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*Vision of sustainability and justice in the town of
Totonacapan: The philosophy of lightning children*

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Abstract:

The present proposal is an approach to the vision, cosmogony and philosophy of the Totonacapan people, and particularly with the inhabitants of the Totonacapan region in Veracruz Mexico, a town whose wisdom is manifested to this day, in the conservation of customs and traditions, as well as the hierarchy of collective desire that seeks health, well-being and peace in the region, are guides in the evolution of their cultural processes, where a closeness, respectful and deep with Mother Nature stands out. This wisdom by the Council of Elders, transmitted to the new generations, by the Supreme Council of Totonacapan who seek share the basis to understand and conceive the current world, from the ancestral vision and cosmogony to identify their space, thought, spirituality and in the building your social context.

In the Totonacapan region, the first pre-hispanic population concentrations were located around 1259 to 1311. Already by the year 1450, there is a record of incursions and the conquest of Totonaca territory, by the Mexica, establishing a relationship of domain and subordination. As a result of the presence of "Mexica" in the Totonaco territory, there was an imposition of customs and language, since in some areas they begin to speak in Nahuatl, resulting in the presence of a bilingualism (Nahuatl-Totonac) , situation that persists, until the encounter with

the Spaniards in the year of 1519. At present, the Totonacapan region includes the area that extends from the Cazonos River to the north, to the towns of Gutiérrez Zamora and Tecolutla, in the State of Veracruz in Mexico.

The importance of the document is that it constitutes an invitation to deepen and understand the vision of the inhabitants of Totonacapan, in the construction of their social context and their connection with nature, as part of an ancient culture, which creates and recreates their vision, in the search for the feeling of belonging and as an inheritance of the children of thunder (Tajin), as well as the need to preserve the benefits that nature itself offers them, seeking a peaceful and harmonious coexistence, in the social and environmental environment. However, the preservation of its history, tradition and philosophy of life, contrast with public policy strategies, particularly in the social sphere, and which are aimed at achieving economic development in the fight against multidimensional poverty and marginalization, all Once they have not incorporated into them, the feeling and living of the relationship between individual and nature, as the guiding axis, of the philosophy of the Totonacapan people. What is sustainability for the people of Totonacapan? What is social justice in the search for sustainability? And what is your concept of justice in sustainability and human development? From the vision and philosophy of the people of Totonacapan, as part of the history and tradition of the children of thunder “Tajin” and in whose worldview, he is responsible for regulating the rain, climate and life of the people of the region.

How does the people of Totonacapan live and live in the face of the maelstrom of actions that, from public policy, that seek human development? How do you adjust, your way of life and how do you adapt to the requirements, which from the perspective of justice, are required to contribute to the objectives of the 2030 development agenda? This document is an effort to learn and recognize one of the most important millenary cultures in Mexico, in the construction of a more inclusive vision of the social development of the Totonacapan people, which invites us to reflect on the direction and scope of this response.

Keywords: Sustainability, Justice, Poverty, Capabilities approach, Totonacapan

Introduction

The present proposal is an approach to the vision, cosmogony and philosophy of the Totonacapan people, and particularly with the inhabitants of the Totonacapan region in Veracruz Mexico, a town whose wisdom is manifested to this day, in the conservation of customs and customs, traditions , as well as the hierarchy of collective desire that seeks health, well-being and peace in the region, are guides in the evolution of their cultural processes, where a closeness, respectful and deep with Mother Nature stands out. This wisdom by the Council of Elders, transmitted to the new generations, by the Supreme Council of Totonacapan who seek share the basis to understand and conceive the current world, from the ancestral vision and cosmogony to identify their space, thought, spirituality and in the building your social context.

The Origin of the People: Historical Background of the Sons of Thunder

In the Totonacapan region, the first pre-Hispanic population concentrations were located around 1259 to 1311. Already by the year 1450, there is a record of incursions and the conquest of Totonacapan territory, by the Mexica, establishing a relationship of domain and subordination. As a result of the presence of "Mexica" in the Totonaca territory, there was an imposition of customs and language, since in some areas they begin to speak in Nahuatl, resulting in the presence of a bilingualism (Nahuatl-Totonaca) , situation that persists, until the encounter with the Spaniards in the year of 1519. At present, the Totonacapan region includes the area that extends from the Cazonas River to the north, to the towns of Gutiérrez Zamora and Tecolutla, in the State of Veracruz in Mexico.

Papantla as an important center of population of the town of Totonacapan, in the year 1519, and considered a ceremonial center, due to the origin of its name. It is important to point out, once the conquest was made, it was in the interest of the Spanish Crown to know the situation of the territories, through a report, taking interest in the following areas: geography, history, custom, ethnic groups, population, as well as natural, livestock and mineral resources. According to (Commons, 1995) at the end of the 16th century, between the years 1569 and 1577, the first surveys were conducted to find out the characteristics of the population and ethnic groups, among other information, of the new territories of New Spain. Thus, at the beginning of the 17th century, a new questionnaire prepared by Andrés García de Céspedes, Senior Cosmographer of the Council of the Indies, contained 255 questions distributed in four groups: 1) Natural questions, 2) Moral and political, 3) Military and 4) Ecclesiastical.

The first description of the physical characteristics of the geographical environment of Totonacapan is found in (De Sagahun, 1830: 131) where it is described "... in their land they make great heats: there are many foodstuffs and fruits, and there is no cocoa there ; neither the veinacaztli, but liquidambar, or the fragrant wine called xuchiococotl, and at present the castilla fruits are given there in great abundance.

The representation of the authorities of the Totonaco people managed to remain until the middle of the 17th century, when a form of social organization was established, divided into headquarters and the constitution of the so-called Indian towns. (García-Martínez, 2005) describes that the operation of the so-called Indian towns were: "... congregations of the Indian population were one of the most visible manifestations, and without a doubt the most spectacular, of the will of the Spanish to impose and instill their principles and values in the society they had managed to dominate."

(García-Chávez, 2007) points out that the Spanish transform the Totonaco territory, where the creation of the Indian towns generated the elimination of the form of organization through the *altepetl* and generated a long history of struggles between the head towns and the peoples subject to maintaining control of the territory and the internal governing bodies. In this sense, the dynamics of the fight for the control of the territory and of the governing bodies (Spanish-Indian people) in this period, is conditioned by the emergence of the economic interest in the production of vanilla for the European market, and determines the way in which this region enters the market. For this reason, the conflicts registered in the years of 1764, 1767 and 1787 in Papantla, find their explanation problems due to issues related to: i) Land boundaries, ii) Parish taxes, iii) Colonial taxes, iv) Monopolies, v) Elections indigenous government and vi) Relating to the distribution of trade.

In the years 1762, 1764 and 1767 one of the main conflicts generated in the Totonacapan region (Papantla) was related to the indigenous government elections. Another important conflict was generated in the colonial economic institution, known distribution of commerce, which registered two events in 1762 and 1767, as well as those generated by the presence of monopolies, in 1764 and 1773. Whenever in the region of Papantla there was no mining, as in other municipalities of the time, it is the production of vanilla, a product of interest to the European market, one of the main sources of conflict as a product of colonial exploitation of the market, originating land appropriation, emergence of monopolies and abusive business practices. (Carmagnani, 2004

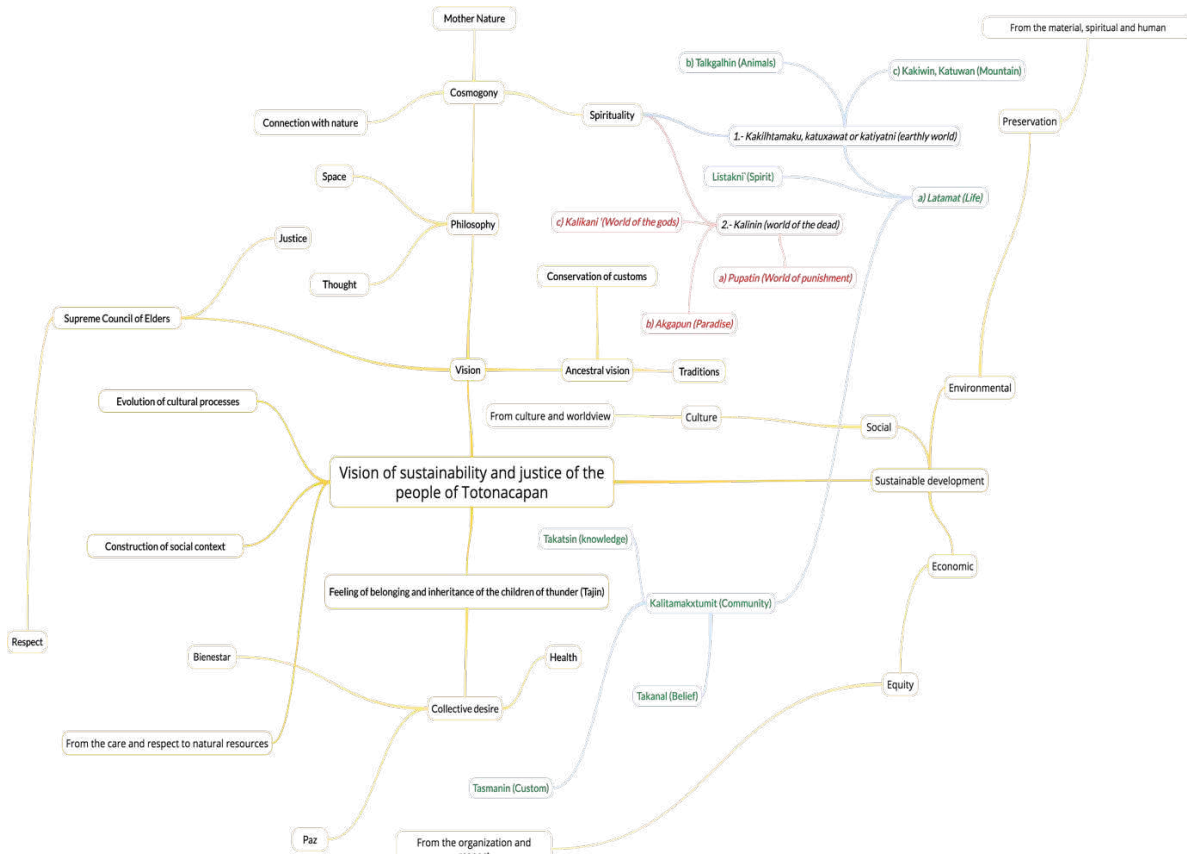
Worldview, philosophy and history of the Totonacapan people

The inhabitants of Totonacapan, in their historical origins, professed a polytheistic religion, where the worship of their deities, who reciprocated corresponded in a heavenly retribution that provided them with good health, good harvest and well-being for their family. Within his deities *Tajín* or *Aktsiní*, God of Thunder: He is the most powerful of the beings of Heaven. Its earthly manifestation is thunder. The god *Tajin* is a warrior, who has power over clouds, rain, water and wind. His veneration and recognition is because he is responsible for the rain and influences the *milpa* (crops).

Consider Figure 1, below, which represents the scheme to follow the vision of sustainability and justice of the people of Totonacapan, based on their cosmogony, connection and high respect for Mother Nature, which defines their philosophy of life, defend thought, space and time, which generalizes the ancestral vision of the

people of Totonacapan, under the care and protection of the Supreme Council of Elders, who are in charge of transmitting the ancestral vision to the new generations and which seeks to preserve customs and traditions.

Figure 1. Approach to the vision of sustainability and justice of the people of Totonacapan



Source: self made.

The Totonacan belief system is cumulative, as a result of the combination in time and space of symbols, myths, rituals or ceremonies, derived from the mixture of indigenous cultures of Mesoamerica, which had contact with each other, and which is seen enriched by the incorporated aspects of Christianity as a result of the Spanish conquest. In this sense, as the religion of the Totonac people mixes and combines both the original tradition and the tradition of the Catholic religion, creating their own religiosity.

The Totonac worldview, there are three magical connections between the spiritual life, the earthly world and the world of the gods, which are in permanent contact, therefore, the actions of people should be directed to the search for a balance with the spiritual world and that of the gods. In the *Kakilhtamaku, katuxawat* or *katiyatni* (earthly world) people coexist as spiritual and earthly beings, who share them with animals and plants. *Kalinin* (world of the dead), is made up of three scenarios, as a result of syncretism with the Judeo-Christian religion: a) *Pupatin* (world of punishment) which is the place where souls pay for their actions in the earthly world; b) *Akgapun*

(paradise), whose earthly manifestation is observed in bodily signs, which are considered to be the product of the reincarnation of a person, who has failed to fulfill his purpose in the earthly world or has an action to compensate and is born again as a person or as an animal; c) The third world is *Kalikani* '(world of the gods) in which the dioeses who protect water, wind, mountains, animals, rainbows, dances and *Kimpuchinakan* (God) inhabit, translated by some as "the owner of the things".

The values embodied in the philosophy and vision of the people of Totonacapan, such as justice and respect for traditions and customs, are syncretized under the conditions imposed by Spanish domination, by the war of independence and later by the capitalist development of the market in where the primary interest is the exploitation, in and for itself, of nature itself, contravening its vision of respect for nature and conditioning its ancestral philosophy, with which a new construction emerges from its social context and an evolution of processes cultural, whose purpose is the collective desire to benefit, health and peace.

In that sense understand the vision of the inhabitants of Totonacapan, in the construction of their social context and their connection with nature, as part of an ancient culture, which creates and recreates their vision, in the search for the feeling of belonging and as an inheritance of the children of thunder (Tajin), as well as the need to preserve the benefits that nature itself offers them, seeking a peaceful and harmonious coexistence, in the social and environmental environment. However, the preservation of its history, tradition and philosophy of life, contrast with public policy strategies.

At this time we should ask ourselves:

How do the people of Totonacapan live and coexist in the face of the whirlwind of actions that, from public policy, seek human development?

The capabilities approach and the search for the common good in the town of Totonacapan

Development understood as the expansion of freedoms considers people as agents of their own destiny. The capabilities approach aims to create the necessary conditions for a more dignified human life (Nussbaum, 2002). The development proposal based on the expansion of freedoms focuses on the ends and not on the means of development, taking into account the diversity of the population and the social values that influence the exercise of freedom, something very important for the gender approach and the analysis of female poverty.

It should be remembered that in (Sen, 2000) development is conceived as a process of expansion of freedom through the development of capacities. From the perspective of freedom, poverty must be seen as "the deprivation of basic capacities and not as a mere lack of income, which is the usual criterion with which poverty is identified"

(Sen, 2000: 114). For (Sen, 1998), "real poverty" is understood then as the deprivation of capacities to live the life that is considered good.

This type of development should focus on the expansion of capacities to lead the type of life that a certain group of people values. A person with agency "acts and causes changes whose achievements can be judged based on their own values and objectives, regardless of whether we evaluate them or not also based on some external factors" (Sen, 2000: 35). However, it is important to recognize that the services provided by the State (health, education, food and infrastructure of services in housing and homes) are a means but not an end for development, government programs do not promote the development of capacities such as expansion of human freedom.

How do you adjust, your way of life and how do you adapt to the requirements that, from the perspective of justice, should contribute to the objectives of the 2030 development agenda?

The current situation in Totonacapan: The challenges facing the 2030 goals

In Mexico, the strategy for combating poverty, according to the social development policy, states that in order to reduce regional disparities and reduce poverty levels, the aim is to achieve an improvement in basic social infrastructure: water, drainage, electricity, in basic services (education and health) and the improvement of housing conditions. The measurement of improvement in these conditions is measured through the marginalization index and the social backwardness index, however, aspects that generate social exclusion and multidimensional poverty are not considered. In the case of Mexico, there is no indicator that allows measuring the degree of social exclusion, that allows comparability between regions, states, municipalities and / or localities.

The Totonacapan region, which corresponds to the north-central region of the state of Veracruz It is divided into three subregions:

- a) The Alta or Sierra subregion is made up of the municipalities of Espinal, Coyutla, Coahuatlán, Chumatlán, Mecatlán, Coxquihui, Filomeno Mata and Zozocolco de Hidalgo;
- b) The low or Costa subregion includes the municipalities of Papantla, Poza Rica, Coatzintla, Tihuatlán, Castillo de Teayo, Cazonas de Herrera, Gutiérrez Zamora and Tecolutla; and
- c) The Misantla-Xalapa subregion is made up of the municipalities of: Yecuatla, Chiconquiaco, Landero and Coss, Miahuatlán, Tepetlán, Acatlán, Naolinco, Coacoatzintla, Tonayán, Jilotepec and Tlacolulan. Only speech from the municipality of Yecuatla, Veracruz is studied in this subregion. See Figure 1, below.

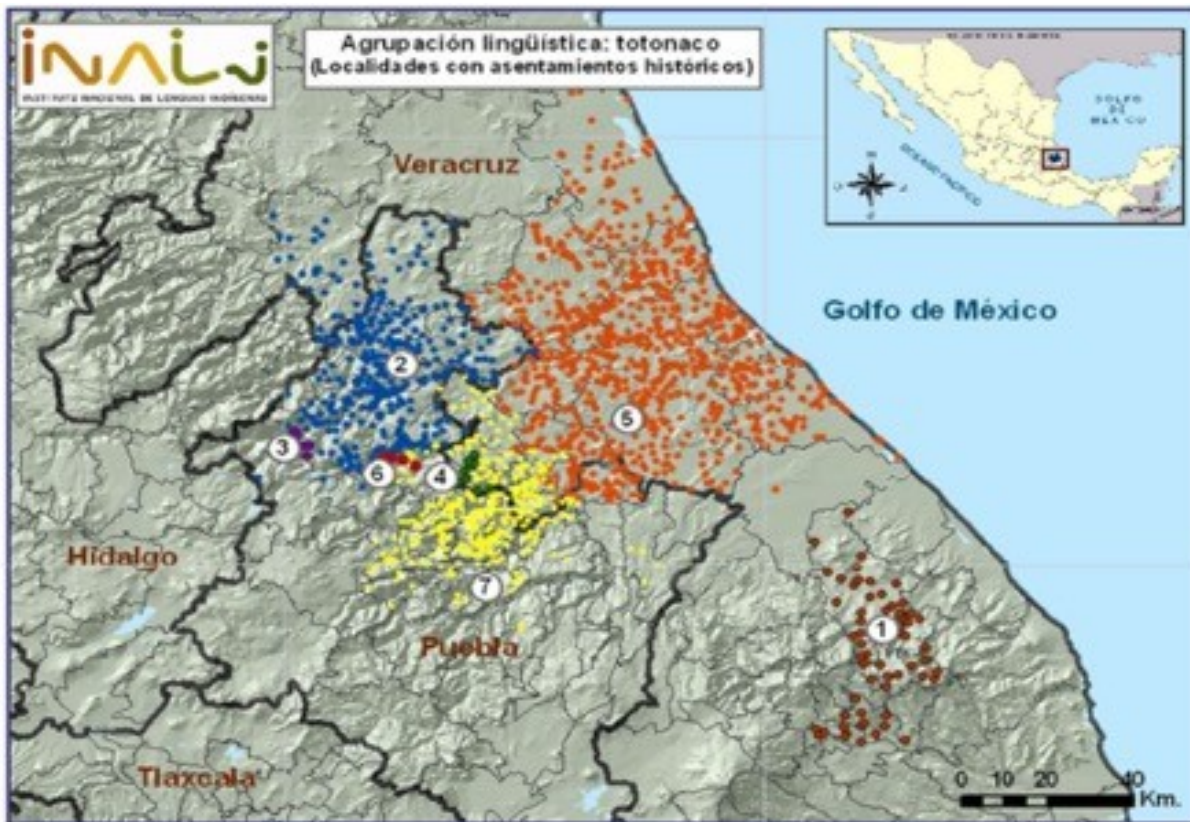
Figure 2. Totonacapan region



Source: Taken from Troiani, Duna (2007). Phonology and morphosyntax of the Totonac language. Huehuetla Municipality, Sierra Norte de Puebla. Scientific Collection 515. Mexico, INAH. National Institute of Anthropology and History. National Institute of Anthropology and History, 2007, Scientific Collection. Linguistic Series

The National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INALI), in the Atlas of Indigenous Peoples in Mexico, identifies that the Totonaco belongs to the Totonaco-Tepehua family, it is spoken in the States of Veracruz and Puebla. And according to information provided in the General Population and Housing Census, in 2010 there is a record of 250,252 Totonaco speakers, and there are seven variants: (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Distribution of the Totonaca language grouping, according to localities where it is spoken of the State of Veracruz and State of Puebla, 2010



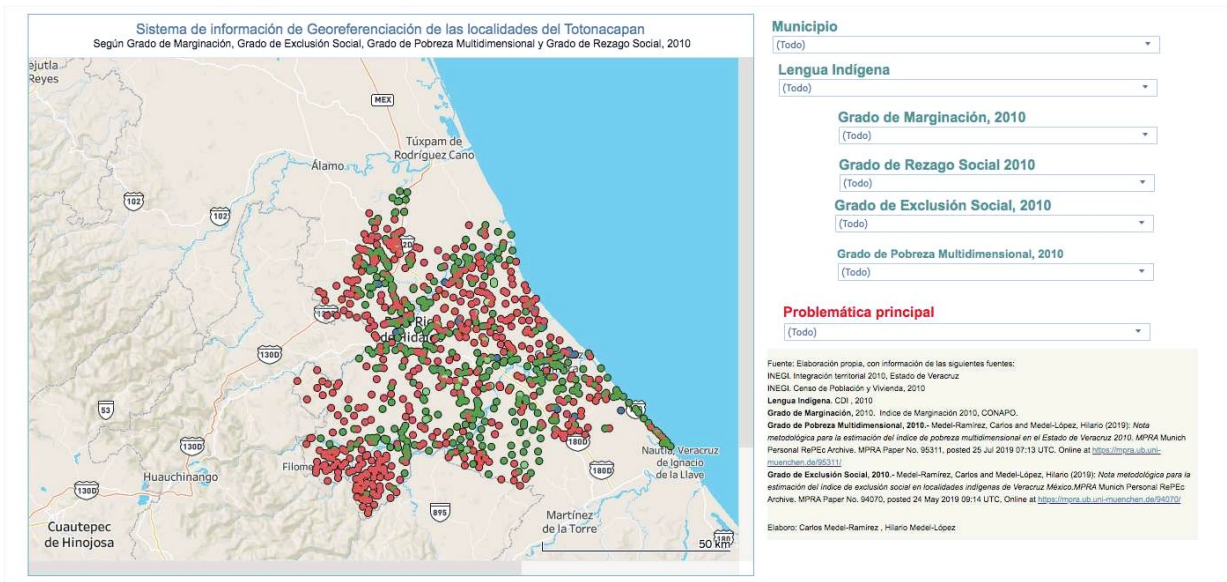
Source: National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INALI). Atlas of Indigenous Peoples in Mexico. Recovered from: http://atlas.cdi.gob.mx/?page_id=2472

Reading guide:

1. Southeast Totonaco / Laakanaachiwiin
2. North Central Totonaco / tachaqawaxti / tutunakuj / tachiwiin no inn
3. Totonaco of the Xinolatépetl / kintachiuinkan hill
4. Totonaco central high / tutunáku (central high) not im
5. Totonaco de la costa / lichiwintutunaku
6. Totonaco del río Necaxa / totonaco (del río Necaxa)
7. Totonaco south central / tutunáku (south central) / tutunakú / totonaco (south central)

Our proposal is to incorporate the index of social exclusion as an element that allows explaining the current condition of multidimensional poverty in localities that present a significant concentration of population, recognizing their condition, as is the case of the indigenous population, as well as that which presents a high degree of economic marginalization, in order to analyze the scope of social policy to combat poverty. (See Figure 4 , below).

Figure 4. Georeferencing information system of the localities of Totonacapan and socio-demographic dimensions 2010



Source. Medel-Ramírez, Carlos. & Medel-López, Hilario (2020) Georeferencing information system of the localities of Totonacapan According to Degree of Marginalization, Degree of Social Exclusion, Degree of Multidimensional Poverty and Degree of Social Lag, 2010 In: Tableau Public. Recovered from:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/centerforstudiesonpublicfinanceandcombatpoverty#!/vizhome/SistemadeinformacindeGeoreferenciaindelasocalidadesdelTotonacapanTablet/SistemadeinformacindeGeoreferenciaindelasocalidadesdelTotonacapan>

The challenges facing the 2030 goals: A look back since 2010

From the perspective of social justice and human development, in the fight against poverty multidimensional the condition of marginalization and the degree of exclusion is recognized as lacerating social that presents the population that is located under this condition; but even more so, the one observed in indigenous people, who are given, by this fact alone, a higher level of severity to overcome their condition of poverty. In response to this social problem, the federal government in Mexico, seeks to promote empowerment in the management capacities of organizations productive activities in charge of indigenous women through project support productive.

The situation that occurs in the Totonacapan region, with respect to social exclusion, multidimensional poverty, social backwardness and marginalization, constitute challenges to be solved from the vision of the State, with the aim of providing social satisfactors such as: Health, Education, Housing, among others. In this section a retrospective look is presented to identify the scenario of the observed deficiencies to be solved.

Social exclusion.- In 2010, the number of towns in the municipalities that make up the Totonacapan area is 838 towns. In this year, the towns that presented a high and medium degree of social exclusion decreased 66% compared to 2005. In other words, out of 473 localities that in 2005 had a very high and high degree of social

exclusion, the number of localities in this condition rose to 161 in 2010. In 2010 the 5 municipalities that present 19% of the total localities that present a high and medium degree of social exclusion are the following: 1) Filomeno Mata with 89% of their localities in this condition, 2) Mecatlán with 59%, 3) Zozocolco de Hidalgo with 56%, 4) Chumatlán with 50% and 5) Coxquihui with 55%.

Multidimensional poverty.- In 2010 the towns that presented multidimensional poverty status increased 30% compared to 2005. In other words, out of 378 localities that in 2005 presented a multidimensional poverty condition, the number of localities in this condition rose to 491 in 2010. In 2010, the 5 municipalities that present 22% of the total localities that have multidimensional poverty are the following: 1) Chumatlán, Filomeno Mata and Mecatlán with 100% of their localities in this condition, 2) Zozocolco de Hidalgo with 96%, 3) Coxquihui with 88%, 4) Coyutla with 81% and 5) Coahuatlán with 75%.

Social lag.- In 2010 the towns that presented a very high degree of marginalization decreased by 24.69% compared to the year 2005. In other words, of 162 towns that in 2005 had a very high and high degree of social backwardness, the number of towns in this condition passes to 122 in 2010. In 2010, the 5 municipalities that present 12% of the total of localities that present a very high and high degree of social backwardness are the following: 1) Zozocolco de Hidalgo with 40% of their localities in this condition, 2) Filomeno Mata with 33%, 3) Mecatlán with 29%, 4) Coxquihui with 24% and 5) Tecolutla with 20%.

Marginalization index.- In 2010, the localities that presented a very high degree of marginalization decreased by 32.67% with respect to the year 2005. In other words, of 202 localities that in the year 2005 had a very high degree of marginalization, the number of localities in this condition increased to 136 in the year 2010. In 2010, the 5 municipalities that present 23% of the total localities that present a very high degree of marginalization are the following: 1) Filomeno Mata with 67% of their localities in this condition, 2) Zozocolco de Hidalgo with 48%, 3) Mecatlán with 41%, 4) Chumatlán with 33% and 5) Poza Rica de Hidalgo with 33%.

Vision of sustainability and justice of the people of Totonacapan

“Si queremos plantar un árbol de buena fruta, lo primero que tenemos que hacer es ofrendar y pedir permiso a los guardianes de la Ciudad Sagrada de El Tajín”.

Don Juan Simbrón
(1916-2015)

Puxko o líder espiritual
de los totonacos de Veracruz

"If we want to plant a tree with good fruit, the first thing we have to do is make offerings and ask permission from the guardians of the Sacred City of El Tajín."

*Don Juan Simbrón
(1916-2015)*

*Puxko or spiritual leader
of the Totonacs of Veracruz*

The sense of respect for nature, spirituality and the guardians of the Sacred City of El Tajín, constitute the reflection of the construction of the ideas and philosophy of the inhabitants of Totonacapan. In the culture of Totonacapan, not only the material, that is, the product, matters, but the process in which it is generated. In this sense, the dialogue with the deities is to thank them for offering and giving an account of the work and actions taken.

In the culture of Totonacapan, it is considered that each individual has a gift from birth, and it is very important that this gift be transmitted to the new generations, thereby strengthening ancestral knowledge, tradition and custom, which as a whole is weaving into branches. of the culture and vision of the people. It is this social responsibility acquired from birth, makes the residents very committed and seeking order, peace, health and justice, making value their idea and philosophy of respect for Mother Nature: rain, wind, the lightning as heirs of the God of Thunder: Tajin.

The *Kantiyan* or House of the Grandparents, is the social figure that allows the reproduction of the social fabric, attending to the generation of new generations under the criteria of justice and respect for what they value and are interested in valuing, as the basis of their harmonic development of space and territory. As indicated, it is the process that leads to a collective well-being that is the most valued part of the community in the search for such factors as: health, peace and well-being.

Conclusions

How does the people of Totonacapan live and live in the face of the maelstrom of actions that, from public policy, that seek human development?

An approach to the answer must consider the paradigm of sustainable development, as well as the worldview of the people of Totonacapan, recognizing the ways of using natural resources, under a vision of respect for peace and nature, which recreate their own idea. sustainability, since when considering as a whole, the material, spiritual and human, in the sense of preserving the natural environment. In the same way, in an economic environment, it seeks equity under a sphere of organization and respect, while the social environment seeks the preservation of culture, justice and peace, which are considered essential elements in the construction of social welfare of the people of Totonacapan.

This invites us to reinvent, from the vision of public responsibility for human development and sustainable development, recognize what is important and value as the main assets in an assessment of the preservation of nature, culture, tradition that seeks to define an economy that It allows to reorient the efforts of the communities of Totonacapan, solving the material deficiencies identified as social lags, marginalization, social exclusion and multidimensional poverty, but recognizing the central contribution of a new sense of life based on sustainability that originates a new culture based in the ethics of sustainability in the application of the State's responsibility to guarantee the use and enjoyment of fundamental social rights, recognizing the value, inheritance and ascentral wealth of the children of Thunder in the Totonocapan region.

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