



WHEN: 2015 to 2019

WHERE: Rural Guatemala - 113 communities in the departments of Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quiché, and Totonicapán

CHILDFUND LIFE STAGE: 1 (0-5 years old); focus was ages 0 to 24 months

REACH: 5,500 children, 850 “lead mothers”²²

SUPPORTED BY: Japan Social Development Fund

IMPLEMENTED BY: ChildFund Guatemala, Association of Integral Development Cooperation of Huehuetenango (ACODIHUE), Cooperation for Western Rural Development (CEDRO)

EVIDENCE LEVEL: Effective

GOAL(S): • Improve caregiver interactions and feeding practices with infants and young children to enhance their physical, cognitive, and emotional development outcomes. • Increase community support of positive child development outcomes.

HOW WE STUDIED THE PROGRAM:

• External evaluation using a cluster randomized control trial to compare the effects across 3 study arms (home visits, group meetings, control) in 113 communities. • Data were collected on 2,022 children and their households.

²¹ Brousset Chaman, H. M. (2019). *Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) Document-Pilot to Improve the Development and Nutrition of Young Children in Poor Rural Areas in Guatemala-P145410* (No. ICR00004878, pp. 1-57). The World Bank.

²² The use of volunteer mothers from the communities to deliver these services (home visits) is part of similar Government-funded programs – for example, the *Cuna Más* program in Peru.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Nuestros Niños Sanos y Listos (NNSL) targeted communities in the northern Guatemalan highlands with high poverty and malnutrition and where over 50 percent of children ages 3 to 59 months experienced stunted growth.
- **NNSL improved young child participants’ cognitive fine motor and language skills**, ensuring they will be better prepared to learn once in school.
- **NNSL placed mothers and caregivers at the center of their children’s development** by giving them the tools to stimulate and monitor their children’s physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and linguistic skills.
- **Two different intervention delivery modalities were used and compared:** group meetings (used in 38 communities) and home visits (used in a different set of 38 communities).
- **The rigorous impact evaluation showed that both home visits and group meetings were effective** in improving parental practices supporting child stimulation, increasing the variety of play material and the play activities conducted by the caregiver and improving children’s fine motor and language skills, with group meetings being slightly more cost-effective.
- Greater program intensity (i.e., more sessions attended across both modalities) was found to increase program impact.

ENGAGING LEAD MOTHERS TO IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN:

- ChildFund and our local partners hired social workers, who, in cooperation with indigenous community governing structures, identified and trained female volunteers.
- These volunteer lead mothers educated caregivers on the importance of early stimulation and activities to engage their children.

SDG CONTRIBUTIONS



NNSL SAMPLE OUTCOME EFFECTS:

- As a percentage change (analyzed with an Intention to Treat model), group meeting participants showed a 6% increase in caregiver-child play activities compared to the control group, while home visits showed an increase of 4%.
- Children in the group meetings showed a 2% increase in cognitive and fine motor skills compared to the control group, while children in the home visit group showed an increase of just under 1.5%.