of a true market system.

INTRODUCTION

The three *municipios* of Sta. María Nebaj, San Gaspar Chajul, and San Juan Cotzal form what some people refer to as the Ixil Triangle. What these *municipios* have in common is that they share a common history and are inhabited by people who form a unique ethnic group and speak the common Mayan language of Ixil. From the early Colonial Period, the Ixil region was regarded by Spanish administrators and clergy alike as a difficult one to control because the people failed to remain in the organized communities patterned after European towns. History repeatedly has borne out the ‘centrifugal’ tendencies of people wanting to live in dispersed settlements outside of the town centers, not for reasons so much of simple predilection, but because soil conditions do not permit intensive or even moderately productive traditional agriculture. Simply put, the ecological bases for sustaining central place market centers have not been present under traditional technologies.

Prior to the conflict in the region that began roughly 25 years ago, the Ixil remain living largely in dispersed settlements. The towns of Nebaj, Chajul, and Cotzal functioned as market and ceremonial centers and were the seats of the resident ‘Ladino,’ or non-indigenous population. The period of conflict began with the guerrilla movement in the early 1970s. The brutal repression of the civilian population residing in the dozens of settlements outside the principal towns by the Army, in its relentless pursuit of insurgents is an infamous chapter in recent Guatemalan history. Part of the counterinsurgency tactics exercised by the Army was to control the Ixil population through nucleating the population outside the principal town into “model villages” or through bringing the refugees into the resettlement centers on the fringes of Nebaj, Chajul, and Cotzal themselves.

In the post-war period, a number of assistance measures were directed toward the Ixil population. These efforts came from the Guatemalan Government, NGOs, and from the international donor community. The magnitude of the effort, and the funds invested in these efforts, have been considerable indeed; yet, for all this it does not appear that any sustainable development effort has taken hold in the region. Nebaj, the *municipio* closer to the cosmopolitan sphere of the nation, is still a major exporter of migratory labor to Guatemala’s plantation sector on the South Coast. In Chajul, at the time of this writing, there are communities that are undergoing famine due to crop failure (USAID is mounting a disaster relief effort to abet that situation).

Nebaj is one of the priority *municipios* in USAID’s strategic objective No. 4: **Increased Household Income and Food Security**. As part of the SO4 partnership, AGIL is focusing on Nebaj and the larger Ixil region with its package of technical assistance for producer groups and increased channels of rural finance. This document outlines the AGIL strategy, both in terms of immediate actions AGIL can undertake as a project with its available resources, and as a partner within the larger team composed of organizations that have significantly greater resources than does the AGIL Project alone. Nebaj is a focal point of AGIL activities, but not an exclusive one within the wider Ixil context. AGIL currently has activities underway in Chajul and Cotzal, but these are small in scope, and will probably remain that way. The *municipio* of Nebaj will be the primary focus of the AGIL strategy and for this reason, the discussion in this document is weighted therein, with some mention made to the other two *municipios*. This document concludes with a discussion of

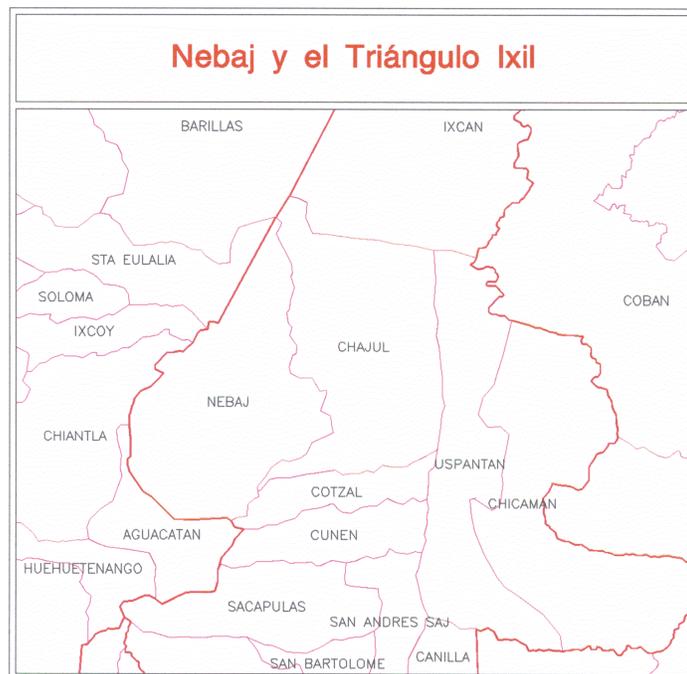
recommendations, constraints, and gaps that need to be filled for a strategic approach to Nebaj and the Ixil region, both in terms of the context of the AGIL project in particular, and for the larger SO4 partnership.

SETTING AND BACKGROUND

Geography and Climate

As one drives northward to the Ixil region from Sacapulas or Cunén, Nebaj is the first of the three major towns to be encountered. The driving time from Sacapulas is approximately one hour, and from Sta. Cruz del Quiché, two hours. To get to either Chajul or Cotzal from Nebaj requires an additional half hour's driving time. The municipal boundaries of Nebaj to the north are Barrillas and Chajul. Moving in clockwise fashion, Cotzal borders on the southeast, and Aguacatán borders on the south and the west. San Juan Ixcoy and Sta. Eulalia also border on the west. See Map 1 for the locations of Nebaj, Chajul, and Cotzal.

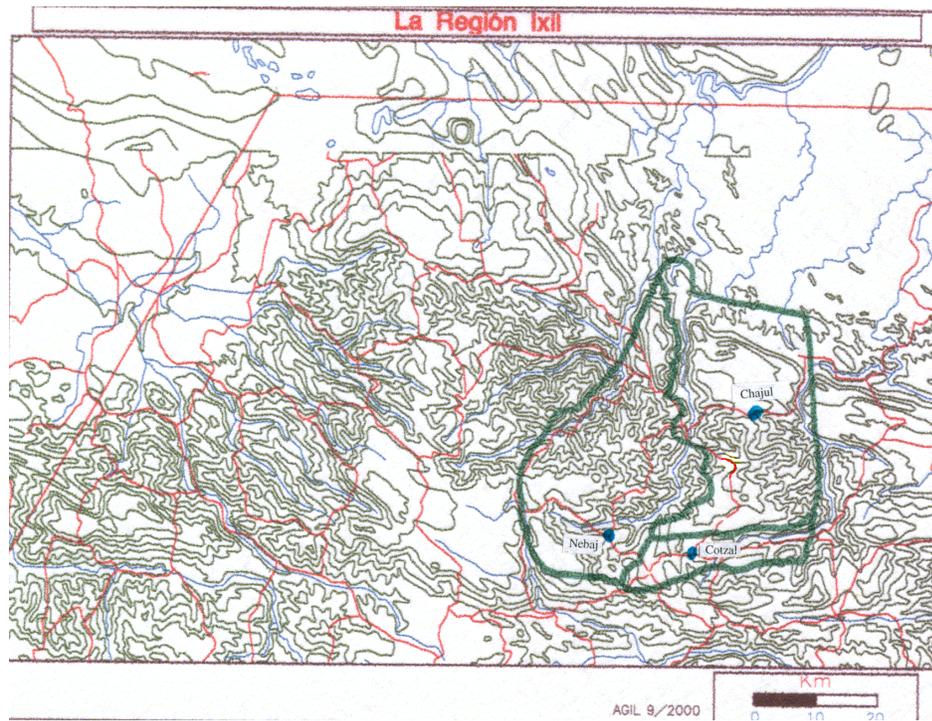
Map 1
Nebaj and the Ixil Region



Nebaj's land area covers 607 kms². Chajul is the largest of the three Ixil *municipios*, with 722,3 kms² while Cotzal is the smallest, with 234.2 kms². The 1,563 kms² of the entire Ixil-populated surface area represents almost 20 percent of the total land area of the department of Quiché. The broken topography of the region is largely due to the fact that the area lies on the eastern part of the Cuchumatán massif. Rainfall is abundant: Nebaj averages 1.9 meters annually, and parts of Chajul have over 4.5. The mean annual humidity is 77 percent. There is an abundance of small and medium-sized riveres in the area. Map 2 shows the topographical features, rivers,

and for reference, roads, and the three principal town centers of Nebaj, Chajul, and Cotzal.

Map 2
Topography, Rivers, and Roads of the Ixil Region
Greater Cuchumatán Massif

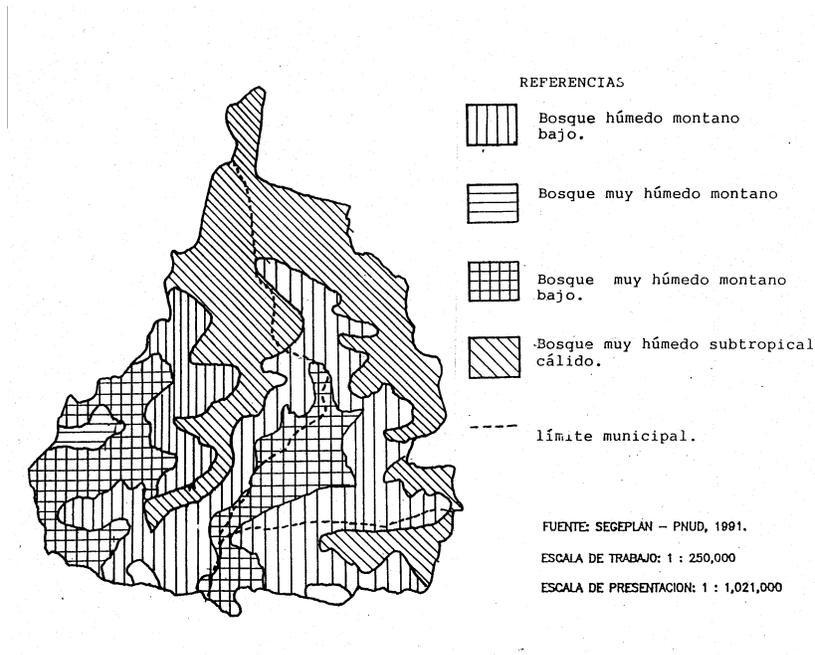


Note:

Topography:	black lines
Rivers:	blue lines
Roads:	red lines
Ixil Region:	thick green line

There is great climactic and natural resource diversity in the region, varying from the cool mountainous regions of the Sierra Chamá to the south to the hot, humid lowlands that border on the Ixcán to the north. Map 3 shows the distribution of the various forest classifications in the region.

Map 3
Forest Classification of Ixil Region

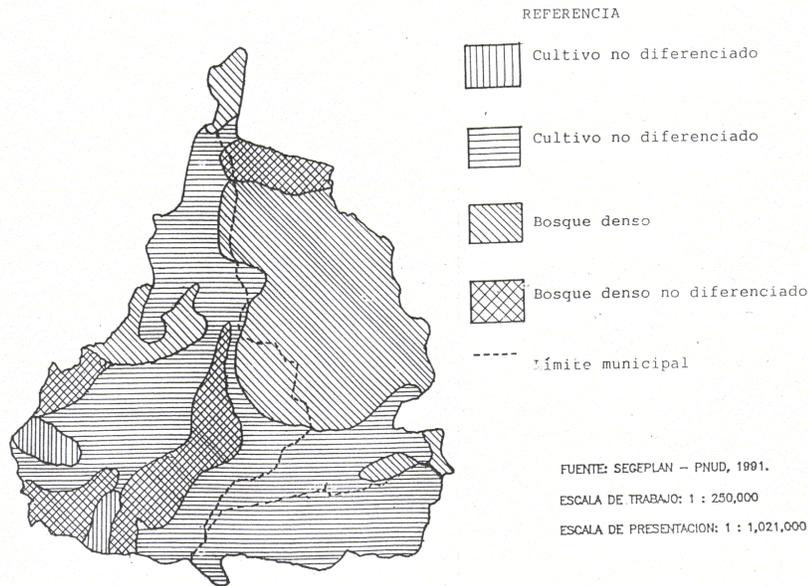


Source: SEGEPLAN-PNUD 1991 (In FINDAESE 1992)

Because of human settlement patterns, the area under true forest cover is significantly less than that shown in Map 3. Map 4 following shows the spatial configuration of forest cover in relation to area under permanent or semi-permanent cultivation. The large land area in the upper right zone on the map, mostly corresponding to Chajul's territorial limits, is the B'isis Kab'a' forest reserve.

Map 4

Map of Life Zones



Source: SEGEPLAN-PNUD 1991 (In FINDERSE 1992)

Under the generally thin topsoil cover of the Ixil region lies a limestone bed. This geological bedrock is of the type known as Karst, and does not permit sustained intensive agriculture. This limestone-based formations is found at almost all the elevations, and, as in the case of Alta Verapaz and Petén, make for a fragile ecosystem because of the susceptibility to erosion when the vegetation cover is slight (FINDERSE 1992: 15). There are, however, small river valley areas where the topsoil layers are appreciably deeper and which would allow for intensive farming regimes.

Early History

The pre-Conquest settlement pattern of the Ixil region was characteristically a dispersed one, with some ceremonial-administrative-market centers, as evidenced in the archaeological record (Smith and Kidder 1950). Ethnohistorical research suggests that the region and its people remained relatively isolated and marginal to the larger and more powerful chiefdoms that lay to the south, even in the late Postclassic Period when the powerful K'iche' kingdom was in an expansion phase (Fox 1978:91-100). Owing to the insular nature of the region, the Ixil region remained outside Spanish control for several years following the Spanish invasion of the Mesoamerican region. The area might have remained outside Spanish dominion for a considerably longer period had not Francisco de Castellano, one of Pedro de Alvarado's lieutenants, encountered the Ixil on his way to conquer the Uspanteks. The main Ixil center of Nab'a (Nebaj) was sacked just prior to the taking of Uspantan (Lincoln 1945:45).

In 1549 the Ixil population was ordered “reduced” into the centers of Nebaj, Chajul, Cotzal, and Iloom. Dominican missionaries headquartered in Sacapulas to the south, were entrusted with the pacification, evangelization, and control of the Ixil people (Colby and van den Berghe 1977: 80). To the Spaniards, Indians who remained outside the newly created town centers were conceived of as barbarians, rebels, and vagabonds (Fuentes y Guzmán 1933:57-59). Missionaries endeavored to gather up these people and congregate them in the town centers, but the efforts were largely in vain, as Ixil people continually took flight and sought refuge in the mountains. A major revolt by the Ixil occurred in 1799 (Colby and van den Berghe 1977:80).

Due to the formidable geographic barriers, the Ixil region remained outside the Spanish sphere of influence throughout the remainder of the Colonial Period. Lincoln writes that there were neither “trapiches” (small sugar processing plants) nor haciendas up until at least the late seventeenth century, implying that there were no Ladinos in the region for the duration of Spanish colonial administration (1945:7).

During the Republican Period, the Ixil were left much to their own, until the late 18th Century, when the Barrios Liberal regime encouraged Ladinos to move into the towns and organize labor for the emerging coffee boom. Although Ladinos never constituted more than five percent of the population in the Ixil region, as the wielders of power they exerted considerable influence over economic, religious, and social life (Lincoln 1945:232). The mainstay of power came through managing the Indian labor supply to plantations growing export crops along the South Coast of Guatemala. Coffee started the seasonal migratory labor cycle for the Ixil that has become a way of life, to this day. In the 1950s, the advent of cotton and sugar production in the plantation zone of the South Coast intensified the migratory labor cycle. Although mechanisms of debt peonage were outlawed in the 1940’s, *de facto* forms of debt bondage are still used at present to guarantee indigenous labor for harvesting commercial export crops.

Recent History and Conflict in the Region

The Ixil region was one of the most severely affected in Guatemala during the recent period of armed conflict. The Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) was successful in organizing Ixil combatants by the mid-1970s. By late 1979, the EGP controlled a considerable amount of territory in Quiché, and in the Ixil region the guerrilla insurgents were able to operate quite freely (Richards 1985). The Guatemalan Army had difficulty sending troops and supplies into the area because the guerrillas carried out devastating ambushes against convoys moving along a precipitous and winding road from Sacapulas.

Beginning in 1981, the Army increased its counterinsurgency measures by attacking civilian members of the Ixil population. Brutal shock tactics, including the indiscriminate massacre of villagers, drove the guerrillas and civilians farther into the hills. The organization of civil defense units (PACs), and the construction of “model villages” under the Ríos Montt and Mejía Víctores regimes served to consolidate Army control of the region. Sweeps through the mountains by the civil patrol units

netted dozens of people at a time, and these people were then forcibly brought into the newly created town centers, the model villages (Flynn 1984:83-84).

Present-Day Population

The 1994 population of the Ixil region totaled 67,243 inhabitants, of which slightly more than half was accounted for by the *municipio* of Nebaj. Table 1 below shows the populational distribution in the three communities.

Table 1
Population Distribution of the Three Ixil *Municipios*

Municipio	Population	%
Sta. María Nebaj	33,855	50.4
San Gaspar Chajul	19,251	25.6
San Juan Cotzal	14,137	21.0
TOTAL	67,243	100.0

As of 1992, there were a total of 109 defined settlements in the Ixil region, including the three main town centers. Interestingly enough, with the easing of tensions in the region and the rollback of Guatemalan Army

After restitution to a civilian government for Guatemala came in 1986, a substantial relief and reconstruction effort in the Ixil region took place. The European Economic Community, was a principal international partner with the Guatemalan Government in restoring some semblance of economy in the region. A number of non-government organizations with funding from the United States and other countries have been involved in the Ixil region in the effort to get the inhabitants into a sustainable economic platform again. In Nebaj alone, the NEXUS project identified a number of development committees in operation. Just to give an idea of the magnitude of the numbers, there are at present 55 'territorial' committees, 24 functional development committees, and nine 'traditional' committees, most of which are working with some governmental agency, donor organization, or NGO.

Language, Culture, and Wellbeing

The Ixil language, a branch of the Mam Mayan language family (which includes Awakateko and Tektiteko), is mutually intelligible among the speakers of the three main Ixil dialect varieties; speakers from each of the three *municipios*, however, say that their dialect variant is sufficiently distinct from the other two to warrant producing written documents specific to each. Although the Ixil language, by far, is the predominant language spoken, about 20 percent of the population in the Ixil Triangle report being native speakers of Spanish. There are considerable numbers of K'iche' speakers located principally in the southern portions of the region. Cotzal has the greatest proportion of these K'iche' speakers (21 percent), followed by Chajul (18 percent) and Nebaj (14 percent). Speakers of some of the other Mayan languages (Kaqchikel, Q'eqchi' are present, but are few in number. In Chajul, there is a sizeable population of Q'anjob'al speakers (765), and these reside in resettlement communities.

In terms of ethnic composition, the 1994 National Census determined that 90.9 percent of the population was indigenous. Cotzal has the greatest proportion of indigenous peoples, with 95 percent; Chajul has 89.5 percent indigenous, and Nebaj 90.5 percent. The Ixil region remains largely a rural population, with over 75 percent of its inhabitants residing outside the three town centers of Nebaj, Chajul, and Cotzal.

In the Income and Wellbeing Survey (EBF), carried out at the end of 1999 by the Universidad del Valle and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística under USAID contract, Nebaj demonstrated some unique characteristics in relation to the other 11 *municipios* investigated in the survey¹. For example, it is the *municipio* with the largest proportion of people who embrace Protestant faiths, an outgrowth probably of the peculiar religious factors that were played out during the years of civil conflict. Almost 60 percent of the household heads are Protestant (versus 33.3 percent for the general sample of the twelve *municipios*).

The literacy rate for heads of households in Nebaj (38 percent) is lower than the average for the general sample (54 percent). Similarly, attendance in school at

¹ A comparative analysis of Nebaj with 11 other *municipios* is being carried out, soon to be released as an AGIL document. Data derive from the UVG-INE survey data. For general information, see UVG-INE 2000.

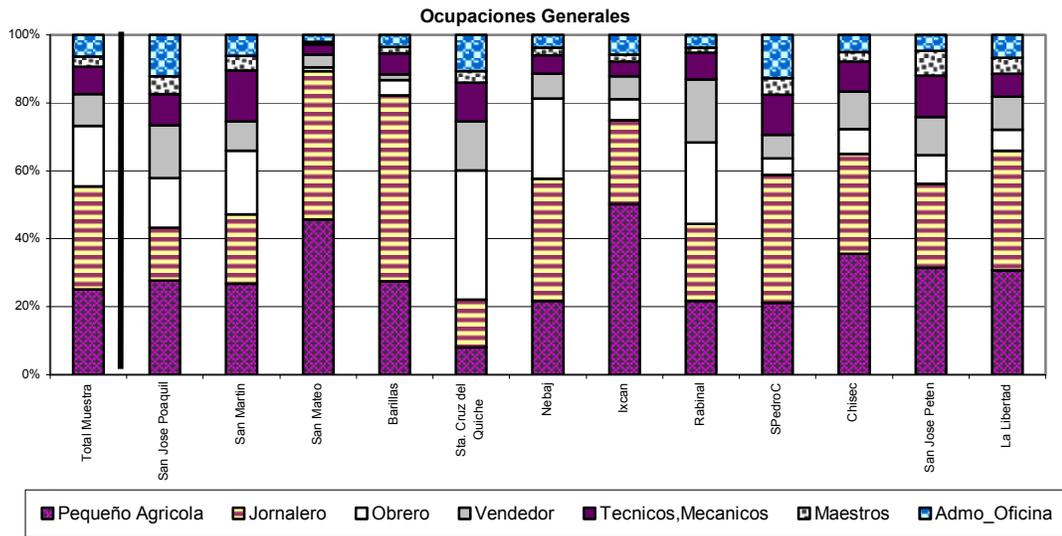
some point in life is lowest for households head in Nebaj than in the other communities—over 72 percent have never had any schooling, versus a 55 percent rate for the other towns. This phenomenon may be explained by the flight from formal settlements people took when violence engulfed the region. In the Ixil region, many thousands of families remained living in the mountains for years resisting Army efforts to nucleate the population into ‘model villages,’ and probably for that reason, many household heads today were deprived of a childhood school experience. For the current population of school age children (aged seven to 14 years), the pattern is not quite as bleak, the attendance factor for Nebaj is slightly higher than average (81.3 percent versus 73.6 percent). A breakout by gender shows that Nebaj has a highly skewed distribution of girl’s participation in school. While only 17 percent of school age boys do not attend school, the percentage for girls is a substantial 28 percent (contrasted to the general sample, where 23 percent of boys and 29 percent of girls were found to be non-attendees).

With regard to health care seeking behavior, Nebaj household heads show the least propensity to have sought the assistance of any type of health care (27 percent sought no health care for medical problems experienced in the past year, versus only 12 percent of families in the general sample). A key indicator in house construction material is whether the floor is dirt or uses some additional material, such as cement or tile. This indicator is useful, not only for appraising socioeconomic wellbeing, but in determining health risks as well. Nebaj has one of the higher indices of dirt floors among the 12 *municipios* in the sample—92 percent, as opposed to 77 percent for the general sample.

Traditional hearths for cooking with firewood also are most prominent in Nebaj. Whereas the percentage of usage of traditional firewood hearths for the general sample is 37 percent, for Nebaj it is 82 percent. It need be mentioned that most of these traditional hearths are located right in the home, creating an interior environment of smoke-filled air. Sanitary facilities, either latrines or flush toilets, are fairly common in Nebaj; the rate of households with no sanitary facilities for Nebaj (18 percent) is lower than the that of the general sample (22 percent). Provision of potable water (66 percent of households) is also better than for the general sample (56 percent).

The economy of Nebaj, and for that matter, the larger Ixil region, is one characterized by traditional corn and bean *milpa* agriculture. However, the breakout of distribution of occupations is not disimilar from that of the general sample, as can be seen in Graph 1 following.

Graph 1
Occupational Differences in Twelve *Municipios*



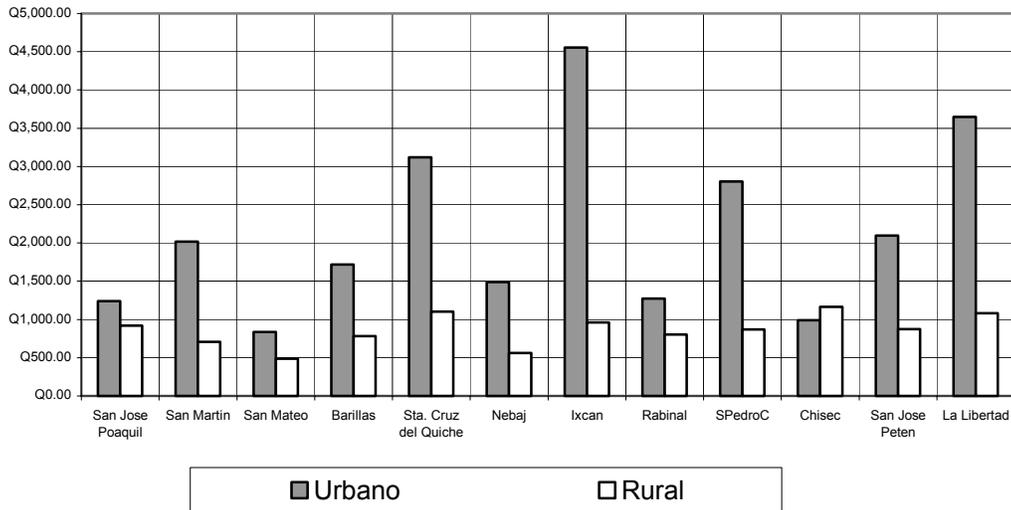
EBF Survey Data 1999

It need be noted that the data include all household members over ten years of age who are working, and not exclusively household heads. For this reason, the category of *jornalero* is rather prominent, as these are generally younger household dependents who sell their wage labor in the agricultural sector, usually within the confines of the community, but oftentimes on distant plantations that produce coffee, sugar, or other crops grown for export. In an interview with the current Mayor of Nebaj, he stressed that over ten thousand *Nebajenses* are involved in the seasonal migratory wage labor market.

Household income in Nebaj is considerably below the general sample mean. In the following graph, the average income for this *municipio* (726 Quetzales for October 1999) is well below that of the general sample average (1,133 Quetzales). The comparison with the other *municipios* of the sample can be seen in the graph below.

Graph 2

Promedio de Ingreso Familiar Por Municipio



EBF Survey Data 1999

Potential Productive Activities

At present there are signs of renewed economic activity in Nebaj. The town of Nebaj itself especially is experiencing a notable construction boom. There now are five hotels that are usually filled to capacity during weekdays with personnel from some development assistance programs. Chajul has one *pensión*, while Cotzal has none.

In terms of productive activities, there are in Nebaj alone 11 small irrigation systems operating in outlying communities. These are under-utilized, however, since horticultural production is down from where it was five years ago. In the period of the mid-90's there were number of farmers who produced broccoli for the ALCOSA firm, but when the broccoli export market in Guatemala plummeted, due to changes in agricultural policies and competition from other overseas markets, the broccoli producers in Nebaj similarly were affected, and at present, very little of what locals perceived as a promising crop is produced. Other horticultural products include cabbage, carrots, fava beans, onions, tomato, garlic, and chiles, and all these are produced for the local or regional markets on a small scale by individual households.

A small group of farmers in the Río Azul *aldea* of Nebaj are experimenting with new varieties of potato and have a guaranteed buyer, Sabritas, the Mexican potato chip company. The scale is small (no more than 50 *cuerdas* of land). Dairy production holds a good deal of promise. Dairy was once a viable industry in the region, and the most notable center of production is in the town of Acul, within the *municipio* of Nebaj. The Azzari family manufactures cheese that is sold regionally and has a marketing outlet in Guatemala City. Members of the Azzari family show interest in increasing cheese production, but they are at full capacity with the herd of cows they own. They are unwilling to purchase milk from other producers in the region because they would have no control over the quality of the milk. What needs to be done is to investigate the possibility of producing other types of finished milk

products with the other milk producers, probably the more simpler 'farm' cheeses, such as "queso fresco," "queso de capas," etc. It is precisely in the same Acul valley are where most of the other dairy produces are located, so mounting a program in dairy improvement would be reasonably centralized.

There is significant potential for improving coffee production in the Ixil region. Already, the Asociación Chajulense (an offshoot of the Catholic Parish in Chajul) is successfully producing and marketing organic coffee. It is estimated that there are over 10,000 small producers of coffee in the Ixil region; of these, approximately 42 percent are located in Chajul, 33 percent in Nebaj, and 25 percent in Cotzal. During the period of conflict most of the coffee groves in the Ixil were abandoned. As a result of this, there is an opportunity to reclaim and improve these groves, and do so under an organic farming regimen since they have not received chemical applications for well over three years, the required period for organic certification.

Textiles produced in Nebaj have a fairly good market outlet as tourist items in Guatemala. In fact, many of the textiles are sold by Ixils themselves, who live in other communities—Ixils who fled the violence and who assumed residence in other communities in Guatemala, and for various reasons have chosen to remain. It is estimated in the Ixil region that there are over 3,000 producers of mostly backstrap weavings with interwoven designs. The European Union's Proyecto Quiché is experimenting with new designs in the town of Tzalbal. The waving done by this group is on double-wide footlooms, allowing for the production of bedspreads, a specialty product that has significant appeal in international markets. This operation shows great promise.

Medicinal plants are being produced by an organization known as APAPTIX (Asociación de Promotores Pecuarios del Triángulo Ixil). AGIL is exploring the possibilities of processing plant oil extracts for the naturopath specialty market. Additionally, there are some small farmers that have experimented with *tillantsia* for the ornamental plant export market.

Unlike the case of the Q'anjob'al, who during the period of violence had a significant proportion of its population assuming residence in California and Florida, and who remain there to this day sending significant amounts of remittance cash back, the Ixil lack this cash resource. For many reasons, most of the Ixil who fled the guerrillas and the Army, remained hiding in the mountains, forming the so-called Communities of People in Resistance (CPR). There are some Ixil who assumed residence in Guatemala City and other places. The 1994 National Census determined that there were over 700 speakers of Ixil (self-definition) outside of the Ixil region.

The raising of sheep in the northwestern portion of Nebaj holds promise. Already there are a number of families raising sheep in the areas of Salqui and Palob, but the genetic pool is small and poor. The flocks could be improved through artificial insemination, better grazing practices, and disease prevention measures.

CONSTRAINTS, PROBLEMS, AND OPPORTUNITIES,

Income generating activities in the Ixil area are largely circumscribed by lack of infrastructure, most importantly, the main access road that remains in poor condition and is the only link to the outside. The road from Nebaj to Sacapulas is a sinewy and narrow dirt road with poor drainage. During the rainy season, mudslides frequently interrupt the passage of traffic. Roads within the Ixil region are of variable quality, but the connecting road from Nebaj to Chajul and Cotzal is in surprisingly good state, at least better than that which connects the entire region with Quiché and the rest of the country. In terms of transport for agricultural products, the distance and time factor, as well as the damage fruit and vegetables may undergo from being transported along the rutted road principal road to the outside, diminish the competitive margin Nebaj might have stemming from other factors. It is heard that the Guatemalan Government is stepping up the priority this road should take in relation to other road projects.

The fact that the Ixil population is circumscribed regionally with only a poor road linking it to the outside world, combined with the fact that there are relatively few productive activities overall, resulting in low income averages for families inhabiting the region, makes for an incomplete market system. Nebaj exhibits the characteristics of being a combination of a 'bounded, hierarchical network system' and a 'dendritic solar central place system,' following classifications made by Smith and others (see Smith 1976:6). A true self-sustaining market system with potential for significant growth must eventually become an 'interlocking central place system.' This optimal type of market is one in which a wide variety of goods and services are exchanged in a rather symmetrical pattern over space where a multitude of communities are tied to a central place of exchange. The exchange of these goods and services assumes that the region is agriculturally diverse and that cottage industry produces an array of different products. For a discussion of market system types, see Appendix I.

The improvement of the main road leading to and from Nebaj to Sacapulas to the south would help bring about the integration of production activities into a true market system, but generalized growth in the area based on rapid growth in the agricultural sector is what would turn the region into an integrated system of exchange of a variety of agricultural and non-agricultural products and services.

The poor soils described earlier pose a detriment to agricultural intensification, although there is an appreciable land area in those small river valleys that interlace the Ixil region, and these are potential production zones for non-traditional export crops. Coffee, especially organically grown coffee, can be developed in conjunction with other specialty products, such as honey

In the Ixil region there exists significant tourist potential. The type of tourism that would be appropriate to develop is more akin to what is commonly known as "eco-

tourism,” and is generally aimed at attracting trekkers more than big spenders. The type of tourist who spends an appreciable amount of money simply is not going to go to the Ixil region, at least not in the near future. The idea, then, is to continue concentrating on attracting the hardier type of tourist and to promote as an attraction for tourists the natural beauty of the region, the richness of the people’s cultural heritage, and the historical memory of the recent period of conflict. This latter focus must be done in good taste and in a reverent manner, given the prominence on local inhabitants’ minds the conflict still exerts. However, the Guatemalan Peace Accords call for actions to remember and commemorate the harsh experience of the recent war, as a measure to stem a return to militarism in the country. Tourism for Guatemalans, Mexicans, and Central Americans, not just North Americans, Europeans, and Japanese, can be encouraged.

The human resource dimension of the Ixil people is the region’s principal resource. The Ixil people are survivors, in every sense. They also are hard-working, and they have a strong cultural matrix that reinforces a sense of identity that can bring large payoffs if the right configuration of opportunities were to be aligned. It has been said, however, that over a decade of developmental aid efforts in the region have created a climate of dependency and a clientage relationship with foreign NGOs. Granted, the period of assistance in the region has been a lengthy one, and there have been cases of lassitude and non-compliance with the wishes of development agencies, Guatemalan or foreign, the Ixil should not be prejudged on hasty notions. What so many developmental interventions have probably accomplished is to generate confusion and expectations in terms of roles and responsibilities on the part of the Ixil. Development under these circumstances is not an easy task, but certainly not an impossible one, and a good measure of perception and cultural sensibility can be key ingredients for new initiatives in the region.

AGIL STRATEGY

AGIL, by no means, possesses an instant success formula for developmental initiatives in the Ixil region. What Nebaj and the greater Ixil region has in terms of productive potential does not lie in any single sector. There is no extensive land area to make non-traditional export crops work on a large scale, or even for that matter, a medium scale, in comparison with the central highland areas of Guatemala. Neither is there any foreseeable miraculous expansion of artisanry and crafts that will make cottage industry the economic engine of Ixil households.

What there is, however, is a bit of a lot of things, and each is of a qualitative level that makes it attractive to work on its expansion. The AGIL team looks to Nebaj and the larger Ixil region as a challenge that requires a “quicksilver” approach, if the metaphor permits. There are many different existing indigenous activities in the region that can be strengthened by supplying technical assistance and by broadening channels of rural finance, and there exists great potential in linking these activities around a market and informational hub. However, the AGIL strategy should not concentrate exclusively on the little activities, or for that matter, work to strengthen the market and informational hub in exclusive fashion. What AGIL needs to do is to work in coordination with USAID and the other SO4 partners in simultaneously bolstering the little activities and to strengthen the core. The quicksilver analogy is thus: create the conditions for a viable market and

informational hub, and work on small activities that eventually will coalesce around the core, but not coerce those activities into prematurely binding themselves to the market and informational activities—that process will occur naturally and in a sustainable fashion.

USAID is poised to bring about appreciable changes in the Ixil region through the establishment of Internet connectivity through a computer laboratory, through the founding of the local affiliate of the Chamber of Commerce, and through and other activities in conjunction with other SO teams. The SO4, operating out of the Income and Natural Resource Office, The SO2, **Better Educated Rural Society**, based in the Office of Health and Education, and the SO1, **More Inclusive and Responsive Democracy**, out of the Office of Democratic Initiatives are entrusted with the task of focusing on Nebaj and the larger Ixil region to work out common strategies and to develop synergies in those efforts. The Education SO, under the LearnLink Project, recently opened a computer laboratory in one of the high schools of Nebaj. This high school is located across the street from the Justice Centers, where the SO1 has its Justice Administration Program. INR, through a grant administered through AGEXPRONT is in the process of forming a local affiliate of the Guatemalan Cámara de Comercio.

The municipal mayor's office, which receives assistance from the SO1 NEXUS project for municipal strengthening and citizen participation is an intended component in the internet connection. With participation of the local government, local commerce association, the education sector and the justice sector around the soon to be installed internet connection, a configuration for creating a true market and informational hub will be set. It need be mentioned that Nebaj will soon become incorporated into the sphere of celular phone coverage with COMCEL.

One of the activities AGIL will pursue is ecotourism and historical remembrance tourism. A cadre of youths from the Ixil region will be trained in an intensive ecotourism course at the Universidad del Valle's Altiplano Center in Sololá. When they return to Nebaj, they will work with a consultant to investigate, document, photograph, and write up material on the region that will be useful for promoting tourism. Part of this production effort will take place at the computer laboratory based in the high school. This effort will assure maintaining the linkages between individuals in the commerce association (including owners of hotels and restaurants), the municipality, and specific producers of crafts, such as the weavers of Nebaj and the hatmakers of Chajul (a recent activity of AGIL).

The essential AGIL strategy for Nebaj is to foster value added premiums to existing products. In the case of dairy, there is significant potential for expanding and marketing products such as cheese. Payoffs in the dairy industry, however, generally occur in the medium to long range time frame. Nevertheless, AGIL is hiring a veterinarian consultant to examine the suitability of milk independent producers would sell to be processed into cheese. AGIL will also work with AGEXPRONT and likely, the European Union's Programa Quiché, in developing potential uses of, and markets for organic coffee, honey, mutton, wool, and products derived from medicinal plants. In this case, as in the case of cheese products refined beyond the usual farm-type, drying and concentration of the herbal products will add value and reduce relative transportation costs. Light manufacture of furniture

and other carpentry products, as well as specialty weaving products, similarly fall into this value added strategy AGIL will pursue.

Initial investigations point to the fact that there is not much potential for large groups in specific areas, but rather a potential for improving production and income in a variety of small existing producer groups. Some of these existing groups include dairy farmers, horticulturalists, potato farmers, and weavers. Potential groups under consideration at present include apple growers and sheep keepers, as well as a few groups working in the cultivation of medicinal plants and ornamental plants. AGIL currently is exploring the viability of small groups of farmers producing export crops such as snow peas, French beans and blackberries. Other potential payoff products, but which seemingly are less promising, are cherimoya, avocados, and other fruit trees.

In the area of rural finance, the AGIL strategy is to support a viable intermediation system that will make available to small and micro- businesses financial services in both urban and rural areas. The strategy will be twofold: first, improve the financial and administrative controls and management efficiency of selected organizations in Nebaj and the larger Ixil region; secondly, AGIL will assist small organizations to access BANRURAL Trust Funds. To accelerate reforms within these organizations, AGIL and USAID will work together to establish an Incentive Fund that will provide incentives to those NGOs that implement the reforms in a timely manner and maintain acceptable financial performance standards.

AGIL additionally will reinforce the institutional strengthening process of NGOs by promoting strategic alliances between those in the Ixil region and elsewhere. These alliances will facilitate the adoption of the standardized Charter of Accounts, a joint venture between AGIL and the GTZ. AGIL is also working on the establishment of national and regional credit bureaus ("centros de riesgo"), a measure that expectedly will reduce loan default rates and have standardized reporting systems to facilitate donor support.

AGIL will facilitate strategic alliances between developed financial NGOs and local organizations in the Ixil region, as well as between Banrural and local organizations. These alliances will speed up the institutional strengthening process of local organizations. Alliances with Banrural will play an important role in the adoption of the standardized Chart of Accounts among local organizations seeking access to the bank's Trust Funds. This activity will result in standardized reporting systems that will facilitate donors' comparison among organizations and a fast response to requests for financial and technical assistance. AGIL will also support the establishment of the Regional "Central de Riesgos" for the Ixil Tringle which will eventually be linked to the National System AGIL is sponsoring. This "Central de Riesgos," to be attached to the newly created branch of the Chamber of Commerce in Nebaj, will contribute to the institutional strengthening of local financial intermediaries by reducing excessively high loan default rates in the Ixil Triangle.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GAPS TO FILL

Part of the constraint in ensuring success in activities for the Ixil region lies with the aforementioned problem of poor road access. Improving the road from Sacapulas will come about at some point, and when it does, the great potential of the Ixil region will be unlocked. The eventual upgrading of the road makes it all the more compelling to initiate activities in the region so that the Ixil become equipped to deal with the improved road, and all that that can signify in terms of jump-start development (including the possible negative ramifications). For this reason, the focus on developing a market and informational hub that incorporates informational technologies, such as the Internet, is all the more cogent at this point in time.

Coordination between the various partners of the SO4 team is critical, especially as new initiatives for the region are developed. Save the Children, for example, will be initiating activities in the Ixil region, and although issues of food security are the primary focus of action, the ancillary activities constructed around monetized food aid resources, such as micro finance activities, can form part of the necessary strategic alliance for actions to undertake in the Ixil region.

Coordination with partners working under other SOs can yield valuable payoffs, and for this reason should be explored. In the case of training, for example, universities already operating as partners with the USAID's Education SO have already developed some measure of administrative infrastructure, as well as experiences, and these can be tapped as valuable assets so as not to reinvent the wheel in technical areas, nor incur unneeded costs in mounting administrative infrastructure. A case in point is the proposed training and certification of technical assistance providers for agricultural producer groups. Three universities that have received endowments from USAID (San Carlos, Landívar, and del Valle) have expanded operations into the highland region, and are increasingly focusing on Quiché. Each one of these universities has its forte in the agricultural sector and in the Quiché region, including the Ixil area, and can be valuable partners in the AGIL strategy.

Basically speaking, the AGIL "quicksilver" approach allows a great deal of flexibility for the inclusion of additional partners in the SO4 team, as well as the development of synergies among the different partners of other SOs. This does not mean that a full-blown strategic framework need be mapped out prior to initiating activities. AGIL and its existing partners have identified a number of promising productive activities in the region, and with the agglutination potential of the market/ informational hub in which the Internet is a central piece, we feel that the actors involved in the various productive activities and the various partner organizations involved in the Ixil region can be nudged toward integration into a strategic network. Other activities and partners certainly can become incorporated into this network in appropriate ways, in the near future, and in this sense, analogous to the properties of quicksilver, the principal mass will be enhanced by the coalescence of partner organizations—those being local producer groups, financial institutions, the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs, USAID, and other donor organizations.

REFERENCES CITED

COLBY, BENAJMIN, and PIERRE VAN DEN BERGHE
1977 Ixiles y Ladinos. Guatemala: ed. Jose Pineda Ibarra

FLYNN, VICENT
1984 Organizing to Survive, Number 4, Volume 8

FUNDADESE (Fundación Centroamericana de Desarrollo)
1992 Diagnóstico Triángulo Ixil. Manuscript

FOX, JOHN W.
1978 Quiche conquest. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press

FUENTES Y GUZMÁN, ANTONIO
1933 Recordación Florida. Tomo III. Biblioteca "Goathemala" Sociedad de Geografía e Historia Volumen VIII. Guatemala

LINCOLN, JACKSON STEWARD
1945 An ethnological study of the Ixil Indians of the Guatemalan Highlands. Microfilm. Collection of Manuscript on Middle American Cultural Anthropology. University of Chicago Library

RICHARDS, MICHAEL
1985 Cosmopolitan World View and Counterinsurgency in Guatemala. Anthropological Quarterly 58 (3).

SMITH, A. LEDYARD, and ALFRED V. KIDDER
1951 Excavations al Nebaj, Guatemala. Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington.

SMITH, CAROL
1976 Regional Economic Systems. IN Regional Analysis vol. 1. (Economic Systems). New York: Academic Press.

Universidad del Valle e Instituto Nacional de Estadística
2000 Encuesta de Ingreso y Bienestar Familiar. Report prepared under USAID Contract 520-C-00-99-00055-00. Guatemala.

M. Richards/AGIL
10/31/00
Market\Mts_ix9.doc

APPENDIX 2

Market/Service Centers

In order to make for more coherent activities for USADID's income generating strategy in the targeted market/service centers, it is useful to classify these centers into different types. Simply in terms of magnitude of economic transaction, for example, San Pedro Carchá and Santa Cruz del Quiché outweigh communities such as San Mateo Ixtatán and Chisec. But to use only economy of scale as a differentiating criteria on which a typology of market/service centers is based would render the scheme simplistic and lacking in any real-life applicability.

It is proposed here that, in addition to the scale of aggregate market transactions that occur in any given place, the type of goods and services that flow to and from, as well as in and around, market/service centers be examined in establishing an operational framework for categorizing the different types of market/service centers in the key *municipios*. The concept of flow, or directionality, is critical to this scheme, not only in terms of the usefulness it provides in categorizing the extant market/service centers, but in order to explore the possibilities for reconfiguring market opportunities based on production and sales. What products are being produced at present, and what potentially can be produced, given technical assistance and rural finance inputs would form part of the criteria set for the designing of the typology.

Economic geography elucidates the concept of market as a 'central place.' Central-place theory, as advanced originally by Thünen in 1826² is probably not so much theory as axiom, and given the precepts around which production and market function in a perfect 'central place,' we find few or no examples where, in its classical conceptualization, it is borne out. As in the case of other economic theories, in the real world there are constraints and conditions that compromise idealized rational human behavior. Christaller³ and others have expanded on Thünen's concept, adding in additional factors to make an otherwise unvarying landscape inhabited by totally rational economic actors who go about their business in a perfectly competitive marketplace, appear more real and subjected to the vagaries of human existence.

²Thünen, J.H.

1966 Von Thünen's Isolated State. Oxford: Pergamon Press (orig. Pub. 1826 as *Der isilierte Staat*.)

³Christaller, W.

1966 Central Places in Southern Germany. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice -Hall (orig. Pub. 1933 as *Die zentralen Orte in Süddeutschland*).

In 1976, a two volume set entitled *Regional Analysis* was published⁴. This is probably the best compendium on economic geography to date, and contains a series of articles based on case studies. The editor, Carol Smith, includes her own work from the Guatemalan highlands, which makes for a particularly relevant platform for comparison of the 11 market/service centers under the SO4-AGIL strategy. Smith argues that a regional analysis of economic problems is useful because (1) it can mediate between local-level and macro-level approaches; (2) it permits concrete conceptualization of systemic economic problems, and (3) attends to non-economic variables⁵. With regard to this last point, the discussion generated by adherents of either the formalist bent or the substantivist leaning in economics is lengthy, and is beyond the immediate scope of this paper, although the importance of non-economic factors of the cultural milieu of Guatemala's Maya peoples should certainly not be under-estimated in examining economic behavior.

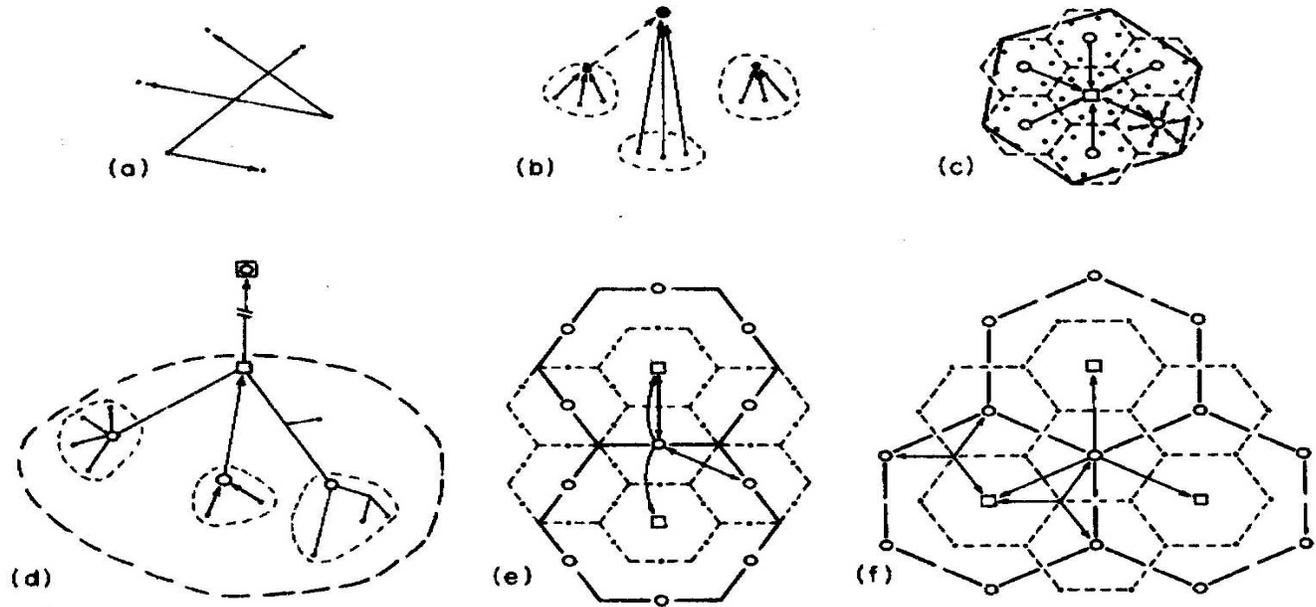
⁴Smith, C.

1976 *Regional Analysis: (vol 1: Economic Systems; vol. 2 Social Systems)*. New York:Academic Press.

⁵Smith, C.

1976 "Regional economic systems." IN *Regional Analysis*, vol I. op.cit. P. 6.

Six different types of market/social arrangements are suggested by Smith, and these are summarized in the diagram and table presented below.



Six ideal systems of nodes or central places.

- a. an unbounded network system;
- b. a bounded, hierarchical network system;
- c. a solar central-place system;
- d. a dendritic central-place system,;
- e. and f. interlocking central-place systems.

Dashed lines show boundaries of the system; arrows show relationship of lower-level to higher-level center(s); size of nodes or central places shows order in the hierarchy; open symbols are market centers. closed symbols places without markets

TABLE 1
Exchange Types and Distribution Systems

1	Exchange Type	Dyadic direct	Polyadic direct,	Administered market	Monopolistic market	Competitive market
2	Division of Labor	None	Very low	Low	Moderate	High
3	Level of Commerce	Uncommercialized	Uncommercialized	Partially commercialized	Partially commercialized	Fully commercialized
4	Stress or Scarcity	Low but some resources unpredictable	Moderate a few scarce resources	High because of bureaucratic "drain"	High because of limited internal specialization	High because of division of labor
5	Regional Extension	Moderate	Lowest	Moderate	Highest	High
6	Distribution System	Extended network system	Bounded network system	Solar central-place system	Dendritic central-place system	Interlocking central-place system
7	Where Found	Independent "tribal" societies	"Chiefdoms" "feudal" manors	Premodern colonies, developing states and empires	"Peripheries" of "modern" economic systems	"Cores" of "modern" economic systems
8	Spatial Characteristics	Fig. 1a	Fig. 1b	Fig. 1c	Fig. 1d	Fig. 1e, 1f

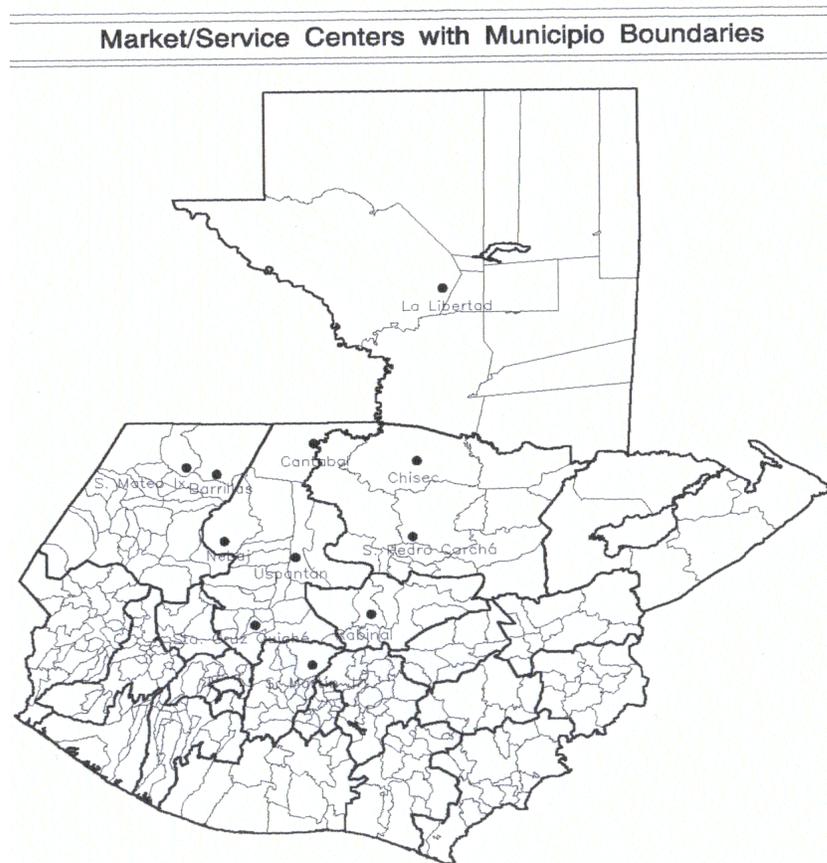
Carol Smith "Exchange Systems and the Spatial Distribution of Elite: The Organization of Stratification in Agrarian States." In *Regional Analysis*. Vol II New York: Academic Press 1976, p. 316-17.

Like any typology, the six level progression from random bartering transactions that occur in a tribal society to the complicated monetary-driven economic transactions found in a modern, competitive market place are not found to be discreet for any given case under analysis. Generally, it is the case that there is a mixture of two or more transactional systems operating in any given place. This implies that different spheres of economy coexist in a localized transactional framework. In Guatemala, where commodity crops, such as coffee or cardamom, are paramount bulwarks in regional economies, the production and exchange of product occurs in a limited sphere, controlled by relatively few individuals (once it is collected and bulked), and generally in unidirectional fashion (read, shipped out, as an export commodity). Parallel to the process of collection, bulking and shipment of a commodity crop, one frequently encounters

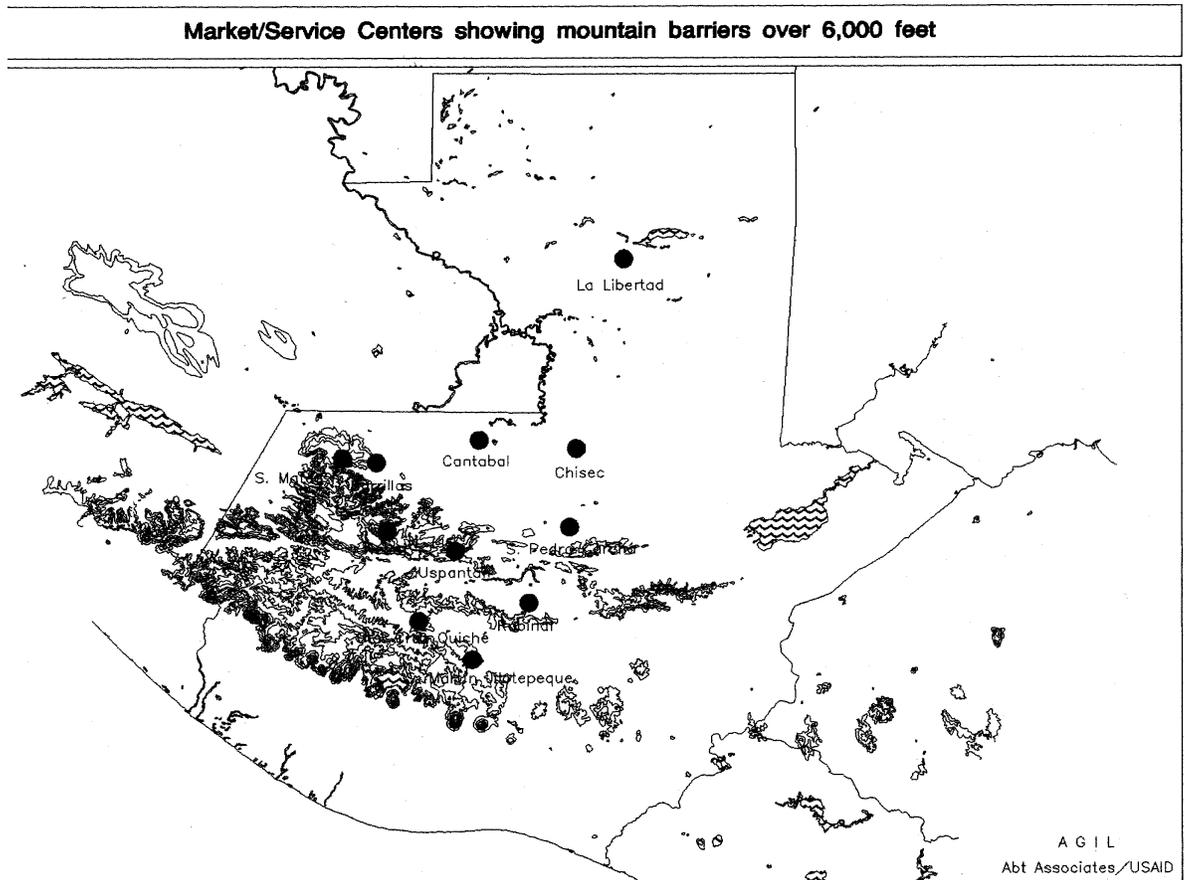
a competitive redistributive system of basic foodstuffs and household consumer goods occurring in a formal marketplace. The juxtaposition of these two examples illustrate how a 'dendritic' system can operate alongside a 'solar' system. For keen observers of transactional behavior among the Maya, the six marketing patterns may be operating simultaneously in one region, and it is here that one can hinge the arguments of substantivist and formalist economics by pinpointing examples of the occurrence of each.

Rather than delve into academic pathways surrounding these issues, for the sake of gaining a practical approach to the 11 market/service centers in question, it is useful to arrange the towns spatially and interactionally within their regional context.

Map 1 below shows the location of the 11 SO4-AGIL focused municipio market/service centers within the *municipio* boundary framework of Guatemala. It is important to maintain the wider regional context that extends beyond the market/service centers per se, since many of the activities of SO4-AGIL involve outlying communities, and in some cases, adjacent *municipios*.

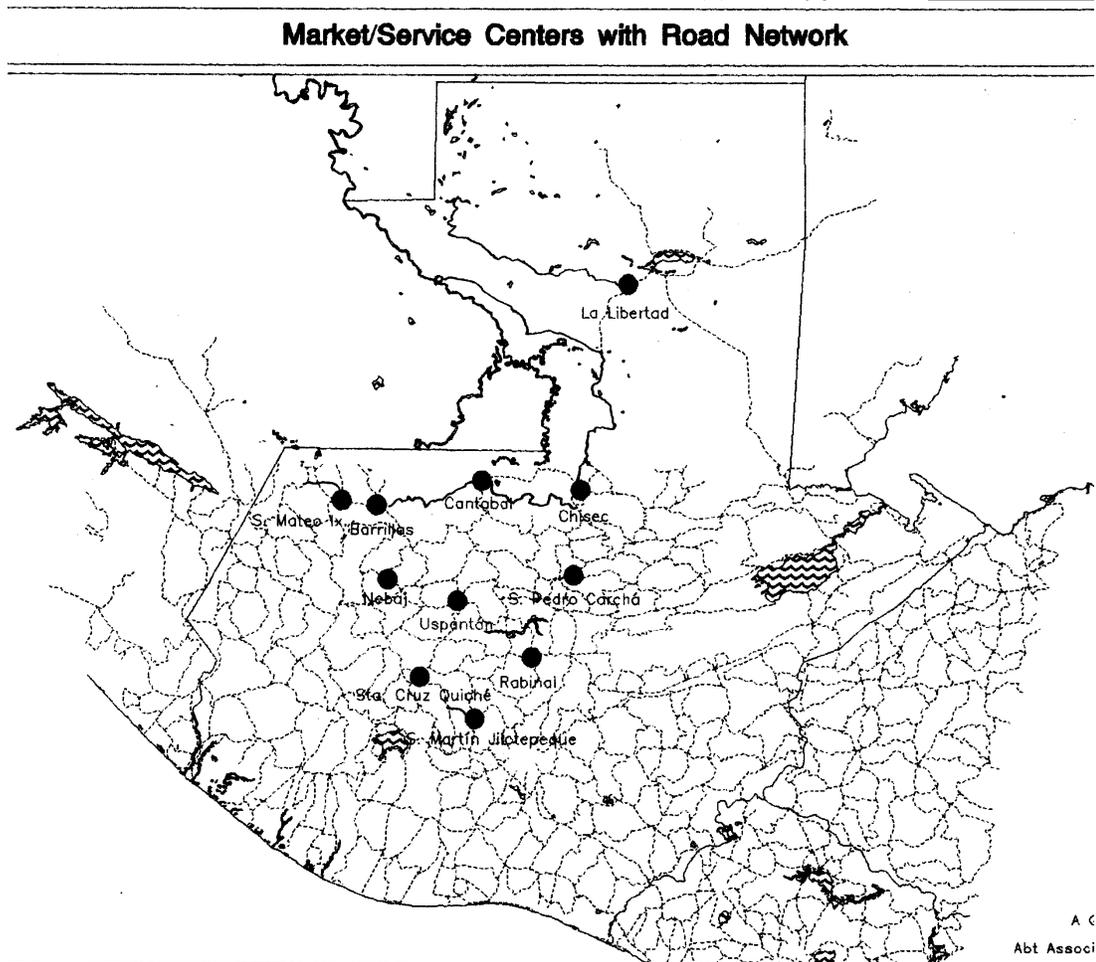


In Guatemala, geographical barriers are critical to determine economic activity. Although there have been considerable advances made over the years in transport, topography still presents its limitations to how goods and services are going to move. In Map 2 below, an appreciation of the formidable geographical barriers can be gained. In order to highlight the areas of greater economic restriction, this map was generated selecting only those topographical contours above the 6,000 foot range.



Map 3 below depicts the market/service centers on Guatemala's road grid. The concept of 'economic corridor' is a useful one, especially in cases of those road-linked towns that serve as collection, bulking or shipping centers for commodity crop products or as service points in a long trucking trajectory. Following Steve Wingert's piece on the viability of economic corridors for USAID's strategy, at present there are probably only three community clusters that aptly fit into a 'corridor' scheme (1) The El Naranjo— La Libertad— Melchor de Mencos along the west-east axis of Petén, (2) the La Libertad— Chisec— San Pedro Carchá along the north south axis of Petén and Alta Verapaz, and (3) the Franja Transversal linking Chisec— Cantabai— Barrillas. To conceive of San Mateo

Ixtatán as playing any significant role in a corridor is fallacious. Nebaj, Uspantán, and any possible viable economic connection with San Cristobal Verapaz and on to San Pedro Carch and points beyond, is significantly premature at this phase.



Truly, we are left with towns distributed across a priority region, which is the Zonapaz. In a sense each of these towns is an existing market/service center or has the potential to become one. This is where the SO4-AGIL strategy can benefit from categorizing these towns into a framework based on some of the schematic representations of market behavior in a spatial construct. For the sake of not pigeon-holing the towns into one of six categorical slots, a bit wider amplitude is allowed in the array of market/service centers shown in the table below.

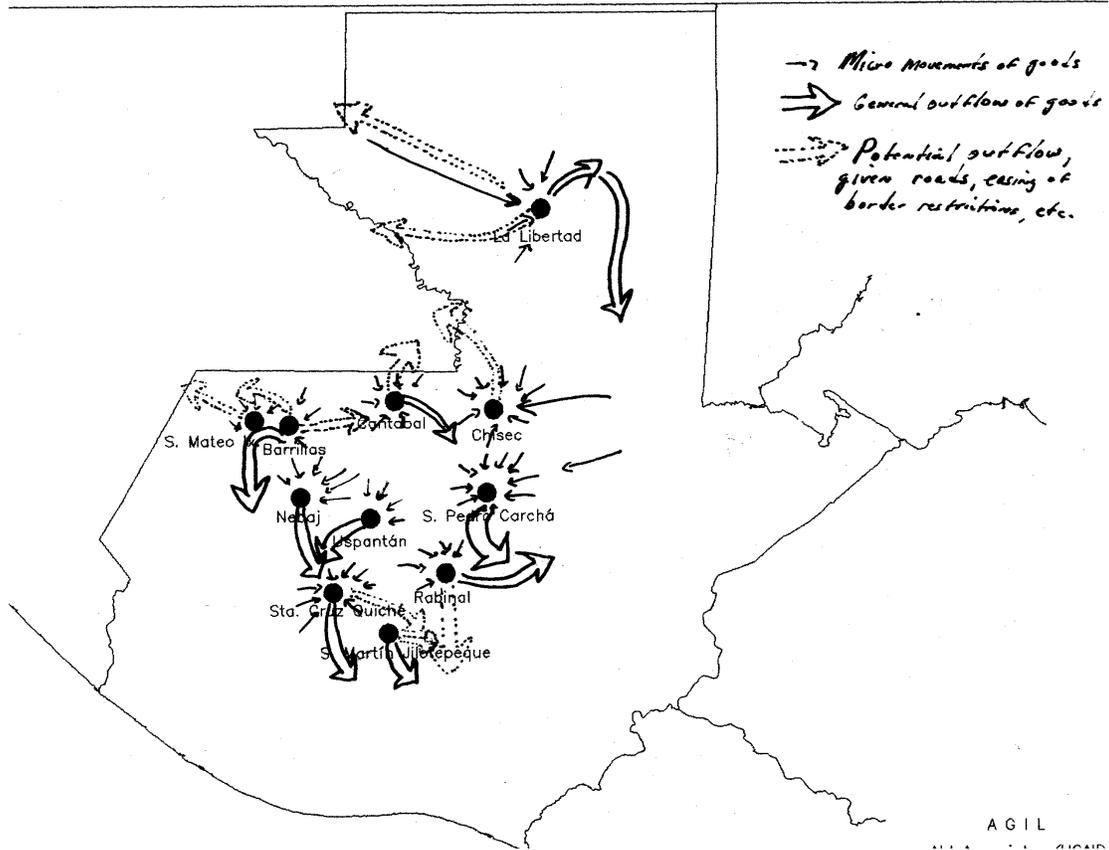
Table II. Distribution of Market/Service Centers in Modified Market Classificatory Scheme

Network -Solar System	Solar -Dendritic System	True Central Place (2 nd order)
San Mateo Ixtatán Cantabal Chisec	San Martín Jilotepeque Rabinal Nebaj Uspantán Barrillas La Libertad	Santa Cruz del Quiché San Pedro Carchá

As mentioned earlier, the concept of economic corridor is a useful dimension to categorize market places, but very often bounded and discreet the types of economic activities figure into the scheme of 'corridor' only as it relates to a specific sphere of economic transaction. For example, Chisec may lie along the trajectory of both an east-west and a north-south corridor, and logically would seem to fit within a corridor scheme; however, when one looks at what is being collected, bundled, and transported along the road, these products happen to be very different from what is being produced and exchanged in the more 'solar' type market system that operates there, and one that is primarily based on consumption needs of local inhabitants.

Finally, in Map 4 below, an attempt was made to portray the different market/service centers with a notion of the dynamics of market activity, based on considerations of production/ exchange scale and directionality of flow of goods and services. This map is ventured on considerations of existing roads in the regions, the general topography, and interpretations of local market factors (as well as social and cultural factors ones). In the map, small arrows depict the general directional flow of smaller order goods and services associated with consumption primarily. Solid larger arrows depict the flow of commodity products produced in the region, and dashed larger arrows show the potential directionality of goods that could occur if roads were improved, borders were opened more freely, and economic incentives to make for a more competitive market structure were in place.

Market/Service Centers-- Flow of Goods & Services



While the presented classificatory scheme for the 11 market/service centers of USAID's SO4/AGIL activities is certainly not perfect, it is intended to generate discussion in order to refine the strategies and activities being developed for the centers. In short, this is an attempt to stimulate debate among the SO4/AGIL working group.