

Global Philanthropists Circle

María Eugenia Garcés: A case study in strategic private philanthropy

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May 2005

Background

María Eugenia Garcés, one of the leading members of an influential Colombian business family, has a strong commitment to supporting philanthropic initiatives that seek to bring peace and development to her native country.

In mid-2003 she and her family decided to join the Global Philanthropists Circle (GPC) on the advice of her relative, Lizzie Eder Zobel de Ayala, who had married Jaime Zobel de Ayala, a leading businessman in the Philippines. Lizzie knew that María Eugenia and her siblings Elena Garcés, Enrique Garcés and Emma Garcés were in the process of setting up the AlvarAlice Foundation in Colombia, and was convinced that GPC could provide a space in which the Garcés family could share their experience and aspirations with other leading philanthropists. In an interview for this study María Eugenia said she knew instinctively that GPC could be important in the development of her philanthropic work in Colombia. She anticipated that the contacts with other philanthropists from many countries facing many similar challenges would provide her with contacts, ideas and learning that would enable her to build a strong new family foundation and leverage additional financial and human resources.

This brief case study describes how membership in the GPC has impacted on the thinking of María Eugenia and her family and has helped to develop a strategic focus to the work of the AlvarAlice Foundation. It highlights the complementary roles played by María Eugenia, her staff at the AlvarAlice Foundation, GPC members and Synergos staff in the launching of a major new strategic philanthropic initiative, the Alliance for Restorative Justice, Co-existence and Peace. This illustrates how María Eugenia and her family and a relatively small team of staff and supporters were able to use a new private foundation as a launching pad from which to leverage resources and convene all sectors around an issue of critical importance to the future of their country.

Section I

Developing the vision and mission of the new AlvarAlice Foundation

From her base in the US, where she has lived for the past thirty years, María Eugenia has had a continuous involvement with the philanthropic endeavors of her family in Colombia. A major vehicle for her voluntary support for social development initiatives has been the Fundación Corona (Corona Foundation), one of oldest, most respected, and influential Colombian private foundations established by her mother's brothers: Felipe, Hernán, Elkin and Norman Echavarría. She has served as an active Board Member of the Fundación Corona since the year 2000.

Her father, Alvaro Garcés, with his brother Armando's support, was very influential in his own right, initiating the development of important philanthropic initiatives in and around the city of Cali. These include contributing the land for the Universidad del Valle's new campus; the establishment of the Fundación Clínica Valle del Lili, which was responsible for the conception and building of the most important and technologically advanced hospital of the region; supporting several development projects in low-income neighborhoods of Cali; and environmental protection programs in the Cauca Valley. María Eugenia, also a Board Member of the US-based Brain Trauma Foundation, founded, with her parents' support, the Colombian Foundation for the Treatment of Brain Injuries (FUNDCOMA). This operating nonprofit organization has played an important role in improving the diagnosis and treatment of patients with severe brain trauma in the Colombian public hospitals, which is a major problem in that country.

María and her siblings created the Fundación AlvarAlice (AlvarAlice Foundation) in 2003 in memory of their parents Alvaro Garcés Giraldo and Alice Echavarría Olozaga. The purpose of the Foundation is to "honor their philanthropic spirit and commitment to Colombia's social development. In addition to continuing their parents' legacy and work, the Foundation's objective is to develop synergistic partnerships and global alliances that enhance the lives and living conditions of Colombian citizens, particularly of the poor and unprivileged communities."

From its inception, the Foundation has had the vision of building partnerships with other sectors both within and outside Colombia to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and violence. The stated vision of the Foundation is to “become recognized as an organization that works towards breaking the cycles of poverty and violence that plague Colombian society by creating opportunities and building bridges between local, national and international partners through the strategic and effective mobilization of resources and the creation of participatory alliances.”

The stated mission of the Foundation is “to contribute to the building of a more equitable Colombian society through support of innovative programs and projects in the areas of healthcare, education and culture, peace building initiatives, income generation, microfinance and sustainable development. By strengthening community participation and local capacity building through global synergistic partnerships, the AlvarAlice Foundation supports the restoration of the social fabric and contributes to improving the quality of life of the people, especially the underprivileged.”

Making the mission a reality

In crafting a strategic mix of programs and projects to achieve its mission, the Foundation drew on a range of assets and resources. These include: 1) Accumulated experience of the Garcés Echavarría family and staff of the Foundation in supporting a range of community development and education programs in Cali; 2) Contacts and ideas provided by GPC members; 3) Contacts, ideas and support from Synergos staff.

1) *Experience of María Eugenia’s family and staff of the foundation.*

Through long involvement in support of social development programs in Cali, the family had accumulated: a) a wealth of experience of working with committed and reliable individuals and organizations in community development, health and other sectors; b) knowledge of how to put together partnerships involving private philanthropic ideas and resources, government, NGOs and academic institutions including some international contacts especially through family members living in the US; c) Working relationships with leading professionals in the philanthropic sector.

- a) Before joining GPC, María Eugenia and her family had had a long involvement in supporting a number of NGO projects in and around Cali that addressed the social and economic consequences of the civil conflict that has afflicted Colombia for over three decades. These projects included the creation of youth employment opportunities, counseling for youth and attempts to reduce the level of violence in low income neighborhoods. For example, the family has provided funding, ideas and contacts to the Fundación Paz y Bien, an NGO working in the low income community of Aguablanca. As part of this engagement, one of María Eugenia’s nephews, Alejandro Eder, worked with the Director of the NGO,

Sister Alba Stella Barreto, to develop new approaches aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty and violence among youths. As a result three youth centers, called Casas Francisco Esperanza (Francisco Hope Houses, named in honor of another of María Eugenia's nephews, the late Francisco Hope Garcés) now apply the concepts and practices of conflict resolution and restorative justice and provided self-esteem reinforcement workshops and vocational training programs. In developing this initiative, Fundación Corona sent Sister Alba Stella Barreto to Northern Ireland to study restorative justice work among youth.

- b) Through extensive networks of contacts with other business leaders, private foundations, senior government civil servants and elected officials and leaders of academic institutions, the family was able to build bridges between institutions and organizations that multiplied the value of their social investments. For example, in developing FUNDCOMA, a strategic alliance was created with the Brain Trauma Foundation of New York City and the Colombian Ministry of Social Protection.
- c) This knowledge enabled the AlvarAlice Foundation to hire Dr. Oscar Rojas Renteria, former Rector of the Universidad del Valle and former Vice President of the Fundación FES as Executive Director of the Foundation. Dr. Rojas brought with him to the Foundation a long record of building partnerships between sectors and deep knowledge of the challenges, difficulties and potential of foundation strategic engagement in the social development arena.

Other assets of the AlvarAlice Foundation are the willingness of the Board Chair and the Executive Director to take risks and take advantage of the ability of a private foundation to play a convening role around issues affecting the future of their country.

2) Contacts and ideas provided by GPC members

As GPC members, María Eugenia's family had the opportunity to interact with other GPC members and gain access to knowledge, information and contacts that helped them build on one of the initiatives, the work in restorative justice and increase its scope and impact.

3) Contacts, ideas and support from Synergos staff

Synergos staff, (including those dedicated to GPC and staff of other departments including Development, Multistakeholder Partnerships, Strengthening Bridging Organizations and Country Operations) brings to the table global experience in building partnerships across sectors, knowledge of the funding policies of bilateral and multilateral donors and US foundations, knowledge of foundation building, contacts in many funding agencies and contacts with key practitioners in many fields of international development practice. The staff pool includes

professionals with long residence and development practice in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia and relevant language skills.

Section II

The AlvarAlice Foundation develops a strategic program in restorative justice

We will now examine how by drawing on the assets and resources described above, María Eugenia, her family and colleagues were able to design and implement a major new program in restorative justice that has already produced impact after only fifteen months.

Why the focus on restorative justice?

As described above, María Eugenia's family had supported pioneering work using restorative justice principles in the community of Aguablanca. The term restorative justice has been defined as "a systematic response to wrongdoing that emphasizes healing the wounds of victims, offenders and communities affected by criminal behavior." The principles of restorative justice are being applied increasingly in conflict situations around the world. A common element in the resulting programs is that all stakeholders are brought together to forge solutions based not on retribution but on forgiveness, repair of harm and reintegration of victims and offenders into society.

The AlvarAlice Foundation had the vision to realize that the adoption of the principles and practice of restorative justice in Colombia could potentially be a critical component in bringing about an end to the bitter conflict that has raged for almost fifty years, claiming some 25,000 lives a year, and displacing over one million people from their homes. She saw that the time was right for this major initiative.

Drawing on the advice and support of many, including GPC members and Synergos staff, the AlvarAlice Foundation has succeeded in building a partnership of donor organizations including bilateral and multilateral overseas development assistance (ODA) agencies, private foundations and nonprofit organizations to realize its vision. Called the Alliance for Restorative Justice, Coexistence and Peace, this partnership has raised over \$3 million for a multiyear program that promotes and applies the principles and practice of restorative justice at different levels of Colombian society.

The program seeks to 1) create a more favorable policy environment for the adoption of restorative justice principles and practice in the country; 2) Apply the practice of restorative justice in low income rural and urban communities and 3) incorporate the teaching of principles and practice of restorative justice in selected universities.

The International Symposium on Restorative Justice and Peace

The Symposium mobilized a level of interest and support from all sectors that exceeded the expectations of the organizers. *What were the major factors of its success?*

- The inspiration and hope given by world leaders in the field of Restorative Justice including Archbishop Desmond Tutu who had presided over the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. His words of hope “I say to the people of Colombia....in spite of all the complexities, if peace was possible in South Africa, it can happen in Colombia” reached the remotest parts of the country through the press, radio and TV.
- The powerful messages of other South African leaders who underlined the importance of forgiveness and pardon in bringing about an end to the apartheid system. These included Tokyo Sexwale, the GPC member who had inspired María Eugenia to invite Archbishop Tutu to the Symposium to learn from the South African experience. He described how he was able to forgive those who deprived him of his freedom for more than ten years. Another South African, the psychologist Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, underscored the need to give voice to both the victims and perpetrators of violence as an essential prerequisite of forgiveness and pardon. Other powerful testimonies of struggles to bring about peace between groups in conflict in their own societies were provided by participants from Northern Ireland, Peru, the Philippines, Guatemala and Sierra Leone.
- The willingness of the speakers to talk about their experiences honestly and from their hearts and relate them to the Colombian experience helped the participants realize that it was possible to adapt these same principles to the Colombian peace process. If the South Africans were able to turn to dialogue instead of revenge after centuries of discrimination and bloodshed, why shouldn't Colombia be able to do the same and finally bring an end to their civil conflict?
- The inclusion of participants from diverse sectors of society – including not just civil society and civilian government, but also the military, religious and business sectors, as well as indigenous people. This broad representation may have been important in gaining buy-in to the initiative and convincing participants that success is possible.
- Participation by leaders from 13 other world religions and indigenous communities – in addition to Archbishop Tutu – that added a spiritual element to the proceedings, impressing upon other participants the moral imperative for peace.
- The ability of María Eugenia and her colleagues to convince a wide range of stakeholders to invest their resources and time in supporting the Symposium. In

months of tireless advocacy and fundraising the organizing team convinced over 50 sponsors and collaborators of the pivotal importance of this event.

The impact of the International Symposium

One immediate result was the inclusion in a draft law before the Congress of a chapter incorporating the principles and practice of restorative justice in the ongoing peace negotiation process.

Another result was the offer by Archbishop Tutu to approach South African President Thabo Mbeki about inviting representatives of Colombia's rebel forces – the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) and the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) – to South Africa to learn about that country's path to peace and reconciliation. Follow up discussions are being held to bring this about.

To build on the momentum generated by the Symposium, a special newspaper supplement and a video for transmission on television are being prepared. In addition a photographic exhibition on the impact on the violence, aimed at creating greater awareness of the urgent need for dialogue, will go on international tour.

Plans are also underway to undertake a set of studies on issues such as properties and goods lost in the civil conflict as a basis for discussion on reparation.

The International Symposium has also helped to create a more favorable atmosphere for the implementation of the other components of the Alliance for Restorative Justice, Coexistence and Peace; these are described below.

Other components of the Alliance for Restorative Justice, Coexistence and Peace

The Alliance brings together the AlvarAlice Foundation, the Fundación Paz y Bien, the Corporación VallenPaz, the Fundación Corona, the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali and Synergos. It incorporates three major complementary lines of work.

- 1) Support for the work of a leading NGO, Fundación Paz y Bien, in deepening and expanding its work in restorative justice and human rights in Aguablanca, one of the poorest communities in Cali. This builds on work supported by the Garcés family in the area of youth counseling, conflict resolution and employment in partnership with other public and private organizations.
- 2) Support for the work of VallenPaz (Corporación para el Desarrollo y Paz del Valle), an NGO with experience in working to support community organization and income generation in rural areas close to areas where rebel activity is accruing. This part of the program focuses on restorative justice, conflict

resolution and support for smallholder agriculture development. VallenPaz works in association with municipal governments in the areas of agricultural development and the improvement of infrastructure and has mobilized the support of public and private banks for the provision of credit for small farmers. This part of the program is based on the realization that the creation of economically viable communities with strong employment opportunities are critical elements in the consolidation of peace and reconciliation.

- 3) Support for the documentation, systematization and dissemination of international and national experience in the field of restorative justice and the development of curricula in restorative justice and its use in schools of law and political science in several Colombian universities.

Section III

What were the respective roles of the AlvarAlice Foundation, GPC and Synergos in developing and executing the restorative justice initiative?

1) The role played by the Garcés family and AlvarAlice Foundation staff

Drawing on the assets described in Section I, María Eugenia and her staff took the encouragement, ideas and contacts provided by fellow GPC members and Synergos staff and built a strong Alliance for Restorative Justice, Coexistence and Peace. This interaction helped María Eugenia realize the potential for having a major impact on the peace process in Colombia provided all major stakeholders could be brought together to develop a new vision for the country built on the practice of restorative justice – rather than retributive justice. In the practice of restorative justice, all stakeholders are brought together to craft solutions based on repair of harm and reintegration of victims and offenders as contributing members of society.

With the help of Synergos staff, led by Andrew Sillen, a stakeholder map was prepared identifying the critical roles to be played by all sectors. María Eugenia and her family and AlvarAlice Foundation staff were then able then to tap into their extensive network of contacts in the government, private sector and the donor community to craft a program aimed at:

- a) bringing about changes in policy at the national level that incorporated principles of restorative justice into the peace process;
- b) increasing use of restorative justice practices at the community level and
- c) the teaching of restorative justice in universities in Colombia.

Through discussions with GPC members and GPC staff it became clear that a major international meeting that would bring together highly credible individuals who had been involved in bringing about peace in their respective societies through the use of restorative justice practices could potentially influence the Colombian peace process.

2. The role of fellow GPC members

At the stage when María Eugenia was developing her ideas on restorative justice she had the opportunity to share her thinking with fellow GPC members. They were able to contribute to broadening her vision and opening up contacts with key individuals in other countries who had direct experience in designing and implementing strategies that were essential building blocks of peace building processes. This helped María Eugenia and her team visualize new possibilities for increasing the scope of the restorative justice initiative and incorporate more ambitious goals that complemented critical work at the community level.

One critical turning point that change María Eugenia's thinking was a discussion she had with Tokyo Sexwale, a fellow GPC member who had been one of the leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. At the GPC's 2003 Annual Meeting, Sexwale was seated next to María Eugenia when she described her family's emerging focus on social justice. He immediately saw the similarity between what María Eugenia had in mind concerning restorative justice and the South African experience with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. "We did something similar in South Africa... and we would love to help you. We can share with you how we did it," Sexwale told her, offering to identify South African leaders to share this experience and assist in exploring new avenues to creating the pre-requisites for building permanent peace in Colombia.

With the support of Synergos staff, María Eugenia and the Director of the AlvarAlice Foundation, Oscar Rojas, who was one of the first Synergos Senior Fellows, followed up on Tokyo Sexwale's offer.

Other GPC members provided encouragement and offered to help with other aspects of the AlvarAlice Foundation's agenda. For example Scott Harrison offered advice and support in the developing the foundation's work in the health sector.

3. The role of Synergos

To support the development of María Eugenia's initiative, Synergos staff contributed the following:

a) Information and contacts.

Synergos staff, led by Andrew Sillen and John Heller, introduced the AlvarAlice Foundation to other international practitioners with direct experience in processes of

reconciliation and conflict resolution who could share their experience at the International Symposium. This included bridges to organizations such as the International Center for Transitional Justice and the World Conference of Religions for Peace that were able in turn to provide additional contacts, potential speakers and additional perspectives on positive experiences in laying the groundwork for ending large-scale civil conflict. Synergos also linked María Eugenia directly to the Northern Ireland and Philippines experiences in conflict resolution. All these individuals were able to bring their experience and ideas to the symposium.

b) Support for conference planning

In addition to opening up access to key players with special skills to contribute to the theme of the symposium, Synergos staff also shared ideas and skills in conference organization and administration. The organizational structure that was developed, that included a CEO, an international advisory committee, a program committee and a secretariat, succeeded in mounting a world class symposium.

c) Building a funding partnership for the initiative

The increasing development of the content of the initiative and the search for partners and donors went hand in hand. Synergos was also able to draw on its experience and contacts to assist in building a broad partnership. An example was the introduction made to the representative of the Global Development Alliance (GDA) of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) at the University for a Night event, Synergos organizes annually. At the November 2003 event, Synergos organized a table discussion around María Eugenia's Colombia Initiative for Restorative Justice and one of the invitees was the Deputy Director of GDA. This meeting led to the presentation of a detailed proposal to GDA and the procurement of a major grant to partially fund the major components of the program. Synergos assisted the AlvarAlice Foundation in preparing this proposal.

One of the requirements of the GDA grant was that it be matched by private funds at a ratio of at least 1:1. Synergos worked with María Eugenia to provide a map of potential funders and develop a strategy to raise the funds. The fundraising plan targeted US private foundations, individuals in Colombia and the US and bilateral and multilateral donors.

In the case of US foundations, Synergos provided contacts with a number of them including the Tinker Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Flora Family Foundation, all of which resulted in funding for the initiative.

In the case of bilateral and multilateral funding, Synergos, in addition to the introduction to GDA helped open the door to funding from the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank. The introduction to Donald Terry, Director of

the MIF, in New York resulted in the expediting of the approval of a \$2.5 million grant to the Corona Foundation to support the development of micro-enterprises. This support for community development work in low income communities was complementary to the work on restorative justice.

With the help of Synergos, María Eugenia and her staff were able to use the GDA pledge to successfully raise more than the match, through both in kind and financial contributions, from a broad array of partners that included NGOs, local government, private foundations, corporate donors and individuals. (*see Appendix for breakdown of contributors*). This had the added benefit to the program of getting greater buy-in and commitment from other stakeholders who had an interest in the outcome.

In a separate and parallel superhuman effort over only a few months María Eugenia and her staff at the AlvarAlice Foundation were able to obtain support in the form of grants and in-kind contribution for the International Symposium from 53 donors. These included multilateral and bilateral ODA donors, companies, individuals and government organizations.

Conclusion

This case provides an example of how a private philanthropist with strong motivation, energy and dynamism was able to develop a focused multidimensional strategy that filled a clear need in her society.

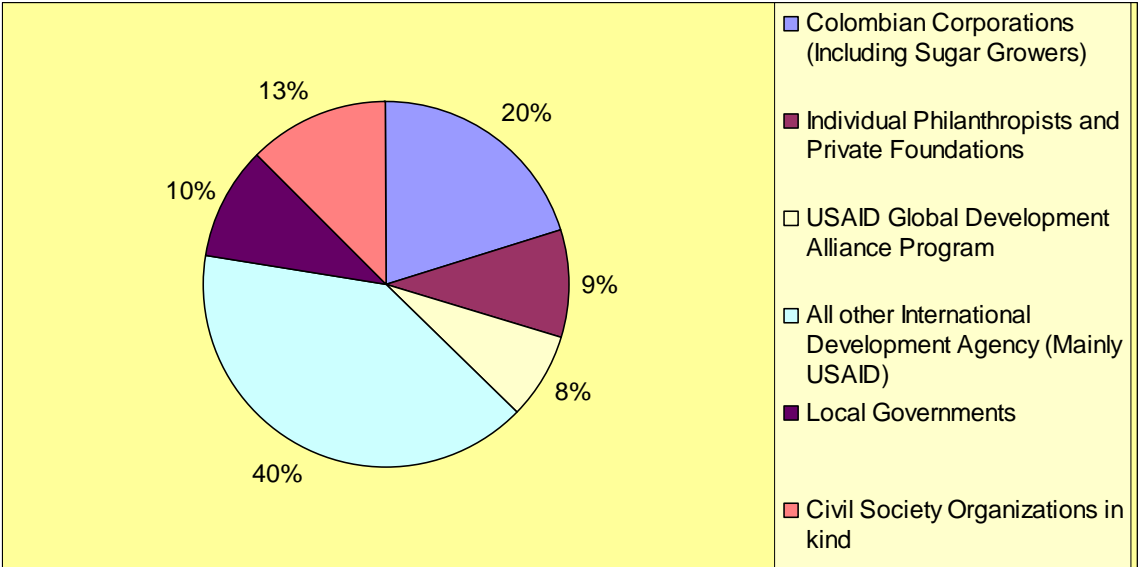
In less than 15 months María Eugenia and her family have been able to demonstrate that a private foundation can successfully leverage its own funds and create a strategic partnership with other sectors to highlight a new approach to building conditions for peace and reconciliation in Colombia.

It illustrates the ways in which the Global Philanthropists Circle, drawing on a range of staff resources from Synergos, was able to respond to María Eugenia's request for support by providing some critical input as she concretized her vision and put in place a strong group of partners and donors.

The experience to date shows how the AlvarAlice Foundation has been able to convene all major stakeholders to highlight the critical role "restorative justice" can play in both creating the preconditions for peace negotiations and addressing current conflicts at the community level.

Appendix

Sources of Funding for Initial Restorative Justice Activities



About Synergos

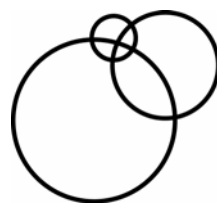
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Synergos is a force for reducing poverty in the developing world. We believe that poverty is the result of a complicated array of causes and conditions and cannot be remedied without the commitment of all key sectors of society -- government, business, nonprofit organizations, and other major stakeholders.

Our staff of 35, headquartered in New York and onsite in Latin America and Southern Africa, work with Synergos partners to mobilize resources and bridge social and economic divides to reduce poverty and increase equity.

Our programs:

- Build and strengthen community development foundations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, fostering a local culture of philanthropy
- Bring leading philanthropic families together to deepen the impact of their social investments
- Broker partnerships among philanthropists, government, business and citizens, increasing the flow of resources to impoverished communities around the world.



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