

OVERVIEW OF

Guatemala

Overview of Guatemala



YEAR OF
1821

INDEPENDENCE



54%
Population
BELOW
poverty line

Languages

Spanish, Amerindian languages - note: there are 23 officially recognized Amerindian languages, including Quiche, Cakchiquel, Kekchi, Mam, Garifuna, and Xinca.

Malnutrition is a huge problem in Guatemala. 49.8% of children suffered malnutrition according to the Food & nutrition Security Secretariat*

Under-five Mortality Rate: 32 per 1,000 live births. Guatemala ranks 76 in the world.

Human Development Index (HDI) for 2012: 0.581 (ranked 133 out of 187, indicating medium human development).

Brief History of ChildFund in Guatemala

ChildFund came to Guatemala: 1964

Number of states/provinces: 10

Number of enrolled children FY13: 18,122

Number of participants FY13: 74,538

ChildFund began operations in Guatemala in 1964 as Christian Children's Fund (CCF), under the supervision of the Mexico National Program. The organization officially established offices in Guatemala in 1974, serving 500 children in urban and suburban areas. In 1997, the organization expanded its reach through partnerships and inter-institutional agreements with local government institutions were signed, permitting implementation of programs in support of children and youth. Since its establishment in Guatemala, ChildFund has worked in close collaboration with communities through local partner organizations.

ChildFund officially adopted the name of *ChildFund International in Guatemala* in June 2012.

Brief Program Overview



ChildFund Guatemala works as an agent for social change in the 386 communities it serves, seeking to empower participants to make decisions that improve the living conditions of infants, children, teens and youth. ChildFund Guatemala focuses on the four geographical regions with the highest poverty indicators in the country and benefits almost 32,000 children.

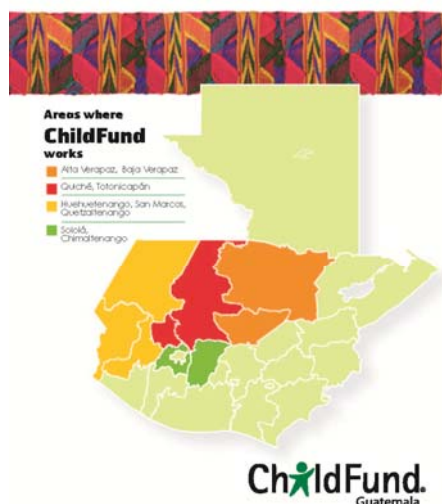
Services and programs that benefit children are at the core of our intent. Our mission is to ensure the physical and social development, education and health of children and families within their communities in a sustainable way by working in partnership with local organizations, civil, private and governmental institutions.

ChildFund Guatemala works to protect and promote children's rights with a focus on rural indigenous girls, whose rights are most affected due to historical and social reasons linked to exclusion and discrimination. We empower children and youth with competencies to transform their realities and improve the quality of their lives. As an organization, we are committed to working with the most vulnerable children who are primarily from rural indigenous families living in impoverished conditions.

ChildFund has been working in Guatemala since 1964, supporting infants, children and youth in the most deprived, excluded and vulnerable communities of Guatemala.

Whether at home, school or in the community, ChildFund projects and programs promote a broad participation in a bid to transform entrenched behaviors and to find new and effective ways to address the significant challenges confronted by children living in poverty.

Where We Work



ChildFund Guatemala works in 10 states:

1. Totonicapán
2. Quiché
3. San Marcos
4. Quetzaltenango
5. Huehuetenango
6. Sacatepéquez
7. Sololá
8. Chimaltenango
9. Alta
10. Baja Verapaz

2013 Program Achievements



Healthy and Secure Infants

Safe and Healthy Infants Program

For this age group, ChildFund promotes health, nutrition as well as emotional and mental stimulation to prepare children to succeed in formal education. This program also involves parents and communities, to raise awareness on child welfare and protection. Early childhood stimulation is a fundamental work area for ChildFund for a variety of reasons. Malnutrition and lack of stimulation during this time affect development opportunities for the child. There is no compulsory preschool education in Guatemala.



The ChildFund Guatemala project *Play With Me* includes infant and maternal health, nutrition, early stimulation and school readiness components. Our technical team builds the capacity of volunteer guide mothers who teach parenting techniques. Guide mothers also reflect with parents and caregivers about childrearing patterns and nutrition. Each week early sensory stimulation exercises are done with children under the age of 2 and school readiness exercises are done with children under age five. With these exercises, children grow in the areas of fine motor, gross motor, and cognitive sensory and social language skills.

FY13 results include:

- 4,523 children participated.
- 627 guide mothers trained (100% volunteers).
- 164 evaluation and orientation centers implemented.
- 7 municipal-level coalitions galvanized.
- 2 statewide coalitions organized.

Educated and Confident Children

This Program works with schools, communities and with partner organizations to develop children's critical and logical thinking abilities. This program raises self-confidence while promoting healthy behaviors, positive communication and active participation. Most importantly, the interventions involve parents, teachers, students and community leaders to ensure an encouraging and exciting learning environment for children. For children ages 6 to 14, ChildFund Guatemala currently has three projects: *Seeds of Change*, *Let Me Tell You*, and *I Learn*.



2013 Program Achievements (continued)



Seeds of Change Project: 2,043 children participated and learned, among other skills, the value of saving money, the importance of making good use of all resources (including natural resources) and were involved in micro business and productive projects.

Let Me Tell You Project: 8,868 children participated, six methodology guides were used, and children conducted community research and shared results with adults.

I Learn Project: 10,095 children participated in this project and developed reading comprehension skills, the habit of reading, clear writing skills and a positive attitude towards math.

Further, 28 agreements were signed with the Ministry of Education, 60 schools used the methodology and materials, strengthening the National Curriculum, and 230 teachers were trained.

Skilled and Involved Youth

Here, adolescents and youth gain knowledge and technical skills allowing them to attain their educational and economic goals. They also learn how to protect their sexual and reproductive health and contribute to decision making in their communities. Under this program ChildFund Guatemala has the *My Chance*, *I Respect Myself I Take Care of Myself*, and *Active Youth*, projects to serve youth ages 15 to 24.

The project *My Chance* involved 1,452 youth last year. All youth receiving training about developing their self-esteem and life plans.

In the *I Respect Myself I Take Care of Myself* project, 2,030 young people participated last year, and 300 youth were trained as sexual and reproductive health rights promoters. These promoters are making a positive change in their communities by teaching others about avoiding early pregnancy and early marriage, and how to reduce the number of teenage unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and HIV in adolescents and youth.

In the *Active Youth* project 2,261, young people participated last year; 23 young people became involved in local decision making positions where they had the opportunity to work in advocacy; 22 initiatives were created and implemented from a youth perspective; and more than 3,000 youth received training in leadership and human rights.

2013 Program Achievements (continued)

Civil Society

ChildFund Guatemala strengthens local partner organizations and networks with like-minded organizations. In an effort to promote the fulfillment of children's rights, ChildFund's broad initiatives include:

- Prioritizing the selection of local grassroots organizations as implementing partners.
- Implementing partners with governance structure that includes youth advisory councils.
- Promoting learning processes among implementing partners and ChildFund Guatemala.

ChildFund is exploring ways to engage national and international companies with operations in Guatemala. We have teamed with the Center of Action on Corporate Social Responsibility (centraRSE), the most influential coalition of socially responsible businesses in Guatemala, with more than 100 member companies. In collaboration with centraRSE, ChildFund conducted a market study to identify companies interested in social investment and with a potential for future strategic alliances.

The outcome of this research is a list of socially responsible companies compatible with the mission of ChildFund Guatemala, who are interested in supporting projects with similar values. In the coming months, we will look for ways of producing synergy and meet with companies in hopes of establishing a funding or strategic collaborative relationship to further the work on children's rights and breaking the cycle of poverty.

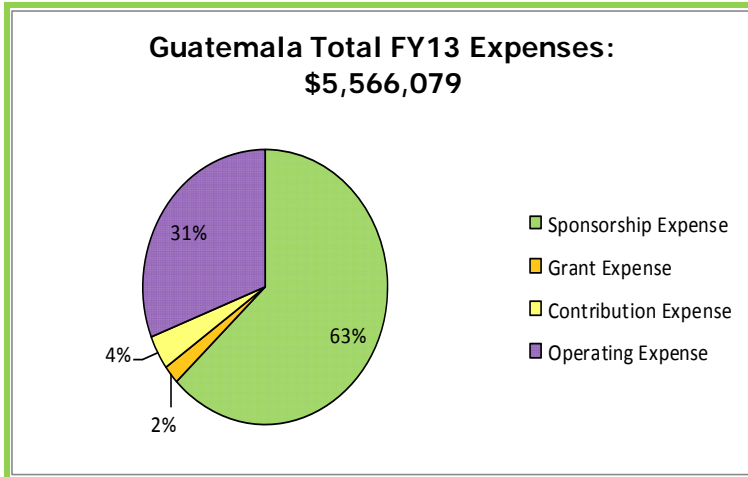
Challenges

Guatemala is the most populous Central American nation and the heart of the Mayan world. At the same time, it is a nation with some of the worst development indicators in Latin America. Guatemala's context is defined by the country's complex history: the people of Guatemala have endured a history of dictatorships, coups, and an internal conflict that lasted 36 years and resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000 people.

Guatemala's rural majority faces more than just the challenges of a post-conflict society. The rural economy relies almost entirely on natural resources, which are being depleted at an alarming rate. Even today, impunity, corruption, lack of justice and discrimination define the challenges of much of Guatemala's population. These factors, typical of a post-conflict society, reinforce the exploitative structures of society and help maintain an unequal social order. Inequalities of income, high levels of violence, a suboptimal legal system, and lack of access to education are other characteristics of Guatemala's context.

Currently, poverty affects children more than it affects adults, and can limit a child's potential for self-development as an adult. Children experience poverty in three key areas: deprivation, exclusion, and vulnerability. The Guatemalan government has attempted to address some of the nation's challenges by empowering local governments and implementing social programming to benefit the poor, especially in the rural areas.

Financial Report



Guatemala FY13

Sponsorship Expense	3,501,695	63%
Grant Expense	120,444	2%
Contribution Expense	222,102	4%
Operating Expense	1,721,838	31%
Total Expense	5,566,079	100%

Why Sponsorship Is Important

“From ECD to Let Me Tell You Project”

Miguelito is 9 years old, and lives in the Quiché indigenous area of Guatemala. He lives with his parents María, 26, and Francisco, 27, who earn their living by weaving traditional clothes and selling them at the markets. Miguelito has three sisters Jessica, 4, Leslie, 3, and Sucely, 2. They share a small adobe house, and, like everyone else in their small community, they subsist on greens, beans and rice. Miguelito is completing the third year of primary school and his grades are great.

His love for learning began with his participation in ChildFund Guatemala’s ECD project, *Play With Me* where parents learn about healthy maternity nutrition, early stimulation and school readiness, and children have so much fun playing with others.

Now that Miguelito is school age, he shines in the *Let Me Tell You* program, where children improve their self-expression and confidence through games, theater and other activities. *“I like both projects because I learned a lot of things that will help me in school and also to have a better future,”* says Miguelito.

“One of my dreams is to study really hard to become a doctor, to help people in my community and support my family, and thanks to ChildFund projects, I will make my dream possible,” says Miguelito.

María, Miguelito’s mother, is pleased with her son’s progress and spirit. *“My child was very shy years ago, but now he likes to talk with other people. At school he’s doing well, he likes to participate more. I can see that there is a change. The self-esteem activities have helped him.”*

I am very proud of my sponsored child”

“I am very glad to meet my sponsored child for a third time and happy to be able to support this wonderful family,” says Stefan Usee. Stefan is a sponsor who came from Germany to share with Lester, his sponsored child and his family.

“I see a change in my sponsored child and it’s great how ChildFund is making positive changes in the communities. Now Lester is less shy than before, I can see that!” mentions Stefan.



Why Sponsorship is Important (continued)

Lester is 14 years old. He is completing the sixth grade in primary school, and has very good grades. He is participating in the ChildFund project, *Let Me Tell You*. *"I am learning how to help in my community because we have a lot of things to do, such as talk to parents about why it is important for children to have a good education. Many parents do not let their children go to school. I am very happy because I have an opportunity to participate in the project. Many children do not have this opportunity,"* expresses Lester.



"Guatemalan culture is changing"

Marcela is 17 years old, and lives in the community of Xecococh, Totonicapán, five hours away from Guatemala City. Marcela comes from a community where girls used to get married as young as 14 years old, most of the times as an arranged marriage by their parents, or because they are tired of poverty or violence at home, or because they get pregnant.



She is the oldest of five children. She is completing the third grad in secondary school (8th grade junior high). One of her goals is to continue studying and go to college to be a good example to her family and community, something that is not very common for girls her age, in rural indigenous communities of Guatemala, because usually, most of them get married at an early age.

Marcela started participating in ChildFund projects at the age of 13. *"Now I can say that ChildFund changed my life in many ways. I learned about my rights, responsibilities and obligations. Now I know that both men and women have the same rights and none is better than the other. Also, now I know about my rights as a girl and about my values as a woman. That is worth so much and is so special that not even a millionaire would be able to pay for it,"* Marcela told us.

"My parents wanted me to get married when I was 14. The family of a neighboring boy came to ask for me, but I didn't want to and didn't know what to do. Look at me. I'm very young and skinny and I started thinking in one year from now, I will have children, and I'm not ready. I knew my rights and that no one would be able to force me. I didn't accept this proposal because I wanted a different future for me and my family. I talk to my parents and told them that I was not prepared and I really wanted to continue studying and marry at a later time. It was not easy (said Marcela with tears in her eyes) but I thank my parents because at the end they were able to listen and understand my decision," explained Marcela.

For Marcela's mother, ChildFund youth projects in her community were a good opportunity for her daughter's development. *"Before, Marcela was a shy girl and she did not like to talk to people. Now, I am also participating as a guide mother, teaching other mothers about how to better raise their children, early stimulation for the little ones, how to play with them and to have a better communication with the older ones,"* shared María.

Marcela tearfully explains that she is very happy because she never imagined what is happening now. *"I am proud of myself and I can see how things are changing,"* she said. She has become a role model for other girls in her community and has the confidence to advocate for girls rights' to continue with their education and delay marriage for a better time when they are ready.

These are some results of how ChildFund is working in the different communities of the country, supporting children from the time they are little, teaching them how to grow and how to have a bright future!