

Covid-19 Pandemic in Guatemala:

Effect on Education

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Guatemala has recently been struggling to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. Kids already have a difficult time trying to get the education they need. After the 36 years of the civil war in Guatemala, most of the Mayan population has been excluded from many opportunities. Guatemala is a very poor country and has faced so many problems. One of the ongoing problems is

having an education in Guatemala. Guatemala has one of the highest illiteracy rates, 79% of indigenous Guatemalans in poverty, 90% of poor kids never graduate from high school, and 33% of indigenous adults cannot read/write. Most of the families are too poor to provide the money to have their children go to school. Even if they can, they usually can only choose one child to go to school and the other's have to stay home and help the family. There are a lot of primary schools that are for families who are in poverty to be able to have their kids go to school but even then most still aren't able to go. Indigenous families have a lower amount of years they let their kids go to school rather than a non-indigenous person who has more years. There are many struggles that kids in Guatemala have to face education every day.



Most schools in Guatemala are very limited in their resources to provide the classes. They don't have typical things that we have in America. One of the many of the struggles that the schools have is: providing good quality teachers who can feel confident in what they are doing and know how to teach. Kids are not able to form or share their ideas/opinions and the teachers are unable to know how to teach the kids. The kids aren't able to take notes for themselves if they don't know how to form their ideas. Most schools have either 15, 26, or

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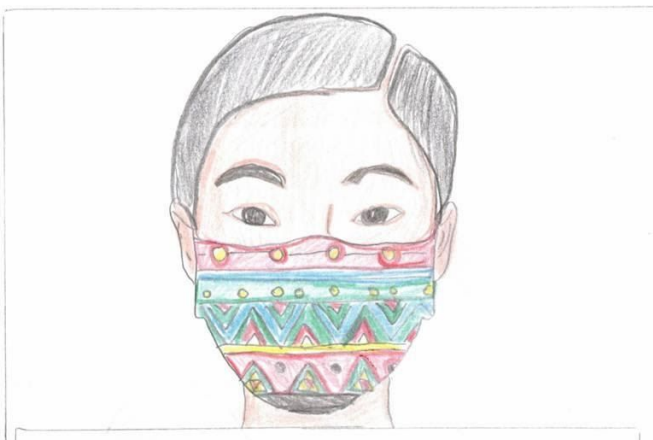


kids in one class. For one teacher they have to act as the of the school. They also might not have the right materials students. Hiring for teachers takes even longer now too. Because of the poor quality and money the government give to the schools, classes are also canceled because the teachers aren't able to pay for their wages. Unfortunately

because of the poor quality of the schools, the government didn't pay for the materials that the students needed to learn. They never had computers, or pencils, or any kind of material that we were given for school. Sometimes if a kid didn't have paper, pencil, or a calculator with them, they had to learn their lesson by memory.

For kids that go to school, everything is a danger zone for them. Many gangs and rapists lurk the streets. Most kids have to walk or take unsafe transportation to school. Even during school, some crimes are being committed causing the schools to cancel. What's even worse is that the outcome of becoming apart of the gangs is very common. Dropping out of school is extremely common for kids. They drop out for many reasons. Some examples are: their parents can't pay the tuition for the kids anymore, their family needs more help at home, blatant sexism, illiteracy, alcoholism, having to marry young. When some kids drop out, they then join gangs. This is terrifying and worrying to people, not knowing if their children are safe or not. Girls are also a big target for gangs and rapists. For most girls ages 10-14 most have pregnancies. Guatemala has the highest teen pregnancy in Latin America. Not only is it dangerous for girls going outside it's also dangerous for them inside their own homes. It is common for girls to also be sexually abused by their own families. 89% of girls are sexually abused by their own families, and 30% are raped by their fathers. When this happens girls have to drop out of school. Even if they don't get raped, families want their daughters to drop out because they think that the girls should learn the basics in life and work at home and more girls drop out than boys.

Over the years, many organizations have stepped up to help improve Guatemala's educational system. Most of the organizations have the same goals. They would set out goals like remake some of the classes, teach the teachers for them to get a better understanding of how to teach. One of the most important goals that all of the organizations had in common was that they all wanted to improve the children's reading ability. The organizations would then provide many reading activities and try to translate it into their Mayan language so that the kids can better understand their reading. Most of the organization's goals have succeeded, others a tiny bit, but that doesn't mean they stopped there. Each day organizations are helping Guatemala and are making a difference in Guatemala especially during this time when Guatemala needs all the help they can get.



Recently during the Covid-19 pandemic, Guatemala has been struggling to be able to still get all of their work done and be there for their family. Currently, in Guatemala, there have been 50 cases of the Coronavirus and is being taken seriously. The government has decided to shut down schools to keep the kids safe. They will move to either online school, school on tv, or by receiving packets weekly by the teachers. They are trying to

give them more food, alcohol wipes, and trying to help them to telework. Before the Coronavirus began they were trying to use the money for just objects to help them teach the kids but now. Since you don't get a lot of food in Guatemala they need to provide that now and trying to keep the people clean with

the alcohol wipes. There are also Artisan women who still need to work so they need to provide them the materials they need so that they can work from home now. Also, because they don't have face masks to order from to keep from spreading the pandemic, they asked anyone that can sew and have materials in their homes to make masks for people in the community. This is very sufficient for Guatemala, this helps them to still have the chance to go outside and get the stuff they need and not put anyone in harm. Hopefully, over the course of time, Guatemala will start to recover and more people will help join in making a more stabilized community for them.