

British Embassy improves equality for girls and women in Sololá

The project is taking action to address equality for indigenous girls and women in Guatemala through improved access to quality education.

Teenage pregnancy continues to be one of the most pervasive social problems in Guatemala today, and the British Embassy, together with the Organization for the Development of the Indigenous Maya (ODIM), has concluded a project to help more than 30 teenagers in the areas of San Juan and San Pablo La Laguna.

The programme aims to reduce child marriage and adolescent pregnancy through quality education. Early pregnancy affects girls' access to education and statistics show that rural Mayan girls are almost half as likely to finish primary school as their urban counterparts are.

ODIM tackled this complex issue by providing a place for adolescents to receive training in life skills, gain valuable knowledge, and access mentoring from peers, including their own family members and learning from content in their own language to last over several years.

The project also provided community education and meetings for mothers, in order to give them the opportunity to interchange ideas about how to handle the changes their adolescent children are going through, and to better understand sexual and reproductive rights.

The UK continues to be committed to ensuring over a million girls in some of the poorest countries, including girls who have disabilities or are at risk of being left behind, receive a quality education. By addressing sexual and reproductive health, this project aims to build a strong cohort of participants, including girls and boys, confident in their ability to make decisions that best meet their needs and hopes for their futures.

The British Ambassador to Guatemala, Nick Whittingham, said:

Societies are stronger and better when girls and women have more opportunities and are able to make decisions about their future; and it is even better when boys are involved in understanding this from a very young age.