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# BASIC EDUCATION QUALITY AND TRANSITIONS

Dates of project: March 1, 2022 – February 28, 2027

Budget: \$33,016,126

The Basic Education Quality and Transitions (BEQT) activity will improve foundational reading, writing, math, and social and emotional skills acquisition for children and youth through the formal education system and will increase the transition rate of students from primary to lower secondary education in targeted rural municipalities of Guatemala.

Through a Cooperative Agreement with USAID, RTI International has teamed up with local partners already working to improve educational outcomes in the Western Highlands, including *Fundación de la Caficultura para el Desarrollo Rural* (Funcafé), the *Centro de Investigaciones Educativas* (CIE) at *Universidad del Valle de Guatemala* (UVG), *Fundación Sergio Paiz Andrade* (Funsepa), and Wayfree to achieve this vision.

## GEOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC APPROACH

The Activity will focus on 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade and *primero básico* (7<sup>th</sup> grade) students in 12 selected municipalities from the departments of:

**Huehuetenango** (Todos Santos Cuchumatán, Malacatancito, San Rafael Pétzal), **San Marcos** (Río Blanco, Comitancillo, San Antonio Sacatepéquez), **El Quiché** (San Bartolomé Jocotenango, Canillá, San Andrés Sajcabajá), **Baja Verapaz** (Purulhá, Salamá, San Jerónimo).

## CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

High dropout rates and weak foundational skills risk creating a lost generation of Guatemalan youth in the Western Highlands, particularly for indigenous students, girls, and persons with disabilities. In addition to the lag in foundational skills development, the Covid-19 pandemic made evident the need for

resources such as Internet access points, devices like computers and tablets for use in schools, and effective out-of-school learning spaces to serve distance learners.

## APPROACH AND RESULTS

Following a collective action approach, the Activity will engage stakeholders—including the Ministry of Education, municipalities, and the educational community—to set a common agenda to:

- Improve in-person and remote foundational skills instruction for all learners in primary school and *primero básico* in target areas
- Strengthen school management systems for student enrollment, attendance, transition, and learning of all learners in target areas
- Improve community and family engagement in foundational skills practice and transition for all learners in target areas
- Strengthen organizational and technical capacities of local subrecipients to support key components of the Activity

BEQT will seek to shift community norms about school participation and inclusion; support learning at home; use data to facilitate students' smooth transition through grades; and increase community participation in assuring education quality.

The Activity will explicitly support students transitioning from primary to lower secondary school by strengthening the family and community environment around students, promoting the value of staying in school as a social norm, and increasing learning opportunities outside of school. To accomplish this shift, BEQT will engage diverse community members to identify their local needs and create multifaceted plans whereby local stakeholders collaborate to take action and reward education success.

BEQT's Activity will also support all implementing partners by providing intensive capacity-strengthening on organizational development and technical skills in a manner that is flexible and customized to the needs of each consortium partner. Capacity-strengthening strategies will include tailored technical assistance, mentoring and coaching, peer learning, and participatory training on operational topics that RTI has used successfully in other local capacity-strengthening programs.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID Office: Health and Education

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