

Final Report
of the *Comunidades Mayas Alfabetizadas*
(COMAL) Project
Guatemala 1999 – 2001



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Overview.....	4
Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology	5
Participant's Motivations and Expectations before Beginning Literacy Training	6
Initial Enrollment	8
Initial Enrollment: 1999.....	8
Initial Enrollment: 2000.....	9
Initial Enrollment: 2001.....	10
Initial Enrollment by Department.....	12
Initial Enrollment by Gender and Age.....	14
Literacy Strategies	16
Strategies.....	16
Methods and Techniques.....	16
Literacy Materials and Supplies.....	20
Community Materials	21
Materials provided by the COMAL Project and the NGOs	21
The Integrated Community Literacy (ICL) Model.....	22
Community Development and the COMAL Model	23
Community Projects.....	23
Group Characteristics	24
Group Size	25
Duration of Literacy Sessions.....	27
Number of Sessions per Week.....	27
Number of Hours of Sessions per Week	29
Results by Language Used in Group.....	31
Facilitator Characteristics.....	34
Facilitator Gender	35
Facilitator Age	35
Facilitator Educational Level	35
Leadership	37
Training Received by Facilitators.....	37
Impact in the Life of the Facilitators.....	39
Project Results.....	41
Results by NGO	41
The Institutional Support of the NGOs of the COMAL Project.....	42
Materials and Supplies	42
Selection and Training of Literacy Facilitators.....	43
Literacy Technicians and Supervision of Facilitators and Their Groups.....	43
Results by Year	44

Results by Department.....	47
Results by Area	49
Gender Interaction of Facilitators and Participants	50
Age Effects of Facilitators and Participants	54
Limitations of the Adult Literacy Process.....	57
Impact at the End of the Project.....	59
Drop-out.....	61
Those Who Kept Going	62
Achievements and Knowledge Retention	63
The Impact of the Literacy Process on Self, Family and Community	64
The Impact in the Lives of the Participants.....	64
Participant Self-esteem	64
Education of their Children	64
Economy, Work and Commerce.....	65
The Utility of Numbers	65
Travel Outside of the Community	65
Legal Formalities	65
Dealing with Health Problems.....	66
Social Participation in the Community	66
Religious Practice.....	66
Interethnic Communication	66
Interest Satisfaction	67
Facilitators	67
Participants.....	67

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to document the achievements of the COMAL Project during the three years of implementation of literacy groups in rural Guatemala. As we will see, Project implementation was systematically modified over the three years as a result of a tightly integrated monitoring and evaluation system that identified implementation weaknesses as well as successful strategies for carrying out literacy work. This report, therefore, describes how implementation was carried out each year, what results were achieved, and with which factors success was associated.

To give the reader a sense of the dramatic evolution of the Project from 1999 to 2001, this section presents a series of figures that highlight the major changes. Subsequent sections present detailed tables that help understand the intricacies of Project implementation and the impressive results achieved in the final year.

Figure 1 shows how much the Project expanded between 1999 and 2001. The number of literacy groups formed each year quadrupled from 313 in 1999 to 1,233 in 2001.

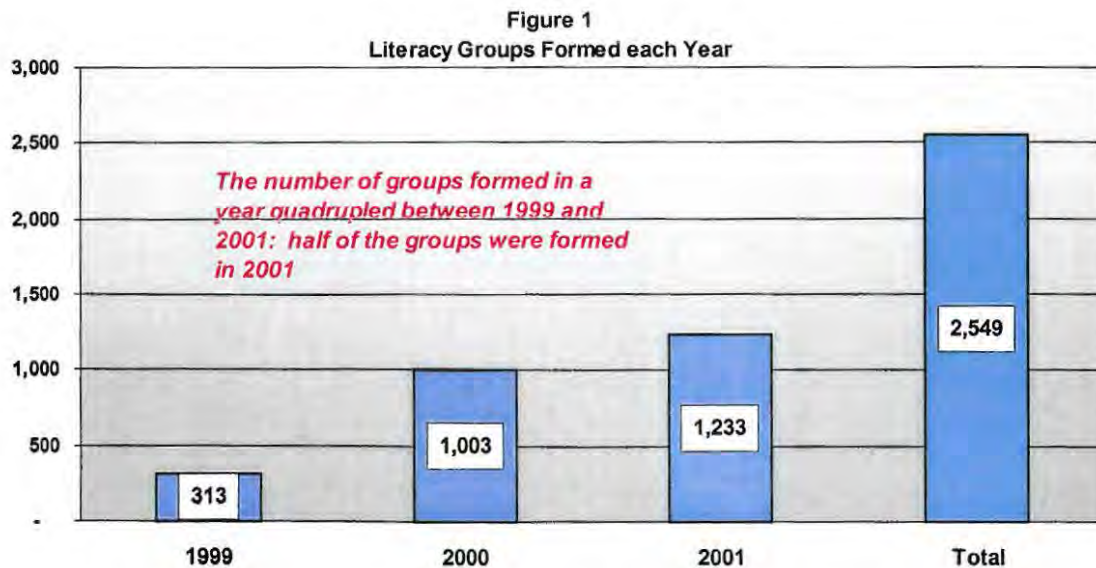


Figure 2 shows the same comparison for the number of participants enrolled each year.

Figure 2
Participants Enrolled each Year

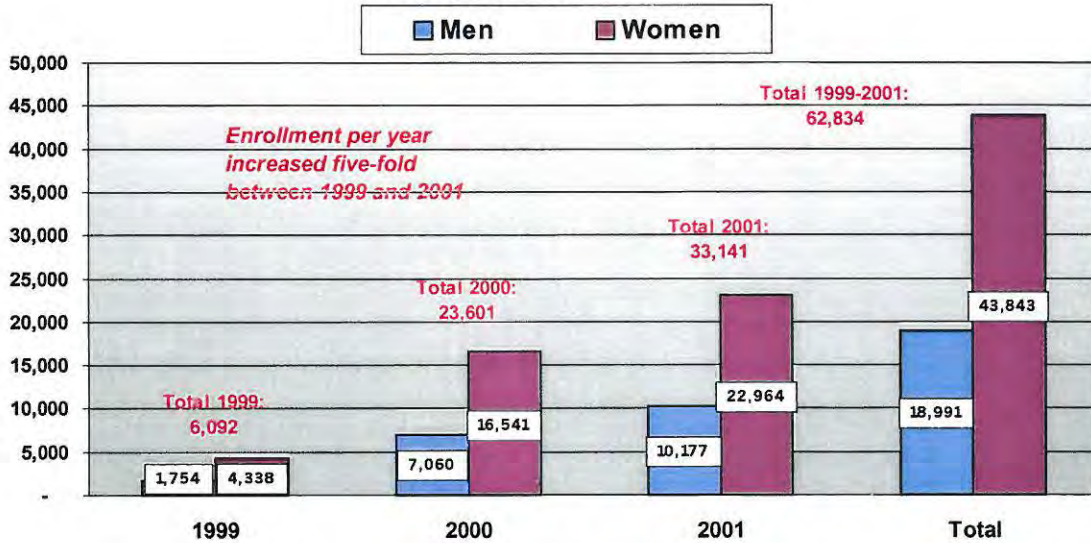
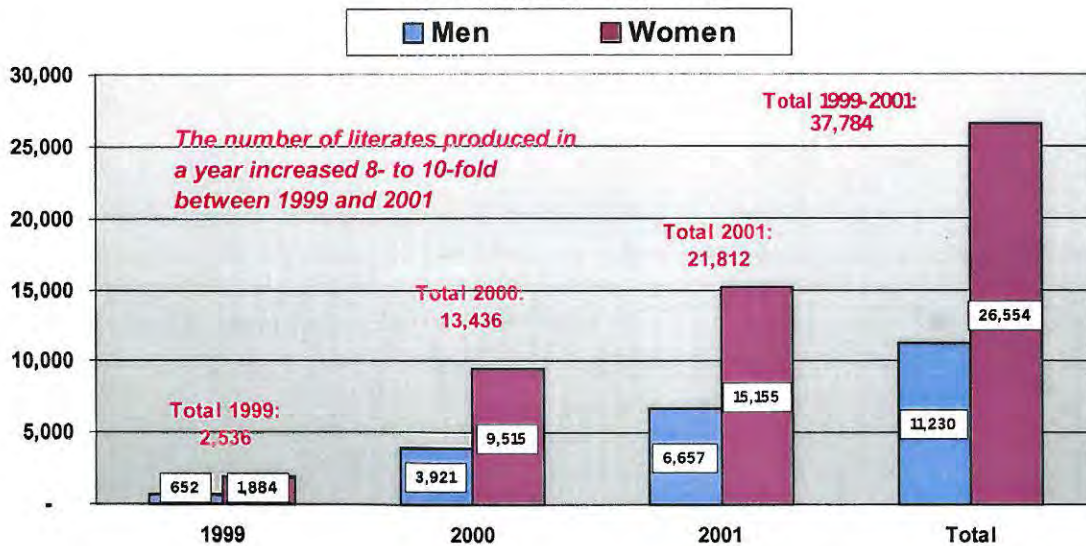


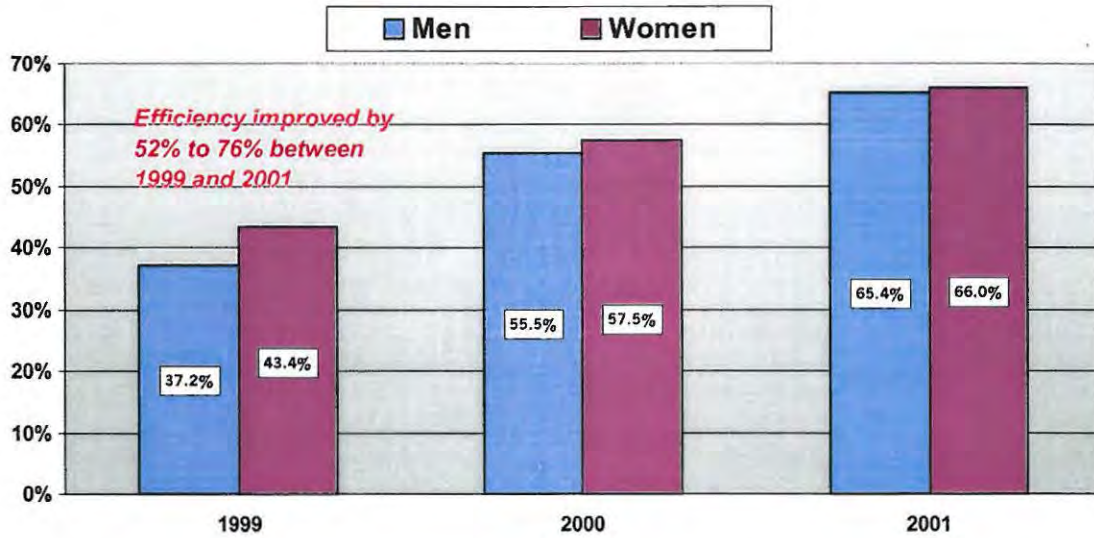
Figure 3 shows the eight- to ten-fold increase in the number of literates produced between 1999 and 2001.

Figure 3
Literates Produced each Year



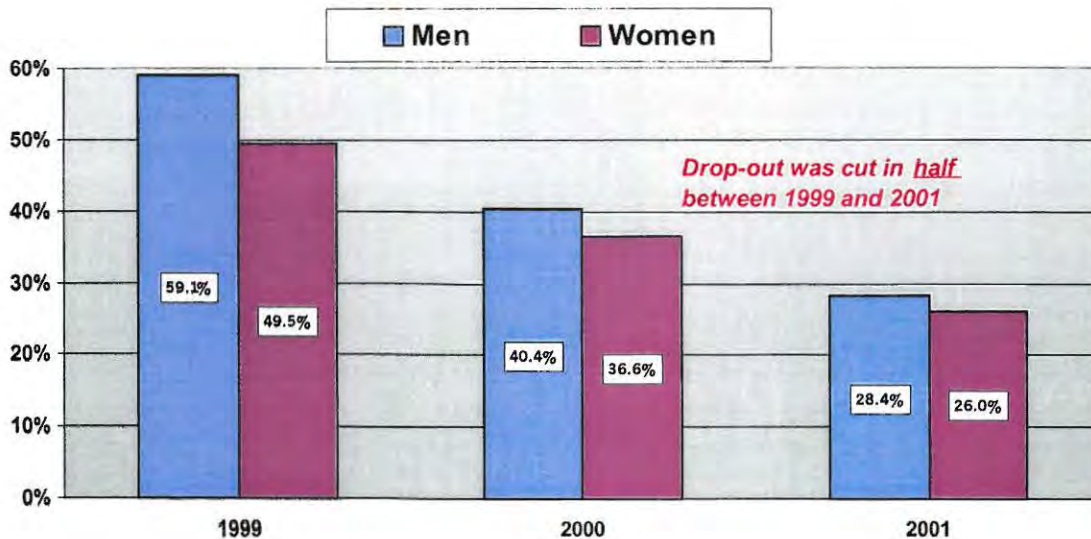
As Figure 4 shows, the efficiency of the literacy process was greatly improved for both men and women. Although the Project was more effective with women than with men in 1999, by 2001 men and women both had efficiency rates above 65%.

Figure 4
Efficiency each Year



But perhaps the greatest success of the Project was to reduce the principal source of failure of participants to become literate: drop-out. As Figure 5 shows, drop-out among men was cut from 59.1% in 1999 to 28.4% in 2001, and among women from 49.5% in 1999 to 26.0% in 2001. Consistent with the principles of the integrated community literacy model, more relevant content and use of active learning techniques resulted in higher retention of participants.

Figure 5
Drop-out each Year



Improvement of access to educational services, especially to bilingual education services in rural areas from Guatemala, was established in the peace process agreements on Identity and Indigenous Rights, Socioeconomic and Agrarian issues, and Human Rights. These agreements called for a concerted effort to achieve a 70% adult literacy, including bilingual literacy in those Mayan languages where technically feasible.

The COMAL Project contributed to meeting this goal through its focus on implementing in Guatemala's Zonapaz a literacy model known as Integrated Community Literacy (ICL).

"There was a project for war-disabled persons, some of them had visited me at my home and told me about the literacy classes, and I agreed to participate. We came here for some small projects, such as credits for stores and other small business ventures."
(Focus group with participants. Man from Ixil area)

Overview

Between 1999 and 2001, the COMAL Project was developed as a model for adult literacy education in communities that previously had been socially marginalized and/or suffered from Guatemala's many years of internal armed conflict.

While contributing to human resource reconstruction and development in those communities, the COMAL Project achieved extraordinary results in terms of enrollment, retention and production of literate adults. For example, in 1999 there were only 6,092 participants enrolled. This was increased in 2000 to 23,601 participants and in 2001 to 33,141 participants for a total life-of-project enrollment of 62,834 adults provided access to an alternative, integral and community-focused educational system that, in the words of participants, allows them to "open the mind."

It became evident that when participants sense that their learning expectatives are being met, they tend to continue with the literacy process, sharply reducing drop-out: the major cause of failure of most adult literacy projects worldwide. Where links exist with short-term community-based development activities, this tendency is reinforced, and participants become aware of changes in their personal, family and community lives.

The COMAL Project's significant accomplishments over the 1999-2001 period became a source of great pride for all the organizations and personnel involved in the Project. Simultaneously expanding coverage (literacy groups four-fold, participants five-fold) while improving efficiency (the number of literates produced increased by eight- to ten-fold) attests to the effectiveness of the

internal review and redesign mechanisms. Key elements of the successful strategy implemented include:

1. Linking literacy training with the practical needs of adults
2. Improved access to literacy centers located close to participants
3. The literacy methodology itself as applied by facilitators and participants
4. Project implementation of financing, training, support and supervision
5. Extensive methodological and operational monitoring and evaluation
6. Extensive use of local institutions, their experience in community work and access to community leadership

The COMAL Project results indicate that in order to be successful, literacy projects should satisfy the interests of young adults integrating, at a minimum elements of gender equity, community development, human rights, personal and intercultural strengthening.

Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology

Monitoring and evaluation of the COMAL Project involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative results were derived from a custom-designed database system that tracked individual participants from all literacy groups formed, and generated CONALFA-required reporting forms. In addition, facilitator profiles were kept and used in data analysis. For the first two years of the Project, training plans and participant logs were used to identify specific training elements received by each facilitator.

The qualitative monitoring, formative evaluation and research activities were conducted in the native language of the community by trained bilingual personnel. Between participants and facilitators, a total of 623 persons from nearly all of the municipalities where the COMAL Project was implemented. Thirteen complete studies were produced from the qualitative studies.

The techniques used by the qualitative monitoring and evaluation activities included: focus groups with participants and facilitators, observations of literacy groups and training events, in-depth interviews and followup interviews with successful women participants, in-depth interviews with drop-outs, participatory action research, rapid interviews, support to training workshops and feedback to NGOs on issues resulted from research.

Literacy Group Formation

The majority of facilitators used home visits to announce, promote, convince, and organize participants into literacy groups. Because settlement in most communities is widely scattered, this phase of literacy group organization was often one of the most difficult of the entire process.

The best results came from the enrollment of people known by the facilitators: families, friends and neighbors. Facilitators also enrolled persons from organizations they belonged to, such as women's or religious groups. Another option employed was to request assistance from community leaders and authorities.

Generally the facilitators followed some strategies to organize their participants groups:

1. Make an inventory of the illiterate population in the community to develop an invitation plan
2. Meet with known people or organized groups
3. Obtain consent and support from community leaders
4. Make household visits
5. Give an extensive explanation about the literacy project
6. Promote a dialog with potential participants about their needs
7. Motivate the participants to enroll and to participate in the sessions
8. Make a list of participants enrolled in the group
9. Hold an organizational meeting with participants

The facilitators generally felt that it was important to know about the needs of the participants, and what they want to know and learn, in order to improve the learning process. Facilitators underscored the importance of encouraging participants through formal recognition of their achievements, such as through the use of participant's certificates.

Participant's Motivations and Expectations before Beginning Literacy Training

The participants' interests relate to the practical application of literacy to their daily activities in different areas: economy, communication, health, religion and community participation. Those participants already involved in a development or group activity generally have more clearly expressed ideas as to their goals for learning and what they want to learn, such as:

1. Carry out purchase and sale transactions in Spanish
2. Learn to read the bible and assume active roles in church activities
3. Participate in community projects
4. Listen to political speeches

In all the groups, participants said that their highest priority was to learn to read, write and speak in Spanish, to have "no fear" when communicating with others and to achieve economic benefits. They state that they want to learn Spanish because they feel that the use of the local language limits them in terms of their ability to communicate with other regions.

Participants were also interested in obtaining their own identity card or birth certificate, in order to stop dependency on other persons: "stop paying a day to someone else in order to deal with an emergency."

This is very important, taking into consideration the lack of identity cards in the ZONAPAZ, where many people, especially women and children, aren't counted in the population of Guatemala. Another point of interest is to obtain the "study acknowledgement" through the literacy certificate.

The participants in the COMAL Project often link their motivations to achieve literacy with life issues:

1. Self-improvement
2. Community development projects
3. Responding to encouragement from the facilitator
4. Access to socio-economic opportunities
5. Access to schools
6. Access to and participation in community organizations
7. Reduce the generation gap in terms of access to education
8. Overcome the effects of internal armed conflict

In community projects, there are interest in integral literacy that involves the persons and their community relationships. In the COMAL Project, one of the ways employed to link literacy and individual practical needs was through the addition of parallel projects.

Some of the NGOs participating in the COMAL Project seamlessly integrated such parallel projects with community literacy in their coverage areas, while in other cases it was the facilitator who developed and promoted community projects as a way of enhancing participant enrollment, retention and performance.

One of the most popular focuses of community organization is a school committee. Community members are generally interested in their children's education, and often see a potential for improving their own education as adults.

An important benefit of the literacy process is an increased appreciation of the value of education generally. This represents a major attitudinal change that will benefit the next generation of children, especially girls. Adult literacy training thus has the potential for breaking the cycle of illiteracy and under-education in the future.

The integrated community literacy model offers adults an opportunity to increase their participation, improve self-esteem and overcome timidity. Being organized and participating in group activities empowers the participant to exercise their rights to free expression and decision-making. Speaking out ("the use of the word") also helps to mend the profound damages individuals and communities suffered through restrictions imposed during the prolonged civil conflict.

Initial Enrollment

The history of the COMAL Project reflects the goal to expand access to literacy services in the Zonapaz. Actual literacy group implementation was carried out through direct agreements with a variety of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and through sub-agreements managed through certain NGOs. NGOs exhibited a wide range of capability, community presence and involvement in other development activities, and as we shall see, these factors were not unrelated to the success they achieved with the literacy groups they managed.

Initial Enrollment: 1999

Table 1 shows the modest beginnings in 1999, where four primary organizations (ADEJUC operated as Save the Children's primary partner, and entered into sub-agreements with other NGOs in the department of El Quiché) organized 313 literacy groups with 6,092 participants enrolled. In 1999, ADEJUC and its partners accounted for 78% of all groups formed and 71% of participants enrolled.

Although the number of groups formed was 96% of the target for the year, small groups sizes (averaging less than 20) caused the Project to enroll only 80% of the projected participants. CCAM, FUNDADESE, ALMG and COINDI were significant under-performers in 1999, while DICOR outperformed relative to its sub-agreement.

Primary Organization	Implementing NGO	Groups		Participants	
		Programmed	Actual	Programmed	Actual
ADEJUC	ADEJUC	30	28	640	502
	ADISA	20	22	403	477
	ALMG	30	22	750	436
	CCAM	105	76	2,100	1,189
	DICOR	36	61	579	827
	FUNDADESE	22	10	525	204
	IXMUKANÉ	20	24	600	685
	COINDI	32	34	1,200	881
	FUNDAZÚCAR	10	10	200	193
	FUNDES	20	26	600	698
	Total (11 NGOs)		325	313	7,597

Initial Enrollment: 2000

The 2000 literacy cycle saw a very significant expansion of the COMAL Project. The number of implementing NGOs nearly doubled to 21, the number of groups formed more than tripled to 1,003 (beating the target by 12%) and 23,601 participants were enrolled (9% above expectations). Average group size increased to 23.5. In 2000, ADEJUC and its partners contributed 45% of the groups and 46% of participants enrolled.

Primary Organization	Implementing NGO	Groups		Participants	
		Programmed	Actual	Programmed	Actual
ADEJUC	ADEJUC	54	70	1,350	1,563
	ADISA	20	32	400	723
	ASODEMI	90	103	2,520	2,781
	ASOREMA	14	10	400	203
	CCAM	88	41	1,658	750
	COPROJUC	38	38	950	916
	FUNDADESE	32	22	640	396
	IXMUKANÉ	45	135	1,350	3,564
	HADITA	18	18	540	429
	CDRO	123	128	3,075	2,744
	COINDI	30	28	840	839
CRS	ACODIN	19	18	432	310
	ADESMA	48	46	1,200	1,035
	ECODESARROLLO	25	24	375	356
FE y ALEGRÍA		30	31	600	611
FUNDAP		45	51	1,250	1,454
FUNDAZÚCAR		26	26	537	619

Primary Organization	Implementing NGO	Groups		Participants	
		Programmed	Actual	Programmed	Actual
	FUNDES	60	86	1,500	2,074
	FUNRURAL	31	37	684	896
	PRODESCA	47	46	1,026	960
	SIDERGUA	13	13	378	378
	Total (21 NGOs)	896	1,003	21,705	23,601

CCAM, ASOREMA and FUNDADESE fell far short of enrollment expectations, but others, notably IXMUKANÉ, ADISA, FUNDES and FUNRURAL, enrolled participants well in excess of those programmed. IXMUKANÉ both increased the number of groups formed three-fold and averaged 26.4 participants per group. ADISA added 60% more groups and 81% more participants. FUNDES upped its group count by 42% and its participant count by 38% with an average of 24.1 per group. FUNRURAL increased the number of groups by 19%, but achieved a 31% increase in participants relative to their agreement through an average group size of 24.2.

Initial Enrollment: 2001

In the final year of the Project, an NGO selection process was implemented that included careful examination of past performance and unit cost analysis and comparison based upon more realistic NGO- and department-specific data. The objective was to maximize the results obtained with limited funding while maintaining the Project's geographical, linguistic and gender focus. Furthermore, all agreements were entered into directly by Save the Children, eliminating intermediary agreements such as had existed with ADEJUC.

Table 3 shows that through the 17 NGOs, 1,233 groups were formed (5% above target) and 33,141 participants were enrolled (also exceeding the target by more than one thousand). Average group size increased to 26.9. Virtually all of the NGOs met or exceeded the number of groups formed and participants enrolled established in their agreements with Save the Children. Four NGOs (IXMUKANÉ, ADEJUC, FUNDAZÚCAR and FUNRURAL) accounted for 40% of groups formed and 43% of participants enrolled in 2001, while FUNDES, SIDERGUA and CDRO contributed another 21% of participants between them.

Table 3: 2001 Literacy Cycle Initial Enrollment				
Implementing NGO	Groups		Participants	
	Programmed	Actual	Programmed	Actual
ADEJUC	125	126	3,750	3,596
ADERSO	41	41	1,230	1,242
ADESMA	45	54	1,125	1,127
ADISA	30	32	900	1,007
Belejob Batz	30	39	900	897
ASOREMA	45	46	1,350	1,455
CDRO	80	80	2,000	2,057
COINDI	40	53	1,000	1,168
Consejo de Pueblos Mayas de Guatemala	30	35	750	982
FÉ Y ALEGRÍA	110	94	2,200	1,873
Foro de la Mujer	15	15	450	419
FUNDAZÚCAR	120	120	3,000	3,045
FUNDES	81	92	2,430	2,775
FUNRURAL	103	101	2,575	2,687
IXMUKANÉ	147	152	4,772	4,889
PRODESCA	64	75	1,600	1,695
SIDERGUA	69	78	2,070	2,227
Total (17 NGOs)	1,175	1,233	32,102	33,141

Table 4 consolidates the three literacy cycles into a single, NGO-specific table. Twenty-seven NGOs carried out implementation, forming 2,549 literacy groups (6% above target) with 62,834 participants (2% above target). The 2001 literacy cycle alone contributed 48% of groups and 53% of participants. Six NGOs (IXMUKANÉ, ADEJUC, FUNDES, CDRO, FUNDAZÚCAR and FUNRURAL) together enrolled 32,587 participants (52% of the total) over the life of the Project.

Table 4: 1999-2001 Literacy Cycles Initial Enrollment					
Literacy Cycles	Implementing NGO	Groups		Participants	
		Programmed	Actual	Programmed	Actual
00	ACODIN	19	18	432	310
99, 00, 01	ADEJUC	209	224	5,740	5,661
01	ADERSO	41	41	1,230	1,242
00, 01	ADESMA	93	100	2,325	2,162
00	HADITA	18	18	540	429
99, 00, 01	ADISA	70	86	1,703	2,207
99	ALMG	30	22	750	436
00	ASODEMI	90	103	2,520	2,781
00, 01	ASOREMA	59	56	1,750	1,658
01	Belejeb Batz	30	39	900	897
99, 00	CCAM	193	117	3,758	1,939
00, 01	CDRO	203	208	5,075	4,801
99, 00, 01	COINDI	102	115	3,040	2,888
01	Consejo de Pueblos Mayas de Guatemala	30	35	750	982
00	COPROJUC	38	38	950	916
99	DICOR	36	61	579	827
00	ECODESARROLLO	25	24	375	356
00, 01	FÉ Y ALEGRÍA	140	125	2,800	2,484
01	Foro de la Mujer	15	15	450	419
99, 00	FUNDADESE	54	32	1,165	600
00	FUNDAP	45	51	1,250	1,454
99, 00, 01	FUNDAZÚCAR	156	156	3,737	3,857
99, 00, 01	FUNDES	161	204	4,530	5,547
00, 01	FUNRURAL	134	138	3,259	3,583
99, 00, 01	IXMUKANÉ	212	311	6,722	9,138
00, 01	PRODESCA	111	121	2,626	2,655
00, 01	SIDERGUA	82	91	2,448	2,605
Total (27 NGOs)		2,396	2,549	61,404	62,834

Initial Enrollment by Department

The COMAL Project was designed to address literacy needs in the war-ravaged departments of the Zonapaz with a focus on providing literacy services to women and youth.

Table 5 shows the distribution of the 1999 initial enrollment by department and participant gender, also indicating the number of municipalities served.

The department of El Quiché accounted for 73% of groups formed in 1999, and 65% of the participants enrolled. Women made up 71% of participants from all departments, indicating that the Project was meeting its gender target correctly.

A factor of some interest to observe is the wide variance in average group size between the departments during the first year of the Project.

Department	Number of Municipalities	Number of Groups	Participants			Avg. Group Size
			Male	Female	Total	
El Quiché	16	227	1,268	2,714	3,982	17.5
Quetzaltenango	4	7	-	149	149	21.3
Sololá	6	58	375	1,119	1,494	25.8
Suchitepéquez	5	10	69	124	193	19.3
Totonicapán	2	11	42	232	274	24.9
Total	33	313	1,754	4,338	6,092	19.5
			29%	71%		

Table 6 shows that major expansion of literacy services in 2000 occurred in the departments of El Quiché, Totonicapán and Quetzaltenango, while activities were initiated in Alta Verapaz and San Marcos. El Quiché had 46% of participants, followed by Totonicapán with 23%. The number of municipalities served increased to 52. Women made up 70% of participants overall, ranging from 61% in Suchitepéquez to 83% in Quetzaltenango. Average group size differences between departments were reduced in the 2000 literacy cycle.

Department	Number of Municipalities	Number of Groups	Participants			Avg. Group Size
			Male	Female	Total	
Alta Verapaz	3	16	3	358	361	22.6
El Quiché	15	451	3,433	7,463	10,896	24.2
Quetzaltenango	16	121	546	2,621	3,167	26.2
San Marcos	5	55	437	888	1,325	24.1
Sololá	3	74	653	1,146	1,799	24.3
Suchitepéquez	6	25	233	367	600	24.0
Totonicapán	7	261	1,755	3,698	5,453	20.9
Total	52	1,003	7,060	16,541	23,601	23.5
			30%	70%		

The strategy employed during the 2001 NGO selection process sought greater concentration and focus of the Project, especially given the goal of providing high-quality literacy materials in the local languages. This consideration led to dropping the departments of Alta Verapaz (K'ekchi') and San Marcos (M'am) for the 2001 literacy cycle.

Table 7 shows that literacy services were provided in 56 municipalities in the five departments with an average of 22 groups and 592 participants per municipality. The participation of women averaged 69%, ranging from 64% in Sololá to 84% in Quetzaltenango. All departments averaged group sizes of over 24, and two (El Quiché and Quetzaltenango) averaged 28.

Department	Number of Municipalities	Number of Groups	Participants			Avg. Group Size
			Male	Female	Total	
El Quiché	19	516	5,146	9,700	14,846	28.8
Quetzaltenango	15	140	633	3,282	3,915	28.0
Sololá	8	211	1,914	3,336	5,250	24.9
Suchitepéquez	7	120	862	2,183	3,045	25.4
Totonicapán	7	246	1,622	4,463	6,085	24.7
Total	56	1,233	10,177	22,964	33,141	26.9
			31%	69%		

Table 8 presents the combined totals of the three literacy cycles in the same format. A total of 74 municipalities in seven departments were served with an average of 34 groups and 849 participants each. El Quiché remained a key Project focus (47% of participants), followed by Totonicapán (19%), Sololá (14%), Quetzaltenango (12%) and Suchitepéquez (6%). A total of 43,843 women were enrolled, making up 70% of all participants.

Department	Number of Municipalities	Number of Groups	Participants			Avg. Group Size
			Male	Female	Total	
Alta Verapaz	3	16	3	358	361	22.6
El Quiché	21	1,194	9,847	19,877	29,724	24.9
Quetzaltenango	20	268	1,179	6,052	7,231	27.0
San Marcos	5	55	437	888	1,325	24.1
Sololá	10	343	2,942	5,601	8,543	24.9
Suchitepéquez	11	155	1,164	2,674	3,838	24.8
Totonicapán	7	518	3,419	8,393	11,812	22.8
Total	74	2,549	18,991	43,843	62,834	24.7
			30%	70%		

Initial Enrollment by Gender and Age

Figure 6 shows how well the COMAL Project targeted more youthful participants over the three years of implementation. Over 50% of participants were between 15 and 24 years of age.

Figure 6
Age Distribution of Participants - 1999-2001

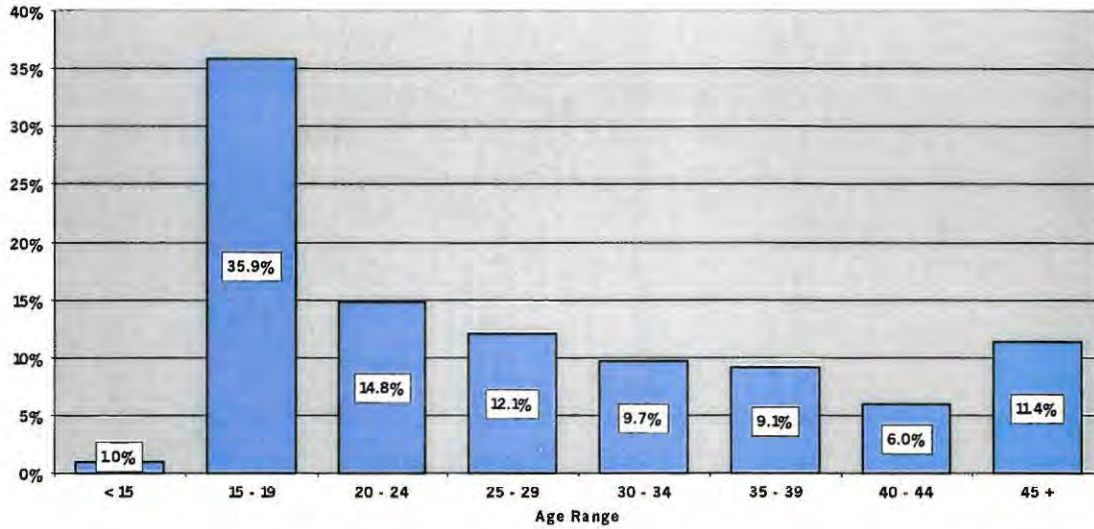


Table 9 shows the average age of male and female participants by literacy cycle. Men were slightly younger than women, and the average age for each dropped somewhat over the life of the Project. This resulted primarily from a relative reduction in participants 40 years and older for both men and women and an increase in those under 30 years of age.

Literacy Cycle	Average Age		% Less than 30		% 30 – 39		% 40 and Older	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1999	27.5	28.7	62%	58%	18%	20%	20%	21%
2000	26.7	27.4	66%	63%	17%	19%	17%	17%
2001	26.8	27.3	66%	63%	17%	19%	17%	17%
Total	26.8	27.5	66%	63%	17%	19%	17%	17%

Participants frequently cited the age of other participants (too young, too old) as one of the characteristics that they did not like about their literacy group: participants generally preferred a group relatively homogenous in age.

Literacy Strategies

Strategies

Facilitators were very aware that earning the trust of participants in their groups was very important for project success. They employed a number of techniques and strategies to reinforce participant's self-esteem and encourage them to continue even when they were tired or frustrated.

Facilitators employed dynamics and felt that they made the classes more interesting. Nevertheless, most participants were opposed to the use of dynamics because they felt that their purpose in attending literacy sessions was "for learning, not play." Adult participants have rather formal views of what an educational process should be, and are especially sensitive to doing "child-like" things as adults. The rather negative reaction of participants to the use of dynamics could also be related to the quality of their application. Facilitators were not always clear about the differences between the purpose and content of dynamics or techniques.

Another strategy used by some facilitators consisted in dividing the group by apparent learning ability or level to allow the facilitator to focus attention on participants having more trouble. While this strategy can create a better relationship between facilitators and participants, it generally also leads to a situation in which those who finish their work faster receive less attention from the facilitator.

The level of learning achieved depends largely on the participant's interest in reading, writing and numerical ability. Facilitators expressed the view that it is easier for participants to count and recognize numbers, but they have great difficulty writing them. In order to evaluate participants' learning, facilitators most frequently called them one-by-one to the blackboard.

The reading and writing of K'iche' was considered difficult by both facilitators and participants.

Methods and Techniques

Receiving training in a topic by itself does not ensure that it will be effectively used--the duration and quality of the training, post-training follow-up and supervision, etc. are also important considerations. Nonetheless, knowing what training topics and content were provided to how many facilitators and the results they achieved helped the Project focus on more effective training elements.

Table 10 looks at those training topics or contents that were received by at least 10% of the facilitators in 1999 and that produced above average pass rates among facilitators who had been exposed to them.

Table 10: 1999 Literacy Cycle Final Results by Training Topic Received by Facilitators			
Results shown only for the 35 topics with above average results and received by at least 10% of facilitators. 89 different topics were given in 1999, 62 of which were received by at least 10% of facilitators. The average pass rate for 1999 was 41.6%.			
Training Content Type	Training Topic/Content	Pass Rate if Received	Percentage of Facilitators Trained in this Topic/Content
Project Information	Información sobre evaluación final	49.0%	16.7%
Dynamic	Pasando el marcador	48.5%	10.8%
Dynamic	La tela araña	48.5%	10.8%
Mathematics	Bingo (lotería) de resta	48.2%	14.6%
Mathematics	Bingo (lotería) de suma	48.2%	14.6%
Project Information	Recomendaciones	47.9%	18.1%
General Knowledge	Educación formal - no formal	47.6%	30.5%
Dynamic	Rompecabezas	47.6%	14.5%
Reinforcement Exercises	Carta del alcalde	47.4%	16.6%
Techniques	Nuestras fiestas	47.4%	16.6%
Techniques	Bingo (lotería) de letras y palabras	47.3%	13.6%
Techniques	Diario personal y diario de sueños	47.3%	13.6%
Dynamic	El fósforo	47.3%	13.6%
Techniques	Mapa del cuerpo humano	46.9%	14.9%
Icebreakers	Identificación con letras	46.9%	14.9%
Techniques	Temas de interés	46.8%	13.3%
Dynamic	La papa caliente	46.6%	15.7%
General Knowledge	Escritura y actualización de K'iche'	46.2%	42.9%
General Knowledge	Educación bancaria y educación participativa	46.0%	31.6%
Reinforcement Exercises	Intercambio de frases	45.9%	35.8%
Project Information	Test de formadores	45.8%	16.1%
Reinforcement Exercises	Leer en tiras de papel	45.1%	35.8%
Techniques	Historias colectivas	44.1%	64.0%
Mathematics	Secuencia de números	43.9%	67.9%
Techniques	Dinámica de análisis	43.9%	64.9%
General Knowledge	Logros, problemas y alternativas	43.4%	64.9%
Mathematics	El reloj	43.4%	44.1%
Techniques	Secuencia de oraciones	43.2%	48.5%
Techniques	Secuencia de palabras	43.2%	48.5%
Techniques	Ri achlal [la familia]	43.1%	47.1%
Techniques	Kab' awil winaq [personalidades del ser humano]	43.1%	47.4%
Mathematics	El calendario	43.0%	45.9%
Techniques	Curación de enfermedades	42.4%	55.5%
Techniques	Ri utzilal qab' aquil [la salud]	42.4%	48.1%
Techniques	Ri wuqub' q'ij [el día domingo]	42.4%	48.1%

Of the 89 topics or techniques given in 1999 training events, 62 were received by at least 10% of the facilitators. Of these 62, 35 were associated with results above average, although only the first 21 contributed a 10% or greater relative improvement in pass rates (equivalent to a 4.2% absolute increase). Unfortunately, these topics and techniques were not received by a very high percentage of facilitators in their 1999 training—frequently fewer than one in six.

Table 11 examines, using the same criteria as above, the training topics and content associated with above-average pass rates in the 2000 literacy cycle. There were 97 different topics or contents given in 2000, 80 of them received by at least 10% of facilitators. Of these, 68 were associated with above-average pass rates among facilitators who had received them. Only the first 12, however, are associated with a relative improvement of 10% or more (equivalent to a 5.7% absolute increase above the average for the year). Generally, about one in four facilitators received training in these topics.

Table 11: 2000 Literacy Cycle Final Results by Training Topic Received by Facilitators			
Results shown only for the 68 topics with above average results and received by at least 10% of facilitators. 97 different topics were given in 2000, 80 of which were received by at least 10% of facilitators. The average pass rate for 2000 was 56.9%.			
Training Content Type	Training Topic/Content	Pass Rate if Received	Percentage of Facilitators Trained in this Topic/Content
Project Information	Asistencia técnica	70.0%	14.6%
Project Information	Perfil de entrada de los técnicos	67.5%	11.1%
Project Information	Perfil de salida de los técnicos	67.5%	11.1%
General Knowledge Reinforcement Exercises	Hoja de instructivo de evaluación	65.9%	27.5%
General Knowledge Reinforcement Exercises	Evaluación de escritura	65.7%	27.4%
General Knowledge Reinforcement Exercises	Evaluación de lectura	65.7%	27.4%
Project Information	Aspectos administrativos	65.6%	27.8%
Techniques	Manual ACI: técnicas y juegos para fluidez/asentar destrezas	65.5%	20.5%
Mathematics	Evaluación del cálculo matemático	65.4%	27.6%
Project Information	Perfil de entrada de los facilitadores	65.0%	24.3%
Project Information	Perfil de salida de los facilitadores	65.0%	24.3%
Project Information	Capacidades del buen facilitador(a)	62.8%	21.9%
General Knowledge	Logros, problemas y alternativas Información sobre evaluación final	61.6%	63.9%
Project Information Techniques	Ri kinsancho [mis gastos]	60.9%	56.5%
Project Information Techniques	Ri upatanil ri q'ayes [la utilidad de las hierbas]	60.7%	32.2%
Techniques		60.5%	31.6%

Table 11: 2000 Literacy Cycle Final Results by Training Topic Received by Facilitators			
Results shown only for the 68 topics with above average results and received by at least 10% of facilitators. 97 different topics were given in 2000, 80 of which were received by at least 10% of facilitators. The average pass rate for 2000 was 56.9%.			
Training Content Type	Training Topic/Content	Pass Rate if Received	Percentage of Facilitators Trained in this Topic/Content
Techniques	¿Qué podemos hacer?	60.5%	28.2%
Techniques	El mercado [Ri k'ayib'al]	60.5%	31.6%
Techniques	Detectemos nuestros problemas comunales	60.5%	27.8%
Icebreakers	Presentación por parejas	60.3%	28.7%
Techniques	Sugerencias para utilizar gráficos	60.3%	31.2%
Techniques	Ub' anik ri qab'aqil [el cuerpo humano]	60.3%	48.2%
Techniques	Diario personal y diario de sueños	60.2%	28.9%
Dynamic	El fósforo	60.1%	30.5%
Project Information	Presentación del Proyecto COMAL	60.0%	22.1%
Techniques	Ri utzilal qab' aquil [la salud]	59.8%	34.8%
Mathematics	Secuencia de números	59.6%	72.8%
Techniques	Utikik taq ri qatiko'n [la siembra de nuestras cosechas]	59.5%	32.5%
Dynamic	Juego de tarjetas de números	59.5%	35.7%
Techniques	Ri wuqub' q'ij [el día domingo]	59.4%	33.9%
Techniques	La lluvia de ideas	59.3%	32.2%
Techniques	Jawi Ek'o ri qatiko'n [en dónde están nuestras siembras]	59.2%	32.6%
Techniques	Ri jupq ri ekó pa ri komon [grupo que está en mi comunidad]	59.1%	32.5%
Dynamic	Rompecabezas	59.1%	29.9%
Techniques	Kab' awil winaq [personalidades del ser humano]	59.0%	30.5%
Techniques	Xpe wi ri Qak'aslemal [el origen de nuestra vida]	59.0%	30.5%
Icebreakers	Identificación con letras	59.0%	46.5%
Dynamic	Juego de objetos	59.0%	31.9%
Techniques	Ri qachak ronojel q'ij [nuestros trabajos diarios]	58.8%	33.7%
Project Information	Test de formadores	58.7%	45.3%
Techniques	Kapewi uchuq; qb'il qak'aslemal [de dónde nuestras fuerzas]	58.3%	32.5%
Techniques	Dinámica de análisis	58.3%	45.6%
Techniques	Los trabajos de la casa	58.3%	34.3%
Mathematics	Aplicación de las matemáticas	58.3%	62.2%
Techniques	Lo que hacen las niñas y los niños	58.2%	34.0%
General Knowledge	Educación bancaria y educación participativa	58.1%	25.6%
Techniques	Nuestras fiestas	58.1%	81.9%

Table 11: 2000 Literacy Cycle Final Results by Training Topic Received by Facilitators			
Results shown only for the 68 topics with above average results and received by at least 10% of facilitators. 97 different topics were given in 2000, 80 of which were received by at least 10% of facilitators. The average pass rate for 2000 was 56.9%.			
Training Content Type	Training Topic/Content	Pass Rate if Received	Percentage of Facilitators Trained in this Topic/Content
Project Information	Elementos de ACI	58.1%	85.7%
Reinforcement			
Exercises	Carta del alcalde	58.1%	81.3%
Techniques	Curación de enfermedades	58.0%	34.3%
Techniques	El mapa de mi familia	58.0%	33.7%
General Knowledge	Escritura y actualización de K'iche'	58.0%	51.4%
Dynamic	La papa caliente	58.0%	44.8%
Techniques	Cómo me llamo	57.9%	38.1%
Project Information	Recomendaciones	57.9%	23.2%
Dynamic	Hilo conductor	57.7%	94.3%
Techniques	Historias colectivas	57.7%	75.9%
Techniques	Temas de interés	57.7%	22.3%
General Knowledge	Expectativas y compromisos del taller	57.6%	93.0%
General Knowledge	La educación de adultos	57.5%	62.6%
General Knowledge	Educación formal - no formal	57.5%	37.8%
Reinforcement			
Exercises	Lectura individual y grupal	57.5%	94.9%
Reinforcement			
Exercises	Trazo de letras	57.4%	93.4%
General Knowledge	Cómo aprenden los adultos	57.3%	60.8%
Reinforcement			
Exercises	Intercambio de frases	57.2%	72.0%
Techniques	Mapa de la comunidad [Le tinamit]	57.1%	63.2%
Mathematics	Bingo (lotería) de resta	57.0%	45.0%
Mathematics	Bingo (lotería) de suma	57.0%	45.0%

Literacy Materials and Supplies

Material provision and use can enhance or impede the literacy process. The materials used in the COMAL literacy Project may be divided into three categories:

1. Material that can be obtained in the community.
2. Material provided by COMAL Project
3. Material provided by the NGO

Informal education uses and encourages the use of appropriate teaching materials. Depending on the environment of the learning process, common objects known to the participants are employed. For example, beans or corn seeds can be effectively used as a substitute for the abacus used in a formal education setting. Even animals known to the participants can be used for learning.

Community Materials

Among these are those that the facilitators found and took advantage of primarily for teaching mathematics or developing participant knowledge of their environment.

These materials were seen as an important resource for teaching, but were viewed as an alternative resource that could not substitute for the lack of formal supplies such as notebooks, pens, worksheets, writing boards, etc.

Community materials identified as useful for teaching mathematics included beans and corn grains, small rocks and coins. Facilitators also use fruits, vegetables, and ornamental and medicinal plants for:

1. Learning how to read and write and read the names of fruits and plants
2. Motivate participants' interest in practical issues of daily use or application
3. The use of medicinal plants for healing

The locale and furniture where literacy sessions were carried out is also included in this category because inadequate conditions in some cases made both facilitators and participants uncomfortable.

Materials provided by the COMAL Project and the NGOs

The teaching/learning process carried out in the literacy sessions was felt by facilitators to require a minimum set of materials: a blackboard, pencils, erasers, notebooks, sharpeners, etc.

The Project, for methodological reasons, downplayed the importance of blackboard use. This is because the adults need to memorize and to set up in their mind what is they are to write or that they had learned before. Because a blackboard is subject to erasure at any moment, erasing as well the written conceptual product. Paper-based writing survives indefinitely, allowing for review and improvement with time.

Currently, I am using a blackboard, because the house where we have our sessions has plastering you can't write on paper over. What I did to solve the problem was to buy a blackboard, even though someone told us that it is not necessary, but I am using the

blackboard to put the papers on so participants can write on the paper. (Focus Group with Facilitators. Woman Totonicapán, 2001)

The lack of materials or their running out caused difficulties in carrying out the literacy sessions. In some cases, this situation accelerated participant drop-out or group disintegration. To enhance the probability of success in literacy efforts, it is important to pay proper attention to the quality, adaptability, quantity and delivery time of materials.

When faced with the lack of materials the facilitators looked for alternatives to provide them to the participants, such as obtaining materials from another institution, borrowing materials from the local school, or purchasing them themselves.

The delivery of literacy materials should not be limited to a single delivery at the beginning of the literacy cycle, but must also foresee materials use over the entire cycle. Facilitators also requested improvement in the delivery of the literacy certificates. Specific requests from facilitators for materials included blackboards, some way to keep participant papers and notebooks, wood crayons for each participant, more pencils, erasers and sharpeners. Participants were highly critical of beginning literacy classes without materials yet being available, again emphasizing the need for literacy projects to efficiently handle these logistical aspects.

The Integrated Community Literacy (ICL) Model

The ICL model implemented by the COMAL Project did not limit itself to the literacy process alone, but it promoted development of individual and community values, as evidenced through the inclusion of subject material covering human rights, culture, sexuality and others pertaining to health.

Learning to read and write is certainly a central focus of a literacy project, but the why of becoming literate is equally important. Learning to read and write does not necessary imply the satisfaction of the immediate and strategic needs of adult participants.

ICL represents an alternative form of literacy training, and the methodology combines increase in knowledge with the acquiring of literacy skills. The ICL model appears to have had good results, particularly in terms of participant attendance, retention and promotion. Inclusion of themes relevant to participants, such as embroidering by women or agricultural activities, received a high degree of acceptance by participants.

Because of this interest, interinstitutional coordination becomes very important, especially in places in which government investment is scarce and the NGOs are the often the only force supporting community organization and development. Facilitators often take the initiative to establish interinstitutional contact in order to obtain supplies, initiate projects, and obtain economic and technical support.

Community Development and the COMAL Model

One of the basic principles of the COMAL Project and the ICL methodology consisted in the integration of the literacy process with individual life projects and community development. This integration wasn't always achieved and sometimes unfulfilled NGO and facilitator promises created false expectations among facilitators and the participants in their groups.

After an participatory needs assessment, a group might decide to combine literacy training with development activities such as farming, poultry, hog breeding, health, community organization, food aid projects or community development project proposals such as electric energy, potable water and roads.

Because of this, facilitators suggested their need for additional training in such topics as simple nutritious cooking recipes, or how to form committees. Some techniques promoted by the Project, such as "the basket" and "health" have had considerable success. Facilitators also worked with generative themes based on problems found in the community and how they could be solved.

Facilitators generally felt that it was important for the literacy process be accompanied from the beginning to the end with visible, practical projects for the participants. This ideal situation, however, was not often achieved.

Community Projects

Some projects carried out by women in conjunction with their ICL literacy classes include: handicrafts, needlework, darning, machine embroidering, crochet, belts with embroidered beads, small carpets, tablecloths, purses, cooking, meals and pastry, the calendar and the days of the month, use of medicinal plants, talks about diarrhea, homemade whey, family planning, nutrition and hygiene.

The projects carried out by men included: contacts with community improvement committees, contacts with auxiliary mayors, pastors and church elders, contacts with other institutions, greenhouses, vegetables gardens, organic and chemical fertilizer production and use, and vaccination of pigs and chickens.

Group Characteristics

Absenteeism, drop-out and group disintegration have been shown to be the largest threats to the success of literacy groups. Most facilitators agreed that combining practical activities with the literacy activity was the best way to avoid drop-out and group disintegration. Activities such as handicrafts or embroidery functioned well with women groups. Others had used techniques of natural medicine with plants and farmer techniques, but this practice had not been well received by men, basically because it requires physical effort like their daily labors in the field.

To reduce the absenteeism, facilitators use several strategies:

1. Home visits
2. Support those who are frequently absent
3. Individually, motivate to learn
4. Use motivational techniques in teaching
5. Teaching through drawing

Facilitators indicated that during the home visits they also had to inquire about any problems or disagreements the participants might have, and try to make adjustments such as changing the session schedule. Facilitators also indicated a number of attitudinal aspects important for enhancing attendance, retention and promotion:

1. Deliver what you promise
2. Arrive at the session first
3. Never miss a session
4. Encourage the participants
5. Be patient with the participants
6. Understand how adult learning works
7. Collaborate with the participants
8. Hold the participants' hand to teach them how to use the pencil
9. Write jointly with the participants
10. Don't be angry
11. Don't humiliate participants

The monitoring and evaluation system tracked many characteristics of the literacy groups formed and the facilitators who led the groups. Subsequent sections of this report will show how these characteristics relate to the success of participants, and these analyses were continually used to improve Project performance. The following tables frequently show major changes in group and facilitator characteristics that resulted from implementing the results of these analyses.

Group Size

The relatively poor results obtained in 1999—far fewer participants than expected—focused early attention on the size of groups formed. Table 12 shows that in 1999 24% of all groups had fewer than 15 participants and only 8% had more than 30. The results section will show the serious consequences of small initial group size in terms of drop-out and disintegration of groups.

In the 2000 literacy cycle, very small groups were reduced to 5% of the total, and by 2001 to 3%. At the same time, groups with more than 30 participants comprised 11% in 2000 and fully 23% in 2001. An important part of the efficiency gains of the Project derived from this shift in the size of the groups.

Group Size	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Less than 15	24%	5%	3%	7%
15 – 30	68%	84%	74%	77%
More than 30	8%	11%	23%	16%

Figure 7 shows this pattern graphically. Small groups went from almost a quarter of all groups in 1999 to 3% in 2001, while large groups increased from 8% of the 1999 groups to 23% in 2001.

Figure 7
Patterns in Group Size

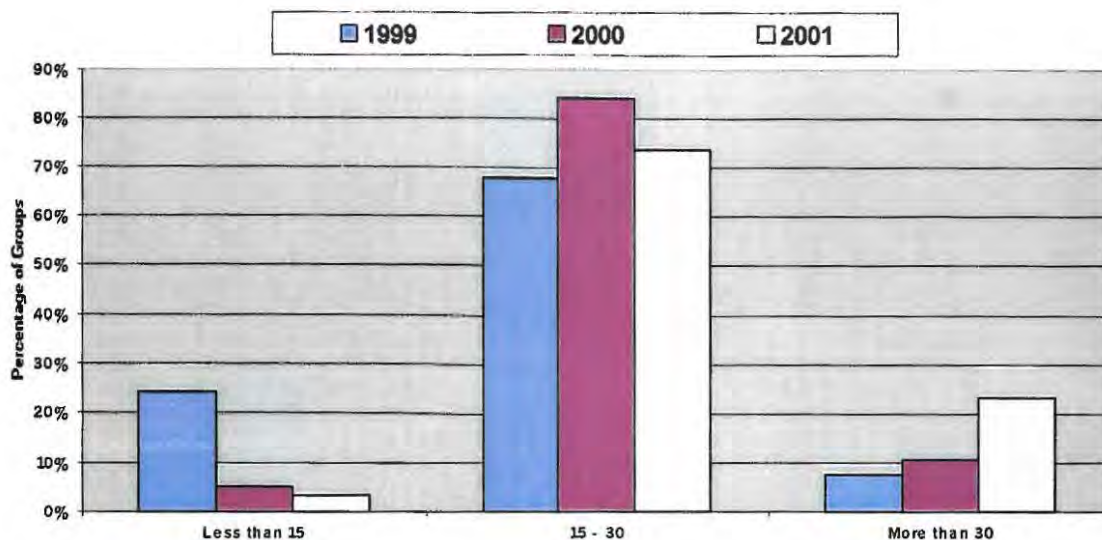


Table 13 shows that in 1999, small group sizes had poor results. High drop-out (46%) and group disintegration (16%) rates caused small group pass rates to be only 34%, compared to the 1999 average of 42%. Drop-out and disintegration were lowest in groups of 30 or more participants, although, in accordance with expectations, the failure rate rose slightly with group size. This was interpreted as a "critical mass" phenomenon rather than one of educational quality, and reinforced the need to initiate groups with sufficient participants to avoid disintegration due to dwindling numbers of participants.

Size of Group	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Less than 20	814	34%	5%	46%	16%
20 - 29	1,117	46%	6%	43%	5%
30 or more	605	48%	8%	41%	3%
Total 1999	2,536	42%	6%	44%	9%
Average Size 1999:	19				

In 2000, better group management brought an overall reduction in drop-out and group disintegration. Table 14 shows that above-average pass rates and lower drop-out rates were now occurring in smaller groups. The increase in drop-out rates with increasing group size is quite marked (although group disintegration falls at the same time). The 2000 results suggest that overall efficiency is best achieved with group sizes of between 20 and 29.

Size of Group	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Less than 20	2,429	63%	5%	24%	7%
20 - 29	7,965	57%	5%	31%	6%
30 or more	3,042	52%	6%	41%	2%
Total 2000	13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%
Average Size 2000:	24				

This interpretation appears to be validated by Table 15, which presents the same analysis for the 2001 literacy cycle. Pass rates are virtually identical for small- and medium-sized groups, but groups with more than 30 participants have markedly higher literacy examination failure rates, leading to a reduced efficiency. Small groups continue to be at a higher risk of suffering group disintegration.

Size of Group	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Less than 20	957	67%	3%	27%	3%
20 – 29	10,480	68%	5%	27%	1%
30 or more	10,375	64%	9%	25%	1%
Total 2001	21,812	66%	7%	26%	1%
Average Size 2001:	27				

Duration of Literacy Sessions

Although participants expressed satisfaction with the number of hours and days per week of their literacy sessions, they were also very aware that they needed more time to learn. While uncertain how much more time they needed, many felt that years could be necessary (one to three years was often expressed). Some participants explained that this was the third literacy course they had participated in, and still did not feel that they had learned all they needed to.

Because of work commitments, most participants preferred session to be held in the evening hours or on weekends.

In my case, we organized our group and then established the schedule, because the participants could not attend during day hours, all have responsibilities. But then they set the time, because if they said in the night hours then in the night, most requested that we have our sessions on Saturday and Sunday, from three p.m., but during weekdays only from four p.m. (Focus Group with Facilitators. Woman, Quiché, 2001)

While evaluating the time that they spent in the literacy sessions, participants reflected on what they had learned as key to whether the time was well spent, or was too little or too much. Those participants whose experiences in the group were less than satisfactory often explained their absenteeism or drop-out as due to a "lack of time." The lack of time for literacy activities was clearly associated with the individual's priorities.

Number of Sessions per Week

Table 16 looks at the relationship between the number of sessions per week and the outcome of the groups in 1999. Most groups held sessions 2 or 3 times a week. Lower failure rates generally were associated with more sessions per week.

Sessions per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
1	66	49%	14%	37%	0%
2	1,059	39%	7%	45%	10%
3	932	43%	6%	43%	10%
4	423	44%	3%	48%	5%
5	27	54%	10%	36%	0%
6	0	0%	0%	0%	100%
7	6	33%	0%	67%	0%
Total 1999	2,513	42%	6%	44%	9%

Table 17 repeats the analysis for the 2000 cycle. There were more groups held three or more times per week, and these usually had higher pass rates due to lower failure rates rather than through lower drop-out or group disintegration.

Sessions per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
1	339	41%	10%	41%	7%
2	3,696	55%	6%	33%	6%
3	7,553	58%	5%	32%	4%
4	813	57%	3%	38%	2%
5	918	65%	2%	28%	5%
6	44	48%	0%	0%	52%
Total 2000	13,363	57%	5%	33%	5%

The 2001 literacy cycle, shown in Table 18, does not produce a very clear picture. Groups that met two, three or four times per week all had identical pass rates.

Sessions per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
1	198	70%	6%	24%	0%
2	4,313	66%	7%	26%	2%
3	12,086	66%	7%	26%	1%
4	3,067	66%	6%	28%	0%
5	1,782	64%	7%	29%	1%
6	124	62%	3%	20%	15%
Total 2001	21,570	66%	7%	26%	1%

Table 19, which shows the life of Project results, suggests that groups that meet three to five times a week enjoy higher pass rates.

Sessions per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
1	603	49%	10%	37%	5%
2	9,068	57%	7%	32%	5%
3	20,571	62%	6%	29%	3%
4	4,303	61%	5%	33%	1%
5	2,727	64%	5%	29%	2%
6	168	55%	2%	13%	30%
7	6	33%	0%	67%	0%
Total 1999-2001	37,446	60%	6%	30%	3%

Number of Hours of Sessions per Week

It was noted that from 1999 to 2001 the average numbers of session hours increased from 6.3 to 9.1. Table 20 examines the relationship in 1999 between session hours per week and outcomes. Most groups had session hours between five and seven per week in 1999, achieving a 39% pass rate. Groups holding sessions between eight and ten hours per week had an average pass rate of 43% as a result of lower group disintegration rates.

Hours per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
4 or less	490	51%	12%	28%	9%
5 - 7	1,230	39%	5%	45%	12%
8 - 10	685	43%	5%	50%	3%
11 or more	98	39%	3%	52%	6%
Total 1999	2,503	41.7%	6.0%	43.7%	8.7%
Average Hours 1999:	6.3				

The 2000 cycle, shown in Table 21, shows the effect of increased session hours. Groups with more session hours generally had higher pass rates, and lower failure, drop-out and group disintegration rates. Contributing to the improved results in 2000 was a shift in the number of groups with more session hours per week.

Hours per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
4 or less	1,177	48%	9%	31%	11%
5 - 7	4,283	56%	6%	32%	6%
8 - 10	5,870	57%	5%	36%	3%
11 or more	2,011	67%	4%	25%	4%
Total 2000	13,341	57%	5%	33%	5%
Average Hours 2000:	7.9				

With an average of 9.1 session hours per week in 2001 (Table 22), Project performance continued to increase. Groups with eight or more session hours per week had the best results, due to lower drop-out rates rather than any other factor. The combination of the number of sessions per week and total session hours offered per week would appear to accommodate participant's needs best.

Hours per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
4 or less	305	64%	5%	32%	0%
5 - 7	4,015	63%	7%	28%	1%
8 - 10	11,346	66%	7%	26%	1%
11 or more	5,687	67%	7%	24%	1%
Total 2001	21,353	66%	7%	26%	1%
Average Hours 2001:	9.1				

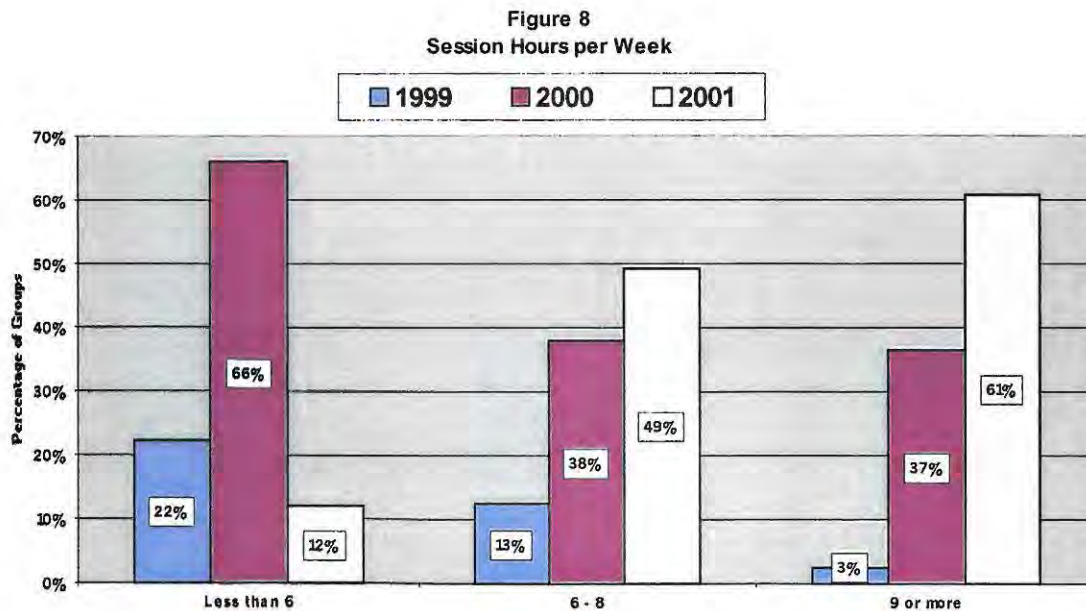
Table 23 confirms this view for the combined three-year set of data. Pass rates rise with more session hours per week, but due primarily to reduced drop-out and group disintegration rather than lower failure rates. If participants feel that insufficient learning is being accomplished over a period of time, they will experience an increased tendency to drop out rather than tolerate the slow pace of learning.

Hours per Week	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
4 or less	1,972	51%	9%	30%	9%
5 - 7	9,528	56%	6%	33%	5%
8 - 10	17,901	61%	6%	31%	2%
11 or more	7,796	67%	6%	25%	2%
Total 1999-2001	37,197	60%	6%	30%	3%
Average Hours 1999-2001:	8.3				

Another problem detected with the 1999 groups was the tendency to offer too few session hours per week. In 1999, 22% of all groups were scheduled to operate with fewer than six hours per week and only 12% of the groups were offered nine or more hours per week. This sort of scheduling did not adapt itself well to the needs of the participants, and thus had serious impacts on attendance and learning. Table 24 shows the significant changes in subsequent years—by 2001 the average number of hours per week had increased 44% to 9.1, groups held fewer than six hours per week comprised only 3% of the total while those operating nine or more hours per week made up fully 61% of all groups.

Session Hours per Week	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Less than 6	22%	13%	3%	9%
6 – 8	66%	38%	37%	41%
9 or more	12%	49%	61%	50%
Average	6.3	7.9	9.1	8.3

Figure 8 shows clearly how groups that held sessions nine hours or more per week increased from 3% in 1999 to 61% of all groups in 2001.



Results by Language Used in Group

The general philosophy of the COMAL Project was to allow the group to decide in what language the group would become literate. Fieldwork indicated that most

participants favored acquiring literacy skills in Spanish, usually in combination with the local language. Table 25 looks at the results from 1999 by language.

Group Language	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Spanish	342	49%	14%	30%	7%
K'iche'	743	44%	6%	48%	2%
K'iche'-Spanish	1,370	39%	4%	44%	13%
Ixil	20	22%	24%	53%	0%
Other	61	50%	5%	45%	0%
Total 1999	2,563	42%	6%	44%	9%

In 1999, high drop-out and group disintegration rates among groups held in either the local language or in combination with Spanish caused Spanish-only groups to achieve a significantly higher pass rate (49%) than the others.

Much in terms of materials and techniques were improved in the 2000 literacy cycle, especially in terms of language support in K'iche'. Table 26 shows the results for 2000, where Spanish-only groups did not fare as well and local language or bilingual groups did.

Group Language	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Spanish	2,384	51%	6%	35%	8%
K'iche'	1,036	56%	3%	31%	10%
K'iche'-Spanish	6,591	63%	5%	28%	4%
Ixil	625	66%	1%	24%	9%
Ixil-Spanish	2,465	48%	7%	42%	4%
Other	335	65%	3%	32%	0%
Total 2000	13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%

In 2001, the difference in outcome rates between languages becomes smaller, as shown in Table 27. Spanish-only groups had higher drop-out rates (30%), leading to a lower pass rate in 2001. K'iche'-Spanish groups achieved the highest pass rate, due to a low drop-out rate of 19%.

Group Language	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Spanish	7,368	62%	7%	30%	1%
K'iche'	2,009	67%	7%	26%	0%
K'iche'-Spanish	9,913	69%	7%	23%	1%
Ixil	329	67%	14%	19%	0%
Ixil-Spanish	1,889	67%	10%	23%	0%
Other	304	53%	1%	46%	0%
Total 2001	21,812	66%	7%	26%	1%

Table 28, combining all years of the Project, generally confirms this pattern. The highest pass rate (61%) is observed among bilingual (Mayan-Spanish) groups, followed by Spanish-only and Mayan only groups, tied at 59% pass rates. The advantage enjoyed by the bilingual groups derives from the lower drop-out rate (all language groupings had similar failure and group disintegration rates). Reflecting both the Project's geographical focus and participant preferences, 47% of participants made literate by the Project did so in K'iche'-Spanish groups, 27% in Spanish-only groups, 12% in Ixil-Spanish groups, 10% in K'iche'-only groups and 3% in Ixil-only groups.

Group Language	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Spanish	10,094	58%	7%	31%	4%
K'iche'	3,788	58%	5%	33%	3%
K'iche'-Spanish	17,874	63%	6%	27%	4%
Ixil	974	64%	7%	24%	6%
Ixil-Spanish	4,354	55%	8%	35%	3%
Other	700	58%	2%	40%	0%
Total 1999-2001	37,784	60%	6%	30%	3%

Among the difficulties expressed by participants in learning to read and write in their native language, the most often mentioned were:

1. They feel that the Spanish language is easier
2. That the writing of K'iche' gets complicated by the "little dots", (diacritical marks for the long vowels), the apostrophes and the pronunciation
3. That the K'iche' language has more letters than does Spanish

Participants say they wish to learn Spanish because, since K'iche' is their native language, they say they know it "from birth." The true reason, however, is that

participants have a series of social and economic motivations to learn Spanish. Participants also express a belief that they will still be illiterates because of what they identify as dialectic differences of the K'iche' language between regions and villages.

It appears, nonetheless, that there is a tendency among facilitators to favor bilingual teaching. In this approach, for example, they will first write a word in Spanish, and then write it and explain it in K'iche'. Although facilitators recognized that bilingual teaching slows down the class, it was also seen as usual for those participants less adept with verbal Spanish, especially women.

Facilitator Characteristics

It was often difficult for the NGOs to recruit facilitators from the community who had a high education profile. In general, however, they sought out facilitators with at least a third grade formal education, had exercised a certain level of community leadership, and were felt would fulfill requirements on time and at a performance level that each NGO established.

Thus, the majority of the facilitators had prior experience as community leaders, health promoters or religious facilitators, and even included former literacy teachers from CONALFA.

The uncertainties and insecurities mentioned by first-time literacy facilitators were primarily based on mistrust of NGO promises for accompanying projects and becoming held accountable in their community for failing to deliver on those promises. In addition, many facilitators were concerned about the secuelae of the psychosocial armed violence that still created resistance among community members to being placed on a list or to provide personal information on information about community leaders.

This section looks at pass rates by a number of facilitator characteristics by year where available. Facilitator gender and age issues are examined separately in a later section. In Table 29, the reported prior experience of facilitators in conducting literacy work was examined in relation to pass rates by year. In all years, prior literacy experience contributed to better results. This was particularly so in the 2000 literacy cycle, where experienced literacy workers achieved an absolute increase in the pass rate of 10%.

Prior Literacy Experience	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Yes	44%	62%	67%	63%
No	40%	52%	65%	58%

Facilitator Gender

Although the Project has always targeted women and youth appropriately, there was an early tendency to favor male facilitators rather than women. Early analyses indicated that female facilitators tended to be more successful, especially among the target population. Table 30 shows how, between 1999 and 2001, the relative participation of male and females facilitators was exactly reversed. In 2001, women made up 54% of all facilitators.

Facilitator Gender	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Male	54%	49%	46%	48%
Female	46%	51%	54%	52%

Facilitator Age

Fieldwork raised some concerns regarding the age of the facilitator and the response of the group. The general impression was that older facilitators were less effective with a younger target population, while older participants felt uncomfortable when led by very young facilitators. Table 31 shows some fairly small changes in the composition of the facilitators: due mostly to an increase in younger facilitators, the average age was reduced from 28 in 1999 to 26 in 2001.

Facilitator Age	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Less than 18	9%	19%	14%	16%
18 – 45	88%	78%	82%	81%
Older than 45	3%	3%	4%	3%
Average	28	25	26	26

Facilitator Educational Level

Facilitators experienced doubts regarding their capabilities, academic preparation, and the support the NGOs would give them. Both the economic benefits the NGOs offered them and a certain degree of social conscience to their support for the community eventually convinced them to become facilitators.

An early concern identified in the COMAL Project was the high percentage of facilitators with limited formal education. Analyses of results identified facilitator education level to be a significant factor to group success, even when significant

training had been provided. Table 32 shows that in 1999, fully 42% of all facilitators had less than a sixth grade education. This proportion was sharply reduced to 16% in the 2000 literacy cycle, and cut yet more, to 6%, in 2001.

Education Level	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Less than sixth grade	42%	16%	6%	14%
Sixth grade or higher	58%	84%	94%	86%

The dramatic change in education level of facilitators is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Education Levels of the Facilitators

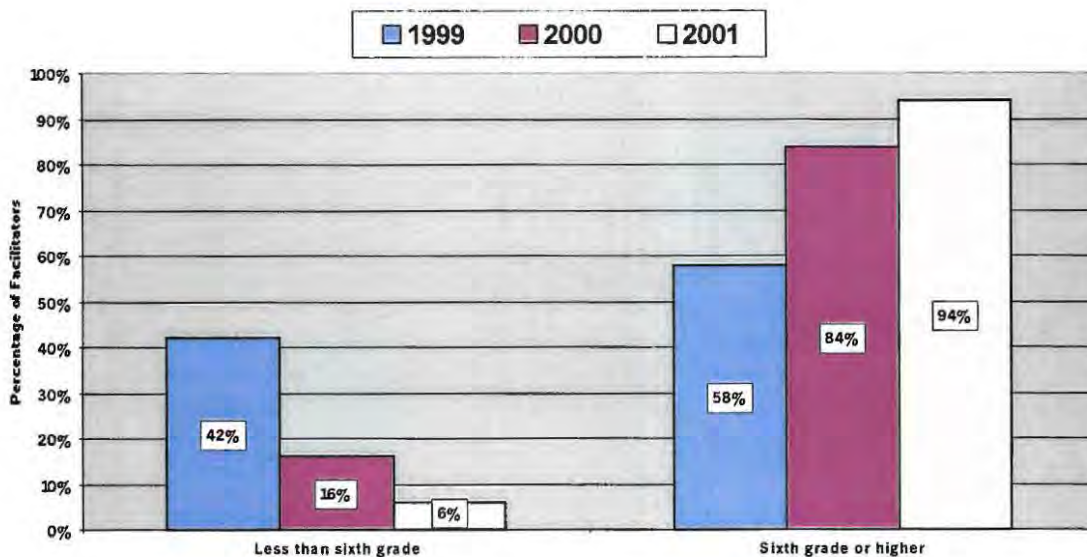


Table 33 looks at pass rates by the educational level of the facilitator. In the 1999 cycle, facilitators with sixth grade education or more achieved a pass rate 12% higher than their less educated counterparts. In both the 2000 and 2001 cycles, however, less educated facilitators had greater success with their groups. The general experience was that primary school teachers did not work well with adult literacy groups, mostly due to higher drop-out rates among the participants. Primary school teachers were often observed to use the same teaching style with adults as they use in the primary school classroom with children. As will be seen in the next section, however, additional training improved performance among all facilitators.

Education Level	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Less than sixth grade	31%	64%	70%	57%
Sixth grade or higher	43%	57%	66%	61%

Leadership

The COMAL Project was envisioned as having wide geographic coverage and was targeted to small, rural communities where illiteracy was most endemic. By design, then, the Project faced the challenge of finding suitable candidates for literacy facilitators.

"What I see is that my group, even though I have only studied until sixth grade, has a lot of confidence in me and say that they do not want another person coming from far to teach, because they have taken into account what the school teachers do, that sometimes they do not show up for class in a week because of the distance. That is why they want somebody from town, so they can talk with confidence with him..." (Focus Group with Facilitators. Agreement 2001)

Ideally, facilitators should be from the same community as the participants. Because of the lack of educated persons in some communities, however, NGO's at times had to recruit facilitators from other communities in the area. The lack of reliable transportation often made this a less-than-ideal solution and resulted in facilitator absences at group sessions.

In the facilitators' opinion, it is not age, gender or academic level that matters for a successful group. What they see as most important is to have good communication with the participants and take an interest in the problems of their communities. The "good attitude" is also key to reduce facilitator desertion.

"Of the people in here [facilitator training course], the majority have only reached sixth grade, but I think that it depends on our experiences with the groups, because even if we had a great title in our hands, if the people don't have confidence in us, I cannot unite them." (Focus Group with Facilitators No. 14 2000)

Training Received by Facilitators

Facilitator interest in expanding their own knowledge supported their role as motivators of the educational process for their participants. Some facilitators expressed a desire to further their own educational preparation by finishing primary school or initiating their high school studies. The facilitators recognized that the training provided by the COMAL Project helped them to motivate and keep the literacy groups intact.

Table 34 looks at the combined effects of facilitator education and levels of training received on the outcome variables in 1999. The lowest pass rate (19%) was observed among facilitators with little formal education and little literacy training, who often had groups that disintegrated. Better-educated and better-trained facilitators achieved more respectable results (43%). Comparing the pass rates of less-educated facilitators with more training (34%) with better-educated, less-trained facilitators (35%) suggested that adequate training could make up for the weakness observed in less-educated facilitators. But the superior results of better-educated and better-trained facilitators nonetheless emphasized the need for careful facilitator selection and training.

Education	Days Training	Literates Produced	Result			
			Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Less than sixth grade	Less than six	53	19%	1%	35%	46%
	Six or more	404	34%	5%	60%	1%
	Total	457	31%	5%	55%	10%
Sixth grade or more	Less than six	277	35%	4%	52%	9%
	Six or more	573	43%	5%	44%	9%
	Total	850	40%	4%	47%	9%
No data	Less than six	169	33%	5%	46%	16%
	Six or more	537	56%	4%	40%	0%
	Total	706	48%	4%	42%	6%
No data		523	51%	15%	23%	12%
Total 1999		2,563	42%	6%	44%	9%

Table 35 looks at the same issues for the 2000 literacy cycle, the last year training of facilitators was managed directly by Save the Children. As mentioned earlier, the formal education advantage ceased to exist, but the effect of training—particularly among less educated facilitators—becomes clearer. Having received six or more days of literacy training consistently improved performance of the facilitator.

Education	Days Training	Literates Produced	Result			
			Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Less than sixth grade	Less than six	256	47%	5%	25%	22%
	Six or more	1,444	67%	4%	27%	2%
	Total	1,700	63%	4%	27%	6%
Sixth grade or more	Less than six	2,011	54%	6%	31%	9%
	Six or more	7,471	58%	5%	34%	3%
	Total	9,482	57%	5%	34%	4%
No data	Less than six	737	48%	6%	32%	13%
	Six or more	951	63%	6%	31%	0%
	Total	1,678	55%	6%	32%	7%
No data		576	46%	4%	32%	17%
Total 2000		13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%

This focus on training was enhanced by an examination, in 1999 and again in 2000, of which specific training topic or content could be associated with positive results. Monitoring and evaluation obtained the detailed daily schedule of each training event, and also obtained the daily attendance logs for all literacy workers trained. This allowed us to determine whether a given facilitator had been trained in a given topic or content. Tables presented earlier in this report examine the relative impact of having received training in particular topics.

Facilitators generally felt that, to be effective at promoting literacy in the Mayan language, they required more training in the writing of K'iche'. Most facilitators had their first experience at writing their native language with the COMAL Project. As with participants, facilitators had difficulty and expressed resistance to the learning written K'iche', and argued that the dialect differences in each sociolinguistic region would simply increase illiteracy in the Mayan communities.

Facilitators showed interest in receiving training in various teaching techniques and content areas, some of which correspond to participant interests, such as community organization, and making minutes and arrangements. Facilitators also expressed interest in receiving courses on how to reduce desertion in literacy groups.

The lack of a socialization strategy for facilitators did not help reinforce the effectiveness or knowledge base among the literacy promoters of the NGO's.

Impact in the Life of the Facilitators

Facilitators experience a wide variety of satisfaction, strengths and motivations, frustrations, weaknesses and dislikes. These feelings cause an impact in individual and group outcomes in the community. In general, facilitators express

positive feelings about "being fortunate to have been taken into account," a sense of personal worth and pride for the contribution they are making to their community.

"You used to hear that we were not worth anything because we are indigenous, and that our language has no value, but now that it is being taken into account because it is being written, they are teaching letters. It is hard but we have to make the effort." (Focus Group with Facilitators No. 1 2000)

The facilitators expressed frustration when:

- there is little progress by the participants
- absenteeism or drop-out is high
- they feel pressured by the NGO to keep the group intact
- inadequate or insufficient supplies are provided
- they do not receive the institutional support that they ask for
- training do not cover their perceived needs
- they see the final results of the literacy process
- they cannot respond to participants' request to provide follow-up literacy training

One of the most discouraging aspects for facilitators was participant absenteeism and drop-out, because they felt it reflected on their own capabilities. Some facilitators also associated poor results with low expectations and motivation of their participants.

The lack of supplies and equipment created pressure and tension between participants and facilitators, and between facilitators and the NGO. There was also institutional pressure applied by the NGO on facilitators to keep participants initially enrolled in the group and to ensure that they all passed at the end of the process. This pressure made facilitators conscious of these issues, but also created a situation in which the group's progress and results reported to the NGO might not coincide with reality. Some NGOs also used a discounting mechanism, where the facilitator pay was tied to the number of participants reported to still be in the group.

Frustration was also expressed at differences of opinion between facilitators, NGO literacy supervisors and CONALFA supervisors because the latter are critical about participant learning levels, causing discouragement inside the group and criticism of the facilitator.

The national political and economic situation also negatively impacted the COMAL Project, disrupting arrangements facilitators negotiated with other institutions for community projects to accompany literacy training. Unfulfilled commitments by FIS and FONAPAZ, institutional bureaucracy and skeptical community participation affected literacy group cohesion and interest levels.

Confusion and delay also characterized negotiations with governmental and other authorities, including CONALFA, where drastic budgetary cuts and personnel changes occurred.

The experience of teaching to read and write causes significant impacts on the facilitator in terms of personal economics, work expectations, social status, personal and community relationships and individual capabilities, and these impacts cause facilitators to develop alternative plans, goals and motivations.

Facilitators perceive that the training they have received has increased their level of knowledge. This is felt to be true even though the qualitative change in their life is not always immediately apparent. Underlying this attitude is a belief in the economic potential derived from education.

While facilitator experiences vary greatly and range from frustration to immense satisfaction, there is no question that the lives of facilitators are significantly changed as a result of the literacy process.

Project Results

Results by NGO

The COMAL Project was implemented through agreements entered into with a large number, and variety, of NGOs operating in the Zonapaz. Table 36 shows the final results, by NGO, for the three-year period of the Project. A total of 37,784 persons were made literate by the 27 NGOs. The largest numbers of new literates came from IXMUKANÉ (5,546), ADEJUC (3,918), FUNDES (3,357), CDRO (3,305), FUNRURAL (2,804) and FUNDAZÚCAR (2,214).

Implementing NGO	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
ACODIN	174	56%	15%	25%	4%
ADEJUC	3,918	69%	5%	25%	1%
ADERSO	894	72%	2%	26%	0%
ADESMA	1,563	72%	7%	18%	3%
HADITA	276	64%	4%	32%	0%
ADISA	1,256	57%	6%	30%	8%
ALMG	127	29%	6%	52%	13%
ASODEMI	953	34%	6%	52%	8%
ASOREMA	1,183	71%	7%	20%	2%
Belejeb Batz	439	49%	6%	44%	1%
CCAM	527	27%	4%	46%	23%
CDRO	3,305	69%	3%	28%	1%

Table 36: 1999-2001 Literacy Cycles Final Results by Organization					
Implementing NGO	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
COINDI	1,631	57%	4%	38%	2%
Consejo Pueblos Mayas Guatemala	651	66%	8%	26%	0%
COPROJUC	542	59%	14%	27%	0%
DICOR	357	43%	5%	49%	3%
ECODESARROLLO	263	74%	7%	19%	0%
FÉ Y ALEGRÍA	1,300	52%	6%	40%	2%
Foro de la Mujer	131	31%	5%	52%	12%
FUNDAESE	406	68%	5%	27%	1%
FUNDAP	279	19%	5%	62%	14%
FUNDAZÚCAR	2,214	57%	4%	38%	0%
FUNDES	3,357	61%	9%	25%	6%
FUNRURAL	2,804	78%	7%	13%	1%
IXMUKANÉ	5,546	61%	10%	27%	3%
PRODESCA	1,817	68%	2%	27%	3%
SIDERGUA	1,871	72%	9%	19%	0%
Total (27 NGOs)	37,784	60%	6%	30%	3%

The Institutional Support of the NGOs of the COMAL Project

Particularly during the early stages of the COMAL Project, there were gaps in terms of the institutional support provided by NGOs to the facilitators. As a result, facilitators would seek support from other institutions, groups or individual people in the community. Facilitators expressed that in some cases they sought out schoolteachers or priests for support, supplies, and matters such as "the use of the dieresis in K'iche'."

Materials and Supplies

The beginning of the Project was characterized by a paucity of materials and a general sense of informality about the ICL methodology itself. The lack of materials (particularly in K'iche') led to innumerable problems, including the use of material incompatible with the ICL model. Facilitator morale was negatively affected by participant perception of the "threadbare" quality of the Project, and facilitators were frustrated at the ineffectiveness of their own attempts to purchase or acquire materials that turned out to be inappropriate for adult education.

The final year of the Project created a wealth of materials in Spanish and Mayan languages with content tuned to adult interests and motivations.

Selection and Training of Literacy Facilitators

NGOs steadily increased the proportion of facilitators with at least a sixth grade primary education level, while maintaining requirements regarding leadership skills, community credibility and commitment.

Training provided by the COMAL Project tied to provide facilitators with a broad understanding of the ICL process, while emphasizing an active learning methodology that provoked questioning and participation. During the first two years of the Project, however, there was a predominance of memorization of techniques and dynamics, often with little understanding by the facilitators of why or when these should be used. Furthermore, most of these techniques and dynamics were untested and as a result were ineffective or even rejected by participants.

Early training was not well adapted to the educational and knowledge level of the facilitators, causing problems in replication at the literacy group level. Nevertheless, facilitators always expressed that the training they received stimulated their creativity and expanded their overall knowledge base.

Working with Mayan communities implies the need for competent technical personnel with linguistics experience. Almost all literacy technician and facilitator training was conducted in Spanish. Grammatical issues regarding the writing of K'ekchi' were also not resolved until the final year of the Project.

The training to the facilitators about the ACI, made an emphasis in the search of satisfactions of the expectations of an adults, trying that the subjects could be practiced in the participants daily life. The Project tried that the literacy process would impact the life of the participants and facilitators in the economic, social, thoughtfulness and other projects' life.

The ACI methodology demanded the facilitators to achieve empathy and stimulation with their groups. Have an emphasis in certain progresses: measuring and visualizing of tangible products. But it also has relative flexibility during the sessions on: attendance, subjects, and supplies.

Literacy Technicians and Supervision of Facilitators and Their Groups

In the latter part of the Project, more intensive use of NGO and Project literacy technicians provided better support for the facilitators. This support consisted of carrying out home visits with the facilitators, undertaking motivation visits to the groups, clearing up of facilitators' doubts and reinforcing facilitators' training. Follow-up, rather than "supervision," characterized this phase of the Project, and

the relationship between NGO literacy technicians and facilitators was enhanced in 2001 when the former became directly responsible for the training of the latter. During the first two years of the Project, Save the Children personnel carried out the training of facilitators, and insufficient attention was placed on the role of the NGO literacy technicians.

The potential for adequate supervision has always been limited by the distance and inaccessibility of the literacy centers, combined in most cases with a lack of transportation facilities to the communities. During the last year of the Project, great emphasis was placed on improving the effectiveness of supervision through early detection of facilitator weaknesses in knowledge and group management, and appropriate support and follow-up.

During COMAL's last year, NGOs greatly strengthened Project implementation based on feedback and insights provided by the Monitoring and Evaluation team and improved NGO support activities carried out by Save the Children personnel. This resulted in positive action by NGOs based on lessons learned about the technical, methodological and administrative requirements and limitations of the ICL model, improvements in materials and training techniques, and a more effective support/supervision model.

Results by Year

As was presented earlier, Save the Children implemented the COMAL Project through a total of 27 NGOs over a three-year period in seven departments, forming 2,549 literacy groups with 62,834 participants. The diversity of implementing mechanisms, locales, literacy workers and participants provided the Project with ample opportunity to employ the monitoring and evaluation system to identify successful strategies as well as weaknesses, and through frequent presentation of quantitative and qualitative results and analyses to the NGO network, the Project underwent continuous improvement.

The previous sections identified some of the changes that were implemented in response to these analyses. This section examines the results of the Project by year, frequently in conjunction with the many factors found to relate to success. It was a goal of the Project to develop a methodology that not only increased success, but did so in as many settings and with as wide a range of conditions and participants as possible. The results presented in this section highlight how the Project methodology came to fulfill that goal.

All groups were evaluated in terms of outcomes and conditions. In order to understand how different factors relate to the success of a group, we used the monitoring and evaluation system to report the key outcome variable for each individual in the group based upon the final evaluation performed at the end of

the literacy cycle. The outcome for an individual, therefore, can be characterized as either:

- Passing the literacy evaluation examination
- Failing the literacy evaluation examination (“In process,” in CONALFA terminology)
- Dropping out from the group before the literacy evaluation examination is given
- Belonging to a group that disintegrates

While it may seem that attention should be placed upon only the measure of success—passing the literacy evaluation exam—it is actually more important to determine why a participant might fail to do so. As we will see, the success of the COMAL Project had more to do with increasing retention—avoiding drop-out and group disintegration—than any other aspect. While many factors contributed to this success, this section of the report seeks to identify which factors affected which aspect of success, and with whom.

Table 37 presents the results for 1999 by organization. As mentioned earlier, 1999 was something of a disappointment for the Project; both because of shortfalls in the initial enrollment and a pass rate lower than expected. Only 2,536 (42%) of participants passed the literacy test. Particularly of concern was the high drop-out rate (44%) and group disintegration rate (the groups of 9% of participants fell apart). The fact that 6% of the participants failed the literacy test pales by comparison with these figures, focusing our attention on how to improve retention. If the Project managed to increase retention, one could expect around 88% of those who took the literacy test to pass it.

Primary Organization	Implementing NGO	Literates Produced	Result			
			Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
ADEJUC	ADEJUC	209	42%	5%	53%	0%
	ADISA	318	67%	6%	27%	0%
	ALMG	127	29%	6%	52%	13%
	CCAM	232	20%	3%	50%	28%
	DICOR	357	43%	5%	49%	3%
	FUNDADESE	85	42%	4%	54%	0%
	IXMUKANÉ	299	44%	7%	50%	0%
COINDI	COINDI	384	44%	4%	47%	5%
FUNDAZÚCAR	FUNDAZÚCAR	106	55%	3%	43%	0%
FUNDES	FUNDES	419	60%	17%	12%	12%
Total (11 NGOs)		2,536	42%	6%	44%	9%

The wide range of pass rates the different NGOs obtained in 1999 was both a cause for concern—CCAM had a miserable pass rate of 20%—and a source of hope—if ADISA could achieve 67%, then why couldn't all of the NGOs? Very clearly, the key was to reduce drop-out by keeping the interest of participants throughout the literacy cycle and holding groups together. NGOs had a quite wide range of organizational capacity, especially with regard to internal training experience and skills, and this clearly affected their ability to implement the Project.

The 2000 literacy cycle reflects the Project's response to the 1999 results. Table 38 shows that, overall, a pass rate of 57% was achieved, mostly through reducing drop-out (from 44% in 1999 to 33% in 2000) and avoiding group disintegration (down to 5% in 2000 from 9% the prior year).

Primary Organization	Implementing NGO	Literates Produced	Result			
			Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
ADEJUC	ADEJUC	1,051	67%	5%	24%	4%
	ADISA	466	65%	0%	25%	11%
	ASODEMI	953	34%	6%	52%	8%
	ASOREMA	163	80%	2%	18%	0%
	CCAM	295	39%	5%	41%	15%
	COPROJUC	542	59%	14%	27%	0%
	FUNDADESE	321	81%	5%	13%	1%
	IXMUKANÉ	2,334	66%	2%	28%	5%
ADIAT	ADIAT	276	64%	4%	32%	0%
CDRO	CDRO	1,832	67%	4%	28%	1%
COINDI	COINDI	496	59%	4%	37%	0%
CRS	ACODIN	174	56%	15%	25%	4%
	ADESMA	732	71%	9%	14%	6%
	ECODESARROLLO	263	74%	7%	19%	0%
FE y ALEGRÍA	FE y ALEGRÍA	293	48%	7%	45%	0%
FUNDAP	FUNDAP	279	19%	5%	62%	14%
FUNDAZÚCAR	FUNDAZÚCAR	351	57%	3%	40%	0%
FUNDES	FUNDES	1,131	55%	10%	26%	10%
FUNRURAL	FUNRURAL	664	74%	3%	19%	5%
PRODESCA	PRODESCA	580	60%	5%	31%	4%
SIDERGUA	SIDERGUA	240	64%	11%	25%	0%
Total (21 NGOs)		13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%

What is perhaps the most impressive in 2000, however, is the appearance of highly successful NGOs. FUNDADESE achieved a pass rate of 81%, ASOREMA 80%, ECODESARROLLO and FUNRURAL 74%. In each of these cases, drop-out was cut to under 20% and failure to 2-5%. Very disappointing results were seen, nonetheless, for NGOs such as FUNDAP (19% pass rate), ASODEMI (34%)

and CCAM (39%). But the fact that 12 of the 21 NGOs achieved pass rates of 60% or better once again provided the Project with a new level of expectation.

Many changes took place in the 2001 literacy cycle, including a more critical selection process for NGOs (although more groups and participants were serviced, this was done with fewer NGOs either with proven track records or selected much more carefully than in the past), improved materials and supervision, and wider dissemination of the strategies found to be successful in prior years. Table 39 shows that the Project achieved a pass rate of 66% and the drop-out rate was further cut to 26%. In 1999, drop-out and group disintegration amounted to 53%. In the 2001 literacy cycle, together they accounted for but 27% of participants.

Implementing NGO	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
ADEJUC	2,658	74%	5%	22%	0%
ADERSO	894	72%	2%	26%	0%
ADESMA	831	74%	5%	22%	0%
ADISA	472	47%	10%	35%	9%
Belejeb Batz	439	49%	6%	44%	1%
ASOREMA	1,020	70%	8%	20%	2%
CDRO	1,473	72%	1%	27%	0%
COINDI	751	64%	3%	31%	2%
Consejo Pueblos Mayas Guatemala	651	66%	8%	26%	0%
FÉ Y ALEGRÍA	1,007	54%	6%	38%	2%
Foro de la Mujer	131	31%	5%	52%	12%
FUNDAZÚCAR	1,757	58%	5%	38%	0%
FUNDES	1,807	65%	6%	28%	1%
FUNRURAL	2,140	80%	9%	11%	0%
IXMUKANÉ	2,913	60%	16%	24%	1%
PRODESCA	1,237	73%	9%	18%	0%
SIDERGUA	1,631	73%	9%	18%	0%
Total (17 NGOs)	21,812	66%	7%	26%	1%

Of the 17 NGOs, only five of them failed to achieve a 60% pass rate and eight of them had pass rates of 70% or better. As a result, the 2001 literacy cycle produced 21,812 new literates, 58% of the total over the life of the Project.

Results by Department

As was seen earlier, most of the groups in 1999 were concentrated in the department of El Quiché. Table 40 shows that most (61%) of the literates

produced in 1999 were from the same department. The pass rates varied widely between the departments, being highest (73%) in Totonicapán and lowest (27%) in Quetzaltenango, although the small numbers make interpretation difficult.

Department	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
El Quiché	1,550	39%	5%	48%	9%
Quetzaltenango	40	27%	40%	16%	17%
Sololá	639	43%	7%	41%	9%
Suchitepéquez	106	55%	3%	43%	0%
Totonicapán	201	73%	5%	16%	6%
Total 1999	2,536	42%	6%	44%	9%

Table 41 shows the same information for the seven departments corresponding to the 2000 literacy cycle. With the exception of Quetzaltenango, a tighter range of pass rates (56-84%) is observed. El Quiché accounts for 46% of all new literates produced by the Project in 2000.

Department	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Alta Verapaz	303	84%	8%	8%	0%
El Quiché	6,125	56%	4%	34%	6%
Quetzaltenango	1,107	35%	8%	44%	13%
San Marcos	940	71%	3%	23%	3%
Sololá	1,076	60%	3%	40%	0%
Suchitepéquez	341	57%	3%	40%	0%
Totonicapán	3,544	65%	7%	26%	2%
Total 2000	13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%

Table 42 presents the results of the 2001 literacy cycle by department. Pass rates range from 59% (Quetzaltenango) to 73% (Sololá). El Quiché accounted for 44% of the new literates, followed by Totonicapán (20%) and Sololá (18%).

Department	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
El Quiché	9,554	64%	10%	24%	2%
Quetzaltenango	2,310	59%	6%	33%	2%
Sololá	3,826	73%	3%	22%	2%
Suchitepéquez	1,757	58%	5%	38%	0%
Totonicapán	4,365	72%	5%	23%	0%
Total 2001	21,812	66%	7%	26%	1%

Table 43 shows the life of Project production of literates by department. Of the 37,784 total, 17,229 (46%) correspond to El Quiché, 8,110 (21%) to Totonicapán, 5,541 (15%) to Sololá, 3,457 (9%) to Quetzaltenango and 2,204 (6%) to Suchitepéquez.

Department	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Alta Verapaz	303	84%	8%	8%	0%
El Quiché	17,229	58%	7%	31%	4%
Quetzaltenango	3,457	48%	8%	38%	7%
San Marcos	940	71%	3%	23%	3%
Sololá	5,541	65%	4%	28%	3%
Suchitepéquez	2,204	57%	4%	38%	0%
Totonicapán	8,110	69%	6%	25%	1%
Total 1999-2001	37,784	60%	6%	30%	3%

Results by Area

Although the Project focused on rural areas, some groups were formed in areas classified as urban (usually the municipal capital). Table 44 shows that 97% of literate produced in 1999 were members of groups in rural areas.

Area	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Rural	2,462	42%	6%	44%	9%
Urban	74	31%	20%	33%	16%
Total 1999	2,536	42%	6%	44%	9%

The expansion of Project coverage in the 2000 literacy cycle also increased the proportion of new literates from urban areas to 11% (Table 45). Although failure rates were higher among rural participants (6% versus 2%), the higher drop-out rate among urban participants gave a slight advantage to the rural participants in terms of the pass rate.

Area	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Rural	11,993	57%	6%	32%	5%
Urban	1,433	56%	2%	37%	5%
Peri-urban	10	59%	12%	29%	0%
Total 2000	13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%

In the 2001 literacy cycle, 10% of participants were from areas classified as urban. Table 46 shows that pass rates continued to favor rural participants by a slight margin.

Area	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Rural	19,689	66%	7%	26%	1%
Urban	1,822	64%	8%	26%	1%
Peri-urban	301	60%	5%	35%	0%
Total 2001	21,812	66%	7%	26%	1%

Table 47 shows the life of Project results by area. Ninety percent of all literates were from groups in rural areas, and there are no significant differences in any of the rates between rural and urban participants.

Area	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Rural	34,144	60%	6%	30%	3%
Urban	3,329	59%	6%	31%	4%
Peri-urban	311	60%	5%	35%	0%
Total 1999-2001	37,784	60%	6%	30%	3%

Gender Interaction of Facilitators and Participants

This section examines the effect of gender and age of both facilitators and participants.

Table 48 shows that, in 1999, female facilitators achieved pass rates significantly higher (46%) than did their male counterparts (38%). Interestingly, by the last year of the Project male and female facilitators did equally well.

Facilitator Gender	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Male	38%	56%	66%	59%
Female	46%	58%	66%	61%

Similarly, in 1999 pass rates for female participants were higher than for men (see Table 49), due mostly to the higher drop-out rates for the latter.

Participant Gender	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Male	652	37%	4%	51%	8%
Female	1,884	43%	7%	41%	9%
Total 1999	2,536	42%	6%	44%	9%

As shown in Table 50, in 2000 male participants still had higher drop-out rates than did women, but even with the higher literacy examination failure rates of women, female participants out performed males.

Participant Gender	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Male	3,921	56%	4%	35%	5%
Female	9,515	58%	6%	31%	5%
Total 2000	13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%

By 2001, participant gender equality was nearly evident, as shown in Table 51.

Participant Gender	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Male	6,657	65%	6%	27%	1%
Female	15,155	66%	7%	26%	1%
Total 2001	21,812	66%	7%	26%	1%

Table 52 shows the three-year combined results by participant gender. Female participants comprised 70% of both initial enrollment and literates produced, and overall performed somewhat better than men.

Participant Gender	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Male	11,230	59%	5%	32%	4%
Female	26,554	61%	7%	29%	3%
Total 1999-2001	37,784	60%	6%	30%	3%

The 1999 gender results for both facilitators and participants brought to question the potential interaction of facilitator and participant gender. Table 53 looks at the pass rates, by year, based on the four combinations of facilitator and participant gender. Not surprisingly, in 1999 the best results were obtained by female facilitators with female participants. Male participants did better with

female rather than male facilitators. Gender sensitivity training carried out during subsequent years has mostly eliminated the effects of gender interactions.

Gender of Facilitator/Participant	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
Male / Male	36%	56%	66%	60%
Male / Female	40%	55%	66%	59%
Female / Male	40%	55%	64%	58%
Female / Female	47%	59%	66%	62%

We were also able to examine the gender composition of the group and gender-specific outcomes. Table 54, for 1999, provided a startling insight into gender dynamics in literacy groups. If there were as few as one male participant in a group, the drop-out rate of women was 70% higher (46%) than in women-only groups (27%). This striking difference is shown graphically in Figure 10.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Men Present	1,214	39%	5%	46%	9%
Only Women	670	54%	12%	27%	8%
Total 1999	1,884	43%	7%	41%	9%

Figure 10
Presence of Men and Results for Women - 1999

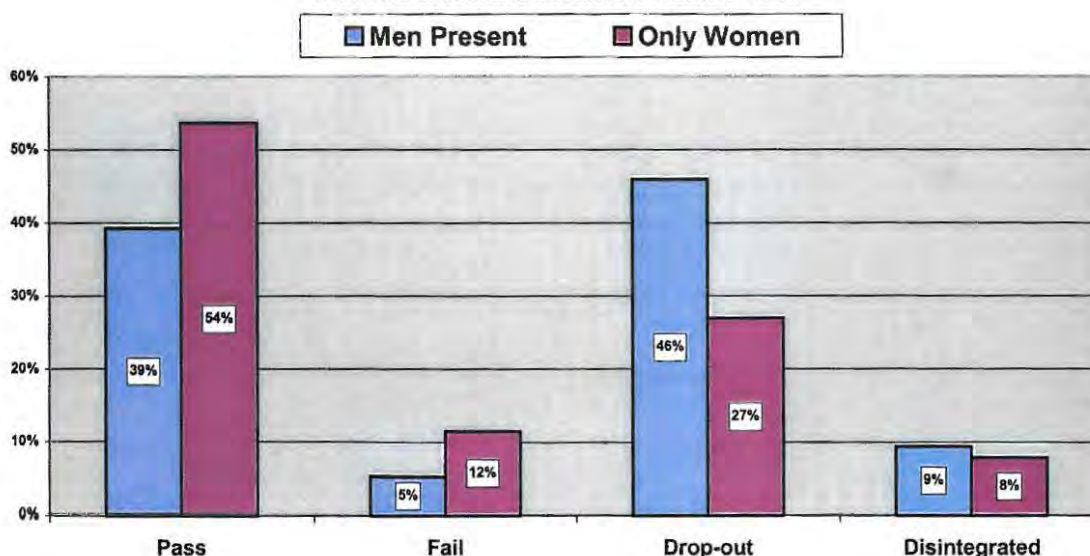


Table 55 looks at the same thing for men in 1999. There were only a few men-only groups in 1999, but it also appears that men-only groups performed better, again due to lower drop-out rates, than mixed-gender groups.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Women Present	625	37%	4%	51%	9%
Only Men	27	49%	9%	42%	0%
Total 1999	652	37%	4%	51%	8%

Table 56 repeats the analysis for women in the 2000 literacy cycle. Although the difference is not as dramatic as in 1999, higher drop-out and lower pass rates for women continue to be associated with the presence of men in the groups.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Men Present	6,946	57%	6%	32%	5%
Only Women	2,569	59%	7%	29%	6%
Total 2000	9,515	58%	6%	31%	5%

Table 57 does the same analysis for men in the 2000 cycle. Men do better in men-only groups due to a combination of lower drop-out, group disintegration and literacy examination failure rates.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Women Present	3,484	55%	4%	36%	6%
Only Men	437	65%	2%	30%	3%
Total 2000	3,921	56%	4%	35%	5%

By the 2001 literacy cycle, the results for women with and without men in the groups were virtually identical, as shown in Table 58.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Men Present	11,219	66%	7%	26%	1%
Only Women	3,936	67%	8%	25%	0%
Total 2001	15,155	66%	7%	26%	1%

Table 59 shows that, for men in 2001, there no longer were any differences in results between groups that were men-only or with women present.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Women Present	5,879	65%	6%	27%	1%
Only Men	778	65%	6%	27%	2%
Total 2001	6,657	65%	6%	27%	1%

Table 60 summarizes the three years of experience for women. Overall, 27% of all new female literates came from women-only groups, where performance was 3% better due to lower drop-out rates.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Men Present	19,379	60%	7%	30%	4%
Only Women	7,175	63%	8%	27%	3%
Total 1999-2001	26,554	61%	7%	29%	3%

Table 61 shows that men perform better in men-only groups by a significant margin, although only about 11% of new male literates came from such groups. Men-only groups had lower drop-out rates and lower group disintegration rates.

Group Gender Mix	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
Women Present	9,988	59%	5%	33%	4%
Only Men	1,242	65%	5%	28%	2%
Total 1999-2001	11,230	59%	5%	32%	4%

Age Effects of Facilitators and Participants

Pass rates by facilitator age are shown for all years of the Project in Table 62. In 1999, lower pass rates were observed for younger (41%) and particularly older (28%) facilitators. The highest pass rates were found in facilitators 21-30 years old. In 2000, the highest pass rates (61% and 59%) were found in facilitators from both the 31-40 and 21-30 age groups, with younger (20 or less) and older (41 or more) facilitators having somewhat lower pass rates (57% and 56%, respectively). By 2001 only younger facilitators had pass rates slightly lower (64%) than any of the other age groups, who all performed equally (67%).

Facilitator Age	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	Total
20 or less	41%	57%	64%	59%
21 – 30	44%	59%	67%	62%
31 – 40	36%	61%	67%	61%
41 +	28%	56%	67%	59%

Apart from the goal of targeting the Project towards youth, the 1999 literacy cycle raised concerns about efficiency problems with older participants. Table 63 shows that pass rates dropped off beginning about age 30, and fell to 27% among participants 45 or more years old. This drop off was due to a combination of literacy examination failure, drop-out and group disintegration.

Age of Participant	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
No age specified	10	15%	9%	14%	62%
10-14	138	45%	7%	43%	6%
15-19	842	47%	4%	42%	7%
20-24	332	44%	5%	42%	9%
25-29	329	44%	6%	44%	6%
30-34	243	42%	6%	44%	9%
35-39	263	43%	6%	42%	9%
40-44	150	38%	8%	45%	10%
45 +	229	27%	11%	50%	12%
Total 1999	2,536	42%	6%	44%	9%

In 2000, although younger participants continued to enjoy the highest pass rates, the drop off in pass rates among older participants is not so marked, as shown in Table 64. Drop-out continues to increase with age, but literacy examination failure and group disintegration are less affected by age than in 1999.

Table 64: 2000 Literacy Cycle Final Results by Age of Participant					
Age of Participant	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
No age specified	9	14%	3%	9%	73%
10-14	93	69%	5%	24%	2%
15-19	5,519	63%	5%	29%	4%
20-24	2,147	59%	4%	31%	6%
25-29	1,585	54%	6%	34%	6%
30-34	1,334	55%	6%	34%	5%
35-39	1,113	52%	5%	38%	6%
40-44	699	50%	6%	38%	6%
45 +	1,343	48%	7%	39%	6%
Total 2000	13,436	57%	5%	33%	5%

This same pattern continues in the 2001 literacy cycle, as shown in Table 65. The new literacy examination applied in 2001, which were generally harder for all participants than the CONALFA-based tests used in 1999 and 2000, appear to affect participants 40 years or older somewhat more.

Table 65: 2001 Literacy Cycle Final Results by Age of Participant					
Age of Participant	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
No age specified	8	67%	8%	25%	0%
10-14	101	68%	5%	22%	5%
15-19	8,367	70%	7%	22%	1%
20-24	3,392	69%	7%	23%	1%
25-29	2,696	68%	6%	25%	1%
30-34	2,024	65%	7%	28%	1%
35-39	1,884	64%	6%	29%	1%
40-44	1,207	60%	8%	31%	1%
45 +	2,002	56%	10%	34%	1%
Total 2001	21,812	66%	7%	26%	1%

Table 66 summarizes the three years of Project implementation. The pattern of increased drop-out with age is quite clear, rising systematically from 26% in the 15-19 age group to 38% in the 45 and older group. Older learners face significant challenges to acquiring literacy: opportunity costs associated with attending literacy sessions, poorer eyesight, poorly developed psychomotor skills (such as for holding a pencil), family pressures, social stigmas associated with "going back to school," etc. Increased literacy examination failure rates are also characteristic of the 40 and older age groups who do remain in literacy groups. Importantly, the table shows that 67% of all new literates produced by the Project were between 15 and 29 years of age.

Age of Participant	Literates Produced	Result			
		Pass	Fail	Drop-out	Disintegrated
No age specified	27	19%	6%	13%	62%
10-14	332	56%	6%	33%	5%
15-19	14,728	65%	6%	26%	2%
20-24	5,871	63%	6%	28%	4%
25-29	4,610	60%	6%	30%	3%
30-34	3,601	59%	6%	32%	3%
35-39	3,260	57%	6%	34%	4%
40-44	2,056	54%	7%	35%	4%
45 +	3,574	50%	9%	38%	4%
Total 1999-2001	37,784	60%	6%	30%	3%

Age and gender combined with marital status are important variables affecting the time dedicated to literacy sessions. Men often are instrumental in the decision-making process regarding the participation of all women in their family group.

Even though participants express a belief that education can help them improve their economic, personal or community life, most participants, and especially those who are older, openly identified a fear of "forgetting what they have learned" due to the lack of follow-up literacy classes.

A reality of life among the rural Mayan population is that the bonds formed in the interethnic relationships between generations, male-dominated gender communication and sociolinguistic comprehension create a "fear" in the individual to express themselves in public. The ICL literacy sessions create a space in which expression and participation is encouraged. For participants, therefore, the "shame" and "fear" of speaking in public have diminished. They now participate in community meetings and are no longer reluctant to express their opinions. ✓

Limitations of the Adult Literacy Process

Successful participants encountered widely varying degrees of difficulty in becoming literate. Prior experience and language ability were important factors in determining how difficult an individual might find the process. For example, participants felt that those who had the opportunity of attending at least a year of formal schooling found it easier to hold a pencil or draw.

On the other hand, participants frequently compared the way formal primary school is taught with the way the ICL works with adults, and sometimes doubt

the process because it does not meet their expectations as to what education is about. This expectation bias, combined with self-doubt about their own capabilities is more frequent in adults than in youth, and in women more than in men. ✓

Other perceived limitations of the adult learning process include:

1. A weak attitude towards the habit of studying, or "opening one's mind to knowledge"
2. The direction, interests and beliefs of participant's lives
3. Prioritization and distribution of participant's time
4. The manual ability to take a pencil and draw or form letters with it, or, as in the case of one women's group, letting a male facilitator guide their hand

Participants suggested that in order to overcome these limitations, homework be assigned for practice in private. This suggestion, however, has two practical implications:

1. Participants must be willing and able to dedicate the necessary time at home to practice in spite of domestic commitments
2. They must have the supplies necessary to practice effectively

Participants identified their progress by saying that they had learned "to read some letters" such as vowels, but found it difficult to combine letters to form words. Most recognized that they could copy words. Others said that they had memorized the writing of some words, such as their name, the name of their town, municipality or department, or the names of their literacy classmates.

The participants insisted that every letter of the alphabet should be taught, so they can read fluidly. They also question the ICL approach to teaching complete derivative words based on generative words. ✓

In terms of native language literacy training, participants universally compare its usefulness to Spanish. Participants indicate the utility of Spanish for communicating outside their own community, even if the other community is also Mayan speaking. Participants thus prefer learning to read, write and speak in Spanish, generally adding the argument that they want to learn Spanish because they can already speak their own language. ✓

Participants sometimes criticized the knowledge or teaching skill of the facilitator, but were more often critical of the lack of appropriate materials to learn with.

The 2001 literacy cycle started after a considerable delay. This moved the end-of-cycle evaluation period as well, causing some conflict with seasonal migration movements to the coast.

Impact at the End of the Project

The shift in overall Project results may be observed in Figures 10-12 for 1999, 2000 and 2001, respectively. Clearly, Project success in 2001 was achieved by cutting drop-out in half and virtually eliminating group disintegration. Better NGO selection, improved facilitator and participant materials, effective dissemination of successful practices, improved supervision and more effective technical support and assistance from Save the Children all contributed significantly to these results.

Figure 11
1999 Results

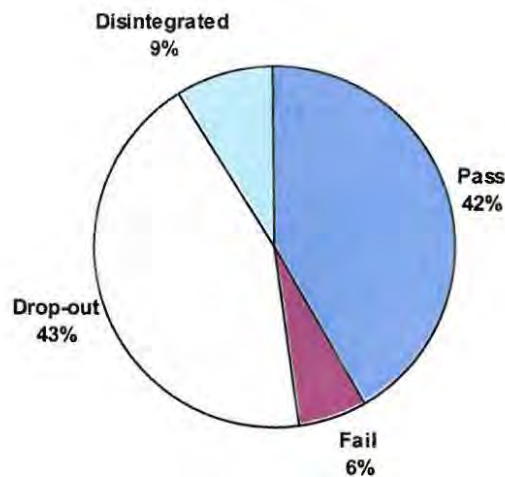


Figure 12
2000 Results

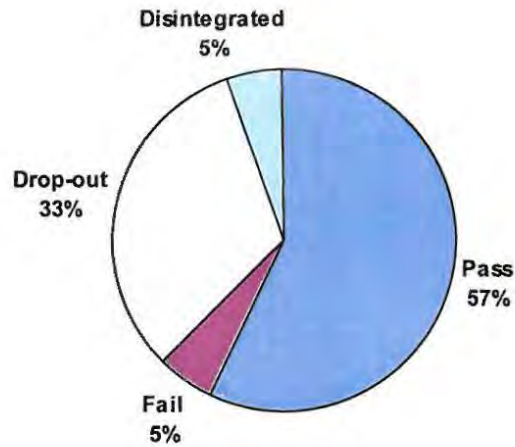
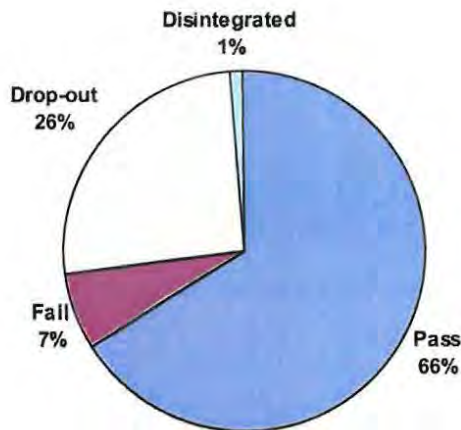


Figure 13
2001 Results



Although the Project clearly achieved an impressive success rate, still one out of three participants failed to pass. Drop-out affected more than one in four participants and is caused by a combination of national socioeconomic problems common to all, personal problems that "are so private you are the only one who knows them" and some technical weaknesses of the COMAL Project. ✓

Drop-out

For some participants, when the reasons for which a person has an interest in enrolling in a literacy group lose importance or fail to materialize, their likelihood of staying in the literacy group also diminishes. Failure to attend was almost always stated to be due to "not enough time," but this reflects a number of underlying priorities and perceived progress and benefits of the literacy process.

There are a large number of reasons why participants drop-out, but the four fundamental reasons revealed through interviews with drop-outs are related to:

1. Changes in the aspirations, individual limitations and perceptions of the world can motivate a person into suddenly or gradually stopping their participation in the literacy process.
2. Pressures associated with family, community culture, gender, marital status, community organizations and/or social participation accumulate to cause a person to stop their learning process.
3. Community poverty exerts economic and social pressure, such as the need for one or more family members to migrate. This type of pressure is beyond the control of the individual and the sphere of influence of the methodology or the implementing NGO.
4. Failure of the ICL methodology or the NGO to satisfy the needs of individuals and groups.

In the case of women, the most powerful reasons for dropping out are related to family commitments, especially the care of children, an aspect especially influential when the children are young or of preschool age. Other frequently mentioned barriers include household work, the permission of the husband, getting married, caring for other people, becoming widowed or changes in household composition due to migration.

Childcare is a problem not only generally, but can be a specific concern during the literacy sessions themselves when other arrangements must be made for their care.

The approval of a husband is crucial for women to carry out any activity, and can provoke many problems, not only internally for the family, but also for the facilitator. A woman might decide to participate in the literacy sessions, but if the husband at any time says otherwise, the woman will drop out from the sessions. Similarly, if a woman participant becomes married or enters into union while she is in literacy training, she may be forced to drop out by her mate.

Maternity can also interrupt the literacy process as can, to a lesser degree, provision of care for sick or elderly family members. Women who become

widowed or who must assume additional responsibilities when family members migrate often find it impossible to continue with sessions.

Economic pressures cause individuals to seek work opportunities outside of their communities, effectively ending their participation in the literacy group. As with health problems, this is an area in which neither the facilitator nor the Project can have much influence.

A literacy group heterogeneous in terms of age can also increase drop-out or even the disintegration of the group when:

- Older adults feel pressured by a majority of younger participants
- Participants include children not accepted by or reported by the facilitator
- Children participate alternately between literacy and formal primary school
- Participants believe that because of their age they can no longer learn
- Neighbors ridicule adult participation in the literacy process

Some participants that dropped out said they did so because they were not interested in learning in K'iche'. Facilitators also mentioned this factor in explaining drop-outs.

Some participants said to be willing to learn and read, but did not perceive that their knowledge retention increased. After seeing no improvement over a period of time, they reached the conclusion that continuing to attend was a waste of time.

Community participation projects require an additional investment of time, sometimes competing with the literacy session schedule itself.

Finally, the rainy season adversely affects the attendance of the participants, and can lead to drop-out when conditions make it difficult to arrive at sessions with small children, for example.

Those Who Kept Going

Interviews with participants who did not drop out brought up a constant theme as to their reasons for continuing their literacy training: "because they want to improve themselves." Continuing participants also mentioned the degree of empathy that the facilitator has achieved with the participants in the group, to the point that the participants do not wish to "mistreat" the facilitator or appear ungrateful. Another theme is the feeling that the group has found support for their problems. An example of this is the testimony given by a participant who explained that even though she cannot see very well in the afternoons, she keeps attending the sessions to help her to forget the disappearance of her

children during the internal armed conflict. She feels that has not learned as much as she should because her sadness does not allow her to pay enough attention.

Continuing participants said that they feel "happy and grateful to the facilitator" and because of this they were learning. Even participants who think that they haven't learned anything express this feeling, underscoring the empathy achieved by the facilitator. Facilitator empathy was most often mentioned when a group had a unifying purpose, such as religion.

Participants who say they want to keep learning envision using their newly acquired skills to read and write and use numbers. Skills acquired in the Spanish language are often mentioned as useful to them.

It is especially important for participants to be able to sense their progress, especially during the early stages of literacy training. Many expressed that drop-out is due to participants not being able to clearly see enough progress during the difficult beginnings of literacy training. This suggests that facilitators must provide constant feedback and encouragement to reduce early drop-out.

Achievements and Knowledge Retention

Most successful participants can identify some form of positive change in their lives due to their literacy training. Women participants often identified feeling "more sure" or trusting of themselves and their abilities, suggesting that the ICL literacy training can help women develop the independence and self-reliance necessary to take a more active role in their lives.

In terms of tangible achievements, participants mentioned results related to reading, writing and mathematics, such as:

1. Having learned "some [but not all] letters" of the alphabet
2. They can write and sign their name, no longer having to "sign" with their fingerprint
3. Writing the names of others
4. Writing the names of their community, municipality and department
5. Writing the names of some animals
6. Some believed they understand more words in Spanish
7. They learned the Spanish names for the parts of the human body, something seen as important to help them to ask for medicine and explain an illness
8. Writing numbers from 1 to 10
9. Perform addition, and with some difficulty, subtraction

Participants often expressed the feeling that they had learned so little of all there was to learn, suggesting both that they have become aware of a wider world but also that the literacy training is viewed as falling short of their (perhaps new) expectations.

Interviews with successful participants about how they felt at the end of the literacy cycle generally yielded expressions of satisfaction combined with relief: "it was worth it learning read and write," happiness because soon they will finish the process, they will have more time to take care of work or do things at home, they won't have to worry about attending, that by finishing the commitment they will feel free and not under pressure to attend.

There were a few participants who expressed indifference at the end of the literacy cycle, saying that it was not worth the time invested because they did not learn much. These participants said that, because of other responsibilities, they did not expect to follow up on the lessons learned once the process finished. For these participants, literacy does not appear to be a priority in their future plans and life projects.

The Impact of the Literacy Process on Self, Family and Community

The Impact in the Lives of the Participants

In general, persons made literate through the COMAL Project identified through the ICL literacy process the opportunity for change in their lives: improving their economic situation by means of management of new knowledge, greater self-worth and self-esteem, feeling less "sad," "ashamed" or insecure, and identification of education as a means or model for progress.

Participant Self-esteem

Participants identified changes in their personal lives related to self-confidence and their relationships with other people in their family and community, where they felt that their worth had increased. Most felt that they would also gain short term economic benefits.

In all groups, participants identify as a great achievement the ability to write their names with accuracy. Many believe that being literate will help them defend themselves against ridicule and mistreatment by others within and especially outside of their community.

Education of their Children

One of the most outstanding changes in participants was an increased appreciation of education, both for themselves and for their own children.

Participants expressed interest in helping their children with homework although they felt that, because of their own limited knowledge, they were still not capable of orienting or guiding the child. Nonetheless, they clearly recognized that before becoming literate they could not even understand what their children did.

Economy, Work and Commerce

Participants believe that potentially the most important change in their lives resulting from the literacy process will occur at the economic level, especially in commercial activities. Specifically, participants see the ability to work with numbers for the purpose of buying and selling as a major achievement.

The Utility of Numbers

With regard to the mathematical operations, participants recognized that in knowing the numbers they can count change. Participants expressed the absolute need to learn "the numbers in Spanish" for commercial purposes. When comparing the degree of difficulty of learning "the letters" to learning "the numbers," participants said that whereas they didn't believe that they would recognize all of the letters in street signs, they would be able to identify the numbers. On the other hand, they said that it was difficult to add and even more complicated to perform subtraction. The ability to tell time was also mentioned as an accomplishment gained through literacy training.

Travel Outside of the Community

As a result of the literacy process, some participants said that they would now feel more confident traveling to town or the capital for market business or for work.

Legal Formalities

Learning Spanish gives participants a greater sense of security when dealing with the legal world outside of their community: participants feel that they are better able to deal with the need to travel, communicate and sign their names in order to conduct such formalities. Before becoming literate, participants felt that they could easily be "taken advantage of" by unscrupulous persons.

Women participants mentioned going to the municipality to obtain their identity card and being able to sign their names without having to use their fingerprints,

register a birth or request identity cards for their children, and handling inheritance matters.

Dealing with Health Problems

Participants said that becoming literate would help them in seeking out medical care because they could now identify parts of the body in Spanish and explain symptoms better. This was seen as allowing them to more effectively use the services of the health post, consulting a doctor or requesting medication.

Social Participation in the Community

Some participants expressed interest in becoming part of a community council or committee, even mentioning expectations or desires to become presidents, secretaries, treasurers and representatives, or to assume other positions in the community, or to get a position in an office of the government. Participants also mentioned community work and seeking help for the community from the municipality or other organizations.

Nonetheless, social and community participation with a representation position does not seem to be an important motivation in the lives of the participants, because in the majority of cases they see such positions as something that can take many years to achieve. Even when the participants don't expect to hold a formal position within the community, however, they express satisfaction at being able to attend community meetings, understand what is going on and express their opinion about the subject. Some participants said that, when they know more things, they want to help their neighbors by forming a literacy group to teach them to read and write.

Religious Practice

Inside the social organization of the community, religion, and especially evangelical religion, plays an important part of social life. Because literature is such an important part of all religions, many participants identified this as a strong motivation to learning to read. Successful participants mentioned that they now that they can read a little of the bible and hymns, they can more fully participate in church, including reading passages, singing in church and going to the altar.

Interethnic Communication

The participants felt that the ability to speaking some Spanish is an important achievement: "being able to speak with a ladino, saying good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, being able to ask a ladino for coffee if you are thirsty, and if a bad word is said to you, being able to defend yourself."

Interest Satisfaction

Facilitators

Key among aspects that characterize the positive experiences of the facilitators are:

1. A greater appreciation for the value of education
2. A positive sense of their contribution to a national development process
3. Becoming aware of the needs and limitations of their communities
4. Satisfaction at seeing the results of their efforts in the progress of their participants
5. A sense of belonging to a group with common interests
6. Receiving institutional support through training and supplies

Facilitators express their satisfaction and joy when they can clearly see the progress achieved by the participants during the literacy sessions, as well as in the impact that can be observed on the life projects of the participants. Facilitators also obtain great satisfaction through the recognition by participants of their efforts on their behalf.

Participants

In the majority of the cases, a primary interest of participants was "learning to write and sign their name." This interest was nearly always satisfied as a result of the literacy process.

A second interest focused on "learning to speak Spanish." This interest was quite strong but generally was not fully satisfied by the literacy process, creating dissatisfaction among some of the participants and in a very few cases led to late drop-out.

In terms of participant priorities, "learning the numbers" and basic arithmetical operations ranks third. While knowledge gained through the literacy process in this area was deemed important, and participants clearly identified its practical application, most participants felt that they needed more practice to become proficient.

Although most participants perceived that their lives had greater "value" or "worth" than before beginning the literacy classes, most felt that the lack of follow-up literacy training and/or practical application of their new knowledge posed some risk to sustained benefits.

Participants sensed some real or potential impact on their economic situation through improved management of new knowledge. In some cases, the participants felt an immediate change in their lives. The major impact corresponded attitudinal changes related to the expansion of their knowledge frontiers. In many cases, participant interest in "knowing their surroundings" exceeded what the literacy sessions were able to offer.

The majority of participants do value their literacy experience, even though they felt that they have learned "too little." This means that their expectations possibly were not satisfied, or that their expectations have increased as a result of what they have learned and reflected on during their literacy training. Most believe, nonetheless, that the little they have learned has already been of use to them. They recognize that in the past they could not read nor write anything, and now they can write words and even simple sentences. They now find significance in things that before had none. Especially for women participants, self-esteem and self-worth have increased. A sense of independence—especially from others whom they fear might mislead or take advantage of them—characterizes the newly literate participants.