

# ***Proyecto Global:*** **Girls and Women's Education in Guatemala**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Girls and Women's Education Activity (GWEA) Project, known as *Proyecto Global*, in Guatemala, forms a part of USAID/EGAT/WID Girls and Women's Education Activity. The five-year life of the project is examined here in relation to the strategic framework for Strategic Support Objective 2 *Broad-based, Informed Constituencies Mobilized to Improve Girls' Education*. This study is based on analysis of project documents, manipulation of the available national education statistics for Guatemala and fieldwork conducted in Guatemala during March of 2001.

The GWEA Project differed from other efforts funded under the EGAT/WID Activity in that it is the second project in Guatemala to employ the strategy of using a small local team of specialists to act as a catalyst in mobilizing support for girls' education. USAID's investment in girls' education in Guatemala began in 1991 as a component of USAID/Guatemala's Basic Education Strengthening (BEST) Project, the purpose of which was to promote attendance, persistence, and completion of primary school by girls, especially Mayan-speakers and those who were members of other rural populations. The program consisted largely of technical assistance to several initiatives to support girls' education and the development of instructional materials and guides for classroom and community use. The Program supported the organization of national seminars on girls' education and provided technical and administrative support for the *Asociación Eduquemos a la Niña* (AEN), which evolved from the seminars as a coordinating body for different actions in girls' education. The Program also supported tests of incentive packages carried out by FUNDAZUCAR, a foundation of the Guatemalan sugar growers association; development of workshops and manuals; and the design of public sector initiatives, such as the Ministry of Education scholarship program for girls, which has been implemented nation-wide in a collaborative effort with AEN.

As the BEST Project drew to a close, USAID/Guatemala continued to invest in girls' education through a buy-in to the Girls' and Women's Education Activity coordinated by USAID's Office of Women in Development. The GWEA program in Guatemala was implemented by World Learning, a subcontractor to the American Institutes for Research, and began work in May of 1997. GWEA's principal areas of action on initiation of work were:

1. providing technical support to the Common Agenda in Girls' Education, a collaborative effort of USAID and the Japanese international assistance agency, JICA, and
2. strengthening the capabilities of the AEN to establish relationships with private sector entities both to encourage investment in girls' education and to assure that activities were coordinated.

From 1999 through 2001, the project dealt with three principal areas of action: awareness campaigns to mobilize leaders to support girls' completion of primary school; training teachers to create girl-friendly classrooms; and building community participation in keeping girls in school. The strategy for implementing these actions was to create tools, with local

participation, that could then be used by partners to carry out relevant actions. Over the course of 18 months a series of materials for use with girls in the classroom were produced. These materials, called suggestions (*Sugerencias*), were packaged in a loose-leaf binder for dissemination. The positive support for the tool by the Ministry of Education after participation in workshops carried out by the GWEA team has resulted in USAID extending the project in order that 10,000 copies of the manual can be produced. Radio campaigns were also produced and a community discussion manual based on pictorial representations to be used with illiterate parents was developed.

## **2. *The Promotion of Girls' Education by Civil Society Organizations***

### **Organizational Participation**

Examining 'the number of civil society organizations, including private sector organizations that initiate actions to promote girls' education' required a special strategy, given the previous history of project longevity in Guatemala. Two different populations of organizations were established: those that had participated in the original national forum of 1991; and those that had participated in subsequent forums. These baselines were used to determine the number of additional 'old' organizations and the number of 'new' organizations that had initiated their first actions since 1997 when the GWEA project began in Guatemala. The total number of organizations initiating actions is also reported. The legal status of an organization was determined as part of a survey of organizations conducted in 2001.

Over the ten years of activities to promote girls' education in Guatemala, 77 organizations have shown interest in the efforts by participating in a national forum on the issue. Of the 43 organizations that participated in the initial forum in 1991, 18 or 42%, initiated actions prior to the GWEA. Since 1997, only one additional organization of the original group has initiated actions in girls' education. New organizations that participated in subsequent forums totaled 34. Of these, a total of 15, or 44%, have initiated actions during the course of the GWEA project. Thus, the relative frequency of new organizations has been consistent over the history of girls' education initiatives. It is important to note, however, that the Guatemalan case suggests that the original participants in the organizing meetings that do not initiate actions are unlikely to do so over an extended period of time. Rather, new organizations, in the sense of being first-time participants in girl's education, are the more likely targets of opportunity.

Only new organizations initiating actions are included in the Table below. Many of those organizations that initiated actions previously have continued these actions throughout the period under study. However, the supposition of the framework is that there will be an increasing participation of civil society organizations over time. The yearly totals of organizations that initiate actions do not suggest an increasing build-up of organizations and increasingly greater cumulative action over time, as after increasing to five new organizations initiating actions in 1999, the total has been only two or three in subsequent years.

### Actions initiated by CSOs by Type of CSO and Type of Action

Type of action Organization			Infra-structure	Incentives	Community Academic support	Curriculum	Teacher training	Policy	Social awareness
	No*	No. of actions	% of total	% of total	% of total	% of total	% of total	% of total	% of total
NGO	36	18 (46%)	1 (3%)	4 (10%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	0	8 (20%)
Religious	5	1 (3%)	0	0	0	1 (3%)	0	0	0
Business	16	7 (18%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	0	0	0	1 (3%)	2 (5%)
Foundation	13	9(23%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	2 (5%)	0	0	0	3 (8%)
Media	4	2 (5%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 (5%)
University	3	2 (5%)	0	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0	0
Total	77	39	3 (8%)	10 (26%)	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	4 (10%)	1 (3%)	15 (38%)

\*Includes potential organizations.

Source: Villagrán "Encuesta de Instituciones" Proyecto Global 2001.

### **Types of Actions**

The above Table shows the actions engaged in by different types of civil society organizations since 1997. It includes both organizations that had ongoing actions during the period, and those discussed previously that engaged in actions for the first time. As can be seen, most organizations initiated more than one type of action and carried out a total of 39 actions in the different categories from 1997 to 2001. Social awareness actions, such as media campaigns and newspaper supplements on the importance of educating girls, made up the greatest percentage of all actions at slightly less than 40% of the total. Incentive programs made up the next largest percentage of actions. They were over a quarter of the actions and related to support of scholarships for girls and school food programs. Actions that would seem to affect classroom behavior and educational quality, such as curriculum development and teacher training, combined, made up only about 18% of the actions.

NGOs initiated the greatest percentage (46%) of the identified actions. However the business sector, as represented by commercial business and philanthropic foundations of commercial business also implemented over 41% of the actions. The relative frequency with which other types of organizations initiated actions was similar. Media, Education and Religious sectors initiated 5%, 5% and 3% of actions promoting girls education, respectively

### **3. Commitment**

In order to obtain an indicator of commitment to girls' education, organizations were asked if they planned to continue working with issues of girls' education in the near future. The Table below shows that commitment is surprisingly low among NGOs, with only slightly more than 50% stating that they would continue. The split is almost totally along size, affiliation, and type of involvement. All but one of the NGOs with international affiliations, including AEN, stated that they would continue. Local Guatemalan NGOs that had generally carried out one activity in the area said that they would not do so again. This response appears to be closely tied to a perception of available funding. The businesses and foundations that stated a continued

presence in the area of girls' education were those that have provided long-term support dating from the first girls' education program.

When the same question was asked of representatives of public sector organizations, all of the Ministries that had carried out actions responded affirmatively. The one exception was the Congress, which did not see a continuation of actions after 2001.

Organizations Showing Commitment to Continue Working in Girls Education

Sector	No.	Yes	No
NGO	15	8 (53%)	7 (47%)
Religious	5	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
Business	9	4 (44%)	5 (56%)
Foundation	6	4 (66%)	2 (33%)
Media	3	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
University	1	1 (100%)	
Total	39	23 (59%)	16 (41%)

Source: Villagrán "Encuesta de Instituciones" Proyecto Global 2001.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Twelve broad conclusions can be drawn relating to these experiences in Guatemala:

1. *The USAID emphasis on building constituencies to promote girls' completion of primary school has contributed to higher completion rates among female primary school students in Guatemala.*

The six cohorts attaining fifth grade available for Guatemala showed completion rate increases of 5.6% and 6.4% for rural and urban girls, respectively. These increases were slightly greater than those for boys during the same period, and in urban areas, girls had overcome a slight gender gap and had higher completion rates than their male classmates. In the target area of El Quiché, rural girls had a 6.1% increase in completion rates from the 1995 baseline. This was, however, less than the 7.2% increase for boys.

2. *Despite increases in completion rates, overall primary completion is low in Guatemala. This is especially true for rural areas.*

Even with the increases in completion rates, only about one-quarter of rural Guatemalan children make normal progress to fifth grade (24.1% of girls and 26.0% of boys). In urban areas, only about half of the children make normal progress to fifth grade. Completion rates are even lower in El Quiché, with 16.1% of girls reaching fifth grade in five years and 19.6% of boys attaining this level.

3. *Social awareness programs about the importance of girls going to school, when combined with increased access, can affect girls' enrollment in primary school.*

The almost ten years of emphasis on educating girls in Guatemala has led to a general familiarity with the issue. This familiarity, when combined with the efforts of PRONADE to create schools in isolated rural areas has created a growth in enrollment among girls that is slightly greater than that of boys nationally. Gross enrollment ratios for girls have reached 87%, an increase of 22% since 1995.

4. *Large-scale investment in scholarship programs alone will not insure that a high percentage of girls complete school, in situations where completion has traditionally been low.*

Scholarships have formed the basis of much of the work in girls' education in Guatemala during the life of the GWEA project. Approximately 10% of rural female primary students received scholarships during this five-year period. This investment produced significant trends in girls' completion and raised the completion rates of girls both nationally and in El Quiché above that of boys among the cohorts of third grade girls who had had the benefit of scholarship support for three years. However, less than a third of rural Guatemalan girls or boys complete third grade in three years.

5. *Leadership and major actions in girls' education are likely to remain in a few civil society organizations whose mission statement supports girls' education. Organizations that do not undertake actions soon after initial contact with national efforts are unlikely to do so.*

In Guatemala, long-term leadership and activity was found in the philanthropic foundations of major commercial entities, and to some extent in the NGOs formed to address problems of girls' education. These organizations were among the original partner organizations that began carrying out actions in the early 1990s. Although additional organizations have carried out actions, only 44% of the organizations that attended national meetings on girls' education initiated actions in either period of USAID-funded support for girls' education. Only one organization that had participated in the first national meeting, during the BEST project, initiated its first action during the GWEA program.

6. *Businesses and small local NGOs are not likely to be long-term leaders in girls' education in Guatemala.*

All small NGOs without international affiliations and all businesses that participated in a single short-term project stated that future involvement in girls' education was not foreseen by their organizations. This suggests that these types of organizations may be called upon for specific activities, but will not form part of the ongoing constituencies envisioned by the EGAT/WID framework.

7. *Local organizations that take a leadership role in carrying actions are able to generate non-USAID funding on a consistent basis. However, as with the number of organizations actively involved, such funding is not likely to grow exponentially.*

Local funding was generated at three to four times the USAID investment for both the BEST and GWEA girls' education programs. However, funding did not grow significantly beyond an average of about one million dollars a year. More than 75% of this funding came from four or five local private sector foundations in each period.

8. *Non-USAID funding to support girls' education can be generated without a reliance on international donor agencies.*

International donor agencies have been active partners throughout the ten years of constituency building in Guatemala. However, their contribution to actions engaged in by civil society organizations was less than 10% of all non-USAID resources.

9. *Government agencies can be active partners in alliances to promote girls' education. However, public sector financial support of an issue such as girls' education may change dramatically with changes of government.*

The two administrations prior to 2000 undertook scholarship programs with public financing. The program that began in 1997 with outsourcing of government funds to the private sector for implementation has been seen as a model for public sector-civil society collaboration. However, with the change of government in 1999, the percentage of the education budget dedicated to primary education has been reduced each year. While the scholarship funds were a Congressional mandate through 2001, there appears to be little continued support in the new Congress and the Ministry of Education has ended its partnership with the civil society organization that appeared to be administering the scholarship program successfully.

10. *Studies are more important than implementation tools in the early years of launching a girls' education initiative. Both studies and tools have a long life span, but must be in the principal language/s of the country to be utilized.*

During the BEST project studies were used in planning efforts and in monitoring results of actions. Implementation tools predominated during the GWEA project. A number of the tools and studies produced prior to the GWEA project were still in use or had been adapted for specific needs. Despite being well-designed and building on international experience, the tools created by AIR were not utilized in Guatemala. This was a result of their translation into Spanish only taking place late in the life of the project.

11. *Leaders can be mobilized to support girls' education through public statements. However, such support is unlikely to include declarations of organizational resources being allocated.*

Despite leveraging more than one million dollars a year, only ten leaders made declarations about allocation of organizational resources to girls' education and amounts were not made specific. Respondents felt that such declarations were limited owing to fear for personal safety.

12. *USAID-funded local teams can be appropriate to carry out work related to teaching and learning even when they do not serve as a catalyst for constituency building. However, in either role, they must have human resources commiserate with the project's scope of work.*

GWEA work in developing teacher training guides and workshops was well received by the Ministry of Education. However, team members felt that the project was understaffed to meet the demands of the scope of work that required national and local involvement of staff. One full-time coordinator and one administrative assistant called for by the contract could not handle the volume of work.

## **5. Wider Implications**

Although Guatemala has made significant gains in girls' completion rates, the country appears unlikely to reach the USAID/EGAT/WID goal of a 20% increase over the ten-year period originally envisioned for the life of the Activity. In the ten years that the framework has been implemented in Guatemala, completion rates have increased between 5.6% and 7.1% for the different target groups. Much of this increase came during the years that the GWEA was in operation. However, even if the increases were to double in the next five years, the maximum

increase would be about 14% for the ten-year period. As the Guatemalan trends are based on real cohorts, rather than reconstructed cohorts, the existing trends in completion might serve as a guide in establishing future goals related to primary school completion.

The scholarship program may contribute to improved female attainment of fifth grade, as third grade attainment has increased by 6.1% and 9.5% in a four-year period. However, as no cohorts containing scholarship recipients have yet reached fifth grade, it is impossible to estimate what may be the effect. Given the changes that have taken place in the administration of the scholarship program and the lack of commitment of the Guatemalan government to continue the program, long-term changes in completion rates are unlikely.

Low completion rates for both girls and boys even after ten years of promoting girls' persistence and completion of primary school, suggest that dramatic change in completion rates may require an extended period of time and/or more targeted actions than have been carried out in Guatemala. The promotion of the elements of schooling that will ensure that all children complete school with the skills and knowledge defined as necessary to become a successful adult in Guatemala may be a complementary strategy to awareness and incentive programs that have predominated in civil society efforts. Such a role, which would require collaboration with the Ministry of Education, may be difficult in light of the government's current relationship with the private sector.

The EGAT/WID framework of using local professionals to act as a catalyst in bringing together organizations from different sectors to promote girls education may not be necessary as a long-term strategy. The Guatemalan experience suggests that once a constituency for girls' education has been formed, a core group of organizations will continue actions in this area. Local technical assistance may only act as a catalyst in such a situation if it has a visible linkage that is national in scope, as was planned with the Common Agenda. Without such visibility, GWEA was unable to bring together new partners on the national forum.

All sectors are not equally likely to be contributing members of a multi-sector coalition. In the case of Guatemala, NGOs carried out a number of actions that did not require large expenditures, whereas foundations, business and government funded large or costly projects. The religious sector was almost a non-participant. Thus, different organizations will contribute in areas where they have expertise or other resources. This suggests, that as efforts to promote girls' education mature, sector participation should be thought out strategically in terms of the types of resources that different sectors could best contribute.

Successful leveraging of financial resources from non-USAID sources appears to require organizations that are involved with the business sector, if relatively large amounts are to be raised on an ongoing basis. Most of the financial resources for actions promoting girls' persistence and completion of primary school came from foundations with educational objectives in their mission statements. Substantial support from international donor agencies does not appear likely or necessary to generate sufficient funding to carry out actions of national scope, as less than 6% of the over ten million dollars generated by civil society organizations has come from such donors.

The relatively long life of tools and studies, suggests that the tools developed by the GWEA in Guatemala have a good chance of being utilized. However, as the project is ending, there is a question of the Ministry's ability to train teachers or even a large number of trainers in their use, given the economic conditions prevailing in the country. If the tools are used, they

may not have an immediate effect. Data from classrooms where GWEA worked with teachers suggests little short-term change in girls' participation in classrooms.

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