



Family and Communities in Guatemala Participate to Achieve Educational Quality

Antonio Arreaga

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Abstract

After a 36-year armed conflict, Guatemala finally signed the Peace Accords in December 1996. Because of these agreements, it is the Educational Reform Design (1998) that promotes different axes and areas of transformation, which include, among other topics, the country achieving educational quality with equity. To achieve this, for example, pedagogical aspects, educational policies, financial topics, and community and family involvement in the education of their children were proposed. Drawing on Educational Reform Design, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, USAID/Guatemala begins to develop projects to

A. Arreaga (✉)
Juarez & Associates, Inc., Guatemala City, Guatemala
e-mail: aarreaga@juarezassociates.com

improve bilingual education and the processes of assessment of the education system, as well as to have expected learning goals to achieve a better education. But it is up to USAID/Education Reform in the Classroom Project (2009–2014), implemented by the firm Juarez & Associates, Inc., to take up the challenge of involving in the educational quality, with an emphasis on reading to municipalities, communities, and families, many of them Mayas, in conditions of poverty, with low rates of scholarship. This approach was called “early reading socialization mechanism,” which used communication for development to design and implement strategies that reach their objectives at different local levels. In 2009, engaging these local actors, under these social and economic contexts in quality education focused on reading, was a little known and explored in Guatemala.

Keywords

Family involving in educational quality · Communication for development focused on education · Communication for development in Guatemala · Friendly municipalities for reading · Early reading socialization mechanism

Introduction

In Guatemala, for the first decade of the twenty-first century, statistics showed an increase in educational coverage for primary school. In the year 2000, 8 out of 10 children, between 7 and 12 years old, were enrolled in school. And for 2006, 9 of every 10 children of the indicated age were enrolled (PREAL and CIEN 2008). These data were a milestone for a country that in the twentieth century still had very low enrollment coverage for primary school, compared to others in the Latin American region.

Although the coverage was not total, this evidence of school attendance, suggested to authorities and technical staff from the Ministry of Education, tanks of thought and academics related to education, that the great majority of the educational community, especially fathers and mothers, were already convinced that it was important to send their children to school. What was the next step? Communicate and raise awareness that in addition to attending a school center, it was vital to learn, starting with reading and mathematics.

But this step of raising awareness of understanding that more than sending their children to school, they had to learn well gained more relevance knowing the results of the tests of learning in reading and mathematics of the students. In 2005, evaluations for sixth grade students nationwide indicated that in reading only 43% of students achieved a satisfactory level and an excellent 5%. Therefore, a little more than half (52%) of the students evaluated in the country in this last grade of primary school were at levels of “must improve” or “unsatisfactory.” In mathematics, the results were very similar. Only 49% achieved a satisfactory level and 6% reached the excellent level (PREAL and CIEN 2008).

The years of these assessments (2005 and 2006) began to link with more intensity in the education system, obtaining better learning by students and having teachers

better prepared for teaching reading and mathematics, with the term of achieving educational quality.

However, the goal of achieving quality in education was already clearly presented in the document “Design of Educational Reform,” published in 1998 by a specialized education commission. This document is the result of the Peace Accords signed in December 1996, which put an end to Guatemala’s internal armed conflict that lasted for 36 years in the country.

In the “Design of Educational Reform,” the educational quality is linked from the beginning of the document with one of the great means to achieve a change in education (Diseño de Reforma Educativa 1998, p. 15). And as the document progresses educational quality is linked with key issues as equity, bilingual education, educational policies, structures and organization of the Ministry of Education, as well as having committees of parents and mothers of family, teachers and students, among other topics (Diseño de Reforma Educativa 1998, p. 89).

It is not surprising that educational quality is linked to an active participation of parents. There are studies that report on the involvement in the education of the parents of the students and the levels that this entails (Stevens and King 2004). These authors reported that after the first level of parental involvement, which is minimal, the second stage or level consists of parents arriving to learn about the program to get involved. And they finish this second level with an important milestone: they can act as teachers of their children at home or outside of the regular educational environment.

By the end of 2009, involving parents in Guatemala in the learning of their children, especially in reading, as well as communicating and having them aware about what is educational quality and its importance was an underdeveloped topic. Especially with rural parents, with low schooling or illiterate; and many of them, of Mayan origins and their mother tongue was related to Mayan roots.

On the other hand, communication approaches for the development of education issues with this audiences or target groups were not common in Guatemala either. There existed in the country previous experiences with approaches of social marketing, communication for development, and change of behavior in the health area, supported by international cooperative sources and/or civil society organizations.

In October of 2009, USAID/Guatemala constituted the Education Reform in the Classroom Project (2009–2014). The project aimed to improve access to basic education (including quality, equity, and efficiency) by focusing on increasing teacher effectiveness, improving classroom learning environments, fostering effective first and second (Mayan language [mother tongue] and Spanish) language acquisition and reading, extending access to underserved populations including girls and indigenous groups, and expanding parents’, communities’, and stakeholders’ participation in student learning.

From the design of this project, it was thought that a communication for development approach was necessary to guarantee the successful involvement of parents and stakeholders in student learning, focused in quality education and reading.

In this sense, the project scope of work included the design and implementation of a communication for development strategy, which will include an awareness

campaign on quality education in the classroom. The communication strategy for development and the awareness campaign were key tools at the service of the early reading socialization mechanism, focused on parents, promoting reading in rural municipalities.

To carry out the design task for the communication for development strategy and the awareness campaign on quality education, the USAID project formed a communication team, consisting on international and local consultants, technical communication staff from the Ministry of Education, and permanent communication staff from Education Reform in the Classroom Project.

Planning and Implementing a Communication for Development Strategy to Achieve Quality Education

The project communication team followed a theoretical and implementation framework proposed by Ph.D. Jan Servaes, who led the leadership as an international consultant specializing in the design of communication for development strategy. Next, a figure that shows this process (Fig. 1).

Using this work route, built under a communication approach for development, where the key actors of the community take part in the proposal of their problems, a diagnostic was designed that would serve as a basis for the strategy.

In this sense, the communication team of USAID/Education Reform in the Classroom held a participatory assessment process, in which, through interviews and focus groups, representatives of the educational community (students, teachers, principals), local municipal authorities, community leaders, businessmen, and media communication provided their views on the situation of education in their geographical area, specifically in three topics of interest for the project: quality of education, interest in reading, and communications media (Alvarado et al. 2010a). These geographic areas were the municipalities where the project was going to have an impact on education issues: Joyabaj, Quiché; San Pedro Pinula, Jalapa; and Jocotán, Chiquimula. The diagnostic process in those municipalities included the urban center and selected rural areas of each.

Identifying the Problems

After conducting the fieldwork with the participatory diagnostic, the communication team analyzed the findings regarding common problems in the three municipalities.

The Table 1 shows these problems, prioritized under the following three aspects:

- The project could solve the problem.
- The project had an impact, but it did not solve the problem.
- It was beyond the scope of the project.

Likewise, this table identifies the actors/audiences subject to change and those that must be advocated for the problems that the project is supposed to solve (red

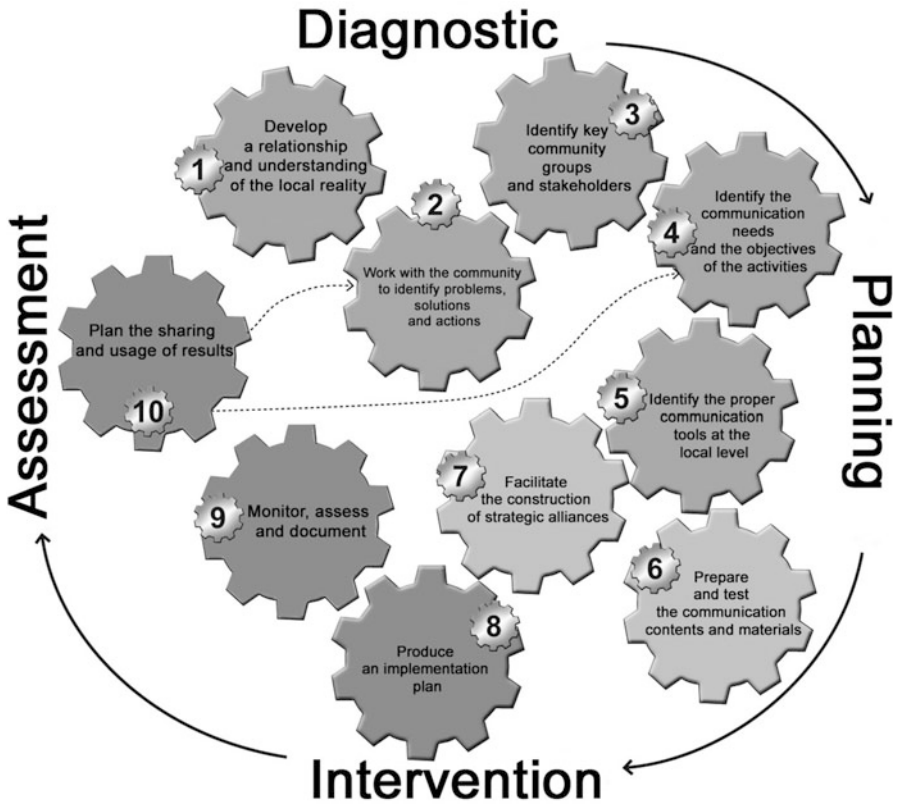


Fig. 1 The proposed phases in the design of the communication strategy. (Servaes 2011)

color); defines the term for generating changes: short (1 year), medium (2 years), and long (4 years); and finally links the problem with the space where it develops, S (School), F (Family), and C (Community).

Objectives and Communication Approaches


Having the prioritized problems identified in the participatory assessment and splicing the results in the USAID/Guatemala work order required for the USAID/ Education Reform in the Classroom, the communication team defined the following main objectives:

- Promote the involvement of parents, communities, and leaders in student learning.
- Promote the creation of a literate environment in the communities and socialize activities that promote reading as a fundamental instrument of learning.
- Raise awareness in different audiences about the meaning of quality education and the importance of putting it into practice in the classroom and beyond.


Table 1 Problem prioritization, audiences and terms table. (Alvarado et al. 2010a)

Audiences	Term	Prio- rity	Problems
Family, teachers and students		1 F 1 S	Language barrier for K'iche' and C'horiti' Mayan languages
Teachers and students	Short	1 S	Strong difference between urban and rural (student population)
Teachers and students		1 S	Lack of teaching materials
Teachers		1 S	Teacher opposition to quality education campaigns
Family		1 F	Lack of reading material at home, especially in rural areas
Community		1 C	Little participation of the community in education matters
Family, teachers and students		1 S	Little participation of the parents in the education of their children
Teachers and MINEDUC authorities		1 S	Lack of technical training
Teachers and MINEDUC authorities	Medium	1 S	Lack of communication between the teachers and MINEDUC authorities (performance of their students in tests)
MINEDUC Education Council		1 S	Absence of school libraries and where these exist, little use.
MINEDUC, teachers, students		1 S	Poor understanding of the contents
Donors, national authorities, local community		1 C	Community leaders and parents think that bilingual education is not practical (Joyabaj, Quiché)
Family, teachers and students	Large	1 F	Poor reading habits
Family, teachers and students		1 F	Education aspirations are very basic (learn reading and writing and numbers)
		2 S	Frustration by the teachers
		2 F	Illiteracy of the parents
		2 F	Lack of values (due to ignorance)
		2 F	The education of the children is the sole responsibility of the teachers
		3 C	Lack of support to build an infrastructure for education
		3 C	Change in local authorities every 4 years which results in lack of continuity
		3 C	Education is not a priority for the Municipal authorities
		3 S	Lack of infrastructure (Classrooms)
		3 S	Overcrowded classrooms (number of students, multiple grades)
		3 S	Outdated education statistics which result in discordant resource allocations
		3 F	Scarce economic resources

Short Term: 1 year. Medium Term: 2 years. Large Term: 4 años (*) Communication media are crosscutting target audiences to assist in social problems. A plan to impact national and local media is an appropriate way to reach and involve this audience.

 We can solve the problem

 We can have an impact, not solve

 Out of our reach

To reach this three main objectives, the following approaches for communication development were proposed:

- Approaches that attempt to *change attitudes* (through information dissemination, public relations)
- *Behavior change approaches* (focusing on changes in individual behavior, interpersonal behavior, and/or behavior of the community and society)
- *Advocacy approaches* (primarily aimed at politicians and decision-making powers at all levels and in all sectors of society)
- *Communication approaches for structural and sustainable social change* (which can be related to the way of the planning design: top-down, horizontal, or bottom-up)

Change attitudes and raise awareness are linked mainly with mass media communication (community media, national media, and TICs). Behavior change is more connected with interpersonal communication. Advocacy approaches are connected with interpersonal communication and mass media communication. Communication approaches for sustainable structural change is a mix of all of them and call for Communication for Structural and Sustainable Social Change (CSSC). Also in this type of communications are the participatory communications, constituted by interpersonal communication and community media (Servaes 2011).

A Communication for Development Strategy for Quality Education

With all the pieces on the table, the team designed a matrix strategy that included the following elements:

- **Specific objectives**, according to the problems presented in the diagnoses, where communication for development can support sustainable social changes. The Table 2 shows only the objectives related with those problems that USAID/ Education Reform in the Classroom could support to solve (Table 1).
- **Levels coverage**: Local, regional, national, and international.
- **Audiences**: School (students, parents, principals, school board/education council), family (fathers, mothers, students), and community (municipal and education local authorities, among others).
- **Change sought**: Changing attitudes (information, public relations), behavior change (persuasion), commitment to social policy (incidence), and providing individuals and groups knowledge, values, and skills that lead to actions effective for change (empower) (Table 2).

Table 2 Communication strategy for the sustainable development of quality education. (Alvarado et al. 2010a)

Objectives	Levels	Target Audience	Type of "change"	Term	Media
Harmonize the different concepts of quality education	National	All	Information	Short	Mass communication means, community dialogues (local/national), forums, press (editorial content), lobbying
Reduction of the language gap within the education community (Joyabaj and Jocotán)	Local	Family, teachers, students, MDC	Information and Persuasion	Short	Local radio, community meetings, religious actors, alternative means
Facilitate access to reading materials for the education community	Local	Family, teachers, students	Incidence	Short	Interpersonal communication
Change the image of quality education	Local	Teachers	Information and Persuasion	Short	Local radio, community meetings, religious actors and community leaders (auxiliary majors and COCODES)
Facilitate the participation in the education topic	Local	Community	Empowerment	Medium	Local radio, community meetings, religious actors and community leaders (auxiliary majors and COCODES), mobile phones, alternative means
Create spaces to improve the communication between the MINEDUC	Local	Teachers and MINEDUC authorities	Information and Empowerment	Medium	MINEDUC web page, cascading communication, workshops, interpersonal

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

authorities and the teachers in urban and rural schools					contact between supervisors and teachers
Establish mechanisms to promote the use of libraries at urban and rural schools in Joyabaj	Local	Local	Incidence	Medium	Interpersonal communication
Advocacy on parents and local leaders about the importance of bilingual education	National and Local	International cooperation, national authorities, community	Persuasion Incidence	Long	Dialogue and forums, interpersonal contact
Awake interest and build reading habits	Local	Family, teachers, students	Persuasion Empowerment	Long	Local radio, community meetings, religious actors, alternative means (storytelling, libraries, reading contests, spelling bees), TV (spill over of the national campaign,) local cable TV
Achieve better understanding of the benefits of education to have a better quality of life	Local	Family, teachers, students	Persuasion Empowerment	Long	Local radio, community meetings, religious actors, alternative means TV (spill over of the national campaign,) local cable TV
Facilitate the participation of the education community in the education topic	Local	Family, teachers, students	Persuasion Empowerment	Long	Local radio, community meetings, religious actors and community leaders (auxiliary majors and COCODES)

Awareness Campaign on Quality Education in the Classroom

The communication team design this campaign as a key tactic tool from the communication strategy for development which main objective was to raise awareness on the importance of taking advantage of education as a vehicle for personal, family, and community improvement. It also positioned to the audiences about key conditions to have educational quality in communities. Under the type of change approach in communication, the awareness campaign was the tactic that provided information and persuasion to the defined audiences.

In order of priority, the audience for the campaign were the following: (1) family, (2) community, and (3) school. The main insights of the campaign were as follows: (1) I like to learn. (2) If my children learn, they will have a better future. (3) I have a better attitude toward life when I learn. The discourse included in the pieces and communication tools of the campaign sought to leave this concept in the audience: "Achievement success in my personal, family and community life because I get support to receive education, learn more and be a better person" (Steele 2011).

The main tools of the campaign were:

1. Three different radio spots versions of 60 and 30 s produced in Spanish and Mayan Language K'iche'. The spots addressed different topics about actions to obtain better learning in reading and how to support the educational quality in the family and the community. The spots used dialogues between characters who represented community members (grocer, teacher, municipal councillor), who spoke in colloquial language about the necessary conditions to achieve students better learning in reading and quality of education at municipal levels. The campaign included a media plan with popular local radios (municipal and departmental levels), broadcasting eight radio spots (60 s) per day the first month. The next 3 months, broadcasting 10 radio spots (30 s) per day. The work with the radio included, also only the first broadcasting month, live mentions about the importance of reading and quality education by the announcers (four locutions per day of around 10 s). This media plan with municipal and departmental radios was used in 2011 for municipalities from Quiché, Jalapa, and Chiquimula.
2. Alternative public communication media with mobile publicity. This consisted of a vehicle (car or motorcycle) that carried a banner with images and text of the campaign and broadcasting live the radio spots on speakers. This media actions were used in 2011 (for municipalities of Quiché, Jalapa, and Chiquimula) and 2012 for municipalities from Totonicapán and San Marcos.
3. Large format poster with nine key protocols about the conditions to have quality education at classroom. These nine conditions were developed previously by technical staff from USAID/Education Reform in the Classroom, as well as the design of the poster. But they are included in the campaign because their contents were a conceptual basis for the development of communication tools within the campaign.

Early Reading Socialization Mechanism

According to the objectives set, designing and implementing this mechanism led to include in its tactics and tools all communication approaches for change included on the communication strategy for the sustainable development: of quality education, information, persuasion, incidence, and empowerment.

The communication objectives proposed for the mechanism were:

1. Raise awareness among parents/families whose daughters and sons are enrolled in first, second, and third graders on the importance of being involved in education.
2. Persuade parents/families on the importance of reading.
3. Empower families to recognize the reading skills their children should acquire according to grade level.

To achieve these objectives, the following communication approaches for change were proposed:

1. **Political incidence** generating commitment for policy support and increased public interest in social issues
2. The **social support** that develops alliances and social support systems that legitimize and encourage development-related activities such as social norms
3. The **empowerment** that gives individuals and groups knowledge, values, and skills that promote effective action for change

The following table presents the specific problems that the socialization mechanism would try to solve, including objectives and the communication approaches for change (Table 3):

As indicated above, this mechanism covered all approaches to change, so it was designed to use Communication for Structural and Sustainable Social Change, which integrates interpersonal communication, participatory communication, and mass media communication.

Early Reading Socialization Mechanism Fields of Action

The implementation of the early reading socialization mechanism had three major fields of action:

1. **Text provision.** USAID/Education Reform in the Classroom project made alliances with other USAID projects, private businesses, and education NGOs to provide teaching materials and reading texts to schools where the mechanism would be implemented, located in the departments of Quiché, Chiquimula, Jalapa, Totonicapán, and San Marcos.

Table 3 Early Reading Socialization Mechanism problems. (Alvarado et al. 2010b)

Communication Media at Editorial Level (1)	Audiences	Term	Problems	Objectives	Strategies (2)
	Teachers and students	Short	Lack of teaching materials in the school	Provide teaching materials and reading books	Text provision
	Family		Lack of reading material at home, especially in rural areas		
	Family, teachers and students	Medium	Little participation of the parents in the education of their children	Raise awareness among parents, mothers and community about the importance of getting involved in education Empower families to recognize reading skills	Political incidence (awareness and commitment) Social support and empowerment
	Community		Little participation of the community in education matters		
	MINEDUC. teachers, students				
	Family, teachers, students	Large	Poor reading habits	Encourage the habit of reading	Political incidence (awareness and commitment)
	Family, teachers, students		Education aspirations are very basic (learn reading and writing and numbers)	Achieve that the educational community recognizes the benefits of education to have a better quality of life	Political incidence (awareness and commitment) Social support and empowerment

Short Term: 1 year. **Medium Term:** 2 years. **Large Term:** 4 años (1) Communication media are crosscutting target audiences to assist in social problems. A plan to impact national and local media is an appropriate way to reach and involve this audience. (2) **Author's note:** The original source used the term "strategies". In this document, communication approaches for change have been used. For the topic of "text provision" the term "Action" may fit better.

The provision of textbooks and school libraries by the Ministry of Education through its “National Reading Program” was very important in this topic.

2. **Awareness and commitment.** Through local mass media (especially radio) and alternative media. The tactic of the awareness campaign on quality education was the main arm to fulfill that action, whose general aspects were described above. On the other hand, forums were held on radio and TV where local educational actors talked about the importance of reading, the quality of education, and the conditions to achieve it in their municipalities/communities. In addition to having the audiences aware about the quality of education, this action allowed these actors to appropriate a discourse on the importance of educational quality and initiate a process of social support and commitment in their communities (Arreaga 2014).

It is important to mention that the radio spots of the campaign were used as information and awareness tools in the tactics radio and TV forums and “parent schools” tactic (more information next).

3. **Social support and empowerment.** In this field of action, several tactics and communication actions were designed and implemented.
 - (a) **Community dialogues.** Were implemented in the urban municipal centers around the topics reading, educational quality, and the conditions to achieve educational quality, also known as learning opportunities. As well as in the radio and TV forums, people from Guatemala City did not attend the dialogues to lead the dialogues. Local leaders on education issues, teachers and event parents were the leading panelist at the community dialogues. This again generated social support and allowed local actors to participate in actions to improve and change education in their communities and municipalities.
 - (b) **Reading Fairs.** These had their scope of action schools and involved local educational and municipal authorities, principals, teachers, volunteers, parents, and students. The main objective of the fairs was to involve them in the development of didactic tools for the local learning communities for the best learning of reading and to raise awareness of the importance of the practice of reading in school and in family settings. The implementation of this tactic of promotion to reading (2011–2012) counted the participation of 694 adults from the zones of the intervention. Among them were volunteers, school directors, teachers, and educational and municipal authorities. If we add the participating children, almost 2000 people participated.
 - (c) **“Parent schools.”** Were designed and executed to provide parents with skills in recognizing their children’s reading skills and to facilitate reading-learning activities at home. The main challenge of implementing such a tactic was that most of the fathers and mothers were of low schooling and/or illiterate and those from the Western Highlands, especially mothers, did not speak Spanish, only the Mayan K’iche’ language. In this sense, it was necessary to create, through experts in adult education at rural level with experience in the indicated social and cultural contexts, work guides of around 2 h, which would be implemented through face-to-face sessions,

the days and time that the parents agreed in each group. The project implemented this empowerment tactic in 20 schools, with an average of 35 participants per session, through volunteer facilitators in its first phase (2011) and, in the second (2012), through facilitators hired by a project grant with a nongovernmental organization with presence in the highlands of Guatemala. In most of the cases, the facilitators were bilingual (Mayan areas), and where it was not possible, they were supported by a local leader. In the first phase (6 sessions), the focus was reading and in the second (8 sessions) on expected student learning. Of the 20 schools where it was implemented, only 2 participated in the two phases.

For the social support and empowerment field of action, it was necessary to contract, under a grant scheme, organizations with rural and community experience that had more permanence in the work areas. It is key to indicate that the USAID project did not have a full-time regional or local team to implement its tactics and actions.

Assessments, Perceptions of Change, and Results of the Communication Intervention

The awareness campaign of quality education and the reading socialization mechanism in its tactic of “parent schools” contemplated in their design assessment actions regarding perceptions of change and penetration. For the “parent schools,” questionnaires were made that explored, at the end of the intervention, the perceptions of change and comments of the fathers and mothers, as well as the teachers of the schools where it was implemented. On the awareness campaign, penetration surveys were designed, included in the post-baseline field studies carried out by USAID/USAID/Education Reform in the Classroom with the educational communities in the geographical areas where the project was implemented. At the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014, close to the end of the USAID project (March 2014), focus groups with local actors (parents, teachers, school directors, and educational authorities) were designed and implemented to learn about their perceptions of communication actions carried out in 2011 and 2012. Likewise, as part of this final monitoring process, interviews were held with representatives of the organizations that implemented these communication actions locally (Arreaga 2014).

Results

Awareness campaign monitoring (2011). A couple of months after the campaign was broadcast in its first phase in Quiché and Jalapa (September 2011), USAID/Education Reform in the Classroom conducted a penetration survey in the municipalities where it was broadcast/disseminated. This survey was conducted with fathers and mothers or managers of students who were in their homes in the areas of opportunity. The sample was taken to a total of 788 people, where 61.8% were

women and 38.2% were men. To the question: “Do you listen to radio?” in Quiché, 62% said yes, and 38% did not. In Jalapa, to the same question, 93.6% said they did listen to the radio, and 6.4% did not.

The people who indicated that they did listen to the radio were asked if they remembered any announcement of education through this medium. In Quiché, 13.4% said that they remembered an announcement about education; and 86.6% commented that they did not remember. On the other hand, in the people of Jalapa, 69.6% answered that they did remember announcements about education, and 30.4% indicated that they did not remember.

The education messages that were indicated more than once, as remembered by the people who were surveyed, are:

- *Send children to school*
- *Education is free*
- *Education is a right*
- *Do not mistreat children*
- *On the health and hygiene of children*
- *There will be no classes for political elections*
- ***Education begins at home and is also the responsibility of parents***
- ***Children must be well educated***
- ***Help children with their homework***
- ***Education gives a better life***
- ***Send children to school so they can learn***
- *Educate is to live*
- ***Reading support from home***
- ***Teacher training***
- *That there is no educational quality*
- *How to educate children*
- *Educate everyone*
- *Send children to school every day*
- ***Education is important for life***
- *Educate without discrimination*
- *Educate with love (Arreaga 2014)*

The remembered subjects of education that have bold (8) are those that were included as contents in the awareness campaign.

Awareness campaign monitoring (2012). Next, the results of the penetration of the campaign by alternative means in 2012 are presented, according to the survey conducted in September 2012, to school directors and teachers of Totonicapán and Quiché (For this department, the campaign was disseminated with these alternative media in 2011).

The survey asked the following two questions to the two target groups:

1. *Have you heard through an automobile, motorcycle with speakers, or speakers an important announcement for the community?*
2. *What do you remember about those ads?*

3. *Have you heard another way or means of communication to talk about education in the municipality?*
4. *What do you remember about those ads?*

School Directors

Of a total of 52 directors questioned with question No. 1, 80.8% answered that they had not heard any message by said means of communication, and 19% said they had heard. Of those who affirmed that they had heard messages in alternate media, they remembered about “promotion of the use of libraries,” one of the education issues of the project campaign.

About having heard by other media about education, 42.6% said they had heard. These directors said that they had heard these messages on radio, then through educational dialogues, and finally through other media. The main contents heard by the directors on education through these channels were “educational quality,” “libraries,” “reading, and teacher training.” All these contents were part of the project’s campaign.

Teachers

Of a total of 130 teachers questioned with question No. 1, 72.3% answered that they had not heard any message by these means of communication, and 27.7% said they had heard. Of those who affirmed that they had heard messages in alternative media, they remembered about “reading,” “writing,” libraries,” and “intercultural bilingual education,” the first three being education issues of the project campaign.

About having heard by other media about education topics, 46.5% said that they had listened. These teachers stated that they had heard these messages on radio (72%), then educative community dialogues (23%), and other means (5%). The main contents heard by teachers about education through these channels were:

- *Educational quality.*
- *That education is quality and effective for children.*
- *That parents are also responsible for the education of children. Adequate time for reading.*
- *Have a habit of reading.*
- *The importance of reading for personal development.*
- *Orientations to parents on education.*
- *Promotion of reading.*
- *Education is important so that a community can improve every day.*

About awareness campaign monitoring in focus group (End of 2013–beginning of 2014). In this period, the USAID project carried out five focus groups (around 9 persons per group) with different representatives of the educational

community of the project's intervention areas. In four of the focus groups, one person per group listened to the campaign by radio or mobile publicity.

Brief Analysis About the Awareness Campaign Monitoring

The first point that draws attention is the use of radio by audiences in the departments where the project intervened: Quiché (62%) versus Jalapa (96%). And in those who do listen radio, the difference is very high between those departments about the top of mind on the education topic: Quiché (13.6%) and Jalapa (69.6%).

Of 21 education topics remembered, 8 topics (38%) were contents of the campaign. Linked to the previous paragraph is very high probability that this impact and penetration occurred more in Jalapa than in Quiché.

The data recorded in the 2012 monitoring show that mobile publicity did not have a high penetration for school directors (19% heard it) and teachers (27.7% heard it). However, what makes it interesting is that for both audiences, school directors and teachers, almost half said they had heard educational messages in other media: radio, dialogues, and others. The point is that for 2012 there was no awareness campaign by radio in Totonicapán or in Quiché. The radial spots were broadcast only by closed circuit in a station in a market of the municipality of Momostenango, Totonicapán, and in the radio forums described before (early reading socialization mechanism, field of action awareness and commitment). They were also disseminated in the community dialogues, where 23% of teachers said they heard about education topics. But there is not enough evidence, according to the sources consulted for this report, to determine with certainty if these groups received the information through the market closed circuit (Momostenango), through the radio forums, or maybe through other radio campaigns not implemented by the USAID project.

“Parents schools” monitoring. For this tactic of the early reading socialization mechanism, field of action social support and empowerment questionnaires were made that explored, at the end of the intervention, the perceptions of change and comments of the parents, as well as the teachers of the schools where it was implemented. Also, exploratory questions were asked about the impact of this tactic, in the focus groups carried out by the project (2013–2014).

We present below the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding changes and impact of the intervention (Arreaga 2014):

Parents perceptions:

1. *“It was to wake up the mind. It is no longer as before when nobody supported us.”*
2. *“I have changed my way of thinking about the responsibilities of having a child in school and that he learns well.”*
3. *“My son has improved his grades this bimester.”*
4. *“It helped us a lot in letting us know what we as parents have to do to help our children learn.”*

5. *"I didn't know the library of Joyabaj; now, I take my daughter [there], who likes to go."*
6. *"In addition of reading more, I got closer to my daughter."*
7. *"We have to help our children, even if we don't know how to read and write."*
8. *"We learned how to spend time with our children reading stories."*
9. *"We read signs of shops and stores with our children."*
10. *"Now he does his homework and he doesn't bring any reds [to fail an exam or class]."*
11. *"Even though we don't know how to read and write, the program gives us great ideas to accompany our children."*
12. *"My son used to fail classes, but this year he passed them all. The teacher says he is improving."*
13. *"We dare to help the children, mainly in reading."*

Teacher perceptions:

1. *"Students are more interested in attending school."*
2. *"[A] significant change in the relationship between teachers and parents."*
3. *"I had a student who had problems to read and write. I believe the school for parents has helped him to read more."*
4. *"75% of the children have improved their school performance."*
5. *"Boys and girls are now less shy."*

Community dialogues and reading fairs monitoring. At the focus groups, the participants said about the reading fairs that it was very motivating for the boys and girls, awakening interest in them by reading. Likewise, the role of community dialogues was recognized as a space for group reflection to search for strategies at the local level that support educational quality. As indicated above, community dialogues were also a good channel for teachers and principals to listen to the spots designed to be broadcast on radio.

Conclusion

From several angles implementing this communication strategy for development, seeking the involvement of parents to achieve quality education focusing on reading was a model to follow and to take account for different actors who finance, design, and implement education projects. Such is the case of the Ministry of Education, projects of international cooperation agencies, civil society organizations, and even academic and university sectors. Below are concepts that indicate these angles that can serve as a guide to know to this previous experience in education and communication for development in Guatemala and highlight to what was learned from this work in communication.

- According to the perceptions showed previously, implementing an early reading socialization mechanism where parents participated in a tactic like a "parent

schools” demonstrated that it is possible to work in Guatemala with parents with little education or illiterate and many of them speaking Mayan languages.

- This was possible using communication approaches that sought to inform, raise awareness, and empower parents. To achieve these approaches, it was necessary to merge disciplines such as communication and adult education, contextualized to the reality of the participants (language, cultural values, replicability of actions at home according to their educational profile, etc.)
- Implementing communication actions for development with a focus on sustainability implies having the support of local, municipal, or departmental partners. They can be volunteers, hired by a grant, or be part of the permanent staff of a project.
- Facilitating reading fairs, community dialogues, and radio/TV forums where participants are teachers, leaders, and local education authorities can generate sustainability of these communication actions, since members of the educational communities are those who participate in its change. Although the USAID project provided the funding and proposed the action, with a *top-down* approach, local stakeholders, including parents, participated in the development of these communication actions (*bottom-up*).
- The use of mass media, such as radio, is quite heterogeneous in Guatemala as evidenced by the penetration surveys of the awareness campaign in two geographical areas of the country (Jalapa vs. Quiché). This suggests that it is necessary to know in greater detail the use of radio at local levels, by certain audiences.
- According to the surveys and focus group carried out, the advertising mobiles or mobile publicity did not have the penetration and expected impact. Possibly more time was needed for exposure to the hearings, but the USAID project did not have a higher budget to use in these media.

Upon completion of the USAID/Education Reform in the Classroom Project (2014), USAID/Guatemala financed and implemented a new project: USAID Life-long Learning (2014–2019). This project took this communication model for development, replicating on a larger scale the early reading socialization mechanism, including parents school and reading fairs, and using the conceptual and design basis of the awareness campaign.

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