

PBI MEXICO – September 2013

New Accompaniment in Oaxaca

Services for an Alternative Education A.C. EDUCA

Due to its vulnerable situation and the risk situation of the communities with which they work, PBI has received and accepted a request for accompaniment by the Services for an Alternative Education AC (EDUCA). The request was backed by the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center.

Services for an Alternative Education A.C. (EDUCA) is a non-governmental organization founded in 1994 and based in the city of Oaxaca de Juárez. EDUCA promotes democracy and development in Oaxacan communities, as well as justice, equality and social participation. The organization works in the city of Oaxaca and in the Mixteca, Sierra Sur, Costa, Valles Centrales and Istmo regions.

EDUCA has three areas of work:

•*defense of the territory*

EDUCA currently accompanies several community processes regarding defense of the territory against energy megaprojects, such as the mine in San José del Progreso, the mine in Magdalena Teitipac and the wind farms in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Since 2006 they have advised five municipalities and more than 25 communities of the Costa region in the defense of their territories against the construction of a hydroelectric dam, “Paso de la Reina”.

•*advocacy and citizens participation*

EDUCA advises indigenous organizations and communities in the defense of their rights, especially in indigenous regions. They give visibility to the situation of Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights of indigenous peoples, as the right to free, previous and informed consultation on projects that affect their territories and way of life.

•*communication*

EDUCA publishes daily news in its *Minuta* and broadcasts through their radio station *Espejos*. They also publish a quarterly analytical bulletin called *El Topil*, as well as information campaigns and many other publications, such as books, reports etc. A few months ago they launched the campaign *Defendiendo Derechos Sembramos Futuro* (by defending rights we sow the future) to raise the profile of the work of community human rights defenders.

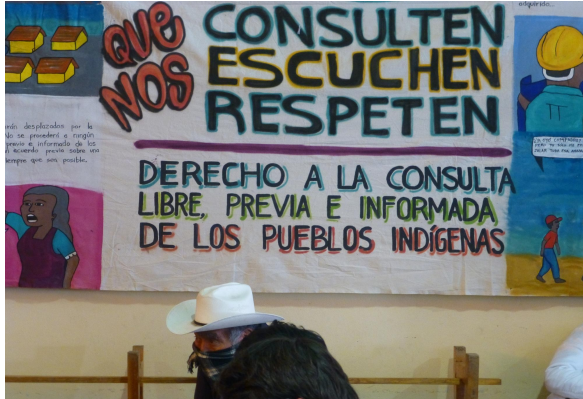


PBI volunteer with a member of EDUCA during the “march for peace” in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec

Risk situation

The relationship between PBI and EDUCA goes back to 2001. Throughout the years, PBI periodically met with EDUCA and accompanied the organization during public

events related to the “Paso de la Reina” case. In May 2013 PBI Mexico accepted EDUCA's request for accompaniment. EDUCA works on various cases in which the implementation of megaprojects and large-scale investment has infringed on the rights of individuals and communities to defend and promote human rights.



Poster in forum in Juchitán, Isthmus of Tehuantepec, about the affects of the implementation of megaprojects in communities

In Oaxaca, defenders accompanying such resistance processes, or people opposed to such megaprojects, are specially vulnerable. EDUCA has suffered harassment, threats and defamation because of its work. In 2012 a media campaign to discredit the organization was carried out. Previously, they suffered surveillance during public activities, threats of raids to their offices in 2011 and threats of burning down their offices in 2006.

Threats against EDUCA have increased since their work with communities in the Costa, Valles Centrales and Sierra Sur regions began. Not only EDUCA members are in danger but also the community human rights defenders they advise and work with.

Through our physical presence and capacity to dialogue with different actors, we intend to directly protect EDUCA members and also, indirectly, the community defenders the EDUCA team supports. PBI's objective with the accompaniment is also to legitimate human rights defenders in Oaxaca in general.

For further information on EDUCA and the acts of aggression against community human rights defenders, please see:

- [EDUCA's website](#)
- their report on [acts of aggression against community human rights defenders](#)
- their publication on the [rights of indigenous peoples to consultation](#)
- their publication on the hydroelectric dam [Paso de la Reina](#)
- their last report about the [human rights situation in Oaxaca from 2009 to 2012](#)