

The San Pedro--Chaquijya ICO Education Project - 2018



Background

Since 2012 we have been working to help bring education to Chaquijya, a small community located in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. That year, our local volunteer, Jesus Toc Cosigua, asked for our help in setting up a junior secondary (basico) school in this village. Because the Guatemalan government does not fund rural high schools for the first three years of their operation, the parents of a community are forced to find funds from foreign donors. Hence Jesus's request and our involvement.

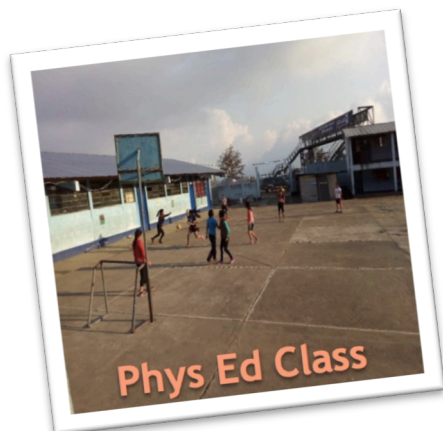


'Basico' school in Chaquijya

The 'basico' school first used the classrooms in the primary school after the younger children had gone home. We paid teachers' salaries and bought some basic equipment ---desks, shelving, blackboards, etc. Since that time the school has thrived. It now enrolls about 75 students in all three levels of junior secondary school. They have their own building with more sophisticated equipment such as 10 computers, sewing machines, and band instruments. The government now pays salaries for a minimum number of teachers. However, we continue to help it thrive as a better-funded school that is able to offer a wider and richer choice of courses and projects such as music, forestry, agriculture, home economics, physical education and Kakchiquel language.

Chaquijya Senior High School

In 2014, as those early students were finishing their junior high education, their parents realized the need for senior high school education in their community. Again, through their spokesman and our colleague, Jesus Toc, our help was requested. Over the past three years, they have established the senior school, once again holding late afternoon classes in an elementary school. The three-year institution, the Instituto de Educacion Diversificada in the “Cooperativa” area of Chaquijya, now has approximately 80 students.



Community Education

It describes itself as “a community education project based on the needs and wishes of the present population as determined by the Community Development Plan whose goal is to bring a secondary education to those of low economic resources.” As well as providing financial support for the teachers, we were able to provide funding for them to buy a much-needed photocopier and printer.





Chaquijya Recycling Centre

As part of this development plan, and in conjunction with the staff and students of the senior high school, the community decided to construct a centre for the collection and recycling of solid wastes. Jesus Toc is himself an environmental engineer, and with his help we feel that they are taking important steps in developing a viable, much-needed, local recycling plan. They hope that it can become a model for other communities in the area. They have requested ICO's financial help with the purchase of construction materials while the community members themselves are providing the labour.



Plans for 2019

At this point, we are planning to go to Chaquijya in January 2019 in order visit the two Chaquijya schools and to further understand the plans for the development and operation of the recycling centre.

At that time we will also visit Javier Navichoc, our ICO worker in San Pedro, and the seven students who are receiving ICO financial help in order to attend high school and college in that community. We will be able to report further on their progress in early 2019 after our visit.

Your concerns and donations are helping to make a huge difference in the lives of not only these students, but the whole community. They ask us to extend their most heartfelt thanks!