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Municipal development plans: State instrument to reduce social imbalance*

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Foreword

At the end of 2007, the University of the Isthmus (UNISTMO) received an invitation to participate in the program called “Strategy for the Comprehensive, Sustainable and Intercultural Development of the 47 municipalities with lowest HDI (Human Development Index) of Oaxaca”. The invitation was made by the Federal Department for Social Development (SEDESOL) through its delegation at Oaxaca. This program is part of the National 100x100 Strategy promoted by that Department. The idea was to adopt one of the most underdeveloped municipalities, to generate a diagnostic and a municipal development plan, provided that both would be developed with the help of its inhabitants; the latter would identify the most important problems of their locality, suggest ideas and projects to face them and thus, define the paths of their own development.

Even though none of the municipalities that participated that year is located in the same area as the university (which, as its name implies is in the area of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec), the will to support the good progress of this public strategy and especially to promote the development of the most disadvantaged regions of the state of Oaxaca, which also represents one of the tasks of our organization, encouraged us to choose the municipality of San Lucas Camotlán.

This municipality is located in the Mixe¹ Region of the northern mountain range or Juárez mountain range; about 150 kilometers from the

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¹ One of the 16 prehispanic cultures that live in the state of Oaxaca.

Tehuantepec Isthmus, a dirt path road that can be driven in six hours when weather conditions permit it; the rainy season makes this road impassable.

In this spirit, the municipal diagnoses were developed, as well as the municipal development plans; according to the following axes: Education, Health, Productivity and Job Generation, Social Infrastructure and Housing, and also Environment; all of them constitute the Comprehensive Municipal Development Plan for San Lucas Camotlán.

I. Models and programs on municipal development

A few years ago, especially before the 70s, the prevailing development model was characterized by centralization in every level, including the territorial one; thus, local communities and institutions were pushed into the background, playing a role that was almost passive. The features of this model (known as the pre-crisis development model²) included: use of inflexible technologies, gambling on major poles of industrial development, centralization of planning and the role of local agents, preeminence of exogenous options (search for external investments and resources, often completely alien to the idiosyncrasies of the place), promotion of big projects and the ignorance or indifference towards ecologic and environmental affairs.

In response to this way of thinking about development, a new perspective sprung: doing and understanding development based on recognizing that the inclusion of local agents and organizations is a necessary condition to promote decentralization. The features of this new model (post-crisis development model) are: a more articulate development based on flexible technologies, incorporation of a balanced inter and intra-territorial planning, giving priority to the endogenous (exploiting competitive advantages of the area), betting on the micro, small and medium enterprises, and taking into account ecologic affairs. The contrast of ideas of both models is presented in Chart I.

Even though few conclusive results exist, the post-crisis model is the approach that is currently included in plan, instrument and program design and laws –concerning development– in Mexico; sharing the idea of conceiving human development (especially in clearly underdeveloped

² This model was named after the drastic fall in oil prices that happened in the mid-seventies of the last century. This provoked an acute worldwide economic crisis, seen in inflation increase and unemployment, thus, transforming development approaches and incorporating comprehensive local development strategies.

Chart I: Characteristics of the pre-crisis and post-crisis development models

| | Pre-crisis Model | Post-crisis Model |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| General Feature | Centralization | Descentralization |
| Available technologies | Heavy and not adaptable | Lightweight, flexible and adaptable |
| Industrial Location | Development poles | Distributed throughout the territory |
| Local agents' attitude | Centralism | Growth of the local role |
| Preferred types of resources | Exógenous | Endogenous |
| Preferred types of projects | Large | Small and medium |
| Consideration of territorial balance | No | Yes, looking for territorial balance |
| Consideration for environmental affairs | No | Yes, in an active way, promoting development |
| Administrative components | State | Territorial, local and regional bodies |

Source: Carrillo Benito (2006).

areas such as rural and indigenous ones) based on appreciating and acknowledging local capacities and resources; always respecting the environment. The aforementioned ideas promoted the creation of state and municipal planning laws, as well as the Sustainable Rural Development Law and more specific programs such as the National 100x100 Strategy and the Strategy of Comprehensive and Sustainable and Intercultural Development of the 47 municipalities with lowest HDI of Oaxaca³.

A. National 100x100 Strategy

Launched on January 2007, the 100x100 strategy can be considered as the most important initiative in the social political field of the current Mexican federal government. This initiative aims to promote the comprehensive development of the 125 municipalities⁴ with the greatest social underdevelopments in the country, reducing the gap of regional inequality. To comprehensibly pay attention to the underdevelopment of these municipalities, six aspects of action that embody the public politics of over 20 federal institutions: education,

³ See Official Publications and Documents at México, CNDPI, 2005 and SEDESOL, 2007.
⁴ It is worth mentioning that originally the Strategy considered 100 municipalities (thus the name); but on 2008 it ended up including 125. On 2009, the plan is to expand its universe of action.

health and nutrition, promotion of productive activity, social infrastructure, decent housing and protection of natural resources. The 125 municipalities that the 100x100 Strategy dealt with in 2008 were located in the states of Chiapas, Durango, Guerrero, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla and Veracruz⁵. According to the guidelines established by the Human Development Index, the 100x100 Strategy has two primary goals:

1. Increase the income of the population that lives in these municipalities through actions to increase job productivity and opportunities, and
2. Increase the quality of life of its inhabitants and improve access and quality of health and education, as well as housing conditions and provision of basic infrastructure in these communities.

During 2008, up to the month of November, the 100x100 Strategy had exercised, according to data provided by the Office of the President, more than 7,279 million pesos. 6,575 million pesos (90.3%) of these resources were provided by the federal government, 6.6% by the participating seven state governments, 2.4% by municipal governments, 0.6% by the beneficiaries and 0.1% by Civil Society⁶. Most of the federal resources were used to carry out basic social infrastructure actions; 2,319 million pesos (35%) were spent. Secondly, the Budget was spent on health: 1,219 million pesos (19%); followed by actions to improve housing conditions: 1,130 million pesos (17%). To improve productivity and income, 923 million pesos were spent (14%); education got 862 million pesos (13%) and environmental development received 119 million pesos (2%).

B. Strategy of Comprehensible and Sustainable and Intercultural Development of the 47 municipalities with lowest HDI in Oaxaca⁷

Of the 100 municipalities that were originally registered in the 100x100 Strategy, most of them had a predominantly indigenous population, 47 of

⁵ 53 out of the 125 municipalities have less than 5,000 inhabitants. Only 13 municipalities have a population of over 25 thousand inhabitants. 46% of the population lives in localities with less than 500 inhabitants and 88% of the localities (6,034 out of 6,857) have a population of less than 500 people. The aforementioned information can be found in the web page of the Micro-region Program of the SEDESOL (<http://www.microrregiones.gob.mx/prog100x100.html?func=tab2>, 20/01/09).

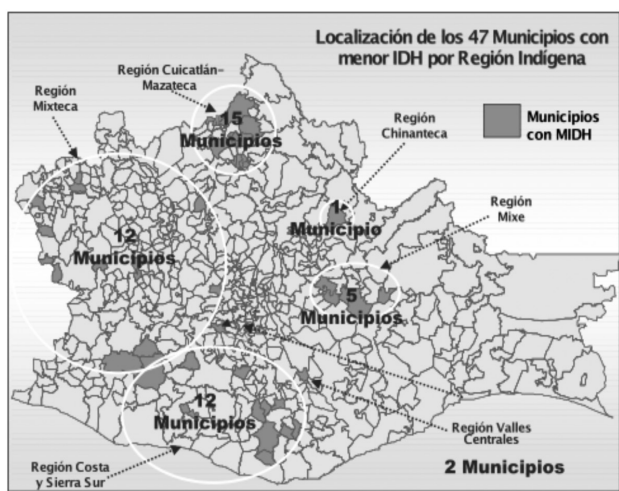
⁶ See the Strategy's yearly reports, published at the website of the Office of the President. Available at <http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/programas/?contenido=34829>, visited on January 20, 2009.

⁷ Mexico is divided in five regions, the Southern Region (includes the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca y Chiapas) has the lowest HDI scores. Oaxaca occupies the second last position only lagged by Chiapas.

them were located in the state of Oaxaca. Given the situation, the Strategy of Comprehensive and Sustainable and Intercultural Development of the 47 municipalities with lowest HDI (Human Development Index) in Oaxaca was postponed. The latter has as central axis the constitutional recognition of the diversity of cultures and thus, the State is obliged to promote the development of these municipalities based on their organization patterns and individual and collective capacities.

Figure I shows the 47 municipalities, which cover a total surface of 5,253.87 km² and, according to the map shown below, the following indigenous regions are distributed there: Mixteca, Cuicatlán-Mazateca, Chatina, Mixe, Costa-Sierra Sur and Valles Centrales.

Figure I: Distribution of the 47 municipalities with lowest HDI in Oaxaca



Source: CDI, 2007.

The 47 municipalities with the lowest HDI have a total population of 225,441 inhabitants; 208,874 of them are indigenous (92.71%). 9 out of 16 indigenous peoples in Oaxaca are represented in the Strategy (see Chart II).

The human settlements of these municipalities, besides being mostly composed by indigenous people are rural and geographically dispersed

(see Chart III) because of their difficult access and their geographic isolation. In most cases, these 47 municipalities only have very poor roads and few dirt roads; which become inaccessible in the rainy season (only 7 of them have paved roads passable year-round).

Chart II: Indigenous peoples by municipalities and region

| Indigenous Region | Municipalities | Indigenous Peoples |
|---|----------------|--|
| Chinanteca | 1 | * Chinantecos |
| Costa y Sierra Sur | 12 | * Zapotecos * Chatinos |
| Cuicateca, Mazateca, Tehuacán y Zongolica | 15 | * Mazatecos * Mixtecos * Cuicatecos * Náhuatl |
| Mixe | 5 | * Mixe |
| Mixteca | 12 | * Mixtecos * Triquis |
| Valles Centrales | 2 | * Zapotecos |
| TOTAL | 47 | 9 |

Source: CDI, 2007

Chart III: Size of the localities in the 47 municipalities of the Strategy

| Size of the locality (Inhabitants) | Number of Localities | % Of inhabitants out of the 47 municipalities' total |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1 – 99 | 550 | 11% |
| 100 – 499 | 462 | 47% |
| 500 – 2,499 | 104 | 41% |
| Over 2,500 inhabitants | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 1, 117 | 100% |

Source: CDI, 2007

Regarding its goals, the Strategy's general objective is defined as "To contribute to a comprehensible, sustainable and inter-cultural development of the municipalities with the lowest Human Development Index in Oaxaca; based on an approach that aims to improve individual and collective

capacities so as to overcome underdevelopment through transversal actions in the three government orders and civil society”.⁸

The specific strategies agreed upon are⁹:

- It is our priority to direct attention at the local level; the next stage implies a regional work.
- To consider family, community, municipality and indigenous peoples as the subjects of development.
- To strengthen the capacities of the subjects of attention which will promote their individual comprehensive development, as human beings and collectively as peoples, municipalities and indigenous communities.
- To employ planning as a tool to identify and achieve consensus in local, municipal and regional actions.
- To establish co-responsibilities between citizens and the government to design and carry on short, medium and long term programs and projects (CDI, 2007).

To achieve the aforementioned, participation and coordination among twenty federal institutions and public programs (see Chart IV); each one of them will have a different type and level of performance based on its own missions and focused on any of the Strategy's axes.

The criteria that will govern the development of the Strategy are: informed consultation, multiculturalism, equality, sustainability, transversality, flexibility and diversity, adherence to law, transparency and accountability. The criteria will include the same lines of action or axes as its federal counterpart program (education, health, productivity, job generation, social and housing infrastructure and also environment), its implementation is in charge of the State Committee of Inter-institutional Coordination (integrated by state delegates of the participating institutions in the program) and both the State Operative Technical Group (composed of staff appointed by the head of that ministry to suggest methodological and operative aspects of the Strategy) and the Regional Operative Technical Group (composed of representatives of government offices in the Oaxaca region), besides Commissions (created to handle topics considered as the Strategy's lines of action). All of this according to the following diagram:

⁸ CNDPI, loc. cit.; and SEDESOL loc. cit.

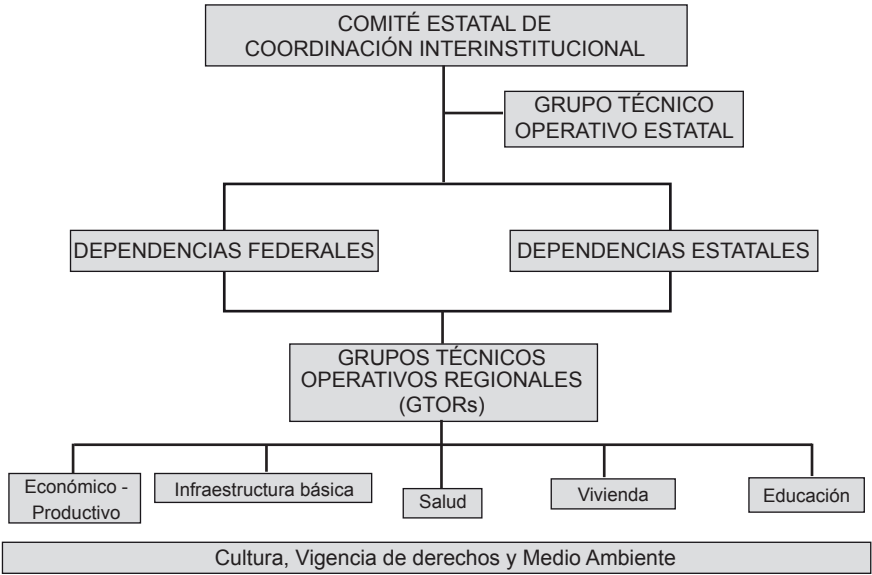
⁹ *Ibidem*

Chart IV: Institutions participating in the Strategy

| Abbreviation | Name of the federal institution |
|---------------------|--|
| SEDESOL | Department of Social Development (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social) |
| SAGARPA | Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fishing and Food (Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación) |
| SEMARNAT | Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) |
| SEP | Department of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública) |
| SE | Department of Economy (Secretaría de Economía) |
| SCT | Department of Communications and Transportations (Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes) |
| SRA | Department of Agrarian Reform (Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria) |
| CDI | National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas) |
| OPORTUNIDADES | Human Development Program Opportunities (Programa de Desarrollo Humano Oportunidades) |
| DICONSA | CONASUPO Distributor of Oaxaca (Distribuidora CONASUPO de Oaxaca) |
| LICONSA | Leche Industrializada CONASUPO |
| FONAES | National Support Fund for Social Enterprises (Fondo Nacional de Apoyo para las Empresas Sociales) |
| PA | Agrarian Office (Procuraduría Agraria) |
| FIRCO | Shared Risk Trust (Fideicomiso de Riesgo Compartido) |
| CONAFOR | National Forestry Commission (Comisión Nacional Forestal) |
| CNA | National Water Commission (Comisión Nacional de Agua) |
| IMSS- OPORTUNIDADES | IMSS-Opportunities Program (Programa IMSS-OPORTUNIDADES) |
| FONART | National Fund for Handcrafts (Fondo Nacional de las Artesanías) |
| CORETT | State Commission for the Regulation of Land Tenure (Comisión Estatal para la Regulación de la Tenencia de la Tierra) |

Source: CDI, 2007

Figure II: Structure of the State Committee of Inter-institutional Coordination



Source: CDI, 2007

II. The Municipal Development Plan for San Lucas Camotlán

The municipality of San Lucas Camotlán, as mentioned earlier, is located in the Mixe area of the northern mountain range in the state of Oaxaca and even though its only 157 kilometers away from the state capital, its orographic conditions and poor roads make it an eight hour journey by bus. It has an area of 127.5 km² and an average altitude of 1,280 meters above sea level; thus, its climate is mild and humid, the terrain is mountainous with hills, steep slopes, extremely rugged, with forest vegetation dominated by pine and oak.

It has a population of 2,524 inhabitants, divided almost equally between men and women (SEDESOL, 2007); its political system is based on rule of custom, which is predominant in indigenous peoples of this state¹⁰. Their level of marginalization is considered extremely high, with a HDI of 0.5386

¹⁰ It is worth mentioning that in these types of municipalities, women have no political representation.

(its health index is 0.6527, education index of 0.5629 and income index of 0.4004)¹¹.

According to the guidelines established in the Strategy, between November 2007 and February 2008 the UNISTMO developed municipal diagnoses and development plans for San Luis Camotlán. The work team was made up by three researchers of the university¹² and about eight undergraduate students of Public Administration, as well as specialists in every one of the axes of the plan.¹³

1) Methodology for the Municipal Plan

In the first place, it was important that this PDIM (Municipal Comprehensive Development Plan) would comply with the criteria set by the Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL) and the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI) for the elaboration of instruments for rural and indigenous communities:

1. It must be comprehensive; it has been made according to a global perspective on development based on the thematic axes posed by the 100x100 Strategy and the gender perspective.

¹¹ According to official information, 59% of the population 15 years old and over has not finished basic education and 29% is illiterate; although women's percentage reaches 39 points. Up until a few years, 99% of the population lacked the right to public health services. The population does not have sewage or a residual water treatment plant; 87% of private homes have dirt floors and 93% of them do not have electric appliances. Also, 92% of the 1,111 people 12 years old and over that make up the Economically Active Population work in the primary sector, especially cultivating organic coffee (with only one crop per year) corn and beans to survive. A total of 523 persons do not make any money and 341 make only half the minimum wage (about three dollars) or less (SEDESOL, 2007).

¹² The author thanks the project's co-authors Israel Flores Sandoval and Jorge Cordero Torres, and of the students that helped develop the diagnoses, workshops and carried out the surveys.

¹³ The education axis received the support of principals and teachers of the schools of Camotlán. For the health axis, the head of the General Hospital of the city of Ixtpec (home to our university) and the Health Clinic Director of San Lucas Camotlán participated. Teacher José de J. Acosta former UNISTMO professor and agronomy specialist, defined the productivity axis. The support for the infrastructure and housing axis was given by the Teacher Ernesto Santiago Cruz. The environment axis was shaped by professors Miguel Á. Curiel Olivera and Joel Martínez López, both of them work in the University of Sierra Juárez. Finally, a UNISTMO teacher, Ignacio Luna Espinoza, assisted in the statistical area. I appreciate the help of each one of them, as well as of the authorities and the people of this municipality.

2. It must be sustainable; the plan promotes a better use and a rational exploitation of the locality's natural resources available now and in the future.
3. It must be multicultural to answer to the needs of the Mixe indigenous population and also to the needs of the non-indigenous people that live in Camotlán.

The diagnosis, acting as an analysis and interpretation of the municipal reality, is a very important exercise because it allows us to learn about the current situation of San Lucas Camotlán and generate improvement plans with the help of its population. A municipal diagnosis includes the following axes regarding human development:

- Education: quality education services that favor a bilingual and multicultural education.
- Health: long and healthy life.
- Productivity and job generation: new sources of family income.
- Social infrastructure and housing: building of basic infrastructure, communication network and better housing every day.
- Environment: exploitation and conservation of the environment.

The methodology used can be divided into a series of general and shared strategies for each axis and specific ones for each line. Among the first: browsing of planning and social development official documents presented by federal and state government agencies. Some of the most important documents that were consulted appear in Chart V.

Chart V: Important documentary research sources consulted

| Institution | Document | Year |
|--|--|--------------|
| SEDESOL | 100x100 Program. Diagnoses of the state's 47 municipalities with lowest HDI. San Lucas Camotlán | 2007 |
| Municipal Presidency -CDI-COPLADE- Ministry of Indigenous Affairs Oaxaca | Comprehensible, sustainable and multicultural development plan. San Lucas Camotlán | 2005 |
| Federal Executive: SEDESOL-SAGARPA, CDI, among others | Strategy of Comprehensible and Sustainable and Intercultural Development of the 47 municipalities with lowest HDI (Human Development Index) in Oaxaca. National 100x100 Strategy | 2007 2006 |
| Secretaría de Salud del estado de Oaxaca | Health Diagnosis 2006, San Lucas Camotlán | |
| INAFED | National System for Municipal Information | 2003 |

Source: UNISTMO, 2008

During November and December 2007, a series of workshops to comment and analyze the most important problems of each and every one of the five axes; with municipal authorities, representatives of government and social organizations and the general population. The specific instruments include visiting different public organizations in charge of implementing public policies in this municipality such as schooling in different levels, health center and city council offices. Also, cover the routes across areas that constitute the municipality to estimate the environmental resources, as well as their infrastructural needs. All of the previously mentioned was complemented with the application of surveys in all the houses in the municipality. This universal application¹⁴ survey was divided into five axes of reference, to obtain specific information regarding the most relevant conditions of this locality.

The exercise was complemented with a door-to-door delivery of a pamphlet on the project's purpose; which did an academic of the UNITSMO develop. The municipal development plans of each axis were based on their diagnoses, highlighting the proposals, which sprung from the participatory planning workshops. Afterwards, they were integrated and put into order following the strategic planning methodology, starting with the SWOT analysis and later integrating their general objectives, strategies, goals and specific projects for each axis.

2) Resulting structure for the Plan

The PDIM of San Lucas Camotlán includes five Sectorial Diagnoses (education, health, productivity, social and housing infrastructure and environment); each one covers the following elements:

- Documentary and statistic research.
- Participatory diagnosis and planning workshops with the community.
- Transecting and visiting municipal government institutions.
- Survey application and analysis.

The PDIM is also complemented with five Municipal Development Plans for the same thematic axes. Each Plan starts with a SWOT matrix and includes the following parts:

¹⁴ Although the original idea was to conduct a census, 432 surveys were made (80% of registered homes at the official census). We did not find the inhabitants of the remaining 20%. However, the number of surveys conducted allows us to make strong statistical statements.

- General goals
- Strategies
- Goals and strategy
- Projects and goals
- Operation mechanics for each project
- Time horizon

At the end, 23 Strategies were defined based on the five thematic axes. Chart VI includes the developed strategies. Regarding projects that support each one of the strategies mentioned earlier, 106 were suggested considering the thematic axes. Chart VII shows all of the projects and lines of action and some of the most representative projects.

Chart VI: Most representative projects and thematic axes

| Thematic axes | Number of Projects | Most important projects |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1. Education | 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual schooling in preschool and elementary schools; strengthen the learning of Spanish • Turn Secondary Education Distance Learning (programs) into Technical Secondary Schools • Build educational infrastructure (classrooms, bathrooms, etc.) |
| 2. Health | 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote specific programs in health care • Fight child malnutrition • Hygiene and dental health program |
| 3. Productivity and job generation | 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of orchids • Coffee processing plant • Ecotourism |
| 4. Social and housing Infrastructure | 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potable water system • Electrification and public lighting • Paving of main street • Building of independent kitchens in homes • Building of Teacher's House |
| 5. Environment | 13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of territorial planning • Forest reforestation • Payment for environmental services • Firewood-saving stoves • Construction of a sanitary landfill • Ecological community sinks |

Source: UNISTMO, 2008.

3) Preliminary results

The PDIM of San Lucas Camotlán has been printed and presented to the authorities and the population of this municipality, as well as the SEDESOL employees in charge of the 100x100 project in Oaxaca. At the request of this ministry, the UNITSMO decided which actions and projects should and could be carried out immediately. Fortunately, two projects were approved to be implemented this year: the potable water system and the electrification and public lighting one. The university, its experts and outside consultants are currently conducting technical studies for its implementation.

Concluding remarks

This paper is considered as one of the efforts to create public management with greater social responsibility in the countries of our region. In this sense, the guidelines of the National 100x100 Strategy and Strategy of Comprehensive and Sustainable and Intercultural Development of the 47 municipalities with lowest HDI (Human Development Index) in Oaxaca promoted by the Federal Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) and by its offices in Oaxaca were laid out. The goals, methodology, experiences and results achieved in implementing the Municipal Comprehensive Development Plan of San Lucas Camotlán stress this and show how the three levels of government (federal, state and local) represented by federal SEDESOL, its state office and the municipal government of Camotlán; working coordinately with a school of higher education (University of Isthmus) to promote one of its main tasks: social development.

It should be noted that in the future the first projects would be implemented: potable water system and the electrification, which are considered a priority, mentioned earlier in the paper. Besides looking for quantitative advances, its application seeks to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Camotlán. Thus, this paper supports the idea of understanding State-promoted development based on the rational exploitation of local resources and local synergies.

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