

Guatemala



Native Language Literacy

Project: 103519
Tax Deductible



Overview

Bible Society Australia is supporting the Bible Society of Guatemala to provide a literacy project which aims to improve reading and writing skills among children in rural Guatemala, in three native languages. By providing culturally relevant biblical materials and training teachers, the initiative fosters enhanced community development through education in their mother tongue, as well as spiritual growth, and ethical values.

The Need

In Guatemala, the need for a literacy project targeting the Q'eqchi', K'iche', and Boca Costa K'iche' languages is critical, particularly in rural communities facing significant educational challenges. With an illiteracy rate of 18.5%, which translates to approximately 2.3 million individuals lacking basic reading and writing skills, the urgency for effective educational interventions is clear. This project aims to meet the needs of children from first to sixth grade by instilling ethical values rooted in their cultural and spiritual heritage, doing so by promoting literacy and addressing their lack of access to specialised biblical materials. By using their mother tongue, the program enhances comprehension and engagement, fostering a deeper connection to learning.

The integration of biblical teachings encourages moral development and reinforces cultural identity. The need for literacy is more pressing, as the translations of the biblical texts in these languages are near completion. Literacy skills will ensure that the community is ready to engage with the Bible in their languages when they become available.

73.28%

of K'iche' de Totonicapán speakers
are non-literate

55.36%

of Q'eqchi' speakers are non-literate

90.6%

average percentage of Christians
across the three language groups

Goals

This literacy project aims to enhance reading and writing skills among children in rural communities of Guatemala, with a special focus on the Q'eqchi', K'iche', and Boca Costa K'iche' language speakers. This project will promote access to education as well as fostering community development. The literacy training also aims to highlight themes from the Bible, with 60% of the primer readings based on stories and teaching from the Bible.

In 2025, the project will conduct three 2-week workshops to develop Level 1, 2, and 3 curriculum materials tailored to community needs, focusing on culturally relevant content. By June, the project aims to print and distribute Level 1 materials. They will seek schools and churches to implement the program, and in August, train teachers and begin the pilot test in five schools and two churches. The test will continue through September and October. Ongoing assessments will ensure the curriculum meets educational standards, and a final report evaluating the program's success will be published by year-end. These activities will help establish a sustainable literacy framework within the communities.

Testimony

"I really like to read, do a lot of homework, study and I really like to draw. My favourite lesson is lesson No. 41 "Kuyuk Maak" which talks about how to forgive others who do bad things to us, we must forgive so that we have eternal life with God in heaven." — Mateo, 11 years old*

**Name changed to protect privacy.*

Prayer Points

- Please pray for God to grant wisdom and guidance to all involved in the project, from leaders to facilitators, so they can plan and execute activities effectively.
- Pray for communities to commit to the project, so that both children and their families can actively participate in the literacy classes, recognising the importance of education in their personal and spiritual development.
- Pray that the project would impact both the reading and writing skills of the children, as well as their spiritual and emotional lives, helping them grow in their faith and strengthen their use of their language through the word of God.

Impact

The impact of this literacy project will be in enhancing access to education in their native languages for children and their communities. By learning to read and write in Q'eqchi', K'iche', and Boca Costa K'iche', children will improve their communication skills and comprehension abilities, which are crucial for personal and academic success. Furthermore, the project empowers teachers to develop their capacity to instruct children effectively in their mother tongue. This strengthens the educational framework within these communities.

The introduction of biblical material tailored to their language will foster spiritual growth in the children and also instil essential ethical values such as service, justice, and respect. The lessons will ensure that literacy and faith go hand in hand. Ultimately, this initiative will lay the groundwork for lifelong learning and community development, creating more informed and engaged citizens capable of positively contributing to their society.