**Transcription of Interview with Beni Ros**

Place: Beni Ros's house

Date and time: 7 December, 2022. Starting at 16 hrs

Duration: 1:26:35

Additional observation notes: The interview is at Beni Ros' house. Originally this interview was planned with Beni and Juan, but on the day of the interview Juan comments that he cannot be there for work reasons. The interview was scheduled from the beginning in this place, and when Beni arrived he told me that he had stopped by Juan's work to see if he could go out, but he was busy working. For this reason, the interview takes place only with Beni, at his home. I wait for Beni on the corner of his house, in the street, for a few minutes while he arrives for our meeting. Once he arrives, he invites me into his house, where we will have the interview. During the interview, he offers me some water to drink. The interview takes place in the dining room of his house. At the end of the interview, Beni tells me that he does not want to fill out a participant diary.

Participants: Interviewer [A] ; Beni [B]

TRANSCRIPTION

A: Thank you very much Don Beni. Well, perhaps we can start with you telling me some very general information about yourself, as well as your name, your age, what you do, some kind of general information more or less to introduce yourself and then we can start talking about the water issue.

B: Yes, I repeat, my name is Beni, age 74, I am from the province of the state of Oaxaca.

A: What do you do or did you do for work?

B: I worked, I worked in various kinds of jobs. In companies, restaurants. Lately, for a little over 10 years now, I worked as a taxi driver. Now I am unemployed because unfortunately I had surgery on my spine and that has prevented me from working.

A: You said you come from Oaxaca originally, do you identify with any indigenous group?

B: No, no.

A: Well, to start with the subject of the interview, if you like we can begin with your memories of what it was like to arrive here in the neighbourhood at the beginning, what the experience of arriving in Santo Domingo was like, and also with the issue of water, what it was like at that first moment.

B: Look, I arrived here in the invasion in September 1971, I was informed by a friend that there was an invasion, I told my mother about it at the time. So my mother said "let's go". And we took off and came, and that's how we got here to the part of, what is now called Flores Park, which is at the back. And that's where we stayed for two years, two and a half years. At that time the leaders were already fighting, at that time the leaders were fighting for this part where I am now, which was alone, to be lived in. All of this was pure stony ground, and so they were looking for a readjustment to be made, which was not at all easy in that readjustment. It wasn't easy because the community of Los Reyes, the community members, wouldn't allow us to have this space or for us to take it. So there were even deaths, there were several deaths from the bullets they fired because they didn't want us to enter, to invade this area. And so on and so forth, and then, as the weeks and months went by, they gave in and it was like now I'm here in the street where I am.

A: So you arrived here with more family?

B: Yes, I arrived the first year with my mum, and later, when the resettlement happened, more family members arrived. Two other sisters, their children, and that's how we are now living here on this property, three siblings.

A: And at that time, I imagine the issue of access to water was complicated, how did you resolve it?

B: That's right, effectively, here we are clearly talking about the fact that we invaded it, we didn't have electricity, we didn't have water, the streets weren't well laid out. And well, we suffered, we really suffered so that this neighbourhood would be well colonised. The streets had to be laid out properly, and the water, well, many of us, wherever we went, if the woman worked somewhere, she would take her little jug of water with her and bring it from work. We also, as men, as husbands, we also took our jug and brought water to pass it around, just for the most essential things. Because I repeat, we had no electricity, we had nothing, no services.

So as we went along, we organised ourselves, the neighbours, the settlers themselves, to start looking into the water issue. But here at the beginning, when the streets were laid out, the leaders or those in charge, who were called block chiefs, were in charge of asking for cooperation for the rubble, to level the streets, so that little by little the cars could enter. And that's when the water trucks began to come in, to deliver water in certain places. Not in the whole neighbourhood, but in certain places where they were levelling out. They were evened out and we would go there to get the water.

Even at that time there were also neighbours who had either a donkey or a mule, and they would load their animals with four cans, like those alcohol cans, to fill them with water, and they charged 10 pesos per trip back then. And that's how we more or less had water, so that little by little we could get by with the most basic things, for food, for coffee, and so on. That's how we started here in the neighbourhood.

And so on and so forth, and then they put in some tanks. Tanks were also set up in certain places. They would arrive there, they would load them with water, and we would go to those tanks to load our water holders with our water holders, in other words, the water holders at that time, the square ones, which are not very common nowadays, but back then they were the most common, the square water holders. And that's how we suffered, and as we went along, as time went by, as they were going to bring in the water, well, the water trucks were coming closer and closer. There were already two or three streets where water tanks were placed in certain places. 200-litre tin water tanks, and the water truck would come and fill them up, and then we would go and carry them to our houses.

A: And they're different from the tanks you told me about first.

B: Yes, the tanks, I mean, we used to go to work with our little bottles. And walking. And then the tanks, and then the water trucks came in, and they opened up the streets and evened them out, and the water trucks came in, and then later on we put the water tanks in certain places. To me, to say here, on one street, we put the drums there, and the water truck would arrive and fill them up. The ones from all over this street, from different streets, and you had to carry the water fast, otherwise they would steal it.

A: Who stole it?

B: Well, we all needed water, and we didn't have toilets, so of course we made our own toilets, and these were our toilets back then, because there was no water.

A: And then when the water truck arrived, how did you organise yourselves?

B: No, the water truck arrived and filled all the drums that were there.

A: All the ones that were there?

B: There were 30, 40 drums, and it filled them all, and then everyone went there to get their water. And then later they put in the water network, but with the galvanised pipes and also in certain places. Then here, halfway down the street, they put a tap, from here, from where I live, halfway down the street, and there for the neighbours, and that's how the water was getting closer. We had the water closer, we didn't suffer so much.

A: But there was a tap there then.

B: Yes, there was a tap, more or less like the one they have now at the school by the well, and we all went there to fill up our jars. And we suffered less, we suffered less. The water wasn't like before, going 6, 8, 10 streets or more, or even bringing it from work. It wasn't the same as having it in the middle of the street.

A: Yes, because the tanks were further away.

B: Yes, they were further away, I mean, they were near Tlahuilli, or by Mixtli, there was another tank there, and so on, that's how it happened, they were distributed at a distance. But later on they were connecting the network with galvanised pipes, and the water was getting closer. And when they were going to put in the water network, we as neighbours participated. Because before, the truth is that we neighbours were very participative. When they were going to put the water in through the network, we had to open up the vines. So usually the plots of land here have 8 in front, by 20, or there are some that have 25, but 20 in the back. So with the neighbour across the street we would open the stock half and half, 4 metres one and 4 metres the other, because we had 8 metres. We would say to each other "neighbour, you get 4 metres and I get 4 metres". And so it was work in, you could say, in union, in communication, in benefit.

A: What was in front of each person's house then, you say, was what they had to open.

B: Yes, I mean, the network passes there in front, and the neighbour had to open up 4 metres and I had to open up 4 metres, the other neighbours also had to open up 4 and 4 and so on. That's how we helped to get the water mains in.

A: So it was something that all the neighbours had to organise.

B: We participated, the neighbours at that time, we were very participative, very participative.

A: In addition to water, did you participate in other activities?

B: Yes, in the construction of the houses, one neighbour, two, three neighbours would organise, and we would help to build the houses, to put up the walls, to take out the stone, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

A: And then you remember that there was a lot of support among neighbours back then, or...

B: Yes, there was a lot of support, we were very united, very united as neighbours at the beginning, because now we all need each other for this.

A: And when you went here too, for example, to the tap, to fill up the water there, I imagine that several neighbours would get together there at the tap, right?

B: Yes, we would get together, but there was no conflict, there was no problem, because we all had the same thing in mind. And we would form up and everyone would pass by, there was no problem. Because we knew the needs of each and every one of us, in that respect we didn't have any problems.

A: And what you said about them stealing the water, that was something else, was that before?

B: Yes, because we were leaving, but they stole it from the drums, from the water tanks. Because if you weren't there, because we were going to work, and the water came in the course of the day, by the time you went there in the evening, it turned out that the water tank was already empty.

A: There was no more.

B: Well, there wasn't any more because we were short of water, that's why they did it. But the truth is that we all needed it, there were just some who took more advantage of it than others.

A: But then each house had its own water tank, or did everyone have their own water tank?

B: No, in fact, each lot should have, or has its own water tank. But maybe there were neighbours because at that time we were short of resources, and we didn't have the money to buy a water tank. So whoever had one, well, he put in his water tank, and whoever didn't, well, no way, maybe they would go and steal it.

A: So you remember that you participated in different activities here in the neighbourhood.

B: Yes, yes, yes, in different activities.

A: And what was that experience of participating like?

B: Let's see if this fits. Here near Mixtli, where there is a school, one of my daughters, when that kindergarten was inaugurated, well, the government, the little it did, tried to do it well. Unfortunately, they didn't do it the way it should have been done, so they left the work unfinished, like a floor. And we as parents talked to the director and the director told us, you know what, that the children are suffering and even more so in times of rain and water. So, she suggested that she was going to write a letter and yes, she did write a letter and in that letter she told us to go to the shopping centres, at that time there was one there on Avenida Universidad, and to ask if they could help us with a blender, an iron, etcetera. And that we could raffle it off in order to have the funds to lay the floor in the kindergarten. And that's what several parents did. So if we wanted our children to be well, that's what we did, we participated in this. And I also participated in primary school, my daughter left kindergarten and went on to primary school, she didn't reach the first year of primary school, but here in a school they put in some professional classrooms, she didn't reach either, and they put in other classrooms there in Los Reyes, and that's where my daughter had to go for the first year of primary school. And that opened up the possibility of eventually building a primary school there in the Los Reyes market. And it was something in which many of us neighbours participated at that time.

And the truth is that of the neighbours who had that experience, that participation at that time, the truth is that I don't feel that there are not even 5% of us left at this point. I haven't seen the neighbours any more and I knew many of them because we used to go to the address that was on the Tlalpan road because there were no teachers. And we used to go to demand teachers for the primary school and so there were many of us neighbours and I really feel that they have been lost.

A: Why do you think all that was lost?

B: Because of age. I think there are only about 5% of them left.

A: But they literally had to raise up the neighbourhood.

B: Oh yes, with the participation of several neighbours at that time, the neighbourhood was raised up. Because there was a lot of participation, a lot of participation.

A: And after the water was introduced into the houses, was the lack of water solved?

B: Well, once the water network was in, we all celebrated. We were happy, we felt satisfied that we now had water in our houses. We made our contract, and the water supply was brought to our properties. That was like in the eighties. But what happened was that, as we went along, we did have water and there was good pressure, in short. But then, later on, over the years, we began to lack water. At first, the water went out for hours at a time. I couldn't say for sure if they took it away, if they closed the valves, if they made any movement, the government's hydraulic operation. If the delegate or the delegation made some moves. But we were missing one hour, then two hours and so on. Three hours, even half a day. And so it was that then we were already one day short, and then two days short, and so it went on as we went along, didn't it? And then it turned out that it was already three days, four days. A week, a fortnight. And with all that, as time went by and we needed water, we became aware of the movements, the manoeuvres that the delegates were doing. We realised that it was more when it was election time. They used water as political booty. And we said, well, what's going on? Even to bring us a water truck, they were asking for our voter's credentials.

A: Without a voter's card they wouldn't bring them the water truck.

B: No, without that they didn't give us water. And at a certain time, especially during the elections, they started handing out water tanks. And many of us, to tell you the truth, up until then we still didn't really know how things were going. Why were they giving out the water tanks? Because they knew that they were already rationing water and they gave them to us so that we could have a water tank and make our own water supply. And they did that in several elections.

A: Is it about 10 years ago that that started? Or more?

B: More or less an approximation? 10, 12 years, I think it's about 10 or 12 years ago. Let's see, this Toledo was around 9, or more like 10 to 12 years ago.

A: Was he the one who started doing that?

B: Yes, Toledo, or one before him. And from there came Toledo, Valentín Maldonado, and then Negrete. And now this Giovanni. Well, they began to give their royalties, but always, usually in elections, they used all that movement. And from there it was born that we as neighbours had to organise ourselves and demand that the delegate see, that he check why there was such a lack of water. They always ignored us, ignored us. Valentín never received us, never received us. Those from below received us, but Valentín as the head never received us. Negrete came, he received us only once. This one came, now Giovanni, well yes, although he has not received us directly, but he has sent the legal director and government secretaries and other people, but they have attended to us. From there, I repeat, we started to organise ourselves about 7 or 8 years ago.

More or less 6 to 8 years ago we formed a Water Defence Committee, and it was formed after so much fighting and struggling, and demanding that the mayor, or the head of government, Mancera, who was already the head of government. Because they didn't listen to us. And even though we wrote several letters, we wrote letters to Dr. Claudia and so on, that's how things happened, that's how they began to pay attention to us. After knocking on several doors, they opened.

And after so much fighting, we knocked on doors and at the end of the day we wrote several letters to Dr. Claudia and she gave the instructions and the water systems, that is, SACMEX, listened to us. And we had some working groups with the water systems, and unfortunately the pandemic came. But with that and everything, putting us at risk, a commission was working tirelessly. Because we needed the vital liquid, the water, it was necessary, and with the pandemic, we didn't even have enough to wash our hands, much less to bathe. So we did everything we could, we even had virtual meetings with the water systems, SACMEX. So that's how, little by little, we made progress. We had meetings with the central government, political consultation, the mayor's office. We got all three to participate, and once we saw that we were making progress, that they were already taking action on the matter, the mayor's office, the water systems, the central government, that's how things began to happen.

We as neighbours have provided information, information. What do I mean by information? That we have seen and we have told the authorities where a well should be built. We were thinking that it should be in the secondary school and at the same time we told them that if it was not possible in the school, in the secondary school, that it should be in Árbol Street, on the corner of Atl. Because that is the central point. Because we need water at the top, and from there it goes towards Atl, towards Tetl, upwards. And from Atl to here, to Tlalli. And from Atl to Grieta or to Mixtli street, the same up to, up to the neighbourhood Ajusco. And then the study was done, after providing that data, and Sistemas de Agua analysed it. The project was drawn up, the budget was looked at, and that's how we moved forward.

A: And how did you get that information about where the water was lacking? Did you collect that information by talking to other neighbours? How did you get that information to present where the water was lacking?

B: We realised that that is where the water shortage was. That is the central area, we call it the centre of Santo Domingo. And in that area that we call the centre is the place where the water is most lacking. Where there are more neighbours. And that is distributed towards the lower part, which we call it, towards Tlalli and the upper part towards Tetl upwards, towards the Copete, that's what it's called. And towards Mixtli Avenue and towards Sol, towards the neighbourhood Ajusco.

A: And then that part was where the water was most lacking.

B: Yes, that part is more, it was the point and we saw it there. That's why the authorities took matters into their own hands, they did the study and they said that that was the right place. It was the right place on the street where the well is being built now, it is being finished, it will soon be finished. And it was either there or in the secondary school. But they told us not in the secondary school, because that would be more bureaucracy. It would take longer because it is federal property. And it became easier because in the street there was a better chance that the paperwork would be done sooner.

A: And you mentioned that there were virtual meetings, were there virtual meetings as well?

B: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

A: Did you have to organise to have them? What was that like?

B: In the virtual meetings we were, apart from the commission, even all the neighbours. Those who could connect, connected, so that they could really see the situation, how we were working with the authorities. And that there was credibility in what was being done. And one thing that should be clear is that, in this committee, in this group, whatever you call it, if there is one thing that has distinguished it and has been recognised in other municipalities and I don't know about other states, it is that there is no corruption, that has been important.

A: And other countries now with the thesis. [laughs]

B: Yes, and that there has been no corruption. We didn't ask for one fifth from our neighbours, not even for transport, not even for recharging our phones. Yes, it has been a transparent committee. That's why I dare to say that.

A: Were you involved in the committee from the beginning to see about the well?

B: Yes.

A: How did you decide to be part of that commission? How did you get involved?

B: Because of the need for water, because of the need. All of us who are involved, all the neighbours, have been involved because of the need for water. And although there are people who have the need for water, unfortunately because of their jobs, for X reasons, they don't participate, but they are also with us. So, this committee has been very transparent with the neighbours. We share all the information, all the information. We have had meetings every 8 days or every 15 days. Because of the pandemic, we also suspended our meetings, but we also had our virtual meetings with the neighbours. And we passed on to them all the information we had with the water system authorities. The neighbours have never lacked information. Always, all the information that the commission knows, all the neighbours know. That's for sure.

Well, and this led us to the fact that on November 20, 2021, when the project was done, when we had the budget and everything, we started drilling the well. Work began on 20 November 2021. We have been working for a year and a month.

First, in the drilling of the well, there was a construction company. A construction company drilled the well.

A: Contracted by SACMEX?

B: Yes, by city water systems. Yes. That construction company drilled to a depth of 300 metres or more. Once they had completed that drilling work, the authorities told us that once they had finished, another construction company was going to come in and do the civil work. What is civil work? Well, as far as we understand it, it is the installation of the pumps, the installation of the backfill, the installation of some booths there for the machinery, the electricity boards, etcetera. Everything. Installing the network and, in short, all those details. We have had the information about that.

But I forgot to mention something. Once the well was finished, it took them about three months to restart the work, and we didn't know why they had taken so long, why the work had stopped.

A: After the drilling.

B: After the drilling. And then we never really stopped fighting and we were always insisting, and asking why. And then the authorities told us that what was missing was the civil work, and there was a tender to see which company was going to do it. Ok. And that stopped for two or three months. And about two months ago they started working on the civil works. From then on, we have had some information.

We can't complain because this company has been very responsible with their work and with the information that we request. Every 15 days we have an information meeting, a work meeting, and we are informed about the work. About 15 days ago we even summoned the neighbours so that the engineers could provide information on how the pump was going to be installed, how the pump was installed and how the network was installed, because many neighbours are suspicious that the water could be taken to another neighbourhood. And so the engineers were very clear and said no. The water that is going to be extracted from the reservoir is not going to be taken to another neighbourhood.

The water that is going to be extracted from this well is exclusively for the Pedregales de Santo Domingo area, which is going to give us approximately 30 litres per second.

A: When the well is finished, is the idea that the tandeo will also be finished?

B: We talked about that, but we can't talk about a water diversion right now because that's not the company's responsibility. The company that is doing the civil work and that is going to leave the whole installation in good condition will hand it over to water systems. Water systems then hands over to the Mayor's Office's Hydraulic Operation, and the Mayor's Office, the Mayor's Office's Hydraulic Operation, will take care of the water distribution. The Mayor's Office, in its Hydraulic Operation office, is already going to see how the water is being distributed. Hopefully we will no longer suffer from the lack of water and we will forget about the tandeo, but in case the water fails, it would be with the Mayor's Office, Operación Hidráulica, with whom we have to talk about how we organise the tandeo.

A: You also told me that apart from the well, well, some neighbours say that they were suspicious because they were going to take it away, and there is a group of neighbours who have not been in agreement with the well being built because they think it will damage their houses, etc. How have you tried to act as a committee in this respect?

B: Yes, there are indeed neighbours who have been negative to a certain extent. Some of the neighbours who live next to the well commented that they were afraid that their properties would be damaged. But SACMEX was very clear with them that they should not have any mistrust, because nothing is happening to their properties, nothing was going to happen to them. And they were explained how the work was going to be done, how the drilling was going to be done.

But the neighbours, some of them, were reluctant. If not all of them, some were selfish to a certain extent, because they thought that the water was going to be for just a few. But the water was not going to be for a few, the water was going to be for the community. That is important. The water is going to be for the community, it is not for a few neighbours. That's why this committee didn't fight for a few, it fought for the community, so that the water would be for the community, for everyone. But, I don't know, there is still some selfishness on the part of some people. Because the well was drilled just two or three metres from the school wall, and it turns out that the school suffered no damage, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing. Now, as they say, not a single pane of glass was broken. So, if any of the neighbours suffered any damage, then the authorities, both the water systems and the central government, will take care of that, of repairing the damage if anyone suffered it.

A: Besides the well, are there any other requests that the committee has made or things that the committee has done with the central government, with the mayor's office? About the water trucks or some other campaign they've had?

B: Well, yes, when we had the lack of water, and the truth is that we were in a very critical situation, we as neighbours talked to the mayor's office, we talked to the water systems, that they had to supply us with water by water trucks. And that's how it was, that's how we got there, we coped. I repeat, because of the pandemic and all that, well, yes, we did suffer, but with the water trucks and all that, the mayor's office and the water systems responded to us, and they did provide us with water trucks for the neighbours who requested them.

A: That was at the same time that we were asking for the well to be built.

B: Oh yes, that's what we demanded, the well, and we also demanded the water trucks.

A: At that time you were also affected by the lack of water here in your house.

B: Oh yes, until now, I wonder if they bring me water, yes. Still.

And the funny thing here is that, for example, my neighbour. My neighbour always has water. And it's logical, he has a big cistern. He never complains. He says to me, "Look Beni, I get a little bit, but I get a little bit".

For what reason? Who knows, but not me. And I have a water tank down there, I take it up there, to other water tanks, to have it upstairs. Because I don't have a cistern. So, that's also what it is. And many people don't have a cistern. It is also another of the things that we then go to the day because many people don't have a cistern. That's one of the situations. But also because we don't take our precautions, right?

A: So you have received support to get water trucks and so on?

B: Yes, all of us who have lacked water, the authorities have supported us with water trucks, to be honest. The committee itself is in charge of making a list and sending it to the authorities to request the water trucks that the neighbours ask for. Even in this the committee has been patient. We have been noble with our neighbours. Because of the needs we have, we have worked with complete transparency. There is no favouritism here. There is nothing about me being from the committee and being sent the water truck or anything else first. No, no, no. Everything here is even. Everything is even.

A: How has your experience of being in the negotiations with the authorities for the well been? Has it been something you had done before or something new? How has all this been for you?

B: I mean, to be honest, the dialogue with the authorities has been very useful for me personally. Despite my years of experience, it has helped me a lot because it has taught me that we must know how to respect each other, how to dialogue. This experience of being on the Committee helped me to realise that this is also a question of knowing how to dialogue with the authorities.

Although it is the authorities' obligation to provide us with this vital liquid, we must also know how to ask for it. It is their obligation. But it is not only the neighbourhood of Santo Domingo that lacks water. The lack of water is in the whole city, in the whole country, in the whole world. So it is also a question of knowing how to dialogue, of knowing how to ask for things, of being calm. It is also a question of not getting angry and in this way we can draw good things, good conclusions, because that is where the well is. It took some work, yes, but it was a question of dialogue, a question of dialogue, a question of dialogue.

And one thing I believe is that the well was also made because the authorities realised that in our committee, and they themselves recognise it, there is no corruption. They know that. And they say, the truth is, they know that our committee is a committee of struggle, of struggle, of transparency and honesty. So that for me has been the experience.

A: Do you think it has been valuable to be able to be with the neighbours and participate again?

B: Yes, because we have dealt with different authorities from different areas. And those are experiences, that's nice. Because you have to know how to adapt, if not adapt, then more or less know how to dialogue with them.

A: And among neighbours, have you felt a sense of unity within the committee?

B: Within the committee, yes, I think that because of transparency we do have that union. Yes, there is unity because of transparency. There is nothing hidden or anything like that. That doesn't leave anyone to whisper, but that's bad faith, isn't it? But because of the good performance and good work we have done, they try to misinform us.

A: Did you already know other people in the group before the group was formed?

B: Well, as neighbours, because of the need for water, yes, and then we got to know others, and it's logical because it spreads, right? Yes, meeting people we didn't know, all that. We are expanding and there is good participation, good will from them, as well as from us, as a commission.

A: And to finish off, why do you think it is worth defending water?

B: I think it is worth it because of the need we have. The same need obliges us to organise ourselves and to demand what we have a right to. Because until now, in the years that I have had, there is no authority that comes and asks you what you need? And I automatically take action.

Because I repeat, after so many years, the well was achieved, right? Was it because the authorities came to tell us: "you need a well"? do you need water? Well, let's do this". No. This was our initiative. So that's what made us take the initiative. And as we are hundreds of neighbours who need water, that's what made us organise ourselves.

A: Well, I thank you very much, Don Beni, for the time of the interview. I don't know if there is anything else you would like to add about your experience of the committee, of being part of the commission, of what is missing from the well.

B: Yes, just now, tentatively, we have a delivery date of December. The well company will hand it over to Sistemas de Agua and we hope that... logically the Head of Government will have to come to inaugurate it, because in some way we have to recognise that the Head of Government had a hand in that well. Clearly it is said that she supported it, because if she hadn't, perhaps nothing would have been done. Because that is where the budget and all that comes from, but we hope that the well will be finished and that all the neighbours, once it is finished, will be happy, satisfied and that the achievement that we made in the community will be seen. That's all.

A: Thank you very much.

B: Is everything all right?

A: Yes, everything is fine, thank you. Thank you very much again for your time, very valuable and your answers to the questions as well. What do you think of the interview? Did you feel good? Did you feel...?

B: I'm sorry if I missed something.

A: No, it's great. Thank you again, did you feel that you enjoyed the interview or how did you feel?

B: Well, fine.

A: Good?

B: Fine, but there are things that I don't remember everything.

A: No, that's why, as I said, I'd really like to have a second interview, maybe after the well is working, next year, I think it might be a good time to see if there's anything else you'd like to say, anything else you'd like to add, what the experience has been like after the well.

B: Well, I think there are some things that escaped me, but... Yes, this achievement is very difficult because then with some of the adjoining neighbours we had some discussions and it's been so much that, well, they even assaulted us... well, verbally and all that, right?

And something because they thought, or some people think that we are even earning money. I don't know what the thinking is, but it's like there are various interests that other people manage. Why this work, this work that was done, to go as far as we did to get this well done, not just anyone can do it. Not everyone has that calm, that will, that vision to do things. Because many do, but they pursue an interest, a political interest, an economic interest. And not here, not here. And least of all me at this stage, you can imagine what interest I can seek, can't you? My only interest is to have water, to have water. That is my interest, that my family has water, all of them. That is the interest, no other interest moves me. No other interest moves me personally.

A: Yes, so the issue with the adjoining neighbours has been a bit complicated?

B: Yes, we had a meeting with some neighbours on one occasion, we had a meeting and yes, they were a bit aggressive in their questions, weren't they? And they said "why don't you do it in your street? Why don't you do the well in your street? And let's see, you say, let's see, where do you live?" I let them talk and all that, let's see, let's see. And I said to them, "It seems like your interest here is to know where you live, isn't it? To see who you are. Well yes, I'll tell you straight away that I'm a parachutist.

And here, in front of this school, my mum came to do faena (community work). That's why this school is standing there. That doesn't give me a reason to tell you, hey, why do you have your children there in the school if you didn't participate? Your children and your family shouldn't enter the school, because you didn't make that school, we did" But no, no, it shouldn't be like that. So, I tell them, "Here it is a project and we saw the place where it is. And just as you say, we are going to tell the authorities, you know what? That it shouldn't be done here, that it should be done on my street, and I'm satisfied that it should be done. There is no problem. But if a project has already been done, everything has been well prepared and everything, and we are really seeing where the lack of water comes from, that's why it was done here. I didn't give the order, I didn't say to the authorities: 'I want you to make the well there, I want you to make the project there'. No. This was seen as the right place, the right place, and they said 'it's in the secondary school or it's here, here is fine'.

But we did have that kind of dialogue, but yes, thank God it went well. And just like that, there were others who came to tell us that the school was going to fall down, and that the children were at risk, and that they were going to talk to the parents so that they wouldn't authorise... But there wasn't a scratch on the school wall, not a scratch. So how did these people look? Even so, there are people out there, and there is no doubt that they are political parties, or people who are in the political milieu, who want to take advantage now. There are rumours, there are whispers, that they say no, that the well was built because of them, you can hear it over there, right? But it's not true. The authorities know us well, they know us very well. Well, you can see the people who were there, and they have already made changes and everything, that is, different people, different people from the mayor's office, from the central government, from the water systems. We have been with different graduates, teachers, etcetera. But yes, we have had this dialogue with several of them.

And just as you saw that day when we were attended to. Because also to a certain extent Andrés, we have to recognise certain things. When you are doing things, you have to recognise them. You have to have the courage, because it's not about throwing away, it's also about lifting up. You have to recognise the work of each one of us. That day, we thanked them for the engineers' participation. What does Andrés take away from you? What does he take away from you? Nothing. No, they say that courtesy doesn't take away from bravery. You have to know how to recognise the work of everyone. Maybe it takes them a little more work, but they recognise our work as a committee. They know about our work. They know that this work that was done with respect to the well was not with money, how are you going to negotiate it with money? I don't know what kind of world you come from. This was done out of necessity. Can you imagine how I am going to make a business of 100,000, 200,000? How am I going to leave my family to die of thirst? That would be to have no conscience, really. I don't know how that fits in my head.

Now you can see the work, knowing how it is going to work. The information has already been given, you were there that day?

A: Yes

B: Well, you know that. We are open, and we are the ones who ask for these meetings, we want people to see, we want people to realise. We tell them that the questions they ask you, you answer them. If you don't understand that, I don't know what language we are speaking, or what dialect. The dialect is nice, isn't it? Yes, I tell you. I don't know if these comments are right or if I'm wrong.

A: No, thank you very much. It's very good and as I say, anything else I'm at your service. There you have my contact if you want to add anything else, have another interview.

I am giving all the people who participate the option of keeping a diary in which they can write a little bit more about their day-to-day experiences or things that could not be included in the interview. It's optional because some people are very busy, some people have more time. It doesn't have to be every day, it can be once a week, every two days, every three days and for no more than two weeks, so that it doesn't take up too much of your time. It can be now, it can be later, at some point during the time I am going to be here. So if you want, I can give you a notebook that serves as a diary so that you can write down the day to day of participating in the group or the issue of the lack of water or something that was missing in the interview. And it can be now, it can be later, as you tell me, if you want the diary.

B: Look, I don't know how you saw the interview now, was it good?

A: Yes, it was very good, it was very good to go from the back to the front and I thought it was very good. I, this type of interview is not about right or wrong questions, no, it's more about what each person has experienced, what each person has experienced, what is most important to each person, so it was very good,

B: Look Andrés, I tell you, if you think it was good, we'll leave it at that, but if there's anything else, then I'll tell you, "hey Andrés, I'll see you to add things to it", but if you tell me in all honesty that it was good the way we handled it, we'll leave it at that.

A: Ok, you prefer that we leave it like that.

B: Was that okay with you?

A: Yes, I was fine with it, so, as you say, maybe we can leave it there, and what it is, if you want, we can have another interview.

B: Just to add the point about the adjoining neighbours, that the authorities haven't complied with them after a year. If there was a fracture or not, it's the authorities' fault, I told them at a table. I told them: "you let this evil advance. The science, the technology, is very advanced. This was about taking before and after. What did it cost you to take a video, to take photos? How many photos can you take? 50, 100? It doesn't matter". And I'll tell you one thing, we are all opportunists.

We see the opportunity to get something and maybe I would do it too, I'm not going to say no, but they've gone too far. And now, unfortunately, these friends have had the support of us, the neighbours, because they were also reluctant, but we also talked to them.

The well, I tell you it wasn't easy, it wasn't easy. In part, the authorities would not go in, they would not go in, and we were exposed. We were there, and we were very careful not to fall into provocations, to take care of this and that. We were taking care of those details, until now. Yesterday I still spoke to Waldo and I said, "Look Waldo, why don't we do this and this and this and this? We have to give them a tightening of the screws, you take care of talking to them, tell them this". And he said, "What do you think, Don Beni, tell them it's OK. You do the talking and tell them that they are going to stop the well. If they don't go tomorrow, they're going to stop the well". So you have to put the screws on them.

A: Yes, the authorities then want the committee to solve it, don't they? As if it was their responsibility.

B: And even if it is their job, from my point of view, you have to make the authorities work. We must see how we can come up with solutions. This way there is attention and dialogue, and that means that we are going to move forward. It is constructive.

Andrés, imagine you are the delegate. And can you imagine me saying "we're going to remove the delegate, we're going to remove Andrés because this and this". No. I have to look for a rapprochement with Andrés. How do I have to look for it? And I go and, I look for you, and I ask you to receive me. I tell you that I want to talk to you about this. Why am I going to ask for your dismissal? It's going to happen, the other delegate is coming, and it's going to be the same. And I'm going to spend my life asking for dismissals. No, what I have to do is that we are going to work. I have to make you work. See how we can do it. And maybe you tell me that we can't do everything, but we're going to do this. But if I get mad and ask for your dismissal, nothing will be achieved. Do you know Raúl? He is very confrontational.

They told him at a table, about something about Aztecas 215 about a month ago, someone from SEDEMA said to him "if you want to fight, let's fight". So what is this man going to fix? You're not going to fix anything. You're not going to fix anything, it's simply better to have an attitude of saying "Excuse me, Mr. Director. There is discomfort on our side. This and this, the architect so-and-so came to us 15, 20 days ago. How is it possible that you don't know anything about this file? Architect, if you knew we were coming, you yourself gave us the table that the director had authorised. It was for you to have given him this file. Mr. Director, you have the appointment. You authorised it. The Aztecas 215, see how it is, to see what response it gives you. They had 15, 20 days to see the file. And it turns out that we came and you don't know anything. So, architect, what are we talking about? Is there responsibility or is there no responsibility? Is there a will to do things or not? As far as we can see, there is no will. That's what we don't want to happen". And so we don't have the aggressiveness, but we are going to say what we are talking about. That's what the roundtables are for, to deal with things very seriously, not to fight, but that there is seriousness, that there is seriousness and responsibility and willingness.

And when you treat people well and with respect you even notice the difference. I've seen how they look for my support when I treat them well. And what a difference, Andrés. That's why I know more or less. And I'll tell you something in confidence. If we're too confrontational, there's not going to be any progress. Do you think that if you're the head of an area, do you want to be shouted at and all that? You have to be calm enough to deal with that, to cope with it.

A: Yes, that's what negotiating is like, isn't it? That's what negotiating is.

B: You have to negotiate things, you have to know how to negotiate things.

But you know what? I like to respect, I like to respect. I also tell him, you know what, Waldo? That's not the way things are. We shouldn't confront anything else, we have to talk to people. But if you offend them you're not going to achieve anything.

A: There are different personalities, aren't there? In the group. There are different personalities.

B: But you have to see things, don't you? Because that's how you offend people. Once, in a

football match, it's a long time ago now, I played football, and I went to play football in a match. The referee is against everyone, against the two teams, against the fans and against everyone. There is no perfect referee.

It turns out that they jump on him and there on the pitch, at the end of the match, everything. The referee got dressed, put on his shirt, and said "now he's going to go with whoever it is". Did anyone get in on it? No, well no. It's what you earn.