How-to Guide

Integrated Community Literacy for Development

by CRS/Guatemala

How-to Guide Series

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Written by CRS/Guatemala Education Team

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Letter from CRS Education Technical Advisors

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are pleased to present the latest edition in our CRS education 'How-to' series: Integrated Community Literacy for Development, produced by the CRS/Guatemala Education Team.

The 'How-to' guide series was created as an opportunity for CRS country programs and their local implementing partners to highlight and share an aspect of their work that has been particularly successful. Instead of presenting a detailed description of their program history and accomplishments, however, the focus of the guides is on the practical steps that CRS country programs and partner organizations can take to adopt similar activities. The recommendations will need to be interpreted for each particular context, but the topics addressed in each guide are ones that would strengthen and improve any existing program: how to increase child participation in programs; how to get disabled children into school; how to address the problem of school dropouts.

This guide from CRS/Guatemala addresses adult education and literacy. It presents a progressive methodology that puts the learner at the center of a process that not only improves literacy, but also raises participants' self-awareness and develops cultural pride. The Integrated Community Literacy methodology is based in local experience, and is flexible to accommodate the various needs of adult learners. Perhaps most importantly, CRS/Guatemala has found that more literate participants in community development initiatives see better outcomes. We hope that you find ideas in this guide to start a new literacy component – or improve an existing one – to improve your overall country programming.

Best wishes,

Anne Sellers and Eric Eversmann

CRS Education Technical Advisors

Letter from CRS/Guatemala Country Representative

Dear reader,

Welcome to the CRS Guatemala How-to Guide on Integrated Community Literacy for Development. This document encompasses the experiences and lessons learned by CRS and its partners over the past seven years in the area of adult literacy training. It is our hope that the suggestions contained herein will be of use to other organizations and practitioners dedicated to adult education programming throughout the world.

There is a clear need for adult education in rural areas of Guatemala. Adults, particularly women, are underserved when it comes to education programming, yet the motivation to participate in such programs is high. CRS' experience in this field has shown repeatedly that basic literacy training promotes self confidence in adult learners and instills in them an appreciation for education and community development, thus motivating them to send their own children to school and to participate in activities that benefit their communities as a whole. For this reason we encourage others to add an adult education component as an important complement to ongoing or future community development projects.

So, please, read on and share this resource with others. It is our desire that the results of this publication be an increase in the number of education opportunities made available to adults in underserved areas, and an improvement in the quality of adult education programming.

Lane Bunkers

CRS/Guatemala Country Representative

Introduction

CRS experience in Guatemala has shown that the more literate participants in community development programs are, the better outcomes they achieve in those programs. In the past, however, it was rare that literacy and adult education programs were integrated with community development initiatives. Today, CRS is among a handful of non-governmental organizations in Guatemala that are promoting an initiative to establish greater links between adult education and rural development. In its programming, CRS strategically supports adult education and literacy as a process closely linked to community development initiatives. CRS' experience in this area has validated the following assumptions:

- Community development initiatives with more literate participants are more successful.

- Literate parents have higher self-esteem; they are better able to realize their own potential; and, they are more determined in supporting their children's school attendance and educational activities at home.

- When a woman receives education, her entire family benefits. The children of educated mothers learn better and their family living conditions improve, especially in terms of health.

- Literacy groups comprised exclusively of women with a female facilitator have the most consistent record of success.

This How-to Guide presents the experience of CRS/ Guatemala and Integrated Community Literacy for Development. It is divided into three sections:

1. **Methodology** provides the who, what, where, when and how of setting up an adult literacy project

2. **Community Literacy Linked to Development** describes the principles of Integrated Community Literacy and provides more practical information on how to create linkages with community development programs.

3. **Lessons Learned** summarizes CRS/Guatemala's experience in Integrated Community Literacy and provides recommendations to others.

Background

Despite previous efforts by international organizations, the Guatemalan National Adult Literacy Organization (CONALFA) and private organizations, illiteracy rates in Guatemala remain high, particularly in rural areas and among indigenous populations. The overall literacy rate is 69% – 65% for women – with pockets of very high illiteracy among the poor and mainly indigenous rural populations. It is estimated that only 30% of Mayan women are literate.

Guatemala is a multilingual and multiethnic country, with Spanish, Garífuna, Xinca and over 20 Mayan languages spoken throughout the country. 57% of the population is poor and 21% is extremely poor, scarcely able to meet their basic needs of housing and food.[1]

CRS/Guatemala has been promoting adult education since 2000 as a complement to ongoing projects including interventions in health, water and sanitation, agriculture, land tenure and microfinance. CRS' approach is based on proven links between adult education and successful rural development. This approach sees literacy education as a way to empower community leaders involved in these projects. These leaders can later replicate what they have learned and become a living example of change in their communities. Empowered leaders promote actions to improve their communities and motivate other illiterate individuals to take interest in literacy education.

Section I: Methodology

CRS/Guatemala's adult literacy training interventions are carried out in alliance with CONALFA, the government entity responsible for the coordination of literacy programs in Guatemala. CRS has taken CONALFA's methodology and didactic materials as a basic reference and adapted them to the particular needs and context of the participating communities. The following is a brief description of main activities carried out during literacy training processes.

[1] Guatemala National Human Development Report, 2003, United Nations Development Program

> **"***...literacy instruction is not an end, but a means to reach higher levels of both personal and community development.***"**

Integrated Community Literacy

When working with adults, CRS promotes the Integrated Community Literacy (ICL) methodology, which uses a holistic vision of literacy – one that goes beyond reading and writing. Besides developing adults' writing, reading and numeracy skills, it addresses issues such as self-esteem, gender and equity, community development, intercultural relationships and human rights. This approach allows the use of other methods including popular education, intercultural bilingual education, the phonetics method, the integral language method and brainstorming techniques. (More information on these topics beginning on page 23.)

CRS/Guatemala began using the ICL methodology for literacy training processes in 2003. This method utilizes participants' actual situation and experiences as a starting point, in a dynamic, flexible and participatory environment. This method is particularly attractive because it combines community development topics into the literacy training methodology. The process begins by stating that literacy instruction is not an end, but a means to reach higher levels of both personal and community development.

ICL materials have been developed in Guatemala by several organizations with expertise in literacy education, including CONALFA. Some of the advantages of the ICL approach are:

- ICL materials target mainly indigenous women and youth from the rural areas, which have been traditionally the most excluded groups from the formal educational system.

- ICL materials create opportunities for adults to express themselves, increase their self-esteem and cultural pride while building writing and reading skills.

- ICL materials offer a flexible learning methodology for both the facilitator and the participant. For example, it is common that at least one participant is absent in a literacy session. The facilitator must then be flexible and identify the absentees and support them to catch up with the rest of the class, by taking half an hour of next class to refresh content or through home visits. Literacy materials should ideally offer participants options to make some progress on their own.

- ICL materials strive to develop other abilities such as listening comprehension and speaking while promoting the recovery of cultural and community values.

- Unlike other existing resources, ICL materials integrate reading, writing and basic math skills all in one book, which facilitates participants' learning.

ICL is a flexible methodology and it needs further adaptation to local circumstances. In Guatemala, CRS is planning to revise this methodology and existing materials based on lessons learned and the participants' profile, with the purpose of developing more CRS-specific materials for CRS/Guatemala literacy programs.

Targeting and mobilizing

Step 1: Identification: A literacy process begins with an initial assessment of target communities in order to find out their particular needs, especially in terms of education. Through interviews, focus groups, observations and other tools, the number of illiterate people is determined, as are their ages and an overall view of their living conditions. In Guatemala, volunteer community organizers represent a good source of information on illiteracy in their community. They keep regularly updated community data sheets, identifying the number of illiterate people, the languages spoken and the priority needs of the community. They will also often know the individuals personally.

Depending on the community where you are working, it may be appropriate to identify a special, targeted population within the community. In rural areas of Guatemala, women are excluded for cultural reasons from participating in many personal development opportunities, including formal education. CRS has therefore identified women as priority participants of literacy projects.

Step 2: Awareness-Raising: After illiterate individuals have been identified, community promoters, school teachers and religious leaders initiate a process to raise awareness of the importance of reading and writing in people's personal and community life.

Step 3: Group Formation: Illiterate people who show interest in learning basic reading and writing skills are organized by affinity in groups of 15-20 participants, according to their availability and/or writing and reading knowledge. (See training levels and phases on page 13.)

" *...a literacy facilitator...is responsible not only for delivering the lessons, but also serving as a motivator, guide and mentor to the learners.* **"**

Best Practice: It is important to take advantage of existing organized groups within target communities because they are already working towards a common goal which can contribute to assuring participants' attendance and completion of literacy instruction. Research has shown that the most successful literacy projects are those that work with existing groups and adapt the curriculum content to meet their interests.

Selecting literacy facilitators

Literacy classes are led by a literacy facilitator. This person is responsible not only for delivering the lessons, but also for serving as a motivator, guide and mentor to the learners.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Participate in training for facilitators on easy-to-use adult education models and techniques.
- Identify participants, organize and guide literacy groups according to participants' specific needs.
- Teach literacy education.
- Maintain adults' interest and promote motivation in a permanent manner.
- Ensure satisfactory learning progress among participants.
- Pay home visits to adults who are failing to attend literacy sessions.
- Establish alliances and/or coordination with other organizations implementing development projects in the area.
- Negotiate with the local church or businesses to obtain funds to carry out group activities such as the celebration of the International Literacy Day on September 8th.
- Maintain files and records of attendance,

evaluation and available resources updated.

- Know participants well enough as to provide them with accompaniment that responds to their personal interests and needs.
- Manage selected methodology adequately and make adjustments in line with local context.

In selecting a literacy facilitator, it is important to look for the following characteristics:

- Resident of target community.
- A person who knows and values people's culture and their mother tongue.
- A proactive leader, able to relate to others and coordinate and promote exchanges with other people and organizations working in the community.

Best Practice: Experience has proven that the best results are obtained when the people of a community choose the facilitator in a democratic process. Prior to beginning the program, two or three candidates meet with people interested in literacy training and the course participants select the person that best meets their needs as facilitator.

Establishing the training session schedule

Participants should play a central role in all literacy activities. Therefore, before setting up the schedule for training sessions, it is important to take into account participants' engagements and activities within their family and their community (e.g. their participation in other community groups or commissions). The facilitator should not impose the schedule for the training sessions. It is better if participants suggest a time and it is agreed upon within the group. In Guatemala, adults will often choose to carry out these sessions during the weekends.

❝*...the best results are obtained when people of a community choose the facilitator in a democratic process.***❞**

In addition to setting the weekly schedule, attention should be given to making sure that the annual calendar takes into account local schedules. In Guatemala, the literacy group functions from February to October (even though some participants learn the content in less time) to assure that participants who regularly attend the classes can achieve the proposed objectives. This time line was established in line with the Guatemalan agricultural cycle (from growth to harvest of a crop). Attendance rates often decrease considerably during the rainy season, especially in August and September when rains are heavier. If a participant or a group is interested in continuing to study during November through January, they are allowed to do so. However, it is rare that this happens due to the corn harvest in December and January.

> **❝***It is also suggested to have a place where participant's children can play while their parents are receiving literacy training.***❞**

Literacy sessions venue

Literacy groups (15-20 people) usually meet at a community convergence center located within a reasonable distance from participants' homes. Therefore, literacy sessions often take place at the home of a participant, a public school, a church or a community lounge. In Guatemala, an advantage of having literacy instruction in a school is that the place has large and well-illuminated rooms, a blackboard, and other resources. However, the desks may not meet the needs of an adult.

An advantage of using the home of a participant for the sessions is that it is usually a strategic place, which participants can access more easily. It also helps create a more close and familiar environment that contributes to better attendance from the participants. The downside is that the place is often too small and the furniture is not appropriate.

In spite of all these disadvantages, CRS, partners, and community volunteers have tried to ensure that the selected meeting place meets minimal characteristics including:

- ✔ good lighting,
- ✔ sufficient ventilation
- ✔ adequate furniture,
- ✔ enough room for educational resources (blackboard, space on the wall for posters, etc).

It is also suggested to have a space where participants' children can play while their parents are receiving literacy training.

Literacy levels and phases

The literacy instruction model used by CRS/Guatemala is comprised of three phases:

Completing the three phases usually take about three years. Once participants complete this three-phase process they are awarded a diploma of primary level education issued by the Ministry of Education.

Phase	Content	Equivalent to	Number of Hours
Initial Phase	Reading, writing and basic math skills	First grade of primary school	210 hours minimum average of 10 hours per week
Post-literacy Phase I	Language and communication, math, community and society, natural resources and environment	2nd and 3rd grades of primary school	230 hours minimum average of 10 hours per week
Post-literacy Phase II	Same content of previous stages, but with a higher degree	4th, 5th and 6th grades of primary school	230 hours minimum average of 10 hours per week

MODEL TIMELINE

Initial Phase –2007

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |

Post-literacy Phase I –2008

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |

Post-literacy Phase II –2009

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |

After completing one phase, participants receive their books and notebooks for the next phase so they can become familiar with the materials and start reading and filling in the exercises in advance. This also serves to maintain their interest in their studies during the gaps between phases. During that time, participants are also encouraged to read any available material such as magazines, newspapers and the bible.

During this time the facilitator should continue to work, visiting participants' homes in order to answer questions or respond to their concerns. In the homes where there are children who attend higher grades (9th–12th), these students are encouraged to become allies in the learning process of their parents.

Best Practice: Literacy classes should always be arranged and coordinated with the relevant government department, usually the Ministry of Education. Literacy courses should meet government standards and agreements should be made with the ministry so the participants' success is officially recognized and they are eligible to participate in opportunities the might require an official certificate of learning.

Integrated Community Literacy Materials

The following is a list of resources included in the ICL materials set:

For participants

- **Learning workbook—Initial phase:** It contains very basic numeracy, writing and reading exercises.

- **Learning workbook—Post literacy phase I:** Used to continue developing reading, writing and math skills through small group and individual exercises. It includes the implementation of activities at a community level.

- **Learning workbook—Post literacy phase II:** This workbook takes participants beyond basic literacy and promotes creative writing skills as well as more advanced reading and mathematical skills. The goal of this workbook is to help participants attain a formal education level equivalent to that of the sixth grade.

- **Supplementary reading book for youth:** This is used by both the participant and the facilitator. It contains 14 readings and exercises about themes of interest to young participants (between the ages of 15-21) in order to consolidate their reading skills during the post literacy phase.

- **Notebook:** Used for exercises at home and time gaps between phases.

- **Basic materials for handicrafts:** Aside from the literacy sessions, women participate in other activities such as weaving, knitting children's clothes, making baskets, baking cakes and trying new recipes.

The following is a list of resources included in the ICL materials set:

For literacy facilitators

- **Methodology guide for technical staff and facilitators:** This is a small booklet (approximately 20 pages) that gives a brief overview of the basic methodological concepts.

- **Manual for initial phase:** It includes detailed instructions and helpful tools on how to carry out successful training sessions. Its purpose is to provide practical ideas on how to implement each step to teach basic literacy skills.

- **Training manual:** It is a guide for technical staff including CONALFA municipal trainers who are in charge of providing technical assistance and training for facilitators. It contains the methodology for initial phase and post literacy phases.

- **Manual of transference and spoken Spanish:** This manual is used when the literacy process is developed first in participants' mother tongue (Phase I only) or when they receive bilingual instruction (their mother tongue and their second language, Spanish). It contains suggestions for the facilitator on techniques to facilitate the transference process from mother tongue to Spanish, and to strengthen participants' oral skills during post literacy phases.

- **Teaching resources:** A kit that includes a blackboard, markers, paper, etc. used in literacy sessions.

Staff

This is the organization chart for the CRS Integrated Community Literacy Program in Guatemala. CONALFA is the government partner for literacy.
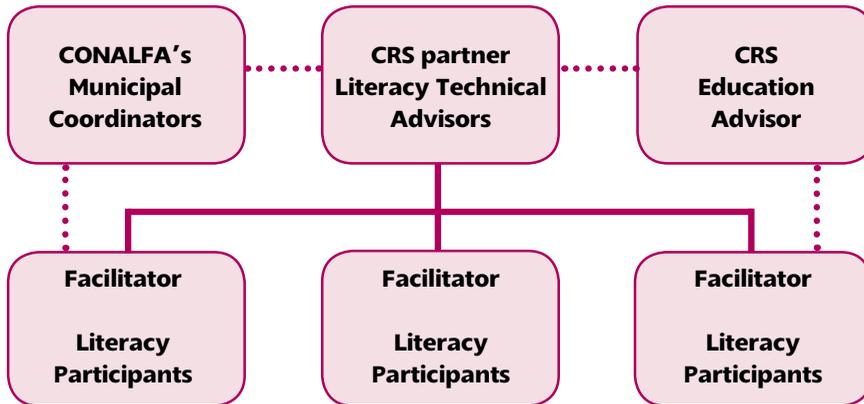
CONALFA's Municipal Coordinators: The Municipal Coordinators are in charge of assuring the functioning of existing literacy groups whether organized directly by CONALFA or through other organizations working in those communities. There is one Coordinator per municipality. Their job includes: supervision of literacy groups at least once every two months; verification of participants' attendance; and processing of certificates for participants after completing each phase.

Literacy Technical Advisors: These Advisors organize, monitor and provide technical accompaniment of the literacy process at a local level. They also plan, implement and supervise training of facilitators, as well as keep a record of participants, attendance and completion of each phase within each group. It is also their job to assure education quality within the groups and adequate provision of educational materials for both facilitators and participants. They have a community development vision that allows them to identify with the groups and make decisions related to participants' progress. In CRS/Guatemala's literacy projects, technical advisors work in close coordination with CONALFA staff to constantly evaluate challenges. They accompany about 20-25 groups and often are able to make one visit to each group once a month. They also write quarterly and final progress reports for each group.

Profile characteristics for Advisors include: service-oriented and committed to their community; ability to speak the regional language; a proactive leader; ability to make assertive decisions; ability to communicate and convey messages to facilitators clearly and accurately; completed high-school level studies mainly in education and/or university studies in adult education or social work.

> **“***Literacy Technical Advisors should use the same methodologies in their training that they will expect the facilitators to use in their classes.***”**

Training processes for facilitators

Literacy Technical Advisors are responsible for training facilitators in literacy education methodology. The training process for facilitators is seen as a framework to implement activities that lead to the good use of the methodology, best use of materials and the overall success of the literacy process. Literacy Technical Advisors should use the same methodologies in their training that they will expect the facilitators to use in their classes. Training in technical aspects complement facilitators' personal qualities and knowledge and/or experience. The training includes:

- **Seminars:** Addressed to Literacy Technical Advisors where they have an opportunity to reflect on challenges in literacy training.

- **Workshops:** Focused on themes already established in the ICL methodology and actual literacy experiences. These take place once every quarter and are specially addressed to facilitators. These workshops have recently been focused on the popular education methodology. During workshops, facilitators observe a sample class where they can identify different steps of a literacy session. They also learn techniques on how to prepare participatory classes.

- **In situ practices:** CRS technical staff carries out accompaniment visits to literacy groups to make suggestions and recommendations on the process.

- **Sharing documents, articles, clippings** and other literacy training resources with technical staff and facilitators.

Technical staff usually takes care of training facilitators through coordination with other organizations and professionals in the subject matter to be able to assure that in the end, the facilitator is able to:

- **Organize and guide** his or her literacy group effectively;

- **Absorb the methodology** and have a positive attitude to implement it;

- **Review his or her own teaching practice** permanently in order to make improvements along the process;

- **Report on the progress** and main difficulties found throughout the process;

- **Develop literacy** in a participatory and lively manner.

Evaluation

Evaluation in literacy interventions is a positive activity that motivates and encourages participants throughout the following process:

- **Pre-test:** The Pre-test serves to assess participants' initial reading, writing and math competencies as well as to identify their level of knowledge.

- **Self-assessment guide:** At the end of each learning unit, participants fill out a brief self-assessment sheet that allows them to see their progress. It also serves as feedback to the facilitator. In Guatemala, each phase has five units:

  1) **Self-esteem**   4) **Multiculturalism**

  2) **Human rights**   5) **Community development**

  3) **Gender equity**

  Each chapter includes reading, writing and basic math exercises related to the unit's theme.

- **Mid-term tests:** Mid-term tests assess competencies developed after four or five months of literacy instruction. They serve to measure their knowledge in reading and writing as well as to identify their social attitudes, etc.

- **Final test:** The final test measures acquired competencies after each phase has been completed and at the end of the literacy process. (In Guatemala, this is a standardized test developed by CONALFA.) Assessment is based on the corresponding participant profile after completing each phase according to the ICL methodology guide (see table on page 10). After completing the literacy process, participants are entitled to a diploma that is validated by the formal education system.

Section II: Community Literacy Linked to Development

In an effort to combat illiteracy and to find alternative ways to make better use of limited human and financial resources, CRS has been supporting innovative initiatives that include work with groups already established – usually through the existing community development initiative – and that are motivated and willing to receive literacy education. These groups could either be organized through a specific rural development project or through existing activities in the community. The advantage of using this model is that the coordinating entity of these groups plays a key role in monitoring and motivating the participants. Another successful

> **"***...instruction should include opportunities for people to learn, to know, to live together and to be.***"**

experience has been the initiative of boys and girls who have received a scholarship through a CRS project and are currently teaching their own parents and neighbors how to read and write.

Participants are greatly motivated when after finishing this three-phase process they are awarded a diploma accredited by CONALFA, which is the equivalent of having completed primary level.

Methodology considerations

Advantages of adult education as a basis for rural development

"Every person (a boy, girl, adolescent or adult) has the right to have access to instruction that responds to his/her fundamental educational needs to the greatest extent possible. This instruction should include opportunities for people to learn how to learn, to know, to make, to live together and to be. An education that develops their talents, their potential and their personality with the purpose of the full enjoyment of their life as well as to contribute to national development and to a democratic and responsible governance."[2]

The paragraph above depicts the spirit on which CRS/Guatemala has tried to promote educational processes. It is essential to understand that it is from their own experience that adults gain knowledge, develop new skills and attitudes, creating opportunities for education to have an effect on their own lives and promote changes at personal, family and community levels.

Therefore, the starting point in literacy training should be a participant's actual situation and everyday life. This methodology is highly participatory and it is useful in identifying the

[2] Declaration and Action Plan of the IV Summit of the Americas. Argentina 2005.

interests and needs of the participants as well as understanding the reason why an individual enrolled in adult education processes. The participant's interests and needs then become an important component of the adult education class, which contributes to keeping them motivated to continue their education process.

In all the levels of literacy education interventions, CRS/Guatemala has tried to take the following fundamental factors into consideration:

- Use methodology and didactic resources especially designed for adults. The learning pace of adults is different from that of youth and children.

- CRS' years of experience working with adults has showed us that it is discouraging for adults to feel like they are treated like children in an intended or unintended manner. It is important that they receive a dignified and respectful treatment with an appropriate spoken and physical language, with respect for their previous experiences and knowledge.

- Some adults have never held a pencil before. Therefore, it is important to develop their fine motor skills through appropriate hand exercises.[3]

- It is important to carry out a thorough revision of existing materials and methodologies in the country to be able to select one that best meets participants' needs and profile, giving priority to the use of a holistic approach that is in line with CRS' work. In Guatemala, CRS has been using ICL because it incorporates cross-cutting issues such as: gender equity, intercultural aspects, human rights, community development, and self-esteem.

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[3] Fine motor skills are actions that involve the movement of muscles in the body such as grasping an object between the thumb and a finger or using the lips and tongue to taste objects.

The following table presents characteristics and participant profiles before and after literacy instruction by phase in a context where literacy is not seen as an end but as a means to personal development.

Profile of an illiterate person (before literacy education)	Profile of a person after completing the initial phase of literacy instruction	Profile of a person after completing post literacy Phase I	Profile of a person after completing post literacy Phase II
Man or woman over 16 years of age who does not know how to read or write, but is willing to learn	• Uses basic reading, writing and Math in their everyday activities • Can communicate in spoken and written language and understands short readings	• Understands spoken and written messages • Can express his/her opinion about everyday situations • Is able to use basic Math operations	• Can read with more speed and comprehension • Has a more fluid vocabulary • Is able to write summaries of simple documents
Is willing to learn and work to solve the problems in her/his community	• Shows respect to others and values their cultures parting from his/her own cultural identity • Shows interest in participating in activities that benefit her/his family and community	• Recognizes that men and women have equal rights • Value members of her/his family and exercises his/her rights and obligations • Participates in other group activities • Can identify organizations that work in development • Promotes cultural values	• Carries out complex and combined operations • Is able to solve Math problems • Proposes activities for the development of his/her community • Participates in income generation activities • Promotes cultural values
Has potential qualities and abilities that have not been developed	• Has a higher self-esteem and is more self-confident • Respects, gives an opinion and acts with gender equity	• Selects useful information for his/her own benefit and that of his/her family • Tries to find causes and effects of things that happen in her/his life • Places importance in community organization	• Feels more responsible for the education of his/her children. • Has a high self esteem and shows confidence in his/her abilities
A person with scarce opportunities to communicate and to improve her/his living conditions	• Has absorbed and made his/her own the idea of personal, family and community development. • Is able to speak in public and express his/her opinion among a group of people and listen to them	• Communicates with clarity his/her thoughts and experiences	• Has taken the personal and community development and has made it his/her own • Is able to speak in public and is a potential leader

Techniques of the ILC Approach

Pre-Literacy Training techniques

These techniques range from motivating participants so that they can find a good reason to attend literacy sessions to carrying out exercises to increase participants' confidence in holding the pencil correctly. These techniques can also serve to identify participants' hearing and sight limitations. Indigenous adults may find it useful to use their own traditional clothes, handicrafts and weavings to reaffirm basic concepts such as left, right, up, down, etc. It is also important that even before they know the letters, participants learn to write their names and the names of their loved ones early in the initial phase, which has a great impact in boosting their motivation, even when in the beginning they would be writing their names mechanically.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming techniques contribute to generating a discussion of issues or needs of participants' everyday lives. They also contribute to develop speaking and listening skills as a basis for reading and favor group discussion that could be the foundation for social change.

A brainstorming activity can initiate with a word that participants can easily relate to, for example ¨corn¨. The word will be presented with an illustration or with the object itself and later participants learn to write and read that word. In Mayan spoken communities, it is important to choose words that are relevant to the local context and that syllable structure is well known by participants (Mayan languages alphabet have some variations in terms of the Spanish alphabet).

Sample lesson using a brainstorming technique

1. The facilitator shows the class a real object or a picture of the object and then asks questions to initiate the discussion, such as: What do you see? What does the object make you think about? What is it good for? etc.

2. The facilitator writes the name of the object, emphasizing its pronunciation. This could be done at the beginning or at the end of the discussion.

3. The facilitator reads the word or phrase two or three times. Participants repeat the work in groups, in pairs and/or individually.

4. The facilitator creates an association between participants' responses to conclusions previously prepared.

5. The word is written several times and it is separated by syllables and then by letters. Participants repeat the sounds of each syllable and letter. After that, the word is put together again. This helps participants to identify the letters in the

> **"***The phonetic method creates an association between the sound and letter and is concerned with the actual properties of sounds and their production, audition and perception.***"**

word that will be learned in that session. The word is often written in a different color or is underlined.

6. The letter is traced several times on the blackboard or a piece of paper. Participants practice writing and pronouncing the word.

7. Participants read and write other similar words that include the new letter.

Using this method:

- Both reading and writing are taught at the same time in a creative way.

- According to progress in learning each letter, combinations of vowels and consonants will be introduced.

- To teach the five vowels, we initiate with the word ¨EDUCATION¨ that has the five vowels and serves to elicit participants' analysis of its importance and their responsibility of their own education process. In Guatemala, the first vowels that are taught are "i" and "o". The easier consonants to learn are: "m", "p", "l" and "s".

- Participants practice the exercises in their learning workbook.

Phonetic and Integral Language Methods

The phonetic method creates an association between the sound and letter and is concerned with the actual properties of sounds and their production, audition and perception. It also supports the systematic development of participants reading and writing skills. Priority is given to adults' logic and their previous knowledge of the meaning of the words.

The integral language approach is a more holistic method that believes that reading is best taught if determined by the actual cultural context of target communities through the use of words fully understood by and relevant to participants. Participants' experience is taken as a starting point and words practiced in brainstorming activities serve as a basis to understand words related to that context. This approach is focused on the comprehension of the message and is based on overall communication.

Since reading and writing involve much more than merely the interpretation of symbols, the techniques described above cannot be applied separately. It will depend on the facilitator's ability to integrate both methods into literacy sessions.

An adult's reading process can be summarized as follows:

1. Initial moment or phonetic phase. During this stage, the adult analyses oral language in order to discover the ¨letter¨. The participant then establishes the relation between code and message and this later becomes a resource to interpret unknown words. It is in this moment where the adult discovers a new way to use the language: the written language.

2. When an adult's reading ability begins to consolidate, it is a good moment to help him/her find readings based on his/her personal interests.

3. Reading comprehension is usually developed during post literacy phase II. Reading is a complex cognitive process that activates high-level processes in an individual. Therefore, it is important to aim for participants' comprehension from the beginning through permanent reading comprehension exercises and activities.

The following table shows some elements to take into account when teaching reading and writing that can help facilitate (or on the other hand hinder) the learning of writing and reading skills in literacy training sessions.

Adults learn easily when:	Learning is difficult for adults when:
It is real and natural	It is not derived from real life experiences
It is integral	It is separated by sectors
It makes sense	It does not make sense
It is interesting	It is boring
It is of relevance to participants	It is irrelevant to participants
It belongs to the participant	It belongs to somebody else
It is part of a real life situation	It is out of context
It has social usefulness	Its social value is unimportant
It has a purpose for the participant	It does not have an identified purpose for the participant
The participant chooses how to use it (for example select readings that he/she is interested in)	The decision to use it relies on somebody else (participants interests are not taken into account)
It is accessible to the participant	It is not accessible to the participant
The participant has the power to use it	The participant does not have the power to use it

A facilitator who uses an integral approach:	A facilitator who uses a traditional methodology:
It is a mediator in the learning process and lets participants discover knowledge and understanding; Adjusts content and speaks in language easily understood by participant; Uses actual local situations to facilitate the learning process.	Acts like a know-it-all traditional teacher of elementary school where he or she knows everything.
Uses other techniques such as cooperative learning where participants are encouraged to pursue their individual interests as well as the interests of their community.	Focuses on technical aspects and individualistic interests.
Invites adults to research, analyze and think.	Prefers that adults are passive.
Is interested that participants actually learn useful things.	Is interested in completing the curriculum and/or content.
Carries out the evaluation as part of the learning process.	Intimidates participants with ¨tests¨.

The ICL approach has provided an optimistic approach to adult education. A common belief in Guatemala is that one cannot learn when one gets to a certain age. CRS has true and interesting stories and testimonies that prove otherwise, revealing positive results in terms of acquired skills, and increased involvement of participants in organizational strengthening initiatives in their community. These testimonies almost always emphasize the right to education and their responsibility as citizens. Testimonials are attached at the end of this document.

This method helps strengthen education with an endogenous development approach. This refers to development that is mainly, though not exclusively, based on locally available resources and the way people have organized themselves. External knowledge and resources are often used to complement these local resources. Local resources such as local knowledge and practices are then utilized as the starting point for development. This approach contributes to a higher self-esteem among participants, who take advantage of their potential and that of their communities and are able to learn, do better and be better.

From the literacy perspective the ICL methodology intends to integrate in a natural way the elements inside the community with external elements to contribute to the increase in quality of the education intervention and its cultural appropriateness.

Section III: Lessons Learned in Guatemala

The process

Lessons Learned	Recommendations
In-depth knowledge of the national and local context is essential.	Carry out community assessments and build on existing information. Validate all materials, methodologies, structure, and implementation models in the local context.
Human resources are crucial in the literacy education process.	Design a training plan and strategies to elevate the profile of the literacy training facilitator.
Successful literacy instruction occurs when participants realize its importance and usefulness for their own development and personal growth.	Begin literacy instruction when assured that the participants are consciously convinced of its usefulness.
Facilitators should have high quality leadership skills in addition to academic qualifications.	Identify qualified facilitators that are community leaders who have stood out for positive actions in the community.
The most successful learning arrangement is women teaching literacy skills to other women.	Invest in training women leaders and promote women's participation in activities that build their self-esteem and open their perspectives to further development.
Materials should be ready at the beginning of the literacy instruction process.	Assure availability of educational materials. Coordinate with other organizations in order to use materials and methodologies that already exist. Promote creativity and pro-activity to use local resources for the literacy classes that are relevant to the local cultural and language context.
Keep in touch. Receiving a visit (with words of encouragement) by a member of CRS technical staff to their literacy group motivates participants to continue attending literacy sessions.	Explore the possibility that supervisors from ongoing development projects in the area can perform some of the supervision and accompaniment responsibilities in communities receiving literacy instruction.
There are examples of good community leaders that as a result from literacy instructions have made relevant changes in their lives both at a personal and community level.	Document and publish stories of how literacy instruction has improved the lives of participants. These can be used to motivate new participants.
Leave room for other alternatives, such as having adolescents teach their parents and neighbors how to read and write as a contribution to their communities.	Strengthen students' initiatives in favor of their community through scholarships and other kind of educational support.

Social Impact

Lessons Learned	Recommendations
People that have had access to education or literacy training value their own education and that of their children.	Link literacy content to participants' everyday life and experience and to the actual application of newly acquired skills. One way of doing this is by creating opportunities for other activities such as weavings; knitting children clothes and making baskets, bake cakes, etc. These activities give participants the opportunity to apply their skills for example by making budgets to purchase materials, taking measures to knit clothes, writing ingredients to a recipe, etc.
People that have had access to education or literacy training are more interested in working in community development initiatives.	Link literacy instruction to development projects. In literacy projects carried out by CRS/Guatemala the majority of participants are beneficiaries from a food security program. CRS experience has proved that complementing literacy instruction with development activities can be beneficial. People participate more actively and have a better comprehension of project educational sessions, especially in maternal child health and community organization.
Absence and dropouts from literacy sessions can be caused by multiple factors.	Take into account participants´ socio economic situation and their cultural and environment context. Assure that people are motivated to participate.
Development projects are more successful if their participants are literate.	Link literacy instruction to ongoing successful projects.
Literate men and women can advocate in favor of their communities with municipal authorities.	Engage local municipal authorities in the literacy process. Use content that promote citizen participation, social audit and self management in their communities. ICL methodology includes content addressed to encourage participants to undertake activities to make improvements in their communities.
Literacy fosters leadership.	Complement literacy with activities to improve people's public speaking skills and to manage groups.

Bilingual Education

Lessons Learned	Recommendations
Participants advance more quickly if they initiate the process in their own language.	Skills must be transmitted in participants' mother tongue and then transferred in their second language (Spanish). When literacy instructions in the initial phase are given in participants´ mother tongue (other than Spanish), transference of the four skills speaking, reading, writing and listening begin during the post literacy phases using the Manual of Transference and Spoken Spanish contained in the ICL set of materials, which provides guidance and suggestions to facilitate the transference process to Spanish. In cases where they receive bilingual training, transference takes place at the same time in each literacy session.
Teach participants writing and reading skills in their corresponding Mayan languages.	It is suggested to use already existent methodologies and materials in regional languages.
Groups of indigenous women prefer receiving literacy instruction in their mother tongue.	Promote bilingual (Mayan-Spanish) adult education.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Lessons Learned	Recommendations
Incorporate monitoring and evaluation from the beginning of the classes.	Create simple and practical tools and seek validation from facilitators. Use results to make improvements to the process.
Establish a functional monitoring and evaluation system.	Train facilitators on the monitoring system and supervision tools.
Consider the participant profile before and after literacy instruction to be able to measure participants´ progress.	Have clear literacy objectives, and consider it as a means and not an end to generate changes in the quality of life of participants at personal and community levels.

Non-Governmental and Governmental Organization's Work

Lessons Learned	Recommendations
Coordinate closely with public and private sectors.	Work in coordination with the national literacy organization.
Coordinate with other institutions working in adult education.	Exchange experiences with networks of adult education organizations.
Make use of the experience of universities specialized in adult education.	Build strategic alliances with universities working in adult education.

Useful links:

1. http://www.ebiguatemala.org/filemanager/fileview/523

2. http://www.ceaal.org/

3. http://www.conalfa.edu.gt/

4. http://www.ebiguatemala.org/filemanager/fileview/572

5. http://www.ebiguatemala.org/filemanager/fileview/368

6. http://www.crefal.edu.mx/

Testimonials from CRS/Guatemala's Literacy Program Participants

"I am 65 years old. In the literacy group I have learned how to read and write. I really like the handicrafts that we make. Although I am a little old, my wish is to cooperate with the group and serve as a good example for my children and grandchildren so they are motivated to study. What I like the most is the talks about men and women having the same value."

Adela Emperatriz Rodas
Initial Phase, 2004
Veracruz, San Marcos
Facilitator: Rosa Rivera

Photo taken by
Caritas San Marcos staff, 2004

"I am 22 years old. Since I was little I have had trouble listening and speaking which is why I couldn't go to school. In the literacy group I was glad because my peers care for me very much. Now, when I need to say something, I just write it down."

Roselia Ramírez Pérez
Post-literacy phase I, 2005

"I am 55 years old mid-wife. I also participate in CRS Food Security Program giving presentations to women about maternal child health. For me it is very important to read and write because I need to read the materials that the technical staff brings us and doctors´ prescriptions. We are glad to be learning and making handicrafts in our group."

Liberata Berdúo Roblero
Initial Phase, 2006
Sanajabá, Tacaná, San Marcos

Facilitator: Angélica Velásquez

Photo taken by Lorena de Leon from Caritas San Marcos staff, 2005

"I am 36 years old. The problem in my legs is a birth defect. I didn't have the chance to go to elementary school when I was little because it was hard for me to move from one place to the other. In the literacy group I have learned how to write and read as well as math operations, which has helped me a lot in my small business. I would like to continue learning."

Mariano Raynel Cifuentes Rivera

Post literacy phase I, 2005
Participant of CRS/Guatemala´s literacy project
San José Ixtal, Nuevo Progreso, San Marcos
Facilitator: Zulema Espinoza

Photo taken by Lorena De León from Caritas San Marcos, 2005

*Literacy groups facilitated by
two adolescents who receive a
scholarship in San José Ojetenam,
San Marcos*

*Photo taken by Gelwer Cardona
from CRS Guatemala, 2006*

*Literacy Group, Post Literacy phase,
Tacaná, San Marcos*

*Photo taken by Gelwer Cardona
from CRS Guatemala, 2005*

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