

Business Plan for the Barbara Ford Peace Center



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Business Plan for the Barbara Ford Peace Center

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements..... 4

Executive Summary 5

Project Objectives 6

About the Barbara Ford Peace Center 6

SWOT Analysis 8

Methodology 12

Awareness Levels of the Barbara Ford Peace Center and Marketing 14

Transportation Survey..... 15

Economic Status of the Area..... 16

Eco-park Interest..... 17

Los Senderos del Abuelo 20

Project Assumptions 21

Recommendations..... 22

Feasibility of Recommendations..... 23

Financial Discussion 25

Project Timeline..... 26

Long-Term Vision for the BFPC and Our Next Steps..... 28

Sources 30



Figure 1: Front entrance to the Barbara Ford Peace Center Hotel

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Executive Summary

We believe that ecotourism is a viable option at the Barbara Ford Peace Center (BFPC). This is validated through our extensive market research within the surrounding area. After interviewing three groups of school teachers, one youth group and one tour of another Eco-park to get a feel for the local competition, we found that pairing education with first hand experiences and activities fits nicely with the mission of the Barbara Ford Peace Center. We received a high level of interest from all of the focus groups interviewed, building confidence that this is, in fact, a feasible project initiative. While the economic stability of the general region is not ideal, the people we spoke with seemed willing to spend a reasonable amount on field trips, especially if they are educational and safe.

Our proposal calls for the development of a well-defined and organized trail system within the 50 acres of the Barbara Ford Peace Center. We think the trail network is an essential building block to the long term vision of a socially and educationally focused Eco-park with a possible expansion into a zip line or a swimming pool. The primary cost to develop the trail would be labor, but other necessary resources include metal, lumber, and gravel. Our hope is that the Barbara Ford Peace Center will be able to sustain positive cash flows through the operations of its hotel, restaurant, and admissions for use of the Eco-park. In the meantime, funding through micro-lending, the Central American Bank of Economic Integration (CABEI), and new and existing donors can help fund this project.

Project Objectives

For this report, we concentrated on several objectives:

1. Undertake a marketing and business survey to identify the most viable activity in ecotourism that will promote economic growth in Santa Cruz del Quiché.
2. Determine the proper location and type of ecotourism after evaluating market competition, availability of resources, and overall feasibility of the project.
3. Understand the mechanics of the project including equipment needs, staffing requirements, and other needed services.
4. Describe the legal and administrative components of the project that might be involved in the development of the organization's policy, structure, operating manual, and legal documents.
5. Estimate the economic feasibility of the project by looking at the planning horizon, investment plans, net cash flow, operating costs, budget of income, and costs.
6. Determine the overall feasibility of the project as a component of the long term success of the BFPC.

About the Barbara Ford Peace Center

The BFPC currently offers opportunities programs, human rights programs, and comprehensive health programs. A goal of the Barbara Ford Peace Center is to "promote the

integrated human development of citizens committed to justice and peace, especially for those who live in poverty.”¹

While conducting our market research, we found it important to keep the BFPC mission statement in mind. Before the trip, not many group members knew of the mission statement or the services offered by the center. After meeting with Sister Ginny on our first day at the center and learning more about Guatemala and the center, we realized that there were two specific aspects of the center we needed to focus on. The importance of offering services to both youth and adults, and the desire to cater to the mind and the body were two key aspects in discerning how to best approach the implementation of an Eco-park at the BFPC.

The center’s devotion to developing the youth of the area through programs and skills training was an important piece of information in deciding what features of an Eco-park would not only be complementary to this devotion, but also expand the focus of the center. Our group wanted to supplement the center and its resources while keeping true to the mission statement. Therefore, it was not just the youth who were utilizing the center that were important in our research, but the adults that are already using the center or would be brought to the center with the youth, as well. We understood that a wide range of age groups come to the center for a variety of purposes, and we wanted to create an attraction that would appeal to the masses. In addition, we looked to create an Eco-park that would be beneficial to both the mind and the body.

While it was important to focus on the mission statement and goals of the center, it was also key to consider the financial position of the center as a non-profit. The group decided that it

¹ "Barbara Ford Peace Center." *Sisters of Charity of New York*. Sisters of Charity of New York, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.scny.org/ministries/guatemala-mission/barbara-ford-peace-center/>>.

was valuable to focus on a starting point for an Eco-park rather than a fully developed park. We looked into what makes an Eco-park and what the foundation for an Eco-park should be composed of.



Figure 2: View from proposed trail

SWOT Analysis

We conducted a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, to review the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Barbara Ford Peace Center. We did this in order to determine the direction of our project regarding the ways the BFPC could improve its lucrative efforts. Strengths are the internal characteristics of the BFPC that give it an advantage, whereas weaknesses are internal characteristics that are disadvantageous for the Center. Opportunities and threats pertain to the external macro-environment, which includes uncontrollable factors that influence a company's decision making.

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 acres • Modern, up to date facilities • Educational services offered to locals • Mayan altar • Hotel coupled with restaurant • Grants/donations from outside sources 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged land that could limit/inhibit future construction • Difficulty of using current trail • Low awareness locally of Center • Lack of transportation
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped land, can develop how seen fit • Hiring internally • Potential to brand the Center how they would like • Strengthen local partnerships 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited disposable income of nearby residents • Uncertainty of external funding • Ecotourism competition

In examining the strengths of the BFPC, the most obvious takeaway was the sheer size of the property. Fifty acres is an incredibly large plot of land, and it will provide the Center with many options when determining how to expand their revenue streams. In addition to the size of the land that the Center owns, another strength is the modern, well-maintained facilities. Having internet access, electrical outlets, and other facilities that are capable of holding conferences or large meetings can help to attract people to the property. These facilities also complement the overall natural landscape of the property by giving people something refined and modern with which they can interact. The next strength is the educational services offered to the locals, specifically the subsistence farmer education. We found out firsthand that many – if not most – of the surrounding indigenous peoples rely on subsistence farming for a living. If they want to improve upon their knowledge base, they have few options beyond visiting the BFPC.

Educating these people and improving their standard of living is one service that distinguishes the Barbara Ford Peace Center. This free education impacts a large amount of

people in the area who farm. Hosting these farmers for training will help spread the word to others in their community about what the Barbara Ford Peace Center offers increasing its popularity. Another strength is the beautiful scenery and plant life. There were many beautiful views throughout the walking hike. The diversity of plant life throughout the property adds to the aesthetic advantages of the BFPC.

We also found the Mayan Altar to be a strength of the center. The present day sacrificial altar is an interesting draw, and many people will be interested in learning more about it. The hotel and restaurant are unique assets of the Barbara Ford Peace Center. The hotel is incredibly nice to reside in, and the restaurant has delectable food. With people on the property for various reasons throughout the day, having a potential revenue generator in a quality restaurant helps immensely. The hotel also helps the center broaden its appeal internationally by giving guests a place in which they can stay comfortably. We also determined that grants and donations from outside sources to be strengths as well. The center is not solely or even primarily dependent on the success of the hotel and restaurant for them to be sustainable. Their success is dictated in marketing and showing outside sources the great things that the Barbara Ford Peace Center is providing and the need for them to help funding.



Figure 3: Mayan Altar along trail

Next, we analyzed the weaknesses of the Barbara Ford Peace Center. The rugged land and rocks seemed to inhibit potential trail construction. This could increase the costs of developing the land to make a trail system. The current trail is difficult to navigate, especially for the elderly and young children. Another weakness was the relatively low awareness of the center and what it offers to locals. When we were conducting market research in the surrounding area, most students and only a few teachers knew what the Barbara Ford Peace Center was. An additional weakness would be the lack of transportation for locals in the surrounding area. It is perceived to be difficult and expensive for the locals to get to the property unless they live in the immediate area.

In terms of opportunities, the undeveloped land is certainly an opportunity because the center is able to mold the land into whatever it deems will best help it fulfill its mission. There are no outstanding commitments on the property that would limit it in trying to build a trail system or expanding their services. Another opportunity is the ease of the hiring process. We learned that many of the employees working for the center first came to it as children in programs at the center. This makes potential hiring pools clearer by already having established a relationship with many locals in the area who could be interested in positions that are offered by the center. The current low awareness of the BFPC affords an opportunity for the center to be branded as they see fit. Without an easily discernable reputation amongst the locals, the center has more flexibility in how it brands itself. The last opportunity we saw was the ability to strengthen partnerships in the surrounding community, particularly with schools. Having strong relationships with the local schools could create opportunities for annual field trips to the BFPC. This could apply to church groups as well.

Looking at threats to the Barbara Ford Peace Center, the first that came to our mind was the limited disposable income of the local populace. The Quiché region is one of the poorest regions in Guatemala, so charging money for services targeted towards locals may be difficult. Another potential threat we found was the uncertainty regarding external funding. With many governments experiencing budget problems, one of the first places they look to cut funding is to international organizations that do not directly affect their electorate. The last threat we saw was ecotourism competition already within the area. We visited an eco-park called “Los Senderos del Abuelo” located on the outskirts of Chichicastenango. What we saw was a low cost, easily replicable business model where underdeveloped land can be outfitted with various equipment that comprises an eco-park. Beyond just this specific eco-park, it seems to be a very easy business model to replicate if the Center doesn’t distinguish its future eco-park from what other businesses could offer.

Methodology

As part of our research for this report, we gathered information from many sources including a tour of the BFPC, four separate focus groups at varying schools, a visit to an existing Eco-park, and a meeting with the current grounds keeper at the BFPC.

- Tour of BFPC - We took a tour of the land to better understand the factors that would play into a potential Eco-park. During the tour, we observed the model farm, the ancient Mayan altar, the “lagoon landscape”, and the apiary, just to name a few. The vegetation was thick and diverse throughout the 50 acres of the center.
- Focus Groups - Our next phase of research included four focus groups. The first of which was at a Secondary School in Chinique with students ranging from 13 to 16. We spoke

with the teachers who gave us a better understanding of the youth population and popular interests. We also contacted the Panajxit Youth Ministry for an interview. The ages of the members ranged from 16 to 21 with a male to female ratio was 5:9. By mid-week, we were able to connect with the teachers at the Alvaro Arzu School in Chicabracan II. The school included students ranging in ages from 6 to 12. The male to female ratio of teachers was 3:7 with approximately 115 families are enrolled at the school. The final community we interviewed was the La Escuela de Santo Hermano Pedro, a private Catholic school educating students aged 5 to 17. There were 12 teachers present and 2 sisters. As of the 2015 school year, there were about 180 students with a 2:3 male to female ratio. The occupations of families in their communities ranged from agriculture to weaving to other small businesses.

- Take a Look at the Competition - Before beginning a plan for an Eco-park at the BFPC, we thought it was necessary to visit another competitive park in the area. We visited Los Senderos del Abuelo² in a nearby community about 17 km away from the Center. Attractions included a rock climbing wall, rope swings, a zip line, hiking trails, and other smaller features.
- Meeting with Grounds Keeper - To better understand the physical limitations of the project, we spoke with the grounds keeper at the BFPC. The team currently consists of four individuals who maintain the land. According to the groundskeeper, a trail system would be fairly easy to implement over a month's time.

² <https://1010experiencias.com/experiencia/las-mejores-distracciones-en-parque-ecologico-senderos-del-abuelo>

Awareness Levels of the Barbara Ford Peace Center and Marketing

When conducting market research in the Quiché region, we visited four schools, Chinique, Panajxit, Chicabracan, and Santo Hermano Pedro. While there, we asked questions to determine the awareness levels of the Barbara Ford Peace Center and the transportation



Figure 4: Meeting with a Catholic youth group in Panajxit

availability and situations for the people living in their areas.

The data we compiled showed that overall, the awareness levels of the Barbara Ford Peace Center were low. In Chinique, only a few teachers and a few students had heard of the Barbara Ford Peace Center. In Panajxit, we met with a Catholic youth group. Almost half of the participants in the youth group had heard of the center, but few had visited. Upon visiting Chicabracan, we discovered that all of the teachers knew of the Barbara Ford Peace

Center, but they told us that none of their students would know about it.

Lastly, Santo Hermano Pedro was actively involved with the Barbara Ford Peace Center and had taken their students on field trips there before. Overall we felt that the communities' awareness of the Barbara Ford Peace Center is very low. Even though one school that we visited, was well aware and had visited the center, this was most likely due to the close proximity of the school to the Barbara Ford Peace Center.

In order to improve awareness, we suggest that the BFPC create brochures that describe what the Barbara Ford Peace Center is and does. We believe that these may already exist as we received something like it during our stay. Our suggestion is to modify it slightly to appeal to a younger audience and distribute them to local schools, churches, and highly frequented tourist areas, restaurants, or hotels. This will not only increase the awareness of the Barbara Ford Peace Center within the community, but also within the tourist market.

Transportation Survey

In addition to measuring awareness levels of the Barbara Ford Peace Center within the Quiché region, we also assessed the transportation conditions. We discovered it was very rare for any students to be driven to school and very uncommon for families to own a vehicle. We surveyed as well to discover the amount of time students spent walking to school, and we asked about the frequency or existence of school field trips. We discovered that an average walking time for a student to get to school was about 20 minutes. The longest walking time that we discovered of any student was up to or slightly exceeding 40 minutes. In addition, we discovered that field trips were mostly dependent upon the school and the feelings about them amongst the community. At Santo Hermano Pedro, they took one or two field trips a year; in Chinique it was the same, but the school in Chicabracan did not take any field trips at all because the community felt that they would be too dangerous. In Chinique, it was dependent on the budget of the families and availability of the teachers.

We discovered that some of the students in Panajxit were willing to pool together about 200Qs (about \$20) to take a trip to play important soccer games at a quality field. With this knowledge, we hope that by increasing awareness through marketing materials, Guatemalan

youth will be excited to come to the Barbara Ford Peace Center. We also suggest to find a way to create group transportation by request and/or to have discounted group rates to allow more school traffic at the Barbara Ford Peace Center. Fees can be higher for foreigners or other tourists not from Quiche.

Economic Status of the Area

As mentioned earlier, we were able to interview individuals from four neighboring towns and/or schools, including Chinique, Panajxit, Chicabracan, and Santa Hermano Pedro. In this area of Quiché, there are a lot of subsistence farmers, which means they have much less



Figure 5: Community members gathering for the market in Chichicastenango

disposable income to spend on extracurricular activities than people would in more urban areas. However, feedback was still positive regarding the types of activities they are willing to spend their money on. Most schoolteachers we met with said if they do take their students on field trips, they will rent a bus for the day. Teachers in Chinique even specified that 25 quetzales for transportation per student is a normal estimate. At Santa Hermano Pedro, however, they do not take as many field trips or travel as far, and estimated transportation to be 1 to 2 quetzales per student.

Another finding was that most students are working for money when they are not in the classroom or studying. This is because their parents

either need the help on their own farms, or the extra income from them working at the family's small business after or before school. More specifically, children in Panajxit help with their family's textile business, which is very common for that area. Youth and their families in this region are able to generate enough income from selling their textiles that they can pay for small luxuries, like traveling for soccer games where they are willing to pay 12 quetzales per person for a decent field and transportation. Students generally only go to school through 6th grade in the Quiche.

Santa Hermano Pedro was a little different because it was a private Catholic school. Students pay tuition in order to attend. It costs around 175 to 200 quetzales per month, plus 125 to 175 quetzales per year for textbooks. There are little to no scholarships offered. This is a smaller school with approximately 180 students in total, including elementary, middle and high school. These students are more focused on their education, so fewer of them work while they are not in school compared to our other focus groups. So although they may not have as much disposable income of their own to spend, they are still interested in doing something that would be educational outside of the classroom. Urban youth also seemed to have more free time for activities, as opposed to youth in rural towns that are helping their families with farming.

Eco-park Interest

Every group interviewed for our market research seemed to be interested in the idea of taking a fieldtrip to an Eco-park that would not only be fun, but educational at the same time. Most said they would be willing to pay a reasonable amount to do so. All of the groups seemed enthusiastic about an Eco-park, depending on what types of activities would be offered. The teachers were more interested in something that would be both educational and fun for the

students. A few of the teachers and schools had either been to the Barbara Ford Peace Center before or heard of it; all had very positive reviews for it. The youth group, along with their teachers, pointed out how much the youth enjoy doing group activities, and they feel it is important for them to learn to work together as a team. Activities like tug-of-war, scavenger hunts, or rock climbing sounded exciting to them, and something they would go to an Eco-park for.

There were numerous teachers that said they had taken their students to an Eco-park before and were not very impressed with it. They would be willing to go back to one if it provided a more educational experience and was well kept. The educational aspect was especially important to them if it would incorporate science, such as the native species and plants in the area, or the history of the culture of the area. All of the groups agreed that this hands-on type of learning is something they would like to do on a field trip and be willing to spend money on.



Figure 6: Swimming pool at Los Senderos del Abuelo

We also learned several important things that we have called miscellaneous takeaways and have found them to be extremely important to our research. There were several common denominators when it came to the activities the youth of the area were interested in. One was that team-building activities were of high interest to the children. The children in local communities enjoy playing team games. Sports were a common interest and soccer was the most popular sport. However, the teachers and children noted that since they already have opportunities to participate in sports, especially soccer, to some extent, that they are looking for new activities that they do not have access to on a regular basis. A few of the activities they listed were dancing, music, and “thrills” like zip lining or rope swings. This information was essential to our research because we found it important to focus on what the communities actually wanted rather than what we thought they wanted.

In addition to listening to what the communities wanted and thought would be a good addition to our project, our AGBL group recognized the importance of listening to the concerns of the communities. The most important concerns we encountered were in relation to environmental changes, sanitation, and garbage disposal. With climate change affecting the crops of these local communities risking one of their major sources of income, we felt the need to add questions to our interviews regarding the environment, and we thank the community of Chicabracan for contributing this idea to our project. Questions such as: Is it possible to use environmentally friendly materials for this project? How will the construction of the trail system affect the environment and climate? How do we ensure the proper disposal of trash? Can we use our project to educate people about environmental changes? These miscellaneous takeaways from the communities allowed us to reevaluate our project idea and think about where we could improve.

Los Senderos del Abuelo

In an attempt to understand on the competition, we visited an Eco-park called “Los Senderos del Abuelo.” The park is located on the outskirts of Chichicastenango and sits atop a hill with panoramic views of the surrounding area. The park’s natural features also include a small river, waterfall, and caves. Manmade features include a rope bridge, rope swings, playground equipment, pool, small zoo exhibit, zip lines, a rock wall, camping areas, snack shop, and sheltered picnic areas with grills. According to employees, the park sees around 250 visitors per week. The entrance fee is Q20.00 per person. All park features are open to visitors with paid entrance with the exception of the zip line which costs 15 to 20 quetzales per ride.

After visiting the park, there were a number of key takeaways, both positive and negative, we want to highlight as it pertains to our business proposal. First of all, the Eco-park has a complete and comprehensive trail map and brochure displaying all the offerings and how to get to them. However, we found some of the park's features lacked the upkeep needed. For example, the zoo displays had only 3 ducks and other cages in the zoo area seemed empty. There seemed to be very few employees present and no attendant at the pool, which is concerning because many of the teachers we met highlighted water safety as a major concern in local communities and a reason to not take a field trip. There were many picnic and grilling areas which were in use during our visit and supported the family friendly atmosphere. There were a lot of features that added value to the park like the swing sets, slides, tree forts, and rope swings. These are very simple and relatively inexpensive and yet were some of the most fun. The views from the park were stunning. It has panoramic views looking down the valley and the mountains

across from it. The terrain is very similar to the BFPC and made it easy to envision an Eco-Park at the center.

We also noted the general lack of educational and informative material on the



Figure 7: Swings at Los Senderos Park

surrounding nature. This is very important. As we will describe in greater detail below, we think if the BFPC were to add some of the features found at Los Senderos del Abuelo with the education expertise of the BFPC, the Barbara Ford Peace Center could have develop into a predictable income stream for the Center.

Project Assumptions

Before making the final recommendations for an Eco-park on the property of the Barbara Ford Peace Center, we had to make a few assumptions. First, it is important that the visitors who come to visit the Eco-park can afford to pay the entrance fee. This will allow the center to achieve their ultimate goal of gaining profit, which can then be reinvested into the center's nonprofit work. So setting the entrance price must consider the economic situation of the schools, families, and individuals who live nearby and would like to visit the park.

Secondly, we will assume that the intention of each patron's visit is tied to a desire to learn more about Mayan culture, native plants, and wildlife. With those desires in mind, the center will be able to cater to the park needs and create signs to be placed throughout the park that explain the foliage and fauna of the area. Given that the individuals surveyed in our market research expressed interest in the educational aspect of the park (the teachers in particular), the education must be able to cater to both children and adults.

It will be important that visitors are capable of paying for and providing their own transportation to get to the center. This may require communication efforts by which the center is able to inform residents living near the Eco-park of buses that stop nearby the center. It will also be important for the center to communicate with schools within the area that the park is willing to host excursions. Many of the schools in the areas spoke about contracting busses for their excursions; this too, would be a viable option for transportation methods schools can use to get to the center.

Recommendations

With about 50 acres of land, the Barbara Ford Peace Center has a lot of potential to create an Eco-park. In order to do so, visitors will need a way of navigating the land. We recommend that, first and foremost, the BFPC should expand the trail systems. The trail systems will serve as a stepping-stone for many of the attractions that could be implemented in later years. Some of the primary accessories to be added in the early stages would include educational signs, benches and picnic tables, trash receptacles, and restrooms. There should be a strong emphasis on the educational aspect of the trails. By including signs about the land and history of Quiché, the BFPC creates an incentive for teachers to bring students to the park. Once there, students might

be intrigued enough by the current and potential attractions to come again. Through the implementation of a trail system, the BFPC could become a well-trafficked Eco-park.



Figure 8: View of River bed from Trail

Feasibility of Recommendations

In order to define, extend, and enhance the current trail system and implement a variety of accessories at the Barbara Ford Peace Center, it is critical to determine the feasibility of the recommendation in its entirety. Our first suggestion is to consult with the center's groundskeeper, Joel, on whether defining and extending the trails would be possible. We consulted with Joel briefly on the day of our presentation, and he explained to us that this did seem viable, especially given that there is already a rough trail system in place. He explained the

work would require a team of himself and a few laborers in order to expand and define the trails since work on the trails requires hard physical labor.



Figure 9: Learning about the model sustainable farm

To turn this trail system vision into a reality, it will be necessary to gather funding from outside sources. The funding would be used to pay the laborers for their time and physical work, for the construction of ‘park accessories’, and any other resources that are needed. One positive aspect of defining and extending the trail system, Joel explained, is the fact that available resources are plentiful for the most part. For example, there are many fallen trees and rocks that can be moved around to help define the trail and make it more traversable.

Joel explained to us that he thought the idea of a more defined trail system would be a great idea in that it requires little maintenance and would create a natural “human alert system”. That is, the individuals using the trails would be able to inform the Barbara Ford Peace Center of any problems or concerns with the trails as they occur. The system may also create a better understanding of responsibility for passersby to keep the trails clean. This should include signage reminding users to keep the trail system clean near any trash receptacles. Many of our market research participants expressed desire to learn more about environmental education. By educating park attendees on the necessity of the care and keeping of the park when they come to visit, it would extend the education beyond the park and into the greater community. Not only

will park attendees share what they have learned, but they will share their experience at the park, which has the potential to inspire others to visit the Barbara Ford Peace Center.

Financial Discussion

Given our recommendation, we believe that the next major step is to determine financial needs and sources. The entire cost of the trail system will vary depending on the Center's ability to recycle materials and other assets to develop the trail system. The primary costs involved are labor, lumber, gravel, and metal for building and developing the trail, benches, tables, educational signs, and restrooms throughout the eco-park. The implementation of a zip line, swimming pool, or the staffing associated with those, legal considerations and marketing will all need to be considered as this project grows.

³Lastly, the goal should be for the on-going operations of the BFPC to provide cash to fund future projects. Thus the for-profit aspects of the hotel and restaurant should be used to help fund these new endeavors. In addition, we believe that an admissions fee is not only proper but necessary. For residents of the Quiché area, the admission price should be 15-20 Quetzales, whereas tourists and foreigners should be charged \$10 (or of the equivalent in another currency) to enjoy of the Eco-park aspect of the BFPC. A discount could be given to those who eat at the restaurant or spend a night at the hotel, as well for those who use both the hotel/restaurant service and the Eco-park.

³ With respect to sources of capital, there are several methods in which this money can be raised that we learned from the Center. Firstly, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) could be contacted with a request for a grant to help fund this project including an explanation of the project scope and mission.

Project Timeline

Designing a successful hiking trail system at the BFPC is a lengthy, complex task. While there are a variety of ways to approach the project, it is imperative to choose a method that is the most time and cost efficient. To execute the creation of such a system under these constraints, we recommend the project proceed in the following phases:

Phase 1: Define current trails.

- The BFPC has a variety of informal trails utilized by staff members. Define these trails and use them as a starting point for the system.

Phase 2: Create new trails.

- Create new trails that feature interesting aspects of the property.



Figure 10: Trails will require more definition

Phase 3: Design a trail map.

- Design a professional, colorful map that illustrates all of the property's trails as well as information about the BFPC and its operating hours.

Phase 4: Create and post educational signage on the trails.

- Create signage that features educational facts about the property's plant life or wildlife, as well as any other relevant historical facts. Post these signs at numerous points on the trails.

Phase 5: Add accessories to the trail.

- Add amenities to the trail system, including bathrooms, water fountains, and trash receptacles.
- Add activities to the trail system, including swings, monkey bars, and a low-ropes activity course.

Phase 6: Create a marketing plan to raise awareness about the trail system in local communities and nearby schools.

- Identify target markets from which the BFPC desires to solicit patrons.
- Create a multi-media marketing plan in Spanish, English, and Quiché that is designed to capture the attention of the target markets and raise awareness of the BFPC new hiking trail service.

Phase 7: Commit to trail maintenance.

- Regularly perform trail maintenance to ensure patron safety and prevent potential forest fires.

It is estimated that Phases 1-3 would take one to three months. It is important to make the framework for the trail as fundamentally sound as possible since it is the basis for the future of

further ecotourism at the BFPC. Phases 4-5 could be added in the several months following, assuming the availability of resources, labor and other materials. Phases 6-7 are ongoing processes once Phases 1-5 are finished. After the completion of these phases, the BFPC will have a successful, operating hiking trail system that will service a variety of patrons and provide a firm foundation on which to expand the Eco-park.

Long-Term Vision for the BFPC and Our Next Steps

We believe that that our proposal for a trail system sets the framework for further ecotourism at the BFPC. We found a deep interest in new, exhilarating experiences as well as teambuilding and educational activities amongst the focus groups we interviewed. Given the proper legal infrastructure, a zip line and swimming pool seem plausible and would be well received by the greater Quiché community. We think that a zip line could be possible in the next three years, while a swimming pool should be held off for at least the next five years. This will give ample time for the initial proposal to develop and prosper. In due time, expansion into the zip line and swimming pool could be a way to further augment success and cash flow.

Ultimately, we could envision multinational corporations sending small group to the BFPC as a part of team development, service, and corporate or social responsibility programs. This would allow greater capacity usage of the hotel, restaurant, conference centers, and beautiful land as a whole. This comprehensive product offering would set the BFPC apart from its competition.

However, the current Guatemalan infrastructure is not conducive to this long term ideal scenario. It would take drastic improvement in the modes of transportation for corporations to



Figure 11: Sustainable Farming area could become a highlight of the trail.

feel comfortable bringing their employees to the BFPC given its location and lack of high accessibility from a major airport. We believe that our proposal for an educational and interactive trail system will allow for the Barbara Ford Peace Center to keep its original mission of aiding the Quiché region in mind while also finding a new way to diversify its revenue stream.

AGBL would be honored to continue working with the BFPC on this project to continue investigating the costs required, providing the marketing materials, and the staffing models to help the Center achieve its goals.

Sources

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Figure 12: Marquette Students make their faculty proud.