



Q'eqchi' Association Xch'ool Ixim (Heart of Corn)
Promoting Maya culture and access to education



WHO WE ARE

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

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 access to education for the Q'eqchi' people of Guatemala.
- Develop bilingual and intercultural education.
- Contextualize the curriculum for primary and secondary education.
- Integrate Maya cultural education into the curriculum.
- Incorporate computer science and vocational training into the curriculum.
- Support teacher professional development in bilingual and intercultural education.
- Support food production as part of school nutrition programs.

OUR AREAS OF FOCUS

PRIMARY EDUCATION

After the armed conflict, there were no indigenous primary schools in Alta Verapaz. In 1993, Q'eqchi' leaders and educators created the Xch'ool Ixim Association and established five primary schools in the Nimlajacoc region for grades 1 to 6, in order to improve access to and the quality of education in rural villages.

: Since then, our key achievements include:

- Developed a local curriculum for 44 Q'eqchi' primary schools
- Trained 86 primary school teachers
- Provided bilingual education to more than 2,620 Q'eqchi' students



SECONDARY EDUCATION – MAYA COMMUNITY INSTITUTE K'AMOLB'E (IMACK)

In 2010, the Xch'ool Ixim Association founded the Maya Community Institute K'amolb'e (IMaCK), with the objective of guaranteeing access to secondary education in rural and indigenous communities where such opportunities did not previously exist.

IMaCK provides classes for grades 7 – 12, offering students a model that integrates:

- Bilingual and intercultural education
- Vocational training and computer technology education
- Maya cultural education to strengthen ancestral identity

Since its founding, more than 600 Q'eqchi' students have graduated:

- 514 at the "basic" level, grades 7 – 9
- 120 at the ("diversified") high school level, grades 10 -12



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MAYA CULTURAL EDUCATION

The curriculum includes the participation of elders, community leaders, and spiritual guides who transmit ancestral knowledge and the sacred oral tradition. This approach seeks to revitalize Maya culture and protect the art of storytelling, which is at risk of disappearing.

Key achievements:

- 13 ancestral authorities actively participate in cultural activities.
- 10 Q'eqchi' texts have been compiled with the support of elders and parents.
- 20 ancestral Q'eqchi' texts have been integrated into classroom subject areas such as music, arts, natural sciences, and social studies.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IMAck has incorporated computer education as a key tool to expand educational and employment opportunities. It currently has a laboratory with 32 laptops, which has enabled both students and teachers to be trained in software and digital tools.

- 48 students and 7 teachers have received specialized training.



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: EDUCATION WITH IDENTITY

The Q'eqchi' Association Xch'ool Ixim is leading the development of the first Q'eqchi' Maya Local Curriculum in coordination with the Ministry of Education, integrating worldview, language, and ancestral knowledge into classrooms.

Key Achievements:

- Over 60 teachers and parents are participating in the training workshops.
- Commissions for management, systemization, and didactic support are ongoing.
- Participation from teachers, parents, families, and community leaders ensure a curriculum that reflects the Maya experience and beliefs.

Impact:

- Strengthens bilingual and intercultural education
- Promotes Q'eqchi' cultural identity among children
- Increases school retention and community participation



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Q'eqchi' Association Xch'ool Ixim (Heart of Corn) leads a professional development project to strengthen intercultural and bilingual education in the Cobán district. The teacher training workshops improve classroom practices, update theoretical and practical knowledge, and promote the value of Q'eqchi' language and culture.

Key Educational Tools include:

- Developed a Maya Regional Curriculum
- Developed a Garifuna Regional Curriculum
- Developed a Bilingual & Intercultural Educational Model
- Developed a Teacher Training Model
- Developed Q'eqchi' Primary School Textbooks

Our Impact:

- 917 trained teachers
- 306 schools in Alta Verapaz benefit



TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND FOOD PRODUCTION

The Q'eqchi' Association Xch'ool Ixim, through the Fabretto CaTec – Agricultural Technical Training Program, promotes hands-on training in sustainable agriculture and food production as a nutritional complement in educational communities.

Key Results:

- 28 students enrolled in the program's first semester.
- 8 crops (cilantro, carrots, cucumbers, cabbage, chile peppers, nightshade, climbing beans and papaya) have been planted in community gardens
- 6 communities are participating in corn production and are working with the schools to strengthen food security for the students.
- 45 students and 4 teachers received agronomy training

Impact:

- Graduates of the Agricultural Program will obtain technical certification, greater access to education at the university level, and the ability to launch productive projects that benefit their communities.

