



**COFOA/PICO Ciudadanía activa desde la Iglesia**

Comunidades de Fe Organizadas para la Acción

Diócesis de Zacatecoluca

El Salvador C.A.

Cuarta calle poniente #7 Zacatecoluca, La Paz El Salvador Centro América Telefax 2334-5482



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COFOA

www.picointernational.org

**COFOA/PICO Stop Violence Campaign**



In February 2009 COFOA leaders launch a **Stop Violence Campaign**, developing a plan of action to reduce and prevent violence that plagues El Salvador.



*Introduction of the; United Neighbors = Safety Neighborhoods campaign*



A group of COFOA leaders in San Pedro Nonualco developed the **United Neighbors = Safety Neighborhoods** program in 2010 as the first action of this campaign. They were looking to build the sense of community among neighbors through dialogue with the specific purpose to identify the most important issues and concerns, first in the urban area of San Pedro and then the surrounding rural area. Leaders contacted nearly 2,000 people in this municipality in the La Paz Department. The majority clearly stated that the most important common issue was the **lack of safety** due to violence.



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**Departmental and Municipal authorities signing a compromise for their Dialogue and Strategy Table.**

COFOA leaders took the initiative to keep going on this issue of **insecurity** and developed a series of research meetings with the various local public institutions (mayor, public schools, judge of peace, and chief of police, health care unit, community organizations, NGOs, cultural organizations and congregations of different religious denominations). This research gave energy

to leaders and the community who organized a big **“March for Peace”** in March 2012. Local authorities and institutions were invited and, at the end of the march, signed a covenant to participate in a **“Dialogue and Strategy Table”** where they would share resources needed for **violence prevention**. This, in the thinking of COFOA leaders, is the first step needed to **Eradicate Violence**.



**Colonel Walter Choto Castillo**  
 Commander in Chief of the DM9 military force in Zacatecoluca.



**Attorney at Law Juana Solorzano**  
 Judge of peace in San Pedro Nonualco



**Attorney at Law Antonio Orellana**  
 Major of San Pedro Nonualco



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According to data provided by the National Police in San Pedro Nonualco, these initial actions by the “**Dialogue and Strategy Table**” reduced violence by 50% and increased the crime reporting by 45%. This data shows the effectiveness of providing information and community education on issues of **domestic violence, youth**



*Dialogue and Strategy Table meeting*

**gang prevention, early pregnancy, family relationship, sexual harassment and more.**



*Sexual Harrasment workshop, Inst. Nacional Cesar Augusto Romero San Pedro Nonualco.*

These issues were addressed by members of the PNC and experts sent by the Justice of Peace from Zacatecoluca and proved to be helpful for most members of these urban and rural communities who had never heard about state resources available to solve the serious problems of low-income families.



*Gang prevention workshop in Cantón La Comunidad, San Pedro Nonualco*



*Domestic violence workshop in C.E. Dra. Milagro Antonia Martínez del Cantón San Ramón, San Pedro Nonualco*



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**March for peace in Cuyultital, La Paz**



**Dialogue and Strategy Table in Cuyultitan**



**March for peace in San Juan Tepezontes**

In February 2014 the majority of COFOA leaders decided dive more deeply into the “**Stop Violence Campaign**”. They are now working to replicate the San Pedro Nonualco effort in Cuyultitán and San Juan Tepezontes, as well as San Pedro Nonualco again. They have taken initial steps to install the “**Dialogue and Strategy Table**” following **Peace Marches** in Cuyultitán and San Juan Tepezontes where they mobilized hundreds of people. The next steps are workshops that focus on **violence prevention**, developing the same themes described above and now adding a new educational element with the active participation by the El Salvador Army. The goal in 2015 is to cover the majority of the adult and youth population in these three municipalities and make progress in **reducing violence**.



**Dialogue and Strategy Table in San Juan Tepezontes**