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Guatemala , Factor 16: Education
Guatemala: Sustaining Education

Guatemala has a huge food insecurity problem. To begin, you have to know how Guatemalans live first. A typical family lives under a tin roofed house that does not have covered windows or even an AC unit. The family will most likely be very poor and live meal to meal. The Father will work but doesn't always have work to do making it harder to get money. The family will most likely belong to the agricultural sector along with the other 70% of the population (discovershareinspire). The average family size is about 5-6 people, not including parents, which is a lot (Arcgis). This family's meals will consist mostly of tortillas and rice. The problem is that tortillas aren't a steady food source because they are made of corn. The food groups that sustain the population, in terms of DES, continue to be cereals (mainly maize), sugars and beans. These foods meet nearly 90% of energy requirements and are deficient in total fats, proteins of animal origin and micronutrients, especially in the plateau, north and center regions as well as low-income population groups (FAO). Food availability in Guatemala is poor mainly due to vulnerability to environmental factors like droughts, floods and storms, deforestation and soil erosion(FAO). Proper education is a way to fix these problems. How do you learn to solve a math problem? How do you learn to solve any problem you encounter? The answer is simple, learn about it. If you learn about the problem your having you can better understand it to find a solution. The current state of the education system is substandard. Many classrooms, especially in rural Guatemala, do not have adequate teaching materials. Additionally, with more than half the population living below the poverty line, many children are forced to drop out of school to help support their families or because they are unable to afford the cost of uniforms, books, supplies and transportation (Gloaleducationfund). Drop out rates are higher for girls than boys because girls are expected to be home and take care of there siblings. To fix the problem of food insecurity in Guatemala more people need to be educate and educated better with more teaching materials. On top of that, Guatemalans need to be taking courses on agriculture to better understand how to maintain crops.

Guatemala has a growing issue with their education system. Most people don't even get high level education in Guatemala. Only 65% of the population goes to secondary school (high school) and only 59% complete secondary school. (Global Education Fund). This is a low percent of enrolment and even lower for completion. Guatemala has the largest population in central America with around 15 million people (Reading Village). This means that more than 5 million people are uneducated through high school. More people need to get high school education to improve society and get more thinkers. A very surprising thing is that only 18% of the population goes to higher education (Global Education Fund). Few students actually finish their studies, with only 30 percent of enrolled students actually completing sixth grade (Coha). Within the adult population, the average schooling of Guatemalan citizens is just four years. Just four years of school that's just simply not enough time to be able to be fully educated. Four years isn't enough time to teach a student everything they need to learn to succeed. And those four years

of learning isn't even a full year of learning because teachers aren't equipped to teach students so some or most of the time spent in the classroom is wasted because the material is being taught improperly to the students. If everyone was educated fully then people could bring the economy back up and create stable jobs.

Guatemala's education system is failing and it needs to be replaced or fixed. The literacy rate for people over the age of 15 is only 75% (Reading Village). That rate is low and it needs to be brought up in order to ensure every person can fluently communicate and so they can get proper jobs and higher wages. Informing all persons about new agricultural practices and communicating new skills and technologies can be difficult when not all people can read articles and fliers. On top of that, only one out of five high school students demonstrate a basic understanding of math. Only fifty percent of primary school students demonstrate basic reading and mathematical abilities (coha). This really shows a fault in the education system. Families are stuck in a cycle of horrible education and it needs to be broken so that all kids can learn and understand basic reading and math skills. Almost every job requires you to be able to read and if that's the case then everyone should be able to read. Once basic skills are taught to kids then agricultural education can be targeted and focused on so that kids can understand how to sustain crops and food sources.

Guatemala's education system has public schools, but they aren't free. Families need to pay for enrollment fees, school supplies, and most likely uniforms (Reading Railroad). If you add all that up it costs more than a child's average salary per child per year(Reading Village). The thing is that public school is free in Guatemala it's just that there are other costs that a family has to pay for like textbooks and uniforms that drives the cost up tremendously to the point where not every family can afford to send their children off to school. If most of Guatemala's population can't afford to pay for public schools why do people have to pay for it? The education system has to be redesigned so that people don't have to pay out of pocket for public schools. With a population of nearly 15 million, Guatemala is the most populated country in Central America. It is also one of the poorest. Seventy five percent of the population lives below the poverty line and 58% live in extreme poverty (World Bank). How could anyone think families could afford school? If people don't have to pay for education out of pocket then this can save more money for food for their families. Few students actually finish their studies, with only 30 percent of enrolled students actually completing sixth grade. Within the adult population, the average schooling of Guatemalan citizens is just four years.

Guatemalans are paying for schools that aren't the best at teaching curriculum. Teachers aren't trained fully so they don't teach students to their full potential. Many teachers in Guatemala's education system are not adequately prepared to be instructing the country's youth. When given the same evaluation as their students, Guatemalan teachers failed to answer 80 percent of the questions on material they were expected to be sharing with and imparting to their students (Coha). Many teachers did not receive a quality education and thus exhibit poor spelling, poor grammar usage, and little to no understanding of mathematical concepts making them incapable of being effective educators (coha). How are students

supposed to learn the material if the teachers can even answer basic questions on it. It's not the teachers fault even though you might think it is. The teachers have been taught the material wrong from there teachers and it just keeps going. Most schools lack books for students to use to study because of low funds (Global Education Fund). In order to teach teachers require materials to help students better understand the lesson. A common material is textbooks. The only problem is most classrooms in guatemala lack the use of textbooks because they don't have any or don't have enough for the whole class. These teachers don't have proper guidelines to follow so students don't get taught properly. Not only will giving people better education make people smarter in general but it will also empower them to do more. If people get an education they will feel good and they will know that they can do so much more and fix their country. People will be able to solve more problems and improve their life. If people improve their life they feel better and then they keep expanding their life. Education is the key to happiness and success. Guatemala needs to increase the amount of educated teachers in order to ensure that every student gets fair and good education. It also needs to get rid of the fees for public schools. People can't afford to send their kids to school and they will be uneducated. If their kids are uneducated then they won't be able to support their kids and send them to school. The cycle would keep repeating and people would be stuck in poverty and hunger. Once people are educated then they will be able to start making more income and be able to support their children through school. If people make more income than they can have more food on the table every night.

With improved education people can learn to prevent disease. Younger people with primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV (cgev). This could make people overall healthier which can do a lot for a person. Improved health can extend lifespan and help keep down child mortality. Along with improved health education can improve economic growth and success. Education will be able to teach students how to have safe habits to prevent disease and other illness. This can lower the amount of children live in each household which can lead to more money per child per year. This could mean that they could possibly attend school. With each year of education a person can improve their wages by 10% (cgev). These earnings can contribute to national economic growth (cgev). Education can improve awareness of their rights and ways to acquire them (cgev). If education is improved in all these ways Guatemala can overcome poverty. If they overcome poverty then they will surely be able to solve there food insecurity.

Education needs to be targeted to educate about sustainable agriculture. The only way to understand and comprehend something is to be educated on it. So if the people of guatemala are educated on agriculture then they will understand how to grow and sustain crops for here consumption. All students enrolled in primary school should have to take at least a 1 semester course on agricultural practices and agricultural sustainability. This will give way to generations being able to get more jobs in the agricultural field and it will teach students the value in agricultural practices. If people learn to grow and manage their own gardens so they can grow there own food on their property. Also people can learn to manage large farms for distribution and retail purposes. Prices of crops will drop and make it more easily obtainable in a family's budget for food. Approximately 50% of the world's undernourished population is made up of low-income farm households (Shaw, p.395). So, a top priority in addressing hunger problems is to

decrease poverty levels among these farmers, and increase their productivity so they can feed themselves and their families. Because the farmers are the price setters, any lowering of prices due to increased productivity should not affect them negatively (Scripts.mit). If farmers have money then they can run a fully sustainable agricultural farming business. This would lower prices on food because farmers aren't in debt and extremely poor. Furthermore, this would increase food availability locally and even possibly nation wide if the operation is large enough. This could largely impact a family's ability to obtain food.

Women are even less educated than men are. If women are educated for six or more years they are more likely to find parental care and assisted childbirth (cgev). This can lead to lower child mortality rates. Women need proper education to succeed. If women get better education then they can make huge impacts on life. Children could live longer. If women are educated then they can educate their children more on different topics that they know. Women will be able to participate in working with men and earning money. The real problem lies when they're young. Dropout rates are high, especially for girls. Girls particularly are expected to take care of siblings, leave school to help support their family or get married early(globaleducationfund). Over half of the Guatemalan population is indigenous and less than 30% of poor, rural indigenous girls are enrolled in secondary school. Indigenous girls in Guatemala are among the country's most disadvantaged group with limited schooling, early marriage, frequent childbearing, and chronic poverty (globaleducationfund). This would also mean that they can get education on agriculture and help improve agriculture across the country.

In Conclusion, Guatemala's education system is falling behind and causing lack of education in agriculture leading to food insecurity. Education will be able to empower the people of Guatemala to grow and sustain crops. On top of sustainable agriculture, people will also be able to prevent diseases and stop deaths from the spread of disease. Furthermore, it will also empower women to do things men do and better the community. Education will improve wages and better the economy. Education can decrease poverty among farmers so they can grow more crops and better crops. Guatemala's low levels of literacy are the product of failing education systems and limited resources for learning. Because public education is not free in Guatemala, attendance figures are horrible (reading village). Once the education system gets rolling that 65% attendance rate for high school will go up to 85% and keep rising. New policies and programs will mean public schools will be less money or free. This will boost attendance rates since poor families couldn't afford school before. While quality of life may be low, Guatemalan culture is alive and well. An intoxicating richness of color, landscape, and architecture combine to inspire this nation. With volcanoes, lakes, and coastal land, the country is rich with natural resources. Its colonial history and cobblestone streets give way to vibrant rainforests and winding mountain roads. Guatemala has the potential to be an even more beautiful country if the education system is fixed and targets agricultural classes. Not only will Guatemala be a beautiful country but will have all the food it needs.

