



Registered Charity No: 1099280

Education for the Children Foundation

The Story So Far...



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Who We Are



Education for the Children Foundation was established as a registered charity in the UK in 2003.

In 2005 we also achieved legal charitable status in Guatemala as Fundacion Educando A Los Niños (the Spanish translation).

We aim....

- **'to advance the education of children in Central America by the provisions of schools, schools equipment and teaching personnel.'**
- **'to relieve the poverty and sickness of children who are educated by the foundation, together with their families, by the provision of shelter, amenities, facilities and equipment, in any such charitable way as the charity trustees determine.'**

Guatemala



Guatemala at a glance:

Population: 12 million

Language: Spanish plus around 50 Mayan languages

Bordering countries: Mexico, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador

History: Emerged from a 36 year civil war in 1996

Geography: Volcanoes, lakes, and jungle.

Poverty Statistics:

Almost 60% of children do not attend school

Only 5 % of children attend high school

Over 56% of Guatemalans live in poverty

24% of Guatemalans live on the equivalent of \$1 per day

Guatemalans have to pay to go to school. For most families this is an inconceivable cost. Even some subsidised schools require families to pay for the provision of books, materials and school uniform. For many families, this would still be impossible as it would be half of their income for just one child.

Schools and Education Programme

How it all began

In 2003 we heard about a volunteer project that was on the brink of collapse and we stepped in to help.

Our Foundation was set up to take over a small school in the town of Antigua, in Central Guatemala. The school had previously been running on volunteer donations alone and had only two teachers to take care of 75 children. These teachers were on the point of leaving as they had not been paid due to the instability of the project.

We managed to keep the school open, and we immediately began trying to improve its infrastructure, its teaching standards and its stability. By 2004 we employed more teachers on full time contracts and we regularly purchased educational materials. The school was successfully catering for 90 children from disadvantaged backgrounds every day.

NGO Report- steps of progress

In the autumn of 2004, "Suivi du project" a French NGO carried out an evaluation of the school. It was a positive and far reaching report which highly praised the efforts of the principals of the school. In addition however, it highlighted several areas in which improvements could be made, subject to funding. In years to come we would use the findings of this report to help define our objectives. The report made observations as follows:-

- 1. Size of School** - The school was situated in a very small building on the outskirts of Antigua, Guatemala and was somewhat overcrowded. If the school remained at its existing location the report stated that we should consider reducing the class numbers.
- 2. Further Education** - The school was only a primary education school. No provision had been made to fund places in secondary education for children graduating at the end of primary 6.
- 3. Medical Attention** - The school, due to lack of resources, did little if anything to cater for the medical needs of the children.
- 4. Psychological Attention** - Many of our children in Guatemala come from difficult backgrounds. Most of the families live in poverty and in areas of social deprivation. Although not in all cases, you can imagine that these conditions can cause serious psychological problems.

We thought long and hard about the report. Funding is always the problem and whilst we wished to take action in all of the above areas, we did not want to jeopardise the long term future and stability of the project by promising too much. As with all things in life, we had to prioritise issues until we could afford to commit to the others.

New Primary School Project- 2005

Reflecting on the 2004 report, it became clear to us that the size of the school was inhibiting our ambitions. We therefore, gave first priority to funding a bigger building which could; a) take more children and b) educate them in an atmosphere more conducive to learning.

In early December 2004, we found a large empty unit in the centre of Jocotenango, a poor area adjoining Antigua. Although the unit costs were a lot higher than before, we committed to it. On 17th January 2005, Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza opened its doors for the first time to 150 children.



'Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza'

It is sad to say, and an indication of the task we faced, that we could have taken hundreds more children. Given the increase in numbers we also needed to take on two more teachers. We then had seven qualified teachers in total, one for each year.

In addition, we employed a school principal, a full time administrator, and a cook.

New Secondary School Project- 2007



'Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza - Nivel Basico, Opening Day'

By 2007, the Foundation had attracted a great deal of support. We had found many dedicated supporters and our sponsorship programme had given us enough guaranteed annual income to contemplate expansion.

We had been funding places in local secondary schools for students who had graduated from our primary school, but this wasn't as successful as we had hoped. With a background of extreme poverty, and with houses not conducive to studying, many of these students were underperforming.

When a local secondary school closed in 2006 and our entire primary sixth grade wanted to continue their education, we decided it was time to open our own secondary school (called 'Basico' in Guatemala).

January 22nd 2007 was a very proud day for the foundation as we opened the doors to our second school, Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza - Nivel Basico. The school had three years, each with 25 children plus 8 teachers and a cook. Jorge Castillo, who had been principal of our primary school since 2005, moved to the secondary school as director, and Patti, his deputy at the primary, stepped up to become principal of the Primary School.

We renovated the new building to make sure it was up to standard and as with the primary school we began teaching the full national curriculum.

School Provisions

Equipment



New desks were purchased for all children and teachers in 2005.

In past years text books were provided only for the teachers, and as a result the children had to copy. When we first gave every child text books, work books and pens, the excitement and pride in their eyes was a joy to see.

There were no computers for teachers or students until 2005. We contacted a non-profit making organisation called Computer Aid. We purchased 32 used computers, and started I.T. classes each week.

In 2007 these computers were on their last legs. Knowing how important IT skills are today, we decided to invest in new machines, pictured left.

We have been supplying books, desks (both standard and technical), music and PE equipment for our Primary and Secondary Schools since 2005.

Food

Many of the children receive little food at home.

We provide a nutritious vitamin enhanced mid morning snack and a two course lunch including meat, veg, and fruit.

For some this is the only food they will eat that day.



Addressing the Bigger Issue

Although we are primarily concerned with providing education, we also help our students and families in other ways. As the Foundation has progressed, so too has our understanding of the problems that our students have to face.

Over the past five years we have begun to address some of the following issues:

Medical Support

Health care and medicine is expensive in Guatemala and completely out of the reach of our children and their families.

In the spring of 2006, we achieved a huge breakthrough in gaining the support of a well established charitable foundation called 'Nuestros Ahijados' based in Antigua, Guatemala.

Not only did we have access to doctors for emergency cases, we also started the process of having all our children checked out by taking two a week for a free medical consultation. And on a weekly basis, we took several children for dental check ups.

Unfortunately in the summer of 2008 Nuestros Ahijados had a big restructure and we have at least temporarily lost their support. We are currently dealing with any medical cases on an ad hoc basis and using our general funds to cover any costs incurred. It is high on our agenda to find another partnership organisation, any suggestions or contacts would be greatly appreciated.

It is difficult for us to explain just how much this support means to the children. There are many heart warming stories, but two in particular will give you an idea of the effect.

Mildred Yanira Galindo had suffered from a painful and irritating eye infection for almost 9 months. The family had tried various cheap creams from the local pharmacy without success. We took Yanira to the clinic one Friday in July and by the Monday she was completely cured and has had no trouble since.

Fredy Estuardo and Claudia Lorena Serech Socorec had developed a nasty fungal skin rash on their faces. We took them to the clinic expecting to be given a simple cream to treat the rash. On examination, it was found that they both had a very serious and dangerous throat infection and the rash was the result of the vapour from their breath. Had the infection gone untreated, it could have been very serious.

Social Conditions & Psychological Support

In Guatemala, we operate in very challenging conditions. Our children come from some of the poorest families in Jocotenango and the surrounding area. We face serious social problems on a day to day basis. As we developed a deeper understanding in this area, we became very aware of the need to employ a specialist worker to co-ordinate our efforts. We now have Aracely Chajon who is a qualified psychologist working alongside our teachers.

In 2008 all of our children were seen and appraised in this initiative. We identified 27 children who urgently required a structured programme of help. These children are now seen by Aracely each week in sympathetic surroundings. As you would imagine, progress is slow and a lot of patience is required, but a start has been made and the children are beginning to work through and understand some of their issues.

We would like to share a couple of stories with you, to try to give you an understanding of how we are trying to help with the most serious cases;

We have a family of five children aged from 6 to 16. All of the children attend our schools. The children lived with their father and the family was very well known to us as we provided food for them on a daily basis. Along with Nuestros Ahijados and the neighbours of the family we had developed suspicions regarding abuse. The state social work department investigated and decided that both sexual and physical abuse was taking place, and that the children were to be taken from the father for their own safety. They decided that they should be separated and placed in a state orphanage- but we felt we could go one step further.

We managed to find a foster home for all five children. The foster family were fully checked and approved by Nuestros Ahijados. We approved a budget to build an extension to the foster family's existing house, and we continue to pay all of the ongoing monthly expenses associated with our five children.



'Before'



'After'

In a second case it is with great sadness that we report the death of Aurelia Higueros de León. Aurelia died after a long fight at the age of 46, from a serious lung condition brought on from the effects of smoke inhalation from the traditional stoves used by most of the poor families in Guatemala. Aurelia, who had no partner, left three children, Lesbia aged 18, Rosaura aged 17 and Erick aged 16, who are all educated by the foundation. With no family to look after them they were to be placed in separate state orphanages. By reputation, they are not pleasant places and certainly not conducive to education. Instead of this, the Foundation was able to take legal responsibility for the family. We initially housed them in two rooms with a kitchen and bathroom in a large house occupied by another one of our families. The house was safe and the foundation paid rent and utilities, and bought food on a weekly basis. This family have now moved into our safe house.

Safe House

As we got to know the children and their families better and got more involved with the social issues it became apparent that more of our children were suffering from abuse or severe neglect. We discussed these issues at great length with the teachers and psychologist and came to the conclusion that we needed to do something.

In June 2007 we purchased a plot of land in San Isidro (5 minutes from the primary school) for £5,300.

In October 2008 we opened our 'safe house'. The house has lovely big open rooms, is safe and secure and is run by a wonderful mum; Yessenia, whose son Cristian was diagnosed with cancer last year. We have 14 children living there and as you will see from the list below there is a wide variety of reasons as to why they need our help, everything from ill health to being deserted;



The 'Safe House'

Yanira, Enrique, Shirley & Cristian; the family were living in a corrugated iron hut with mud on the floor, as mentioned previously Cristian developed Leukaemia and urgently needed clean, warm conditions to stop him deteriorating further.

Alejandra; her mother was a prostitute and was murdered last year, she has no father.

Lesbia, Rosaura & Erick; their mother died recently and they have no father.

Nancy Carolina, Carlos, Bryan, Alejandro & Ana; their mother left them in December 2008 to try and make her fortune in Mexico, they haven't heard from her since and were on the verge of being thrown out of their house, the youngest Ana is only 6 years old.

Another young girl who we cannot mention by name due to a current court case has been taken away from her step father because of suspected sexual abuse.

Dangerous Living Conditions

Many of our children live in conditions which are beyond our comprehension. They live either on dangerous hillside areas susceptible to mudslide, or extremely unhygienic or unhealthy conditions. We have relocated all of the families displaced so far but sadly, we have been unable to do as much as we would have liked due to insufficient funds.



We have however managed to help a few families who were living in extreme poverty. This has been due to very generous personal donations;

Danny Murphy and Kevin McMenamin kindly donated enough money in order to rebuild Ana Luisas house. The family were living in awful conditions; with mud floors and barely enough corrugated iron to make one room. The 'house' didn't have a roof and

had absolutely no shelter from the elements. We built two rooms and a bathroom; the family now have safe and dry living conditions.

Shaun Wright-Phillips and David Howell kindly donated enough money in order to rebuild Daniel Chonoys home. Again his family were living in conditions beyond our comprehension; with mud floors and corrugated iron placed around them to try and protect them from the weather. The 'house' was built into the hillside and when it rained water would literally flow into their home. We built two rooms and re-routed the drainage away from the house, Daniels family now have somewhere safe and dry to live.

All the houses we build/re-build are made from concrete and are built to provide dry and safe living conditions for our families. We shall continue to attempt to raise funding for this, but we daren't risk the longevity of our educational programme.

The cost of moving a family and building a dry safe house is approximately £3,000.

We currently have fifteen urgent cases.

Stove Appeal

The World Health Organisation has stated that children exposed to open fires used for cooking in Guatemala will develop permanent lung damage by the age of five. We felt we couldn't stand by and watch this inevitability, so we began looking into supplying a safer alternative.

We started by installing two different models of stove so that we could evaluate the efficiency, and more importantly in such an underdeveloped country, their ease of use. Our progress in installing the stoves was a lot slower than first anticipated. This was due to the preferences and differing cooking methods of our families. Originally we believed that the ONIL stove (www.onilstove.com) would be perfect for every family, but our experience showed that it was too small for some of our bigger families. A suitable alternative was found which we were able to adapt for the families individual needs. We also arranged instructional workshops to prepare our families for their stoves and to ensure that they would be used to their full potential.

In 2008 we managed to raise sufficient sponsors to buy and install these stoves in each of our children's homes. These children are no longer exposed to this terrible risk and we are grateful to all of our sponsors.

With our 2009 intake we will undoubtedly encounter more families who cook with open fires. Our stove appeal will continue as we try to protect each new child that joins the Foundation. The cost of a safe stove is £90.



Before



After

Water Filter Appeal

Our children were frequently becoming sick and it soon became apparent to us that this was due to the water. None of our families had access to a safe water supply so we decided this had to change.

The cost of supplying a water filter which will give safe clean water to a whole family is just £20. This amount will also cover the replacement filter needed after 18 months.

We plan to buy a water filter for every family in the Foundation (currently 226 families). So far we have raised enough money to buy 95. If you can help with our water filter campaign please do not hesitate to get in touch.



'Thelma & her family now have safe clean water'

Shaun Wright-Phillips: Charity Ambassador

We are incredibly lucky to have the Manchester City and England Footballer, Shaun Wright-Phillips, as an ambassador to our Foundation.

He first got involved in June 2007, when he visited Guatemala with Chelsea TV who made a 30 minute programme to highlight the huge social problems that exist in the country.

In 2008 Shaun went out to visit the project for a second time and again got involved in every way, along with the avid support of his family and friends. As you can imagine- the kids love him!



Shaun has visited the homes of some of our poorest children and was visibly shocked and moved at the poverty he witnessed. He assisted the ONIL workers in installing safer stoves, he helped in building works to secure one of the worst houses, and he has helped to give out water filters. In June last year, Shaun and his family also climbed a volcano with a group of secondary students - a real treat for the children involved. He is currently planning his third trip which will hopefully be in June of this year.

Shaun has become a dedicated supporter, ambassador and fundraiser for the charity and we can't thank him enough for all his work.

Where We Are Today

Further Education

Our secondary school graduates are now offered scholarships to go to local colleges where they can take both vocational and academic courses. We currently have 43 students studying in various colleges.

We have students studying to be Bilingual Secretaries, Teachers, and Electricians. There are also students working towards certificates in Technical Drawing, Tourism and Accountancy.

We also have 4 students who have started University.

Adult Classes

The majority of the parents of our children do not read and write. Many are also young, and unprepared for parenting. We have started a regular weekly class for parents where we try to address both of these issues. The classes are well attended, and although progress is slow, it helps the relationships between the parents and children, and reinforces the family's decision to enrol their children in education.

UK Scholarships 2008

We attempted a new initiative in 2008. We rewarded our two best senior graduating students with a 'gap year' opportunity to study and work in England. Luis and Carlos were in Nottingham from February 2008 until October 2008. They lived with a host family, studied English at college in the mornings, and helped out in the Foundation in the afternoons.

Since being back in Guatemala, Carlos has found employment due to his English language skills and Luis has just started at University.

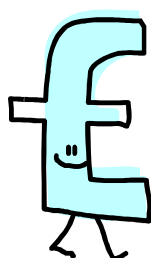
Schools & Current Fundraising

By the beginning of 2008 we felt confident enough to offer places to a further 100 primary children, however, this meant re-locating our primary school. We found the perfect location close by our existing schools, in a town called San Felipe, which had the potential to hold an extra primary school as well as a secondary school. We secured a years contract to rent the building with an option to buy at the end of 2008.

Obviously our big project for 2008 was then to buy the new school. We managed to raise the asking price of £150,000 by the end of 2008 but unfortunately due to the exchange rate falling dramatically we were not successful in purchasing this beautiful school.

The asking price of the school in effect became much more expensive as the year went on; In March 2008 we were getting Q16 (Guatemalan Quetzales) for every £1 but by December we were only getting Q11 for each £1.

March 2008



= Q16 (Guatemala Quetzales)

December 2008



= Q11 (Guatemala Quetzales)

This 30% fall made the asking price unachievable; we needed to find an extra £69,000 just to make up the difference. Sadly this just wasn't possible.

We have signed a contract which will allow us to rent the San Felipe building until the end of 2009. This will give us enough time to find an alternative building from which to run our school.

At this stage we have several options:

(a) Build a New School;

With the funds we have, we think we will be able to find land to build on and have the school ready for use in 2010. We haven't found the ideal plot of land as yet but there appear to be several available plots in the area.

(b) Find an alternative building;

Nothing has come up in all our searches so far but there is still time.

(c) Negotiate a better deal for existing school

It is possible the owner may reduce the asking price if he doesn't find a buyer, however we will continue to look at other options.

We would still like to say a huge thank you to all of the trusts and individuals who donated to this campaign; and although we weren't successful, your money will still be used to secure a Primary School building for our 279 Primary Children.

Both our schools are continuing to operate normally with high attendance and encouraging results. We currently have 427 children within the foundation and the schools are broken down as follows;

School	No of Students
Primary	279
Secondary	101
Further Education	43
University	4
Total	427

Sponsorship Programme

Our dedicated sponsorship programme is the bedrock of our funding and without it we could not contemplate expansion. We have 427 children in our educational programme and 270 of them have dedicated sponsors. This leaves us with **157** children without sponsors. If you can help us to attract more much needed support, then please let us know.

Summary

As you can see from this report, there is a lot to do and a lot more we would like to do. We are ever aware of the huge need and the continued inequality in our world and we realise that for every child we help in Guatemala, there are another 100 we don't.

We actively encourage as many people as possible to visit the project in Guatemala.

It seems appropriate at this stage to thank each and every one of you for all the help and support we receive. This is your foundation, and however hard we work, we cannot do anything without your kind support and generosity.

For those of you, who generously sponsor children; please try to write now and again. We can't emphasise how special the children feel when they receive a letter, card or small gift from their "padrino" or "madrina".

We hope you have found this report informative, however for further information; please either look at our website www.eftc.org.uk or contact one of the people below.

On behalf of the beautiful and deserving children of Guatemala, thank you for taking the time to read this report.

“ONLY THROUGH EDUCATION CAN WE BREAK THE POVERTY CYCLE”

David McKee (Chairman & Trustee)
Kevin McMenamain (Trustee)
Amy Holly (Charity Co-ordinator in UK)
Emma Denman (Charity Co-ordinator in UK)
Krisztina Hidasi (Charity Administrator in UK)
Tommy Johnson
Emily Chennery
Boo Somers

You can contact all of the above people on
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