



GLOBAL LEARNING EXCHANGE

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# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

[www.GLXi.org](http://www.GLXi.org)



# Letter from our new Executive Director



Dear Reader,

This report shows what Global Learning Exchange Initiative (GLXi) achieved in 2021. Our results are truly remarkable. Underlying them is an unwavering commitment to Guatemala's children and their future success. At GLXi, we are passionate about providing quality education to all children, thus enabling opportunities to improve their lives and contribute to their communities and country.

Beginning with the pandemic in 2020 and continuing in 2021, we quickly organized to ensure that our professionally developed early elementary literacy curriculum, "Open Books, Open Minds," was sustained.

In 2021, we introduced an adapted GLXi program that defined the model for future literacy learning in Guatemala and accommodated the distance learning needed to ensure the delivery of "Open Books, Open Minds" during the pandemic.

Armed with our adapted program and the addition of a new Training and Curriculum Coordinator, we progressed along the road of pandemic challenges and reached goals we dared hope to achieve. One, in particular, is our first annual Teacher Fellowship graduating class of 28 teachers. Pandemic withstanding, we plan to make our high-quality programs available to even more children in the future and train more graduating teachers.

The successful adaptation of our teacher training for and delivery of "Open Books, Open Minds" into a sustainable model for the future could not have occurred without the vision and direction of the U.S. and Guatemalan Executive Directors. In October, I took over the position of the U.S. Executive Director from Elizabeth McDonald. She will continue to offer her invaluable expertise to GLXi as a member of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director in Guatemala, Jaime Vielman, will continue building and strengthening the program in Guatemala. The entire GLXi team will continue to work to build on the foundation created this past year.

Lastly, YOU, our supporters, and volunteers are critical to our organizational success. Thank you for your continued support as we instill a passion for learning in children and build a better future for communities in Guatemala.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ana G. Schulz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'S' at the end.

Ana G. Schulz  
Executive Director



# About Global Learning Exchange Initiative (GLXi)

## OUR MISSION

to empower elementary school children in Guatemala by providing access to an unparalleled literacy curriculum and professional teacher training that creates new opportunity pathways for the next generation.

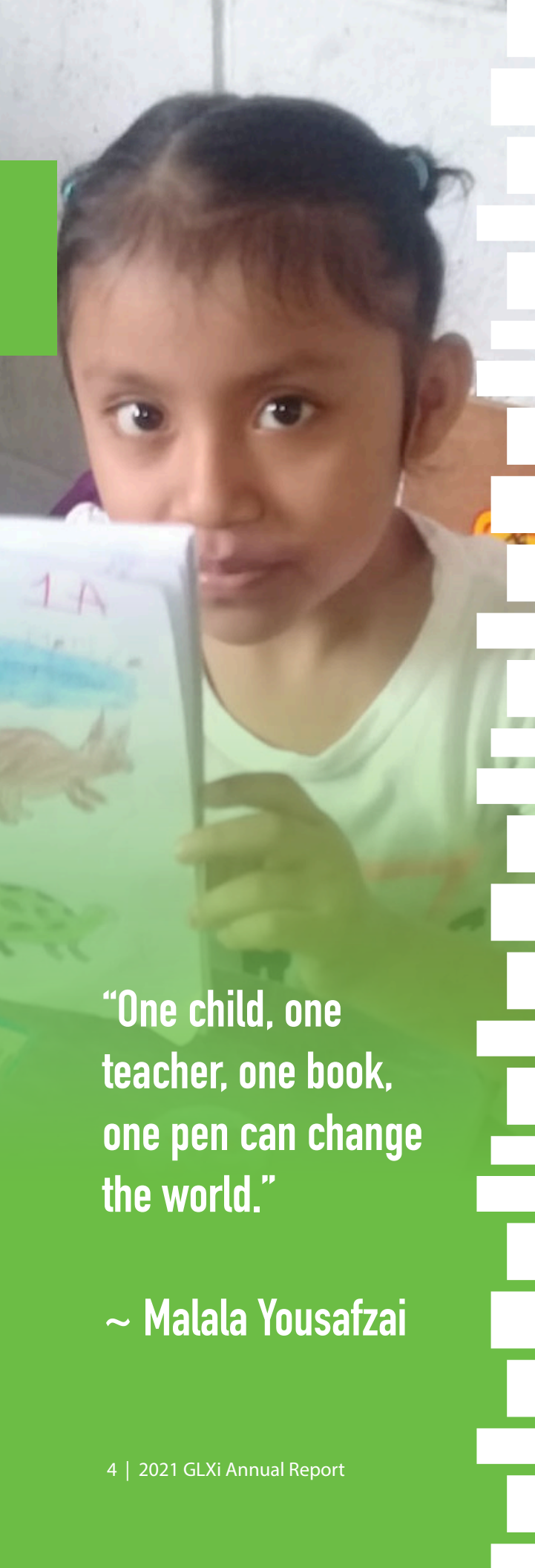
## OUR PURPOSE

is to transform lives and communities through child literacy, one lesson at a time.

## OUR FOCUS ON GUATEMALA

From meeting people around the world, particularly those in underdeveloped countries, GLXi witnessed firsthand impoverished living conditions, desperation, and lack of hope for the future. This experience helped create a vision for change, particularly for Guatemala, and in general, for the world.

Fundamental to GLXi's mission is the belief that an educated citizenry can better create healthy, productive communities. This kind of achievement can uplift a nation. Current events vividly demonstrate the importance of thinking and acting globally in achieving a safe, equitable, and sustainable world. Improving quality educational access in the developing world is an important foundational step. For GLXi, the first step starts with Guatemala.



“One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.”

~ Malala Yousafzai

According to *World Population View's Poorest Countries in North America*, Guatemala has the largest economy in Central America, but more than half of its citizens live below the poverty line. <sup>1</sup>

Guatemala is also the most populous country in Central America (17,422,821 July 2021 est.). Notably, its population is very young, with a median age of 23 years; about half the population is under 19, with 33% 14 and younger. <sup>2</sup>

Add insufficient educational capacity for this young and impoverished population, and the result is a crisis for the Guatemalan education system. Findings from Child Aid <sup>3</sup> indicate that most teachers in Guatemalan primary schools lack advanced teaching degrees, exposure to best teaching practices, receive minimal support from administrators, and lack a supportive teacher fellowship network. Moreover, most primary schools in Guatemala simply do not have the essential resources, namely grade-level appropriate Spanish-language books. (Guatemala spends about 3% of its gross domestic product (GDP) on education—far less than the regional average in Central America.) Poor learning achievements are the result.

According to the 2019 Comparative and Explanatory Regional Study (ERCE 2019) prepared by the Latin American Laboratory for Evaluation of the Quality of Education of the Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, <sup>4</sup> formidable challenges exist to improve learning in all in areas measured. In particular, 60.7% of 3rd grade students did not reach the minimum level of proficiency defined in reading. In 6th grade, nearly 85% of students were below the minimum proficiency level expected in reading.

## Sources

1 <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/poorest-countries-in-north-america>

2. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/guatemala/>

3 <https://child-aid.org/the-problem-global-education-crisis/>

4. [https://www.mineduc.gob.gt/digeduca/documents/erce/ERCE\\_Guatemala.pdf](https://www.mineduc.gob.gt/digeduca/documents/erce/ERCE_Guatemala.pdf)

5 <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx>



# Our Focus is on early elementary education, 1st through 3rd grades

GLXi's "Open Books, Open Minds" curriculum focuses on 1st through 3rd grade students. Children who stay in school through third grade and master reading comprehension and writing are more likely to complete their education, improve their economic opportunities, and are better equipped to adapt to changes in the economy, environment, and technology.

According to a long-term study by the Anna E. Casey Foundation, "students who were not proficient in reading by the end of third grade were four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers. In fact, 88% of students who failed to earn a high school diploma were struggling readers in third grade.

Third grade has been identified as important to reading literacy because it is the final year children are learning to read, after which students are "reading to learn." If they are not proficient readers when they begin fourth grade, as much as half of the curriculum they will be taught will be incomprehensible."



# Forging Ahead through COVID-19 and Beyond

By the end of 2020, GLXi realized that a fast but well-constructed shift in teacher training and how the “Open Books, Open Minds” curriculum was delivered was necessary to sustain the program through the pandemic and beyond. Hence, in 2021, GLXi adapted its program model and piloted the “Open Books, Open Minds” Teaching Fellowship. Existing GLXi teachers committed to trialing the pilot despite the pandemic’s challenges presented to them personally. First, the teacher training that occurred each year at an annual conference was adapted into a weekly development program. (Previously, the training took four years to complete.) Every teacher participated in weekly training throughout the school year, thus equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to motivate the next generation of students to learn. GLXi completed 100% of the sessions scheduled in 2021 in a virtual setting.

## The Use of Mobile Applications was Invaluable for Teacher Training and Support

Essential to the Teaching Fellowship model was providing the teachers with a continuous and collaborative support network that had been previously missing in the GLXi program and sorely needed by teachers in Guatemala. The weekly engagement delivered by a newly hired Training and Curriculum Coordinator prepared the teachers first to instruct virtually. It enabled them to use tools such as PowerPoint, Google Classroom, and other educational applications (apps).

Using **WhatsApp**, approximately 200 multimedia messages were sent and more than 1,000 group conversations were held, not counting individual conversations.

Using **Google Classroom**, two virtual classrooms were created, each with 19 learning sessions, for a total of 53 different activities in each classroom which included 18 evaluations in Google Forms and other projects.

Using **YouTube**, we created 5 playlists (graduation, learning sessions, support materials, virtual meetings, and recording projects), for a total of 58 videos.

Via **Zoom**, we held 36 virtual meetings, 18 on Fridays, and 18 on Saturdays.

Using **Pear Deck**, we enabled 17 learning sessions that were completely interactive and added a session using **Kahoot**, for a total of 18 sessions at the end of the training.



The training showed the teachers how to prepare recorded, virtual lessons for their students, use digital content, write short stories around vocabulary words, and use apps creatively to engage their students. All was done using the researched-based “Open Books, Open Minds” four components: Guided Reading, Individual Reading, Guided Writing, and Independent Writing.

The adapted curriculum was a collaboration between the Training and Curriculum Coordinator and two highly qualified educators, Dr. Linda Henke and Lee Ann Lyons. Dr. Henke is a recognized curriculum and instructional design leader and the creator of the “Open Books, Open Mind’s” early childhood literacy program and corresponding teacher training program for developing countries. Ms. Lyons is an Executive Coach at Santa Fe Center for Transformational Leadership. She is a retired school administrator who also served as a teacher and reading specialist and oversaw professional development and literacy for a pre-K through 12th grade public school.

The second important part of the adapted pilot program and the most demanding for the teachers was incorporating all they learned through training into creating a digital book for their students. The project constituted their final criteria for graduating from the first Open Books, Open Minds Teaching Fellowship Program. Creating their book was designed to incorporate all the lessons learned from their training. 28 out of 36 teachers graduated with certificates. The results exceeded expectations.

The graduation ceremony was the first-ever held by GLXi on December 18, 2021. The process leading to graduation and the graduation ceremony will become a permanent part of teacher training in the future.



**Cecilia Verónica Orozco Cifuentes**  
Teacher

“During the pandemic, knowing that the reading project has never left us alone is a great help and an encouragement to continue. . . I carry in my heart great learnings that I am transmitting to my students, it makes me feel like a teacher of quality and not of quantity. THANK YOU.”



**Mary Galvez**  
Teacher

“... Several of the tools GLXi provided us, helped the first-year students successfully learn to read and write even though the lessons were delivered virtually. Also, by getting to know the students, understanding their feelings, and developing a sense of empathy with them, I was able to help them in managing their emotions. I grew professionally and I consider that GLXi is a great teaching program that enables the teacher to be in constant training. Thank you for allowing me to participate in your program.”



**Nivia Zapata**  
Teacher and student Andres

“The importance of ... reading for the children is very important because you can see their interest when they connect.”



# The 2021 Graduation Projects

The graduation project involved creating a short story and its illustration using the Canva design application.

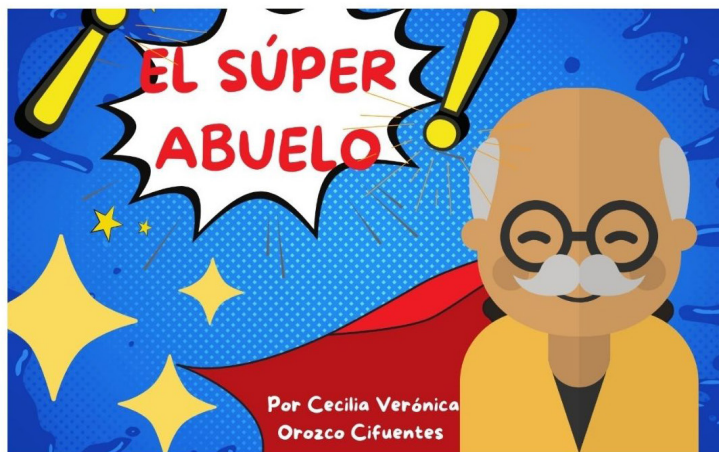
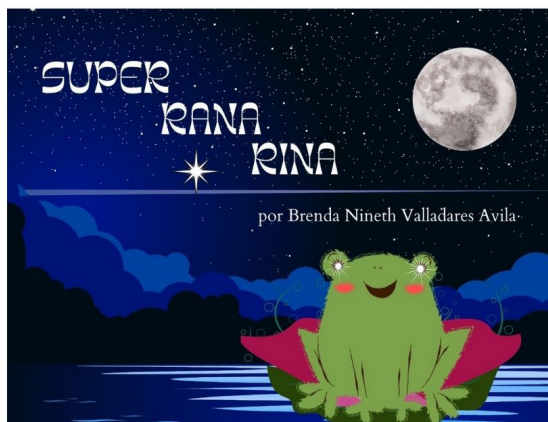
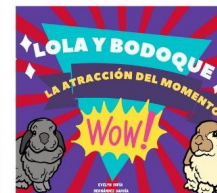
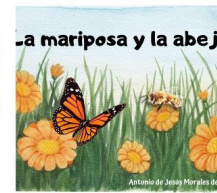
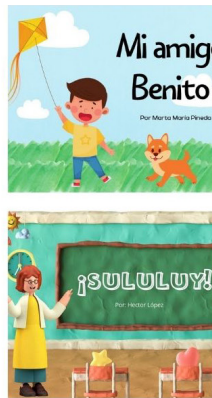
Each teacher undertook a process of five steps, with accompanying technical support and mentorship from the curriculum and training coordinator along the way. The five steps were:

1. Find Inspiration
2. Write the first draft
3. Edit draft through the final version
4. Illustrate the story using Canva
5. Edit the final draft using Canva for completion

These are the 28 fully completed graduation projects









GLXi believes that people around the world are born capable and uniquely talented. Opportunity is the missing ingredient in those who won't succeed and those who will. GLXi believes that all people deserve this opportunity regardless of where they are born, and it starts with education.

# 2021 Reach & Impact



**1,250** children benefited from 500 hours of instruction from 36 teachers. (In Guatemala, there are a total of **900** school hours during a school term.)



**28** teachers completed the GLXi adapted curriculum training,



**1405** books were distributed, and



**12** different public schools in 5 different departments around Guatemala were reached (San Marcos, Baja Verapaz, Guatemala City, Jalapa, and Zacapa).

**Note: Guatemala is divided into 22 departments and sub-divided into about 332 municipalities.**

## Looking Forward

In 2022, GLXi has recruited 48 new teachers with an expected reach of 1,572 students, the largest ever in teacher recruitment and expected student reach. COVID is still a factor in 2022, with limited face-to-face classes at the start of the school year. However, with a tested and successful Teacher Fellowship program, we are confident that 2022 will be an excellent year for our teachers and students with continued support from donors like you.



# Our Financials

REVENUES	\$136,643
EXPENSES	\$80,899
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$55,744
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$8,012
NET ASSETS END OF YEAR	\$63,756

## OUR 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**David Barford**  
Founder & Chair

**Amy Inman**  
Vice Chair

**Sean Walsh**  
Secretary

**Jeff Fulmer**  
Treasurer

**Kristine Smith**  
Director

**Lee Ann Lyons**  
Director

**Lucia De Paz**  
Director

## OUR 2021 ADVISORY BOARD

**Dr. Linda Henke**  
Curriculum Developer

**Lee Ann Lyons**  
Curriculum Developer

**Nathan Fouquet**  
Pedagogical Supervisor

**Oscar Bonilla**  
Training Expert

## OUR 2021 STAFF & TEACHERS

**Elizabeth McDonald**  
Executive Director  
United States

**Jaime Vielman**  
Executive Director  
Guatemala

**Lesvia Marleny Andrino**  
Training & Curriculum Coordinator  
Guatemala

**Elise Neal**  
Director of Special Projects



## GLOBAL LEARNING EXCHANGE

There are many ways to help improve the future for the next generation of Guatemalan global citizens.

You can support them with books. Put a book in the hands of a child and help him/her take the first step toward literacy. A modest donation supports classroom supplies for one child, for one year.

You can sustain our literacy program with a monthly recurring donation. No donation is too small. Recurring donations help us underwrite literacy kits that include a Chromebook, projector, and laser pointer.

You can sponsor our teacher training for one year, a long-lasting investment that will benefit children and communities for years to come.

Lastly, we hope you will join us in advocating for child literacy around the world!

Please go to our website [glxi.org/donate](http://glxi.org/donate) to learn about these and other ways to support our literacy program.

### Global Learning Exchange Initiative

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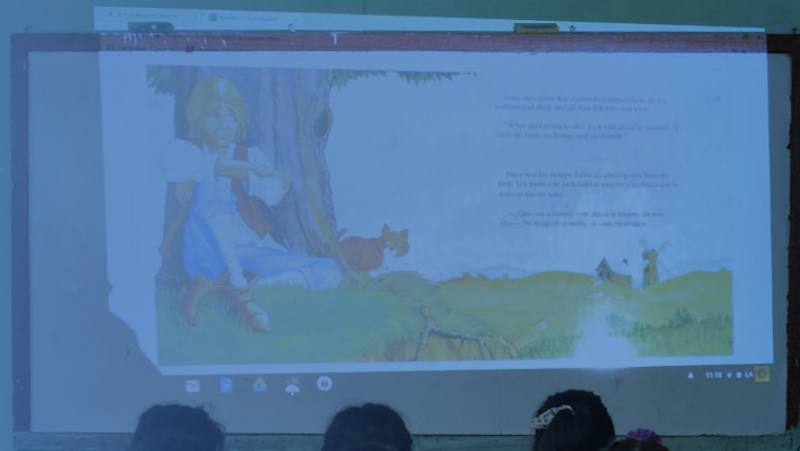


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