



CONTRIBUTE TO SOLUTIONS...

Support Primary School Construction and Bilingual Education in Comitancillo, Guatemala

Access to education has improved in Guatemala in recent years, but despite this progress, cultural and economic gaps persist. Today, only 30% of rural students complete third grade, and 2/3 of Maya first graders are taught by instructors who neither understand nor speak the children's maternal, indigenous languages. In addition to lack of access, poor teacher training, insufficient resources and regional disparity plague the system.

In Guatemala, nearly two million children (ages 5–18) do not attend school; and few children are enrolled in pre-school (43%), junior high (28%), and high school (16%). Poor teacher preparation and insufficient resources cause 76 percent of all rural children who enter first grade to drop out before completing primary school. The situation is exacerbated by poor health conditions, child malnutrition, and child labor, since many poor children must contribute to their family's income. Almost half of all students in Guatemala fail grade one. These children are more likely to fail again and eventually drop out.

The poor— particularly girls and rural indigenous children of both genders— have less access to primary school education. Only 19% of indigenous students have access to intercultural bilingual (Spanish and Mayan) primary school education.



Though 60 % of urban students will complete third grade, only 30 % of rural students will do so. This legacy persists throughout life, since primary education is insufficient preparation for modern jobs in the globalized economy, and the average rural worker has been schooled for only 2.1 years.

In the Mayan-Mam indigenous region of Comitancillo, Change for Children works with AMMID (the Mayan Mam Association for Research and Development) to strengthen indigenous capacity in many ways. One of these ways is through the construction of primary schools which offer bilingual education and increase access to education for rural indigenous students.

We are currently collecting donations for the construction of a four-room primary school, which will provide for the education of 360 indigenous children in one of the poorest regions of the country. Here, only one-in-five children currently have the chance to attend school and girls are typically excluded from access to education. A primary school will ensure a prosperous future for the community and contribute greatly to the long term needs of the indigenous population. Ensuring that the indigenous populations are educated, enables them to chart their own course for development and define their participation in the Guatemalan economy and global economy.



Human Dignity, Healthy Communities, Global Justice

Change for Children is an Edmonton-based charitable organization with a 32 year history of supporting sustainable grassroots community development in Latin America and Africa. In Canada, CFCA provides an award-winning Global Education program that engages the public in a process of awareness raising, analysis and action on issues of global justice.