

Rise Youth Development Program

Why Rise?

In Guatemala, 90% of poor students never graduate from high school, but it takes a high-school degree to support a family above the poverty line. These students often come from regions where the average level of education is less than two years. Many families live on less than \$4 a day and can neither afford the direct cost of schooling (tuition and fees) nor the opportunity cost of keeping their children in school when they could be contributing to the family's income. In addition to economic challenges, students face many other pressures to drop out, including gangs, child marriage, abuse and alcoholism in the home, pressure to migrate, and a lack of support from their families.

“The Rise Program gave me the ability to develop my potential. Limits only exist in your mind.”

— Brenda Sactic, program graduate



More Than a Scholarship

The Rise Program gives opportunities to students who have great potential but face overwhelming obstacles. In addition to a scholarship for middle and high school, Rise offers students the comprehensive support and development opportunities that they need to graduate and thrive. Rise scholars participate in workshops on personal and professional skills. They explore possibilities for their own future by learning what life is like in universities and businesses. They get personalized support from a local facilitator and telecounseling services as needed. And most importantly, they find a safe space and a community of classmates who are facing and overcoming their struggles together.

Girls Are Key to Change

In Guatemala, girls are not traditionally supported in their desire to go to school. In some rural communities, there is nearly a boy and a half in school for every girl.

USAID reports that educating girls yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world. Development experts are increasingly finding evidence that educating girls improves the health and survival rates of infants and children; leads to higher rates of school attendance and completion in the next generation; improves the status of women within families, communities, and the political arena; and more. That's why the Rise Program focuses mainly on girls—approximately 75% of Rise students are female.

Results

1,060 students

90% of graduates get a job or continue studying beyond high school.

53% of graduates with younger siblings help pay for those siblings to stay in school.

What About the Boys?

About 25% of students included in the Rise Program expansion will be boys. Why? First, because we believe that all children born into the cycle of poverty deserve the opportunity to rise above their current circumstances. In addition, including boys in the program increases community acceptance of education women. And finally, we know that when young men and women learn together, they learn from each other, too.