

### **Introduction to this document.**

The document that follows is a scanned version of a report that I've kept for 35 years. I'm not certain that this represents the final report submitted to the directors of CIASP, but is at worst the penultimate version of my 1967 Project report. It was dated January 1968.

#### The Source:

The original 6 page document was scanned and converted with an OCR program. I compared the electronic version to the scanned version and edited where clarity was necessary.

I did not perform unnecessary editing. My training as a sociologist stopped me from altering an archival document. It was a hard decision, because it's very embarrassing to see one's ignorance reflected in spelling, grammatical and incorrect word use. But, try to remember that it was written by a 23 year old for a volunteer organization. An even greater consolation to me was that I didn't have access to an editor or spell-checker in 1968.

#### CIASP Background:

Traditionally, CIASP national directors submit an annual report to the other regional coordinators. Many issues surfaced in 1967, and the following report was supposed to do two things:

- a) Present a general summary of the CIASP experience during the summer of 1967 and
- b) Provide some tips and guidelines to the board of CIASP for the management of projects in 1968.

I was national coordinator in 1967, but unable to travel to Mexico during the summer of 1968. The report was prepared after I traveled to Mexico along with Pat Leslie (from St. Patricks College in Ottawa) to visit the 1967 sites of CIASP.

One important policy direction in 1967 was an attempt to reach out to Mexican Organizations (both government and non-government). There were some limits to working only with hosts from the churches, and there were also frictions between Church and State that had to be addressed. In 1967 we also were concerned about the general student orientation process in Mexico; we felt that it was too broad and too general when it was strictly limited to the events at the convent in Tlalpan. Consequently, we dragged the Canadian students out to Pachuca for a one day orientation about the State of Hidalgo before sending students off to the projects.

The report below reflects some of these themes. I am not embarrassed by anything that CIASP did in 1967, but I am shocked by some of the arrogant observations made by a naïve foreigner in Mexico.

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**Canadian Director's Report**  
**January 1968**  
**Prepared by Jim Creechan**

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE NOT AWARE, PAT LESLIE AND JIM CREECHAN TOOK A TWO WEEK SWING THROUGH THE PROJECTS FROM NOV. 11 - 24. THEY VISITED SANTA ANA, PISAFLORES, CHAPULHUACAN, SAN NICOLAS, JACALA, MEXICO CITY, PACHUCA, ZACUALTIPAN, TIANGUISTENGO, XOCHICOATLAN, AND WOUND UP THE TRIP WITH THE THREE DAYS SPENT AT THE PRIEST'S MEETING IN CUERNAVACA. JIM HAS THE WHOLE TRIP ON FILM<sup>1</sup> AND YOU SHOULD GET TO SEE IT BEFORE WE LEAVE FOR MEXICO.

PISAFLORES HGO

The most startling fact was the condition of the road. The rains from Hurricane Beulah washed it out and closed it completely below the Capoline (about 9 or 30 Km. down the 18 Km. road). Pisa was cut off from the outside for more than a month. At that time the river was absolutely impassable, since it overflowed its banks and swept away all vegetation on the shores. When we were there, several hundred feet of the shore inland was nothing but rock and sand. A bridge would have been completely swept away unless it were placed in a very narrow spot. When we were leaving Pisa, *La Secretaria des Obra Publicas* was repairing the road with tractors, and it had State workers doing the repairs. When the road was being built in 1965, the work was done by the *Municipio* itself instead of by work forces from outside. In Pisa, most of our talking was done with the two priests, although we got to see everyone who runs things. Maximiliano was receptive, and although he decided that he could not attend the co-ordinators meeting in Cuernavaca, he is still enthusiastic about students returning. His position of non-involvement with us is entirely understandable; he does not seem to be a very complex man and he therefore accepts people as they are. He is satisfied with us and sees no reason for us to change.

The priests definitely expect more from us next year, and their personal example of involvement in social problems was gratifying to see. Father Miguel Nuñez has proceeded quite well with his "*Casa de Juventud*". The building itself is up, and they were working at getting the basketball court ready for the cement laying. The showers were started and will be

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<sup>1</sup> This super 8 film disappeared during 1968. It was used in several training sessions in Ontario and was mailed to Nova Scotia and PEI for training purposes. No one seems to know where it has gone. If anyone does know where it might be located, I would convert it to a digital movie and put it on this site. Jim Creechan

finished very shortly. This project is providing a service to the town that otherwise would not be there. When it is completed, it will teach these people a skill as well as health rules and skills. He also has plans for including the ranchos in on the plan when he can build a residence to house people from the ranchos in the near future. Perhaps we may be able to supply boys with carpentry or agricultural knowledge to help out in the classes that he wants to hold in the building. . In the same manner there may be a need for girls to do the same type of teaching that Carmen is now doing in the fields of cooking and I mentioned the idea to Padre, but I did not press for answer this early in the year. However, the possibility of this will be taken into account during the placement consideration. We are also trying to help him build up a library, but we are running into the problem of national boundaries and international tariff regulations. This may yet be solved.

Father Miguel also explained the school situation. The Particular School of Pisa will open up to grade 4, and the other students will now attend the Federal school. There has been some sort of agreement worked out with the federal authorities, but the priests are still unsure about what the final decision will be. The problem of particular schools in is still a hot one, and we need to do a lot more thinking about this situation. The surest thing that I can say right now is that NO STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE ALL THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FEDERAL SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED.

Father Emilio gave us a quick run-down of the rancho situation and the placement of students in ranchos for next summer. He recommended two things: First of all that we close down Caracole because of the difficulty of understanding all of the rifts that exist; Secondly, that we make sure we demand things of people before we give them anything. He mentioned this last fact in reply to my request to pay part of the salary for the school teacher in San Rafael (Their common garden was washed out in the rains, and they were faced with the fact of losing their teacher). He agreed with all of the project reports that I gave to him, and my facts were taken from last years "reports.

We also met Betty Dweyer - who spent 4 years in Pisaflores and other project sites. She was back for a vacation and was in Pisa during the time that we were there. She pointed out two very important things: First of all, with regard to the priests, she said that the people are still waiting for Fr. Zapeda to come back, and that they have a hard time accepting the new guys, even though there does not seem to be anything wrong with them. Secondly, she pointed out the fact that the

Union had approached her to intervene on their behalf to us. They want students to come prepared to teach the Union leaders how to work with the Government. They want to work: legally: Last year it was our big fear that if we were found working, with the Union, we would lose all of the respect that we had with the government. Perhaps, we may be able to get around this now, if they really are sincere in their request. It should be remembered that it was Betty who did most of the organizational work for the Union when she stayed down during the winter in 65-66. One of the big problems with Father Emilio is that he was told not to cause any problems, because the Bishop of Huejutla had just been removed, and there was no legal head to represent the Church to the Government. This may explain part of the reasons for his non-acceptance.

On our way to San Nicolas, we stopped off in Chapulhuacan to talk to Sr. Arieta in the *Secretaria de Salubridad y Asistencia*. He told us two very important facts. First of all, electricity is coming through from below Tomazunchale. and there is a possibility that it could reach into Pisaflores. Secondly, the social promoter, Ezequial Santander had been moved to Jacala, and the SSA had to abandon plans to develop the Chapulhuacan Area. This included Pisa. This means that students cannot count on too much cooperation from the SSA if they are going to Pisa. The project has to be well-organized before they can consider giving help for it. Dr. Arieta mentioned that he was very pleased with the ways the students had cooperated with them the year before. I cannot judge at the moment how useful this friendship will be, for it may turn out that he has no help to offer us. We have to play it by ear again.'

#### SAN NICOLAS

There were many facts obvious here, but all interpretation of these facts will have to be obtained from either Pat Leslie or from Maureen McKee.

The *Conasupo* corn silo project has proceeded beyond all expectations. Plans changed slightly from the summer, but only in the minor details such as where things would be placed. The men have delayed working on the road until the buildings are up, but its completion is still planned. The buildings themselves are well underway, and we were told that there is a good chance that they will be finished by the time the students return for 68, Students should stay involved and promote the use of this project. A student of some background in cooperatives will be greatly of use in San Nic.

The *Centro ExtraScolar* has all of the machinery in it, but there will not be any use made of them until the electricity

comes through. At that time night classes will begin to teach the men how to use the machines for carpentry, and the women will be taught how to sew. Again we could use students who are skilled in these areas of work.

Benjamin and Coca Meloneri have left their teaching posts. They were the ones who took responsibility for the students last year, and so there will be a few big changes for the students who go there next year. The students will have to be more diplomatic, and they will really have to be aware of the actual situations. The teachers have not always been democratic in their dealings, and very often they decided things without the rest of the town having too much say. Students who are going there will have to get in touch with either Prof. Nicolas Rubio or with Male Nurse Erasmo Cama. This second man is more reliable than Nicolas, and he is looking forward to having the students there, because he really believes that the town moves when they are present.

The school in Barranca has hit a few snags, but there is nothing that we can do at this end of the line. It will have to be solved by them down there or else wait until we return. The other ranchos are quiet, and there are possibilities of last minute changes of placement. We could not rely on all of the things that were said about other sites.

The social promoter in Jacala knows the students well, and he will give you all of the help that you need. He is familiar with the students because of his contact with them in Pisa. He should do a great deal for the San Nic Area. The students next year should see if they can get him interested in starting something to solve the relations of the ' Jacala-San Nicolas-Ranchos Communications.

#### PACHUCA

The visit here was quite fruitful. Our man in Pachuca was Javier Rubio from San Nicolas, and he gave us some very good opinions of what we could expect from the government. Because of him, we have two sides of the scale to weigh in considering the amount of cooperation that we should be doing with the SSA.

The man in the SSA that we got to see was Dr. Arando Salinas, and we picked up where we left off last year. It now appears that they are going to run a one-day orientation for us in Pachuca, and in the Convivencia we will learn many concrete facts about Hidalgo, and many techniques of working with the people. The plans for these will be set at the Coordinators Meeting, and we will send him a letter of our requests.

There is definitely room for a team in Pachuca, but the amount of work that they do with the government will have to be decided on a trial and error method. They will let us work out of their office if we want, but the situation has to be considered carefully. It could lead to complete control by them over us, and we cannot be sure it this will be doing any good. Personally, it frightens me, but I must admit that we really have to give it some more thought next summer. In any case it must be done slowly. The most immediate problem is finding a suitable team, to work in Pachuca, and finding them a cheap place to stay. We have few people checking out on this, but I do not think that it can be decided until we actually arrive. It should boil down to a matter of checking out the places that our contacts tell us are available.

Before we left Dr, Salinas, he gave me two names to talk to in Mexico City, and these two men were in charge of Federal Community Development Plans, I later talked to these men, and I obtained some materials that we are going to have mimeographed for general use. The most helpful, will be the Manual on *Desarrollo de la Comunidad* that all of the gov't workers use.

Basically, Dr. Salinas suggested that we put all of our students in large centres where they could work hand in hand with his trained staff. The drawbacks to this are subtle ones, and too detailed to go into. The biggest thing that we should consider before we jump on this bandwagon is the personality of the man himself. He likes to draw dramatic pictures. The team in Pachuca will work on the possibilities of this changeover, but I really cannot see it in the immediate future.

#### ZACUALTIPAN

We talked to Alfonso Galindo, who was in Tianguí during the previous summer. He had many different ideas than Dr. Salinas, and I intended to trust him more because his contact with the immediate problems is much more first-hand than Dr. Salinas. He seemed to want the students to continue in their role of collaboration whenever they had an opportunity to do so. He did not see how he could effectively guide students in projects if they were ever placed under his command. He was happy with the way things worked the summer before. He may be leaving Zacualtipan, and it will be a great loss for the whole area.

He also told us that there is a new road going from Zacualtipan to North of Molango. This road will by-pass both of Tlanguí and Xochi, and it could mean very hard times ahead for both of these regions. There will no longer be the regular

bus service, and trucks will be less willing to make deliveries there. The government has already given up hope on Tianguí, and they have pulled out their promoters, and many of the school teachers have left. However, the social promoter from Zacualtipán will still be working to a limited extent in the Tianguí area.

#### TIANGUISTENGO

We were expecting a difficult time from Padre Julio, but he gave us a fantastic amount of cooperation. He is by far the most humble man that I have ever met, but his determination to get things done in no way suffers because of his humility.

The water project in Polintotla will be completed as soon as good weather comes, and the government has pledged their aid. The bridge will not be started until the people are more willing to cooperate, and this should be solved by the time the good weather comes.

Father Julio and we are closer than ever before as far as working together as a team. He really understands what we want, and we know what he wants. It is up to the students who go there to realize that he is looking for people who are willing to be friends. He does not expect you to undertake large projects, but he wants someone to be with people who have no one else to care for them. There will be some minor changes in ranchos next year, and again we are not certain of the exact location of them at the moment. Polintotla will be reopened, but it will now serve as a centre of the neighbouring ranchos, and the group who goes there will have to understand that they will be in a completely different world than they ever saw before. Their Spanish should be good before, so that they can start to learn a few words of Nahuatl. The other ranchos will be closer, but they will not be as close as we had earlier hoped. Father has some good ideas about what must be done there, and he promised to communicate with me before we leave. The people placed there will definitely receive his letter.

The students who go to Tianguí cannot have any objections to the Church. The Church is the only source of social action there, and it appears that this will be more of a fact when the new road goes through. Father said that the people of the town could see last year that the students talked to him only because they were afraid not to talk to him. He did not object to the fact that he had his differences with the students, but he objected to the fact that the students felt they had to put on a show for him. He said bluntly, you are not here to please me, but you should be here for the people. To the people the Church meant quite a lot, and this fact should be

kept in our minds first of all. The problem is not as serious as I have described it, and we can easily circumvent it if we watch our placement. If there are any people who have their doubts about the Church, then we cannot in all fairness place them here. There is lots of room in San Nic or Pisa for people who object out of principle. Please note, Father did not ask me to tell the people who go there that they must go to mass and rosary every day. He just pointed out that last year the students did not even bother to play with the Children in front of the Church (which is the only land anyway). The people noticed this, and they mentioned it to him.

#### XOCHICOATLAN

We ran into many difficulties in Xochi. Father Heriberto was not there, and since he was the one responsible for taking care of us, we could not do too much talking about next year. We left him a note asking him to tell us how the students worked out last year, and if he wanted them back next year. We also asked him to tell us where he wanted to put us, and what kind of projects he had in mind. So far he has not answered me,

The only person that we talked to was the Presidente. He was not too happy with the students last year because they refused to pave the Plaza for him. His reaction was somewhat cold to my question about the students from last year. He suggested two very important things

First if all, that we should confine ourselves to living in the curato. Secondly, that we keep a closer watch on the girls. He told us that one very important man in the town had appealed for a divorce so that he could marry a Canadian girl. The funny thing about his appeal was that there were two girls involved.

This may not say much against us because of the fact that two girls being the object of his attention, but it does reveal that everyone will have to be very careful about their actions, The Mexicans may treat this much more seriously than we do. This situation also reveals that a problem from a few years ago is still not solved, and we have not come much closer in healing the split between the two factions, Church and State. The only reason that we are worried about this problem is that they are using us as fighting material. Perhaps we are taking things worse than they are, and perhaps we should not even be returning to Xochi. This decision will not be made until we hear from Father, because the Presidente does not really represent the feelings of the whole town. But we have to respect his opinion.



The promoter for Xochi is now in Molango, so 'if we send students back,they will have to take trips up to Molango.