CASE STUDY 6

GUATEMALA

Guatemala, November 2014

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1   Introduction

This document integrates the information about the study of case six in Guatemala, from the research project for inclusive education in international cooperation, which was developed to know the inclusion perspectives from different actors, both from those who make part of the local educational community (Principal, teachers, students and mothers), as well as actors that are external to the selected school (educational authority of the Departmental Directorate of Education –DIDEDUC-, government officials and local leaders). We also identified barriers and opportunities for inclusive education, since it's an essential strategy to bring education to everyone.

The selection of the place of this research was in function of various criteria, such as: poverty levels compared to other regions of the country, cooperation programs by international organizations, education coverage rates, ethnical composition and size of the primary schools.

According to the rural poverty map of 2011, the department where the research took place is among those that posses the lowest total rural poverty rates (47.4%), and the lowest extreme rural poverty rate (3.0%) compared tot he rest oft he country, Another determinant factor is that unlike other regions oft he country, there has been little cooperation in subjects like education, health and development by international organizations in the region

It's important to mention that in a national level, the municipality where the study took place ranks third among those with the best primary level coverage rate (146.6%) and sixth with the best coverage rate of high school cycle (85.8%) (Pellecer, H., Saz M. and Santos, J. 2001). Finally, the population is Ladina and their mother tongue is Spanish.

Because of all this, the study case took place in an official rural co-educational school, with a monolingual approach (Spanish), located in the South region of the country.

The most important findings related with the different inclusion perspectives are presented below, as well as the barriers and opportunities of educational inclusion faced by the population.

2   Description of the case study and its context

The population of this case lives in the southern region of the country, where the climate is warm and the most important economical activity is the cultivation of sugar cane. The ownership of actives corresponds to a small group of investors; as a consequence, poorly trained workforce composes most of the population during the sugar harvest, which refers to the temporal activities of the harvest, such as: the sowing, the cleaning and the cutting of the cane. The harvest has a significant impact, not only in the economical sphere, but also in the social aspect of this region, as we can see in this quote:

" … when the harvest is over, … most of the people have no other job, there come other factors that (generate) crime". About what we just said, some teachers attribute/ say, " most of the people settle for only working six months, and after that they rest, they don't look for other work source." While

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others consider that "it's not really that they settle, " but that "a certain level of education is now required everywhere, and if the parents don't have it, their only refugee is to cut the sugar cane, because that's the job where nothing is required." According with the information given by the principal of the school in the instrument of data registration, this is a co-ed school that belongs to the public sector, and that operates during the morning session. It has 392 students, 52% of which are boys. In this institution there are 14 teachers working, and only the PE teacher is a man. The infrastructure of the school has 13 classrooms, separate bathrooms for each gender, and a school kitchen. It also has a concrete patio, which was designed as a place to play basketball, and its shared by all the students of the school. However, the area is considered to be a dangerous space for them. On one hand, the principal prohibited every ball game so that older students wouldn't hurt their younger fellows.

> *… You know, during recess, you can see, it's a mess, we don't let them play soccer because the kids, during recess, they used to play soccer, the big kids occupied all the field, and used to go running around and pushing the smaller kids, that's why we decided they wouldn't be allowed to play soccer anymore, that was the only space they had to play, it's the only one …*
>
> ***Principal***

The girls confirmed this:

> *… When they play soccer, and the smaller kids are there, they push them away, the hurt them, and that's why teachers don't let them play anymore.*
>
> ***Girl***

On the other hand, both boys and girls said that the school playground is too small for all the students, which causes fights and aggressions during recess time between students:

> *… What I don't like, is that there are too many boys, and they're always messing with us …*
>
> ***Girl***

> *… Too many kids (boys and girls or teenagers), and they're always running around, and we trip over someone and the other looks for trouble and they start fighting, just like me, a lot of kids (boys and girls or teenagers) were in the field running non-stop, and someone gave me a "canilla" (zancadilla: when a person puts his/her leg in front of someone's leg to make them fall) and I fell in my mouth.*
>
> ***Boy***

3   Characteristics of the population

The population studied in Case 6 is Ladin, and its mother tongue is Spanish. The Human development indicators (2011) indicate that the literacy rate of the municipality is 96,8%.

According to the stakeholders, most of adults have a low educational level, some of them can't read nor write, and this situation limits their job opportunities, and to be actively implicated in the learning activities of their children.

> *The illiteracy of the parents that only work on the fields, they don't know hot to help their kid, or know whether he's really learning or not, then the situation is worse, if this happens in a urban area, it's definitely happening in the rural area.*
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> ***Local leader***

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> *One of the barriers, is the lack of education of some parents, because many of them need, or want to help their kids, but they can0t because they don't know how… I feel like this has been really significant, because some of them never studied, some stopped at the end of middle school, others didn't even made it to third grade. In general, many mothers, women can't read or writhe and they're the ones who spend more time with their children.*
>
> ***Teacher***

By categorizing the data collected we determined that the informants mentioned personal, familiar, social and economical characteristics of the educational population, which are linked with their opportunities of access, acceptance and participation in the national educational system. Some of these characteristics are positive, others show the need of strategic interventions to be transformed into better opportunities for their inclusion in the educational system.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics

Aggressive Behavior	Need of special education	Teenage pregnancy	Over-age
It refers to the attitudes and … behaviors of students in their interaction at school, which were reported by the informants. *They are quarrelsome /troublemakers, very rude, selfish, not well educated.* ***Student*** *My dad used to hit my mom a lot, and when I came home from school, I got angry and if they bothered me (the other kids), I hit them because I was already angry from what I saw at home, and in school, they couldn't mess with me because I would start fighting with them.* ***Student***	The numbers are the evidence that inside the population, there are students with different conditions when it comes to language development, and other difficulties to fully learn, and that the school has faced difficulties attending these differences. *Well, what I have noticed now is, first that I have some kids who have problems speaking. It's hard for them to talk, and therefore to pronounce the consonants.* ***Teacher***	It affects in a bigger degree women in middle and/ or high school and as a consequence, the students usually abandon their studies. *I would say that another condition is, if the girls do well, they reach elementary school. Why don't they reach high school? Most of the girls are looking for a couple. I believe that in a National level, we're facing this teenage pregnancy problem, so that's also a problem here. And if a girl stops studying and starts being/ becomes a mother, that's where her studies finish, in second or third grade.* ***Other governmental entities***	It refers to students two or more years of school delay /backwardness compared with the average age for the grade they're in. (MINEDUC, 2013) Which usually penalizing them in their continuation inside the educational system. *Here in first grade, there are many ten, eleven and twelve year old kids. Kids who should be in fourth, fifth or even in the sixth grade.* ***Other governmental entities*** In most of the schools, kids enter the first grade when they are between six and a half and seven years old. We have kids entering the first grade when they are nine or ten years old

As we will see in the acceptation section of the document, various/ many informants agree that the aggressive behavior of students can be prejudicial for them to have an effective interaction in the class room and in school. It makes both the aggressor and the victim vulnerable when it comes to their possibilities of continuing in school. Their aggressiveness was attributed to the domestic violence that

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continues to be present in many households, to the violent demonstrations in the local/ community environment, and to the television shows to which they are exposed at home.

> *... The kids see when their father hits their mother, or they see when their mother hits their father, because as we see fathers hitting their wives, there are also women who hit their husbands. And kids begin to understand, and then, as they see there's no love at home, they are also begin to sow, (replicate: do the same thing) with their class mates, but I do believe that's why there are so many aggressive kids, also because of television, and the problems they face at home.*
>
> **Mother**

When it comes to pregnancy, the department where the research was made was one where it was reported the biggest number of teenagers giving birth, causing school dropouts, and having an impact in their opportunities of entering the workforce, making it the "link between the reproduction of the inter-generational poverty/ the reason why poverty is inherited between generations." (Observatorio Salud Reproductiva, 2011).

The community where the case study was developed isn't immune to the pregnancy in minors' subject, as was indicated in the previous board. During the fieldwork, there was the case of a pregnant student in the town, which had alarmed many local actors, perhaps because it had been caused by rape.

The over-age is also an evident characteristic of the school population, informants from inside and outside the school attribute it tot he late inscriptions of the kids, which can be explained by the lack of economical resources, which forces them to work before entering school.

The over-age cases increase with the kids repeating the first grades of elementary school, and disadvantage the student's adaptation to the classroom and the learning process.

> *There are students who feel bad because they are too big and they're embarrassed to be in this stage … But kids are innocent, they say, they play and do things with pleasure, but them, they are really morbid, we have kids of a certain age, and their minds goes beyond, it's not simple.*
>
> **School Principal**

Table 2: Family Characteristics

Numerous Families	Little father's involvement	Domestic Violence, family breakdown, single mothers,	Alcoholism and drug addiction
Most of the families here have three or more kids. There's a mother who has eight kids, and so she gives the younger ones the opportunity to go to school, and the older ones have to go to work because she doesn't have enough to keep/maintain so many kids attending school. **School principal**	*Their excuse is that they (mothers) don't know either how to read or write; they don't do their part/ contribute to help their kids. Teacher But the fathers go to work and the time they dedicate to their kids is really small.* **Teacher**	*What I can see in my classroom, as common denominator, is the family breakdown. Most of the kids live only with their mothers, or only with their grandparents. Teacher. We've seen kids who we can obviously note are smart; but they have problems/ fights with their father and their mother, they fight at home. School Principal. What happens, is that there are too many single mothers. And what do*	*What factors can keep men from studying? They do drugs and drink a lot. Student. Sometimes those who drink, are there, asking for money. How old must they be, those who drink? Many 13 or 14 years old.* **Student** *And so, it's normal that , in the middle of the day, you see young people (kids or teenagers, men) with a beer, because it's accessible, because there*

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Numerous Families	Little father's involvement	Domestic Violence, family breakdown, single mothers,	Alcoholism and drug addiction
		the fathers do? They left to the United States. He got her pregnant but he did nothing else. ***Other government officials***	*are no restrictions, they sell it to anyone.* ***Other government officials***

The number of kids per family, linked to the unemployment of the environment, infringes the right to access education to some of the family members, so that the rest can actually go to school, and frequently, it's girls the ones who are prejudiced. And when it comes to the involvement of the parents, many of them contribute little or nothing to the learning process of their children.

Domestic violence was reported to be a present factor in the student's life. According to the actors, domestic violence is a phenomenon provoking physical and mental consequences throughout the minor's lives, prejudicing their learning performance, as it's expressed in the following quote:

> *If the kids have family problems, inside the classroom, they don't perform well in school… here at school we have them physically; but their thoughts are away.*
>
> ***School Principal***

The report about Estadísticas de Violencia Intrafamiliar 2012 (Statistics of Domestic Violence, 2012) published by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, (National Statistics Institute) indicates that in the department where the study took place, there were 1,166 domestic violence' complaints filed this year. Another of the factors that affect the population is the easy access to alcoholic drinks, which becomes a real social problem/ issue touching every group age since the teenage years. Its consequences in the young people's lives are serious, because it keeps them from making efforts and from keep studying.

Table 3: Scholar Characteristics

Kids under the risk/risking/ of integrating criminal groups	Vulnerability to become victims of sexual assault/ violence.	A violent environment in the community	Gender inequality
They are kids aged from eleven upwards; as they begin interacting with other adults they receive other negative influences. They identified three or fours, because they take the client, they rob him, and they take him somewhere else. ***Other government officials***	*…We've had cases of children who were sexually abused, so here in school, we have their physical body, but their thoughts are somewhere else.* ***School Principal***	*What other things we could say affect you? Violence, and the people who kill you.* ***Student***	*It got my attention that here, there are more boys going to school than girls, since according to the population rate, there are almost 50,5% of men and 49,5% of women, then: Why are there more boys attending school than girls?* ***Other government officials***

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The table above shows that violence is a significant factor, not only at country level/ in a national level, but also in the department where the school is located. According with the report of Caracterización Estadística (Statistical Characterization) by INE for 2012, this department was the one that presented the highest criminal rate, with 498 for each 100 thousand habitants. When it comes to gender inequality, the informants reported that in the region, the priority is given to boys, so that they study more than girls, as we saw in the quotes above.

Table 4: Economical characteristics

Limited financial resources	The temporary employment of the parents	Difficult access to food	Children from the rural area who work
At primary level, I believe that the economical factor still affects most of the families, because their incomes are very limited and talking about buying shoes, or school materials, would mean that they don't have any more resources. ? **Municipal Mayor** *I believe that the first obstacle is their economical situation.* **School Principal**	The population works an average of six months each year picking sugar cane, and the rest of the year they face unemployment. *I believe that one of the first factors affecting childhood / children, is the work situation, many people don't have access to a permanent job, because sometimes they have a job, for example sugar cane picking, once the sugar harvest is over, that's where their job ends, there's not a permanent job, just one once a year, and it lasts six months.* **Local Leader**	*There are many children who come from home with having had breakfast; they fell asleep without dinner, with their old clothes because they just can't buy new ones.* **School Principal** *... Many children endure hunger, they come without any food to school and they return home to find it empty because anyways, they don't have enough to eat.* **Mother**	*In the rural area, people suffer from many shortages. We have schools where children have to walk a lot to manage to get there, that's maybe a factor, instead of going to school, they go to work on the fields.* **Other government officials**

Most of the interviewed actors agreed that the economical factor is the determinant one for a student to continue or not inside the educational system.

For the Educational System, this phenomenon creates the challenge of knowing how to assist and include children with limited resources, suffering from chronicle malnutrition, and who in many occasions have to conjugate their homework with paid activities to be able to contribute with the family's economy.

The economical difficulties get worse with unemployment, as referred in the quotes above, and we stress the following quote:

> *Well I believe that many times, there are children who find it hard to come to school because many time, as you know, men work in the sugar cane harvest, they only have a job during that time of the year; after that, the harvest is over and it's very hard for them to find another job.*
>
> **Mother**

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As a consequence of the factors mentioned above, there are difficulties to satisfy basic needs such as food, clothing and of course, as they say, materials used to learn at school, which has a decisive impact in whether or not they can access, accepted and be able to participate inside the classroom and in school, as is reflected in the following report:

> *... So there are children who, as their parents don't have anything to give them for breakfast and I guess that they don't send them to school in order to avoid embarrassing them, since if they don't have a job, then they don't have enough money to buy basic things, like soap, they don't have clean clothes for the kid. To avoid the embarrassment, they don't send them to school.*
>
> *Mother*

The above shows how parents decide not sending their children to school, as a way of trying to protect them from being rejected by their classmates because of their humble standard of living. As a consequence, children are often sent to work in order to contribute with the family's economy, which happens more in the rural sector, as we can see in the quote of the chart above, and in the following:

> *We have children between nine and 10 years old in the first grade, because parents don't make them go to school, they prefer they work instead of studying.*
>
> *School Principal*

This shows again how the early entrance of minors into the job market prejudices their path into the educational system.

It is important to observe how factor and social barriers become explanations for individual limitations that eventually face boys and girls when it comes to their full inclusion into the educational system.

Despite what we just said, the expectations the population has on education are evident, since they consider it as the mean to improve their living conditions, and as a consequence, to ease their social mobility. Both parents and students agree in the wish of entering, staying and graduating from the educational system, as shown below:

> *Tell me, what's your goal? I want to study and to become an engineer.*
>
> *Student*

> *But yes, I would like to see them getting a good education, to see them graduate, for them to be able to take care of themselves.*
>
> *Mother*

Summarizing, in the environment of case 6, we were able to establish that population doesn't enter the primary level because of economical reasons, and because of how time consuming it is for parents, as it's expressed in the following quote:

> *There are very little children attending preschool, because parents tend to see it as expenditure. Why would they make them go to preschool, if it's only expenditure? If we scan through the total number of kids that are currently in the first grade, only 30% or 35% of them went to preschool, the rest didn't.*
>
> *School Principal*

Most of the population enters the educational system in the primary level, but because of the factor we indicated above, not many people actually complete every grade of the level.

When it comes to high school, most students who finish the primary level aims to continue studying and reach the goal of graduating from high school, or even from university. Nevertheless, their path is

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interrupted by their lack of economical resources, explained by their lack of employment. The rural area population and girls are the most affected segments of the population.

> *Because I have spoken with many young people in the rural area, and their dream is to keep studying, because they graduated from the sixth grade, and they want to reach middle school and high school. The access situation becomes much more complicated, since not everyone can have the opportunity of living close in order to finish high school. If they're lucky, they only have to go to the municipal capital, or they have to go directly to the department's capital city, and the economical issue becomes bigger.*
>
> **Municipal Mayor**

> *I think that here in the urban area, this doesn't happen so much, I can't really tell you, but in the rural area, there are indeed many people who don't go to school.*
>
> **Local leader**

The population that isn't part of the national educational system is doubly disadvantaged: first, they don't have the right to education, and secondly, they don't have the right to access the services offered by other state institutions.

> *The problem with no-schooled people is that they are working; they work in houses as housekeepers, they go to work in „ maquilas", and so, their schedule doesn't fit with ours. This is our weakness, not being able to work with the no schooled.*
>
> **Other government officials**

4 Inclusion perspectives

One of the questions of this research is how did actors understand and interpret inclusive education. The answer to this question was deduced from what was reported by the actors who belonged and those who didn't belong to the school, and form observations made during the visit of the place.

It seems that actors make a distention between the students who actually have to attend normal schools, the students who could benefit form study plans or educational systems specially designed for them, and the students whose rights are not being recognized. Their explanations vary from not having staff to assist population with specific needs, to cultural issues.

4.1 Students who have to be in normal schools

Teachers mentioned that there are students in their classrooms who come from homes with economical limitations, resulting in not having the resources to buy the school materials for them to work in class. In order to prevent this, teachers get the materials, which usually means they cover the expenditures. This action is considered to be inclusive, since it guarantees the participation of these students.

Along the same line, we find the situation of the students who work. During the focus group, one of the children commented that in his classroom there was a kid who worked, which had an impact in his attendance to class. The student commented that the teacher "told him not to skip class because he was going to fail the school year". Despite that, the student finally abandoned school. It seems that the reason behind these inclusive practices is the attitude of the teachers towards the right to education held by students, regardless of their economical condition, as was mentioned by one of the teachers:

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The fact that they don't have the economical resources doesn't mean they won't learn.

Teacher

In what declared the educational authority from DIDEDUC, a government official, and the girls, we could find support towards the right to education of pregnant students.

It's interesting to see that form all the actors of the school only girls approached the subject. The educational authority form DIDEDUC and the government official indicated that it's essential to work with parents, not only with pregnant students, but also with the classmates, so that the pregnancy doesn't keep the future mothers from studying. The above will be discussed in the segment about students whose right to education isn't recognized.

Finally, according to what was mentioned by the educational authority of DIDEDUC, mothers of children with severe mental retardation want them to study in a normal school; however, according to the educational authority, this decision has to be made depending of the existence of qualified staff to assist those children. He mentioned that before, there was the program of "aula recurso", but it was dropped because " the relocation emerged (when a teacher is transferred from the original workplace that was assigned to him/ her) and the program became impossible to do."

During the last day of data collection, while the researchers went looking for the religious leaders of the community, they saw a kid with Down syndrome coming out of the school with his mother. When they asked the mom about her child, she mentioned he's now in the second grade, and that he goes home early because the full-time school day is too heavy for him in terms of tiredness. It's interesting that none of the school actors mentioned the student.

4.2   Students who have to be in different schools or programs

The educational authority from DIDEDUC commented that students with severe mental retardations would be more benefited by studying in a special education school, since in a regular school, "teachers don't have the tools to deal with them/ treat them correctly (assist them, teach them)". He mentioned that even if it's true that DIDEDUC counts with pedagogical advice from the Dirección General de Educación Especial (General Directorate of Special Education) –DIGEESP-, it seem its not enough to be beneficial for students, since "it's hard for a student to learn Mathematics". The over-age group is another that could benefit form the programs offered by other institutions, different than the normal schools. According to the principal, they're students with other interest, they're in a different stage of their development and they find it difficult to interact with the rest. She mentioned that last year they had students between 18 and 20 years old, but "we talked with their parents and told them there are other institutions, at least in the weekend program, where they do two grades in one year." So, their right to education is recognized, but we consider there are programs that will benefit them more. Given the above, this year there was only one 15-year-old student.

4.3   Students whose right to education isn't recognized

As was mentioned above, the actors that don't belong to the schools mentioned that there still exist a certain opposition from parents towards pregnant students remaining in school. Unlike the other group of students, it seems that pregnancy is a situation that really takes always from girls and young women their right to education. But apparently, it's not only pregnancies that put girls and young

women into this situation, but there's still a differentiation between genders present in the community when it comes to education, and as one of the local leaders mentioned:

> *… In primary school, there might not be a difference, where I have noticed a difference is in middle school and even more in high school, because women for example, many people have this idea, why would she even graduate? If she has to take care of the house anyways, and tomorrow she will get together with her husband, and how is studying going to be useful for her? This is the first … thing that think a father … she was studying but she didn't continued because she found her husband, and he didn't let her keep studying … "Why would you go learning? What are you going to do there?"*
>
> ***Local Leader***

Summarizing, it would seem that the inclusion perspective of this research is dedicated to some of the characteristics of the population or to the capacity of the system to assist specific populations. However, the above doesn't have to be interpreted as if the actors aren't making any efforts to ensure the right to education, since as was mentioned before, we found evidence of actions by government officials and by the actor of DIDEDUC to support the possibility for the pregnant minor to keep up with her studies.

5   Access dimension

Within this research, access is one of the dimensions of inclusive education, defined as the entrance, the permanence and the transition of the population inside the National Educational System. In order to understand the way the educational access of the population becomes real in this case, we identified four factors out of which we identify the barriers and the access opportunities, which are illustrated in the following graph.

Figure 1: Relation between factors, barriers and access opportunities
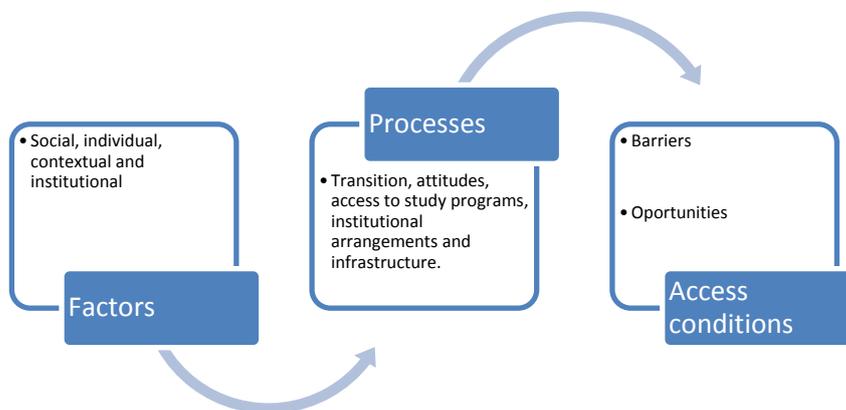
The identified barriers and opportunities are described below.

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5.1   Access Barriers resulting from Social and Individual Factors

The factors illustrated in the following table are the obstacles faced by population to access the educational system.

Table 5: Access barriers resulting from social and individual factors

Barriers	Quote
Pregnancy in minors.	*It hast he case of an eleven year old girl that was raped and is pregnant. She's supporting fort hem to let her continue in school, but they have found resistance from parents of the other kids, they don't want the girl returns to school.* ***Other government officials***
Aggressive students.	*...As was saying Mrs. X, there are children that don't come to school because they're rebel... we've heard of cases here of kids that have been expelled because of their rebelliousness, they come here and drag other kids around, they don't come here to learn, and they don't let other kids learn because they hit them.* ***Mother*** *… Are you really excited to come? I'm not anymore because they hit me every single day. They hit you every single day? Yes… and also when you go to buy something, they want you to let them pass in front of you in the line… if we don't let them the hurt us on the belly with their hands.* ***Student***
Insufficient financial resources	*Well the truth is today; almost everyone has it at hand- Specially the National Institute. There is the middle school from the cooperative and in there are many institutes in the municipality. Here, they're are also teaching on Sundays to grownups and to minors, and those who haven't completed the primary level yet are doing it here, and the high school students also graduate here from the Sunday program. Almost everyone has education at hand. What we don't have is money.* ***Mother***
Unemployment	*... Well, I believe many times there are kids that find it hard to come to school, because many times as you know, men who work in the sugar harvest only have that time to work; after that, the harvest ends and they struggle to find a job.* ***Mother***

Barriers that were indicated in the table create unfavorable attitudes for the access, the permanence and the transition of school-aged population, like the reactions towards the case of the pregnant student, who was rejected her right to keep studying by the opposition of the other parents. However, as was mentioned above, maybe because it was caused by rape, various actors backed her continuing in school in the environment. If we look back in the past, maybe if this case would have happened a couple of decades before, the girl would have probably become invisible, which shows that there have been progresses in the country, thanks to different intervention on social transformation, but it's

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evident that there still has to be strengthening actions that guarantee the total protection of children and teenagers to guarantee their success in life.

The aggressive behavior of students in school and inside the classroom is another barrier that infringes population. These attitudes lead sometimes parents of the aggressive kids to not enroll them in school, as it's indicated in the following quote:

> *… and there are others who don't come to school either because they're really rude and parents don't know what to do with them, they rather take them out from school.*
>
> ***Mother***

Or they are removed from school by the educational authorities; they get expelled from the institution. On the other hand, the aggressor show a lack of motivation to go to class as is quoted in the table above.

Another barrier identified is unemployment, which results in insufficient economical resources. Most of the interviewed actors agreed that social and economical conditions are the common barrier, and hard to overcome in order to keep studying in the primary level and the next levels of the educational subsystems.

5.2   Access opportunities facing individual and social barriers

It's important to mention that as a response to the aggressive demonstrations showed by students, the Ministry of Education has elaborated a manual to identify and prevent bullying, and a Protocol to identification, attention and reference of violence cases inside the National Educational System, as well as a Total Care Education System in Sexuality and Prevention of School Violence.

These tools could orientate care actions for the cases mentioned before.

Since 2008, the Guatemalan State implemented various political strategies for the social and economical barriers, especially to incorporate boys and girls living in extreme poverty and vulnerable segments of society.

One of them is free school enrollments, established in the Governmental Agreement no. 226-2008, in which they forbid to ask parents any form of payment, mandatory or volunteer, for uniforms, text books or teaching materials; however, according to on eof the informants there are still some schools where parents are required to pay some things, as we can see in the following quote:

> *I think it's also lack of communication, or the lack of a program regard the part of the educational practice, because the truth is there are many schools where they have to buy uniforms … the child might have other clothes but it's not the uniform so he has to buy another.*
>
> ***Municipal Mayor***

5.3   Barriers resulting from Contextual Factors

What is described in the following table are the obstacles resulting from the physical conditions of the school and the community environment where the school is.

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Table 6: Access barriers resulting from contextual factors

Conditions of the school environment		Internal conditions of the school: School building.	
Risks of the school environment	Violence, Threats, Risks of rape	**The classroom**	Overpopulation of the classroom
		School hygiene	Condition of the toilets.

Both students and parents agreed in manifesting their worries concerning the conditions of the school environment, because of the violence and insecurity in the community, which infringes the children's integrity in their way home form school, as illustrates the next intervention:

> *... Imagine the walk form here to the next town, now there are many crooks/ criminals, so many rape stories ...*
>
> **Mother**

When it comes to the internal conditions of the school, we identified the state of the building and the other services, finding the next comments:

First, the principal commented that they have „many students" in the classroom. .. in the sixth grade we have 54", which was confirmed during one of the classroom observations.

> *The classroom doesn't allow any easiness to move around, because of its dimensions and for the amount of students ... organization was difficult, because the space is very reduced: each group was right next tot he other.*
>
> **Classroom Observation**

Secondly, another condition that jeopardizes the students is the location of the classrooms, in the second level, and the quality of the stairs to access them; they provoke fear in parents and even in students.

> *I'm scared that when they go out, they might get hurt in the stairs because they are small.*
>
> **Mother**

> *They also need to fix the stairs, because one day one of the stair railings broke, and the others can break too, and we could fall.*
>
> **Student**

Thirdly, the conditions of the toilets, which was confirmed by the children during a focus group:

> *-It stinks here! –What don't you like about school? –The bathroom, the smell of the bathroom. It's horrible. All the time, at all hours.*
>
> **Student**

> *-What else don't you like? –Kids go to the bathroom and take a marker and they draw bad things on the walls ... also bad words"*
>
> **Student**

The World Health Organization -WHO-, reported that schools in bad sanitation and hygiene conditions are high risk places for students and teachers, it adds that the learning capacity of children can be affected in various ways, provoking them „ diarrheal diseases and malaria, which forces them to skip class." (WHO)

It indicates that „ boys and girls might be affected in different ways by these inadequate conditions in schools, and this can contribute to inequalities in their learning opportunities.

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Sometimes girls and female teachers are more affected that men because they can't attend school during their periods because oft he lack of sanitation facilities." (WHO, 2010)

The above is a proof of the internal conditions of school, which fit into the subject of the building it can turn into a barrier to a successful entry into the school.

By being disliked by students and also by being prejudicial to their health, it can turn into a barrier for they entry, their permanence, and their successful graduation from school.

5.4   Access opportunities facing contextual barriers

Through the research, we identified opportunities such as the support of the Municipality for the Classroom construction, and the recent elaboration of a Manual of Classroom quality in the Ministry of Education, in which the architectonical aspect is established as one of the specific condition of the classroom for the preschool and primary school levels, indicating that " the specific classrooms for the preschool and primary levels have to be designed with a style in accordance with the context and the necessities of the student with disabilities (physical, hearing, visual, intellectual, multiple, little people) and without any disability, a design counts with elements facilitating the entry, the exit and the mobilization of the students. (MINEDIC, 2013, page. 15). It will be a valuable tool for the improvement of the school building.

5.5   Barriers for accessing study programs

Middle School and high school are unavailable fort he population in the rural sector. The Ministry od Education has made efforts to make the primary level universal, however, there's a big delay for the middle and high school cycles, just as is shown in the following quote:

> … Many young people in the rural area, and their dream is to keep studying, because they graduated from the sixth grade, and they want to reach middle school and high school. The access situation becomes much more complicated, since not everyone can have the opportunity of living close in order to finish high school. If they're lucky, they only have to go to the municipal capital, or they have to go directly to the department's capital city, and the economical issue becomes bigger.
>
> **Municipal Mayor**

Another barrier that was indicated was the lack of programs of extracurricular Education in the rural area.

> Many times, it's true that they don't come to school because of the illiteracy of their parents, because of their unemployment, or because that possibility isn't offered in their communities, but, is there a way of doing so? „Look, we offer them this opportunity, it's academic, you don't like to read, you don't really like to study, but come to school" just so that they aren't there being lazy and all that, right? And that it gives them opportunities for their futures.
>
> **Local leader**

5.6   Opportunities of accessing Study Programs

It refers to the availability oft he educational offer in the region and in the community. The informants indicated that there exist programs available to study in a weekend schedule, but the financial limitations are a barrier to access these programs.

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There are centers by the Instituto Técnico de Capacitación y Producitvidad (Institute of Technical Training and Productivity) INTECAP which offer „practical curses", but then again, the financial limitations is an obstacle to be able to take them. One of the local leaders suggests that this model could be copied to offer other alternatives to the population.

> *As it's doing INTECAP; giving the opportunity, they are practical things, practical courses, maybe this could help.*
>
> **Local leader**

6   Dimension of Acceptance

The information given by the interviewed actors allowed us to build and to understand this dimension.

Acceptance is understood as "*action and effect of accepting*", which is defined as" *approve, accept, access to something*". Then, within the framework of interpersonal relationships, acceptance can be understood as the opposite of rejecting, which means, "showing opposition or disregard towards person, a group, or a community." (RAE, 2011).

Actors identify the classroom and the school as the two places where acceptance is possible; plus, they distinguish between who the acceptance is possible. On one hand, acceptance has to do with what happens between classmates or between students of the school, and on the other hand, there is the acceptance of the students towards the actors of the educational community.

According to the actors, there exist internal conditions that might be an obstacle for acceptance in the classroom and in school. Opportunities for acceptance inside the classroom constitute internal conditions, and acceptance within the school, they constitute external conditions.

It's interesting to observe that depending on how the obstacles are approached, inside the classroom (class management), or in the school (through institutional arrangements), these can either become opportunities or remain obstacles

Below, we present the actors reported about the barriers and then, what they said about the opportunities.

6.1   Barriers to acceptance inside the classroom

As was mentioned above, acceptance inside the classroom refers to the one between classmates. Teachers, girls and mothers were the ones who talked about it. All of the actors agree that aggressive attitudes are the. Just as we can observe, the actors that identify this characteristic are women, and they say it's boys the ones to show it.. In addition to this individual characteristic, one that particularly got our attention was the case of a girl who emigrated into this municipality form another region of the country.

This was evidenced in an observation, and both a girl and a boy expressed a certain attitude of non-acceptance towards a girl that came from another municipality:

> *It was silent, and everybody seemed to be copying what the teacher had asked them, when suddenly a girl screams: "Mam, tell this one", referring to another girl, "to not say her little word". Another boy*

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indicates, "She must go to her village". Another boy says, "What happens is that the girl isn't from here, she's from another village."

<div align="right">***Observer***</div>

Finally, the classroom management that the teacher has, or doesn't have, before situations like the one just mentioned, or before aggressive attitudes, can also be a barrier to acceptance between classmates, as is evidenced in the following quote:

I have an anecdote of a boy who is the one that disturbs the most … There was a time where he himself started to say, "Who wants to play with me?" and nobody answered. Then he says "Who wants me to not be in school?" and everyone raised their hands. The he said "who wants me to die?" and everyone raised their hands. He certainly felt bad because he began to cry and I told him "you provoked all this, because you beat them", but he didn't change his behavior, in fact right now he's suspended because he tried to beat her, I have an intern working in my classroom, and he tried to beat her.

<div align="right">***Teacher***</div>

This example shows how not knowing how to handle the aggressive attitudes of the students from the beginning results in rejection, just as it was mentioned by the actors previously, but on the other hand, and even more important, how the teachers handle the situation can make the non acceptance of the students by their classmates remain.

We can deduce, on one hand, that the competences held by the teacher are underlying to his/ her abilities to handle the class, but on the other had, the variables of the school environment also are to be taken into consideration.

According to what was reported by one of the teacher, there's a disciplinary commission in school, which is composed by some of the teachers, and its role is to make decisions regarding the punishments to give to the student, which can be "to suspend them or to assign them more "planas" (when the student has to write many times the same sentences, word, or phrase.) The teacher referred she sometimes what she does is "she takes recess away from them… to leave them homework, "plana" about behaving well", but she stresses that "that's what they can do because they don't know what else to do". We don't know if the school counts with school regulations. Finally, all of the actors agreed that if a student has attitude problems, the usual thing to do is to call the mothers. The above suggests that the practices to fix behavior problems consist of giving them a punishment.

6.2   Opportunities for acceptance inside the classroom

The opportunities for the acceptance between students inside the classroom correspond, on one hand, to the attribution of the aggressive behavior of students, and to the management of acceptance in the classroom. The latter refers to what the teacher does to handle any possible situation; it contributes to the acceptance between students in the classroom.

The following quote suggests that what the teacher explained concerning the aggressive behavior of the student has an influence in how she addresses the situation; so in this case, the opportunity wouldn't only be linked to learning how to address the situation, but even more important, on knowing how to interpret what the student is trying to communicate with this type of behavior, and how the school environment can give alternatives answers.

… I have a boy who beats everybody. He can't be clos to anyone because he's always pinching the others, or while they're walking he has to make them fall (zancadilla: when a person puts the leg in front of the

other person to make her fall.) and he already started feeling rejected by other kids. … So what I do now, I tell him "look son, come here, you'll be next to me, because I want you to be here", I tell him "I like you a lot and you'll stay here"… many times it's because of the lack of love that they want to catch the attention and want to bet everyone … Talking to them, giving them love, telling them "look son, don't do that because your little classmates or, would you like that they do this to you, to beat you every day? … But I do see that by having him next to me he's changing because he's not going to beat me.

Teacher

6.3   Barriers for acceptance in school

The principal and the girls mentioned that one of the barriers to acceptance between students has to do with individual characteristics. For the principal, there are related to the economical factor, and the personal hygiene, while girls identified aggressiveness and values, specifically "being selfish, rude. Another barrier has to do with the perception regarding over-age students. According to the principal's perception, these students are different from the rest of students of the school when it comes to interests, stage of development and behavior. This way, perception has an influence in the acceptance of these students in the school. The above can be found in previous quotes (refer to Table 1. Personal Characteristics, page 5; page 7; page 14)

Yes, last year we had many. We had one that was about to turn 18, others that we're turning 19, one that was about to turn 20, but that was last year. And these kids, as they're older, there are some that instead of helping to take care of the younger kids, they were more rude. They already have other habits, and so it's hard with the younger kids … Let's say 15 years old is the oldest that we have.

Principal

6.4   Opportunities for acceptance in school

The opportunity for acceptance in school has to do with the institutional arrangements implemented by external actors. In this particular case the institutional arrangement developed by he authority of DIDEDUC and a government official corresponds to strengthening the right to education of a pregnant minor:

"We've removed the stigma of her being pregnant and not being able to keep studying. We can't turn our backs to her, we have to show her support. The girl keeps studying".

Educational authority from DIDEDUC

7   Dimension of Participation

Participation is to take or to be a part of something (RAE, 2001) and "implies an active implication with what it's being learned and taught" (Booth, 2002, p. 2). Actors identify two types of participation; the first one refers to the participation in the classroom, and the second refers to the participation in school. Furthermore, actors explain there exist external conditions and/or internal to school that can be barriers and/or opportunities for participation inside the classroom or in school. Depending on how these are approached, in the classroom (classroom management), or in school (institutional arrangements), they can turn into opportunities, or remain as barriers. But they also mention there exist external or internal conditions that constitute barriers or opportunities to what it's done inside the classroom or school. Below, we present what the actors reported.

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7.1   Barriers for the participation inside the classroom

The participation in the classroom is understood as taking or being part of the learning process that takes place, as the name explains, inside the classroom.

All of the actors agreed that there exist external and internal conditions which complicate or work against the participation of students inside the classroom, and so they become barriers.

They identified six external conditions to be barriers for the participation of the student sin the classroom, which are: working, economical factor, food, sexual violence, domestic violence and aspects related to parents. The latter refer to relation, attitude and participation problems of parents. The next quote shows how the lack of participation by parents is a barrier for the participation of students in the classroom:

> *There are many actors that have an influence in the children's education. In this case, as a teacher, we give what we can… but if at home they don't help them, we can't do it all. We give them homework for the next day, and when they come back, the children didn't do it. Parents leave them alone because they need to work, and so there's no one behind them to check their notebooks and support them.*
>
> *Principal*

On the other hand, the conditions internal to the classroom that were identified as barriers by the actors of the school are: the attitude of the student and the management of the participation in the classroom.

The management of classroom participation refers to what the teacher does to handle a situation in the classroom, which disadvantages, or can disadvantage the participation of the students in the classroom. According to what was reported by one of the students during a focus group that took place in this research, the teacher punishes those students who don't want to participate or who don't follow the work rhythm of the rest.

Finally, the school actors report that there also exist conditions internal to the classroom that limit the management the teacher does for the class' participation, which are: over-populated classrooms and available resources.

Girls explained that whether they work in groups or individually depends on the amount of material the teacher has. The girl commented that it there's enough material, they work individually, if not, the work is done in groups.

This implies that the way of working depends more of the availability of resources, than it does of the learning goals or objectives.

> *When "la seño" (the teacher) prints sheets and doesn't bring too many things, we work in groups, and when she brings one for each of us, we work individually.*
>
> *Student*

7.2   Opportunities for participation inside the classroom

As we mentioned before, participating in the classroom means taking or being part of the learning process inside the classroom. According to what the actors of the school indicated, there exist internal and/or external conditions that promote and/or favor participation by students inside the classroom, therefore becoming opportunities.

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The external condition identified to be an opportunity refers to the mother's participation. The school's actors identified opportunities are: student's intrinsic motivation, teaching materials, teacher's attitude and the management of the class's participation. Regarding the latter, teacher refer to what they do to promote and/or guarantee the participation in the classroom of students with financial limitations, from households where parents have problems, students work, and those who have problems relating with their classmates.

The next quote refers to what the teachers do to guarantee students coming form households with economical difficulties participate in class:

> *Sometimes, we do an effort beyond normal, because if we ask for material… some bring them, some don't; so we see how we manage to help them… and the fact they don't have the economical resource doesn't mean they won't learn.*
>
> **Teacher**

7.3   Barriers for participation in the school

External conditions, such as bullying or institutional arrangements can affect the student's participation in school. The Principal and one of the students identified over-age to be the institutional arrangement that becomes a barrier.

On one hand, the Principal commented that last year there were 18, 19, and 20-year-old students, but they discussed with their parents for them to enroll them in programs offered by CONALFA and other institutions; this year, unlike last year, there's only one 15-year-old student. On the other hand, a student commented the school established a limit age to participate in the football or basketball team.

7.4   Opportunities for participation in the school

According to what the teacher and the Principal informed, the opportunities for the student's participation in the school have to do with institutional arrangements, which have been proposed by the schools themselves, and intent to promote the student's participation. There are three types of institutional arrangements: a) respect toward the economical situations of parents; b) respect towards parent's participation; and c) to guide the parents.

The next quote gives an example of the institutional arrangement towards parent's participation

> *… When we detect … a child with weaknesses in something, or that was a certain behavior, we try to make the parents involved…*
>
> **School Principal**

8   Discussion

The most important findings of case six show that school-aged population is exposed to different factors preventing their total inclusion into the educational system, which means that even if the person wishes to start and continue her academic journey, inside her context, from his family and community converge many events and realities that, for the most part, interrupt their possibilities of accessing the academic journey.

Some of them constitute mechanisms to facilitate the population's educational inclusion, especially the actor's actions in the local environment, and the State's support measures through the Ministry of

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Education, such as: free education, support programs, and school lunch which, though as many participants mentioned, they're not enough, they succeed in mitigating the precariousness in which some students live, and it complements the efforts of other families that are in better conditions compared to those who can't satisfy their basic needs.

What's evident is that population is diverse, no only by their ethnicities, gender, social and economical condition, their special educational needs or their lack of disabilities, but also by other distinguishing elements that emerge, such as: the level of domestic violence, the violence rate of the environment, the integration or non-integration of the family, the aggressiveness of other students, the easy access some have to drugs and alcoholic drinks, pregnancy and risk of rape in minors, chronicle malnutrition, etc.

In front of these characteristics, we can also perceive different answering mechanisms expressed in the institutional arrangements designed for the access, acceptance and participation. Some favor and others increase the exclusion of particular segments of the population.

Into the inclusion perspectives, we determined there's an attention approach that remains segmented to students, especially when subjects like special educational needs, linked or not to a disability or to over-age, are not approached.

Among the opportunities we identified, we stress the fact that there is enough primary level coverage, and the availability of middle school offers. It's not the case for the preschool level, which remains insufficient, and population don't really use it because of the lack of financial resources, and of the little value parents give to see their children attending to that level According to the informants, the high school cycle is the one where there's not enough offer, girls are the more likely to drop school after primary school, as well as the rural area students. Girls, because of gender cultural issues, and the rural area kids, because of the lack of offer in their community and the need to work to contribute with the family's economy.

Regarding the gender issuers, there has to be support and create more institutions working to guarantee girls and pregnant teenagers and mother keep up with their studies.

A Research, which tracked pregnant teenagers and teen mothers fro three years, evidenced that „the teenagers who didn't drop their studies don't get pregnant again as often as the ones who do drop school." And the children of the ones who didn't drop school „had less episodes of illness" than those who did abandon school. (Observatorio Salud Reproductiva, Observatory of Reproductive Health, 2011)

Finally, programs in the extracurricular subsystem have to be designed or improved to assist population left outside by the educational subsystem.

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