Growing together

Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

Special thanks to:
Our first learning hurdle was overcome through experience; we learned that for any problem there is always hope. We have seen that by coming together to look for a solution to a specific problem, a possible path is always uncovered which can benefit even more people, and as such becomes a benefit for everyone.

María del Socorro Del Río Angulo
Director of CRECEMOS
Results of an exploratory study evaluating Crecemos (Dijo)’s projects in Monte Albán and Xoxocotlán, Oaxaca, Mexico

1. The context
   1.1. Xoxocotlán
   1.1.1. History
   1.1.2. Socio-demographic profile
   1.1.3. Health
   1.1.4. Education
   1.1.5. Housing
   1.1.6. Religion
   1.1.7. Economic Activity
   1.1.8. Basic services
   1.2. Monte Albán
   1.2.1. History
   1.2.2. Socio-demographic profile
   1.2.3. Health
   1.2.4. Education
   1.2.5. Housing
   1.2.6. Religion
   1.2.7. Economic Activity

2. The Associacion Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud Oaxaqueña (Crecemos (Dijo))
   2.1. Precedents and development history
   2.2. Philosophy Behind Crecemos (Dijo)
   2.2.1. Authentic relationships
   2.2.2. The Christian experience
   2.2.3. Freedom
   2.2.4. Commitment
   2.2.5. From assistance to education
   2.3. Approach
   2.3.1. Trust
   2.3.2. Frugality and the value of services and things
2.3.3. Focus on the whole child
2.3.4. Starting at preschool
2.3.5. Prioritizing the most vulnerable children
2.4 Methodology of Crecemos (Dijo)
2.4.1. Experiential Learning Method
2.4.2. At the refectory in Monte Albán
2.4.3. L’inizio del lavoro in una colonia (quartiere)
2.4.4. The scholarship program
2.4.5. With the preteens
2.4.6. In homework assistance and/or remedial support for primary school
3. The sample
3.1 Systemization workshop
3.2 The questionnaire
3.3 The interviews
3.4 Focus groups
3.5 L’informazione di archivio
3.6 XXX
4. The characteristics of the populations of Monte Albán and Xoxocotlán according to the interviews
4.1 The colonias
4.2 The schools
5. The characteristics of Monte Albán and Xoxocotlán according to the questionnaires
5.1 Demographic data
5.2 Educational characteristics
5.3 Ethnic and linguistic characteristics
5.4 Religion
5.5 Civic and political participation
5.6 Socioeconomic characteristics
5.7 Health
5.8 Living conditions and services
5.9 Characteristics of the children and the home environment
6. Results and changes in the beneficiaries
6.1 Subjective considerations of respondents
6.1.1 In Relation to Homework Assistance and Primary Remedial Support
6.1.2 Regarding the preschool
6.1.3 Regarding the workshops
6.1.4 General work of Crecemos (Dijo)
6.2 Change in people
6.2.1 The value of people
6.2.2 Authentic relationships
6.2.3 Positive social relationships
Conclusioni e prospettive di sviluppo
Evaluation of the impact of the service by Silvia Vernizzi
1. Exploring the data
1.1 Multiple Correspondence Analysis
1.2 Cluster Analysis
2. Impact evaluation
2.1 What is an impact evaluation?
2.1.1 The importance of the impact evaluations in economic and social programs and the corresponding evaluation gap
2.1.2 What is the evaluation gap?
2.1.3 Where does the evaluation gap come from?
2.1.4 What measures should be taken to overcome the evaluation gap?
2.2 Applying an impact evaluation to Crecemos (Dijo)
Bibliography
Conclusions Why evaluate? María del Socorro Del Río Angulo
CRECEMOS
AVSI
Introduction

by Rossana Stanchi,
AVSI Representative for Mexico
Tuesday, February 1st, 2011 the inauguration of the new Center for Community Development “María de Guadalupe” was held in Oaxaca, Mexico. The new center was built in the Monte Albán neighborhood, with help from the EnelCuore Foundation, the government of Navarra, CESAL, all of the Spanish partners in the AVSI network, the “Campaña Tende” fundraising project in Italy, and in partnership with the local Mexican association Crecemos (Dijo), “Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud Oaxaqueña” which after this moment changed its name (more about this later...)

The inauguration of the Center was truly an extraordinary event. Present to witness the occasion were the Ambassador of Italy to Mexico, Roberto Spinelli, Apostolic Nuncio Mons. Pierre, previously Nuncio in Haiti and Uganda, the recently elected Governor of the State of Oaxaca, Gabino Cué Monteagudo, Archbishop of Oaxaca, José Luis Chávez Botello, the mayor, a representative from UNICEF, the families of the community in Oaxaca and directors from Crecemos (Dijo) and AVSI.

With this inauguration, the project “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” (August 2007 - January 2011) was successfully concluded by the AVSI Foundation thanks to the collaboration with Crecemos (Dijo) and co-financing from the Italian Government’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE).

The project

- **Education**: Improvement of the student performance of 300 children and 100 adolescents through attention to learning problems, interpersonal relationships and their ability to socialize;
- **Healthy eating and hygienic habits** have also been taught and maintained;
- **Formation**: Successful professional development of 400 people, as well as the initiation of 200 micro-loans;
- **Housing**: Improvement of 100 housing units each given access to drinkable water, paved floors, and a functioning drainage system;
- **Micro loans** : Successful professional development of 400 people, as well as the initiation of 200 micro-loans;
- **Healthy eating and hygienic habits** have also been taught and maintained; better learning experiences for students.
- **Formation**: Successful professional development of 400 people, as well as the initiation of 200 micro-loans.
- **Housing**: Improvement of 100 housing units each given access to drinkable water, paved floors, and a functioning drainage system.
- **Micro loans**: Successful professional development of 400 people, as well as the initiation of 200 micro-loans.
- **Healthy eating and hygienic habits**: Successful professional development of 400 people, as well as the initiation of 200 micro-loans.

From the beginning, it has been asked how all this was possible. It was obvious that this project did not start from scratch. Crecemos (Dijo) had already begun to collect data: the first attempt at a diagnostic study was inconclusive. The study assembled, more than anything, historical information on the origins of the community in which they were working at that time in 2002. This new initiative was the chance to make this assessment happen, and to put in the work that was necessary that was previously impossible.1

The research

The first question was to identify and circumscribe the main themes and objectives of the research. They wanted to go to the heart of the area where they had been pouring the main energy of the project, where the fruit of their activities were the most conspicuous:

- **Monte Albán** was without a doubt the neighborhood with the most beneficiaries as well as the neighborhood where Crecemos (Dijo)’s presence was the most significant. From every angle, investment of qualified personnel, the types and variety of activities, the systematic presence over time, the cost of management and investment in resources Monte Albán was impacted the most.
- **Xoxocotlán** is a community geographically connected to Monte Albán, where Crecemos (Dijo) has been present since 2000 with significant investments in the community. One of the main projects in this area is the extension of the child formation programs to reach a larger number of participants.

One of the main projects in this area is the extension of the child formation programs to reach a larger number of participants.

The opportunity to develop these research activities with greater coordination between the two

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1 It is interesting to observe how it is precisely in those years, as if together with AVSI, after following in a tradition of work that puts the importance on the building of knowledge through development projects that “The path begins with a focus on the knowledge of the facts, aiming at a knowledge of the facts and of life” that builds the base of the organization. In this story, the most efficient methods, in how problems are faced, in the mistakes that can be avoided. Based on the question “raising awareness” is possible, when one puts themselves in a relationship with their coworkers, it is possible, that is to generate, creative answers to the reality that surrounds you. The conception, in fact, is the sharing of what is known with what you intend to discover. Taking this path, the organization always intends to adhere more to reality and give answers to real needs, validating and documenting the developed experience, and ultimately communicating it.” AVSI Foundation. Social Report 2006. Page 15.
neighboring were a viable possibility. The main focus became the programs concerning after
school care, academic support, and educational activities offered to elementary school students in
both neighborhoods.

Concrete data was required. We needed to get to the bottom of what we were able to capture
with daily meetings, we needed to have the real features of the neighborhood, to know their habits,
their needs, what would most benefit them and what operations were already developing. Were
these operations truly pertinent? Would they be able to sustain themselves if the project were to end?

The main concerns

More than anything, we wanted to know how much the investment of human and economic
capital with the intention of encouraging the growth of the human person would be able to
become a project sustainable by the protagonists of the endeavor itself, of their own develop-
ment. The only guarantee, other than the output and measurable outcomes in the implementation
stages of the project, were the substantial long term changes made in the community.

The response

All of our worries were fully put to rest by the work reported on the pages of this publication. This
fantastic work done by Silvia Schmelkes, the director of Instituto de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo
Educativo (INIDE) of the University of Iberoamericana in Mexico City, was primarily achieved through
the initiative to systematize experience and knowledge, as practiced by Crecemos (Dijo) over many
years of working side by side with the communities of Monte Alban and Xoxocotlán.

In the following pages you will see that we have looked at the facts, the characteristics of the
intervention area and the problems that frequently arise. The past has been summarized so bring
into focus what in fact is, despite the many changes, the backbone of Crecemos (Dijo). The report
demonstrates an awareness of the rich experience Crecemos (Dijo) offers as well as the limits of
any project, even if it is well done. The data was collected and a profile of the beneficiaries was
constructed to give a glimpse at the impact being created; however there are still many
who live in these same neighborhoods who have yet to become involved in the development of the
community. The effects and changes obtained so far are highlighted herein, there are still many
areas that can be developed in the future.

Expert collaboration

The eye of an expert can see and analyze the impact of a project and make evident interesting
aspects of the project and its reach that are not always visible to those who work on it daily. Ever
mindful, and with the surprising openness of a scholar who is looking for something new and unique,
more than once Sylvia Schmelkes was left astonished by reality that she was presented with.
Constantly put in front of her data, she was able to bring to light the points of change made and the
problems that instead remained open. Her collaboration with Professor Carlo Lauro, a Statistics
professor at the University of Napoli Federico II and the head of the department for Research
for the Fondazione per la Suissidiarietà (Foundation for Subsidiarity in Milan, Italy), made possible the creation of The Questionnaire an indispensable tool for collecting data. Following this,
the experts closely followed the statistical extrapolations made from the hard data collected.
The contribution of Silvia Vernizzi was indispensable for precisely this reason, she assessed the
impact of the entire initiative and the contribution of specific operations towards that impact.
A surprising contribution towards the future

The affinity of the results this immense research undertaking arrives at was completely unex-
pected. Carried out by a scholar with profound expertise in the field of the socio-educational reality of
Mexico, Sylvia Schmelkes, as well as by Silvia Vernizzi from thousands of miles away, the results of
this collaborative work brings astonishingly clear results.

With the awareness of these assets it is now possible to begin working towards the future. The
publication of this work is intended to be the first step in facilitating the careful documentation
of the methods used and the experiences lived in the hope of generating creative and effective
responses to the needs we seek to meet.

The power of a new name

The collaboration with Crecemos (Dijo), based on a common vision of development and made
possible by their professionalism, was the main factor which guaranteed the fulfillment of this work.
From the beginning to end, Crecemos (Dijo) accepted everything involved with the undertaking of a
project so “importante”. True to form, Crecemos (Dijo) came out of this project stronger, more mature
and more capable.

It is not banal that at the end of a long process of reflection, they chose to express themselves in a
new way. “CRECEMOS” or “Growing Together” is Crecemos (Dijo)’s new name, a sign of where
they have arrived and everything the organization has gone through. It is a name that expresses
their strong identity and the power of striving forward into the future.

Today “Crecemos” is certainly ready to rise up to meet the next challenge.

January 2011 The Center for Community Development

“Maria de Guadalupe” is also supported by Panino Giusto and Humana.

The Lady of Guadalupe,
who appeared in 1531 to the indigenous Juan Diego in Guadalupe, Mexico
is the patron and queen of the American Continent.
Her feast day is the 12th of December.
I would like to thank Angeles Nunez Gomez for the meticulous and tedious preparation of the database, Carolina Mendoza for running the regressions and Jürgen Madrid for transcribing the interviews.

Results of an exploratory study evaluating Crecemos (Dijo)'s project in Montealban

by Sylvia Schmelkes

I would like to thank Angeles Nunez Gomez for the meticulous and tedious preparation of the database, Carolina Mendoza for running the regressions and Jürgen Madrid for transcribing the interviews.
Introduction

The evaluation presented here is the result of a fieldwork investigation commissioned by the AVSI Foundation (The Association of Volunteers in International Service) and Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud Oaxaqueña, A.C. The aim was to implement a systematization study of the work carried out by both institutions as part of the project funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE), which began in 2007 with special funding. MAE decided to evaluate the impact of the work of each of the two organizations in Oaxaca, Monte Alban and Xoxocotlán, with the intent to improve their performance, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The study began in August 2008 with the intention of:

1. Carrying out a participative systematization of the work carried out to date, including the work preceding the MAE project, starting in 2000 in Xoxocotlán and 2003 in Monte Alban.
2. Exploring the impact of the work conducted in the communities being studied, with regard to learning support and the effects on the children’s diets.

The goal is to use these elements to:

3. Advance planning for subsequent years with participation of stakeholders.
4. Recover the hypothesis of knowledge and transformation revealed in the process of systematization, and any additional knowledge that has surfaced in the same process.
5. Take advantage of strengths and opportunities while also taking measures to surmount weaknesses and obstacles detected in the systematization.

With the goal of fulfilling these objectives, interviews were carried out by the directors of both organizations along with field visits being conducted by investigators from the INIDE. The results are presented at a hypothetical level. A study such as this, limited in time and without the possibility of ensuring a probability sample of either the beneficiaries or a control group, does not allow for making conclusive statements. Nevertheless, due to the number of interviewees (24) and the care taken in obtaining information from various sources, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, we can have the certitude that what is presented here reflects, to a reasonable extent, the reality.

Frame of reference

It is usual for an investigation to begin with a theoretical framework. In this case, because it is an evaluation, we can allow the conceptual and theoretical references to come from the institutional authorities themselves with the understanding that it is not possible to evaluate what was not intended by the organization. The first systematization workshop on the origins and purpose of Crecemos (Dijo) allowed for the construction of this frame of reference and the hypothesis of transformation, which gave direction to the questions, which in turn guided the field study.

Nevertheless, it is impossible for those investigating to discard their own frames of reference. For this reason, as well as for the purpose of contrast and comparison, at the end of the study references will be made to some of the investigators’ own concepts of social promotion which not only will help shed light on the results but also the future efforts of the institution.

The frame of reference used here will be defined in the description of the systematization workshop.

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1. Integral Development of the Youth of Oaxaca, Civil Association
2. “Education and Poverty Reduction in low-income peri-urban indigenous communities” starting in August 2007 and co-financed by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Italy
3. Instituto de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo de la Educación (The Institute of Investigation for the Development of Education)
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

1.1 Xoxocotlán

Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán is a municipality which covers a large area and contains 84 districts or ‘colonias’, 5 municipal agencies and 3 police stations.

Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence in the municipality of Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán includes the following districts: Insurgentes (where the education center is), Ex-Garita Police Station, Paraguito, Santa Helena, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Ampliación Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán, part of Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán and another colonia which has still not been assigned a name.

1.1.1 History

Xoxocotlán, known as ‘Xoxo’ for short, comes from ‘Xoxocotl’ an ‘acidic bittersweet fruit’ and ‘tlan’ which means ‘together, among’. Therefore, Xoxocotlán means ‘among the acidic bittersweet fruit.’ According to the historian Clavijero, the original inhabitants of the area were Mixtecos from Achiutla and Tilantongo sent there by Chief Szahuindanda, leader of the region in 1067 A.C. The village was founded 375 years after they established in La Mixteca.

The Mixtecos inhabited the northeast and southeast areas of the city of Oaxaca with the Zapotec nation as their neighbor. On one side they founded Huijolotitlán, today Huitzio and on the other Cuilapam near Monte Alban. The Municipality of Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán, in terms of legal jurisdiction and revenue, belongs to the Distrito Judicial del Centro (Central Judicial District) which is headed by the City of Oaxaca. Its municipal agencies are 4 to 5 kilometers away and the Police and Colonias agencies are one or two kilometers away.

The first inhabitants of the colonia where Crecemos (Dijo) is located arrived in 1970. Although founded in the same year, the municipality did not start to give the residents their municipal contributions until 1992.

› Before then, the services were at the beneficiaries’ own cost. At that time, the difficulty was the lack of public services. Nowadays, there are resources and the problem is the insecurity, the lack of garbage collection and the lack of water. . . (EA2).

The authorities believe that the colonia changed with the arrival of services:

› When I arrived, I saw that people were more united in terms of religion and collaboration. Now few people come to our meetings. They’ve lost interest now they’ve got the majority of services. (EA2).

1.1.2 Socio-demographic profile

The basis for all the data that follows is, firstly, the basic geo-statistical area (BGSA) in which Crecemos (Dijo)’s work is concentrated and, secondly, their neighboring BGASAs, which are defined as their area of influence. The data is based on the Censo de Población y Vivenda del año 2000 (The Population and Housing Census of 2000), which is the most recently published. When possible, we took data from the ‘II Conteo Nacional de Población y Vivienda del 2005’ (The Second National Population and Housing Count of 2005), which is more comprehensive and includes more variables than the Census itself.

Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence has a population of approximately 14,715 people (from a total of 59,181 people living in the municipality of Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán). Children from 6 to 14 years old make up 16.9%, while the 15 to 24 year olds are 21.3% of the population. Adults over the age of 18 make up 65.6% of the population, 7.8% of whom are over 60 years old.

As depicted in the pie chart, half of the population is under the age of 24, which as can be seen in the table below is the situation across the whole area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Area of influence</th>
<th>Other BGSA in the area</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 14</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 59</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 plus</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4 Based on statistics from the ‘II Conteo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2005’ (Second Population Count 2005) and the ‘Censo Nacional de Población y Vivenda 2000’ (National Population and Housing Census 2000), both by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, INEGI (National Institute of Statistics and Geography).
6 INEGI, Conteo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2005.
7 BGSA is defined as a territorial extension occupied by a group of blocks, usually between 1 and 50, delimited by roads, avenues, pedestrian walkways or any other easily identified characteristic of the land, and whose principal use of land is residential, industrial, services, commercial, etc. This type of BGSA is given to geographical locations which have a population of 2,000 or more inhabitants, or is the seat of the municipal government regardless of the number of inhabitants according to the Conteo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2005.
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

1.1.3 Health
The population without health care in Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence is 57.5%. Among those who count on a health service, 53.7% have IMSS, 25.9% have ISSTE and 18.0% have Seguro Popular.

- **Health Care Entitlement (%)**
  - Population with entitlement: 42.20%
  - Population without entitlement: 57.80%


1.1.4 Education
In the zone of reference, 7% of the population of people 15 years and older are illiterate, 9.6% of which are female and 3.9% male.

- **Population Aged 15 and Over in the Area of Influence Illiteracy (%)**
  - Men: 3.00%
  - Women: 9.60%

The population of preschool age (5 years) who are not enrolled in nursery schools is 5.7% of the total area of influence and 6.5% in other nearby AGEB.

- **Population of 5 to 14 years Area of influence Other BGSAs in the area Total**
  - Population of 5 year olds that do not attend school: 5.7% 6.5% 6.3%
  - Population of 6 to 14 year olds that do not attend school: 2.9% 3.1% 3.1%

Of children in the area of influence, 2.9% of children at the age to attend basic education (6 to 14 years) do not attend, compared to 3.1% in the other BGSAs in the area. The fact that there is no percentage for children who attend preschool is significant. However, 5.7% of preschool aged children (3 years) do not attend preschool in the area of influence; 6.5% do not attend in the neighboring BGSAs.

Of youth between 15 and 24 years, 51.8% attend school. As high as 31% of the population 15 years and older have an incomplete basic education, 19.6% have completed basic education, and 42.8% have completed post-basic education.

- **School attendance from 5 to 14 years Area of influence Other BGSAs in the area Total**
  - Population of 5 year olds that do not attend school: 5.7% 6.5% 6.3%
  - Population of 6 to 14 year olds that do not attend school: 2.9% 3.1% 3.1%

- **Population Aged 15 to 24 years Number of years attended**
  - Attends school: 51.8% 48.5% 49.3%
  - Does not attend school: 48.2% 51.5% 50.7%

- **Level of Schooling for the Age Group 16 Plus in Crecemos (Dijo)’s Area of Influence**
  - No schooling: 6.50%
  - Basic education incomplete: 31.00%
  - Basic education incomplete: 42.90%
  - Post-basic education: 19.60%

- **No schooling**
  - Basic education incomplete**
  - Post-basic education

- **Population with entitlement**
  - Population without entitlement


› Here in our colonia, fortunately, the majority of people have a slightly higher level of education, shall we say. There are a lot of professionals. Because education is seen as a priority. (EA2)

› Xoxocotlán has got it all, from very cultured people to people who are less cultured. They come from different parts of the state and even the country. (EA2)

Nevertheless, as the following table demonstrates, half of the youth between 15 and 24 years old do not attend school, which means there is a lot of work to be done with the youth population in this colonia; most likely the lack of education contributes to the difficulties of finding work. It is probable that the gang problem, which is frequently mentioned in interviews, can be explained by the large youth presence, in a limited area, that neither works nor studies.

- **School attendance in the population of 15 to 24 year olds Area of influence Other BGSAs in the area Total**
  - Attends school: 51.8% 48.5% 49.3%
  - Does not attend school: 48.2% 51.5% 50.7%

8 INEGI. Conteo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2005.
9 Mexican Social Security Institute.
10 The Social Security and Social Services Institute for State Employees.
11 A government health care initiative that provides social security benefits to the underprivileged population.
12 Ibid.
1.1.5 Housing

13.1% of the population in the area of influence lives in indigenous households. 76.3% of homes have a male head. Of the total homes inhabited 76.3% have tap water; 84.0% have drainage. 90.9% of homes have televisions, 77.7% have refrigerators, only 48.2% have washing machines and 18.6% have computers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of homes</th>
<th>Area of influence</th>
<th>Other BGSAs in the area</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population in indigenous households</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in homes with a male head</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing with tap water</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing with drainage</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with televisions</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with refrigerators</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with washing machines</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with computers</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.1.6 Religion

According to data from the Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2000, 86% of the population is Catholic, 7.7% Protestant, 2.6% are other religions and 3.6% do not have a religion.

The religious community has fallen apart. Other sects and religions come along. This is due to the state of extreme poverty in many homes. They (from the sects) offer them a food package, they offer to help with medicines, and they take them to the doctor. They’re very united and it makes a person feel good, they feel protected. And also they help with the priest's duties. I want to baptize my children but they made it difficult because I wasn't married by the Catholic Church. That's why the people leave (EA2).

1.1.7 Economic activity

52% of the population is economically active. 24.4% of the population is employed in the secondary sector (mining, petroleum, manufacturing industry, construction and electricity), 21.2% male and 3.3% female. 71% of the population is employed in the tertiary sector (retail, tourism and services), with only 2% working in the primary sector (agriculture, livestock, hunting and fishing) and 2.6% do not specify which sector. 61% of the population are office employees or industrial/manual workers, 5.8% work as laborers or farm workers, while 25.5% are self-employed (of the 7.7% that remain, 3.4% are unpaid family workers and 3.3% did not specify). 4.5% do not have any income. 12.7% receive less than the minimum wage, 29% receive between one and two times the minimum wage, 38% receive more than two and up to five times the minimum wage, 10% of the people in the colonia receive more than five times the minimum wage and the last 6.8% did not specify.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation and income of the economically active population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentages regarding the 52% of the population which is economically active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office employees or industrial/ manual workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers or farm workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal to 2 times minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 to 5 times minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 times minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.8 Basic Services

25 years ago there were no services. Many are still inadequate.

We still don’t have tap water, or drainage. just a septic tank. the garbage truck doesn’t come by and there’s a lot of pollution, because they throw it into the countryside. When it rained, we would go and play in the stream, now if you go in you’ll get a terrible foot infection. The residents who don’t have toilets defecate in the stream. There have been improvements in the colonia but, in terms of the environment, I think we’ve gone from bad to worse. (EB2).
1.2 Monte Alban

The colonia Monte Alban is a marginalized area in the city of Oaxaca; it has a partial provision of public services. Despite having the necessary elements to be considered within the polygon of poverty, while also receiving federal and state level support, it is located in a zone that is not considered to be marginalized.

1.2.1 History

According to the stories of the people from Monte Alban, the colonia was founded around 1968. Its population comes from distinct regions in Oaxaca: Istmo, Sierra Norte, Papaloapan, Costa, Catada, Mixteca, Sierra Sur, and Valles Centrales. People began to populate the area when there were not any services, only paths that the people used to transport their building materials. The land was sold at 100 to 200 pesos. The first roads were built as tequio.

In 1989, the Governor authorized our connection to the piped water supply, and it was through the cooperation of everyone, the people here who helped us. We’re used to doing tequio. They didn’t want to give us electricity until the state government authorized it. They started putting in electricity and then the water, but first the roads were opened up, with the participation of nearly everybody, although there were some negative people. Then drainage. Now everyone lives better, they have services and some roads are paved.

1.2.2 Socio-demographic profile

The total population has reached 4,920 people, 47.5% are male and 52.5% female.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Colonia Monte Alban</th>
<th>Area of influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2,337</td>
<td>1,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2,583</td>
<td>1,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,920</td>
<td>3,183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly 11% of the population are young children between 0-5, 16.8% are children of a basic education level, and 23.7% are youths between 15-24.

As illustrated in the following table, in Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence there is a higher percentage of children between 0-14 than the rest of the colonia’s average.

1.2.3 Health

In October 2005, 48.2%, or nearly half of the population, did not have access to any health services. Of those who have health services, 55.8% have IMSS, 25.7% ISSTE, and 17.1% have Seguro Popular. 1.4% have other health services. The clinic nearby, “Clínica del Pueblo,” gives health care to people from the colonia.

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17 Ibid.
18 According to the stories of the people from Monte Alban.
19 A type of community organization through which community members contribute their labour or economic resources.
21 Ibid.
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1.2.4 Education

The colonia has two primary schools and an incomplete preschool. There is a ‘telesecundaria’ (a distance learning program), in the community plaza. The INEA (National Institute for the Education of Adults) provides basic education for youth and adults.

According to INEGI, 7.3% of the population over the age of 15 is illiterate. 4.4% of the male population over 15, and 9.8% of females of the same age are illiterate. The percentage of illiteracy in Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence is much higher than the colonia’s average.


ILLITERACY IN THE AGE GROUP OF 15 YEARS AND OLDER IN Crecemos (Dijo)’S AREA OF INFLUENCE

Only 50.2% of youths attend school. The fact that half of the youth population does not attend school is a concern in Xoxocotlán, and indicates a need to focus attention on this sector of the population. 6.9% of the population over 15 years of age has never been to school. Nearly 28.9% of people over 15 have not completed basic education. 18.9% have completed basic education and 45.2% have post-basic education. But if we analyze the same data in Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence it can be ascertained that the numbers differ significantly from the colonia’s average: the percentage of people over 15 with a completed basic education is higher than the average, reaching 23.8%, and the other statistics are significantly higher than average as well.

3.4% of the population of preschool age, five years, does not attend school in colonia Monte Alban, compared to 18.6% in the area of influence.

This is both surprising and worrisome; although there are few five year olds in the area of influence, the percentage that does not attend preschool is very high. 3.8% of the population at an age to take basic education does not do so in colonia Monte Alban, and 4.8% in the area of influence.
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1.2.5 Housing

23.2% of the colonia’s population lives in indigenous households, in Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence the percentage is very different and is also quite distinct from the percentage in Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence in Xoxocotlán:

- 72.7% of homes have a male head. The average number of people living in a home is 4.3.

Estimations based on: INEGI (2008) II Conteo de Población y Vivienda 2005, Oaxaca

Here the colonia is divided into distinct regions. Here we are Mixtecos, Zapotecos—from the Mixes—from the Sierra Juárez, the Costa, Valles Centrales, the Mixteca. They come from different places (EA1).

- 72.7% of homes have a male head. The average number of people living in a home is 4.3.

Estimations based on: INEGI (2008) II Conteo de Población y Vivienda 2005, Oaxaca

It is calculated that there are 1,132 inhabited homes: 8.6% have dirt floors, 69.6% have solid or cement floors, and 17.9% have wooden floors, tiles, or other coverings. As shown in the following table, Crecemos (Dijo)’s area of influence stands out with its distinct percentages, indicating a higher level of vulnerability in the population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonía Monte Alban</th>
<th>Area of influence</th>
<th>Other BGSAs in the area</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with dirt floors</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with solid or cement floors</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with wooden floors, tiles, or other coverings</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes where the type of floor is not specified</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimations based on: INEGI (2008) II Conteo de Población y Vivienda 2005, Oaxaca

- 10.6% of homes in the colonia only have one room, 16.4% have two, and 69% have three or more, while the situation is distinct in the area of influence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonía Monte Alban</th>
<th>Area of influence</th>
<th>Other BGSAs in the area</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with 1 room</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with 2 rooms</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with 3 or more rooms</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes where the number of rooms is not specified</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimations based on: INEGI (2008) II Conteo de Población y Vivienda 2005, Oaxaca

- 17.9% of homes do not have piped water connected to the public supply; 8% do not have drainage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonía Monte Alban</th>
<th>Area of influence</th>
<th>Other BGSAs in the area</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes that have piped water connected to the public supply</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes that do not have drainage</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- The land is expensive now. Before it was cheap. They used to give away property to the community. It cost 100 to 200 pesos, a bit of land 20m by 20m. Now it’s over $100,000 because its got all the services (EA1).

- 92.7% of homes have a television, 78.4% have refrigerators, 57.6% have washing machines, and only 29.1% have computers.

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Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Colonia Monte Alban</th>
<th>Area of influence</th>
<th>Other BGAs in the area</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with a television</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with a refrigerator</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with a washing machine</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied private homes with a computer</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.2.6 Religion

According to the census by INEGI 2000, 75% of the population is Catholic and 23% is not Catholic or does not have a religion.

1.2.7 Economic activity

51% of the population is economically active: 28% work in the secondary sector (mining, petroleum, manufacturing industry, construction, and electricity); 23.7% male and 4.3% female; 68% are employed in the tertiary sector (retail, tourism, and services); only 1.2% works in the primary sector (agriculture, livestock, hunting, and fishing). 55% work as office employees or industrial/manual workers; nearly 8% work as laborers or farm workers; 29% of the population is self-employed. 21% receive less than the minimum wage, 35% receive between equal to twice the minimum wage, while 30% receive more than twice to five times the minimum wage, and only 3% of people in the colonia receive more than five times the minimum wage.

There are very few trades here. There are street vendors who go out to sell scourers, stockings and bags. There are also lots of artisans who go to sell at the Monte Alban ruins. There are very few trades here. There are street vendors who go out to sell scourers, stockings and bags. There are also lots of artisans who go to sell at the Monte Alban ruins. There are very few trades here. There are street vendors who go out to sell scourers, stockings and bags. There are also lots of artisans who go to sell at the Monte Alban ruins. There are very few trades here. There are street vendors who go out to sell scourers, stockings and bags. There are also lots of artisans who go to sell at the Monte Alban ruins. There are very few trades here. There are street vendors who go out to sell scourers, stockings and bags. There are also lots of artisans who go to sell at the Monte Alban ruins.

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Comparing the basic data in Monte Alban and Xoxocotlán

Socio-demographic profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP IN Crecemos (Dijo)'s AREA OF INFLUENCE</th>
<th>Monte Albán</th>
<th>Xoxocotlán</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 5 years</td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td>13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 14 years</td>
<td>37.20</td>
<td>22.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24 years</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>19.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 59 years</td>
<td>10.70</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years</td>
<td>21.30</td>
<td>21.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION IN INDIGENOUS HOUSEHOLDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF SCHOOLING IN THE POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OLDER IN Crecemos (Dijo)'S AREAS OF INFLUENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monte Albán</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Xoxocotlán</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>4,920</td>
<td>14,715</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 0-5</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 6-14</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>2,435</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 15-24</td>
<td>1,139</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>3,075</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 25-59</td>
<td>2,062</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>6,119</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 60+</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in indigenous households</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>1,874</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in homes with a male head</td>
<td>3,474</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>10,919</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monte Albán</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Xoxocotlán</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population without access to health services</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>8,255</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population with access to health services</td>
<td>2,463</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>6,102</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monte Albán</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Xoxocotlán</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population of 5 year olds who do not attend school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of 6-14 year olds who do not attend school</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population who are 15 years plus illiterate</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of 15-24 years who attend school</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>1,593</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of 15-24 years who do not attend school</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>1,482</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of 15 years and older who do not have schooling</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of 15 years and older who have not completed basic education</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>3,165</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of 15 years and older who have completed basic education</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>1,999</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of 15 years and older who have post-basic education</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>4,367</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOUSING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monte Albán</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Xoxocotlán</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homes with dirt floors</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with 1 room</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes that have piped water connected to the public supply</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>2,430</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately occupied homes with a television</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
<td>2,917</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately occupied homes with a refrigerator</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>2,494</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately occupied homes with a washing machine</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately occupied homes with a computer</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INEGI. Conteo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2005.
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According to the data above, it would seem, according to some indicators, that Xoxocotlán is in a worse state of poverty than Monte Alban. However, although such is true in terms of access to water, which is also demonstrated by the questionnaires applied as a part of this study, the other indicators are the result of the fact that the colonia Xoxocotlán is four times bigger than the colonia Monte Alban. Crecemos (Dijo) works in a central zone that has all of the services. The zones that are further away, it would seem from the sources above, are in very bad condition.
2.1 Precedents and development history

Crecemos (Dijo) was founded in 1993\(^{27}\). Conceived in the university environment, Crecemos (Dijo) initially worked with young students, creating a university newspaper, and holding forums and cultural events. As the students developed and began practicing the professions they had studied, Crecemos (Dijo) also changed, adapting to the new situation in which it found itself. According to the founder, Lorenzo Fanelli, Crecemos (Dijo) was created "as a legal instrument to support activities with a Christian presence in the university" (EF1). Then the opportunity arose to start mini-projects with the support of the Italian government and in 1995 they began to carry out more formal projects financed by the Italian Episcopal Conference\(^{28}\). From this moment on Crecemos (Dijo) began to have a larger area of action, as it grew it began to separate from its original university-based structure, changing its mission and its name to Centro Social Juvenil, in which a women's group also began to participate. As the Centro Social Juvenil it began to work in poor communities bringing them legal, accounting, and psychological support, and also giving guidance courses and outreach to parents.

When I started, I didn't know what I was getting ourselves into. But I liked the work; it was part time and with my friends. I worked with high school kids, teaching English and giving students support. The students would come for help. (P5)

In December 1997, due to financial problems, the association had to reduce its staff to two people.

The beginning of the project has little to do with what we do now. First it was called Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud Oaxaqueña and then Centro Social Juvenil. It was an office where you could get legal and accounting consultations, as well as psychological support. We started off with about eight people. We gave talks in the colonias about values. The project lasted about two years. When it finished, because the resources dried up, only two people could stay on, and there wasn't the possibility for the work to continue. This was at the end of 1997. The psychological support was what had had the most impact. We stayed because there was a project with adolescents financed by the European Union. It took a year for the funding to arrive. In the meantime, we continued to provide counseling. (P6)

While in transition, the association readopted the name Crecemos (Dijo) and began offering psychological and academic support to children at risk of dropping out of school. From that moment on, the focus became more educational and, despite changes brought about by new circumstances, the organization continues to mature and deepen its focus on community support and outreach. During the recovery phase, the staff brought together university students to collaborate and participate in the organizational activities. In 1998, the first person arrived from AVSI in Italy and Crecemos (Dijo) began to gain a new organizational structure and, ultimately, after so much change, to define its own form and mission. At that time, new funding meant that they could restart and maintain activities with the university students; the focus: a project to help young people from the communities to start their own businesses. Initially, the students provided them with accounting advice because many of them were accounting students. However, the only aspect that had continual success was the focus on counseling and support for children.

We saw that children came not only needing psychological care but also academic and remedial help. So we got university students involved in order to give academic support. We continued giving counseling. We realized that it was useful to train the university students in what they liked doing, with guidance from a teacher. Children started to arrive from other colonias. We had loads of children but there were only two or three university students. A mother came and asked us to go to San Felipe. Another came and asked us to go to San Luis Beltran. Another asked us to go to Xoxocotlán. We’re getting there. With the university students we carried out psychological assessments to understand why the children weren’t doing well at school. We gave a cooking course where they learned math, portions, weights, and quantities. And a music course, where they learned to follow instructions through sounds and rhythms, psychomotor education, and remedial support. Later we added sports. We started in the communities because the mothers asked us to. In Tlaltizapán, it was different. They asked us to join an association that no longer exists, to do a pilot program in the community’s central plaza. In Monte Albán, the work started through an association called CANICA. It was this organization that asked us to go out to the community. (P6)

In 2000, the “scholarships” started\(^{29}\), thanks to which the association reestablished its educational work without further interruptions. In 2002, they received support from INDESOL allowing Crecemos (Dijo) to invest in educational materials, computers, television, videos, and cameras in three communities: San Luis, San Felipe, and Tlaltizapán. This reinforced the work they were already doing in the communities.

But bit by bit the children started to come … we started to buy furniture to be able to receive the children. … The attention was individualized as there was one university student per child. Our objective was more concerning the youths, the university students. Nevertheless, there were also good results with the children and so we started to work with them. (E13)

In 2003, Crecemos (Dijo), already well known in Oaxaca for its educational work to fight and prevent student dropouts, settled in Monte Albán, after an invitation by a local NGO that wasn’t able to meet all of the educational needs of the area. The locals did not perceive the educational problem as urgent. They gave greater priority to the problem of under nutrition and malnutrition and so, the small building meant to be the place for an after-school program became a refectory, called “La Compañía.” On this occasion an unexpected solution arose from the problem encountered:

Hunger was the problem rather than educational support. I didn’t know anything about it. I don’t even like cooking. Monica (a friend who runs an association in Campeche with a refectory for children) told me that a refectory was cheaper than educational psychology. Food can also be part of an educational process. So I started to try to find resources to equip a refectory, with the authorities in Monte Albán… (P6)

The refectory started in a small room in the colonia’s Plaza Comunitaria offering a hot breakfast to 50 children daily. In 2004, the educational support for children by the university students, which had always been difficult to coordinate and organize, began to wane. Despite that, they had achieved good results:

It was a time with lots of life and energy with the students. They liked to be with the children. They were happy. But the work wasn’t as useful for the students as it was for the children. (P3)

\(^{27}\) It was founded thanks to the initiatives of Lorenzo Fanelli, then a Professor of Philosophy at various universities in Oaxaca.

\(^{28}\) Two projects: one “Training and induction courses for unemployed youths” offered vocational training courses in taxes, accounting, tourism, social work and environmental education. The other course was in computer training.

\(^{29}\) Through AVSI’s, “Distances Support” project: “distance support is a particular form of solidarity that is fulfilled through a steady and uninterrupted flow of financial contributions, so that Italian citizens (or a person, a family, a group, a company) funds are entrusted to the AVSI’s identified contacts (a child or adolescent) somewhere in the world, who thereby receives food, healthcare, sanitation, schooling and opportunities to participate in educational and recreational activities. It is a specific process where a child represents the point of entry to involve his/her family and community, without substituting their own responsibilities, but rather accompanying them towards their own independence and helping them to become actors in their own economic development and a part of the change in the society where they live. The special feature of AVSI’s distance support is education, which, along with material help, assures the presence of adults who follow the child in his/her progress. The donor receives regular information on the child, the country, the project and AVSI’s activities worldwide, and participates in the possibility of an interpersonal relationship that educates the child to gratitude and helps the donor understand the reality of the life of the child.” AVSI, Social Report 2008, page 298.
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

I worked with the children in the new programs and they were enthusiastic and happy, as were the psychologists. This helped the students to get direction with what they wanted. There were problems, but it wasn't the case of 'I failed, I'm off', but 'I failed and what am I going to do to resolve it'. This created a commitment on behalf of the student, the parents and the teacher and it worked out very well, because everyone was really committed. (P2)

In 2005, Crecemos (Dijo) made a conscious decision to redirect itself towards children:
› We were very few people, with a lot of enthusiasm but very low wages. The moment came to decide between the student and the child. It was better not to have the students because we weren't actively helping them. (P5)
› There were huge lists of students and were only four people, we couldn't keep up with all the work. (P2)
› We realized that the children were in most need of help. (P4)

At the start of 2007, funding arrived with the MAE project, which resulted in rapid growth creating new challenges but also giving Crecemos (Dijo) the opportunity to make their services in each area more professional, which was undoubtedly a good process
› (The refectory in Monte Alban) … at the beginning we didn't know what a good diet was, we weren't aware that this could help us. Now we have a nutritionist who helps us to organize a series of menus taking into account what the children need. Some had little white spots on their skin because they needed vitamins, these have now been disappearing. They eat lots of vegetables now. This is what has helped to end this level of malnutrition. We control the diets, the vitamins, etc. These controls have helped us out of a lot of problems. (P5)
› At the beginning the program wasn't nutritional; it was only able to help stop a little bit of the hunger. (P4)
› Three or four years ago we didn't even have a restroom to teach children about cleanliness… It's logical that once you've got resources you become more professional. We started with lots of projects which we'd do and then make adjustments according to the needs. As you get more of a budget you can start settling payments and incorporating more staff… (P4)
› Now the aim is to stop school dropout. (P6)

2.2 Crecemos’ philosophy

2.2.1 Authentic relationships
What is important is the relationship with the whole person, valuing their freedom, hoping they'll grow as a result of the relationship. It is not about doing things for them, but for them to learn how to do things for themselves.
› It was very rewarding for me because I had a close relationship with the mothers; I used to chat with them a lot. (P8)
› In Xoxocotlán, I spent a lot of time with the children, we had very close relationships. I became very involved with the children; the mothers were very involved. (P4)
› Education is not only theoretical, but teaching and walking side by side. Not just giving them food, but also knowing who they are. (E3)
› When people are treated as people, they start becoming a person, they discover their dignity and they set off, become active. By becoming conscious of themselves they start looking to satisfy their own needs. (E7)
› Relationships with people always have the potential to be educational. An educational relationship requires the whole person. All humans have a common framework made by the same

Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

desires. When an interest is awakened, like in kids, they all behave in the same way. When something surprises us, it attracts us, we shout, we tell others. If they're paying attention they come to see what it is. (E7)

The quality of the relationship is fundamental, not just the quantity of beneficiaries:
› The percentuale di famiglie con cui costruiamo un rapporto è bassa, perché non possiamo raggiungere tutte quelle famiglie. Non è ciò che ci interessa, perché non si può obbligare quella gente ad avere quel vincolo. Ciononostante, tutti hanno formato vincoli con diverse famiglie e ci sono stati ottimi risultati in questi rapporti. Ci rendiamo conto del fatto che la maggior parte dei bambini che viene lo fa per se stesso. Nel rapporto crescono sentimenti di affetto (P5)
› We're really interested in connecting with the mothers to be able to find out about everything. They identify with us. It's also a way of checking out and understanding the family's lifestyle. (P5)
› The support they get makes them feel like they have a friend, an ally, someone who'll be there when they need them. (E2)
› I'm learning that you have to know a person and their reality to be able to have an opinion, judge or condemn them… I'll be able to talk about my development process when I've managed to talk with the mothers. (E3)
› How Crecemos (Dijo) accompanies people is what defines it. There's genuine concern, it's real. (E5)
› The desire to share some family's needs. The more involved a person gets in the job, the more they see others as people, not trying to resolve other people's problems but awakening your own humanity, being human, and accompanying the families as they take the leading role in their own lives. (E6)
› After a deep depression, Crecemos (Dijo) appeared. I came back to life. Crecemos (Dijo) appeared and felt like a warm blanket… (E8)
› At the moment we're a little stuck economically. I told the teacher and I said, “I think my son's going to stop coming, because you see we haven't got enough to pay the month.” “No,” they said, “keep bringing him, I'll see how…” (EB3)
› (In the refectory) Without any paperwork or anything they included my children in the breakfasts, without having a sponsor… But they told me 'they need sponsors but it takes time. We'll give breakfast to the girls because they need it… I was also very thin and so they gave me breakfast… and I stayed to wash dishes…’ (EB3)
› When I have problems I go to the refectory. They give us a hand there. For example, now, with my baby being sick, because she was really premature, they came to drop off my food package, they sent me my breakfast, they helped me alot. And when there's any little problem, they always tell me, "Tell us, if you don't tell, well, God won't hear you." (EB3)

Crecemos (Dijo)'s place in the lives of the people in the communities is clearly perceived by other institutions:
› Marcelina had an incomplete miscarriage and needed a D&C procedure… She didn't want to go… She arrived (to the clinic) alone with Soco (the director of Crecemos (Dijo)) and no one else… I didn't know if I should do it or not because her husband didn't know. So Soco had to go and see the husband, let him know, and he didn't even come down. One of their children stayed… Soco stayed on alert. (E13)
› The services offered (by Crecemos (Dijo)) are of the best quality and warmth. Their support isn't conditional: I support you because I care that you don't fail, I care that you better yourself, because I care that you overcome this malnutrition, because it's important that you learn as a child that you should have your hair combed, bathe, clean… (E11)
In Oaxaca, 90% of what's done is political. And when you see social groups (like Crecemos (Dijo)) you say how wonderful! Becoming involved in Crecemos (Dijo) for me was how I got rid of the political problems I had hanging over me, because, how are we not going to help when they're doing wonderful work? (E15)

It is essential to be fond of the children, and be concerned about the person:

- I wasn't at all concerned with the community. I was worried about one child in particular, but to be able to reach that child, economically, I needed there to be at least 25 children with scholarships. Although we worked with university students, we needed someone to be in charge consistently and we needed at least one teacher. (P6)

2.2.2 The Christian experience

Crecemos (Dijo) was started by professionals who have lived the Christian experience; the Christian inspiration that permeates into the work of Crecemos (Dijo) is clear, and is shared in a surprising way by its members, even the most recent.

- I see Crecemos (Dijo) as the adult and mature expression of faith, in as much as they are now capable of completing a systematic job, consistently… (EF1)
- I've confirmed that the educative process requires the full commitment of the educator, arrive at an educational encounter without preconceptions, without prejudices, ideas about what it is to be poor. Experience generates a kind of knowledge that counts, which gives life, deforming university knowledge and school structure. Life is a learning process, it gives birth to useful knowledge. (E7)
- …You can have a rectorcy in which you give food in the way that you do it: looking at the person. This hungry person is a person who was made to be happy. Giving someone something to eat is one way, a gesture through which you allow the person to become conscious that their destiny is happiness… (EF1)

2.2.3 Freedom

- Your humanity pulls at you because you're human. Happiness as a solution, the solution to people's problems, isn't in oneself, but in God. I don't interfere in their destiny that should be done by something greater. When people don't want anything, it's because they're free. Your destiny doesn't depend on other people, but oneself. Don't expect anything from others. The freedom of others is so great… If you do a good job, but loose the ability to see the other person as a person, but instead as someone poor. And to see them as poor makes you treat them as poor. (E4)
- They're told us that Crecemos (Dijo) is part of many people. There are many people that make this possible. I thank all of them… (EB4)

2.2.4 Commitment

- You see the teacher, when she has lots of work, sometimes she stays until seven, eight. Or sometimes she comes on Saturdays and Sundays as well. We go by and there she is working. Sometimes she leaves lots of things to give us a hand. She dedicates a lot of time to the children outside of her work schedule. (EB2)

Crecemos (Dijo) staff describes how they've become more committed:

- Personally this has been a really lovely job. I have grown… At the beginning it was 'I'll come and help with the homework.' Not any more. Now it's like I need to know more, know why they don't come. I worry if they leave and haven't understood something, I worry if they leave and I haven't had the chance to check their homework. (E12)

The relevance of Crecemos (Dijo) in the community is clearly perceived by staff from other institutions in the area:

- At least the people that I've met are committed to the work; they are convinced by what they do. (E11)
- The beneficiaries also perceive this value. A mother tells us:
  - About a year ago my youngest son got ill with pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital. And I got help there, not economic help, but they went to visit… all of the teachers went… They were there with me… (EB3)

2.2.5 From assistance to education

The Crecemos (Dijo) staff is convinced that what is important is to educate. Aid work can be a way of achieving it, but it should never be an end in itself.

- Not as a philanthropist, because there's a way of seeing needs that is inhuman because it's partial. There's another way of seeing the needs of another person which is more holistic. Christianity allows me to rediscover how to look at myself and other people in a way that sees everything. We have a basic need, which calls out to be fed, but the answer is in the whole person. (EF1)
- We have a relationship with people. Apart from being teachers they see us as people who can help them. This helped us to get to know the families, how they lived and when the program "Children for the World" arrived I loved it, and that's what we try to share with the parents. It's about having a relationship with the child and the parents. (P5)
- The government is more of a flash in the pan. They say they'll give you sewing machines, courses on something, but that's it. But, Crecemos (Dijo) is a project that bit by bit, quietly goes about its business and unfortunately the government's not used to that… At the end of the day we're not against the government because we receive help from them, on our premises, like electricity (P5)
- It was never intended to be aid. Maybe we've fallen into assistance at times. But we are clear that it is about education. (P5)
- I never felt like I was in a charity. I never thought I was going to sort out poor people's lives. This has helped me to understand Crecemos (Dijo)'s educational point of view. (P6)
- Crecemos (Dijo) is an association with very good, positive intentions: To try to educate. To try to teach people, not just to donate things. It's an organization that teaches; it doesn't just give. Another association in Xoxocotlán gives things. They're American and they give food, balanced meals, blankets and toys. The children get excited but I don't know if they learn anything. And the difference with Crecemos (Dijo) is that education is the objective. It's like the difference between a rich father and a poor father. A rich father's going to give you a lot of things. A poor father is going to guide you through life, he'll teach you how far he can take you as a father… He'll educate you. If you love your children teach them how to fish, don't give them fish ready to eat. Because the children just pass through Crecemos (Dijo) and after they carry on with their lives. While they're in Crecemos (Dijo), the best gift is to teach them something, educate them about something. People love it when you're giving them something, but when you ask them for something they leave. (E2)
- We didn't come to change the poor or help the helpless but to educate ourselves first in how to educate others. We didn't come to help people. We came to educate others and ourselves. (E4)
- That people recognize their own needs and are capable of satisfying them. If I manage to make you understand, to eat well, even when, after I'm gone you're going to eat well. For the seed to germinate takes time, lots of time. Our primary struggle is that the children stay with us, because only then can they start to understand certain things. Knowing puts you in the face of another difficulty: before you didn't know, but now you do. To walk you need an educator and a student. Self-sufficiency is generated through the processes that create change. (E4)
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

2.3 Approach
The philosophy translates into a way of being for Crecemos (Dijo) and its staff. Some of the main characteristics of their approach follow:

- I need to teach people how to walk, not to carry them. If not we fall in the trap of the government, keeping people dead, weighed down. I think that it’s important to start to walk with a purpose. To accompany them isn’t doing things for them but ensuring that they do them, keep them moving. (...). We’ve made them poor by conceiving them as poor. We all want to be happy. Our hearts were made to be happy. (E5)

- I learned that I can’t resolve other peoples’ problems. I accompany people making a step towards a life that is more real. I can share tools, but that’s all. Overcoming poverty is very difficult. Working with human beings is the most wonderful but also the most difficult thing, because people are free not to get involved. What’s valuable is spending time together and sharing daily work with other people. You have to support people in their own development. (...)

- We don’t want to give things and put a stop to people’s desires but to awaken them, because that’s what it’s about, fighting poverty. (E6)

- Being in Crecemos (Dijo) is an educational opportunity, the possibility to educate and be educated. Through education people can discover their liberty, their autonomy, the need to fulfill their own needs. I don’t see charity as a way of helping the poor, but as an exercise that ends up educating you. We don’t help because we have and others don’t but because I need to help. I am the first beneficiary of the help. By educating, we educate ourselves. (…)

- A proposal in which you give everything isn’t real life. In the world, things have a price, they involve commitment. Presenting people with the reality ends up making them more conscious of how things work and they are more able to get things done in real life. Crecemos (Dijo) has an educational approach, which can help transform the way they look at themselves and the world. (...)

- There’s a close relationship between your work on yourself and your work as an educator. You can’t give what you don’t have. You can’t teach another if you haven’t experienced the process of self-education. (E7)

Now the staff of Crecemos (Dijo) is becoming convinced that there should be an educational focus with any type of work. Such as in the case of the refectory in Monte Alban:

- Teach that it’s important to wash your hands, to say thank you before eating, to do handicrafts to socialize, to respect the toys that are donated. (P6)

You can observe a transition from assistance to education, which is assimilated by the staff

- Crecemos (Dijo) has changed. They’ve stopped giving things to the children, just to give. It’s more about educating. (E2)

- We have passed from assistance to education. (E5)

Although it’s not that easy:

- (The beneficiaries) need to see us in a different way, not as a charity; but as a school where we’re teaching. (E3)

- When we want to help they see it as “Oh, they want to help us. We should demand something.” (E3)

It is continually surprising the level of consistency among Crecemos (Dijo) staff regarding their basic philosophy; it has been evolving and now seems to be completely consolidated. It is encouraging to see the degree to which the philosophy they describe is assimilated into their daily work.

2.3.1 Trust
The work is based on trust. Winning the trust of people is considered to be a long process. Crecemos (Dijo) staff has on the trust of people. Crecemos (Dijo) has the trust of their staff:

- I really identify with them. We have a lot in common. They’ve supported me through the trust they have in me. They give me lots of tools to continue working. (…) (P9) Crecemos (Dijo) has treated me really well. (E2)

- There was a great distrust of Crecemos (Dijo). They said maybe they were going to take the children. Because they thought it was foreign. Because they asked for photos. Because they had sponsors. Lots of people didn’t send their children at the beginning. Now they’ve seen that the children have moved forward, that they’ve had a lot of support. Now more come, more people from outside, from neighboring colonias. More haven’t been accepted because the space is small. I’ve noticed a greater influx of children now. (EA2)

2.3.2 Frugality and the value of services and things
It costs a lot to obtain the materials for the work itself and the equipment. The staff has to look after them well. Also they had to help put together services in other colonias where they were asked to go in order to begin working there.

In the educational psychology department, Crecemos (Dijo) decided to charge a small amount for the therapy. This involved a commitment, a contract with the parents. They saw themselves as obliged to bring their children.

- … in Xoxocotlán we began to ask for a fee… They’re not that poor. And we’re interested in the process being quick. If a child comes for speech therapy, it’s important that the child solves the speech problem quickly. But in the community the process isn’t quick. In the community we’re interested in staying at least three years to complete the learning process. The educational psychology is attending to a problem. The community is about an educational process. (P6)

- It was hard for me to charge them… (They explained to me) that they have to value things, and that they aren’t given for free. They have to learn that everything has a price. (E13)

2.3.3 Focus on the whole child
Psychological, and later, nutritional support, prevents school dropouts.

Crecemos (Dijo) began working with university students in psychology. Loro adottavano un bambino e lavoravano sia sull’aspetto psicologico che su quello accademico, per evitare che i bambini disertassero la scuola.

- I joined when I was in my sixth semester.

- They give me all the information about what the children were like and I began to work with them. My classmates and I began to work on the programs under her supervision; she directed us and helped us to carry the work out correctly. After a time we had the freedom to decide how to continue with the work, there was a commitment to the child you were working with. (P2)

- What defines Crecemos (Dijo) is its humble heart, prepared to help, to really commit. (E3)

In situations of extreme poverty, they discovered to the need to begin with providing food.

- There’s a moment in which we realize that providing food was necessary for making the remedial education project work. But we had to decide: food or remedial support because there wasn’t enough budget for everything. It was decided to provide food, which was basically to soften the
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

When we did the home visits and this level of poverty was detected the idea of the refectory arose: Juan Guillermo Cardinal, a young student working with us, told me “They just eat bread and coffee all day.” I saw him deeply affected by this. He was mortified. He said “How are we going to do this project if these children can’t even eat?” The refectory was only to soften the hunger. It wasn’t planned to be a nutritional center. A nutritional center has doctors, nurses, where they measure them daily, they weigh them. That’s a center for fighting malnutrition. Crecemos (Dijo) only wanted to soften the hunger. There weren’t the necessary components or resources for anything more. (P6)

The refectory is conceived as something more than a nutritional center:
› You teach the child because the intention is that they apply it in their homes. It doesn’t always work. It’s amazing the children tell you everything. They say, “I asked my mum to do more vegetables and she said no, only pasta soup”. So, I feel that the children learn, but... (E3)

The concern for the whole child also impacts the staff’s vision of the work:
› I think that other needs are also necessary (sic), other than the homework. You’ve got to get closer to the children. Well, it’s natural for me to want to know more about the child... As a human, I’d like to support them more in other areas. Like how to socialize more, how to be closer to their family, with the children... because I leave worried, with the impotency of how much I can help, maybe a little, but I’d like it to be more. (E12)

2.3.4 Starting from preschool
To be able to care for the whole child you must start from preschool.

Serious problems can be perceived in children from a young age; working with them once they’re older and outside of school can really limit the impact. You need to start from early childhood.
› We’re very concerned about the children, we focus on the preschool children and we see what they are lacking and try to resolve it. There was the problem that children didn’t do preschool. The parents didn’t enroll their children until primary. This was a problem for us as it wasn’t a concern for the parents. The objective was to give attention to those children through activities to stimulate, skills etc. (P2)

2.3.5 Prioritizing the most vulnerable
Crecemos (Dijo) is paying special attention to the places with the most need. This is precisely the case in Monte Alban. It’s the colonia where Crecemos (Dijo) is now dedicating most of their efforts, compared with Xoxocotlán, where they started. The colonia of Monte Alban is grappling with severe poverty and its influence on the social dynamics of the community.

› In Xoxocotlán there was a very different atmosphere to Monte Alban. It really affected me to see the people’s needs. I had a case where I helped a girl who wasn’t allowed in the primary school because she hadn’t been to preschool. So I taught her how to read and prepared her as much as possible so they’d accept her. I’ve also had problems with the mothers who were with me at the refectory because they didn’t get involved enough to be able to work together... (P4)

The level of economic and emotional need of the population of Monte Alban impacts the Crecemos (Dijo) staff on a personal level.
› I saw a lot of poverty. What we did was through an instinct to help the children. It was very difficult to connect with the families... It really impacted me to see so much poverty. (P4)
› I sensed a need in the children who didn’t go to school. Five of the children I had didn’t go to school; this worried me. They were between 6 and 8 years old. It was difficult to get the parents to enroll them. It was a struggle to get them to attend to be able to learn to read... Now we’ve managed to make sure that children from the age of four are enrolled in preschool. (P1)
› I don’t stop asking for help from everyone to be able to help these communities. It was really hard to face the reality and not to be able to help, as you’d like. But this is what’s helped us not to get distracted from our objectives, seeing so much poverty, seeing children without socks, without underwear, is very difficult. But we’ve managed to help them to the best way possible, they’re well fed, they don’t miss school... (P1)

In two years, I’ve learned more than in 25 years in other schools. I worked only knowing a partial reality. Here, I’ve seen truth exposed, total, and painful. At the beginning it scared me. I lived in limbo. I didn’t know about drugs. Seeing poverty, destitution, scared me... You realize that you can’t fix reality, but as a teacher you’ve got to propose something... It’s not that people don’t want to, you have to give them an option. There are mothers who are scared. You have to teach them how to walk. (E5)

At times the challenges of doing outreach in the community intensify:
› In Monte Alban the people are harder to get on with. It’s harder for them to understand the purpose of the program. So that’s why we came in through institutions. We didn’t enter through the families. We knew people who were in leadership positions in the community so that’s how we got known. Unlike in Xoxocotlán, where it was the people who came and asked for help for their children. (P1)
› The community is full of conflict, the relationships are very troubled. Actually CANICA (the association that invited Crecemos (Dijo) to Monte Alban) had a problem with the president of the colonia and they were going to make us leave. I went to talk to the president when we started working there. He was really hostile; he didn’t want us to stay... But that changed. (P6)

Monte Alban’s residents discuss their poverty:
› The colonia is lacking the same things as it was 36 years ago. It’s the same: unpaved roads, useless drainage... the people below suffer most because it floods. We started in a little room with our first son. With the second we built another small room. (EB1)
› We came six years ago from a village on the coast because my husband didn’t have work... My husband has a friend from the village and he let us stay for two months without paying rent. After we started paying rent, they didn’t fix the house when it rained, it leaked, it was broken. So we left. We went to live (in a different house), but then the husband of the señora drank a lot and would make a scene and my girls got scared... So we left and now we’re here... The house is simple, but, well, we’re alone... And it’s difficult because sometimes my husband doesn’t have work. He works as a builder, helper, whatever comes up. (EB3)
› When I was a girl in the mornings we’d go and sell gum and then go back to school. We were 10 brothers and sisters. We’d be hungry, we didn’t have clothes. It was the most forgotten colonia in Oaxaca. In the first year of secondary school I had to leave because there was no money. I started to work, I cleaned houses. Followed by a job in a juice bar, then a shoe shop. My dad used to drink a lot, up to two months continually, just mescal... Then I got pregnant with my first daughter when I was 17. That was my mistake. At the beginning life with my husband was good because he worked hard, was responsible, my children never went without. He’d drink and we’d have problems, but I put up with it because he was responsible. But now it’s been about five since he started taking drugs, he got hooked. That’s when the bad life started. I had three children and was pregnant with...
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

2.4 Crecemos (Dijo)'s methodology

2.4.1 Experiential learning method

The experiential learning method is at the core of Crecemos (Dijo)'s methodology:

- It’s a method that comes from experience. When you don’t have a methodology you’re on ideological terrain. You can live things but not understand them. To really have an experience which allows you to take a step forward. What I most liked about this method is the point of growth: you first. I never came to be good and help the poor. At the beginning the temptation to be good is an inhuman burden. But when they say: “you’re not going to be good, you’re going to come to work,” it is an important methodological change. (E4) …It’s NOT a method where you propose a timetable, it comes from experiences. These methods are to teach you how to resolve any problems that may come up. It’s difficult for a child to understand, but it’s very important that the child can resolve their own problems. […]

- The important part of the methodology is friendship, that the child knows they’re not alone. It’s a difficult job making a child understand this and that they can generate important change in their community, because when they’re adults they can put this knowledge into practice. (P11)

Now more specifically, in terms of concrete activities, Crecemos (Dijo)’s methodology is the following:

2.4.2 Monte Alban’s refectory

In the refectory in Monte Alban, the parents initiate the first visit. The parents come to ask for information:

- We inform them and explain that we are not part of the government, because the people think we are. We also explain that the money we receive is for the children’s breakfasts. They think we’re going to give them cash, like with Opportunidades.32 There’s no form, we just give all the information. (P4).

After the first conversation, there is a home visit with a socioeconomic questionnaire.

- The first visit has a socioeconomic focus, to see how they live, who the child lives with, the condition of the house… Files are opened on the children with a photo. Later there’s an investigation to see if they can join. (P4)

- I tell the parents that I’m going to visit and verify that the child is a candidate to join the program. There’s a form for membership with the information on the child and family. (P5)

Then in the daily activities:

- After the Angelus – because we do a general prayer for everyone – we see what the menu is, what the fruit cocktail has, watermelon, papaya. Ok, very good, watermelon. What vitamins does it have? Well, such and such. And what benefits does the papaya have? Well, this or that. And they do answer, because everyday we study this. The amaranth is… well, a cereal. What substance does amaranth have? Well, lysine. What is lysine? A protein. And what do proteins do? Well, they’re for growing. (E3)

2.4.3 Starting work in a colonia

Crecemos (Dijo) always waits to be invited to work in a colonia

- We’ve never come to a colonia because we decided to, because of necessity, but through an ini-

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31  It’s assumed that what she wants to say is that what can seem to us to be education or attention, can be instead experiences as offensive.
**Growing together**

Project Evaluation for "Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, Indigenous community" in Oaxaca, Mexico

...tation by someone else. We've started in public buildings that the authorities have lent us. In Xoxocotlán we're building on the colonia's land. It comes from personal contacts, not projects. It emerges from a preoccupation for the community, for the social impact. What always concerns me is that the children improve, they don't fail. But you need economic stability. (P6)

2.4.4 Con il programma di borse di studio (sostegno a distanza)
The scholarship project includes an Italian sponsor who donates an equal amount to each adopted child33. The child and family are asked to commit for three years. Before, every child had a scholarship. This is no longer the case.

In the case of the scholarship program they also do initial questionnaires and home visits, the child also has a trial period of a month. The next step is to speak with the parents again to be certain there's interest and to explain that the program lasts at least three years and in this time the child needs to attend regularly.

2.4.5 With the preteens:

- Games were part of a process to teach rules, limits and to interest them… Games were the first phase. Now there are things like English, teaching the kids that life, like games, has rules, which entails putting brakes on their own instincts, impulses. (E7)

2.4.6 In homework assistance and/or remedial support for primary school

In the case of homework assistance the methodology is flexible, diverse, engaging and has various purposes, such as to further develop thinking and problem solving skills:

- We arrive and start to do homework. There are children who arrive really early. Sometimes I even give them some more time, because I come from my other job (primary school teacher), I sometimes arrive at three, and sometime on the way I find some children and they come with me and we start from three in the afternoon. They hired me from four till seven. We do homework and other activities like: visual-motor exercises to improve their visual skills, develop logical thinking to help with math, we sing, we play games that there's often not time to do in the school but the children like them. Then the time runs out. Really there's not much time. I'm with the first grade for an hour and a half and the second grade for an hour and a half. (E1)

- To teach reading and writing we use SEP materials which use whole words, full texts. We don't spell, we don't pronounce syllable-by-syllable; we always read full words and will always look for reading comprehension. The method is slow. They don't necessarily learn in the first grade. (E1)

The educational methodology when working with children looks to engage them and keep them coming as well as to educate. It is about reaching out to children through activities that interest them, so they’re happy.

- They don't really like academics. So that’s why we do lots of activities to break the monotony of school. (P6)
Initially the study was intended to be quantitative. With this goal a questionnaire was designed which would capture the socioeconomic conditions, health, diet, academic, family time and the children and families use of free time. The Crecemos (Dijo) beneficiaries included in the sample were those who participated in the activities selected to be evaluated: the refectory, preschool, homework assistance and the remedial activities for the primary school and the extracurricular activities. The questionnaire of beneficiaries was applied during the first stage of fieldwork. The beneficiaries were selected at random from a list of Crecemos (Dijo)’s participants, striving to include as many as possible. During the second stage, the questionnaire was applied to a group of non-beneficiaries, trying to select people who lived on the same blocks as the selected beneficiaries, to try and ensure a similar socioeconomic level with children of school age.\textsuperscript{34}

In the second phase we also included more in-depth interviews with the different actors in the process: Crecemos (Dijo) staff, teachers of the beneficiaries and the colonia’s authorities in each colonia, an interview with the founder of Crecemos (Dijo) and with people who for one reason or another had a special experience and felt influenced in their lives by Crecemos (Dijo). AVIS and Crecemos (Dijo) believe that their work is not only justified by the number of beneficiaries but for the quality of transformations that have occurred in the people they work with. We seek to investigate this further with the in-depth interviews.

The methodological work was based on the participatory research theory developed by Schmelkes (1986)\textsuperscript{35}. The methodology proposes that the systemization exercise should be participative and that those who are responsible for the intervention should collect the evidence regarding the fulfillment of the transformation hypothesis.

3.1 The systemization workshop

In October of 2008, the first fieldwork activity was a systemization workshop, attended by 14 female members of Crecemos (Dijo) staff, among them were those responsible for Crecemos (Dijo) and AVSI.

- Educator, has worked in Crecemos (Dijo) since November 2006 in Monte Alban. She runs the preschool group for two and three year olds and a support group for children with poor academic performance.
- Education coordinator at Crecemos (Dijo). She has a degree in Education. She started working at Crecemos (Dijo) in 2006.
- Manager of Crecemos (Dijo). Started work with Crecemos (Dijo) in January of 2008. She manages the staff and raises funds through projects. She is creating a Process Manual for Monte Alban.
- Head of the department of nutrition and management of the children’s refectory, La Compañita. She started in March of 2007.
- Math teacher in Xoxocotlán. Started working with Crecemos (Dijo) in 1996 with the current director. She left and then returned. She has also worked in the refectory in Monte Alban. Currently, she is responsible for coordinating the social service of the students.
- Psychologist. Started working with Crecemos (Dijo) in March of 2007. She works in the department of teachers – trains teachers from the public schools in the communities – and in the educational psychology department, where she attends to students with learning and behavioral problems in one-hour sessions.

AVSI representative, in the Oaxacan project since January of 2007 as education coordinator. She is responsible for coordinating AVSI’s project.

AVSI employee. Started working on the project a year ago. Is responsible for improving the houses and a training center for adults. She is in charge of international adoption.

Director of Crecemos (Dijo). Manager. Entered Crecemos (Dijo) in 1996 as manager and since 1997 has served as the director.

Volunteer for 10 years. She looks after 60 children in the Crecemos (Dijo) community, in the ‘Distance Learning’ program.


Community head, Xoxocotlán.

Head of development of projects for adolescents. Recently joined Crecemos (Dijo).

3.2 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created with significant collaboration of Professor Carlo Lauro of the University Federico II of Naples. Recent graduates from the University of Benito Juárez Oaxaca implemented the questionnaire between November 2008 and January 2009. The study was coordinated by Jurgen Madrid and directed by Sylvia Schmelkes. It is composed of two parts:

In the first group to be interviewed were the adults responsible for the children receiving Crecemos (Dijo) services. They were asked about:

- What relationship they have with the child
- Demographic data
- Their and their partner’s educational background
- Ethnic and linguistic background
- Religious background
- Social and civic participation
- Socioeconomic background
- Help received by the programs being evaluated
- Occupation
- Health
- Living conditions and services
- Characteristics of the children

The second part of the questionnaire focuses on the children, and the adult interviewed was asked to answer questions for each child that lives in their house.

This part of the questionnaire is divided into two more sections: one with general information about the child and the second is more specific looking in more detail at some of the aspects of daily life which, according to the hypothesis, should demonstrate some change due to Crecemos (Dijo)’s services. They refer to:

- School situation (linked to the services of homework help, remedial support, computing courses)
- Health (linked to the refectory’s services)
- Interpersonal relationships and socialization (linked to all of the services, particularly sports and extra curricular activities)

In this part they are also asked about their satisfaction with the service received.
The two sections are organized accordingly:

In the first section they are asked:

› Demographic data about the child
› School situation
› Relationship between parents and child and family relationships
› Sociability of the child
› The child’s work
› Health

In the second:

› What Crescemos (Dijo) activities the child participates in
› Crescemos (Dijo)’s impact on school performance
› Satisfaction
› Suggestions

These were used to interview a group of beneficiaries and then later a group of non-beneficiaries from Monte Albán and Xoxocotlán. In all cases adults were interviewed (fathers, or in general mothers), asking them about family characteristics and each of their children. The final sample consists of the following cases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Monte Albán</th>
<th>Xoxocotlán</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult beneficiaries</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child beneficiaries</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult non-beneficiaries</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child non-beneficiaries</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 The interviews

The qualitative work also included in-depth interviews with team members. The interviewees were:

› Community head, Xoxocotlán
› Teacher responsible for 1st and 2nd grades (remedial support) in Xoxocotlán
› Responsible for the youths in Monte Albán
› Director of Crescemos (Dijo)
› The preschool teacher in Monte Albán
› Crescemos (Dijo) teacher for homework assistance
› Crescemos (Dijo) operations assistant, working with micro-enterprises and vocational training
› Crescemos (Dijo) teacher
› Crescemos (Dijo) nutritionist
› Crescemos (Dijo) head of cooks
› Crescemos (Crecemos (Dijo)) coordinator in Tlalixtac
› Crescemos (Dijo) Teacher 1 in Xoxocotlán
› Crescemos (Dijo) Teacher 2 in Xoxocotlán

Interviews were also applied to Crescemos (Dijo) beneficiaries, a suggestion by the director, looking for people who were in some way ‘touched’ or impacted by Crescemos (Dijo) in order to reconstruct the process.

› A mother in Monte Albán, with 6 years living in the community
› A mother in Monte Albán, with 5 years living in the community
› A mother in Monte Albán, with 10 years living in the community
› A mother in Monte Albán, with 20 years living in the community
› A couple, parents in Monte Albán, with 36 years living in the community
› A mother in Monte Albán, with 30 years living in the community
› A mother in Xoxocotlán, with 5 years living in the community
› A mother in Xoxocotlán, with 16 years living in the community
› A couple, parents in Xoxocotlán, with 26 years living in the community

Interviews were applied to teachers in both communities:

› A fifth grade teacher in Xoxocotlán primary school
› A sixth grade teacher in Monte Albán primary school
› A second grade teacher in Monte Albán
› A sixth grade teacher in Xoxocotlán primary school
› A second grade teacher in Monte Albán primary school
› A sixth grade teacher in Monte Albán primary school

The community authorities were also interviewed. In Xoxocotlán there was a group interview with the Board of Directors of the colonia where Crescemos (Dijo)’s head office is located. In Monte Albán the interview was carried out individually with the President of the Board of Directors and the Community President. People who work in other institutions which have a presence in the colonias were included in the interview process of this study: the coordinator of SEDESOL projects, the director of the association Niño a Niño, the director of the ‘Clinica del Pueblo’ in San Martín near Monte Albán, the coordinator and ex-coordinator of the state’s department of DIF. The priest of Xoxocotlán’s church who used to work in Monte Albán was also interviewed. And lastly, the founder of Crescemos (Dijo) was interviewed.

3.4 Focus groups

Group interviews were carried out with 5th and 6th graders from the homework assistance program in Xoxocotlán, and with a group of 10 to 12 year olds from the refectory in Monte Albán. The questions were about what they like and dislike about Crescemos (Dijo)’s services, and suggestions for improvements.
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

3.5 Information from Archives
We reviewed the Crecemos (Dijo) archives and obtained lists of attendance for a few months for the refectory in Monte Alban and the homework assistance in Xoxocotlán. We also found results from when the children were weighed and measured in the refectory in 2008, but without references for comparison. Likewise the archives of the pre-inscription interviews with the responsible adults are incomplete. We will make reference to some of this information but recognizing that the information saved by Crecemos (Dijo) in their archives is lacking and incomplete, comparisons over time were not.

3.6 References and interviews
In the section that follows we will make reference to the workshop, the interviews and briefly the focus groups as they provided less information. When we refer to the informant as ‘Participant,’ we are referring to the workshop. When the informant is referred to with an ‘E’ and a number, we are referring to interviews with members of the Crecemos (Dijo) team. When the reference is ‘EB’ with a number, we are referring to the beneficiaries of Crecemos (Dijo). We will refer to the two interviews with the community authorities ‘EA’ plus a number, ‘EFI’ refers to the interview with the founder and ‘M’ with a number refers to the teachers at the schools that the children attend.36

The characteristics of the population of Monte Alban and Xoxocotlán according to the interviews

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36 To protect the identity of the participants, the numbers used for reference do not relate to the order in which the interviews were carried out.
Oaxaca is sui generis. There is a lot of need, the truth is that sometimes you’d like to do so much to be able to carry on, but there aren’t enough resources, you’ve got to use your imagination to be able to help. (EA1)

4.1 The colonias
The authorities of Monte Alban believe that gangs are the biggest problem in the colonia:

- In this colonia there are a lot of gangs. That’s the colonia’s problem. We, the parents, don’t know how to guide our children. It’s the biggest problem. (EA1)
- Youths who are called “cholos” began to appear. The colonia turned on its head. But now we’re here, it’s 80% OK. But there was no order, no coordination, no brotherhood. But yes, the colonia is corrupted… The drug addiction started heavily ten or more years ago. (EA3)

The children from Monte Alban say that when they leave school and it’s getting dark:

- Sometimes they steel children. They robbed my dog. They robbed my 50 cents. The children ask for money. They mugged Andrés. In my school they sprayed gas in some child’s face. (GF2)

The families speak about youth violence:

- Well, everything’s fine, just sometimes, as there’s a lot of cholos around here, that’s what makes you scared, the cholos. (EB5)

Among Crecemos (Dijo) staff there’s a perception that distrust and conflict among neighbors characterizes Monte Alban:

- When it’s not possible to help everyone that’s when the conflict starts. They talk about injustices. The biggest challenge we face is trying to get the people to understand what’s different about education, that you can’t always give to everyone. If they educated themselves in how to work for themselves, it’d be progress. (E3)

Someone who works offering a service in the colonia addresses the problems:

- We’re talking about a migrant population, migrating from the interior of the state, so we’re talking about a multiethnic population. Recognizing Oaxaca’s 16 ethnic groups, this population is now multiethnic.
- We’re talking about how combative the colonia is, which also results in lots of mothers and fathers abandoning their children or leaving them in the care of older siblings or a grandmother. We’re also talking about a population that has its own migratory rhythm. Those who now have their own house or land stay, but there are many who live in tenement housing which you can’t call houses. It’s a room, dirt floor, tin roofs, and this also implies specific unfavorable heath conditions. In the winter here we have lots of children with colds, coughs that are poorly treated, very difficult because of the condition of the room or rooms. We’re talking about a population, which has severe overcrowding. Families, which have one room plus a kitchen and six people living there, this can also often implicate abuse within the same family. There has been a high level of alcoholism. Now it’s not just alcoholism but also drugs. (E13)

The authorities are aware of the problem of poverty:

- There are a lot of poor people. They still gather their firewood on the hill… The people here

The priest sees the poverty combined with the divisiveness in the community:

- There’s a lot of need, a lot of economically poor people. And a lot of divisions, lots of political problems… even within the same church. There’s a lot of vandalism, I hear about a lot of robberies, muggings, murders… Because of the economic problems, everyone works. Even on Sundays. They use them a lot for the tequios. It’s difficult because there are a lot of broken families. There are some families where the husband isn’t here, they go to the United States or to sell far away in Oaxaca. Broken families, we can’t talk about families (…) They come from lots of villages, many ethnic groups, many cultures. The way they live faith is different in every case. (E16)

The residents describe the problems they face in their community:

- It was the most forgotten colonia in Oaxaca, because we used to live very badly. Now we’re more or less fine, but before the houses were only made of tin or reeds. (EM)
- We were just taking care of the house for a lot of time. But then later the señora asked us if we wanted the house. My husband bought it in installments. Every week he paid 100 pesos, 200 and so on. It was a very small room. That’s how we lived for a long time. We suffered, we didn’t have water, we didn’t have electricity. Back then the pipes of water would come up here and because I was new here they wouldn’t give me water straight away. At night we would go and get water, back there where the hill is, there was a well. There still is. I used to go there to get water with my husband at ten, eleven at night. After we spoke with the owner, the person in charge, apparently there was a committee. We spoke with her and then they let me put my dishes out to get water every eight days. Every eight days the pipe came to leave water. We spent a lot of time like that, getting water from the pipe. Later we put in water and electricity. But now we’re fine, we’ve got electricity now. (EM)

In many cases their employment is unstable:

- My husband worked but it was a while ago now that he started to drink, and a lot. He drank a lot and stopped working. I dedicated myself to working. I used to wash, wash and iron, I worked from Monday to Saturday because of my children, some of them were in the primary, then later my daughter left sixth grade and went to the secondary and my husband didn’t work, he just drank. Without money what could I do, I was obliged to look for work. I went to clean, I went to iron and I went to places to wash and iron so my children wouldn’t suffer. (EM)

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37 Latin for ‘of its own kind’ or ‘unique.’
38 A “cholo” is a member of a group or gang which have a special way of dressing, influenced by Hispanic immigrants in the US which is often related to gang and hip hop culture.
From the perspective of a teacher in one of the primary schools in Monte Alban, the parents are disinterested in the schoolwork of their children, partially the result of the poverty and their own limited access to education:

… caused by the marginalization, the poverty. Here (Monte Alban) forms a ring of abject poverty around the city. After the colonia Volcanes, this is the most marginalized (in the city of Oaxaca). The parents don’t know how to read or write. This means they don’t help them. In the homework the children do what they can, what they have time for, what they understand in the class, but the support of the parents is non-existent. (M1)

The problem is the children don’t do their homework. They arrive without eating. It’s because there mom isn’t there. Here both parents work; also the majority of mothers are single parents. One of the problems is that the children come without eating. Some don’t go to that kitchen (the refectory) because of laziness. They argue that there’s no one to take them, as mothers aren’t always there. A child that doesn’t eat doesn’t produce what you ask for. Also, they’re absent too often. (M5)

One problem is the lack of attention from the parents, also the lack of hygiene, the children arrive scruffy. Sometimes the parents do the homework, they want a good grade, they don’t care about the child’s progress. Some parents over protect their children. (M6)

Overall, the teachers point to the emotional nature of the problems of their students stemming from a lack of stability in the home:

I have students (in Xoxocotlan) that have learning problems. Some have a lot of problems with their parents: problems with alcoholism, others because they live alone, they were abandoned, there are single mothers who look after their children but also have to work… There are a lot of children who don’t have resources, who don’t bring materials. This has serious repercussions on learning. (M2)

We have a lot of difficulties. One is the poverty and from there come many more: the breakdown of the family. Here, particularly in the group, I have a lot of children who only have a mother. So the mother is who works, and leaves the child, with the grandmother, or they’re left on their own, and a lot of problems arise from there which effects their education, their ability to learn. (M3)

One child suddenly started to crawl (in second grade). He was regressing. It’s a boy without a dad. The mother has to provide for three children. There are several different couples in the same house. There’s fighting, there’s drug addiction, there’s the worst… I helped him, and at my expense… (M5)

“Sofía” is a girl with very low self-esteem. She is very rude, she works very slowly. She does her homework, her mother is always very concerned for her… She’s a slow learner. But what she needs more than anything is affection. Her mother comes once a week, but she’s out selling. She goes to the market daily and the señor too. The señor drank a lot. The girl arrived very scared. (M6)

The authorities believe that the people do not cooperate with each other because they’ve forgotten the ‘usos y costumbres40’ of their villages of origin:

I’ve told them that it’s not possible that when they come to live here they want to do things that they wouldn’t be allowed to do in their villages. I ask that those who are 18 participate (in the tequios). (EA3)

Or because of their mentality:

Another problem we find is the resistance to being treated (for illness). ”If I’ve got to die of something, well, the sickness has hit me” is often heard in the community. ”The sickness has hit me.” So we warn them about the good and the bad. The good is when the sickness hits and I die tomorrow. But to die slowly, be left without a leg or blind is very bad. A disability and also an economic burden for the family. We try and raise awareness around that. (EI3)

About Xoxocotlan the community members say:

(Xoxo)… is distinctive because of its size, territorially it’s much bigger than any other municipality. It’s also multiethnic because we have people from all the regions. (EA2)

Continuing with the subject of education, and even in the class we were punished, with a belt, with a stick, punishments that made the information go in, maybe. Nowadays there are other methods. Nowadays, children have lost many, not just a few, moral values, they’ve lost values which are easier to recuperate, or maybe in some homes, in others no. And although you would like the children of today to be different, we see that they have two or three different sides. So sometimes, we cheat ourselves when we don’t know our children well, then they call us from the school because the son hit someone or didn’t do their homework (sic). (E9)

The community members speak out about the problems; lack of water and pollution:

(Xoxo) has 37 housing developments now and only four wells, and of these four wells only two work and two don’t, which means we don’t have the same amount as before. There’s more pollution, when the garbage truck doesn’t pass by the neighbors throw the trash out, polluting the land. (EA2)

4.2 The schools

In the interviews with the teachers difficulties arise regarding the way they conceive education and teaching, or their training to do so:

The teachers don’t attend to the children as individuals:

“Evita” has reading problems. It’s been a problem since first grade. She’s only had two different teachers: one from first to third grade and I took them from fourth to sixth. We know the children well and we’ve decided it’s not a question of failing her because in other areas she’s capable, she’s smart, including for writing sentences. She’s better at writing than reading. The problem is reading, she can’t pronounce what she reads, she stutters a lot. I think she needs special education for reading. I have got her to read separately, extra texts, but she doesn’t overcome it. I can’t look after one girl when I’ve got twenty waiting. So it would be good support to channel her into special education. (M1)

I can’t say a lot about “Paco” because he just left this school year. Paco’s problem is writing. He reads really well, but he writes terribly. And Paco has problems with attendance and lateness… It

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40 Indigenous customary law
seems that the mother leaves him with someone or him in charge of the younger ones, so when it's time to come to class he doesn't come because his mother hasn't arrived. I've already spoken to the mother, I brought her in twice. It was agreed that she was going to try to help, be more responsible, but the problem hasn't been overcome. He still comes late and in a bit of a mess. The destitution they live in is very noticeable, the poverty. He needs to be helped with exercises, give him exercises and a special handwriting workbook. I can't dedicate myself to him here. (M1)

Or the teachers lack the right structure to offer individual attention:

› I've noticed that “Juanito” is a little behind, his writing level is low. I’ve noticed poor performance. He's distracted, doesn't understand. I’ve talked to his dad. His dad says he worries about him but he's not at home every day, he works away… What I'm doing now is having him sit close to me to watch him and give him more attention... (M2)

› Here, when the majority has understood, as it’s boring to keep repeating, we change the activity. And those children, who are few, sometimes two or three, who still don't understand end up behind. Because we have to rush because the next shift starts. They almost force us out of the classroom with a broom… (M4)

› “Mario” knows how to read but he finds writing hard because he's left-handed. Now we've checked his notebook, his scribbles and now I understand him better. He does it well, but you have to be talking to him. It's like having a baby in the group. They tell us we have to take him by the hand so he'll write. But I don't have time, they're twenty, and taking his hand, I'll spend it holding his hand and not working. But no, now he can work alone, the little one's overcome it... If his handwriting improves he can go on to third grade. But because of the small problem with his messy writing I'm not sure if I can pass him. (M3)

Some teachers depend on the materials that the children bring to be able to work:

› The parents don't check their work. They come just to come, without materials. (M5)

A member of Crecemos (Dijo) staff points out that the teachers:

› Concentrate on finishing the course and they don't worry if the children learn or not. It's difficult to work with the teachers because they give a lot of excuses. There are teachers who say: “You go your way and I'll go mine”. The teachers who don't work end up blaming the family, that's their position. (P5)

They also note that the children:

› … they often come with first subjects not looked at school, so they need me to explain it. Another problem is that they don't understand, they find it hard to understand. Because I've realized that they don't understand the meaning of a lot of words. This results in disinterest in writing because they don't understand the subject, because they don't understand how to explain one, or many words. For example, the other day this boy came with math homework and said, “what do I have to do, tell me how I do this”. It talked about regular polygons, segments, lines, terms, you know? I say “do you know what a vertex is? A segment?” These words were in the question. “No, I don't understand”. They don't like to read either, they have a lot of spelling mistakes. There are children who still write the letters... They do their homework mechanically, without understanding what they're studying. They bring a lot of homework (…) subjects they haven't looked at, lack of understanding, spelling mistakes. Math is what they find hardest. They don't know their timetables, which they give them there… (E1)
In what follows we will analyze the demographic characteristics and the living conditions of the populations of Monte Alban and Xoxocotlán using the data from the questionnaire applied as part of this study.

There are important differences between the two populations assisted by Crecemos (Dijo). Xoxocotlán, in general, has more services, more stable employment, more united families, higher incomes – virtually a community of middle or lower middle class. In comparison, Monte Alban stands out for its greater poverty, lesser access to services, more unstable families and more informal employment. Monte Alban’s level of poverty makes it more of a priority for Crecemos (Dijo)’s type of work.

5.1 Demographic data
This section examines the data on the populations in both communities of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of Crecemos (Dijo).

In Monte Alban nearly 30% of the families interviewed are cohabiting. This is the case for only 20.5% of families in Xoxocotlán. In Monte Alban, 20.6% of the respondents (nearly all female) don’t live with their partner. This is only true for 11.6% of the families in Xoxocotlán.

Regarding schooling, the trend in both places is having attended secondary school, for both the respondent and their partner. Nevertheless, the percentage of respondents with high school diplomas in Xoxocotlán is 17.1% while in Monte Alban it’s 11.2%. There are slightly more who didn’t finish the primary school in Monte Alban (22.4% versus 19.5%). 4.3% of the respondents in Monte Alban have university degrees and 7.3% in Xoxocotlán. More notable is the data that 3.1% of couples have degrees in Monte Alban and 14.3% in Xoxocotlán. Xoxocotlán also stands out for having more residents with higher-level studies than Monte Alban, where once again the data indicates a higher level of well being in one colonia than the other.

5.2 Educational characteristics
The level of illiteracy is higher in Monte Alban than in Xoxocotlán – 10.9% versus 4.4% for the respondents and 11.6% versus 5% for their partners, respectively. In one case we have a level of illiteracy above the national average (8.4) and in the other case it’s almost half. It is worth highlighting that both places are considerably below the average illiteracy rate for Oaxaca, which is 19.3%, according to the 2005 Count by INEGI.
Very few children entered school at five years or under, which is the legal age to start preschool: 39.6% in Monte Alban and 28.8% in Xoxocotlán.

In Monte Alban, 35.5% of children attend school on the afternoon shift. This is only the case for 9.1% of children in Xoxocotlán. This data indicates that there is a higher offering of morning schooling in the second locality than the first. There are a lower number of residents per school and in Xoxocotlán a Zapoteco.

The proportion of children attending school daily is similar in both colonias (94.9% in Monte Alban and 100% in Xoxocotlán). So is the number of parents who receive report cards for their children bimonthly, which is the regulation, in both cases the percentage is above 50% (51.9% and 62.2% respectively). More parents (mothers) in Xoxocotlán speak frequently with the teacher of their child (81.6%) than in Monte Alban (68.3%), but in both cases it’s the majority of mothers. The number of children whose mothers help them with their homework is similar (37% and 58.3% respectively). There are more children in Xoxocotlán than Monte Alban, according to teachers, whose performance is below average (18.4% and 10.1% respectively). More children in Xoxocotlán, according to the parents, have improved their performance in the last year (72.7%) than in Monte Alban (58.8%).

5.3 Ethnic and linguistic characteristics
In Monte Alban, the proportion of respondents who identify themselves as belonging to an indigenous group is 23.7% while in Xoxocotlán it’s only 4.5%. In Xoxocotlán all those who self-identify with an indigenous group say they are Mixtecos. However, in Monte Alban the Zapotecos are predominant followed by the Mixtecos, although there are also Mixe and Mazatecos. Something similar happens with the partner, although the percentages are slightly lower in both places. Between couples interviewed the ethnic provenance is the same, although in Monte Alban there’s a Nahua and in Xoxocotlán a Zapoteco.
Interestingly, the percentage of those who say they speak an indigenous language is higher than those who consider themselves to be indigenous43: 30.8% in Monte Alban and 9.1% in Xoxocotlán. The same thing occurs with the partner.

As expected the linguistic and ethnic origins are the same.

It is notable that in Monte Alban a third of the population could be considered indigenous. This is the case for only a little more than 10% of Xoxocotlán population. This data is particularly important for Crecemos (Dijo) as it appears that the process of social integration is probably more advanced in Xoxocotlán than Monte Alban. If this is the case, it confirms once again the need for positive social presences, capable of promoting unity in the community, through positive values and carrying out positive work in Monte Alban, above all.

5.4 Religion

The religion in both communities is significantly different. The question was formulated like this: what church or temple do you usually go to? We have answers that are “Catholic” and others that say “church”. As Protestants refer to their churches as “temples” we can assume that those who responded with “church” are also Catholics. This being the case, in Xoxocotlán 91.1%...
of the respondents are Catholics, compared with only 65.4% of respondents in Monte Alban.

9.2% of respondents in Monte Alban, and 2.2% in Xoxocotlán, do not attend a church or a temple. The rest (25.4% in Monte Alban and 6.7% in Xoxocotlán) attend, in order of frequency, Christian temples, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Jehovah’s Witness, nombre de Jesucristo’, or simply ‘the temple’. This difference between communities should also be of interest to Crecemos (Dijo), as those who belong to other religions represent nearly 40% of the population in Monte Alban.

5.5 Civic and political participation

Regarding the civic and political participation in both communities interviewed we found a lot of similarity regarding their participation in the colonia’s “tequios”44 which is very high in both cases (86.7 and 84.4% in Monte Alban and Xoxocotlán, respectively) in cultural associations (8.5 and 8.9% respectively) and in municipal activities (35.4% and 31.8% respectively). However, they are differences respecting their participation in the ‘Consejo de Padres de Familia’ (the Board of Parents) (66.4 and 77.3% respectively), and regarding their participation in political and labor union activities (9.9% and 2.3% respectively). None of the differences are statistically significant although the last two indicate significant characteristics that once again differentiate the two locations.

Spending priorities are different between the two colonias. Taking into account those who consider that they “always” have enough, in both cases the priority is food (there’s enough in 78.1% of cases in Monte Alban and in 81.8% in Xoxocotlán)45. However, after food the most important for those from Monte Alban are the services, and in Xoxocotlán it’s education. The third most important cost in Monte Alban is education for the children, and in Xoxocotlán it’s services. With the question regarding whether the family income was enough to buy clothes there was a significant difference, in 56.8% of the homes sampled in Xoxocotlán there was enough, while there was only enough in 34.3% of homes in Monte Alban. Also, there was a significant difference between the answer to the question about whether there was enough money for celebrations: there was in 28% of the homes in Xoxocotlán, and only in 9.8% of those in Monte Alban. Lastly, the colonias are different regarding whether their income was enough to buy electrical appliances and furniture. It was sufficient in 31% of the homes sampled in Xoxocotlán, and only in 14.8% of those in Monte Alban. Data that shows the higher level of economic well-being in the population interviewed in Xoxocotlán than in Monte Alban.

5.6 Socioeconomic characteristics

In Monte Alban more family members work for an income than in Xoxocotlán. In the first location, in 51.1% of the households in the sample only one person works, while in the second this is true of 69% of the households. In Monte Alban more than one person works in 48.9% of cases, which is only true of 31% of the families sampled in Xoxocotlán.

44 “Tequio” is part of Mesoamerican culture and entails working together to attend to the needs of many or the whole community.

45 There is a strange result regarding the question as to whether there is enough income for ‘communications’ (telephone, etc). 47.8% of those from Monte Alban, compared with only 8.8% of those from Xoxocotlán, say there is always enough. We consider that the question was not understood and therefore rule it out from this analysis.
The value placed on education by the families in Monte Alban is worthy of comment; spending on education is a priority over spending on transport (a category not included in services), clothes and celebrations.

The two colonias are also different in regarding the support received over the last year. In Monte Alban almost half (58.8%) of the families interviewed received some kind of support (in the form of scholarships, water tanks and others). This was only true for 40% of the families included in the sample from Xoxocotlán. This data probably reflects, among other things, the different programs that Crecemos (Dijo) has in both colonias which recognize their socioeconomic differences.

The most frequent occupations in order of frequency in each community. It is possible to see that the more stable and lucrative occupations are more frequent in Xoxocotlán than in Monte Alban. The type of occupation of the head of the family also differs. The most common occupation in Monte Alban is that of street vendor, in 19% of cases. In Xoxocotlán, in comparison, the most prevalent are most frequent occupations in order of frequency in each community. It is possible to see that the more stable and lucrative occupations are more frequent in Xoxocotlán than in Monte Alban.

The percentage of families where the head of the family works in the informal sector is much higher in Monte Alban than in Xoxocotlán (49.2% and 25.6% respectively). This confirms the hypothesis regarding the difference in socioeconomic levels in the two colonias.

5.7. Health

The most common illnesses in the two colonias are, in this order: respiratory, gastrointestinal, infections and diabetes. In both colonias the most frequent are the first two, but in Xoxocotlán there is a higher rate of “infectious” illness than gastrointestinal, which is the opposite in Monte Alban. This is probably due to different ways in which each colonia refers to illnesses, as both gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses can be infectious. In Monte Alban skin infections are mentioned, which aren’t mentioned in Xoxocotlán.

In Monte Alban the children very rarely get ill (75.8%), and the same is true in Xoxocotlán (82.3%). The most frequent illnesses are gastrointestinal and respiratory. However, in Monte Alban gastrointestinal illnesses are mentioned (9.7%) more than in Xoxocotlán (3.2%). The majority of gastrointestinal illnesses are generally due to lack of care and hygiene when preparing food.

The percentage of parents who consider that their children’s health has improved in the last year is similar in both colonias (50.7% in Monte Alban and 48.4% in Xoxocotlán).
5.8 Living conditions and services

The following table summarizes the services and living condition in both locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of homes that count on the following services or characteristics</th>
<th>% Monte Alban</th>
<th>% Xoxocotlán</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water tank</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement floor</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paved road</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own bathroom</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full bathroom</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular phone</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing machine</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water more than twice a week</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three rooms in the house</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of rooms in the house</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant differences are marked in bold.

In general terms, it can be seen that Xoxocotlán has a slightly higher standard of living in regard to quality of housing and services.

The most notable differences are in paved roads (one in four homes in Monte Alban, compared with two in three homes in Xoxocotlán), the availability of a full bathroom in the house (one in four homes versus one in two, respectively), the availability of a telephone (one in six versus two in five, respectively) and in the availability of a washing machine (28% versus 53%, respectively).

However, contrary to expectations Monte Alban seems to have better water service than Xoxocotlán, judging by the frequency of the water delivery. In Xoxocotlán there is tap water in 68.9% of homes while in Monte Alban 94.2% of homes have tap water.

5.9 The characteristics of the children and the home environment

In Xoxocotlán there is a higher percentage of parents (mothers) who consider that they have good communication with their children (86.7%, compared to 77.5% in Monte Alban). There is also a higher percentage of children whose parents (mothers) consider their behavior to be good in Xoxocotlán (72.1%) than in Monte Alban (61.5%).

There are more parents who consider their children’s personalities to be unstable in Monte Alban (10.1%, versus only 1.7% in Xoxocotlán), and fewer who consider their children to be sociable (61.5, versus 75% in Xoxocotlán).

The percentage of parents who consider that their children’s relationships with their classmates have improved in the last year is also slightly higher in Monte Alban (66%) than in Xoxocotlán (63.3%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of the child</th>
<th>Monte Alban</th>
<th>Xoxocotlán</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good communication with parents</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good behavior</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable personality</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociable</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better relationship with classmates in the last year</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two colonias are significantly different in terms of the services found at home, with the average number in Monte Alban being 6.65 and in Xoxocotlán 7.89, both out of a total of 12 possible services.

This data confirms what was expected when analyzing the socioeconomic variables: overall, the families in Xoxocotlán are in a relatively better situation in terms of goods and services than the residents of Monte Alban.

More parents (mothers) in Xoxocotlán say that their children spend the majority of their time with them or a family member (86.2%) than in Monte Alban (62.4%). The number of parents in Xoxocotlán who state that their children spend more time with their brothers and sisters or friends is lower than in Monte Alban.
There is a higher percentage of children in Monte Alban whose parents (mothers) say they share work with them, but more children in Xoxocotlán whose parents say that they share their homework with them (54.2% versus 41.4% in Monte Alban), meals (87.1% versus 71.5% in Monte Alban) and recreational activities (42.6%, versus 33.7% in Monte Alban).

The percentage of parents who say that their children spend their free time watching television, playing with brothers, sisters and cousins or playing sports is very similar.

The parents confirm that 37.7% of children in Monte Alban, and 22.9% in Xoxocotlán, work. Only 11.3% of children in Monte Alban and 6.3% of children in Xoxocotlán work daily, and only 10.9% of those from Monte Albán and 14.3% of those from Xoxocotlán do so for more than 6 hours. Of those who work, 6.7% in Monte Alban and 10% in Xoxocotlán clean, 5.5% of those from Monte Albán and none from Xoxocotlán work in the streets and in informal retail, and 4.4% of those who work in Monte Albán and 20% of those who work in Xoxocotlán do so in formal retail.

This confirms the hypothesis that the families in Xoxocotlán are more stable than in Monte Albán and that the children have less psychological and behavioral difficulties than the children in Monte Albán.
The results and the changes in people
This section responds directly to one of the purposes of this study.

› Educational activities

68.8% of the beneficiaries interviewed believe that their child’s attendance at Crecemos (Dijo) has improved their school attendance.

Of those who participate in homework assistance, 71% say that their school attendance has improved. 42.6% of the beneficiaries interviewed consider that since their child has attended Crecemos (Dijo) their grades have significantly improved, and 30.9% think that they have improved. 26.6% believe that they haven’t improved or have improved very little.

Of the respondents whose children attend homework assistance, 50.8% consider that their grades have improved significantly.

The respondent beneficiaries consider that their children at Crecemos (Dijo) have learned how to do their homework (17.7%), how to socialize with others (12.9%), math (8.1%), reading and writing (14.6%), and many other activities that have very low percentages, singing, dance, better diet, discipline, respect, sharing, computing, sports, self-expression and study habits.

Only 12% of respondents whose children participate in homework assistance don’t know a Crecemos (Dijo) teacher. 39.7% know them a bit, and 47.6% know them well. 34.9% speak with them regularly.

57.1% consider that their health has improved a lot. Among the differences noted, the following stand out: they eat more, their weight has increased, they eat a wider variety of food, they socialize more with other children, they’ve grown, their constitution has improved, they don’t get ill, they are more enthusiastic, more independent.

39.7% of the respondents think that the food at the Crecemos (Dijo) refectory is very good, 59% think it’s good. 82% consider that the refectory has influenced the family’s dietary habits.

They consider the refectory to have been very important for the hygiene of food in the family 48.6%, for the variety of foods 56%, and for the number of meal times 45%. 48% of respondents know what foods their children should eat. 38% actually eat a balanced diet.

6.1 Subjective considerations of respondents

Regarding the qualitative information from the systemization workshop and the interviews, we found the following interpretations of the results and changes made:

6.1.1 In Relation to Homework Assistance and Primary Remedial Support

In Xoxocotlán Crecemos (Dijo) is perceived as a mechanism for reducing time spent on the streets and watching television.

› In Xoxocotlán there are children who spend the whole day on the streets, roaming, they watch a lot of TV. At least the Crecemos (Dijo) ones don’t watch so much TV (E2)

The parents value this service a lot because the children are learning to read, they’re doing better at school and can control their hyperactivity better. They also highly value the method of learning through play:

› My son likes to go (to homework assistance) because he spends time with other children. You see they helped him a lot, because (one day because of confusion no one picked him up from kinder) he got scared. Now when he goes to school, he doesn’t cry like before. With learning, specifically reading, when they gave them five hours, he made the most of it, because they finished their homework, then they played – playing and learning – then they’d read or join words… He was the boy that didn’t read well, he wasn’t going to move up, and in the middle of first grade they said that maybe he’d fail. But he learned to read with Crecemos (Dijo). (EB2)

› He liked going to (homework assistance) because they did handicrafts and lots of creative games. They taught him dominoes, chess, and all that, snakes and ladders. They combined it and he liked it. I saw
that by playing he learned. And teaching singing, because my son had a problem pronouncing ‘t’, and quick as anything, my son now pronounces ‘t’. They never helped him at school. (EB2)

› They helped my children a lot. Up till now they have good grades, none have failed (secondary). They got sponsors, the three had scholarships. (EB6)

› Because (my daughter) had learning problems, we sent her on the Crecemos (Dijo) course. It’s worked for me because she makes more effort at school. Before she didn’t worry about doing the homework at all… Now she does homework, writes, reads well and has improved in math. She was very rebellious, she’d go off sometimes… At school they said she didn’t sit at her place… She didn’t let the others work, or she left the classroom. Now her teacher says she can’t believe it, that she used to go out, that she was restless. She learned to obey and sit in her place. She obeys me now. She sits down on her own to do her homework… (EB7)

› We know about good experiences with Crecemos (Dijo). Children who were hyperactive and thanks to Crecemos (Dijo) they’ve sorted themselves out. One boy was terrible. Now gets good grades. They helped him for six years. (EB2)

The authorities in Xoxocotlán also consider Crecemos (Dijo)’s work with homework assistance and remedial support to be important:

› We found out about Crecemos (Dijo) when they arrived here because my children came by here. We didn’t know them very well back then because we’d just pick up our children, but we saw that they did tutor them. The teacher of one of my children asked “and your son, where is he tutored?” We started to say “la escuela.” My son talked about UFOs, planets he was really interested in researching, because they taught him here. From then on I said: “Crecemos (Dijo) is an institution that does support and does help.” We signed a condemnation with Crecemos (Dijo) for ten years. The Assembly authorized it. We are fortunate to have lots of primary, secondary and higher education teachers and professors in our colonia. (EA2)

› I’m happy and congratulate this association because in the State of Oaxaca very few real educational spaces actually become a reality. In my three years (as President of the colonia’s Directive Committee), I’ve noticed the progress of our children who come here. There are sporting, cultural and academic activities. For that Crecemos (Dijo) is a sure thing. (EA2)

› Crecemos (Dijo)’s presence has raised the academic, cultural and social level, and also in terms of buildings, because the entrance is here (where premises are, remodeled by the colonia), the main entrance, and look at the building. Crecemos (Dijo)’s building gives the colonia its image. (EA2)

› When my son was younger everything Crecemos (Dijo) did helped him a lot, he’s not failed the primary, secondary or high school. He was very aggressive, it helped him a lot. (EA2)

Regarding the schoolteachers, many see changes in the children; some attributed to the work of Crecemos (Dijo):

› (“Ernesto” came to my group with problems because he had discipline problems in first grade. They didn’t want him to be accepted into third grade. But M3 did accept him and noticed that the group rejected him.) The boy has advanced, there is more integration and he’s improving. There were complaints about him recently. We talked. He’s overcome a lot of his problem. He doesn’t have those problems anymore. Since January he’s changed completely. In this group, I don’t have complaints about him anymore, he brings his homework, there’s been a marked change. (M3)

› On one occasion a señorita from Crecemos (Dijo) came to do an interview. I told her that ‘Leonardo’ had problems with dyslexia, that he confused b with d and had spelling problems. He’s improved a lot.

The school has participated with drawings about water, protecting the environment. They’re the
activities that have been carried out here. The children also talk to me and I’ve told them that’s great, go. They’ve told me about assistance with homework at Crecemos (Dijo), courses they’ve given, computer courses, English. I tell them that any course is good, they should go. Also with the parents, when a child’s behind I always tell them to send their children to the community centers. Send them there. And sometimes they even ask me if it’s good to go, it’s great. Yes, sports are good, they should go and burn off some energy. (M4)

Everyday I ask them:
- What did you eat?
- Well, such and such—... I ask:
- Why didn’t you eat?
- Because I don’t like it—...
And I explain why they should eat. Always, every day, I always ask. Always their milk, their breakfast. The vegetables, Jell-O, desert, papaya, sometimes tuna. (M3)

In Monte Alban when asked about what they do in Crecemos (Dijo) the children mention, computing, homework, chess, secretarial courses, and poetry.

The teacher helps with our homework. He corrects us. (GF2)

6.1.2 Regarding the preschool

The preschool in Monte Alban has received a good evaluation for its staff and is well received by the population:
- The children are out of step with their development, their language is poor. There are three year olds that hardly speak. Their mobility and behavior are interesting because they’ve advanced a lot. In socialization, the moms have learned to get along because of their children. The real work is with the mom. If she doesn’t go, the development isn’t real. (E5)
- My baby girl didn’t want to talk and was a bit isolated, now she’s a bit more open and expressive. Next year she won’t be there because the school isn’t valid officially, but the girl is going to be more awake. The teachers had a talk and agreed that the children that come from Crecemos (Dijo)’s preschool are going to be in the same group so they learn more. All of these possibilities benefit me. What’s important is that they are ok, that they have the attention that you can’t give them, that they have the capacity to learn, to know. (EB1)

6.1.3 In relation to the refectory

The refectory is considered to be extremely positive and a high impact project by all involved.

Crecemos (Dijo)’s members value the progress and the educational results:
- I’ve seen positive changes in the refectory. There are many that now think and meditate before answering, but others just guess hoping it’s right. But there are those who think about the purpose of a cereal, a protein, a fruit... (E3)

One worker in the refectory, and resident of Monte Alban, comments:
- ...I didn’t know anything, I had my eyes closed. Now we’ve been learning, I’ve discovered a lot of things. Actually, everyday I feel like I’ve got my eyes like this (she shows a circle with her thumb and index finger). I’m surprised by everything I’ve discovered... For example, first of all the way to eat... cheaply but balanced. Now we don’t fill up on just rice or soup. We weren’t educated about how to eat. (EB8)

Parents are full of praise for the refectory:
- The refectory has been a great help, because I can’t give them the breakfast they receive there. There’s a great variety of food, nutrition. When would I have the opportunity to give them milk everyday, or fruit? My daughter hated fruit, she didn’t like it, wouldn’t eat it, now she eats it. My children didn’t eat vegetables, broccoli, celery, the flavors were unfamiliar, and now they give them everything and they eat it all. I ask the cook: ‘how did you do it?’ so they get to try different flavors, ensuring that it changes a bit, vegetables, the combinations... Sometimes I go all morning to find out more and learn, because you can always learn and know more, not for me, but for the good of the children... It’s not the same to give them what you have at home as giving them the opportunity to eat a great variety of nutrients. They eat fruit and vegetables daily. When we would have thought to give them a lettuce soup, or tomato puree, or broad bean puree, or cream of broad beans...? Sometimes because you’re unfamiliar, you don’t know how to prepare it so you don’t buy it. They teach you how to eat there and now you have to keep up the rhythm. (EB1)
- We were surprised that they gave so many breakfasts to all the children. My son used to get ill a lot and was overweight. Because they started to give him food when he was little he eats everything now: he’ll eat what’s put in front of him, he eats it because in the breakfast they give vegetables... He learned to eat everything. They started to give him vitamins, and then they measured and weighed him. I’d say that with this he started to go up. Now his weight is fine... They give a very nutritious breakfast. They always give fruit, it’s never missing, and their fruit and yogurt, their milk, and they always give them milk. And if they want more, they give them another glass of milk, and fruit. The breakfast is different everyday. (EB5)

Si apprezza l’obiettivo educativo e sociale della mensa:
- I ask the cook how to do it and she explains the steps. She’s very open to questions. There are foods that I hadn’t seen and I ask her how to make them to try them too, learn to cook, not always the same things. And more with the food that they like: lasagna, cream of zucchini soup. We’ve been trying everything. (EB1)

The impact on the children’s health and vitality is recognized:
- It’s helped the integration with everyone, not just with them, but with everyone in our family. It’s helped a lot because they don’t get ill, they don’t get ill so often, with the variety of proteins and vitamins they don’t get ill, which was worse with these changes in weather. Before they got ill a lot. Now they’ve got defenses. (EB1) You can see the diet they’ve had during the week, they’re full of energy, and have the strength to do things. There are children who don’t have the opportunity to have breakfast or lunch and they look sad, worn out, tired, they don’t even want to play, the only thing they want to do is sit down. The children who eat at Crecemos (Dijo) come out running. They want to go to school, to play, after good food. Like my baby girl, who’s going to want to be still? She’s all over the place. (EB1)

There are many benefits for those who go to the refectory:
- They give us a lot of help, they’ve supported us a lot. For example, the other day they gave us a water tank. They’ve helped us with the floor and later the bathroom, they helped us with materials... It’s been a year since they baptized the children. I took advantage and baptized my kids, the
The benefits of the refectory go further than the children, to mothers who need it, and this is valued:

I was happy to go to the (refectory) with my four daughters, and they also gave me (breakfast). Later they said: ‘Now you look well, now we can give your breakfast to another child.’ They gave lovely breakfasts to my girls. Because sometimes we don’t have the food they give us there at home. Sometimes you don’t have enough money to buy this, or that, or the other… You can’t. I have a girl who suffered a lot from pains in her bones, her feet and her head… because she needed vitamins. All of a sudden she got sick… The doctor came (from the refectory) and told me she had anemia and she was close to getting leukemia… Now, thanks to God she doesn’t suffer those pains, she’s improved… (EB3)

The contribution to school performance is also recognized:

My life changed when my children started to go to the refectory. They go and have breakfast. And now they’ve started to go to the computer courses, English, secretarial courses, the little one in the kinder. They gave us a water tank. I didn’t have anywhere to store my water, sometimes I kept it in the washing machine. They gave everyone a water tank. I’m happy because my children are learning. They teach them things that I can’t. Before they spent all their time playing in the street, fighting. Now they know how to use cutlery, they eat everything. They didn’t eat vegetables before, now they even eat tomato on its own… I swear if Crecemos (Dijo) had started years ago, I would have got ahead, or done a degree or something. My life and those of many people would have changed. The truth is at the beginning, when I saw all the support, I said what are they going to ask for in return? On the contrary, up till now they’re just helping us more and more. My life is different now because I don’t have to worry that my children will go without food. There are things I don’t understand in their homework and they say “well, I’ll do it at the refectory,” and that’s it, they get ten. The two older ones do very well at school. The other is the best in her class with an average of 9.8. Without Crecemos (Dijo), the truth is I don’t think I’d have gotten through it. They even baptized my children, it’s all a blur it happened so quickly. (EB4)

The refectory has been very important for Monte Alban’s authorities:

The service that has helped a lot is the kitchen. At the beginning there were few people. They started with 200 children, but after it went down, but with the work of the social workers and the work of this group more have rejoined and they’ve got a lot of children. This service helps the diet of the children a lot. (EA1)

The refectory is judged favorably by other institutions:

One day I arrived unannounced. I had a delicious breakfast. The mothers are very involved, at they end they gather and wash the dishes. It’s very integral… (E15)

The children also like the refectory, although they have criticisms:

Because they give us a good breakfast and healthy food. They give vitamins to some. (GF2)

(The nutritious things they give us are) fruit and vegetables. Avocado. All the food. The vegetables, the fruit, the spinach. (GF2)

In general they like the food.

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In general they like the food.

I don’t like the carrot soup. Nor the celery or mushroom soups. (GF2)

They eat differently at home:

Soup. Rice. I ate beef. I ate pasta with chorizo. I ate chicken soup. Sometimes we even eat mole (GF2).

Before the refectory opened the children would eat the following for breakfast:


The children asked the refectory’s cook for:

Really spicy enchiladas.

Potato chips.

Mango.

Strawberry cake.

Really spicy enchiladas with beef. (GF2)

Some changes:

I don’t eat potato chips anymore. (GF2)

6.1.4 Regarding other Crecemos (Dijo) services

Regarding the preadolescent program:

The Crecemos (Dijo) staff considers the advances to be positive:

At the beginning there was aggression between them, trying to cheat, losing control. Bit by bit they began to accept the rules, the need to wait their turn, not to cheat. (E7)

The adults also value it:

I was looking at a program they bring for youths, adolescents and its good, so they have an idea of the risks, so they don’t fall into bad company, bad habits, and here in the community, without the need to move. (EB1)

Regarding the workshops:

The testimony of one young woman is eloquent regarding its usefulness:

Also up there in the workshop… they taught me to make bags. I learned there and I’m making them… I don’t have to tell my husband how much I make. I saved and I bought myself a little sewing machine. Now I make aprons, cloth bags. People have even brought me clothes to repair. (EB3)

About Crecemos (Dijo)’s work in general:

The authorities in Monte Alban hold the work of Crecemos (Dijo) in high esteem:

I have known Crecemos (Dijo) since the beginning when it started working with children and their studies. Bit by bit it’s picked up force. It’s done lots of social work here in the colonia.

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Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, Indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

They created the kitchen, they started to give food. Then Susana helped a lot with housing issues. They've supplied lots of people with Rotoplas (water tanks) who didn't have one to store their water. They have a program for lavatories. They've worked very well. There was a group of people who were against them taking this place. I was one of the people who supported the señora Socorro so she could stay… Their work has been really good, really, sincerely. They've helped a lot of people and particularly on the Day of the Child. All the children are happy because they receive support, affection. That's why we should tell the parents that they should also give something, cleaning, participate in the tequío. There are a lot of negative people, they only come to ask for help. (EA1)

They've had very good projects so people can have work, but we're very apathetic. People haven't known how to make the most of it. They brought carpentry, electricity, dressmaking, and beauty. Unfortunately, it's not been made the most of. Only two or three people come and the teachers get exasperated. (EA1)

6.2 Change in people
Crecemos (Dijo) has had an impact on people through their outreach and in turn the people's participation in activities and their testimonials have been documented in the appropriate places. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that there has been a remarkable impact resulting in fundamental transformation in some people who have been in contact with the organization for longer and in a more systematic way. Among them are some mothers and others who began sending their children to the refectory and now work with Crecemos (Dijo).

6.2.1. The value of people
It is possible to note in the participants, and they themselves communicate it in various forms, a positive change in their self-perception and their personal dignity:

- I've learned a lot… I talk loads now, I didn't use to talk at all. If I didn't like something I kept it to myself and it was the same when I liked something, gosh. For two years if I liked something, I laughed or something, but if I didn't I simply didn't speak (…) I felt that my character changed a lot, because before I was very grumpy… In every aspect this work has helped me a lot. I've changed as a mother, as a wife, as a human being… (E13)

- I like what I do. I never expected to be where I am now. (E5)
- … They've taught me a lot by working, to do well, organize myself above all. (…) I feel like new, I like what I do. I never expected to be where I am now. (E5)
- Another thing I've learned: before I didn't offer my work, I didn't say "I offer you everything, God, Jesus, I offer you my work," whether it be good or bad, however the day went. I didn't. I was stuck with the idea that "ah, I've got to do it!" I can't be bothered. … Now, "I'm going to do this" and I enjoy it. This has helped me a lot. It's all been a great discovery to be where I am, in the refectory… (E8).

They surprise themselves because they've become actors in living their own lives.

- … before, for example, to start with I didn't know the people in my village. Although, I live in the village, there were people who although I saw them, I didn't know where they lived or whose family they were from. Now, with this job I've met a lot of people, and see where they live. To relate more to people, with children more than anything… I'm concerned with what they're living, when they tell me that the little cousins fought. I'm concerned with the children's experiences, the situation of the moms, that they don't have money, the husband doesn't have work. I'd like to have a load of work for everyone, so there'd be enough. (…) … I have that type of relationship with the mothers now. I feel comfortable, I feel good when I feel like I contribute to a solution. (E5).

- I went to sell my embroidery, I made cuddly toys, knitted and by hand. I sold them cheap because I wanted a little money, because I didn't have any, and well, they'd say it was very expensive and I'd lower it a bit just to get some money. And what ever I got I was happy, now I bring fruit and little things for my girls. And yes, we've suffered a lot but we are progressing. (a mother).

- I've progressed, I really want to work, and I want to get my children ahead, because I don't want them to experience what I did. Thanks to them they're really getting ahead. (a mother).

- Well yes, now I know that I know a bit about what they give to eat, I ask the cook a bit about how to do it, or what the ingredients are and she tells me how to season, to fry, to liquidize and she tells me the steps to make the menu, the dish… (a mother).

- Yes, she likes to go, she feels good going. And when she started, I served her a lot because she started to improve quickly. Then when I went to see the schoolteacher to see how she was doing, she told me she'd improved a lot. And now I've got to talk to her again so she makes an effort. I talk to the schoolteacher. When a month or a month and a half passes I go and see how she's going, if she does her homework. (a mother).

An observer was amazed by these changes:

- What I admire about Socorro, what they achieved with the sewing workshop, what they achieved with those women, who aren't a great number, but I think that those four or five that are in the workshop know that they're not going to die of hunger, they know they've got a bit more income, with effort, but that's how you promote development. Or the mothers come to help wash and clean. I think it's an impressive stronghold, being there listening to the nutritionist say what something does and although she's washing dishes she's noticing and incorporating it in her daily life, something more than beans and rice, that's already a small step. (E13)
6.2.2. Authentic relationships
Bit by bit a more authentic way of living in relationships emerges:

… I want to help this señora, I want to help her in a good way; not tell her what she has to do, but invite her and if she wants to I’ll help her, and if not, well, I won’t. Well, I was helped. (…) We get all types here, annoyed, sad, happy. You can’t talk to everyone, but yes, I’d like to understand them and maybe, although I won’t be able to sit down and talk with them but give them their space. (E8)

Personally this has been a really lovely job. I’ve grown, in the sense that at the beginning it was I’ll come and help with the homework. Not any more. Now I need to know more, know why they don’t come. I worry if they leave and haven’t understood, I worry if they leave and I haven’t had the chance to check their homework. (E1)

Why? If you love your children teach them how to fish, don’t give them fish ready to eat. Because the children just pass through Crecemos (Dijo) and after they carry on with their lives. While they’re in Crecemos (Dijo), the best gift is to teach them something, educate them about something, for example discipline, which will be useful for life. (E2)

6.2.3 Positive social relationships
Although difficulties are perceived in the social climate in the colonia, another dynamic has begun:

What happens is that the people here are really selfish, if they get something they don’t share with others, they keep it for themselves; they’re just very selfish, the truth is I didn’t know anything about this, I knew that they charged 20 pesos, I think, for each child’s breakfast and I said:

- No, when would I pay? - and also I had five – Well, no – I said. – No!

and that was it. I tell you, we went to Mass and I met the teacher Rosalinda and she asked me:

- Wouldn’t you like to?- she said – Well yes - I told her. (a mother).

After I met a señora coming for breakfast and I said:

- Where are you going? - I said – I always see you pass by with your children.-

She passed by up there. And she says that down there they give breakfasts to children and that I have to take my children because they’re little so they can go. And because of what I’m like, I chat and ask. So I say: - Hey, are there more places? Do you know? -

She told me: - go and see the person in charge there, see what they say - . And that’s how I came. (a mother).

She entered a year ago because her classmate went there for the course, then she told her then as my girl wasn’t doing well at school, she was low, in math and in Spanish she’s always had this problem, when the mom of her little friend told me that there was a course where they helped with homework and subjects that weren’t going well. That’s how I got interested in going and asking and getting her in there. (a mother)

There are children for who we are now a part of their life, we’re even part of their family now. Because the mothers tell us, the days she doesn’t come they get frustrated, she’s used to coming every afternoon. (E5)

The authorities recognize it:

They’re reliable, they’re people, I’ve met them, they’re people who really want to work. I’ve seen it; I’ve seen the interviews they’ve had. Because, look, here in Oaxaca everyone knows each other. Really, the best promotion that you can get is by word of mouth. (E11)

50 They are referring to an industrial size blender which Crecemos (Dijo) had requested in funding years ago, it is referred to as ‘famous’ because it got their attention the fact that a small NGO would need such a big blender.

It is often tempting to feel like giving up hope:

› You have to work on the human relationships, that’s what’s missing. But sometimes people don’t want to go, because some have got to work and others have other things to do. (E3)

An active role born out of positive experiences wins:

› I’ve learned… to value people, because I also used to think, I always said that poverty isn’t in conflict with cleanliness and a señora used to go really, really dirty. And I got annoyed, but I never said anything. I don’t think about how this señora could be in this situation and not have anyone to get her out of the abyss she’s in. Maybe she doesn’t want to be like that. I’ve got no reason to get annoyed. I learned that, everyone has his or her own values, she may have some kind of problem. Better than thinking that I’d like to change this señora, I should change how I think about others. (E8)

Managing to work together and building towards a common good:

› We’ve started in the public spaces that the authorities lent us, actually in in Xoxocotlán we’re building on the colonia’s land. (P6)

When we received our posts, myself, the treasurer here, and the secretary who isn’t present, our concern was to remodel the space that we have here because it was also our meeting room, because this was just one room where Crecemos (Dijo) was, every time we had meetings we moved the furniture. It was awkward because the teacher arrived and you had to clean again, and in a way it’s uncomfortable that they move your things around sometimes.

… talking with Socorro she said: - If you give us the facilities, I could see where I could find the support to build, to rebuild our space - , and that’s what she did. We’ve helped, we’ve contributed with a bit of material, a bit of wire we had, some bricks we had, gravel we had here, a bit of sand that was our contribution so this building could be built. (EA2)

› They facilitated a lot of things because they gave us a nice room within the town hall, although it was small, but because we were just starting out there was enough furniture. They gave it to us, we took the materials, but well it still wasn’t what it is today. After as we were growing and they also needed the room where we were, we went to another one that was outside but in the same town hall. We were great there but then we started to grow and the room started to be too small, so the same authorities gave us the room where we are now, which is quite large. (E5)

And even the “experts” noticed this, occasional visitors used to working with projects:

› We stopped visiting Crecemos (Dijo). I went back in a personal capacity two years later. By then the population had tripled and there wasn’t enough equipment, even the famous industrial equipment.50 It was a real pleasure because it wasn’t just the breakfast anymore, there was also the preoccupation that the children were clean, that they brushed their teeth, they wanted to go to the restroom in a respectable way, there was an area for those who couldn’t go to kindergarten, so they could get used to going to school, because they told us that there were lots of children accustomed to working. (E15)
Conclusions and perspectives on development
Sylvia Schmelkes

1. Monte Albán and Xoxocotlán are two colonias with very different socioeconomic conditions and services, which is reflected in the socioeconomic and cultural level of the families. Although there are conditions of poverty and even extreme poverty in Xoxocotlán, it is not the norm. In comparison, in Monte Albán although the conditions of services have improved, also as a result of Crecemos (Dijo)’s work supporting the construction of bathrooms, floors and the donation of water tanks, the conditions of poverty and extreme poverty are much more generalized. The schooling of the population is notably lower. These conditions of poverty also generate a violent environment, including mistreatment and neglect, family breakups, instability, alcoholism, gangs and delinquency which are much more evident than in the case of Xoxocotlán. Crecemos (Dijo) has, correctly, opted to intensify its work in Monte Albán, which is undoubtedly the place that most needs their services. The density of people attended in this colonia is much higher than in the other, as well as the diversity of services offered. This coincides with Crecemos (Dijo)’s orientation towards more vulnerable populations.

› Crecemos (Dijo) seems to be benefiting most those who most need it. In general a good performance in each one of its projects can be observed as well as a good acceptance of each one by the population.

From the qualitative information important hypothesis arise about the effects of Crecemos (Dijo):

› About the homework assistance and the remedial support in primary school. The parents, on a subjective level, really value the work of Crecemos (Dijo) because the children are learning to read, they are doing better at school, and they manage their hyperactivity better. They also highly value the methodology of learning through play.

› About the preschool. This service is also highly valued by the population benefited. Nevertheless, there is a bottleneck perceived, as it is not accredited by the SEP. Also they would like the work to include more children, for which a better building in better condition becomes indispensable. There are problems with lack of security on the premises where the preschool is that are identified by parents and staff.

› About the refectory. This is without a doubt the most valued service by the population of beneficiaries and the authorities of the colonia – curiously this is not the case for the schoolteachers who do not seem to have heard of it. The important difference between the nutritional value of what they eat at home and what they are given at the refectory is notable and very clearly perceived by the population. The perception perceived by the educational and social focus and its impact on the health and vitality of the children, their generosity in their attention to mothers who need support, and its effect on school performance. There is no doubt that the refectory fulfills an essential function in conditions of extreme poverty such as Monte Albán. Regarding its impact on the nutritional education of the beneficiaries, while there are some indicators that this is happening, it is necessary to keep reinforcing the educational link between the refectory and the mothers. Despite the fact that it seems that there is a greater knowledge of what they should eat at home. This has been difficult to convert into practice, as at home they continue to eat poorly balanced foods which are too high in carbohydrates.

› About other projects. The workshops in professional training are highly valued by the benefi-
Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

(Dijo), is the indigenous population. In Xoxocotlán the percentage of the population which considers itself to be indigenous is small – 4.4%. But in Monte Albán the number is considerable, nearly a third of the population. We know about the conditions of increased poverty and exploitation of indigenous people in Mexico in general, which means that a presence like Crecemos (Dijo) is very important to facilitate cohesion between different ethnic and religious groups. It has been demonstrated that positive time spent together is capable of reinforcing solidarity and responsible initiatives towards a common good.

3. In Monte Albán there is a clear problem with the instability of employment which is, without a doubt the basis of the extreme poverty as much as the emotional problems which are derived from the necessity of looking for an income, above all, by the mothers, which must leave the children at least partially neglected. This situation is the basis of many of the problems of childhood in Monte Albán and should be addressed. The efforts made to offer training courses and vocational development still have not produced the results necessary to limit this problem. It is true that while the socioeconomic problem is not combated at its root it will still be necessary to attend to the consequences of the problem. Of course attention to the consequences of this damaging socioeconomic problem which Monte Albán is suffering is indispensable.

4. Crecemos (Dijo) has been slowly maturing and is ever more conscious of a change in orientation from assistance towards education. They are convinced that this is really crucial: that people change due to their own free will through education, learning about autonomy in the search for their own development. In this sense Crecemos (Dijo) has a big task ahead of it and work to do: progressively systematizing their methods of intervention so they become replicable in similar situations of poverty and vulnerability.

At this point in the Association’s growth, it is desirable to further reinforce its links with other NGOs which work in the area, or those at a national level with an educational orientation. In this way the work of Crecemos (Dijo), along with AVSI as their interlocutor, and the government organizations that operate in the community, will benefit as it continues to professionalize and grow. Their experience can also be extended to other projects with common goals.

At this point working with a network will allow them to maintain an open and fertile circle of reflection about the reality, not only locally, but also regionally and nationally and the direction that they should take with future projects.

5. Crecemos (Dijo) began working with youths and since then continued to work with children. Except for a small project with pre-adolescents, their work has focused on children. The orientation towards the whole child is part of its philosophy: their psychological integrity, their school performance, their diet and as a consequence their health, and their family and social relationships. There is ever more preoccupation with younger children with the concern to achieve more impact, because it has been noted that if they do not start early the children arrive at Crecemos (Dijo) with severe problems already in affect. The sphere of action for work with children has become broader and is being articulated in an interesting way.

Nevertheless, it is fundamental to continue educational work with adults, therefore we suggest further reinforcement of the link that already exists between the work with children and adults, above all at the level of nutritional education for the mothers, community organization with the support of the refectory, training in education and development of the child through the remedial courses and homework assistance. If the educational orientation of the activities can reach the parents as well as the children it can have much more impact.

It is considered important that the communication between Crecemos (Dijo) and the schoolteachers of the children is increased, of course in relation to the refectory, but also in the remedial work for primary and academic support, as it is very advisable to have synergy with the work that attends to the academics of children and their teachers.

6. It is important to appreciate the way in which Crecemos (Dijo) has managed to share its philosophy and way of working with its entire staff. The generosity, the commitment, the concern for people, the search for authentic relationships, the conviction regarding the freedom of people, all enjoy a general consensus and is clearly assimilated by the staff, whatever the position or their time at the organization. The communication of these values has even been possible with people in conditions of poverty in the same community, some of which have found work at Crecemos (Dijo), to the degree that Crecemos (Dijo) has transformed them in a deep and integral way.
Impact evaluation of the service

by Silvia Vernizzi
Applying multivariate statistical techniques to data analysis

The data from the questionnaires applied to beneficiaries of the service was statistically analyzed using multivariate techniques. They are very useful in a context such as this, where a great wealth of information is derived from the data collected through the questionnaire. Firstly, these techniques permit the analysis of indicators with a compound mode and discover the connections between them. Secondly, they permit the identification of individuals with similar characteristics to later be able to define more specific and appropriate interventions. Thirdly, they permit the clarification of the complex mechanism of the effects of the interventions carried out in a population and use them for simulations in order to make predictions, to analyze the changes that could be achieved if certain types of intervention were intensified.

To summarize, the objectives of using these analysis techniques on the data are:

1. **An exploration of the data itself.** Multiple Correspondence Analysis was applied, which is very useful for summarizing the most important information from the investigation in a few dimensions. Once the summarized factors were identified a Cluster Analysis was carried out to identify groups of individuals with similar characteristics.

2. **Impact evaluation.** A structural equation model was used, **PLS Path Modeling**, which helps to determine causal links between latent variables. This model was applied to evaluate the extent in which Crecemos (Dijo), the family and the economic conditions generate an impact on a child’s performance.
To explore the internal relationships among the data from the beneficiary questionnaires, Multiple Correspondence Analysis and Cluster Analysis were used. Multiple Correspondence Analysis is very useful in a context where the variables are qualitative. It permits the extraction of the principle factors that best explain the results of the investigation in a hierarchical form, and also the summarization of the most significant information in a few dimensions. It also permits an explorative study of the relationships between the categories of variables. It is expected that the factors summarize the economic, family, sanitary and housing conditions and access to services, which is the principal information collected in the questionnaire. Once the factors that best explain the changes in the categories of variables have been extracted, the Cluster Analysis was applied. This technique permits the identification of groups of children with common characteristics and later defines an appropriate intervention based on these attributes. It is expected that there will be groups of children with different economic, housing and sanitary conditions, where the family and Crecemos (Dijo) act in different ways.

1.1 Multiple Correspondence Analysis

Through Multiple Correspondence Analysis the “factors” are extracted which are most apt at summarizing the information in the data; each one of these “factors” represents a latent aspect in the structure of associations in the data. In particular, the first 5 factors that this technique extracts explain 70.13% of the total variables. This time it was decided to analyze the first two factors, because they are the most explanatory of all the factors. Projecting the variable of the survey on a factorial map (Graph 1.1) provides a visual representation showing the most important associations among the variables. This helps to summarize the great quantity of cross tabulation tables needed for describing the results of the investigation. A point on the map represents every possible answer to each question on the questionnaire. Points which are close together represent strong multiple associations among the corresponding variables. Points that are far apart represent weak associations. In this case, the modality points are graphed (each point represents a modality of the variables) on the factorial plane, defined by the first two factors and their respective contributions to the explanation of the axis (data the size of the points).

The variables are colored according to their area of origin:
- Purple indicates the variables in income
- Fluorescent blue the access to sanitation
- Light blue the availability of water
- Dark blue the characteristics of the house
- Black the place of origin
- Fuchsia the head of the family’s occupation
- Pink their marital status
- Dark green family and dependents
- Yellow child’s schooling
- Red the number of meals a day
- Light grey the child’s job
- Light brown the family’s presence
- Orange belonging to an indigenous group
- Light green the missing values
- Grey the schooling of the parents

By looking at the graph it is possible to interpret the information that is summarized by the two axes:
- the first factor distinguishes the best and worst cases in terms of economic, sanitary and family conditions. Therefore it could be referred to as “quality of life.”
- however, the second factor is primarily composed of the access to health services and the missing data.

The modalities which most contribute to explaining the variability of the first axis, “quality of life”, are related to income and availability of water. Regarding income, the variables that explain a greater proportion of change are diet, transport and services, within which the most significant modalities are “rarely” and “always.”

Table 1.1. Contributions to the first two axes of the variables related to income and availability of water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Contribution to the active categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family income is enough to cover food in the last year?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never_food</td>
<td>Relative weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely_food</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly_always_food</td>
<td>0.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly always_food</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 1.1 - Plan of the first two factors obtained with MCA
Growing together

Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Relative weight</th>
<th>Distance from origin</th>
<th>Axis 1</th>
<th>Axis 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>0.921</td>
<td>1.52632</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most humble jobs (load carrier and builder) are on the left of the graph while on the right appear the most qualified (teacher and accountant).

The presence of the family is higher on the right of the graph: there are frequent family activities while on the left the family activities are occasional; the children spend their free time alone or with acquaintances and do their homework alone or with the help of the Crecemos (Di)o tutor.

The housing characteristics do not explain a great part of the first factor, which describes the quality of life; they are partially distinct. On the left hand side appear those who do not have drainage, refrigerators, gas, electricity or a spacious house but have a kitchen and full bathroom. On the right are those who have cellular phones, washing machines, telephones and spacious houses but do not have a kitchen.

The number of meals is partially distinct to the factor “quality of life,” in fact on the right appears those who have three meals a day with their family as well as those who only have one, while on the left are those who have two meals. The dependent relatives are not particularly distinctive either, in fact on the left are those who have a lower number of dependent relatives along with those who have a higher number.

In this context Xoxocotlán is located on the right and Monte Alban is near to the center. It is evident that the residents of Xoxocotlán are characterized by a significantly higher quality of life. Older people are related to better conditions and the younger people to worse conditions. As was expected in this context, the indigenous people are linked to conditions with greater need. On the left of the graph are those who do not attend school, in one respect because they are evidently poorer and for the other because they have not reached a school age (this category is similar to that of ages 0-4 years).

The variables related to the “participation in the service” are explained better by the second rather than the first axis, as is demonstrated by the observation of the contributions.

Table 1.1.2. The contributions to the first two axes with the variables of participation in health services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Relative weight</th>
<th>Distance from origin</th>
<th>Axis 1</th>
<th>Axis 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your child go to Crecemos (Di)o’s breakfasts?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>5.15385</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1.948</td>
<td>0.19403</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your child go to Crecemos (Di)o’s homework support?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.705</td>
<td>0.36364</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.620</td>
<td>2.75000</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often does your child go to Crecemos (Di)o?</td>
<td>1_2week</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>33.28570</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3week</td>
<td>0.271</td>
<td>7.57143</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diario</td>
<td>1.841</td>
<td>0.26316</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MissingV87</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>15.00000</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth pointing out that those who attend the homework assistance but not the breakfasts appear on the right side of the factorial plane. This relationship is probably due to the fact that the homework assistance is given in Xoxocotlán and the breakfasts in Monte Alban. This relationship is also confirmed when observing the distribution of the red individual points, of who attends the homework assistance in graph 1.1.1. They are principally located in the right hand side.
1.2 Cluster Analysis

The Multiple Correspondence Analysis has permitted that the fundamental information from the data collected from the questionnaires applied to beneficiaries to be summarized. Based on this information it is possible to identify groups of individuals with homogenous characteristics to detect appropriate, effective and coherent measures for the real needs of the subpopulations.

Cluster Analysis is a technique that allows the segmentation of the sample. This technique permits the examination of data from the perspective of the people interviewed and not from the perspective of the variables of the investigation.

Looking at the dendrogram obtained by the algorithm of hierarchical groupings based on Ward’s criteria, it is clear that the data can be divided into five primary partitions. The first partition distinguishes the individuals with the worst features from the rest of the population, and the second partition is where this last group is subdivided. The fifth partition has a first group composed of the missing values, a second and third group composed of individuals with intermediate characteristics and a fourth group with people with the worst characteristics.

Graph 1.2.1- Dendrogram

The best partition is the fifth, according to what was established by the loss of inertia criteria. Automatic classification was used (a technique which identifies the modalities of variables with the most frequency within the different groups and therefore it demonstrates who are the individuals who belong to the same modalities) to investigate more in-depth the characteristics of each group. 15% of the people belong to the first group, which is of the missing values. This group is effectively associated with eight categories of the missing values and with not attending school. Specifically, the values that are missing are those related to variables of performance, with variables that ask about the participation of the children in the activities, the adults and child’s work. This group is associated with both the missing values and the age category of 0-4 years (80.55%) in the colonia Monte Alban (100%) and the homes with only one room (66.66%).

Table 1.2.1 Characterization of the second group

The second and third groups are made up of people with intermediate characteristics, which although divided by the statistical techniques, are, in fact, very similar. The second group is composed of 6.25% of the population. It is also linked to the categories of missing values, as we will see in Table 1.2.1 it is very close to the first group. These categories of missing values are housing characteristics, whether there is sufficient water and access to health services.

In terms of income, the group is linked by intermediate characteristics: incomes nearly always enough for food (100%), for transport (80%), for parties (100%), rarely enough for clothes (100%) and never enough for electro-domestics (93.33%). There are a high number of family dependents: 4 or more children (100%). Also the characteristics of housing are diverse: the houses do not have kitchens (73.33%), refrigerators (73.33%), but have washing machines (80%). The children are helped with their homework by their brothers and sisters (40%).

The third group represents 14.7% of the population and like the previous group it has intermediate characteristics. Income is rarely enough for electro-domestics (100%), but nearly always for clothes (44.11%) and always for services (76.47%). The majority of the house characteristics are negative: they do not have gas (52.94%), they do not have a kitchen (55.88%), they do not have electricity (20.58%) they do not have a private bathroom (85.29%), but the houses are spacious (47.05%) and have washing machines (61.76%). There is always enough water available for washing (52.94%) and bathing (73.52%). There are a high number of family dependents: with 4 or more children for 67.4% of the population. The family is not very present: the children are helped by their brothers and sisters with homework (55.88%) and spend their free time with them (55.88%) and their friends (17.64%).

51 To carry out the Cluster Analysis the first 5 factors extracted were used, together they explain a large part of the variability (70%).
This group is linked to the participation in the homework assistance group (50%).

Table 1.2.2. Characterization of the third group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characterization by categories of variables</th>
<th>Percentage of group</th>
<th>Percentage of the group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fourth group is bigger (49.17%) and is formed by individuals who, although they are in positions of extreme need, have more positive characteristics than the group of beneficiaries of Crecemos (Dijo)'s service.

They have families that are very present: the parents regularly help with their school work (67.79%), accompany them with meals (91.52%), in religious activities (50%), in recreational activities (35.59%), the children spend their free time with their family (73.72%) and are helped by their mothers with their homework (61.01%).

The income is good enough for clothes (18.64%), education (41.32%), and nearly always for services (42.37%) but rarely for celebrations (34.74%)

The housing characteristics are almost all positive: the houses have gas (94.61%), electricity (96.61%) and cellular phones (71.18%), but do not have washing machines (63.75%). These individuals are from Xoxocotlán (20.33%) and are from an intermediate age group (8 - 11 years, 42.37%).

The group is linked to some of the performance variables: improvements in learning (66.1%), average or above average level of learning (76.27%), stable health (50%) and good communication with parents (35.59%).

Table 1.2.3. Characterization of the fourth group

Characterization by categories of variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of group</th>
<th>Percentage of the group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fifth group is formed by 15.72% of the population. It is the group with the most negative characteristics.

The economic characteristics are abysmal: income is never enough for electro-domestics (81.08%), celebrations (89.18%), services (16.21%) nor education (13.51%) and rarely for food (89.18%), services (83.78%), transport (91.89%) and education (86.48%). The family rarely eats with their children (86.48%), help with homework (100%), religious activities (86.48%), recreational activities (78.37%) and work (51.53%).

The head of the family does a humble job: load carrier (35.13%). There is never enough water for the toilet (56.75%). The homes do not have a private bathroom and the people do not have cellular phones (70.27%).

To summarize the information from these groups it is apparent where the information fits in a factorial plane.

- The first group is very close to the categories of missing data and not attending school.
- The second group is close to the missing values but is found in the center of the plane, and therefore is associated with intermediate characteristics.
- The fifth group is located in the extreme left of the graph and for that reason it is linked to adverse living conditions.
- The fourth group is larger and is composed of people with the most positive characteristics.
- The third group has positive aspects, but is intermediate.
Impact evaluation
2.1 What is an impact evaluation?

The purpose of an impact evaluation is to understand if a program, a service or a project is achieving the desired effect. Effect is understood as a change happening in the subjects of interest which can be causally attributed to the programs and services themselves. But how can you determine if a causal relationship exists? Causality is measured in terms of the difference in the observed results in the variable after the implementation of the program and the value that is observed in its absence. Nevertheless, it is impossible to make this comparison as only one of the two cases is produced in reality: the people have either been participants in the program or not.

But there is a solution to this problem. Rubin (1974) demonstrated that to quantify impact you can compare the group of beneficiaries with a group of non-beneficiaries, only when the initial differences between them are null: therefore it is necessary to adequately define the membership of the control group. However, creating a control group is very difficult because there are inherent disadvantages in the different methods used to create them, a series of difficulties can emerge in terms of ethics and when the control group is non-compliant, among many other possibilities.

One solution for the difficulty of creating a control group (which was adopted in this case) is to measure the degree of intervention of the program on the individual who participated. The hypothesis to be proved is that if a person participates more in the program they achieve greater levels of performance. The impact is not measured by the change in performance, but with the variation in performance in the variation of exposure to the program. This is how you can determine what levels of performance can be achieved if the exposure to the program were to be increased.

2.1.1 The importance of the impact evaluations in economic and social programs and the corresponding evaluation gap.

Programs to improve health, education, literacy, and economic conditions in countries are considered to be essential for global progress by the international community, which is in agreement with the urgent need to improve economic and social conditions.

With this aim, organizations for development along with government organizations and non-government organizations (NGO) have spent millions and millions of dollars. Evaluations in this field have various complementary objectives: to know the processes and situations in the countries benefited, to promote and monitor the quality of services, to make informed judgments about the performance and to inform as to whether the program has achieved its objectives.

The last question involves the impact evaluation or the analysis and documentation of the changes in the target population which can be attributed to a program or a policy and which allows the gathering of information about what works: what kind of actions by national governments, entities for development and others can achieve a change in health, education and other aspects of human wellbeing.

This type of impact evaluation generates knowledge with greater benefits than other evaluations and can be applied to situations that differ from the one in question. Atmospheric this type of evaluation is essential it is rarely applied and this creates an evaluation gap, which in turn creates a large and dangerous problem, because replicating programs whose effects have not been evaluated is unethical.

In 2004, to remedy this situation the Center for Global Development established the Evaluation Gap Working Group, whose objective was to investigate why there was a low occurrence of rigorous impact evaluations in social development programs, financed directly by government institution or with international aid. The Working Group was also established to stimulate a more thorough and higher number of impact evaluations. It worked for 18 months and consulted with more than 100 politicians, project directors, agency staff and experts in evaluation through interviews and meetings.

2.1.2 What is the evaluation gap?

It has been observed that the evaluation gap is caused by two things: first that the governments and donors do not request or do not produce enough impact evaluations and two that the evaluations produced often have methodological problems.

In terms of the first aspect, documentation shows that the United Nations, the multilateral development banks and the governments of developing countries are spending great quantities of resources on evaluations which are useful for monitoring and operative evaluations but they do not use enough resources on the types of studies necessary to evaluate whether the interventions work under certain conditions, what differences they generate and what the costs are.

The second aspect is that even when impact evaluations are commissioned they do not generate useful information because they do not use rigorous methods and data collection. This error is even produced when the changes between beneficiaries are measured, as it cannot be demonstrated that they are the result of the program in question. To avoid these problems it is necessary to design an impact evaluation of a program from the moment the program is designed with the aim of establishing an adequate control group in the initial phase, in fact the impact expected by the program and adequate comparisons can also be established. Poor quality evaluations are misdirected. To understand these issues better it is possible to make a comparison with the field of pharmacology: no doctor could prescribe a medicine without having evaluated its effect. Therefore, all impact evaluations require planning before hand, attention to bias, systematic distortions, time availability and funds.

2.1.3 Where does the evaluation gap come from?

The evaluation gap is generated because there are few incentives and many obstacles to carrying out an adequate impact evaluation. The impact evaluation should be conducted from the beginning of the program. Nevertheless, those who manage projects as well as politicians leave it out, falling short by initially concentrating on the design and implementation. Actually, in the short term an impact evaluation only generates costs, while the benefits are perceived in the long term: this is understood through a process of learning, in which the evidence is created in the long term and in different contexts. This type of knowledge is in part a public good from which everyone can benefit. So, although there are great benefits for investing in this knowledge, the incentives for individuals, organizations or countries are not sufficient to stimulate investments equal to their social value. The temptation is to become a free-rider or to let other people invest in the creation of knowledge with the goal of enjoying its fruits without contributing.

What are the incentives that would encourage institutions to take on the cost of the evaluation? This cost should be compared with the value of the knowledge generated, which can prevent problems as well as help to reach out to a larger number of people with programs which have been tested. The knowledge generated by an impact evaluation is of great value and is critical.
for the public good.

A second obstacle is the fact that evaluations take a long time to generate results (the majority of which take years), so that when the results are available the program is already in an advanced phase if it is not already finished. Nevertheless, in cases where the program is still running when the impact evaluation has been finished the results can be useful for future decision. If the program is finished, the results would have a value for those who are observing similar work in other places or interventions that are based on similar principles. A final observation is that impact evaluations are not a substitute to other theories and models, but that they need monitoring and assessment, evaluations of processes: all of these elements are necessary for it to be successfully executed. The different forms of evaluation are not in competition, they mutually reinforce each other.

2.1.4 What measures should be taken to overcome the evaluation gap?

A growing number of examples show how a good impact evaluation can be feasible, ethical, timely and useful. There is a great interest in the evaluation gap, proved by the fact that there are many initiatives to:

- Increase access to information through magazines, databases, leaflets and bulletins.
- Improve the collection of simple data though the development of aggregate and development indicators.
- Promote specific evaluations with subsidies and different types of funds.

Evaluation Gap Working Group has proposed that in the future there should be a reinforcement of the existing initiatives on behalf of the community and collaboration around a new group of measures to promote more and better impact evaluations. First, the Working Group supports the need to reinforce individual efforts. Governments should intensify existing energies in creating and applying the knowledge from impact evaluations from social programs. This includes reinforcing the monitoring systems and evaluations in general, dedicating resources to impact evaluations, ensure the collaboration of the responsible politicians, project managers and experts in evaluation; increase the level of evidence, facilitate the access to knowledge and resources to impact evaluations, ensure the collaboration of the responsible politicians, project managers and experts in evaluation; increase the level of evidence, facilitate the access to knowledge and resources to impact evaluations.

Promote specific evaluations with subsidies and different types of funds.

To check whether this type of relationship exists between participation in the service and the children’s performance it is necessary to control all of the factors that could have influenced their performance. These factors are the presence of the family in the life of the child and their socio-economic conditions. The most appropriate model to study the existence of these causal links is called PLS Path Modeling, a statistical model with structural equations. This type of model permits the study of the complex structures of causality between concepts that cannot be directly measured – called latent variables. It is clear that concepts that are being examined such as “relational performance” and “presence of the family” cannot be explicitly calculated.

In the model, the latent variables are interconnected and linked to measurable variables – called manifest variables. The PLS-PM is particularly appropriate to study this type of relationships because it does not require distributional hypothesis and is orientated to the prediction. The impact is defined in this case according to the different levels of participation by the individuals in the service and not through the comparison with a group of non-participants.

In the initial hypothesis before the estimate, the model structure is composed of four latent variables, of which three are exogenous (the family, the participation in the service, the economic conditions) and one is endogenous (performance). The endogenous variables are caused by the exogenous variables. For each latent variable, manifest variables were selected, hypothesized and associated with each one. All of the manifest variables are qualitative ordinal (formed by attributes that are susceptible to being ordered) and in the case that they are not, an increasing order has been assumed in function of whether the characteristics are seen as positive or negative. For example, marital status has been transformed into a dichotomous variable (a variable which only takes two values), indicated by the value “1” when the parents of the child are not married and “2” when they are. It could actually be hypothesized that the families with both parents are more stable.

Some variables were constructed from the addition of others. For example, the frequency of activities shared between parents and children is the sum of the scoring of different activities. It was necessary to divide the first latent variable “family” into two more latent variables. This division was made using a statistical technique called Principle Components Analysis 53 and lead to the creation of the latent variables:

- “Composition of the family” which is nearly entirely composed of the variables that define the structural characteristics of the family: marital status, cohabitation with partner, number of children, the school grade reached by the parent, people who the child spends the majority of their time with.
- “Participation of the child’s parents”, linked to the manifest variables which indicate the participation of the parents in the life of the child (but also other aspects): the frequency of activities shared with the children, social work, the frequency with which the parent talks to the teacher about their child and belonging to the Catholic religion.

The second latent variable is constituted, as mentioned, by “participation in the service” and is linked to the number of children per family which attend Crecemos (Dijo)’s services, the breakfasts and the homework assistance, the number of services that they receive and the frequency with which the child participates in Crecemos (Dijo)’s programs.

The third latent variable represents the economic-hygienic conditions of the family. In this case the manifest variables chosen are whether the income is sufficient for the items of primary need, and for luxury items, the number of meals eaten by the family, if there is sufficient water for bathing, for the

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53 This technique can simplify the data by reducing them to a few factors.
PLS Path Modeling can be divided into two types of models: An external model which describes the relationships between the latent variables, and an internal model which describes the relationships between each latent variable and their manifests: each latent variable is a linear combination of its latent variables.

Regarding the estimate of the external model, in Table 2.2.1, coefficients of the linear combinations are yielded which unite each latent variable to their manifest. Taking into account these coefficients, it is possible to identify the manifest variables that most determine the latent variables. The latent variable “family” is principally determined by marital status, by the relationship with the son or daughter and by the level of schooling reached by the parents. In the group that describes the participation of the family in the child’s life, the highest external weight is the frequency of shared activities. In the case of participation in Crecemos (Dijo) the variable with most weight is the frequency of participating in Crecemos (Dijo). The most important coefficient for performance is the variable related to school improvement due to participating in Crecemos (Dijo), relationships and the personality in the last year.

Table 2.2.1 - The external model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent variable</th>
<th>Manifest variables</th>
<th>External weight</th>
<th>External weight (normalized)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>marital status</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>0.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>level_schooling</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>0.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationships_child</td>
<td>0.541</td>
<td>0.321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To measure the goodness of fit for the internal model with the data, $R^2$ is used between the endogenous variables of the structural equation. The value used is 0.205, which is very low considering that the index takes values between 0 and 1. Nevertheless, through statistical hypothesis testing it can be said that this value is significantly distinct to zero (p-value equal to 0.00).

The equation estimated with the OLS method of the internal model is:

$$\text{performance} = 0.064 + 0.173 \text{famiglia} + 0.053 \text{partecipazione} + 0.329\text{CRECEMOS (Dijo)}$$

It is clear that the path coefficient – term meaning the coefficients of linear combination of internal models – of the latent variable “participation in Crecemos (Dijo)” is the greatest, followed by the family and family participation. Then, by increasing the participation in the service the performance would increase much more, rather than increasing the influence of the other two covariates. In Table 2.2.2., the coefficients of correlation between latent variables and performance: are not very high and the highest value is taken in correspondence with that of Crecemos (Dijo) (0.23). There are also contributions (in percentages) of the latent variables predecessors in the index of the exogenous latent variable: it is clear that Crecemos (Dijo) has the most contribution (43.76%), followed by family (29.14%) and by participation (27.10%). Therefore, the performance of the children is affected first by the impact of Crecemos (Dijo)/service, secondly by the family and then by the participation of the family in the child’s life. It is clear that Crecemos (Dijo) really has an effect on the generation of improvement in individuals within the school environment, interpersonal relationships and health.
Tab. 2.2.2 - Impact and contribution of the variables of performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Crecemos (Dijo)</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>0.230</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>0.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path coefficient</td>
<td>0.199</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation* Coefficient</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to R² (%)</td>
<td>43.761</td>
<td>27.100</td>
<td>29.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Accumulated</td>
<td>43.761</td>
<td>70.861</td>
<td>100.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results obtained are summarized in the graph 2.2.1 which shows the structural model, with the contributions, the path coefficient and the respective importance of each structural variable. The thickness of the red arrows is the result of the values of the standardized external coefficients.

Graph 2.2.1 – “Performance” model

Therefore, what can be said in conclusion is that the improvements in the performance of the children beneficiaries of Crecemos (Dijo) in the school environment, in health and in interpersonal relationships are principally caused by the service. Within this a very important role is played by the frequency with which children participate. To have increased improvements they should ensure that those who are already benefiting continue to be more involved. This is an aspect that it would be timely to take up in the future.

Also the two latent variables, which represent the intervention of the family, have an impact on performance, although it is lower. In the future, Crecemos (Dijo) could involve the family more to generate an improvement in relationships between parents and children.

Bibliography


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Conclusions
Why evaluate

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Growing together
Project Evaluation for “Education and reduction of poverty in a low income, suburban, indigenous community” in Oaxaca, Mexico
This project is part of an educational journey, a path taken over the years we have been working. On route everything has become an opportunity for growth and learning, not only for those working in the association, but also our beneficiaries and everyone involved.

Our first learning hurdle was overcome through experience; we learned that for any problem there is always hope. We have seen that by coming together to look for a solution to a specific problem, a possible path is always uncovered which can benefit even more people, and as such becomes a benefit for everyone.

We have seen and shared significant changes but also, in some cases, we have experienced serious limitations; when we have not been able to accomplish what we would have liked to. Sometimes we have made mistakes, imagining, or worse still, expecting results according to our own ideas of what we’d like, without realising that you must be patient and go at people’s own pace, and that things ripen in their own time.

Our work is difficult, it is primarily educational: our work is always exposed to the risks of each beneficiary’s freedom. First, each beneficiary has to recognize their own necessities, which makes them decide to enter the project. Later they must always decide, once again, if they want to continue on the new path or not, to take the opportunity to improve their own condition and become the actors in their own destinies or go back to the comfortable passivity of paternalism.

In the face of the risk that everyone has the freedom to choose whether they participate in the educational activities we have become ever more certain that to be accompanied, within any process, offers a real possibility of self-improvement, a path that should be taken together. A path towards education must be walked by all of those who participate in the process, not just by those who receive the service.

DIJO has always worked in places where they have been invited by someone in the community; those who have asked for our services; in the case of parents, they have recognized their need to be helped with their children. Once they have recognized their own need they usually become active in finding a place for us to start working and make all the contacts necessary for us to be able to give the service. They are active with the local authorities, the schools and with other potential beneficiaries.

In each of our Centres the story starts by: recognizing the value of each child, mother, father, brother or sister and taking their needs seriously. By recognizing the importance of; each teacher in a child’s education, local authorities as promoters of community development, other NGOs who’s services reinforce our work, AVSI’s constant training and guidance, and the beneficiaries themselves strengthening all of the initiatives which benefit their families and community.

In Monte Alban, in particular, the majority of the beneficiaries are actively involved and help with the activities: the mothers, aunties and grandmothers help in the kitchen and with cleaning, and the fathers share their plumbing, electrical and building skills. In all of our Centres the older brothers and sisters help those who are younger, the schools support their students’ participation in our activities and a great team spares no effort and commitment in ensuring that we stay on the path towards education.

Two years ago we asked ourselves: Why evaluate? Are the changes we see the result of our interventions? Today the results of these studies have not only surprised us but strengthened our convictions as outside eyes have shown us how the methodology we’ve applied is not only viable but gets results.

This demands a responsibility which is now clearer than ever to continue strengthening a way of working which counts on the synergy among individuals in the communities, well trained staff, authorities and public and private institutions in an area. We believe that this is the best methodology for reinforcing a civil society where people become ever more active in their own development.
CRECEMOS

Crecemos (Dijo) is a civil charitable association registered since 1993 in the city of Oaxaca. It is a civil charitable association registered since 1993 in the city of Oaxaca; its mission is to further human development in marginalized communities, focusing on the person and his/her family and community relationships, through programs centered on nutrition and education.

Today, Crecemos (Dijo) works in 3 educational centers located in the municipality of Tabataac de Cabrera, in Xoxocotlán, and in the Monte Alban neighborhood of the city of Oaxaca, Mexico.

In Monte Alban, in addition to the community kitchen for youth between 1 and 16 years of age, the new Marta of Guadalupe Center for Community Development, built in 2010 with financing from the Eneclouere Onlus Foundation, AVSI's 2009 Tende Campaign, the Government of Navarra (Spain) and Dijo's 2009 fundraising campaign, was inaugurated on February 1, 2011. The Center offers services of early childhood stimulation, preschool, academic reinforcement, and cultural and recreational activities for youth and adolescents. The Center also accompanies mothers in the care of their infants, encourages physical activity and offers other workshops for women.

One of the main concerns is the good nutrition of the children who attend the community kitchen daily, from Monday to Friday, at which on average 300 meals per day are served. As a complement to the daily meals, continual nutritional monitoring of each of the beneficiaries, medical assistance and nutrition education of the children's mothers are also carried out.

From its beginning, Crecemos (Dijo) has seen continuous growth in its services and outreach due to the voluntary support of an unending stream of professionals and successful synergies with other civil society organizations and the Mexican Government. Projects such as the Youth Social Center, the Adopt-a-child initiative with private donors and AVSI, the food assistance program with SEDESOL, and the "HABITAT" program with the municipal government in Oaxaca have been developed through such partnerships.

Since 2007 and together with the Spanish NGO CESAL, Crecemos (Dijo) has been implementing the project entitled, "Accompanying a Generation: Program for integrated attention towards children and improvement of education for children and youth in Oaxaca and Campeche" with funding from Mapfre Foundation, among others.

With AVSI Foundation, Crecemos (Dijo) is implementing the project entitled, "Education and the Reduction of Poverty in Indigenous, Low-Resource Communities around Oaxaca," with funding from the Mexican Government.

Other donors include CEMEX, HSBC, Dr. Simi Foundation and Sonrya A.C.

In 2010, CRECEMOS won a prize for best practices in nutrition for children from 0 to 6 years of age in the category of "Nutrition Education for Optimal Health" through the second annual nutrition campaign, ‘Cadena de Ayuda’ sponsored by Kiddi Pharmaton of Boehringer Ingelheim.

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AVSI

AVSI Foundation (www.avsi.org) is an international, non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1972, with headquarters in Milan, Italy and an office in Washington, DC.

Globally, AVSI’s mission is to support human development in developing countries according to the social teaching of the Catholic Church, with special attention to education and promotion of the global dignity of every person.

Since 1991, AVSI has been registered as a PVO with USAID, and is officially recognized by the Italian Government and the European Union. AVSI holds general consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, New York, with UNICEF, New York and UNIDO, Vienna, and is listed in the ILO Special List of NGOs.

Throughout the past thirty-seven years, AVSI has directly implemented hundreds of long-term programs and today, with a workforce of more than 120 professionals in the field and over 600 local staff, supports over 200 local institutions in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the Middle East and South-East Asia. At present, AVSI implements around 100 long-term projects, benefiting people in various sectors in 35 developing and transitional countries in Africa: Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Uganda; in Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, in the Middle East: Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine; in Eastern Europe: Albania, Kosovo, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia; in Asia: Kazakhstan, Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar.

AVSI links together 24 NGOs into a global network that benefits from the technical, financial and relational support of AVSI. Drawing on AVSI’s methodological approach that focuses on the needs of the person in his/her entirety and on partnerships with local institutions, AVSI’s programs and those of networked organizations often extend into more than one sector and across the divisions of civil society, business, and the state. This cross-sectoral and community-level approach makes each intervention more effective and sustainable. The sectors in which AVSI and its partners implement programs are: education (early childhood, basic, vocational, informal); healthcare and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; agriculture and food security; economic strengthening and micro/small business development; community development and care and support for children, adults, families, communities and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

AVSI’s operating budget in 2010 exceeded $45 million and drew on a wide-range of funding sources including private donors and foundations (51%), public funding from Europe, Canada, and the US, as well as international financing through United Nations agencies and the World Bank. In addition, AVSI implements projects in consortium with other international NGOs.

AVSI-USA is a not-for-profit organization registered as a PVO with USAID, with headquarters in New York and an office in Washington, DC, that supports the AVSI network by leveraging resources and contacts in the US in order to enhance and broaden the achievements of member organizations in promoting human dignity in developing countries.

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