

Thesis

Bilingual education is most effective when it is administered by people in the town that it serves. The resurgence of the indigenous language and culture since the 1990s demonstrates the resilience of Guatemala's indigenous community.



Diversity in Indigenous Languages

- Guatemala has 23 indigenous languages
- Renewed use of these languages
- Threatened by the prominence of Spanish, rural to urban migration, and secondary education
- Can be counteracted through indigenous bilingual education, which is taught in both indigenous languages and Spanish
- In 2015, World Bank reported that between 2000 and 2011, the gap between the decrease in probability of an indigenous child completing primary school improved by 6.9%



Findings

- Interviewees from Cajolá were unanimous in supporting the preschool and aftercare programs.
- Interviewees felt that an education was not only beneficial to their children, but also to the community because in the future, they can use the power of education to help change the community.
- "The Helping with Homework program has also been a tool to continue my daughters' personal development since we have trained teachers to contribute to the development of the community."
- Focus on Reggio Emilia approach



Historical Context

- Indigenous communities oppressed by colonizers for centuries
- 1954 military coup reverses advances in indigenous empowerment.
- 1960-1996 Civil War pits military against rebels, largely supported by the indigenous population
- Indigenous people specifically targeted by military
- Over 600 massacres and 200,000 deaths
- Indigenous communities essential in post-war truth commissions and exhumations
- *Quinientos años* creates a massive cultural revival and pride in indigeneity

Case Study: Grupo Cajolá

- Non-governmental organization aimed at reducing poverty and inequality by creating economic and educational opportunities in their indigenous town so people are not forced to migrate
- Created a free bilingual preschool and aftercare homework center staffed by people of the community
- Through grant funding, they published the first picture books written in their indigenous language, Mam.

Conclusions

- Public education is often government funded and employs teachers who are not invested in the growth of the community
- Children can excel while learning multiple languages as a result of indigenous bilingual education