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GUATEMALA

BEFORE & AFTER

Improving Resources for Rural Students

New libraries and teaching tools enrich rural schools

Nearly a decade after its 36-year civil war ended, cultural and economic gaps persist in Guatemala. Education is plagued by a lack of access, poor teacher training and insufficient resources — especially for rural children. Although 60 percent of urban students complete third grade, only 30 percent of rural students do. Two-thirds of Maya first-graders are taught by instructors who do not speak their mother tongue, and 76 percent of rural children drop out before completing primary school. Nearly two million children do not attend school.

President Oscar Berger's administration, which took office in January 2004, has sought to overcome these obstacles, setting a goal of employment and well-being for all Guatemalan citizens. Since education is a vital step toward this end, USAID is working to improve reading instruction for 43,000 children in six of the country's poorest states, and is supplying teachers with high-quality resources, many of which are designed to improve instruction for bilingual students.

Telling Our Story

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Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>



Photo: USAID

BEFORE Few Guatemalan children are enrolled in preschool (43 percent), junior high (28 percent) or high school (16 percent), and only one in ten children who enters first grade makes it to tenth. Students enrolled in rural schools have only the most rudimentary of resources.



Photo: USAID

AFTER As part of its effort to improve teaching resources and methodologies, USAID helped establish libraries at 1,000 primary schools in six of Guatemala's poorest states, including this rural school in Sumpango, Sacatepequez.