

UK supports Indigenous Maya Girls to create transformational change in Guatemala

The project reached over 230 adolescent Maya girls aged 11 to 18 residing in more than 40 rural villages in Sololá where the MAIA school is located. The project also had a holistic approach, which included the families of each student. The total of indirect beneficiaries was approximately 2,000 people.

The project had three main aims in order to deliver quality education to these young indigenous girls. First, a series of courses, which included women's empowerment, critical thinking and civic participation.

The second aim of the project was around media freedom in which more than 30 girls participated in 14 journalism workshops to gain skills and public speaking tools that they will be able to use in the future as active members of their communities.

Lastly, the girls designed, produced, and led 9 virtual and 2 in-person interviews using the tools they gained to discuss critical issues facing girls and the Maya community with international and local public figures.

In addition, around 236 girls received quality education on sexual reproductive health, physical and emotional wellbeing, leadership, body positivity and self-esteem.

By engaging with families and communities, the project had a positive impact in the cultural and societal norms that usually prevent women and girls from engaging in decision-making and public spheres.

During the closing of the project, the British Ambassador to Guatemala, Nick Whittingham said:

Empowering girls is the best resource to slowly address and change certain cultural norms that prevent girls from reaching their full potential. I am thrilled to see how empowered these girls are, ready to advocate for more equitable access to quality education and women and indigenous girls' rights.