

Project Report:
Support for
Children with
Special
Educational Needs
at the Official
Mixed Rural
School of San
Miguel Milpas
Altas



Project Report: Support for Children with Special Educational Needs at the Official Mixed Rural School of San Miguel Milpas Altas

Identification of the problem

As a school community, San Miguel Milpas Altas has worked hard to support special needs students. However, the educators are limited in what they can do. Marcos Terete and Franque Bains came together to seek out a solution and this project was born through the support of the Worldwide Education and Research Institute.

The education and training of an elementary school teacher in Guatemala does not provide strong instruction on teaching students with special needs and the educators at San Miguel Milpas Altas developed this project to better equip themselves to provide education for their students that would build the confidence and abilities of their students with special needs. Education specialists in Guatemala are spread thin and assigned to schools in the most populated areas. San Miguel Milpas Altas does not run with the support of a special education teacher. Through connections at their teacher education program, they were able to contract Lucia's services to provide specialized attention for their school. The support of the Worldwide Education and Research Institute was awarded in the fall of 2019 and allowed for the project to be implemented in the 2020 school year.

The original project

This proposal is sought to equip the Official Rural Mixed School of the San Miguel Milpas Altas Village with a resource lab that helps teachers accommodate special needs students. The project's original goals were to (1) equip the school with technology for a resource lab and (2) provide training to best prepare the school's educators to support special education students with these new resources.

The implemented project

Marcos Terete sought out the support of his school principal and fellow educators and the original project expanded in its original design. The first goal to equip the school with a technology resource lab was modified and the technology was used throughout all of the classrooms as the need was great for all of the teachers and creating a lab was a challenge with the facilities available at their school campus. The second goal to provide training for their educators was expanded. The training was provided and the educators worked together to implement a 6 phase overhaul of the special education program at San Miguel Milpas Altas. Education Specialist Sandra Lucia Castellanos Illescas was hired to train the teachers and oversee the program. The [linked program was designed](#) with the following objectives



Students sharing learning time with a tablet

Overall objectives

This special education program has the key goals of [1] evaluating and diagnosing students with special needs to gain better understanding of their needs, [2] providing training to teachers and parents on how the needs of these students can be addressed and provide instruction on how to improve the academic performance of students with special needs.



Lucia providing parent training

Specific objectives (page 3)

- Interview parents to learn of the needs of the students and seek to understand the genetic, trauma related, and emotional causes affecting student development and academic performance.
- Evaluate students to understand their mental development and emotional capacity
- Evaluate the students academically to identify their academic proficiency and development
- Provide pedagogical training to educators to ensure adequate curriculum and supports are provided by the school
- Suggest appropriate activities and curriculum the educators can utilize to support students
- Offer ongoing professional development talks with the educators
- Offer ongoing motivational talks with parents informing them on the ways to better understand the needs of their students and provide them with tools to support their child’s development
- Develop educational programming that supports the special education students and helps improve the quality of their learning and development
- Provide ongoing support in the 2020 school year to parents, students and teachers at EORM San Miguel Milpas Altas

Timeline of the program (pages 6 & 7)

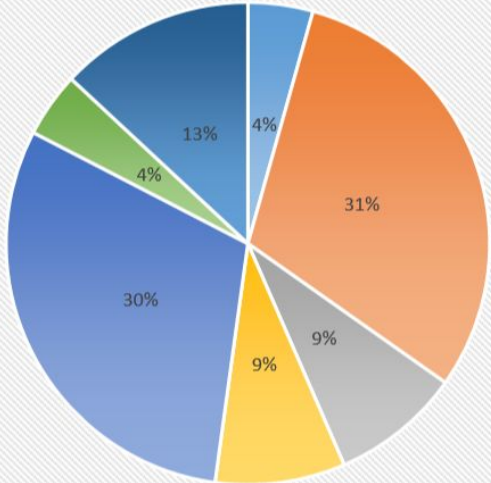
The objectives were spread out amongst 6 phases between January 2020 and May 2020. Starting with identifying students in need and building through outlined steps by the end of May students were to be evaluated and parents and educators were to be trained.

What was accomplished

They were able to maintain the schedule through March of 2020 getting through 4 of the 6 phases planned before COVID19 hit. With this work they were able to accomplish a great deal in a short amount of time. You can fully see the list of what was accomplished before April 2020 on [pages 6 & 7](#).

They were able to

<i>Identify students with special needs</i>	<i>23 students were identified. This works out to 1 - 2 students per class at San Miguel Milpas Altas. 375 total students attend the school site</i>
<i>Commission a Special Educator</i>	<i>Sandra Lucia Castellanos Illescas was brought on to lead the work with this body of educators. She is a special education teacher with over 15 years of experience teaching and training teachers.</i>

<i>Interview families</i>	<i>Lucia met with the families of the 23 students to learn about their home lives, assess the families needs and listen to their concerns</i>																
<i>Evaluate the students</i>	<p><i>Lucia completed an in depth evaluation of students and was able to diagnose the students. The students in need fell underneath the below percentages and categories. The majority of students were found to have learning disabilities and developmental delays.</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Problemáticas Identificadas</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Normalidad</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Problema de Aprendizaje</td> <td>31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Daño O Lesión Cerebral</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Problemas de lenguaje</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retraso mental Leve</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discapacidad Visual</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retraso mental Moderado</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Category	Percentage	Normalidad	4%	Problema de Aprendizaje	31%	Daño O Lesión Cerebral	9%	Problemas de lenguaje	9%	Retraso mental Leve	30%	Discapacidad Visual	4%	Retraso mental Moderado	13%
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<i>Train parents and teachers</i>	<i>Teachers and parents were given the gift of support and time with Lucia. She held what are called “Charlas” or “Talks” that supported the families and educators by listening to their needs, sharing tools and offering materials and support.</i>																
<i>Provide educators with technology</i>	<i>Items purchased with support from WERI allowed educators to use updated technology to differentiate instruction. Lucia trained educators on applications for the tablets, the projector and laptop helped make learning more visual and gives the educators access to an incredibly helpful tool.</i>																

Lucia evaluating a student



Building on the work - Impact and COVID-19

COVID-19 has caused the educators at San Miguel Milpas Altas to pivot. Without internet access in homes, they are sending printed materials home with students. This project was incredibly timely. The resources and tools learned are being implemented by parents and they are understanding the needs of their students with the broader perspective provided by Lucia’s training. Through this challenging adjustment, Lucia provided a powerful framework to help educators and families serve students dangerously at risk of falling through the cracks during distance learning. Her work has been reported to have built up the confidence and sense of self of students and have helped families better see their students as learners and guide them towards independence and strong development. The impact of this program can continue to build and the team at San Miguel Milpas Altas would like to continue to explore how to build on the impact gained.

Further report materials

On July 1, Dan Eastmond was able to attend a live recording that was attended by the school principal, two teachers, 2 students and the education specialist. Recording is below

Topic: Grupo Focal- Proyecto Educación Especial SMMA

Date: Jul 1, 2020 08:35 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Meeting Recording:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/7vUyMlnP-FLLYqvnOltYbV6AsPLaaa82yEW8vclmRrpd-AducR2t4YgKhYkCizB>

Thank You

From Marcos Terete - Project Manager and the team at San Miguel Milpas Altas. Seeing our students light up as they gained the support they needed has shown us the true value and importance of providing care for our special needs students. Before this project, our special needs students would find themselves lost in the classroom, just another student in the seat with teachers overwhelmed and unsure of the best ways to support. This project has enabled us to see our students shine because they are able to see what they are capable of and they are getting a taste of just how limitless this potential is. Thank you for supporting this work and giving us a special opportunity to support our school in a way that has been life changing for our students and families.