



EARTHCHECK

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THE HACIENDAS, MEXICO

Grupo Plan is a Mexican investor's collective founded in 1992 by Architect Luis Bosoms. At the heart of the company's growing portfolio of properties is a handful of exquisite Haciendas, which have been lovingly restored to their former glory.

Each Hacienda sits in the midst of a Mayan community and has become the area's central economic driver. As such, there is a great deal of inter-reliance between community and Hacienda, which has resulted in the formation of highly sophisticated social programs that are bringing about much needed sustainable change.

In the aftermath of the devastation wrought upon the Yucatan in 2002 by Hurricane Isidoro, Grupo Plan's social commitment to Mayan communities increased exponentially. To manage recovery projects and the flow of not-for-profit initiatives, the "Mayan Worlds Haciendas Foundation" was conceived. Its mission as simple: to generate sustainable micro-regional economic development in Mayan rural communities.

The objective of the Mayan Worlds Haciendas Foundation is to bring about an improvement in the quality of life experienced by those in the community, through the preservation of traditional medicines and cultural cuisine and the creation of jobs using Mayan handicraft skills that were being lost with the passing of each generation. A partnership was formed in a number of communities, requiring each to provide the human resources and a local investor who would be willing to match the financial and in-kind support extended by the Foundation. It is this strategy of "teaching a man how to fish" rather than "giving him food" that has resulted in extraordinary, far-reaching success in the company's triple bottom line outcomes.

Productive projects include:

- The creation and support of 7 artisan cooperatives and 1 service cooperative supporting 250 women 14 communities, generating MN\$7,289,531 between 2005 and 2009;
- Production, management, and administrative training to enhance quality and the commercialisation process;
- Promoting the work of artisans in Mexico and internationally;
- Opening 4 Fair Trade stores selling high quality handicrafts and handmade products;
- Support and training of 19 Mayan spa therapists in 6 communities to work in 5 Hacienda spas;
- Establishment of micro loan programs in 3 communities to improve housing and productive enterprises;
- Provision of technical support and training for 3 locally owned and operated groups dedicated to the production of honey, gourmet salt and habanero chili.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

WATER SAVINGS

The Haciendas are located in areas where water is a scarce natural resource. To reduce consumption, they implemented a number of measures and combined, achieved a **13,061 M3 reduction in water consumption** (2009 - 2010).

Hacienda Puerta Campeche was **2.8 Points better than Best Practice**;

Hacienda San José was **0.6 Points better than Best Practice**;

Hacienda Santa Rosa was **29.4 Points better than Baseline**;

Hacienda Temozón was **0.6 Points better than Best Practice**;

Hacienda Uayamón was **24.9 Points better than Baseline**.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The Haciendas undertook an energy audit to identify areas of over-consumption and explore ways to improve energy efficiency.

In the benchmarking period of 2009 to 2010, all five Haciendas decreased their electrical energy consumption and **reduced GHG emissions by 102 metric tons**. A 8,162 litre reduction in LP Gas consumption resulted in **an additional reduction of 11 metric tons of GHG emissions**.

SOLID WASTE REDUCTION

Due to a lack of infrastructure in some of the communities, waste management is an important consideration. Recycling and reuse, as well as clever purchasing policies have resulted in the following EarthCheck Benchmark results:

Hacienda Puerta Campeche was **22.8% better than Best Practice level**;

Hacienda San José was **22.2% better than Baseline level**;

Hacienda Santa Rosa was **47.2 Points better than Best Practice level**;

Hacienda Temozón was **29.2% better than Baseline level**.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & SUPPORT

The Haciendas have developed a Community Development Plan that addresses the areas of health, education, culture, housing, personal & community development, productive projects, and the environment.

They began with a process of identifying community needs through a self-diagnostic study. Opportunities for community development leveraging existing resources were noted and local participation/management was considered a prerequisite for any initiative.

They reached out to different sectors of the community, offering skills re-training to encourage sustainable practices.

By establishing realistic and quantifiable goals early, they were able to measure and monitor true and lasting change in community behaviours.

For each initiative, the community was required to secure an investment partner or government funding grant.

Healthcare

Primary Healthcare is being reinforced through the rescue of Maya traditional medicine. Seven Health Clinics cared for 11,704 people between 2003 and 2009, providing them with primary health care. As medical facilities and pharmaceutical drugs are expensive to access, preference is given to Mayan herbal remedies for treating minor ailments. Native, medicinal plant species are grown locally and community nurses trained in their use.

The construction of 56 Community Centres provides care for to **3,428 children** and the emphasis is on battling malnutrition. Community gardens made access to fresh, healthy produce possible and reduced the cost of living in turn.

Malnutrition rates have declined from **12.9% to 3.9%** (2009) while a **0% mortality death rate** in children aged 0 to 5 years has been achieved.

In conjunction with government institutions, 15 campaigns promoting hygiene and health are conducted on a yearly basis. Programs that aim to eradicate open-air defecation and a target to build one bathroom per home in three separate communities.

The Haciendas have donated two vehicles to the Civic Council of communities for use in health care services.

Promotion and enhancement of educational services

Six community libraries were built and the educational activities in these buildings are coordinated for **13,500 people** (2003-2009). Programs offered included continuing education, computer services, internet access, reading rooms, Mayan cultural rescue and artistic activities.

Adult literacy program were developed in six communities and cater to the needs of **521 people**.

A parenting school is run in 10 communities, resulting in improved family cohesion. For those communities without a library of their own, a mobile library makes visits to villages and services the needs of **3874 children**.





Housing

After Hurricane Isidoro, **1441 houses were reconstructed**. The Foundation provided traditional Mayan house plans and building materials, but home owners had to do all the labour.

Prior to this project, few community residents held title to their lands and so, a concerted effort was made to secure property titles. This resulted in 922 property titles being granted; benefiting **4134 inhabitants**.

A total of **207 restrooms** fitted with ecological septic tanks, were constructed in three communities in coordination with the State Water Board (JAPAY).

Personal and Community Development Human development and human rights workshops were run in 12 communities.

Training for rural teachers was provided in four communities, giving them the tools to improve student attention and performance.

Natural Resources and the Environment Community agricultural units were established in 11 communities and trained in the use of low-impact farming practices. A honey collection centre promotes good practice in regional honey production and directly benefits 12 families in three rural communities.

A school orchard promotes the development of skills in agricultural production and sustainable use of local resources. This involves two middle schools.

Family gardens were developed to promote the cultivation of vegetables and involved 117 mothers in five communities. The Botanic Garden at Hacienda Santa Rosa

promotes the rescue of ethno botanical Mayan knowledge through the propagation and display of more than **230 medicinal plants**.

Job Creation

Nearly 90% of the employees working at The Haciendas live in the local community.

The Haciendas have been working with EarthCheck, developing mechanisms and indicators to measure and minimize the environmental impacts of tourism activities.

In this effort, Haciendas del Mundo Maya Foundation is a key component in bringing together the communities where each Hacienda is involved, through the preservation and promotion of Mayan culture and local economic development.

Community Contribution ratings for all five Haciendas (1 January 2010– 31 December 2010) are:

Hacienda San Jose was 88%, which is better than Baseline level;

Hacienda Santa Rosa was **100%, which is Best Practice level;**

Hacienda Temozón was **100%, which is Best Practice level;**

Hacienda Puerta Campeche was **100%, which is Best Practice level;**

Hacienda Uayamón was **100%, which is Best Practice level.**

