

# Q'eqchi' Association Xch'ool Ixim

PROMOTING MAYA CULTURE AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION



## WHO WE ARE

The Q'eqchi' Association Xch'ool Ixim (which means "Heart of Corn"), is an indigenous cultural, social and educational community organization. It takes its name from the sacred corn, a fundamental element of the Mayan culture and integral to Q'eqchi' family life.

## OUR MISSION

To promote and generate the integration, promotion, and development of education and Q'eqchi' Maya cultural identity in Guatemala.

## OUR VISION

To provide equitable access to education and learning to the Maya people in the region, rooted in the revitalization of our identity and dignity.



## OUR OBJECTIVES

- Improve educational access for Q'eqchi' people of Guatemala
- Develop quality bilingual education
- Improve curricular content for primary and secondary education
- Integrate Mayan cultural education into the curriculum
- Promote computer technology and vocational training in secondary education
- Support professional development for primary and secondary teachers
- Empower girls' education



INSTITUTO MAYA COMUNITARIO K'AMOLB'E - 2023



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# OUR FIVE FOCUS AREAS

## PRIMARY EDUCATION

After the Civil War, there were no indigenous primary schools in Alta Verapaz. Despite great odds, indigenous leaders and educators developed the Q'eqchi' Association Xch'ool Ixim in 1993 and formed five small primary schools for 1st – 6th grades in the region of Nimlah'akok to improve educational access and quality of education for Q'eqchi' students in these rural indigenous villages.

Since 1993, we have:

- Trained 122 primary school teachers
- Constructed a local curriculum for 43 public schools (one per village)
- Educated over 2,766 students



## SECONDARY EDUCATION

*Instituto Maya Comunitario K'amolb'e (IMaCK)* is a non-profit organization created to foster bilingual education and provide educational access in the most remote rural areas and Maya indigenous villages in Guatemala. Xch'ool Ixim founded IMaCK in 2010. Until then, there was no middle or high school education available to students in this region. IMaCK provides:

- Access to secondary education (grades 7-12) for young people from remote rural areas
- Access to Maya cultural education, bilingual education, vocational training, and computer technology training that allows students to have job opportunities and an education for life

Since 2010, IMaCK has graduated over 600 Q'eqchi' Maya students:

- 500 middle school students (grades 7 –9)
- 105 vocational high school students (grades 10-12)

## MAYA CULTURAL EDUCATION

The participation of elders, community leaders and spiritual guides are integral to our curriculum. We focus on strengthening ancestral knowledge and revitalizing Mayan culture.

We purposefully engage elders and invite them to share the sacred oral tradition with our students, since these unwritten rituals and beliefs are traditionally passed down to each generation through storytelling, and the art of storytelling is facing extinction, as our elders are dying.

Our Distinctive Approach:

- 13 ancestral authorities participate actively in developing cultural themes and activities with students and parents
- 10 texts in Q'eqchi' were collected with grandparents and parents
- 20 ancestral Q'eqchi' texts (recorded and transcribed in 1978 in Alta Verapaz) have been contributed to Xch'ool Ixim for Mayan cultural education in different subject areas in the classroom, including music and arts, natural science, and social science.



## COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

At IMaCK, we have introduced computer technology training for students and teachers with great success. It is an opportunity to increase enrollment and improve retention, as our students recognize a pathway to employment and global development. This academic year, we now have a computer laboratory equipped with 21 laptops.

So far, we have introduced computer technology and software training to:

- 45 students and all four teachers

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Xch'ool Ixim initiated the implementation of a professional development project to strengthen and update teaching to foster intercultural, bilingual education in the classroom. As a recognized organization within the Ministry of Education, Xch'ool Ixim has contributed to the development of the Maya Regional Curriculum, the Development of the teacher training model in Bilingual and Intercultural Education, and much more.

Through a dedicated team of trainers, this program has assisted approximately:

- 900 teachers and
- 300 schools in Alta Verapaz



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