



MILLENNIUM  
CHALLENGE CORPORATION  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



EVALUATION BRIEF | OCTOBER 2022

## STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GUATEMALA

### Ministry support for teacher selection and recruitment reform facilitated change

#### Program Overview

MCC's \$28 million [Guatemala Threshold Program](#) (2016-2021) [aimed](#) to provide quality educational opportunities for Guatemala's youth that have relevance to the labor market, and mobilize additional government resources that are needed to address binding constraints to economic growth. The Education Project consisted of three activities: (1) Quality of Education in Support of Student Success; (2) Improving Technical and Vocational Education and Training; and (3) Strengthening of Institutional and Planning Capacity. This interim evaluation brief focuses on Activity 3.

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MCC commissioned Mathematica to conduct an independent performance evaluation of the Strengthening of Institutional and Planning Capacity Activity of the Education Project. Full interim report results and learning: <https://mcc.icpsr.umich.edu/evaluations/index.php/catalog/216>.

#### Key Findings



##### Teacher Recruitment and Professional Development

- › The Ministry of Education's support for reform, the teacher's union support, and the promise of stakeholder incentives led to a 2021 ministerial decree for teacher selection and recruitment.
- › The lack of knowledge about the decree within the Ministry threatens its sustainability.



##### Service Standards for Planning and Budgeting

- › The implementing organization (FHI360) developed and promoted seven learning standards to improve equitable lower secondary education, but this did not increase funding.
- › FHI360 facilitated the creation of planning and budgeting tools for staff to use up-to-date data.
- › Scarce resources, the lack of a champion within the Ministry to advocate for financial increases, and lack of public awareness are barriers to increased and sustained funding.



##### Decision Support Systems for Planning and Budgeting

- › Respondents agree that educational resources are insufficient to implement the national curriculum.
- › Lack of capacity, lack of a champion, and a culture of deprioritizing lower secondary continue to be barriers to improved quality of middle school education.

## Evaluation Questions

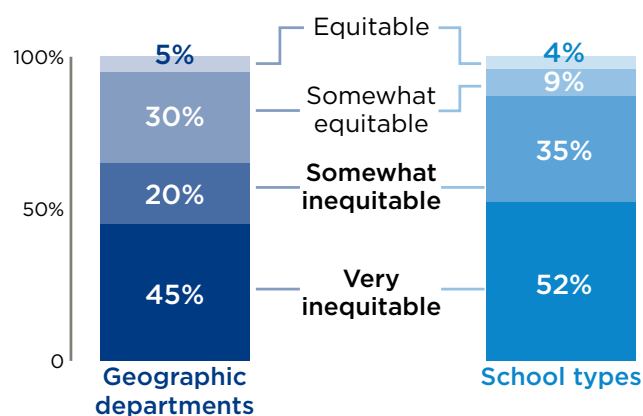
This interim performance evaluation was designed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent was the implementer able to complete activities in accordance with the work plan?
2. To what extent did the Strengthening of Institutional and Planning Capacity Activity help improve decision-making and resource utilization in the Ministry of Education?

## Detailed Findings

### Teacher Recruitment and Professional Development

The Guatemalan government officially adopted the Ministerial Agreement to implement the new teacher recruitment and professional development process in January 2021. The Agreement regulates the teacher recruitment and selection process for lower-secondary schools in Guatemala. The Ministry's Office of Evaluation and Research (DIGEDUCA) is now responsible for conducting the diagnostic assessments, and since the beginning of 2021 they have been working on developing these tests. Key informants noted that the math, reading, science, and teaching assessments are almost complete; however, they were not certain that the new recruitment and selection process would be fully operational by the end of 2021. At the time of data collection, the Ministry of Education had not yet approved the teaching position descriptions for lower secondary school. Challenges such as the lack of an internal champion, knowledge of the purpose and goals of the reform, and lack of teachers who pass the certification exam have created delays in the approval process. The Ministry cannot hire new teachers with permanent contracts without certified teachers. There is a consensus that the teachers union is no longer a major barrier to the reform. Key informants are hopeful that, with the support from the Ministry's leadership, the teaching positions will be approved, and the new teacher recruitment and selection system will be in place in 2022.



**Stakeholder perceptions of the equitable distribution of qualified teachers across departments and school modalities (percentage). The majority of respondents believe the distribution of qualified teachers is inequitable.**

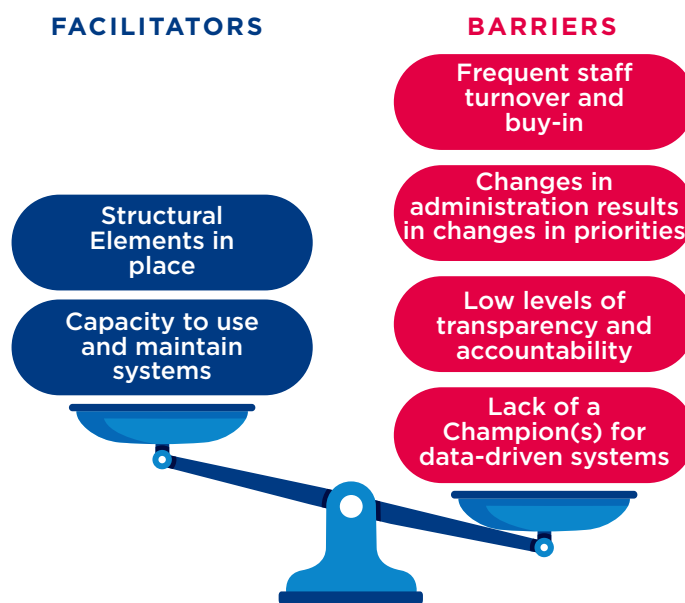
### Service Standards for Planning and Budgeting

The implementing partner conducted rigorous research to identify the learning standards for lower secondary and carried out activities to disseminate findings. Dissemination included meetings with key decision makers within the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, and members of Congress to present a diagnostic of lower secondary education, the causes of the challenges, the learning standards identified as potential solutions to those challenges, and the budget required to fund those solutions. While these efforts led to increased awareness of the learning standards, they were followed by only a small increase in resources available to fund secondary education during the project period. From 2017


to 2020, the budget for secondary education increased by 1.4 percent (adjusted for inflation). At the same time, the budget for preprimary and primary education grew by 14.3 percent. The budget did not reallocate funding to prioritize the learning standards, despite efforts by the implementing partner who worked with policymakers in the Ministry of Education and the Guatemala Congressional Finance Committee to advocate for increased funding. The 2020 budget proposal included 5.8 Quetzales million to pay for textbooks and additional funds for teacher training. However, these items did not appear in the final budget for 2020 or in the budget proposal for 2021. Scarce resources, the lack of a champion within the Ministry to advocate for financial increases, and lack of public awareness and action are barriers to improving funding for lower secondary education.


### Decision Support Systems for Planning and Budgeting

The stakeholders interviewed during the interim round of data collection noted that the new information systems were generally well developed, and some were automated for ease of use by Ministry of Education staff. Stakeholders also noted that of the nine new and three updated information systems, only a few are actively used by staff, including the infrastructure dashboard (used for COVID-19) and the virtual education resource database. The Ministry requested some of these systems be revised to meet the new administration's needs. The Ministry of Education's Office of Planning (DIPLAN) started the process established by Office of Information and Technology (DINFO) to put the system into production. However, staff changes at DINFO and DIPLAN may delay the production and use of the teacher recruitment and selection and teacher demand systems.



## MCC Learning

 MCC should devote more resources to identify and advocate stakeholders with the power to influence the actions of those responsible for implementing policy reforms, when attempting to make politically difficult policy reforms such as the Teacher Selection Decree.

 COVID-19 was a major disruption, and this had a particularly negative effect on a political and institutional reform intervention where political attention and buy-in are crucial to the success of the intervention.

## Evaluation Methods

The interim Activity 3 evaluation uses a mixed-methods approach to conduct a performance evaluation composed of two main components: fidelity of implementation and political economy analysis.

The **Fidelity of Implementation Study** draws on multiple rounds of key informant interviews with national and departmental staff, staff from the implementing organization, and staff of the Accountable Entity, PRONACOM. The study also draws on education management information system data, and a document review to examine factors affecting the design, implementation, and results of Activity 3.

The **Political Economy Analysis** uses a mixed methods approach. The qualitative approach to this analysis draws on multiple rounds of key informant interviews with national and departmental staff and staff of FHI360, the implementing entity, to gather information that allows us to employ DFID's Drivers of Change framework during analysis (Warrener 2004). The quantitative approach draws on Delphi surveys to systematically gather and consolidate opinions about the system, its features and status, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It involves six main steps: (1) identifying the issue or theme, (2) selecting a group of experts to participate in the data gathering process, (3) administering a questionnaire to the group and collecting the answers, (4) creating a second questionnaire based on responses to the first one, (5) conducting and analyzing a third round of data as needed, and (6) reaching consensus on the main issues.

## Next Steps

A final study covering the Education Project is underway and results will be available in 2023.

