

Financial Access Goes Faster and Farther In Rural Mexico

Nearly 600,000 marginalized people throughout rural Mexico are realizing greater income, thanks to a strategic alliance network, advanced technology, and credit unions' passion to serve hard-to-reach areas that banks will not.

For more than 13 years, World Council's Rural Microfinance Technical Assistance Project (or PATMIR, its acronym in Spanish) has linked rural residents—including women, youth, and indigenous populations—to formal financial institutions using an innovative rural finance methodology.

With renewed funding from the Mexican government's Bank of National Savings and Financial Services (BANSEFI), the program equips a growing network of 40 partner credit unions with technical assistance and technology alternatives, such as ATMs, point-of-sale devices, and mobile banking.

Designed to maximize benefits for both rural communities and financial institutions, the PATMIR program features outreach methodology, called Semilla

Cooperativa [cooperative seed], for delivering financial services and products—including loans, savings, and insurance—to underserved areas.

The model regularly sends credit union staff by motorbike to remote community groups to provide financial education, add previously unbanked members, and help current members make transactions via tablets and mobile printers.

By cooperating to serve the greater good where they live and work, local credit union leaders are catalyzing community development and the future of financial services in the mountainous regions of Mexico.



▲ Local press cover PATMIR's success and heavy influence on Mexican communities.



▲ Through the PATMIR program, Mexico's rural villages access affordable, reliable, and self-sustainable financial services.
(Photos courtesy of World Council, unless otherwise noted)



▲ Semilla Cooperativa's group-based approach enables CUs to expand their market share and increase profitability, while still maintaining low delinquency rates.



▲ Rural regions are home to various indigenous-speaking populations. Caja Zongolica CU requires staff to speak Nahuatl to increase members' trust.



▲ Key PATMIR players—including representatives from BANSEFI and local CUs, and World Council President/CEO Brian Branch (from left) and Chair Anne Cochran—convene in Veracruz to recognize the power of long-term collaboration to advance financial inclusion throughout rural Mexico.

(Photo by Oliver Hernández Rivera)



▲ Mexico's CUs, such as Caja Zongolica, grow membership and retention through youth-oriented financial education programs.



▲ World Council's board of directors visits a park shelter built by Caja Yanga CU in a small town without any branches.

►The directors observe CU staff collect savings and loan deposits from a Semilla Cooperativa group using a tablet and portable printer. (Photo by Oliver Hernández Rivera)

