



## Contact Information

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# Project Brief

## Education

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### Situation Analysis

Today, primary school enrollment rates in Guatemala are almost 100% and there is nearly equal enrollment of boys and girls. Failure rates in first grade have dropped dramatically (by 18.6%) in the last four years as a result of the implementation of several quality education policies and programs. Still, 37.2% of students did not pass first grade in 2014. In addition, only about three-fourths of those enrolled in primary school graduate from 6<sup>th</sup> grade (80% of boys and 73% of girls), and the net enrollment rate for middle school (7<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade) is less than 40%.

Education quality is also a pressing issue. According to 2014 Ministry of Education (MOE) data, only 41% of primary students reach national standards in mathematics and only 50% reach national standards in reading. Therefore, even when students are able to complete primary school, many do not acquire the necessary skills to advance. Furthermore, the gap in school enrollment between rural and urban areas is significant.

In Guatemala, more than 1.6 million out-of-school youth between 15 and 24 years old, including 600,000 youth in the Western Highlands, do not have basic life or vocational skills to enter the workforce. Youth face increasingly difficult conditions, including high levels of unemployment, social and economic marginalization, rapid urbanization, increasing incidence of crime, and lack of basic services.

### USAID Response

USAID's education efforts are part of the Western Highlands Integrated Program, which focuses on reducing chronic malnutrition and improving food security through the implementation of three presidential initiatives – Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative. Following a wave of migration to the United States by tens of thousands of unaccompanied children in 2014, USAID/Guatemala, through these programs, is addressing the lack of insecurity, social, educational and economic opportunity the main underlying causes of migration from Guatemala.

The Western Highlands Integrated Program seeks to achieve sustainable rural development through parallel focus on agriculture, economic development, health care, education, nutrition, adaptation to the impacts of climate change, local governance, and gender equity. The program works in 30 municipalities and more than 2,500 communities in Guatemala's Western Highlands that suffer from the highest rates of poverty and chronic malnutrition, yet have the potential for economic growth. USAID collaborates with Guatemalan officials and leaders at the community, municipal, departmental, and regional levels to achieve shared goals, especially under Guatemala's national plan to reduce chronic malnutrition, known as the Zero Hunger Pact.

In the education sector, USAID works in partnership with the Government of Guatemala to improve primary grade reading skills and provide educational opportunities for out-of-school youth.

- To improve the quality of education, USAID is focusing on improving reading skills by promoting early grade reading as the backbone of lifelong learning.

- USAID supports activities that are implemented by the MOE at the central and local levels, such as the development, printing and distribution of materials in Mayan languages and Spanish. Additionally, USAID supports teacher training at the local level and the strengthening of management and technical skills of MOE personnel.
- USAID partners with parents and communities to promote demand for quality education services and raise awareness of the important role that families play in their children's education.
- USAID works alongside local governments to establish basic requirements for schools in order to foster a classroom environment conducive to improving reading skills.
- USAID provides technical assistance to the MOE to improve information systems and to promote the use of data generated by these systems to inform policy decisions.
- USAID activities provide opportunities for out-of-school rural indigenous youth in the Western Highlands to receive education and build skills to increase their access to sustainable livelihoods. Out-of-school youth receive workforce readiness and vocational training as well as alternative options to complete primary and secondary school.

### Major Results and Accomplishments

- **Support for bilingual education for indigenous students** – To improve the quality of education for indigenous students for whom Spanish is a second language, USAID supported the MOE's design and approval of reading and writing components for the Intercultural and Bilingual Education Model.
- **Improved education systems** – With USAID assistance, the MOE has developed strong K-9 national education content standards. USAID also developed an innovative assessment system for entry-level teachers using standardized testing in Spanish and nine Mayan languages to hire and place teachers. Additionally, with USAID support, the MOE improved the transparency and efficiency of its processes, and as a result, received international certification of its management system in 2007. The MOE is the first public institution in Guatemala to meet this standard.
- **Support for alternative basic education quality programs** – USAID has developed learning standards for technical and vocational training programs and standards of implementation for institutions that implement these programs. These standards are nonexistent in the country and will contribute to strengthen alternative basic education for out-of-school youth, as well as the MOE capabilities to monitor and assess the quality of these programs.



### Principal Current Implementing Partners

Project Name	Implementing Partner	Duration
Lifelong Learning	Juárez and Associates, Inc.	March 27, 2014 – March 26, 2019
Health and Education Policy Project Plus(HEP+)	Palladium (formerly known as Futures Group)	October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2020
Rural Value Chains Project	ANACAFE	May 31, 2012 – May 31, 2017.