

## **Report on Educational Development in Guatemala May 2021**

The causes of illiteracy are historically explained within the framework of an unequal and unjust socio-economic, political and cultural structure, which is manifested in the state of poverty, misery and stagnation in which the country lives. The foregoing shows that illiteracy transcends the limits of a strictly educational problem, identifying itself as a social problem. From this premise, it is considered necessary that very concrete, dynamic and realistic actions should be defined.

### **Economic causes:**

Illiteracy has its deepest roots in the economic backwardness that prevails in rural areas. From this point of view, it ceases to be a strictly school problem to become an economic problem. Unemployment, low-paid jobs, and the informal economy force parents to use their children as labor in order to obtain other income, thereby reproducing the spiral of illiteracy.

38% of the rural indigenous population subsists on less than a dollar a day, which makes it impossible to have an adequate diet that allows them to have the minimum calories. In the last fifteen years the country has made some progress in reducing general poverty (from 62% to 57%), however, at least a fifth of Guatemalans continue to subsist in conditions of extreme poverty. Extreme poverty (21%) also affects urban areas and is more evident, again among the indigenous population

### **Social causes:**

Currently, marginalization continues, positioning the population that does not read or write at the base of the pyramid and within this population the problem is aggravated in women and more in indigenous women, which contributes to this population being marginalized from development processes and live in a critical situation of poverty and stagnation.

### **Reasons that hold back Educational Development in Guatemala**

- Migration, machismo, school dropouts in children, little interest in literacy
- Exclusion of indigenous children, priority for work tasks
- Lack of knowledge of parents, inefficient formal education system
- Low coverage in primary education, low coverage in occupational orientation
- Lack of attention with linguistic relevance, outdated development programs, There is no follow-up to proposals and improvements to education due to the change of government, teachers lack adequate preparation to teach, they are not updated
- The lack of enthusiasm, lack of motivation and lack of preparation of teachers, contributes to the poor academic performance of primary and basic students, which results in dropping out of school, thus the cycle of poverty continues.

### **Some specific data:**

- 75% is the percentage of illiteracy in many rural areas of Guatemala
- Two-thirds is the proportion of Guatemalan children living in poverty
- Nine out of ten is the proportion of rural schools that lack books
- Lack of money and having to work are the two main reasons why children and young people stop attending school.
- 25% of the population of academic training age stops attending due to lack of money
- 48% do not attend because they have to work
- 10% have no desire to study for various reasons
- 17% of the population of training age consider that they have already finished their studies
- According to the 2018 census, three million, 123,493 people study in the same municipality in which they live, another 346, 422 have to move to another municipality to have access to education and 2,589 study abroad
- In the range from 06 to 14 years, there are 379,748 children who did not attend school; from 15 to 18 years (who are the age of majority in the country), they add up to 673,771; while, from 19 to 29 years old, there are more than 2.5 million who report school absenteeism
- Parallel to the confirmation by President Alejandro Giammattei that the second wave of coronavirus is due to the irresponsibility of Guatemalans, the Ministry of Education reports that there are 64,536 students, corresponding to 1.56% who do not study in Guatemala

### **Education in time of coronavirus:**

Several teachers are teaching their classes through the different platforms, but many others are losing their role as teachers, only sending the tasks without explaining more content, making many of the students feel worried and stressed since they finally deliver the tasks, but they are not learning 100%.

### **Some of the problems are:**

- Insufficient command of computer skills in students.
- Student motivation can be difficult. If in face-to-face teaching it is already difficult to stimulate positive emotional attitudes that improve academic performance, in distance teaching the problem acquires greater dimensions.
- The type of social relationships established in traditional classrooms are reduced.
- The availability of computers in time and space. According to the 2018 census of the population in Guatemala, 68% do not have internet access and 78% do not have a computer. Only 16% of public sector students have access to the internet, limiting their access to online training during the crisis.