

Pasos del Jaguar



What characterises Pasos del Jaguar?

The Asociación para el Desarrollo de la Cosmovisión y Cultura Indígena Pasos del Jaguar is an organisation dedicated to promoting the development of indigenous culture in El Salvador. It is the COMPAS El Salvador coordinator. Our mission is to promote the development of indigenous culture by revitalising principles, values, practices and ancestral knowledge in order to reconstruct the identity of the Nahuatl Pipil, an indigenous group living in Western El Salvador.

We engage in political advocacy at local and national level, working together with municipalities, the Legislative Assembly and government ministries to gain recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. We are supported by institutions such as the *Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (PPDDH)*. Our demands include constitutional recognition and the ratification of international human rights conventions that support the rights of the indigenous peoples of El Salvador in terms of language, territory, sacred sites, forms of organisation and spiritual expression.

What priority areas will Pasos del Jaguar focus on in the coming four years?

According to the official statistics, the indigenous population makes up 12 % of the population of El Salvador. Historically, indigenous people have been marginalised economically, politically and culturally. Our first priority, therefore, is the restoration of our native language, Nahuatl, as this will confirm our identity and form the basis for further development of our culture.

Los Pasos del Jaguar also uses its experience in the field of traditional medicine to develop community health programmes that are based on our ancestral values and the vision of endogenous development. In the field of sustainable agriculture we are putting the values and principles of our ancestral culture into practice. To achieve these objectives we are working on strengthening indigenous community organisations and conducting political advocacy for indigenous rights.

What does Pasos del Jaguar consider the main opportunities and threats/challenges in achieving its goals in the near future?

The main opportunity we perceive is the more liberal climate that has arisen with the new government, which is living up to the promises it made during the election campaign. Indigenous peoples have become a priority group in the newly created *Secretaría de Inclusión Social*, which is presided over by the country's First Lady.

Another important element that inspires us to pursue our goals is the empowerment that communities experience from the vision, principles and values that Los Pasos del Jaguar and COMPAS El Salvador support and promote.

A potential threat would be that the current government might not live up to its commitments concerning indigenous peoples. Our political advocacy work might then be frustrated and, if objectives are not met, communities and indigenous organisations will become demoralised.



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