



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**GUATEMALA**

## FIRST PERSON Innovator Awarded for Technology Use

**Technology innovator is recognized for his efforts**



Photo: USAID

USAID's Andrew Lieberman received the Microsoft Education Award in 2004.

***"It is an honor and a privilege to be included in such a select group of social entrepreneurs. Although the problems we address are very different, we have found success by putting the people we want to help — rather than the technology — at the center of our solutions."***

***—USAID's Andy Lieberman***

U.S. Agency for International Development  
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At Tech Museum Awards' November 2004 black-tie gala, USAID's Andy Lieberman won the Microsoft Education Award and \$50,000 in recognition of his use of technology to solve global challenges and improve the lives of people around the world.

After traveling to Guatemala, Andy fell in love with the country — and then with a very special woman. The two settled in the highland town of Santa Cruz del Quiché, where he earned the nickname "Teacher Andy." In 2000, USAID hired Andy to lead Enlace Quiché, a project designed to spread the use of information technology to rural areas and strengthen the training of bilingual (Spanish-Mayan) teachers.

Since its inception, Enlace Quiché has sought to help Mayan communities and schools cross the digital divide — without sacrificing their culture and language. In 2003, Andy was elected founding president of the Asociación Ajb'atz' Enlace Quiché, an independent Guatemalan organization established to continue the project's vision after USAID support ended in February 2004.

Enlace Quiché's legacy includes a virtual community through its Web site ([www.enlacequiche.org.gt](http://www.enlacequiche.org.gt)), a training center, 28 bilingual intercultural technology centers, and 14 interactive compact discs on Mayan education, culture and language. The organization also won an award from the World Summit of the Information Society in Geneva for "Jun E" ("A Destiny" in Maya K'iche'), a children's CD recognized as having among the best digital contents worldwide.

Five years ago, no one dreamed that integrating information technology into rural schools was feasible. But through USAID's and Enlace Quiché's collective efforts, spearheaded by Andy, a rapidly growing number of Mayans — from children to grandparents — are harnessing computers and Internet as tools for development, for education and for strengthening their cultural and linguistic identity.